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Terrorism in South Asia

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K. Alan Kronstadt, Coordinator
Analyst in Asian Affairs
Foreign Affairs, Defense, and Trade Division

Bruce Vaughn
Analyst in Southeast and South Asian Affairs
Foreign Affairs, Defense, and Trade Division

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Terrorism in South Asia

Summary

This report reviews the terrorist environment in South Asia, concentrating on Afghanistan, Pakistan, and India, but also including Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and Nepal. With U.S.-led counterterrorism efforts focused especially on Southwest Asia, the existence of international terrorist groups and their supporters in South Asia is identified as a threat to both regional stability and to the attainment of central U.S. policy goals. Al Qaeda forces that fled from Afghanistan with their Taliban supporters remain active on Pakistani territory, and Al Qaeda is believed to have links with indigenous Pakistani terrorist groups that have conducted anti-Western attacks and that support separatist militancy in Indian Kashmir. A significant portion of Pakistan's ethnic Pashtun population is reported to sympathize with the Taliban and even Al Qaeda. The United States maintains close counterterrorism cooperation with Pakistan aimed especially at bolstering security and stability in neighboring Afghanistan. In the latter half of 2003, the Islamabad government began limited military operations in the traditionally autonomous tribal areas of western Pakistan. There are indications that such operations are intensifying in coordination with U.S. and Afghan forces just across the international frontier.

The relationships between Al Qaeda, the Taliban, indigenous Pakistani terrorist groups, and some elements of Pakistan's political-military structure are complex and murky, but may represent a serious threat to the attainment of key U.S. policy goals. A pair of December 2003 attempts to assassinate Pakistan's President Musharraf reportedly were linked to both Al Qaeda and a Pakistan-based terrorist group. There also are indications that elements of Pakistan's intelligence service and Pakistani Islamist political parties may have provided assistance to U.S.-designated Foreign Terrorist Organizations.

It is thought that some Al Qaeda elements fled to Bangladesh. The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) of Sri Lanka have been designated as a Foreign Terrorist Organization under U.S. law, while Harakat ul-Jihad-I-Islami/Bangladesh, and the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist)/ United Peoples Front, have been listed as Other Terrorist Groups by the State Department. This report will be updated periodically.

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Terrorism in South Asia

This report reviews the terrorist environment in South Asia, concentrating on Afghanistan, Pakistan, and India, but also including Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and Nepal.¹ In the wake of the September 2001 terrorist attacks on the United States, President Bush launched major military operations in South and Southwest Asia as part of the global U.S.-led anti-terrorism effort. Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan has seen substantive success with the vital assistance of neighboring Pakistan. Yet the United States remains concerned that members of Al Qaeda and its Taliban supporters have found haven and been able at least partially to regroup in Pakistani cities and in the rugged Pakistan-Afghanistan border region. This area is inhabited by ethnic Pashtuns who express solidarity with anti-U.S. forces. Al Qaeda also reportedly has made alliances with indigenous Pakistani terrorist groups that have been implicated in both anti-Western attacks in Pakistan and terrorism in Indian Kashmir. They also seek to oust the government of President Gen. Pervez Musharraf and have been named as being behind two December 2003 assassination attempts that were only narrowly survived by the Pakistani leader. Along with these concerns, the United States expresses an interest in the cessation of “cross-border infiltration” by separatist militants based in Pakistani-controlled areas who traverse the Kashmiri Line of Control (LOC) to engage in terrorist activities both in Indian Kashmir and in Indian cities.² In March 2004, the Assistant Secretary of State for South Asia, Christina Rocca, told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that the top U.S. policy goal in the region is “combating terror and the conditions that breed terror in the frontline states of Afghanistan and Pakistan.”³

Al Qaeda, the Taliban, and Pakistani Extremism

The Al Qaeda-Taliban Nexus

Among the central goals of Operation Enduring Freedom were the destruction of terrorist training camps and infrastructure within Afghanistan, the capture of Al

¹ “Terrorism” here is understood as being “premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against noncombatant targets by subnational groups or clandestine agents, usually intended to influence an audience” (see Title 22 of the United States Code, Section 2656f(d)).

² See also CRS Report RL30588, *Afghanistan: Current Issues and U.S. Policy*, by Kenneth Katzman; and CRS Report RL31624, *Pakistan-U.S. Anti-Terrorism Cooperation*, by K. Alan Kronstadt.

³ “State’s Rocca Outlines Assistance Plans for South Asia,” U.S. Department of State Washington File, March 2, 2004.

Qaeda and Taliban leaders, and the cessation of terrorist activities in Afghanistan.⁴ Most, but not all, of these goals have been achieved. However, since the Taliban's ouster from power in Kabul and subsequent retreat to the rugged mountain region near the Afghanistan-Pakistan border, what the U.S. military calls its "remnant forces" have been able to regroup and to conduct "hit-and-run" attacks against U.S.-led coalition units, often in tandem with suspected Al Qaeda fugitives. These forces are then able to find haven on the Pakistani side of the border.⁵ Al Qaeda founder Osama bin Laden, his associate, Egyptian Islamic radical leader Ayman al-Zawahiri, and Taliban chief Mohammed Omar may themselves be in a remote area of Pakistan near Afghanistan. The frequency of attacks on coalition forces in southern and eastern Afghanistan increased throughout 2003 and, in October, U.S. Special Envoy and current Ambassador to Afghanistan Zalmay Khalilzad warned that resurgent Taliban and Al Qaeda forces present a serious threat to Afghan reconstruction efforts.⁶ A major spike in Afghan opium production in 2003 spurred acute concern that Afghanistan may soon become a "narco-state," and that terrorist groups and their supporters in both Afghanistan and Pakistan may reap huge profits from the processing and trafficking of heroin.⁷

The United States is concerned by indications of links between Al Qaeda and Pakistani intelligence agents, weapons experts, and militant leaders. During the time that Islamabad was actively supporting the Afghan Taliban regime it had helped to create, Pakistan's powerful Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) agency is believed to have had direct contacts with Al Qaeda figures.⁸ Sympathetic ISI officials may even

⁴ Al Qaeda members are most readily identified as being Arabs or other non-Afghans who primarily are fighting an international jihad; Taliban members are ethnic Pashtun Afghans who primarily are fighting for Islamic rule in Kabul. Al Qaeda is designated as a Foreign Terrorist Organization under U.S. law; the Taliban are Specially-Designated Global Terrorists (see the U.S. Treasury Department's master list at [<http://www.ustreas.gov/offices/eotffc/ofac/sdn/index.html>]).

⁵ Director of Central Intelligence George Tenet, Testimony Before the Senate Select Intelligence Committee, February 24, 2004. Pakistan's western regions are populated by conservative ethnic Pashtuns who share intimate religious and tribal linkages with their counterparts in Afghanistan and who are seen to sympathize with Taliban and sometimes Al Qaeda forces while holding vehement anti-Western and anti-American sentiments (see, for example, Eliza Griswold, "Where the Taliban Roam," *Harper's*, September 2003; Owais Tohid, "Tribes Inflamed By Qaeda Hunt," *Christian Science Monitor*, October 20, 2003; Iqbal Khattak, "Tribals Warn Pakistan and US Against Military Operation," *Daily Times* (Lahore), February 19, 2004).

⁶ Carlotta Gall, "Taliban May Be Planning Larger Attacks, U.S. Envoy Says," *New York Times*, October 7, 2003.

⁷ A. Brownfeld, "Al Qaeda's Drug-Running Network," *Jane's Terrorism and Security Monitor*, February 1, 2004; Stephen Graham, "Karzai Seeks Anti-Drugs Aid Amid Fears Afghanistan Will Become 'Narco-State,'" Associated Press Newswire, February 9, 2004.

⁸ James Risen and Judith Miller, "Pakistani Intelligence Had Links to Al Qaeda, U.S. Officials Say," *New York Times*, October 29, 2001. Declassified U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency documents from October 2001 indicate that the Al Qaeda camp targeted by American cruise missiles in 1998 was funded and maintained by the ISI, and that Pakistani

(continued...)

have provided shelter to Al Qaeda members in both Pakistan and Kashmir.⁹ Two senior Pakistani nuclear scientists reportedly met with Osama bin Laden in 2001 to conduct “long discussions about nuclear, chemical and biological weapons.”¹⁰ Moreover, known Islamic extremists with ties to Al Qaeda appear to remain active on Pakistani territory. For example, longtime Pakistani terrorist chief Fazlur Rehman Khalil, who co-signed Osama bin Laden’s 1998 edict that declared it a Muslim’s duty to kill Americans and Jews, lives openly in Rawalpindi, not far from Pakistan’s Army General Headquarters.¹¹ Khalil is the leader of one of the many Pakistan-based terrorist groups opposed to both the continued rule of President Musharraf and to U.S. policy in the region.

Indigenous Pakistani Terrorist Groups

Pakistan is known to be a base for numerous indigenous terrorist organizations. In January 2002, Pakistan banned five extremist groups, including Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM), and Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan (SSP). The United States designates LeT and JeM as Foreign Terrorist Organizations (FTOs); SSP appears on the State Department’s list of “other terrorist groups.”¹² Following Al Qaeda’s 2001-2002 expulsion from Afghanistan and ensuing relocation of some core elements to Pakistani cities such as Karachi and Peshawar, some Al Qaeda activists are known to have joined forces with indigenous Pakistani Sunni militant groups, including LeT, JeM, SSP, and Lashkar-i-Jhangvi (LJ), an FTO-designated offshoot of the SSP that has close ties to Al Qaeda.¹³ The United Nations lists JeM and LJ as “entities belonging to or associated with the Al Qaeda organization.”¹⁴ Al Qaeda reportedly was linked to anti-U.S. and anti-Western terrorist attacks in Pakistan during 2002, although the primary suspects in most attacks were members of

⁸ (...continued)

agents “encouraged, facilitated and often escorted Arabs from the Middle East into Afghanistan” (National Security Archive Electronic Briefing Book 97, available at [<http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB97/index.htm>]).

⁹ Bob Drogin, et. al., “Al Qaeda Gathering Strength in Pakistan,” *Los Angeles Times*, June 16, 2002; Philip Smucker, “Al Qaeda Thriving in Kashmir,” *Christian Science Monitor*, July 2, 2002.

¹⁰ Kamran Khan and Molly Moore, “2 Nuclear Experts Briefed Bin Laden, Pakistanis Say,” *Washington Post*, December 12, 2001.

¹¹ Paul Watson and Mubashir Zaidi, “Militant Flourishes in Plain Sight,” *Los Angeles Times*, January 25, 2004.

¹² See CRS Reports RL32223, *Foreign Terrorist Organizations*, and RL32120, *The ‘FTO List’ and Congress*, by Audrey Kurth Cronin.

¹³ U.S. Department of State, *Patterns of Global Terrorism 2002*, April 30, 2003; Howard French, “Officials Warn of Links Between Al Qaeda, Pakistanis,” *New York Times*, May 29, 2002; Hasan Mansoor, “Karachi Killings Reveal Sectarian-Jihadi Nexus,” *Friday Times* (Lahore), October 10, 2003; Kamran Khan and John Lancaster, “Suspect Predicts Attack on U.S. Forces,” *Washington Post*, March 7, 2003.

¹⁴ See [<http://www.un.org/Docs/sc/committees/1267/1267ListEng.htm>].

indigenous Pakistani groups.¹⁵ During 2003, Pakistan's domestic terrorism mostly involved Sunni-Shia conflict, and a March 2004 machine gun and bomb attack on a Shia procession in Quetta killed at least 44 and injured more than 150 others.¹⁶ Some analysts believe that, by redirecting Pakistan's internal security resources, an increase in Pakistan's sectarian violence may ease pressure on Al Qaeda and so allow that group to operate more freely there.¹⁷ There have been past indications of collusion between some elements of Al Qaeda, Lashkar-e-Taiba, and influential Pakistanis. For example, of the three major Al Qaeda figures captured in Pakistan, one (Abu Zubaydah) was found at a Lashkar-e-Taiba safehouse in Faisalabad, suggesting that some LeT members have facilitated the movement of Al Qaeda members in Pakistan.¹⁸ Another (Khalid Sheikh Mohammed) was seized at the Rawalpindi home of a member of the Jamaat-i-Islami (JI), one of Pakistan's leading religious Islamist political parties. In fact, at least four top captured Al Qaeda suspects had ties to JI.¹⁹

In a landmark January 2002 speech, President Musharraf vowed to end Pakistan's use as a base for terrorism, and he criticized religious extremism and intolerance in the country. In the wake of the speech, about 3,300 extremists were arrested and detained, though most of these have since been released (including one man who later tried to assassinate Musharraf).²⁰ Among those released were the founders of both Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Muhammad. Though officially banned, these groups continued to operate under new names: LeT became Jamaat al-Dawat; JeM became Khudam-ul Islam.²¹ In November 2003, just two days after the U.S. Ambassador expressed particular concern over the continuing activities of banned organizations, Musharraf moved to arrest members of these groups and

¹⁵ Among these incidents was the January 2002 kidnaping and ensuing murder of *Wall Street Journal* reporter Daniel Pearl. Also occurring in 2002 were a March grenade attack on a Protestant church in Islamabad that killed five, including a U.S. Embassy employee and her daughter, likely was the work of LeT; a May car bombing that killed 14 outside a Karachi hotel, including 11 French defense technicians, was linked to Al Qaeda; and a June car bombing outside the U.S. consulate in Karachi that killed 12 Pakistani nationals also was linked to Al Qaeda. There have been arrests and some convictions in each of these cases. See U.S. Department of State, *Patterns of Global Terrorism 2002*, April 30, 2003.

¹⁶ About three-quarters of Pakistan's Muslims are Sunnis. Major sectarian violence in 2003 included a July strike on a Quetta mosque that killed more than 50 Shiite worshippers (blamed on the militant Sunni SSP), and the October assassination of Maulana Azam Tariq, leader of the SSP and member of the Pakistani parliament, who was gunned down with four others in Islamabad.

¹⁷ "Pakistan: A New Wave of Sunni-Shiite Violence?," Stratfor.com, October 7, 2003.

¹⁸ U.S. Department of State, *Patterns of Global Terrorism 2002*, April 30, 2003.

¹⁹ "Pakistan Asked to Explain Islamic Party Link to Al Qaeda Suspects," Agence France-Presse, March 3, 2003.

²⁰ Paul Watson, "A Delicate Balance of Rule for Pakistan's Musharraf," *Los Angeles Times*, March 5, 2004.

²¹ Paul Watson, "Revolving Doors for Pakistan's Militants," *Los Angeles Times*, November 17, 2002; "Musharraf Says Heads of Two Extremist Groups Did Nothing Illegal," Agence France-Presse, March 2, 2003; "Militant Suspects Freed in Pakistan," BBC News, January 31, 2003.

shutter their offices. Six groups were formally banned, including offshoots of both the JeM and SSP, and more than 100 offices were raided. Musharraf vowed to permanently prevent banned groups from resurfacing, and his government moved to seize their financial assets.²² Some analysts called the efforts cosmetic, ineffective, and the result of international pressure rather than a genuine recognition of the threat posed.²³

Musharraf's further efforts to crack down on outlawed groups — along with his suggestions that Pakistan may soften its long-held Kashmir policies — may have fueled even greater outrage among radical Islamists already angered by Pakistan's September 2001 policy reversal, when Musharraf cut ties with the Afghan Taliban regime and began facilitating U.S.-led anti-terrorism operations in the region.²⁴ A December 14, 2003 remote-controlled bombing attempt on Musharraf's motorcade and dual suicide car bomb attacks on his convoy 11 days later were blamed mainly on Jaish-e-Mohammed operatives. Numerous Pakistanis and foreign nationals — including Afghans, Chechens, and Kashmiris — were arrested in connection with the attacks, with officials suggesting a possible Al Qaeda link.²⁵ The F.B.I. played a role in the investigations, and the United States has undertaken to provide improved training to Musharraf's bodyguards. Nonetheless, it is considered likely that future assassination attempts will occur.²⁶

Madrassas and Pakistan Islamists

A notable development in autumn 2003 was the arrest by Pakistani security forces of 19 Indonesian and Malaysian nationals at a Karachi madrassa (Islamic school). The men were suspected of running a sleeper cell of the Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) terrorist network in what would be an indication that JI, a group linked to Al

²² “U.S. Committed to Strong Relationship With Pakistan,” U.S. Department of State Washington File, November 13, 2003; “Owais Tohid, “Pakistan Tries Again to Shutter Terror Groups,” *Christian Science Monitor*, November 26, 2003; Razaqat Ali, “Musharraf Vows to Root Out Extremism,” *Dawn* (Karachi), December 5, 2003; “Pakistan Freezes Accounts of Three More Banned Islamic Groups,” Associated Press Newswire, December 12, 2003.

²³ Husain Haqqani, “Skepticism Over Crackdown,” *Nation* (Lahore), November 19, 2003; Najam Sethi, “Writing On the Wall,” *Friday Times* (Lahore), November 21, 2003.

²⁴ Bryan Bender and Farah Stockman, “Extremist Influence Growing in Pakistan, US Officials Fear,” *Boston Globe*, January 11, 2004.

²⁵ Some also suggest a possible ISI role, noting a long history of ties between Pakistan's intelligence service and JeM leader Masood Azhar (John Lancaster and Kamran Khan, “Investigation of Attacks on Musharraf Points to Pakistani Group,” *Washington Post*, January 14, 2004).

²⁶ Mubashir Zaidi, “FBI Joins Inquiry Into Blasts Aimed at Pakistani Leader,” *Los Angeles Times*, December 27, 2003; Dana Priest, “U.S. Aids Security of Musharraf,” *Washington Post*, January 3, 2004; Mazhar Abbas, “Agencies Fear More Suicide Attempts on Musharraf,” *Friday Times* (Lahore), February 13, 2004.

Qaeda, is operating in Pakistan.²⁷ The Taliban movement itself began among students attending Pakistani religious schools. Among the 10,000-20,000 madrassas in Pakistan are some that have been implicated in teaching militant anti-Western, anti-American, and anti-Hindu values. Many of these madrassas are financed and operated by Pakistani Islamist political parties such as Jamaat-e-Ulema Islam (JUI, closely linked to the Taliban), as well as by multiple unknown foreign entities. While President Musharraf has in the past pledged to crack down on the more extremist madrassas in his country, there is little concrete evidence that he has done so.²⁸

The Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal (MMA) — a coalition of six Islamist opposition parties — holds about 20% of Pakistan's National Assembly seats, while also controlling the provincial assembly in the North West Frontier Province (NWFP) and leading a coalition in the provincial assembly of Baluchistan. Pakistan's Islamists denounce Pakistani military operations in western tribal areas, resist governmental attempts to reform religious schools that teach militancy, and harshly criticize Islamabad's cooperation with the U.S. government and movement toward rapprochement with India. The leadership of the MMA's two main constituents — the Jamaat-i-Islami and the Jamiat-Ulema-Islami-Fazlur, are notable for their virulent anti-American rhetoric; they have at times called for "jihad" against what they view as the existential threat to Pakistani sovereignty that alliance with Washington entails.²⁹ In addition to decrying and seeking to end President Musharraf's cooperation with the United States, many also are viewed as opposing the U.S.-supported Kabul government. In September 2003, Afghan President Karzai called on Pakistani clerics to stop supporting Taliban members who seek to destabilize Afghanistan. In November, the Afghan foreign minister complained that Taliban leaders were operating openly in Quetta and other cities in western Pakistan. Musharraf has since called on Pakistan's Muslim clerics to assist in fighting extremism and improving Pakistan's image as a moderate and progressive state.³⁰

²⁷ Owais Tohid, "Pakistan Widens Terror Dragnet," *Christian Science Monitor*, September 26, 2003.

²⁸ Author interviews with Pakistani government officials and scholars, Islamabad, January 19-23, 2004; "Unfulfilled Promises: Pakistan's Failure to Tackle Extremism," International Crisis Group Report 73, January 16, 2004; Ahmed Rashid, "Afghanistan and Pakistan - Safe Haven for the Taliban," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, October 16, 2003. See also CRS Report RS21654, *Islamic Religious Schools, Madrasas*, by Febe Armanios.

²⁹ See "US Trying to Destabilize Pakistan, Iran: MMA," *Dawn* (Karachi), November 4, 2003; "MMA Says Check on Seminaries to be Resisted," *Dawn* (Karachi), November 11, 2003. JUI leader Maulana Fazlur Rehman reportedly said he considers Americans to be "criminals" and the Taliban "innocent" ("MMA Opposes Pak-US Military Drive," *News* (Karachi), June 24, 2003).

³⁰ "Karzai Tells Pakistan Clerics - Don't Back Taliban," Reuters News, September 12, 2003; Shaun Waterman and Anwar Iqbal, "Taliban Leaders Plotting in Cities," *Washington Times*, November 14, 2003; Rana Qaisar, "Clerics Asked to Help Fight Terror," *Daily Times* (Lahore), February 18, 2004.

Pakistan-U.S. Counterterrorism Cooperation

According to the U.S. Departments of State and Defense, Pakistan has afforded the United States unprecedented levels of cooperation by allowing the U.S. military to use bases within the country, helping to identify and detain extremists, and deploying tens of thousands of its own security forces to secure the Pakistan-Afghanistan border. Top U.S. officials regularly praise Pakistani anti-terrorism efforts.³¹ In the spring of 2002, U.S. military and law enforcement personnel reportedly began engaging in direct, low-profile efforts to assist Pakistani security forces in tracking and apprehending fugitive Al Qaeda and Taliban fighters on Pakistani territory. The State Department reports that Islamabad has captured 550 alleged terrorists and their supporters, and has transferred more than 400 of these to U.S. custody, including several top suspected Al Qaeda leaders.³² Pakistan also ranks fourth in the world in seizing terrorist assets.³³

Obstacles

Despite Pakistan's "crucial" cooperation, there have been doubts about Islamabad's commitment to core U.S. concerns in the vast "lawless zones" of the Afghan-Pakistani border region where Islamic extremists find shelter.³⁴ Especially worrisome are indications that members of the Taliban receive logistical and other support inside Pakistan. Senior U.S. Senators reportedly have voiced such worries, including concern that elements of Pakistan's intelligence agencies might be helping members of the Taliban and perhaps even Al Qaeda.³⁵ In August 2003, at least three Pakistani army officers, including a lieutenant colonel, were arrested on suspicion of having ties to Islamic extremists. In late September, Deputy Secretary of State Armitage was quoted as saying he does "not think that affection for working with us extends up and down the rank and file of the Pakistani security community." In testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Assistant Secretary of Defense Peter Rodman said, "There are elements in the Pakistani government who we suspect are sympathetic to the old policy of before 9/11," adding that there still

³¹ In January 2004, the Commander of the U.S. Central Command, Gen. Abizaid, said, "Pakistan has done more for the United States in the direct fight against Al Qaeda than any other country" (Ron Lorenzo, "Abizaid: Pakistan Best Ally in War on Terror," *Defense Week*, February 2, 2004).

³² Among those captured are Abu Zubaydah (March 2002), believed to be Al Qaeda's field commander; Ramzi bin al-Shibh (September 2002), said to be a key figure in the planning of the September 2001 terrorist attacks on the United States; and Khalid Mohammed (March 2003), alleged mastermind of the September 2001 attacks and close associate of Osama bin Laden.

³³ U.S. Department of State, *Patterns of Global Terrorism 2002*, April 30, 2003.

³⁴ Statement of George Tenet Before the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, "Worldwide Threats to National Security," February 6, 2002.

³⁵ James Dao, "Terror Aid From Pakistan Concerns Senators," *New York Times*, February 13, 2003. See also Testimony of Timothy Hoyt Before the Joint Hearing of the Subcommittees on Asia and the Pacific and International Terrorism, Nonproliferation, and Human Rights, October 29, 2003.

exists in northwestern Pakistan a radical Islamic infrastructure that “spews out fighters that go into Kashmir as well as into Afghanistan.”³⁶ For some time now, the number of Al Qaeda figures arrested in Pakistan has remained fairly static, causing some U.S. officials to wonder anew about the extent of Islamabad’s commitment to this aspect of U.S.-led counterterrorism efforts.³⁷

Military Operations

In an effort to block infiltration along the Pakistan-Afghanistan border, Islamabad had by the end of 2002 deployed some 70,000 troops to the region. In April 2003, the United States, Pakistan, and Afghanistan formed a Tripartite Commission to coordinate their efforts to stabilize the border areas. In June, in what may have been a response to increased U.S. pressure, Islamabad for the first time sent its armed forces into the traditionally autonomous western Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) in search of Al Qaeda and Taliban fighters who have eluded the U.S.-led campaign in Afghanistan. By September, Islamabad had up to 25,000 troops in the tribal areas, and a major border operation reportedly took place in coordination with U.S.-led forces on the Afghan side of the border. A firefight in early October saw Pakistani security forces engage suspected Al Qaeda fugitives in the South Waziristan district; 8 were killed and another 18 captured.³⁸ Pakistan has lost about 40 of its own security personnel in gun battles with Al Qaeda and Taliban fighters. The October operations encouraged U.S. officials, who saw in them a positive trend in Islamabad’s commitment to tracking and capturing wanted extremists on Pakistani territory. Still, these officials admitted that the Pakistani government finds it more difficult politically to pursue Taliban members who enjoy ethnic and familial ties with Pakistani Pashtuns.³⁹

After the two December 2003 attempts on President Musharraf’s life, the Pakistan military increased its efforts in the FATA. Many analysts speculated that the harrowing experiences brought a significant shift in Musharraf’s attitude and caused him to recognize the dire threat posed by radical groups based in his country.⁴⁰ By February 2004, Musharraf made his most explicit admission to date that Muslim militants were crossing from Pakistan into Afghanistan to battle coalition troops

³⁶ Zaffar Abbas, “Pakistan Arrests Army Officers,” BBC News, August 31, 2003; “Armitage: Some Pakistanis Reluctant to Work With US,” Reuters News, September 30, 2003; “Transcript: Senate Foreign Relations Committee Holds Hearing on Security and Democracy in Afghanistan,” Federal Documents Clearing House, October 16, 2003.

³⁷ Munir Ahmad, “Pakistan Claims 402 Al Qaeda Arrests,” Associated Press Newswire, September 10, 2002; author interviews with U.S. officials, Islamabad, January 22-23, 2004.

³⁸ John Lancaster, “Pakistan Touts Control of Border,” *Washington Post*, September 2, 2003; “Pakistan Army Launches Border Operation,” BBC News, September 4, 2003; “Pakistan’s Army Kills 12 in Attacks Against Qaeda,” *New York Times*, October 2, 2003.

³⁹ See the testimony of both William Taylor and Brig. Gen. Gary North in “Transcript: Senate Foreign Relations Committee Holds Hearing on Security and Democracy in Afghanistan,” Federal Documents Clearing House, October 16, 2003.

⁴⁰ David Rhode and Carlotta Gall, “Pakistani Offensive Aims to Drive Out Taliban and Al Qaeda,” *New York Times*, February 23, 2004.

there. In the same month, the Vice Chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff testified before Congress that the Islamabad government had “taken some initiatives to increase their military presence on the border, such as manned outposts, regular patrols, and security barriers,” and the Pakistani Army reportedly was preparing to launch major operations along the frontier, some in tandem with tribal militias.⁴¹ Islamabad’s more energetic operations in the western tribal regions have brought vocal criticism from Musharraf’s detractors among Islamist groups, many of whom accuse him of taking orders from the United States.⁴²

The Islamabad government also has made progress in persuading Pashtun tribal leaders to undertake their own efforts by organizing tribal “lashkars,” or militias, for the express purpose of detaining — or at least expelling — wanted fugitives.⁴³ After being presented with a list of several dozen such fugitives, tribal leaders in South Waziristan formed two lashkars and succeeded in capturing and handing over more than half by the end of January 2004. In February, dozens of suspected Al Qaeda sympathizers reportedly were handed over to authorities. Yet political administrators in the district, impatient with the slow pace of progress, have issued an “ultimatum” that included threats of steep monetary fines for the entire tribe, as well as for any individuals who provide shelter to “unwanted foreigners.”⁴⁴ Some observers worry that increased government pressure on tribal communities and military operations in the FATA may create a backlash, sparking unrest and strengthening pro-Al Qaeda sentiments there.⁴⁵

In December 2003, nearly one-fifth of the 11,000 American troops still in Afghanistan were involved in Operation Avalanche, an effort to sweep Taliban forces

⁴¹ “Pakistan Says That Afghan Rebels May Be Using Its Soil,” Reuters News, February 12, 2004; Statement of Gen. Peter Pace Before the House Committee on Armed Services, February 4, 2004; John Lancaster and Kamran Khan, “Pakistan to Step Up border Operations,” *Washington Post*, February 23, 2004; Ismail Khan, “Operation in North Waziristan Planned,” *Dawn* (Karachi), February 8, 2004; “North Waziristan Militias Will Hunt Wanted Men,” *Daily Times* (Lahore), February 12, 2004; “Pakistan Arrests 20 in Hunt for Bin Laden,” *New York Times*, February 24, 2004.

⁴² “Fazl Accuses Govt for Taking Dictation From US for Tribal Operation,” Pakistan Press International, January 14, 2004; “US Provoking Tribesmen Against Army, Says Qazi,” *Dawn* (Karachi), February 24, 2004.

⁴³ There are indications that such progress has come through outright coercion. The top U.S. commander in Afghanistan, Gen. Barno, said that Pakistani government and military officials have threatened tribal leaders with “destruction of homes and things of that nature” unless they cooperate (“U.S. Says Pakistan is Confronting Tribal Leaders,” *New York Times*, February 17, 2004).

⁴⁴ David Rhode and Ismail Khan, “Pakistan Adopting a Tough Old Tactic to Flush Out Qaeda,” *New York Times*, January 31, 2004; Ismail Khan, “Operation in S. Waziristan,” *Dawn* (Karachi), February 18, 2004; Rasool Wazir, “Tribals Hand Over Qaeda Sympathizers,” *Daily Times* (Lahore), February 24, 2004; Iqbal Khattak, “Army Ready to Search South Waziristan,” *Daily Times* (Lahore), February 18, 2004.

⁴⁵ Iqbal Khattak, “Military Operation in Waziristan May Backfire,” *Friday Times* (Lahore), February 20, 2004; Scott Baldauf, “New Thrust in Hunt for bin Laden,” *Christian Science Monitor*, March 4, 2004.

from the country's south and east. In 2004, U.S. and Aghan forces appear to be preparing a major spring 2004 operation in eastern Afghanistan, employing new tactics and in coordination with Pakistani troops across the international border.⁴⁶ A press report in January 2004 suggested that the U.S. military in Afghanistan had plans for an offensive that would "go into Pakistan with Musharraf's help" to neutralize Al Qaeda forces. President Musharraf's said, "This is not a possibility at all." Two days later, the Commander of U.S. Central Command Gen. Abizaid stated that he had no plans to put U.S. troops in Pakistan against Islamabad's wishes. A February report indicated that a coming offensive would involve coordination between U.S., Afghan, and Pakistani troops who could "cross into the other's side if necessary." U.S. military officials in Kabul say that Pakistan has agreed to allow "hot pursuit" up to ten kilometers into Pakistani territory, although this is denied by the Islamabad government.⁴⁷

The opening months of 2004 have seen increasing indications that both the United States and Pakistan intend to re-invigorate their efforts to find and capture those terrorists and their supporters remaining in Pashtun-majority areas of Afghanistan and Pakistan. Moreover, President Musharraf has taken steps to crack down on indigenous Pakistani extremist groups. Many of these groups have links not only to individuals and organizations actively fighting in Afghanistan and Pakistan, but also with groups that continue to pursue a violent separatist campaign in the disputed Kashmir region along Pakistan's northeast frontier. A November 2003 cease-fire agreement between Pakistan and India holds at the time of this writing, and appears to have contributed to what New Delhi officials acknowledge is a significant decrease in the number of "terrorist" infiltrations.⁴⁸ However, separatist militants vowed in January 2004 to continue their struggle regardless of the status of the nascent Pakistan-India dialogue.

⁴⁶ David Sanger and Eric Schmitt, "New U.S. Effort Steps Up Hunt for bin Laden," *New York Times*, February 29, 2004.

⁴⁷ Christine Spolar, "U.S. Plans AL Qaeda Offensive That Would Reach Inside Pakistan," *Chicago Tribune*, January 27, 2004; Stephan Graham, "U.S. Military 'Sure' to Catch Bin Laden," *Chicago Tribune*, January 29, 2004; Amir Rana and Iqbal Khattrak, "Afghan, Pakistani, US Forces Set for Spring Offensive," *Daily Times* (Lahore), February 21, 2004; author interviews with U.S. military officials, Kabul, January 16, 2004. Pakistan also denied a February report claiming that it had agreed to allow U.S. Special Forces soldiers on its territory in return for a softened U.S. policy toward Pakistan's apparent role in nuclear proliferation activities ("Seymour Hersh, "The Deal," *New Yorker*, March 8, 2004; "Pakistan Denies US Bin Laden Deal," BBC News, March 1, 2004).

⁴⁸ In January 2004, the Indian Defense Minister said that infiltration across the Kashmir LOC was at an "all-time low" ("No Plans for Ceasefire Against Militants in J&K," *Times of India* (Delhi), January 30, 2004).

Terrorism in Kashmir and India

Kashmiri Separatism

Separatist violence in India's Jammu and Kashmir state has continued unabated since 1989. New Delhi has long blamed Pakistan-based militant groups for lethal attacks on Indian civilians, as well as on government security forces, in both Kashmir and in major Indian cities.⁴⁹ India holds Pakistan responsible for providing material support and training facilities to Kashmiri militants. According to the U.S. government, several anti-India militant groups fighting in Kashmir are based in Pakistan and are closely linked to Islamist groups there. Many also are said to maintain ties with international jihadi organizations, including Al Qaeda:

- Harakat ul-Mujahideen (an FTO-designate), based in Muzaffarabad (Azad Kashmir) and Rawalpindi, is aligned with the Jamiat-i Ulema-i Islam Fazlur Rehman party (JUI-F), itself a main constituent of the MMA Islamist coalition in Pakistan's National Assembly;
- Hizbul Mujahideen (on the State Department's list of "other terrorist groups"), believed to have bases in Pakistan, is the militant wing of Pakistan's largest Islamic political party and leading MMA member, the Jamaat-i-Islami;
- Jaish-e-Mohammed (an FTO-designate), based in both Peshawar and Muzaffarabad, also is aligned with JUI-F; and
- Lashkar-e-Taiba (an FTO-designate), based in Muzaffarabad and near Lahore, is the armed wing of a Pakistan-based, anti-U.S. Sunni religious organization formed in 1989.⁵⁰

JeM claimed responsibility for an October 2001 suicide bomb attack on the Jammu and Kashmir state assembly building in Srinagar that killed 31 (they later denied the claim). In December 2001, the United States designated both LeT and JeM as

⁴⁹ Grenade and bomb attacks against civilians have been a regular occurrence in India and Indian Kashmir for many years. Among the notable terrorist incidents in recent times were a May 2002 attack on an Indian army base in Kaluchak, Kashmir that killed 37, many of them women and children (New Delhi identified the attackers as Pakistani nationals); a July 2002 attack on a Jammu village that killed 27; an August 2002 grenade attack in Kashmir that killed nine Hindu pilgrims and injured 32 others; a September 2002 attack on a Gujarat mosque that left 32 dead; a March 2003 massacre of 24 Hindu villagers in Nadimarg, Jammu; a July 2003 attack on a Jammu village that killed seven and injured more than 20; a July 2003 bus bombing in a Bombay suburb that left four dead and 42 injured; and a pair of August 2003 car bombings in a crowded Bombay district that killed 52 and injured some 150 more. Indian authorities linked each of these attacks to the LeT, although the last may have been planned by indigenous elements (John Lancaster, "India Shocked by Bombay Bombings, and Suspects," *Washington Post*, September 12, 2003).

⁵⁰ U.S. Department of State, *Patterns of Global Terrorism 2002*, April 30, 2003. Among the State Department's "other terrorist groups" active in Kashmir are the Al Badhr Mujahideen, the Harakat ul-Jihad-e-Islami, and the Jamiat ul-Mujahideen. All are said to have bases in Pakistan, and all are designated by the Indian government as being terrorist organizations (Indian Ministry of Home Affairs, "The Prevention of Terrorism Act, 2002," available at [<http://mha.nic.in/poto-02.htm#schedule>]).

Foreign Terrorist Organizations shortly after they were publically implicated by New Delhi for an attack on the Indian Parliament complex that killed nine and injured 18. This assault spurred India to fully mobilize its military along the India-Pakistan frontier. An ensuing 10-month-long standoff in 2002 involved one million Indian and Pakistani soldiers and was viewed as the closest the two countries had come to full-scale war since 1971, causing the U.S. government to become “deeply concerned ... that a conventional war ... could escalate into a nuclear confrontation.”⁵¹

Pakistan’s powerful and largely autonomous ISI is widely believed to have provided significant support for militant Kashmiri separatists over the past decade in what is perceived as a proxy war against India.⁵² In March 2003, the chief of India’s Defense Intelligence Agency reported providing the United States with “solid documentary proof” that 70 Islamic militant camps are operating in Pakistani Kashmir. In May, the Indian Defense Minister claimed that about 3,000 “terrorists” were being trained in camps on the Pakistani side of the LOC. Some Indian officials have suggested that Al Qaeda may be active in Kashmir.⁵³ Deputy Secretary of State Armitage reportedly received a June 2002 pledge from Pakistani President Musharraf that all “cross-border terrorism” would cease, followed by a May 2003 pledge that any terrorist training camps in Pakistani-controlled areas would be closed. Yet, in September 2003, Indian PM Vajpayee reportedly told President Bush that continued cross-border terrorism from Pakistan was making it difficult for India to maintain its peace initiative, and a series of bloody attacks seemed to indicate that infiltration rates were on the rise.⁵⁴

President Musharraf adamantly insists that his government is doing all it can to stem infiltration at the LOC and calls for a joint Pakistan-India monitoring effort

⁵¹ Statement of Director of Central Intelligence George Tenet Before the Senate Armed Services Committee, “Worldwide Threat: Converging Dangers in a Post-9/11 World,” March 19, 2002.

⁵² “Although Pakistan did not begin the [1989] uprising in Kashmir, the temptation to fan the flames was too great for Islamabad to resist. Using guerrilla warfare expertise gained during the Afghan war, Pakistan’s ISI began to provide active backing for Kashmiri Muslim insurgents” Dennis Kux, *The United States and Pakistan 1947-2000: Disenchanted Allies* (Washington: Woodrow Wilson Center Press), 2001, p. 305. Many Indian analysts emphasize evidence of a direct link between Pakistan-sponsored militancy in Kashmir and the wider assortment of radical Islamic groups active in Pakistan after 2001. One observer has gone so far as to call Lashkar-e-Taiba a “wholly owned subsidiary of the ISI,” although others have doubts (Indrani Bagchi, “Beyond Control,” *India Today* (New Delhi), December 8, 2003).

⁵³ “India Says It Has Given Proof of 70 Islamic Militant Camps in Pakistan-Controlled Kashmir,” Associated Press Newswires, March 14, 2003; “3,000 ‘Terrorists’ Being Trained in Pakistani Kashmir: India,” Agence France Presse, July 30, 2003. In October 2003, the Indian Chief of Army Staff raised the possibility of an Al Qaeda presence, as “most of the terrorists killed in [Jammu and Kashmir] are foreign nationals these days” (“Al Qaeda Presence Not Ruled Out in J&K,” *Hindu* (Madras), October 12, 2003).

⁵⁴ Chidanand Rajghatta, “Cross-Border Terror Continues, Vajpayee Tells Bush,” *Times of India* (Delhi), September 25, 2003; Scott Baldauf, “Insurgents Push Into Kashmir,” *Christian Science Monitor*, October 7, 2003.

there. Positive signs have come with a November 2003 cease-fire agreement between Pakistan and India along the entire LOC and their shared international border (holding at the time of this writing) and a January 2004 pledge by Musharraf reassuring the Indian Prime Minister that no territory under Pakistan's control could be used to support terrorism. Ensuing statements from Indian government officials confirmed that infiltration rates were down significantly.⁵⁵

The United States signaled increased pressure on Islamabad in October 2003 when the Treasury Department designated the Pakistan-based Al Akhtar Trust as a terrorist support organization under Executive Order 13224. Al Akhtar is said to be carrying on support for Al Qaeda and Taliban terrorist activities funded by the previously-designated Al Rashid Trust. The United States also that month identified Indian crime figure Dawood Ibrahim as a "global terrorist" with links to both Al Qaeda and Lashkar-e-Taiba. Ibrahim, wanted by the Indian government for 1993 Bombay bombings that killed and injured thousands, is believed to be in Pakistan.⁵⁶ These moves by the U.S. government were welcomed in New Delhi, where officials continuously are urging greater U.S. attention to anti-India terrorism emanating from Pakistan.

Indigenous Indian-Designated Terrorist Groups

The United States does not designate as terrorist organizations those groups that continue violent separatist struggles in India's northeastern states. Some of the groups have, however, been implicated in lethal attacks on civilians and have been designated as terrorist groups by New Delhi under the 2002 Prevention of Terrorism Act.⁵⁷ Among the dozens of insurgent groups active in the northeast are:

- the National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB);
- the National Liberation Front of Tripura;
- the United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA); and
- the United National Liberation Front (seeking an independent Manipur)

The Indian government has at times blamed Bangladesh, Burma, Nepal, and Bhutan for "sheltering" one or more of these groups beyond the reach of Indian security forces, and accuses Pakistan's intelligence agency of training members and providing them with material support. In December 2003, after considerable prodding by New Delhi, Bhutan launched military operations against NDFB and ULFA rebels based in border areas near India's Assam state. The leader and founder of the ULFA was captured and, by February 2004, India's Army Chief declared that nearly 1,000

⁵⁵ "India and Pakistan Set Talks Date," BBC News, January 27, 2004.

⁵⁶ "U.S. Designates Al Akhtar," U.S. Treasury Department Press Release, October 14, 2003; "U.S. Designates Dawood Ibrahim," U.S. Treasury Department Press Release, October 16, 2003.

⁵⁷ Indian Ministry of Home Affairs, "The Prevention of Terrorism Act, 2002," available at [<http://mha.nic.in/poto-02.htm#schedule>].

militants in Bhutan had been “neutralized” — killed or captured. Both Burma and Bangladesh may move to increase pressure on Indian rebels based on their territory.⁵⁸

Also operating in India are Naxalites — communist insurgents engaged in violent struggle on behalf of landless laborers and tribals. These groups, most active in inland areas of east-central India, claim to be battling oppression and exploitation in order to create a classless society. Their opponents call them terrorists and extortionists. Most notable are the People’s War Group (PWG), mainly active in the southern Andhra Pradesh state, and the Maoist Communist Center of West Bengal and Bihar. Both are designated as terrorist groups; each is believed to have about 2,000 cadres. PWG fighters were behind an October 2003 landmine attack that nearly killed the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh.⁵⁹

India-U.S. Counterterrorism Cooperation

One facet of the emerging “strategic partnership” between the United States and India is increased counterterrorism cooperation. The U.S.-India Joint Working Group on Counterterrorism was established in January 2000 to intensify bilateral cooperation. In November 2001, President Bush and Indian Prime Minister Vajpayee agreed that “terrorism threatens not only the security of the United States and India, but also our efforts to build freedom, democracy and international security and stability around the world.”⁶⁰ In May 2002, India and the United States launched the Indo-US Cyber Security Forum to safeguard critical infrastructures from cyber attack. The State Department believes that continued engagement with New Delhi will lead to India’s playing a constructive role in resolving terrorist insurgencies in Nepal and Sri Lanka. Calling New Delhi a “close ally of the United States in the global war on terrorism,” the Bush Administration has undertaken to provide India with better border security systems and training, and better intelligence in an effort to prevent future terrorist attacks. Moreover, the two countries’ militaries have continued to work together to enhance their capabilities to combat terrorism and increase interoperability.⁶¹

⁵⁸ Wasbir Hussain, “Going for the Kill,” *Outlook India* (Delhi), December 22, 2003; Nirmal Banerjee, “N-Proliferation From Pak Dangerous: Vij,” *Times of India* (Delhi), February 5, 2004; “Screws Tighten on Indian Rebels,” BBC News, January 2, 2004.

⁵⁹ See “The 14 Spokes of a Revolution,” *Outlook India* (Delhi), October 20, 2003; “India: Terrorist Groups,” South Asia Terrorism Portal, available at [<http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/india/terroristoutfits/index.html>].

⁶⁰ “Joint Statement of U.S., India on Terrorism, Bilateral Ties,” U.S. Department of State Washington File, November 9, 2001.

⁶¹ U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Resource Management, “FY2004 Performance Plan,” March 2003. Assistant Secretary of State Christina Rocca, “U.S., Regional Governments Cooperating Against South Asian Terrorism,” U.S. Department of State Washington File, October 29, 2003; U.S. Department of Defense, Office of the Press Secretary, “Joint Statement on U.S.-India Defense Policy Group,” August 8, 2003.

Other South Asian Countries

Bangladesh

There is increasing concern among analysts that Bangladesh might serve as a base from which both South and Southeast Asian terrorists could regroup. There have been reports that up to 150 Taliban and Al Qaeda fighters fled to Bangladesh from Afghanistan in December 2001 aboard the *MV Mecca*, which reportedly sailed from Karachi to Chittagong.⁶² This was evidently not the beginning of Al Qaeda connections with Bangladesh. Al Qaeda had reportedly recruited Burmese Muslims, known as the Rohingya, from refugee camps in southeastern Bangladesh to fight in Afghanistan, Kashmir and Chechnya.⁶³ An Al Qaeda affiliate, Harkat-ul-Jihad-al-Islami (HuJI) was founded by Osama bin Laden associate Fazlul Rahman.⁶⁴ HuJI is also on the State Department's list of other terrorist organizations.⁶⁵ Rahman joined bin Laden's World Islamic Front for the Jihad Against the Jews and the Crusaders in 1998.⁶⁶ It has the objective of establishing Islamic rule in Bangladesh. HuJI has recruited its members, thought to number from several thousand to 15,000, from the tens of thousands of madrassas in Bangladesh, many of which are led by veterans of the "jihad" against the Soviets in Afghanistan. The organization is thought to have at least six camps in Bangladesh as well as ties to militants in Pakistan.⁶⁷ The Bangladesh National Party coalition government includes the small Islamic Oikya Jote party which has connections to HuJI.⁶⁸ It was reported that French intelligence led to the arrest of 16 Bangladeshis on December 4, 2003 in Bolivia for allegedly planning to hijack a plane to attack the United States. According to reports, they were later released for lack of evidence. 11 Bangladeshis were arrested in Saudi Arabia on August 14, 2003 on suspicion of planning a terrorist act.⁶⁹

⁶² Alex Perry, "Deadly Cargo," *Time Asia*, October 21, 2003.

⁶³ Zachary Abuza, *Militant Islam in Southeast Asia*, (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2003), p. 174.

⁶⁴ Zachary Abuza, *Militant Islam in Southeast Asia*, (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2003), p. 174.

⁶⁵ *Patterns of Global Terrorism 2002*, United States Department of State, Office of the Coordinator of Counter-terrorism, April, 2003.

⁶⁶ Rohan Gunaratna, *Inside Al Qaeda* (New York: Berkeley Books, 2003), p.60.

⁶⁷ *Patterns of Global Terrorism, 2002*, United States Department of State, Office of the Coordinator of Counter-terrorism, April, 2003, p.133-4.

⁶⁸ Bertil Lintner, "Bangladesh: Breeding Ground for Muslim Terror," www.atimes.com See also Bertil Lintner, "Religious Extremism and Nationalism in Bangladesh," Paper presented at the Center for Security Studies, Honolulu, August 19, 2002.

⁶⁹ Anand Kumar, "Bangladesh Weak Link in War on Terror," *The Straits Times*, December 16, 2003.

The Rohingya Solidarity Organization (RSO) is the largest organization representing the over 120,000 Rohingyas in Bangladesh.⁷⁰ The number of Rohingyas varies depending on the level of pressure they are under in their homelands in Burma. The Rohingya also speak the same language as Bangladeshis from the Chittagong area. These “destitute and stateless people” have proved to be a “fertile ground” for recruitment to various militant Islamist groups.⁷¹ The RSO has reportedly received support from the Jamaat-e-Islami in Bangladesh. Afghan instructors are reported to have been seen in RSO camps.

There are also reports, based on information derived from the interrogation of Jemaah Islamiya (JI) leader Hambali, who was arrested in Thailand in August 2003, that indicate that he had made a decision to shift JI elements to Bangladesh in response to recent counter-terrorist activity in Southeast Asia. It is also thought that key JI operative Zulkifi Marzuki may already be in Bangladesh.⁷² The decision to move operations west may also be evident in the arrest of 13 Malaysians and six Indonesians, including Hambali’s brother Rusman Gunawan, in Pakistan in September 2003. Bangladeshis have been among those arrested in Pakistan on suspicion of being linked to terrorist organizations.⁷³ Some have speculated that JI militants, thought to be from Malaysia and Singapore, would not have made it to southeastern Bangladesh without some degree of tacit agreement from the Directorate General of Forces Intelligence of Bangladesh which is thought, by some, to have close ties with ISI.⁷⁴ It is also thought that Fazlul Rahman’s Rohingya Solidarity Organization, which is based in southeast Bangladesh, has also established ties with JI.⁷⁵ These reports are difficult to confirm.

Despite these apparent developments within Bangladesh, visiting Secretary of State Colin Powell told his Dhaka audience in June 2003 that “Bangladesh has been a strong supporter in the war against terrorism because their enlightened policy is that terrorism ... effects us all.”⁷⁶ The Government of Bangladesh has also denied that Bangladesh has become a haven for Islamic militants, such as the Taliban or Al Qaeda.⁷⁷ The Bangladesh government has also denied allegations made by Indian Deputy Prime Minister Advani that Bangladesh had aided Pakistan’s Inter-Services

⁷⁰ Bertil Lintner, “Bangladesh: Breeding Ground for Muslim Terror,” www.atimes.com

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

⁷² Kimina Lyall, “Hambali Moved JI Front Line to Bangladesh, Pakistan,” *The Australian*, September 27, 2003.

⁷³ “Pakistan Nabs Six More Terror Suspects,” *Xinhua News Agency*, September 26, 2003.

⁷⁴ Bertil Lintner, “Bangladesh: Celebrations and Bombs,” www.atimes.com

⁷⁵ Statement of Dr. Zachary Abuza, House International Relations Subcommittee on International Terrorism, Non-proliferation and Human Rights, October 29, 2003.

⁷⁶ Secretary of State Colin Powell, “Press Briefing,” Dhaka, Bangladesh, June 19, 2003.

⁷⁷ “Bangladesh Calls Time Article on Militant Fictitious,” *Associated Press*, October 16, 2002.

Intelligence and Al Qaeda elements.⁷⁸ It has also been reported that the Bangladesh Rifles and police have captured weapons during anti-terrorist operations in the southeastern border region with Burma in August and September 2003.⁷⁹ (For further information on Bangladesh see CRS Report RL20489, *Bangladesh: Background and U.S. Relations*, by Bruce Vaughn.)

Nepal

The Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist)/ United Peoples Front has been identified as an Other Terrorist Group by the U.S. Department of State.⁸⁰ On October 31st 2003, the United States Government went further and announced that for national security reasons it was freezing Maoist terrorist assets. The security situation in Nepal has deteriorated since the collapse of the cease fire between the Maoists and the government on August 27, 2003. By some estimates, the numbers of Nepalese killed since August has risen significantly. This brings the total number killed since 1996 as high as 9,100 by some accounts. It has also been reported that the Maoists' anti-United States rhetoric has grown and that there is a "potential threat to U.S. staff and facilities in Nepal, including aid programs."⁸¹ Currently, an estimated 32,000 Maoist fighters are opposed by 120,00 Nepalese soldiers and police.⁸² India has acknowledged a link between the Maoists and leftist extremists in India.⁸³

The Maoists' message frequently calls for the end of "American imperialism" and for the "dirty Yankee" to "go home." The Maoists' Chief Negotiator and Chairman of the "People's Government," Baburam Bhattarai, reportedly threatened the United States with "another Vietnam" if the United States expands its aid to Nepal.⁸⁴ In September, Bhattarai sent a letter to the U.S. Ambassador in Kathmandu which called on the United States to stop "interfering" in the internal affairs of Nepal.⁸⁵ Maoists claimed responsibility for killing two off-duty Nepalese security guards at the American Embassy in 2002,⁸⁶ and the Maoists have made it known that

⁷⁸ "India's Remarks on Bangladesh Aiding Terrorists Rejected," *Xinhua News Agency*, November 8, 2002.

⁷⁹ "Bangladesh Country Report," *Economist Intelligence Unit*, October, 2003.

⁸⁰ *Patterns of Global Terrorism*, United States Department of State, Office of the Coordinator of Counter-terrorism, April, 2003.

⁸¹ "Nepal's Forgotten Rebellion," *Jane's Foreign Report*, October 23, 2003.

⁸² Chitra Tiwari, "Violence Soars After Peace Talks Fail," *The Washington Times*, November 1, 2003.

⁸³ "New CRPF Unit to Fight Naxals Likely," *Business Standard*, November 5, 2003.

⁸⁴ Thomas Bell, "Maoist Army Wins Hearts and Minds in West Nepal," *The Globe and Mail*, September 18, 2003.

⁸⁵ Binaj Gurubacharya, "Maoist Rebel Leader Asks U.S., China, India to Stop Interfering in Nepal," *Associated Press*, September 25, 2003.

⁸⁶ Binaj Gurubacharya, "Nepal Rebels Threaten U.S.-Funded Groups," *Associated Press*, October, 22, 2003.

American trekkers are not welcome in Maoist-controlled Nepal.⁸⁷ Further, the Maoists stated on October 22nd that American-backed organizations would be targeted. Rebel leader Prachanda is reported to have stated that groups funded by “American imperialists” would not be allowed to operate in Nepal.⁸⁸

After the cease fire, the Maoists appeared to be shifting from large-scale attacks on police and army headquarters to adopting new tactics that focused on attacks by smaller cells conducting widespread assassinations of military, police and party officials.⁸⁹ The unpopularity of this policy appears to have led the Maoists to shift policy again in October and declare that they would not carry out further political killings or further destroy government infrastructure. Despite this guarantee, attacks continue. Regional leader of the Maoists, Ram Prasad Lamichhane of the Gandak region, renounced the party for using terrorism in November 2003.⁹⁰ The Maoists’ guarantee against terrorist attacks did not extend to projects “run directly by the United States.”⁹¹ The United States Agency for International Development and Save the Children both operate in Nepal. On October 27, Maoist leader Prachanda stated that “we will ensure that no American citizens — tourists or officials — except those who come to the battlefield with the Nepal Army would be caused any harm by the Maoist militia.”⁹² (For further details on the Maoists and Nepal see CRS Report RL31599, *Nepal: Background and U.S. Relations*, by Bruce Vaughn.)

Sri Lanka

The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) of Sri Lanka have been identified as a Foreign Terrorist Organization by the United States Department of State.⁹³ More than 64,000 people have died in Sri Lanka’s unresolved civil war over the past 20 years. The LTTE is reportedly responsible for more suicide attacks than any other terrorist organization worldwide.⁹⁴ Hopes for a peace agreement with the LTTE, that would grant the Tamils a degree of autonomy in the northeast, have been put into doubt by recent moves by President Kumaratunga. Kumaratunga, who was wounded in a LTTE attack, reportedly believes that her political rival, Prime Minister Wickremesinghe, has been too ready to make concessions in negotiations with the LTTE. Their differences highlight debate in Sri Lanka and elsewhere, on the best

⁸⁷ Amy Waldman, “Chance for Peace Fades in Nepal as Deaths Rise,” *The New York Times*, October 13, 2003.

⁸⁸ Binaj Gurubacharya, “Nepal Rebels Threaten U.S.-Funded Groups,” *Associated Press*, October 22, 2003.

⁸⁹ “Nepal: Back to the Gun,” *International Crisis Group*, October 22, 2003.

⁹⁰ “Regional Leader of Nepali Maoists Quits Party,” *BBC News*, November 10, 2003.

⁹¹ Kedar Man Singh, “Nepal’s Maoist Rebels Say They Will Not Carry Out Political Killings,” *Agence France Presse*, October 22, 2003.

⁹² Kedar Man Singh, “Nepal Maoists Say Americans Safe,” *Agence France Presse*, October 27, 2003.

⁹³ “Foreign Terrorist Organizations,” United States Department of State, Office of Counterterrorism, May 23, 2003.

⁹⁴ “Sri Lanka’s Crisis,” *International Herald Tribune*, November 13, 2003.

means for addressing terrorism and the best mix of a military and political solution.⁹⁵ The LTTE has thus far stated that they remain committed to the peace process despite recent political turmoil and infighting inside the Sri Lankan government.⁹⁶ LTTE “Supremo” Velupillai Prabhakaran has sought guarantee that the government will honor the cease fire during the period of internal turmoil within the Sri Lankan government. The Norwegian government has played an active role in trying to broker a lasting peace between the LTTE and the Sri Lankan government. Hardliners, represented by the President, have accused the Norwegians of exceeding their authority in trying to broker a peace agreement.⁹⁷ There is concern among some analysts that the rivalry between the president and the prime minister could lead the LTTE to relaunch a terrorist campaign to force the president back to the negotiating table. Others feel that the LTTE will be hesitant to do so because it would thereby lose the political legitimacy that they have been gaining.⁹⁸ The United States has recognized that the LTTE is engaged in a peace process and holds the hope that the LTTE will renounce terrorism and cease terrorist acts. Until such time, the United States Government has stated that it will not remove the LTTE from the Foreign Terrorist Organization list.⁹⁹ (For further details on the LTTE and Sri Lanka see CRS Report RL31707, *Sri Lanka: Background and U.S. Relations*, by Bruce Vaughn.)

⁹⁵ Elizabeth Sullivan, “Taming Terror Takes Toughness and Persuasion,” *The Plain Dealer*, November 6, 2003.

⁹⁶ “Turmoil May Stall Tamil Peace Talks,” *Irish Times*, November 6, 2003.

⁹⁷ “Norwegian Envoys Head for Talks with Tamil Tiger Supremo,” *Channelnewsasia*, November 13, 2003.

⁹⁸ “Sri Lanka Likely to Remain a Simmering Political Risk,” *Dow Jones International News*, November 9, 2003.

⁹⁹ Richard Boucher, “Status of LTTE, Press Statement,” *Presswire*, October 3, 2003.

Figure 1. Map of South Asia



Adapted by CRS from Magellan Geographix. Boundary representations not authoritative.