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Defense Intelligence Agency

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(S) Background Paper: Kashmiri Militants (Tasker COLISEUM Requirement NEITF-02-0106/a Kashmir Militants

1. (S) Key points:

o Current militant operations in Kashmir fall within the normal pattern for the past two years since the introduction of "suicide tactics" and terrorist employment of vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices (VBIED).

o To date no Pakistani/Kashmiri groups have attempted an attack which could be considered a 'mass casualty' terrorist attack on the magnitude of the August 1998 Embassy Nairobi bombing or the October 1983 Beirut Marine barracks bombing.

o Jaish e Muhammed (JEM) led by Maulana Masood Azhar is assessed as having the greatest intent and capability to conduct a high-profile attack well out of the operational norms for Kashmir which could have unpredictable consequences.

2. (S) **Intensity of Violence Trends.** Current militant operations in Kashmir fall within the normal pattern for the past two years since the introduction of "suicide tactics" and terrorist employment of vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices (VBIED).

(b)(1),1.4 (c)

The first time this tactic appears to have been employed was on 19 April 2000 when a militant drove a small car loaded with explosives into the front gate of the Indian Army XV Corps Headquarters in Srinagar. Since then, the Jaish e Muhammed (JEM) and the Lashkar e Tayyiba (LT) have employed suicide teams (usually involving just gunmen) in more than 20 attacks. The most prominent recent attacks have been the 13 December 2001 attack on the Indian Parliament in Delhi and the 1 October 2001 attack on the Jammu-Kashmir State Assembly Building in Srinagar.

3. (S) **Level of Violence Trends.** (b)(1),1.4 (c)

The Indian Army XV Corps publicly posts information on its Internet webpage (www.armyinkashmir.org) which is indicative of some of these trends. (b)(1),1.4 (c)

Tables on civilian casualties, number of militants killed, and the number of weapons recovered as posted as enclosures 1,2, and 3. At present there are about 18 active militant groups operational in Kashmir, five of which are assessed as the ones most likely to conduct a 'significant' or 'spectacular' attack. To date none of them have attempted an attack which could be considered a

'mass casualty' terrorist attack on the magnitude of the August 1998 Embassy Nairobi bombing or the October 1983 Beirut Marine barracks bombing.

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6. (S) **Jaish e Muhammed (JEM)** led by Maulana Masood Azhar is assessed as having the greatest intent and capability to conduct a high-profile attack well out of the operational norms for Kashmir which could have unpredictable consequences.

(b)(1),1.4 (c)

- o Closely affiliated with elements within al Qaida and the Taliban.
- o Associated with Pakistani Jamiat Ulema Islami (JUI) politico-religious movement
- o Founded in 2000 by Maulana Masood Azhar after he was freed from an Indian jail as a result of the December 1999 Indian airline hijacking.
- o Leaders and members transferred from older Pakistani groups such as the Harakat ul Jihad e Islami (HUJI) and Harakat ul Mujahideen (HUM)
- o (b)(1),1.4 (c)
- o Fighters mostly Pakistani; known for "suicide team" tactics in Kashmir
- o (b)(1),1.4 (c)
- o Renamed itself Tehrik ul Furqan in October 2001 after the Pakistani government froze their bank accounts (under US pressure).
- o (b)(1),1.4 (c)
- o Designated a Foreign Terrorist Organization by the US on 26 December 2001.

7. (S) **Past attacks by the JEM and its predecessor groups** the Harakat ul Jihad e Islami (HUJI) and Harakat ul Mujahideen (HUM) include:

- o 13 December 2001. Indian Parliament attack in Delhi, India. The five gunmen in that attack (who had four AK-47s, two small improvised explosive devices, and 15 hand grenades) apparently planned to force their way into the Parliament building, kill as many Members as possible, seize hostages, and leave explosive booby traps to hinder rescue operations. Due to the unexpected presence of the Vice President's motorcade, the terrorist's car got into an accident and the gunmen got caught in a shootout with his security detail. After a 30 minute shootout, all five terrorists were killed along with seven Indians (six of whom were police or security officers). Investigative leads from India point towards the

JEM as the most likely perpetrator. "Mohammad", who led the Parliament attack terrorist team, may also have participated in the December 1999 airliner hijack team.

- o **1 October 2001. Jammu-Kashmir State Assembly attack in Srinagar, Kashmir.** On 1 October, four terrorists dressed as policemen hijacked a local utility truck. They subsequently loaded it with several containers of explosives. An hour later the terrorists drove the truck to the entrance of the heavily guarded Jammu-Kashmir State Assembly Building in Srinagar. Three of the terrorists debarked while the fourth drove into the gate and detonated the vehicle-borne improvised explosive device [VBIED]. The three remaining terrorists forcibly entered the Assembly Building and began shooting indiscriminately; 27 people were killed and at least 60 were injured in the attack. Indian security forces took four hours to contain and kill the gunmen. The Pakistani terrorist group JEM initially claimed the attack.

- o **24-31 December 1999 Indian Airlines IC-814 hijacking from Kathmandu, Nepal to Qandahar, Afghanistan with 189 passengers and crew abroad.** The Indian government eventually released Maulana Masood Azhar and two other militants from jail in exchange for the hostages; one passenger was murdered.

- o **July-December 1995, Kashmir Kidnapping of American, British, German, and Norwegian tourists.** The Harakat front group 'Al Faran' kidnapped six and eventually killed five Western tourists in Kashmir, including an American. The kidnappers' key demand was for the release of Maulana Masood Azhar from jail.

- o **September-October 1994, Delhi Kidnapping of American and British Tourists.** An American and three British tourists were kidnapped in New Delhi, India by the Harakat front group 'Al Hadid'. The kidnappers' key demand was for the release of Maulana Masood Azhar from an Indian jail. The Indian police detected and arrested the plotters after they had held some of the captives for five weeks, but before they had announced their demands.

- o **June 1994 Kashmir Kidnapping of British Tourists.** Seven British tourists were kidnapped in Kashmir, two were eventually held for three weeks by the Harakat ul Ansar. The kidnappers' key demand was for the release of Maulana Masood Azhar from an Indian jail. The hostages were released after the HUA received significant pressure from the other militant groups active in Kashmir and the Pakistani government.

8. (S) **Lashkar e Tayyiba.** The LT is also considered as a candidate for possible high-profile attacks using "suicide tactics". Its most significant known attack outside of Kashmir occurred on 22 December 2000 when two LT gunmen attacked India's Red Fort military headquarters in Delhi and killed two soldiers and a civilian employee.

(b)(1),1.4 (c)

- o Some ties to al Qaida; exact relationship is unclear.
- o Associated with Pakistan-based worldwide Muslim Dawa (missionary) network.
- o Goal is jihad against India and others such as the US; no tangible political aims.
- o Fighters mostly Pakistani; known for "suicide team" tactics.
- o Training facilities predominantly in Pakistani Kashmir.
- o Operations mostly in Kashmir; (b)(1),1.4 (c)
- o Past good relations with the Pakistani government (prior to December 2001)
- o Pakistani crack down in December 2001 and banning on 12 January 2002 led to the arrest of leader Hafiz Muhammad Saeed and closure of many offices.
- o Designated a Foreign Terrorist Organization by the US on 26 December 2001.

9. (S) **Hizbul Mujahideen (HM).** HM is the largest of the militant groups active in Kashmir and is composed predominantly of ethnic Kashmiris.

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Indian press sources also note that HM also has links to the Students Islamic Movement of India (SIMI) which was implicated in a series of five low level bombings in 2000 in Uttar Pradesh state in north-central India.

- o Minimal ties to al Qaida.
- o Associated with South Asian political-religious party Jamaat Islami.
- o Goal is liberating Kashmir from India; attempted negotiations with India in 2000.
- o Largest group; fighters mostly ethnic Kashmiris.
- o Training facilities are in Pakistani Kashmir.
- o Combat operations almost exclusively in Kashmir.
- o Relations with ISID usually good.

10. (S) **Al Badr Mujahideen.** Al Badr Mujahideen is much less prominent in the press than JEM, LT, and HM, however it is also a very capable ethnic Kashmiri group. Aside from its operations in Kashmir, Indian police sources quoted in the press suspected that the group was responsible for two low-level IED attacks in Delhi in January 2000 and June 2000.

11. (S) **Harakat ul Mujahideen (HUM).** It is unclear exactly what capabilities the HUM currently has since many of its cadres joined the JEM in 2000 and because of recent network and infrastructure losses the HUM probably sustained in Afghanistan as a result of Operation Enduring Freedom.

(b)(1),1.4 (c)

HUM senior leader Fazlur Rehman signed the anti-US fatwa sponsored by Usama bin Ladin in 1998 so the group is known to not only have had past ties to al Qaida at the operational level, but also some links at the leadership level. Little is known about the exact nature of the relationship between the HUM and al Qaida.

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