



CLAWS

Jihadi Terror: Pakistan-Middle Eastern Linkages

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The recent bomb blasts at the Delhi High Court and Agra and the clues thereto reportedly gathered by security and intelligence officials so far serve as yet another reminder of the fact that the evil of what former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee termed, *jihadi* terrorism, a distorted version of a great religion, conceived and designed by Pakistan and operated in collusion with a few local like-minded elements, continues to pose a serious threat to India. To this reminder, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh added at the annual Directors General of Police/ Inspectors General of Police (DGPs/IGPs) Conference in New Delhi on 16 September, 2011, “There are reports of cross-border camps for terrorists being reactivated and of attempts to induct fresh batches of militants into the country.”

Pakistan’s Designs

Volumes have been already written by reporters, researchers, independent observers and others on this phenomenon and its implications for the secular Indian Republic. One finds that in this anti-India game, Pakistani General, Zia-ul-Haq, played the most important role when he outsourced the *jihad* to the Jamaat-e-Islami and similar ideologically motivated groups. As has been detailed by the former Chief of the Indian Enforcement Directorate, Bhure Lal, in his book, *The Monstrous Face of ISI*, the Zia methodology has matured further over the years. Lal has written extensively herein on the *modus operandi*, strategy and tactics of the all-regime powerful Pakistan Army and Inter-Services Intelligence and their linkages with

several anti-India terrorist organisations. Successive governments in Islamabad seem to have somewhat religiously adhered to this game. One may recall that even when General Pervez Musharraf had no choice except backing the Americans against what the latter called America-specific terrorists in the post 9/11 landscape, he remained soft on the Pakistan-based terrorist organisations which threatened India (also Afghanistan), and refrained from even limited operations against the *jihadi* infrastructure directed against India.

Politics of Religion

Jihadi terrorism has two important linkages. First, it acquires legitimacy from the politics of religion that ultimately pays in Pakistan. It is well-documented that ever since a separate state of Pakistan was created out of British India in the name of Islam, successive governments in Islamabad have used religion either to remain in power or to expand their social base. Given the clout of organised forces such as the Barlevis and Deobandis in Pakistan’s society, politicians of all hues—including its politically-ambitious Army—have chosen to echo their sentiments in favour of establishing Islamic rule in the entire subcontinent.

In MJ Akbar’s latest book, *Tinderbox: The Past and Future of Pakistan*, one could not but discern that even MA Jinnah, whom some well-meaning politicians, historians and commentators have viewed as essentially “progressive and secular”,

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looked the other way when his troops asserted their identity by daubing 786 on their barrack gates and vehicles. And Jinnah's successors, Field Marshal Ayub Khan, General Yahya Khan, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, General Zia-ul-Haq and others, have all been far worse, competing with each other in demonstrating their allegiance to the Islamic agenda. The appeasing of the *Mullahs* continued during General Pervez Musharraf's regime. The present regime of Zardari-Gilani-Kayani is also cultivating the Islamists by giving them permission to reopen several *madrasas* which had been closed during Musharraf's regime. Pakistan's Prime Minister, Yousuf Raza Gilani has agreed to withdraw all cases registered under the Anti-Terrorism Act against those arrested during the historic commando action at the Lal Masjid in July 2007.

Middle Eastern Ideological Linkages

Second, *jihadi* terrorism against India has had its linkages with the Middle East. Historically, the *jihadist* ideology in India was first advocated by fundamentalists like Imām-i Rabbānī Shaykh Ahmad al-Farūqī al-Sirhindī (1564-1624). The rule of the famous Moghul King Akbar was based on a shared Hindu-Muslim culture and ideology. He adhered to his policy of *Sulha-i-kul* (intermingling of religions). As against this, Sirhindī advocated *jihad* against the Kafirs as one of the "necessities" of the Mohammadan faith. Later, Shah Waliullah and his son Shah Aziz picked them up. The latter's disciple, Sayyid Ahmad Barelvi, who popularised it—his followers are called Barelvis—was influenced by the *Wahabi* movement during his stay in Saudi Arabia. Ever since, the forces aiming at the creation of Islamic rule over secular India have been in touch with the custodians

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of *Wahabism* in the Middle East, drawing all kinds of support from them.

Masterminds such as the founder of Pakistan's Jamaat-e-Islami, Maulana Sayyid Abdul Ala Maududi (1909-79), believed in the slogan of the slain Saudi Arabian Al Qaeda chief Osama bin Laden's Egyptian guru Syed Qutb (1906-66) and Palestinian mentor Abdullah Yusuf Azzam (1941-89) that the political ascension of Islam is the goal. All anti-India *jihadi* groups share their goal also with other Middle Eastern Islamist ones such as the "World Islamic Front for Jihad Against the Jews and the Crusaders," Al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghrib (AQIM), Islamic State in Iraq, al-Shabab al-Mujahidin in Somalia, the Muslim Brotherhood, and the Moroccan Islamist "Justice and Spirituality" (*al-'Adl wal-Ihsan*) movement, Salafi-*jihadist*. All of them are united in their opposition to the values of modern civilisation represented by the liberal democracies of the world. Their common goal is to drive away the Americans and other non-Muslims from Saudi Arabia, Afghanistan and Iraq, eliminate them, and establish Islamic rule over the world.

Operational Support

The historical and ideological linkages between such *jihadists* and their Middle Eastern counterparts have flourished operationally too. In his book, *Terrorism: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow* (New Delhi: Lancers, 2008), India's former Additional Secretary B Raman, has elaborated well the linkage the *jihadists* based in India have had with Saudi Arabia. Besides, a friend of Sayyid Qutb, spiritual guru of Osama bin Laden, Maududi was very close to Osama bin Laden. In 1998, this connection brought Osama bin Laden to hold a press conference at the Abu Jindal camp where boys from Kashmir were being trained for jihad against India. Also, there are reports that these days, the second largest terrorist group in Pakistan, after the Lashkar-e-Tayyeba, the Jaish-e-Mohammed's (JeM's) charity arm Al Rehmat Trust, has been travelling in Saudi Arabia and other Gulf countries to raise funds for *jihad* against India. The trust is now being run by JeM's notorious Chief Masood Azhar's close confidante Maulana Ashfaq Ahmad. Masood Azhar's younger brother Amar Azhar is doing the fund-raising business in the Middle East.

Links with Post-Shah Iran

There are reports that some of these *jihadi* elements have been getting support from the post-Shah Iran too. In Kashmir they have come to share with Hezbollah their tactics of using civilian shields and inflicting the maximum damage on India's security forces. Such reports cannot be ruled out. In the book, *Two Brothers - Maududi and Khomeini*, Ahmad Farouk Maududi (son of Abul-A'ala Maududi) has revealed, "Allama Khomeini had a very old and close relationship with Abba Jaan (father). Ayatollah Khomeini translated his (father's) books in Farsi and included it as a subject in Qum. Allama Khomeini met my father in 1963 during Haj and my father's wish was to create a revolutionary in Pakistan similar to Iran. He was concerned about the success of the Iranian revolution till his last breath."

Indian Predicament

New Delhi needs to discern and neutralise all such linkages to win its war on *jihadi* terror. India has suffered a lot at the hands of the *jihadists* since Khan Abdul Qayyum Khan and his gang pushed tribal *lashkars* into Kashmir in the Forties. Since 1980 alone the *jihadists* have claimed 1.5 lakh lives in India. In the Kashmir Valley, they have compelled over half a million of its minorities to leave their homes and live in miserable conditions elsewhere in the country. American Congressman Frank Pallone's letter of 23 August, 2004 to Prime Minister Manmohan Singh contains the best description of the Kashmir scenario today: "The Pandits have suffered more than any group as a result of the conflict in Kashmir.... Violence continues to threaten their existence. Kashmiri Pandits are on the verge of losing their identity, culture and homeland in Kashmir.... "The ethnic cleansing of Pandits from Kashmir started as a result of targeted assassinations, leading to forced exile of the entire minority community during the early stages of the insurgency. Horrible events have been repeated in recent years when Islamic insurgents committed mass massacres of Pandits in villages and hamlets throughout Kashmir."

Recently, Rajya Sabha member Shanta Kumar said that in 1989, the Valley had a population of over four lakh Pandits. But today, this number stands reduced to

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about 4,000. By 2000, Kumar states, *jihadi* terrorists had killed over 34, 252 citizens, wounded 17,484, set afire 10,000 houses and destroyed individual and public property worth Rs 2,000 crore in the Valley.

Lessons from History

An inevitable lesson from our post-Independence history is that emboldened by New Delhi's non-action in thwarting Pakistan's designs in the Forties and in defending its own territory even after Maharaja Hari Singh of Jammu and Kashmir had signed the Instrument of Accession to India, successive governments in Islamabad have employed increasingly aggressive means as part of their *jihad* in Kashmir and later in the rest of 'infidel' India. Islamabad's powerful Army's policy of "keeping India destabilised and its military preoccupied with internal security duties to neutralise the superiority of the Indian armed forces" is intact. This is clear also from the declaration by successive governments in Islamabad that for "the success of the Kashmir freedom movement", they would continue to "give all possible political, moral and diplomatic support to the valiant struggle of the Kashmiris."

Options Before India

Against this background, it would be naïve to calculate that New Delhi's traditional diplomacy of dialogue with Islamabad can contain India-related terrorism, the evil coming mainly from Pakistan itself. In view of the pattern of multilateral diplomacy on Kashmir in the post-World War II landscape, India would also do well not to expect much from the international community either. New Delhi would have to invent an effective, credible diplomatic, defence and internal security mechanism of its own to meet its challenges.

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Relative Autonomy to Indian Defence Forces

It is well documented that Prime Minister Indira Gandhi accommodated all the crucial inputs provided by then Chief of Army Staff, Field Marshal, SHFJ Manekshaw into her decision-making during the decade of the Seventies. Following in her footprints, the current dispensation in New Delhi could seriously consider inputs provided by successive military leaders to their political bosses when it comes to dealing with current external threats. India's highly professional and apolitical armed forces have already shown to Pakistan and the world what they can do

if given relative autonomy in their field of action. There is not a shadow of doubt today that the crucial lifeline of *jihadi* terrorism against India is the Pakistan Army, and the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI). But for their indoctrination, funding and training, the home-grown terrorists active in India would not have emerged. The Indian armed forces could be given the autonomy to resort to military, quasi-military and other means aimed at raising the cost of such designs for Islamabad. Needless to mention, India today is not the one of 1947-48 when then Governor General, Lord Mountbatten who still presided over the Defence Committee of the Cabinet and other Britons over the three Services, might have played their own politics, leaving Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru with no option but to take the country's internal Kashmir issue to the United Nations. India's political

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leadership can implement its own military course and take all appropriate action on the ground today.

Effective Legislation and Homeland Security

In dealing with its home-grown terrorists, New Delhi could do what all other liberal democracies have done in the post-9/11 landscape—enact effective laws and put in place an appropriate homeland security mechanism, equipping it with relative autonomy to take care of anti-social elements and their sympathisers, howsoever powerful the latter may be. Islam, like all other religions of the world, propagates the values of liberalism, equality and justice. *Jihadists* cannot be allowed to distort this great religion and continue playing havoc with the Indian Republic. In this national endeavour against them, India could also do what Mughal Emperor Akbar did; use quality Hindu, Muslim and other communities, who all have shared and nurtured throughout the ages our inclusive culture and spirit, in order to sideline the reactionary forces.



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