



Defense Intelligence Agency

(b)(3):10 USC 424

## SPECIAL ANALYSIS

(b)(3):10 USC 424

18 April 2003

### ~~(S)~~ Pakistan/Transnational: Lashkar-e-Tayyiba Evolving into a Transnational Threat

~~(S//NF)~~

(b)(1),1.4 (c)

In the past few years, the group has evolved into a more extensive transnational threat. LeT declared jihad on the United States in 1998 and formed closer fraternal and operational ties to the al-Qaida network.

(b)(1),1.4 (c)

~~(S//NF)~~ LeT was formed in 1989 as the military wing of the Markaz-ud-Dawa-wal-Irshad (MDI), a Pakistani-based religious group. The MDI has a fraternal network that has facilitated LeT's connections to similar extremist groups from South and Central Asia and the Middle East.

(b)(1),1.4 (c)

Hafiz Saeed founded the group and currently leads it.

~~(S//NF)~~ LeT's transformation to transnational threat status began with its declaration of jihad against the U.S. in 1998, which followed the U.S. missile strikes in Afghanistan.

(b)(1),1.4 (c)

- ~~(S//NF)~~ While LeT has primarily conducted operations in Kashmir, it has also sent members to fight overseas, including in Chechnya and Bosnia. During these missions, LeT members often operate under different group names to obscure LeT's involvement.
- ~~(S//NF)~~ LeT was implicated in the December 2001 attack on the Indian parliament, which was the catalyst that took India and Pakistan to the brink of war.

• (b)(1),1.4 (c)

***(S) LeT-al-Qaida connections***

(S//NF) The close ties between LeT and al-Qaida date back to 2001, but the connections between the leadership and training channels date back to the late 1980s. Given the composition of the LeT and al-Qaida cadres from Afghan alumni, members of the two groups trained and fought together during and after the Afghan war against the Soviet Union. While not a signatory to Usama bin Ladin's 1998 fatwa, LeT's declaration of holy war against the U.S. showed its close ideological links to al-Qaida. Furthermore, the LeT based its ideology on a type of Sunni Islam similar to the Wahhabi faith of many al-Qaida members. Al-Qaida sees the LeT as a well-established and organized group with a logistical structure in place that facilitates al-Qaida operations and movement within Pakistan. LeT likely sees its work with al-Qaida as a means to expand its reach and as a means of benefiting from al-Qaida's financial and operational expertise.

(S//NF) Linkages became more apparent following the events of September 11<sup>th</sup> and the commencement of Operation ENDURING FREEDOM in Afghanistan in October 2001. A recent interrogation of detained al-Qaida facilitator Abu Yasir al-Jazaeri indicates LeT offered al-Qaida housing, money and other assistance in October 2001. In June 2002, a detained LeT leader claimed to have provided al-Qaida forces with weapons later used in a firefight with the Pakistani army, during which 10-12 soldiers were killed. Additionally, sensitive source reporting from October 2002 indicated that recruits initiated travel to al-Qaida camps from an LeT office.

***(S//NF) Al-Qaida senior operational coordinators Abu Zubaida and Khalid Sheikh Mohammed (KSM) have provided additional insight into the evolving relationship between LeT and al-Qaida:***

(b)(1),(b)(3):50 USC 403-1(i),1.4 (c)

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- (S//NF) A February 2003 detainee interview with senior al-Qaida lieutenant Abu Zubaydah provided information on LeT assistance to al-Qaida.
  - Zubaydah claimed that the relationship between LeT and al-Qaida began following the U.S.-led October 2001 strikes on Afghanistan.
  - Following the attacks, LeT assisted al-Qaida fighters and their families to escape Afghanistan and hide out within Pakistan.
  - LeT provided safe houses, food, and transportation, including ambulances that Pakistani police were less likely to stop.

- (S/NF) In November 2002, a walk-in source discussed information on Abu Zubaydah's claims that LeT was providing transportation. The walk-in also confirmed that LeT was providing safe houses to both al-Qaida forces and the families of detained al-Qaida members.

(b)(1),(b)(3):50 USC 403-1(i), 1.4 (c)

(S/NF) With their traditionally different foci, it is uncertain why LeT and al-Qaida are now choosing to work together. Given LeT's primary focus on operations in Kashmir and the support from ISID, it cannot afford to be linked too closely to al-Qaida as Pakistan continues to support the Global War on Terrorism. Despite its growing global network, LeT cannot afford to lose its network base in Pakistan. *To date, LeT has not launched attacks on U.S. persons or interests, although a recent report alleges the group is planning to conduct mine attacks on coalition forces in Afghanistan on the next coalition force movement through Nuristan.* Such an attack would be a clear departure from LeT's stated goal of liberating Kashmir from Indian control and would indicate a desire to broaden its operational targets.

~~(S)~~ **LeT-IIS Connections**

(b)(1),(b)(3):50 USC 403-1(i), 1.4 (c)

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~~(S)~~ **LeT-ISID connections**

~~(S//NF)~~ Evidence indicates that LeT continues to enjoy support from Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence Directorate (ISID), in spite of the ban imposed on the group by President Musharraf in January 2002. LeT's dedicated, religiously motivated cadre has been an effective tool for Pakistan in its ongoing conflict with India. ***There have been multi-disciplined intelligence indications of cooperation.***

- ~~(S//NF)~~ ISID provides infiltration support, supplies, and oversight of militant/terrorist groups, but attempts to control the amount of support for plausible deniability.

(b)(1),(b)(3):50 USC 403-1(i), 1.4 (c)

~~(S)~~ **LeT Expansion – Cells in the Middle East and Europe**

~~(S//NF)~~ LeT is moving from its traditional base of operations in and around Kashmir to a more global presence, possibly to position itself for international operational capabilities. One of the preliminary efforts is expanding its existing financial network.

- (U) LeT has fundraising cells in the United Kingdom and solicits funds over its website.
- (U) Like al-Qaida, LeT protects much of its financial assets from government seizure by investing in legal businesses such as real estate, commodity trading and consumer goods manufacturing.

~~(S//NF)~~ Sensitive reporting indicates LeT has set up an extensive and highly organized network in Saudi Arabia. While most of the Saudi activities are overt, in the form of fundraising, there is one clandestine wing. The clandestine wing does not appear to be operational in nature, but rather handles affairs with Indian citizens, who are otherwise banned from contact with the LeT. The network in Saudi Arabia breaks down as follows:

- ~~(S//NF)~~ Three zones—Riyadh, Jeddah, and Damman; and
- ~~(S//NF)~~ Riyadh is further broken down into four sub-zones—Hara, Manfuha, Al-Rawdah, and Al-Shimaysi. Each sub-zone has its own commander. Hara was broken down into seven districts, Manfuha into five districts, Al-Rawdah into three districts, and Al-Shimaysi into six districts. As with the sub-zones, each district has a leader.

~~(S//NF)~~ Despite the overt nature of the Saudi network, it is indicative that LeT is aiming for a greater global reach and now has a financial network in place to complement the network of militant groups facilitated by the MDI network. These features, along with the existing relationship in Pakistan and the LeT's reputation for well-planned, effective operations, will make them an attractive operations partner for groups like al-Qaida. It is also possible that in addition to receiving funding from al-Qaida, LeT's fundraising network is being used to funnel money back to al-Qaida.

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USC 424 ~~(S//NF)~~  *assesses that LeT is continuing to work towards establishing itself as a transnational terrorist group.* While the foundation for these efforts was laid in the 1990s through joint training of LeT and al-Qaida leaders, the 1998 declaration of jihad against the U.S. was the first overt indication of LeT's intention to oppose the U.S. Since 1998 the LeT has strengthened its ties to al-Qaida, further positioning itself to threaten U.S. interests, both within Pakistan and internationally. *We are concerned that in addition to logistical aid, al-Qaida sees LeT as a potential partner for future attacks against Americans. Ultimately, with its international operational and financial network, LeT will be in a position to augment the international operational capabilities of al-Qaida or other transnational organizations.*

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