



Background Brief

**Transnational Terrorist Networks:
The Afghanistan-Pakistan Connection**

Jeffrey Thomas, Senior Fellow

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Neither international terrorism nor religious extremism is a recent development in world affairs. However, the convergence of both to form an ideology and strategy targeting the West in general is a phenomenon that dates back only two decades, with the emergence of global jihadism in the 1990s. With antecedents in the Soviet-Afghan war of the 1980s (and even earlier in anti-colonialist movements of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries), this phenomenon transformed the international security environment and defined the first threat with global reach to challenge America and Europe in the post-Cold War period.

Global jihadism is not specific to South Asia, and its chief ideologists and strategists are not of the region, but events in Afghanistan and Pakistan gave rise to the global jihadist movement and remain a principal driving force behind anti-Western Islamist terrorism today. The death of Osama bin Laden in May 2011 and the rise of al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (principally in Yemen) may alter these circumstances. Moreover, the Arab Spring may presage a decline in the ideology and the appeal of global jihadism, which in any case never gained a sufficient following to become more than a militant fringe movement. But Afghanistan and especially Pakistan today remain the focus of global jihadist activity and the base of operations for most transnational terrorist networks motivated by militant Islam.

AFGHANISTAN AND THE BIRTH OF GLOBAL JIHAD

Al-Qaeda and the Global Jihadist Movement

Throughout most of the 20th century, Islamist activism—both peaceful and militant variants—focused on bringing about social-political change in the Muslim world. Islamist militants sought to cast off colonial rule or overthrow secular governments in their own countries and establish Islamic regimes dedicated to enforcing *shari'ah* (Islamic law). From Algeria in North Africa to Afghanistan in South Asia, and as far eastward as Indonesia, secular (often authoritarian) rulers contended with Islamist insurgencies and terrorist groups.

The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 added a broader international dimension to this trend. Islamic scholar Abdullah Azzam and his former student, Osama bin Laden, created Maktab al-Khidamat (the “Services Bureau”) to help finance and supply the Afghan resistance. The organization also recruited Muslim volunteers from around the world to fight against the

Soviet occupation. These efforts helped mobilize a pan-Islamic movement, based on the concept of “defensive *jihad*,” which united Muslims across national and ethnic divides to defend their fellow Muslims.¹

Following the Soviet withdrawal in 1989, many non-Afghan resistance fighters returned to their countries of origin to fight for the creation of Islamic states. Others, emboldened by victory in Afghanistan and instilled with a transnational outlook, went to Kashmir, Chechnya, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and elsewhere to help Muslim populations fighting against non-Muslim forces. To support the continuation and expansion of defensive *jihad*, Osama bin Laden and his associates established al-Qaeda (“the Base” or “the Foundation”).²

As the international scope of Islamist militancy expanded, Osama bin Laden and like-minded militants began advocating a shift in focus toward the West, or the “Far Enemy.” While retaining the goal of establishing theocratic rule in Muslim lands, advocates of this view pressed their belief that Western powers were oppressing Muslims around the world, with the assistance of apostate regimes in many predominantly Muslim countries. To repulse this perceived threat, they called for a “global *jihad*” against Western interests around the world, including targets within Europe and North America. They also placed an emphasis on mass casualty terrorist attacks and the use of suicide bombings against civilians in this global conflict.³

For Osama bin Laden, this strategic shift in focus occurred in 1990, when the United States led an international coalition to repulse Iraq’s invasion of Kuwait and prevent an Iraqi military incursion into Saudi Arabia. Osama bin Laden, who had offered to raise an all-Muslim force of *mujahideen* to repel the threat posed by Saddam Hussein’s military, was enraged by the presence of infidel soldiers in the land of Mecca and Medina, the birth place of Islam.⁴ Throughout the 1990s, his advocacy of anti-Western *jihad*, suffused with selective interpretations of Islamic law and tradition, abetted the rise of a diverse and widely dispersed “global jihadist movement.”

Although rejected by most Muslims—including most Islamist militants, the majority of whom remained focused on overthrowing secular regimes at home—this amorphous movement appealed to fringe elements who wanted to punish the West for its perceived unjust treatment of Muslims worldwide. It is comparable to—and has been described as a part of—the broader anti-globalization movement, which sparks frequent protests and occasional violence.⁵ In recognition of al-Qaeda’s dominant role in the rise of this transnational movement, former CIA analyst Marc Sageman has suggested that it be called “the al-Qaeda Social Movement.”⁶

In August 1996, Osama bin Laden issued a declaration of war against the United States and called on Muslims to use guerrilla tactics to drive Americans and their allies from the Arabian Peninsula.⁷ He expanded this mission in a more ambitious declaration issued in February 1998. This declaration, made in the name of the World Islamic Front against the Crusaders and the Jews, stated:

The ruling to kill Americans and their allies—whether civilians or military—is incumbent upon every Muslim who is able and in whichever country is easiest for him. . . We also call upon Muslim *ulema* [religious scholars], leaders, youth, and soldiers to attack the American devil and those allies of Satan who have aligned themselves with [America].⁸

Islamist terrorism against the West spiked following this declaration. Al-Qaeda initiated the rise in violence with simultaneous suicide bombings against U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, killing more than 200 people and injuring 5,000.⁹ Over the next three years, al-Qaeda and allied militants launched operations across Europe, North America, and around the world, culminating on September 11, 2001 in the deadliest terrorist attack in modern history.

The Al Qaeda-Taliban Alliance

A critical element in al-Qaeda's rise as a global terrorist organization was its alliance with the Taliban. In 1990 and 1991, Osama bin Laden relocated his principal base of operation to Sudan at the invitation of the ruling National Islamic Front. From this base in North Africa, he formed alliances with Islamist insurgencies and terrorist groups around the world, from Europe to Southeast Asia. However, under international pressure to end support of terrorist organizations, the Sudanese government forced him and his lieutenants to leave the country in 1996. In May of that year, Osama bin Laden returned to Afghanistan, where he formed a cooperative relationship with the Taliban.

The Taliban ("Seekers" or "Students") emerged during the Afghan civil war in the early 1990s as a loose amalgam of Islamist militants, most of whom were affiliated with a network of *madrassas* located across Afghanistan and northern Pakistan. By 1994, this collection of militants had coalesced into a cohesive movement, under the leadership of Mullah Mohammad Omar, dedicated to enforcing *shari'ah* and imposing order on Afghan society, which had descended into civil war after the Soviet withdrawal in 1989. In September 1996, four months after Osama bin Laden's return to Afghanistan, the Taliban captured Kabul and overthrew the government of Afghan President Burhanuddin Rabbani. The Taliban later declared the creation of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan with Kandahar as its capital.¹⁰

As the Taliban continued its efforts to consolidate control over the country, Osama bin Laden recognized Mohammad Omar as *Amir al-Mu'minin* ("Commander of the Faithful"). This relationship benefited both al-Qaeda and the Taliban. Osama bin Laden contributed several hundred foreign *mujahideen* to participate in Taliban offensives against the Northern Alliance, the Taliban's principal rival for control over Afghanistan.¹¹ In September 2001, just two days before the attacks of 9/11, al-Qaeda orchestrated the assassination, via suicide bombing, of Northern Alliance commander Ahmed Shah Massoud.¹²

Al-Qaeda, in return, gained a secure sanctuary, which allowed the organization to establish a network of training camps to indoctrinate and train terrorists and insurgents from around the world. Al-Qaeda members traveled freely throughout Afghanistan, entered and exited the country at will, imported vehicles and weapons, and used the Afghan state-owned Ariana Airlines to courier money into the country. According to U.S. intelligence estimates, from 1996 through September 2001, between 10,000 and 20,000 foreign militants trained in Afghan camps supported by Osama bin Laden.¹³

PAKISTAN AND GLOBAL JIHAD AFTER 9/11

Al-Qaeda's Post-9/11 Exodus to Pakistan

The Afghanistan-Pakistan border, more than 1600 miles long, stretches almost the entire length of Afghanistan and about two-thirds the length of Pakistan, from northeast to southwest. A remnant of the region's colonial past, this border was drawn up in 1893 to demarcate a buffer zone between British-controlled India and the Russian Empire by British statesman Mortimer Durand (hence the border's popular designation, the Durand Line).¹⁴

Like many colonial-era borders, the Durand Line does not account for traditional boundaries. As a result, the modern Afghanistan-Pakistan border arbitrarily divides ethnic groups and tribes. Most importantly, the ethnic Pashtun population is split, with approximately 14 million Pashtuns on the Afghan side and approximately 27 million on the Pakistani side. The ethnic Baluchi are also divided by the border, with about 700,000 in Afghanistan and about 6 million in Pakistan.¹⁵

Local populations on both sides of the border generally ignore the Durand Line. Family members and members of the same tribe frequently cross back and forth without regard to national citizenship. The enormity of the territory, the hostile natural landscape, and the local people's often-uncompromising dedication to autonomy deter effective policing of the border. Additionally, since 1947, consecutive Afghan governments have claimed territory on Pakistan's side of the Durand Line and have refused to recognize it as the legal border.¹⁶

Pakistan's tribal belt is located along the Durand Line and stretches across Pakistani territory for roughly 175,000 square miles. This territory is divided into three administrative regions:

- Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (formerly the Northwest Frontier Province), located in Pakistan's far northwest, is home to almost 20 million inhabitants (mostly ethnic Pashtun). The province includes the city of Peshawar and the Swat Valley.¹⁷
- The Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), with a population of 4 million people (predominantly Pashtun), exercise substantial legal autonomy from federal authorities. The area is divided administratively into seven tribal regions (or "agencies"):¹⁸

Khyber	Mohmand	North Waziristan
Durran	Bajaur	South Waziristan
Oraksai		

- Baluchistan Province, located in the southwest, is geographically the largest of Pakistan's provinces, but is sparsely populated with about 8 million inhabitants, mainly Baluchi and Pashtun. In addition to its border with Afghanistan, Baluchistan shares a roughly 500-mile-long border with Iran.¹⁹

Across much of this frontier region, Pakistan's federal government exercises limited power. From 2004 to 2006, following clashes between local militants and the Pakistani Army, federal

authorities negotiated a series of truces granting substantial autonomy to tribal leaders in North and South Waziristan.²⁰ In 2009, a similar agreement in the Swat Valley granted Islamist militants the authority to impose *shari'ah* across the valley.²¹ Each of these agreements subsequently collapsed, leaving the Pakistani military with the task of imposing a degree of order in areas with a tradition of hostility to outside interference.²²

The poorly monitored Afghanistan-Pakistan border, leading into Pakistan's tribal belt, provided both al-Qaeda and the Taliban an obvious escape route from Afghanistan after 9/11. Al-Qaeda members and their families crossed into Pakistan in successive waves in late 2001 and early 2002, first establishing a base of operations in South Waziristan, then expanding to other tribal regions.²³ By 2005, al-Qaeda had set up bases throughout the FATA—especially in South Waziristan, North Waziristan, and Bajaur—and in adjoining areas of the Northwest Frontier Province (renamed Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in 2010). Some senior al-Qaeda leaders took refuge in Quetta, the capital of Baluchistan province, where the Taliban leadership established its post-9/11 headquarters.²⁴

The New Training Ground for Global Jihad

Secure and isolated locations provide terrorist organizations with space and seclusion to turn new recruits into terrorists. Hands-on training—in surveillance, bomb-making, use of firearms, logistics—increases the ability of individuals to execute complex operations, while isolating recruits from external information allows militant leaders to facilitate socialization and indoctrination of new members through unchallenged ideological peer pressure. Secluded training grounds also provide an environment for acculturating recruits to violence, an important step in overcoming inhibitions against committing acts of indiscriminate murder.²⁵

During the late 1990s, Taliban-controlled areas of Afghanistan served as ideal locations for training camps operated by al-Qaeda and other terrorist groups. The result was a large international network of trained terrorists, comprising al-Qaeda cells, militant groups linked to al-Qaeda, and autonomous groups and individuals participating independently in the global jihadist movement.

International intervention after 9/11 eradicated the large terrorist training camps in Afghanistan. However, since regrouping in the Pakistan tribal belt, al-Qaeda and allied militant groups have established new training grounds and produced hundreds of trained terrorists. Alain Grignard, director of counterterrorism for Belgium's Federal Police, recently pointed out that the region had become the destination of choice for people seeking militant training. In 2009, he stated, "Not since the year before 9/11 have we seen as many people travel towards the Afghanistan-Pakistan conflict region."²⁶

American al-Qaeda operative David Headley corroborated this assessment. In an e-mail message sent before his arrest in 2009, he wrote, "Just walk around the bazaar in Miram Shah [the capital of Pakistan's North Waziristan region]. This bazaar is bustling with Chechens, Uzbeks, Tajiks, Russians, Bosnians, some from EU countries, and of course our Arab brothers."²⁷

AL-QAEDA ALLIES IN PAKISTAN

The Taliban Relocates to Pakistan

The U.S.-led invasion of Afghanistan in 2001 forced the Taliban leadership to flee across the border into Pakistan. In the winter of 2001-2002, thousands of Taliban fighters crossed the border into Balochistan, where many of them had grown up in Afghan refugee camps during the Soviet-Afghan war. Mohammad Omar and his senior lieutenants established a new base of operations in the city of Quetta, Balochistan's provincial capital, and formed a consultative council (the Quetta Shura) to coordinate insurgent activities in southern Afghanistan.²⁸ The Quetta Shura Taliban, as this group is commonly called, is the central organizing force behind the ongoing insurgency in Afghanistan.

The Haqqani Network, based in Pakistan's North Waziristan region, is active across eastern Afghanistan, including Kabul Province. The group's nominal leader, Jalaluddin Haqqani, once served as commander-in-chief of the Taliban's armed forces in Afghanistan. He and his son, Sirajuddin Haqqani, who is in charge of the organization's day-to-day operations, reorganized Taliban forces in southeastern Afghanistan after being expelled by U.S.-led forces. Both men remain loyal to Mohammad Omar and the Quetta Shura.²⁹

Hizb-e-Islami Gulbuddin (HeI-Gulbuddin), named after its leader, Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, formed from a splinter faction of Afghanistan's Hizb-e-Islami (Islamic Party) in 1979. This group became one of the main *mujahideen* factions resisting Soviet occupation during the 1980s. Following the Soviet withdrawal, HeI-Gulbuddin fought against the Taliban during Afghan civil war. Gulbuddin Hekmatyar fled to Iran in 1997 as the Taliban consolidated its rule across much of Afghanistan. After 9/11, he settled in Peshawar, in Pakistan's Northwest Frontier Province, and allied his forces with the Quetta Shura Taliban.³⁰

These three groups—the Quetta Shura Taliban, the Haqqani Network, and the HeI-Gulbuddin—constitute the backbone of the Afghan insurgency today and are often loosely referred to as the “Taliban.” They do not share a formal command-and-control structure, but they coordinate activities and share the goals of overthrowing the post-Taliban Afghan regime and expelling foreign forces.³¹

The Taliban employs a combination of guerrilla tactics and terrorist attacks to destabilize the country. Along with attacks on Afghan and international security forces, the Taliban strikes civilian targets, including government officials and civil servants, Members of Parliament, tribal leaders, moderate imams, teachers, and even school children.³² In November 2008, an acid attack on students and teachers at a girls' school near Kandahar maimed several school girls.³³ The Taliban has also attacked foreign civilians in Afghanistan, especially foreign diplomats, NGO and U.N. workers, mine removal teams, and construction crews working on roads and infrastructure projects.³⁴

A disturbing development, which may be indicative of al-Qaeda's influence on the Taliban's operations, is the rise in suicide bombings in Afghanistan. Al-Qaeda's assassination of Northern Alliance commander Massoud in 2001 was Afghanistan's first suicide bombing. The next two

suicide bombings occurred in 2003, followed by three in 2004. The next year, suicide bombings began an exponential progression: 17 attacks in 2005, 123 attacks in 2006, 160 attacks in 2007. Suicide attacks most often target Afghan and international security forces, but also strike civilian targets and include mass-casualty attacks in mosques, public gatherings, and urban centers. Civilian bystanders account for the large majority of casualties from suicide attacks.³⁵

To date, Taliban attacks on the West have been confined to Afghanistan. Some Taliban commanders have stated their intension to strike targets abroad, although such attacks have not yet materialized. In June 2007, a Pakistani journalist filmed a Taliban graduation ceremony for suicide bombers who were supposedly trained for missions in Europe, Canada, and the United States. Taliban commander Mansur Dadullah, who chaired the ceremony, threatened to unleash a wave of suicide attacks against the West and asked why the Taliban should wait for the West to come to Afghanistan, when Afghans could take the war to the enemy.³⁶

Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU)

The Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan emerged in the late 1990s as a coalition of Islamist militants operating in Central Asia. The movement originally focused on establishing its version of *shari'ah* rule in the Ferghana Valley, which encompasses a large segment of Uzbekistan and smaller parts of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. At the end of the 1990s and throughout the next decade, the IMU adopted a broader agenda as it became increasingly intertwined with the Taliban and al-Qaeda.

The network of militants that would coalesce into the IMU began to take shape during the post-Soviet Islamic revival. As Soviet central authority weakened and eventually collapsed in 1991, the Islamist-oriented Adolat (Justice) Party seized control of Namangan, a city in the Ferghana Valley, and enforced Islamic practices on its residents. Uzbek authorities retook control of the city in March 1992, forcing Adolat's leaders—Jumaboi Khojaev (popularly known as Juma Namangani) and Tahir Yuldashev—to flee to neighboring Tajikistan. Namangani remained in Tajikistan, where he fought alongside fellow Islamists in the Tajik civil war (1992-1997). Yuldashev traveled throughout the region and the Middle East, eventually settling in Kabul in a house provided to him by the Taliban. In summer 1998, Namangani and Yuldashev met in Kabul to announce the formation of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan.³⁷

In February 1999, in a terrorist attack widely attributed to the IMU, a series of car-bombs in the Uzbek capital of Tashkent killed several people and injured more than 100. In the summer of 1999, the IMU issued a call for *jihād* against the regime of Uzbek President Islam Karimov, as well as against neighboring Kyrgyzstan (for its supposed persecution of ethnic Uzbeks), and declared its intent to establish an Islamic caliphate in the Ferghana Valley. The IMU also conducted a series of raids from bases in Tajikistan into neighboring Kyrgyzstan, kidnapping government officials and several foreign mountain climbers for ransom.³⁸

In November 1999, under pressure from Central Asia governments, several hundred IMU militants relocated to the Afghan city of Mazar-i-Sharif. During the next several months, both Namangani and Yuldashev met with Mullah Mohammad Omar and Osama bin Laden in

Kandahar to plan military operations, logistics, and funding. This support aided the IMU's insurgent raids into the Ferghana Valley in the summers of 2000 and 2001.³⁹

At the same time, the IMU became increasingly integrated with the Taliban. Throughout 1999 and 2000, the movement accepted Uighur and Pakistani recruits whom the Taliban transferred to IMU training camps (a tactic that allowed the Taliban to avoid the appearance of hosting terrorists operating against the Chinese or Pakistani governments). In summer 2000, the IMU began participating in Taliban offensives against the Northern Alliance, contributing hundreds of fighters to the Taliban ranks. After the terrorist attacks of 9/11, Namangani led a force of IMU militants to resist the U.S.-led advance into northern Afghan city of Kunduz.⁴⁰

During U.S.-led military operations against the Taliban, the IMU suffered substantial casualties, including the death of Juma Namangani. When the Taliban regime collapsed, IMU militants dispersed throughout the region, eventually regrouping under the leadership of Yuldashev in Pakistan's South Waziristan region. From this new base of operation, the IMU resumed terrorist attacks in Central Asia, including mass-casualty bombings and guerrilla attacks.⁴¹

Alongside its revived campaign in the Central Asia, the IMU continued to adopt a broader regional agenda. In alliance with the local Pakistani militants, the IMU began participating in attacks against the Pakistani military in 2007.⁴² In Afghanistan, IMU militants resumed coordinating with the Taliban in attacks on U.S. and international forces, sending hundreds of fighters from Pakistan and Central Asia into the country.⁴³ In 2003, the IMU attempted to bomb the U.S. embassy and a hotel in the Kyrgyz capital of Bishkek. Kyrgyz authorities disrupted the plot before it could be launched.⁴⁴

In January 2010, in defiance of reports that he had been killed months earlier in a missile strike from a U.S. aerial drone, Yuldashev appeared in a new online video. The IMU leader affirmed his movement's broadened focus on Afghanistan and Pakistan and committed the IMU (at least rhetorically) to a global jihadist agenda, stating:

We must rid the world of infidels. There are no limits for us. Our goal is to take over not only Afghanistan and Pakistan, but the whole world and to re-establish a caliphate as Allah commanded.⁴⁵

Despite these claims, the IMU has not demonstrated an ability to reach targets outside of South and Central Asia, focusing instead on Western and other targets in the region. However, it has attempted to establish a presence in Europe. In May 2008, a joint European operation led to the detention of nine people—seven in France, one in Germany, and one in the Netherlands—suspected of setting up a financing network for the IMU.⁴⁶ The Dutch General Intelligence and Security Service (AIVD) reported that the suspect detained in the Netherlands was an IMU operative in direct contact with the movement's leadership in Pakistan.⁴⁷

Islamic Jihad Union (IJU)

The Islamic Jihad Union formed in 2002 from a splinter faction of the IMU. Like its parent organization, the IJU is closely allied to the Taliban and al-Qaeda, and has focused principally on

insurgent and terrorist operations in Central Asia, Afghanistan, and Pakistan. However, the IJU has succeeded in setting up operations beyond the region, especially in Europe.

Following the IMU's expulsion from Afghanistan by U.S. and allied forces, Najmiddin Jalolov led a breakaway faction of the IMU to the town of Mir Ali in North Waziristan, where he founded the Islamic Jihad Group (renamed the Islamic Jihad Union in May 2005.)⁴⁸ This new group conducted its first operations in 2004, launching a series of suicide bombings (the first ever in Central Asia) and guerrilla assaults in Uzbekistan. Targets included a popular bazaar, the Prosecutor-General's office, and the U.S. and Israeli embassies in Tashkent.⁴⁹ The IJU claimed that the attacks "were an answer to the injustice of the apostate government [of Uzbekistan] and an expression of support for the *jihād* of our Muslim brothers in Iraq, Palestine, Afghanistan, the Hijaz, and other Muslim lands."⁵⁰

The IJU's attacks in Uzbekistan and its denunciation of the Uzbek regime demonstrated its dedication to violent social change in Central Asia, the original cause of its parent organization. At the same time, its early adoption of mass-casualty suicide bombings against Western embassies and its rhetorical embrace of pan-Islamic causes signaled its identification with the global jihadist agenda. Until his death in a missile strike from a U.S. aerial drone in January 2008, Abu Laith al-Libi, one of Osama bin Laden's top field commanders, appears to have served as al-Qaeda's liaison to the IJU.⁵¹

The IJU also developed close relations with the Taliban-affiliated Haqqani network. In 2006, members of an IJU cell were arrested while attempting to carry out multiple bombings in Islamabad. In late 2007, the IJU joined militants in Pakistan's Swat valley to fight against Pakistani forces and, in March 2008, the group issued a statement pledging revenge for the Pakistani army's storming of the Red Mosque in Islamabad the previous year.⁵² Also in 2008, the IJU conducted a series of suicide bombings against international forces in Afghanistan, including the attack by German resident Cüneyt Ciftci on an American outpost.⁵³

As it intensified operations in Pakistan and Afghanistan, the IJU also established a presence in Europe. In September 2007, German police arrested three German citizens (members of the IJU's "Sauerland Cell") for plotting to bomb American and other targets in Germany.⁵⁴ The following year, IJU's media arm, Badr al-Tawhid (the "Full Moon of Monotheism") released a series of propaganda videos online. One video showed the training of suicide bomber Cüneyt Ciftci, a German resident of Turkish origin. Another featured Eric Breiniger, a German convert to Islam, who called for Muslims living in Germany to join the *jihād* against the West.⁵⁵ In February 2010, German police arrested the wife of Fritz Gelowicz, leader of the Sauerland Cell, on suspicion of fundraising for the IJU.⁵⁶ In addition, German authorities claim to have identified at least a dozen German citizens and permanent residents who have joined the IJU.⁵⁷

Signs have emerged that the IJU is also active in Turkey. In 2007, a fourth member of the IJU's Sauerland Cell was apprehended in Turkey and extradited to Germany.⁵⁸ In June of the following year, a Turkish national named Hasan Alpfidan, operating for the IJU, conducted a suicide bombing against the Afghan intelligence service in Khost province.⁵⁹ In April 2009, Turkish authorities seized weapons and detained extremists with ties to the IJU.⁶⁰

The IJU has not yet succeeded in carrying out a terrorist attack against Western targets outside of the Central-South Asian region. Jalolov's death in September 2009, due to a missile strike from a U.S. aerial drone operating over North Waziristan, may have disrupted IJU operations for a period.⁶¹ However, the group's successful outreach and recruitment operations in Turkey and Germany (which has a Turkish community of more than four million) have given the IJU a link to Europe and a potential means of targeting Western nations.

Harakat-ul-Mujahideen (Movement of Holy Warriors)

Harakat-ul-Mujahideen (HuM) emerged in 1985 to participate in the anti-Soviet insurgency in Afghanistan. After the Soviets withdrew, HuM remained close to al-Qaeda. It operated several terrorist training camps in eastern Afghanistan until U.S. air strikes destroyed them in 2001, and many Afghan and Arab veterans of the Soviet-Afghan war remain members of HuM. In 1998, HuM's leader, Fazlur Rehman Khalil, signed Osama bin Laden's declaration of war against the United States and its Western allies, issued in the name of the World Islamic Front.⁶²

Throughout the 1990s, HuM participated in anti-Western violence through attacks against American and European targets in South Asia. In 1994, a plot by HuM militants to kidnap Western tourists in India and exchange them for imprisoned comrades ended in failure when Indian authorities captured the kidnapers and freed their hostages. A second HuM operation to kidnap Western tourists the following year resulted in the murder of all five kidnap victims.⁶³ HuM and affiliated militants are also suspected of assassinating six Americans in Karachi: two U.S. diplomats in 1995 and four American oil workers in 1997.⁶⁴

HuM militants also target India and participate in the anti-Indian insurgency in Kashmir, with the goal of expelling Indian forces and establishing Islamic rule under Pakistan's administration. In December 1999, HuM militants hijacked an Indian passenger plane and demanded the release from prison of high-ranking HuM members in exchange for 155 hostages. India complied with the HuM demands.⁶⁵

Since 9/11, HuM has focused primarily on attacks against Indian security forces in Kashmir, while also providing sanctuary and support for al-Qaeda in Pakistan. During the May 2011 Navy SEAL raid that killed Osama bin Laden in the Pakistani city of Abbottabad, U.S. forces discovered a cell phone belong to the al-Qaeda leader's courier. The cell phone contained contacts to HuM, which uses Abbottabad as a recruitment base and a transit point for militants traveling to Kashmir. HuM is believed to maintain active training camps in nearby Mansehra.⁶⁶

Jaish-e-Muhammad (Army of the Prophet Muhammad)

In February 2000, a splinter faction of HuM established a new group, Jaish-e-Muhammad (JeM), possibly to exercise greater independence from the Pakistani government. This new organization opened a campaign of violence against India with a series of suicide bombings. In April 2000, JeM carried out the first ever suicide bombing in Kashmir, targeting an Indian army barracks.⁶⁷ The following year, JeM conducted several suicide car bombings in Kashmir, including the bombing of the regional legislature Jammu and Kashmir, which killed 38 people.⁶⁸ In 2006, JeM claimed responsibility for a second wave of bombings in Kashmir.⁶⁹

JeM has also attacked India beyond the borders of Kashmir. In December 2001, JeM militants participated in a terrorist attack on the Indian parliament in New Delhi that killed fifteen people.⁷⁰ The following year, Indian police arrested three JeM operatives for plotting to kidnap Rahul Gandhi, a Member of Parliament and son of National Congress Party leader Sonia Gandhi.⁷¹

In contrast to the HuM, factions within JeM have launched attacks against Pakistani targets (not just against Westerners in the country), indicating a willingness to challenge the Pakistani government after closer U.S.-Pakistani security cooperation began following 9/11. In 2002, JeM engaged in sectarian (anti-Christian) violence, attacking a school, a hospital, and other civilian targets in Islamabad and two other cities. That same year, Osama bin Laden issued a statement calling on his “Pakistani Muslim brothers . . . to get rid of the shameful [Pakistani President Pervez] Musharraf.” In December of the following year, JeM militants tried twice to assassinate President Musharraf, once with a suicide car bomb that killed 15 people and wounded 50.⁷²

JeM’s operational ties with al-Qaeda and the Taliban, which remained strong after 9/11, may account for the group’s boldness in challenging the government of its host country. Until the fall of 2001, JeM operated training camps in Afghanistan, as did its parent organization, the HuM. Since al-Qaeda’s expulsion from Afghanistan, JeM has provided shelter to al-Qaeda militants and has hosted al-Qaeda training centers in Pakistan.⁷³ In June 2008, JeM militants publicly beheaded two Afghans for passing information to international forces in Afghanistan.⁷⁴

JeM has also established links to Europe’s Muslim population, especially in Britain. Militant elements of Pakistan’s population provide the bulk of JeM’s members, but the organization also recruits from Britain’s large Muslim community. A British convert to Islam, Muhammad Bilal, conducted the April 2000 suicide bombing (Kashmir’s first) against an Indian army base.⁷⁵ Another British citizen, Ahmed Omar Saeed Sheikh (who participated in the HuM kidnapping of Western tourists and later joined JeM) was convicted in Pakistan for helping orchestrate the kidnapping and beheading of American journalist Daniel Pearl in 2002.⁷⁶

Lashkar-e-Taiba (Army of the Righteous)

Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), although focused heavily on Kashmir, has from its inception embraced a broader jihadist vision. With assistance from Abdullah Azzam, Osama bin Laden’s mentor and partner during the 1980s, two Pakistani engineering professors founded Markaz-ud-Dawa-wal-Irshad (the Center for Preaching and Guidance) outside of Lahore in the late 1980s. Spread out over several hectares, this facility served as a mosque and community center, while promoting an extremist interpretation of Islam. Annual gatherings at the center attracted as many as 100,000 people and prominently featured calls for *jihad*.⁷⁷

LeT emerged in 1993 as an armed wing of this religious center, with the goal of establishing Islamic rule first in Kashmir, then throughout India.⁷⁸ In the first decade of the 21st century, LeT made a name for itself regionally with a several high-profile attacks against India, including an attack on India’s historic Red Fort military base in December 2000, a failed attack by a squad of suicide bombers on Kashmir’s Srinagar Airport in January 2001, a series of bombings in Delhi in

October 2005, and bombings across Mumbai's commuter rail system in July 2006. The group has also been implicated, along with JeM, in the 2001 attack on the Indian Parliament.⁷⁹

The group expressed broader, international ambitions in March 2003, when LeT leaders organized a Defense of the Muslim Community Conference in Islamabad. Hafiz Saeed, the LeT leader, promoted a global jihadist vision to participants, proclaiming:

“The powerful Western world is terrorizing the Muslims. We are being invaded, humiliated, manipulated, and looted. How else can we respond but through jihad? . . . We must fight against the evil trio—America, India, and Israel. Suicide missions are in accordance with Islam. In fact, a suicide attack is the best form of jihad.”⁸⁰

Five years later, in November 2008, LeT gained international recognition as one of the most brutal terrorist organizations, when it carried out a three-day armed assault on civilian targets across Mumbai that left nearly 200 people dead. Tourist sites and other locations frequently visited by foreigners—including five-star hotels, a train station, and a Jewish community center—were directly targeted during the attack.⁸¹ One year later, authorities in Bangladesh and India arrested several LeT militants for planning suicide car bombings of the American and Indian embassies in Dhaka.⁸² Both of these plots had been foreshadowed in 2007, when Indian police arrested an LeT-trained militant for planning a series of bombings aimed at American and Israeli tourists on India's Goa beaches.⁸³

Like HuM and JeM, Lashkar-e-Taiba has maintained close links to al-Qaeda. LeT's earliest recruits were trained in an al-Qaeda camp in Kunar, Afghanistan.⁸⁴ After al-Qaeda's expulsion from Afghanistan in 2001, LeT provided sanctuary for al-Qaeda members, including Abu Zubayda, who was captured in an LeT safe house in March 2002 in Pakistan's Punjab region.⁸⁵

Along with sanctuary, LeT provided training for new recruits going on missions for al-Qaeda and other terrorist groups. This function was especially important for al-Qaeda as the organization's leadership struggled to establish a secure presence in Pakistan after 9/11. Several Western terrorists trained by LeT returned to their home countries to attempt mass-casualty attacks, including Richard Reid (the 2001 shoe-bomber), Dhirin Barot and Omar Khyam (leaders to two separate bomb plots in Britain), and David Hicks (an Australian al-Qaeda operative). LeT has also trained militants—and sent its own cadres—to fight against U.S., NATO, and allied forces in Afghanistan and Iraq.⁸⁶

As it facilitated activities for al-Qaeda, LeT developed international contacts to expand its operations. Within Britain's large Pakistani population, LeT has recruited new members for its activities in Kashmir and has maintained successful fundraising campaign through the LeT-linked charity Jama'at-ud-Da'wa (Party of the Calling). British and Pakistani authorities suspect that money raised through this charity was used to finance the thwarted plot to detonate liquid explosives on several transatlantic flights in 2006.⁸⁷

In October 2009, the FBI arrested two men in Chicago—American David Headley and his Canadian accomplice—for plotting a terrorist attack in Denmark. Authorities subsequently learned that Headley had conducted at least five reconnaissance missions in Mumbai to help LeT identify targets for its November 2008 attack on the city.⁸⁸ In November 2009, one month after

Headley's arrest, Italian police arrested four Pakistani men for providing funding for the Mumbai attack. A fifth suspect avoided capture and fled Italy.⁸⁹

These international connections give LeT greater resources to fund its operations, while enhancing its ability to recruit non-Pakistanis, who may have easier access to targets in India, Europe, and North America. During his 2009 presentation of the intelligence community's annual threat assessment to Congress, U.S. Director of National Intelligence Denis Blair stated:

Although [Lashkar-e-Taiba] is not focused on the United States, we are concerned that, in general, it is becoming more of a direct threat, and is placing Western targets in Europe in its sights. LeT's plotting against India and willingness to attack Jewish interests and locations visited by Westerners, as demonstrated in the 2008 Mumbai attacks, raise concerns that either the group itself or individual members will more actively embrace an anti-Western agenda.⁹⁰

Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (Taliban Movement of Pakistan)

The Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (the "Taliban Movement of Pakistan"), or simply the "Pakistani Taliban," serves as an umbrella organization for several militant groups based in Pakistan's tribal belt. This alliance of Pashtun militants has focused principally on anti-government terrorist and insurgent attacks in Pakistan. However, the Pakistani Taliban has demonstrated an ability to strike NATO and allied forces in Afghanistan, as well as a capability to reach Western targets beyond the region.

The Pakistani Taliban arose as a formal alliance in December 2007, when a *shura* of militant leaders convened in South Waziristan to establish a permanent coordinating body. The *shura* appointed Baitullah Mehsud, a veteran of the war in Afghanistan, as its leader. The new umbrella organization quickly established a presence across all seven regions (or agencies) of Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and in the neighboring Northwest Frontier Province (especially the Swat Valley), with an estimated 30,000 to 35,000 members.⁹¹

In contrast to most other prominent Pakistani extremist groups, the Pakistani Taliban arose in direct opposition to the Pakistan regime. The network's leadership announced a defensive *jihad* against the Pakistani army's incursions into Pakistan's tribal belt and declared its intention to eliminate Western influence from the country and establish an Islamic state. The Pakistani Taliban is widely suspected of carrying out the assassination of Benazir Bhutto, Pakistan's secular and reformist former Prime Minister, via suicide bombing in December 2007, just days after the network formally announced its creation (although Baitullah Mehsud denied involvement).⁹²

Since then, the Pakistani Taliban has conducted numerous attacks on Pakistan's police and security personnel. In addition to resisting the Pakistani military in the tribal belt, the Pakistani Taliban has launched assaults against security forces in other regions, including the siege of the Manawan police academy in Punjab and the suicide bombing of a police station in Islamabad, both in March 2009.⁹³ The Pakistani Taliban is also linked to the June 2009 suicide truck bombing of the Pearl Continental Hotel, a luxury hotel in Peshawar with a large foreign clientele.⁹⁴ During the same month, the Pakistani Taliban launched near-simultaneous suicide bombings in different regions; one killed outspoken anti-Taliban cleric Sarfraz Naeemi in Lahore

and the second struck a mosque near a military base in northwestern town of Nowshera.⁹⁵ Parallel to its assault on Pakistan's government, the Pakistani Taliban actively participates in the Afghan insurgency. Many Pakistani Taliban militants are veterans of the conflict in Afghanistan and continue to fight alongside their counterparts across the border. The Pakistani Taliban also provides sanctuary in South Waziristan to Afghan Taliban insurgents. In February 2009, the network's leader Baitullah Mehsud joined with other militant leaders to form the Council of United Mujahideen, which pledged allegiance to Afghan Taliban leader Mohammad Omar.⁹⁶

In August 2009, a U.S. missile strike in South Waziristan killed Baitullah Mehsud, who was succeeded by his cousin, Hakimullah Meshud, as leader of the Pakistani Taliban. Four months later, in cooperation with the Taliban in Afghanistan, the Pakistani Taliban engineered a revenge attack, striking a CIA facility in Khost with a suicide bombing that killed seven CIA agents and one Jordanian intelligence official. In a propaganda video released after the attack, the suicide bomber, a Jordanian citizen whom the CIA had hoped to employ as a double agent to infiltrate al-Qaeda, appears next to Hakimullah Mehsud and vows revenge for the killing of the Pakistani Taliban's previous leader.⁹⁷

The Pakistani Taliban has been linked to two terrorist plots in Europe and North America. In January 2008, Spanish authorities arrested 14 suspects on suspicion of plotting bombings of the Barcelona subway system, to be followed by attacks in several other West European countries. Dutch police arrested another suspect and extradited him to Spain. The Pakistani Taliban claimed responsibility for the attempted attack in a video-taped interview.⁹⁸ In May 2010, Faisal Shahzad, a naturalized American citizen from Pakistan, attempted an attack on New York's Time Square with a (defective) car bomb, which failed to detonate. Shahzad received training and financing from the Pakistani Taliban, which later released a "martyrdom video" featuring Shahzad discussing plans for an attack against America.⁹⁹

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