Terrorist Group Backgrounder

Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP)

Historical Background

The Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP or Pakistani Taliban) were formed in December, 2007 to unite several insurgent groups operating within the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) of Pakistan. The TTP currently control large sections of the FATA, with their stronghold in South Waziristan. They were formed by Baitullah Mehsud, an experienced warlord, who led them until his death in a U.S. drone strike in 2009. The TTP operates primarily against the Pakistani state, but also against NATO forces in Afghanistan.

Goals

The goal of the TTP is to institute an Islamic emirate throughout the FATA and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP). To do this, they have outlined five key objectives:

1. Enforce Shari’a, united against NATO forces in Afghanistan and perform ‘defensive jihad against the Pakistan army.’
2. React strongly if military operations are not stopped in Swat District and North Waziristan Agency.
3. Demand the abolishment of all military checkpoints in the FATA area.
4. Demand the release of Lal Masjid (red Mosque) Imam Abdul Aziz.
5. Refuse future peace deals with the government of Pakistan.

Structure/Key Leaders

The TTP acts as an umbrella organization of jihadi groups within Pakistan. It has a unified command, but a relatively disaggregated and networked group below that. Most agencies within Pakistan have their own cells working within them, usually based along tribal lines. The exact number of fighters within the TTP is unknown, but most estimates put it around 5,000-10,000. Hakimullah Mehsud is the current leader of the TTP. He has been in this position since Baitullah Mehsud was killed in 2009.

Primary Alliances

The TTP has connections with most of the jihadi groups operating in the FATA and KP. They have close ties to al-Qaeda, the Haqqani network, and the Afghan Taliban. These groups often collaborate to plan attacks, such as the suicide bombing of Forward Operating Base Chapman in December, 2009.

Military/Economic Capabilities

The TTP gains a majority of its training and financial aid from the Afghan Taliban and al-Qaeda.
Lashkar-e Toiba (LeT) (Army of the Pure)

Historical Background

Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT) was formed in 1990 in the Kunar province of Afghanistan. LeT is now based in Muridke, near Lahore, Pakistan and is headed by Hafiz Muhammad Saeed. Its main area of operations is in the disputed Kashmir region (J&K). The first presence of LeT in J&K was recorded in 1993 when 12 Pakistani and Afghan mercenaries infiltrated across the Line of Control in tandem with the Islami Inquilabi Mahaz, a terrorist outfit then active in J&K. LeT is now one of the largest terrorist organizations active in J&K.

LeT has been outlawed by most Western nations. It was outlawed in India under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act. This Act restricts the group’s freedom of speech and expression, right to assembly, and right to form associations or unions. The United States designated LeT as a terrorist organization on December 5th, 2001.

Just prior to their designation as a terrorist organization by the United States LeT formed a front organization, Jama’at-ud-Da’awa (JuD) and were able to transfer most of their finances, personnel, and logistical support to this organization. JuD acts as the public face of LeT throughout Pakistan and undertakes recruitment efforts as well as funds collection. JuD also acts as a social organization within Pakistan, offering relief supplies to victims of the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, the 2005 Kashmir earthquake, the internally displaced persons camps in 2009, and victims of the 2010 Pakistani flooding.

LeT has been implicated in 116 attacks since 1998. One of their most infamous incidents was the Mumbai attacks of Nov. 2008, which saw over 150 people killed, and over 300 wounded.

LeT is comprised of members mostly from Pakistan and Afghanistan and a sprinkling of militants from Sudan, Bahrain, Central Asia, Turkey and Libya. It presently has over 1,000 militants (this number varies by estimate) in Jammu and Kashmir which represents a vast majority of the foreign mercenaries operating in J&K. Despite the smaller number of militants, LeT/JuD enjoys large scale support within both the Pakistani population and government.

Goals

LeT’s professed ideology goes beyond merely challenging India's sovereignty over the State of Jammu and Kashmir. LeT’s agenda includes the restoration of Islamic rule over all parts of India. They also seek to bring about a union of all Muslim majority regions in countries that surround Pakistan. Towards that end, it is active in J&K, Chechnya, Afghanistan, and other parts of Central Asia.

Lashkar-e-Toiba does not believe in democracy and nationalism. LeT has chosen the path of Jihad to free all Muslims who are under the control of non-Muslims in democratic societies. Members are drawn from the Wahhabi school of Sunni Islam.
LeT has consistently advocated the use of force and vowed that it would plant the 'flag of Islam' in Washington, Tel Aviv and New Delhi.

LeT is one of the only militant groups in the region to not target the Pakistani state directly. They operate extensively in J&K as well as Afghanistan. For not attacking the state (as well as providing some internal security) they enjoy the closest ties with ISI of any militant group.

Structure/Key Leaders

LeT is headed by Hafiz Muhammad Saeed with their headquarters in Muridke, Pakistan. The exact number of fighters is unknown, but most estimates place it in the thousands.

The headquarters houses a Madrassa (seminary), a hospital, a market, a large residential area for ‘scholars’ and faculty members, a fish farm and agricultural tracts. LeT also reportedly operates 16 Islamic institutions, 135 secondary schools, an ambulance service, mobile clinics, blood banks and several seminaries across Pakistan.

Its members are organized at district levels with ‘district commanders’ in charge. Within Pakistan, the outfit has a network of training camps and branch offices, which undertake recruitment and collection of finances.

Primary Alliances

LeT has close ties to Pakistan’s ISI. They have alleged ties to al-Qaeda but these are yet to be concretely proved.

Military/Economic Capabilities

According to most sources, the group collects donations from the Pakistani expatriate community in the Persian Gulf and Britain as well as from Islamic NGOs, and Pakistani and Kashmiri businessmen. Experts also say it also receives funding from the ISI and Saudi Arabia. LeT coordinates its charitable activities through its front organization (JuD).

Lashkar-e-Toiba is credited for having initiated the strategy of Fedayeen attacks in J&K. It has formed two sub-groups called 'Jaan-e-Fidai' and 'Ibn-e-Tayamiah' to carry out these Fedayeen attacks. While the first group consists of highly motivated terrorists, the second comprises terrorists suffering from incurable diseases. The group uses assault rifles, light and heavy machine guns, mortars, explosives, and rocket-propelled grenades in their attacks.

Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA)

Historical Background

Balochistan comprises 44% of Pakistan’s landmass, yet contains only 5% of the population. It is the poorest province in Pakistan, which contributes to the sense of alienation within the
population. It has a substantial amount of natural resources, yet reaps none of the benefits. Due to the vast expanse of the region and its porous borders it is a central hub of the Taliban resistance in Afghanistan (the Quetta Shura is the command node for the insurgency) as well as a major transit route for opiates and drug running. Ethnic Balochs comprise approximately 45% of the population and have been engaged in a decade’s long struggle for independence from the Pakistani state.

Balochistan has a long history of separatist violence, with the current nationalist insurgency being the fifth of its kind. The previous insurgencies occurred in 1948, 1958-59, 1962-63, and 1973-77. The current insurgency began in 2004 and intensified in January, 2005. The key drivers behind the insurgency include heavy militarization of Balochistan by the Pakistani military, the brutality of the security forces, the continued political and economic alienation of the Baloch people, and the suppression of Baloch culture. The construction of the Gwadar port has also led to violence, with the Baloch separatists angered over the influx of Chinese construction workers and the influence that China is gaining in the region. The Pakistani state bars most aid groups from entering the region, but estimates of the dead are placed at 3,000 since 2005. There are an estimated 116,000 internally displaced people.

The BLA was formed in early 2004, with their first attacks occurring the same year. They were recognized as a terrorist organization by Pakistan in 2005 and by the U.K. in 2006. The Pakistani government responded to the most recent round of violence with harsh military reprisals, and the BLA continues to undertake guerilla attacks towards the military and Pakistani government officials.

Goals

The ultimate goal for the BLA is the establishment of an independent Balochistan; however, this appears to be a maximalist bargaining position. Analysts believe that most Balochs are looking for autonomy from the Pakistani state and more control over the natural resources within Balochistan.

Structure/Key Leaders

The leadership structure of the BLA is unclear, but it appears to be divided along tribal lines. The BLA is predominately comprised of Marri tribesmen, but also includes members from other Baloch tribes, including the Bugti. Each tribe appears to have its own leadership within the BLA.

Primary Alliances

There appears to be significant links between the BLA and the Indian intelligence service. The BLA appear well trained with sophisticated targeting techniques which indicate an understanding of tactical vs. strategic aims. They also have a sophisticated communication network which allows for simultaneous attacks. Pakistan claims this advanced training has come from India, while India has denied any links with the BLA. They don’t appear to have any links with the other insurgent groups within Pakistan.
**Military/Economic Capabilities**

As with many of the other terrorist organizations within Pakistan, the BLA primarily uses small arms and explosives in their attacks. They routinely target gas pipelines within the region, and use small arms attacks against the Pakistani military.

**East Turkistan Islamic Movement (ETIM)**

*Historical Background*

ETIM was founded in 1997 by Uighurs in Xinjiang province, China. In its early years it targeted Chinese government and military sites and personnel. It was designated a foreign terrorist organization by the United States in 2002, during a period of increased cooperation between the United States and China. ETIM is often blamed by China for any violence or disturbances throughout Xinjiang province, but many analysts debate if these are accurate claims, or rather China using ETIM as an excuse to crack down on Uighur protests.

ETIM faced increased pressure by both China and the United States between 2002 and 2006, but by 2007 had rebuilt itself into a formidable group. Initially targeting only the Chinese, ETIM expanded their target list to the United States interests and personnel after the U.S. began targeting them in 2002. ETIM currently has bases in Xinjiang province as well as Pakistan and throughout Central Asia.

*Goals*

The primary goal of ETIM is the independence of East Turkestan (which roughly corresponds to Xinjiang province and parts of Central Asia). Their secondary goal is the conversion of all Chinese people to Islam.

*Structure/Key Leaders*

The current leader of ETIM is Abdul Haq. His current location is unknown, but most believe he is somewhere in Pakistan. Abdul Haq and his top lieutenants maintain operational control over ETIM and their attacks, but there are cells and regional branches located throughout China and South and Central Asia.

*Primary Alliances*

ETIM has close ties to al-Qaeda as well as the Taliban and the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU). Al-Qaeda serves as a major source of funding for ETIM, and members have trained extensively at both al-Qaeda and Taliban training camps.
Military/Economic Capabilities

ETIM utilizes a wide range of attacks. They have bombed buses, movie theaters, department stores, markets, and hotels. They have also used assassinations and arson attacks. They have a large small arms cache and expertise in bomb making. They have threatened the use of biological and chemical weapons, most notably during the 2008 Olympics in China, but have yet to show any capability in that field.