



Pakistan – Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on 9 April 2013

Any evidence or allegations of collusion between the Pakistan government and extremist terrorist groups operating in Pakistan?

A US Congressional Research Service report, in a section titled “Questions About Pakistan’s Main Intelligence Agency”, refers to alleged links between the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) and terrorist groups in Pakistan as follows:

“A 2002 statement by the then-British foreign secretary noted the British government’s acceptance of ‘a clear link’ between the ISI and Pakistan-based terrorist groups including the LeT, JeM, and Harakat Mujahideen. A former French judge has claimed that the Pakistani government once ran training camps for the LeT with the CIA’s knowledge. He contends the two intelligence agencies had an agreement that Pakistan would not allow foreign militants to train at an LeT camp ‘run by the Pakistani military.’ The Afghan government claims to have evidence of ISI complicity in both an April 2008 assassination attempt on President Karzai and in the July 2008 bombing of India’s Kabul Embassy. New Delhi joined Kabul in accusing the ISI of involvement in the latter attack. Islamabad countered that, despite repeated demands, neither neighbor provided evidence supporting the ‘unsubstantiated allegations.’ The top Afghan intelligence official has reported to his government that the ISI provides material support to Taliban commanders based in Quetta. The ISI may even have maintained contacts with Baitullah Mehsud, possibly tipping off the Taliban commander when Pakistani army forces get any fixes on his position. Even some retired, U.S.-trained Pakistani military officers are suspected of continuing to recruit, train, and finance Islamist insurgents. One, known as ‘Colonel Imam,’ is among those believed to serve as a ‘quasi-official bridge’ to Taliban leaders.” (US Congressional Research Service (1 June 2010) *Pakistan: Key Current Issues and Developments*)

This section of the report also states:

“As recently as September 2009, the former top U.S. commander in Afghanistan, Gen. Stanley McChrystal, was accusing ISI elements of materially aiding insurgent groups that attack coalition forces in Afghanistan, and there appears to be an ongoing conviction among U.S. officials that the Afghan Taliban’s sanctuaries in Pakistan have allowed them to sustain their insurgency and that elements of the ISI have continued to support them. Pakistani officials repeatedly provide assurances that no elements of the ISI are cooperating with militants or extremists. In May 2009, a State Department spokesman indicated that the United States takes such officials ‘at their word.’ A late 2009 Los Angeles Times report indicated that the ISI’s cooperation with U.S. intelligence agencies has been instrumental in the capture or killing of numerous militant fugitives, and that covert U.S. rewards for such assistance is valued in the hundreds of millions of dollars, accounting for as much as one-third of the entire ISI budget. According to this report, despite holding deep misgivings about the ISI, U.S. intelligence officials recognize no alternative but to work with them.” (ibid)

Referring to insurgent group the Haqqani network, a report published by the Institute for the Study of War states:

“The Haqqani network has been at war for much of the last thirty years. Although the network wages its insurgency in Afghanistan, it is operationally and strategically headquartered in North Waziristan, Pakistan and enjoys the support and protection of elements of the Pakistani intelligence establishment.” (Institute for the Study of War (October 2010) *The Haqqani Network: From Pakistan to Afghanistan*, p.9)

See also an Institute for the Study of War report which states:

“The Haqqani Network is the most capable and dangerous insurgent organization in Afghanistan. The network’s current leader, Sirajuddin Haqqani, effectively organizes the tribal and insurgent groups of the southern part of Pakistan’s Federally Administered Tribal Areas in ways consistent with the interests of the Pakistani government.” (Institute for the Study of War (March 2012) *The Haqqani Network: A Strategic Threat*, p.11)

This report also states:

“The Haqqani Network is the preferred insurgent group to represent the interests of the Pakistani security services going forward in Afghanistan, as the group is more effective than the much-diminished southern Taliban. The Haqqani Network’s territorial control of the southeast could provide the Pakistanis with much needed ‘strategic depth’ in case of a full-scale breakout of hostilities across Pakistan’s eastern border with India. Additionally, given Pakistan’s concerns of increased Indian involvement in Afghanistan, the Haqqani Network is a tool to target strategically Indian political, diplomatic and economic interests in Kabul and elsewhere around the country. Furthermore, by helping to dissuade anti-Pakistan insurgents, such as Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan (TTP), from launching attacks on Pakistani security services and instead reorienting some of their focus on Afghanistan, the Haqqanis are assisting in the campaign to quiet military tensions in Pakistan’s tribal frontier, though they have not been successful in doing so.” (ibid, pp.11-12)

A Voice of America News article states:

“Admiral Mike Mullen, chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, told Pakistani media Wednesday that some members of the Inter-Services Intelligence agency have a long-standing relationship with the Haqqani militant network. Officials have for years suspected the ties, which Pakistan denies.” (Voice of America News (20 April 2011) *US: Pakistan's ISI has Links with Militants*)

A South Asia Terrorism Portal article on alleged links between the ISI and 'Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) states:

“Attending a special Congressional hearing on March 11 on ‘Lashkar-e-Toiba and the growing ambition of Islamic militancy in Pakistan’, Congressmen unanimously expressed concern that despite best of the efforts by the Obama administration, the ISI continues to maintain links with LeT and that Pakistan is not taking decisive action against the terrorist outfit.” (South Asia Terrorism

Portal (3 December 2010) *ISI continues to maintain links with LeT, say US experts*)

The alleged relationship between the ISI and LeT is also referred to in a Voice of America News report which states:

“The U.S. government’s star witness in a high-profile terrorism trial involving the 2008 bombings in Mumbai, India is on the stand this week in Chicago, Illinois. Pakistani-American and admitted terrorist David Headley has offered jurors an inside look at what he describes as the close relationship between members of Pakistan’s intelligence agency and militant groups, and how it led to the three-day siege that killed 166 people. Headley told jurors that Pakistan’s Inter-Services Intelligence agency (ISI) serves as ‘an umbrella group’ for Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), the militant group accused in the attacks, and other terrorist cells. He said the ISI also provides financial support and training for militants in Pakistan.” (Voice of America (24 May 2011) *US Witness in Mumbai Terror Trial Ties Pakistani Spy Agency to Militants*)

A report from the Jamestown foundation on the killing of two Indian soldiers, allegedly by LeT, states:

“India’s military intelligence report on the January 8 killings and beheading indicates that the incident was the handiwork of Pakistan’s Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) According to that report, a Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) terrorist identified as Anwar Khan was responsible for the beheading. Anwar, who had earlier decapitated another Indian Army officer in 1996, was part of the ISI’s Border Action Team (BAT). This team was comprised of at least 15 LeT and Jaish-e-Muhammad terrorists led by Subedar Jabbar Khan, who is affiliated to the ISI unit in the Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa village of Tattapani. The intelligence report also said that Anwar was rewarded with \$5,000 by the ISI (CNN-IBN, January 29; Times of India, January 31). An alternative source claims that another BAT member named Mohammad Ismail (a.k.a Ismail Langda) carried out the beheadings at the behest of the LeT and ISI (India Today [New Delhi], February 1). The beheading triggered widespread discontent within India’s political and military circles as well as enraged public sentiment against what is viewed as the Pakistan Army’s brutal behavior and its alleged collusion with the Kashmir terrorists. Official denials have poured out of Islamabad, terming the Indian accusations ‘baseless and malicious” (The Jamestown Foundation (7 February 2013) *Taking Kashmir to the Brink: Provocations and Insecurity Along the Line of Control*)

A report published by the Center for Strategic & International Studies, in a section titled “The Uncertain Role of the ISI”, states:

“The ISI is best known for its links to militant groups, although there is considerable uncertainty as to the magnitude of these relationships. The ISI itself, and its supporters inside Pakistan, allege that it is an intelligence agency just like any other that works only to ensure the defense of Pakistan. US intelligence officials have alleged close ties between the ISI and Taliban elements, but there is likely some truth to a senior Pakistani official’s frustrated retort that ‘honestly, they see ISI behind every bush.’ These actions have also led some to allege that the ISI operates as a rogue organization, answerable to no-one. Former US ambassador to Pakistan William Milam disagrees, stating that, ‘I do not buy the thesis that the ISI is a rogue

organization. It is a disciplined army unit that does what it is told, although it may push the envelope sometimes.' Some element of collusion between the Army, ISI, and Afghan insurgents is almost certain, although estimates vary greatly. Recent developments have also raised new concerns in Washington. The circumstances surrounding the successful US attack on Osama Bin Laden on May 2, 2011 have led many analysts to ask how Bin Laden was able to find sanctuary in the garrison city of Abbottabad. This city is the location of Pakistan's most prestigious military academy, and home to at least three Army regiments and thousands of troops." (Center for Strategic & International Studies (7 June 2011) *Pakistan: Violence vs. Stability*, pp.4-5)

This section of the report also states:

"Matt Waldman, a researcher with the London School of Economics has alleged that there is extensive cooperation at both the operational and strategic level between the ISI and the Afghan Taliban, including ISI representation as observers during meetings of the Quetta Shura, the senior most leadership council. Given the long relationships cultivated from the Soviet jihad, it is also believed that some, or many, ISI officers, both retired and serving continue to maintain a close sense of identification with their proxies." (ibid, p.5)

The 2013 Human Rights Watch annual report on Pakistan states:

"Sunni militant groups, including those with known links to the Pakistani military, its intelligence agencies, and affiliated paramilitaries – such as the ostensibly banned Lashkar-e Jhangvi – operated with widespread impunity across Pakistan, as law enforcement officials effectively turned a blind eye to attacks." (Human Rights Watch (31 January 2013) *World Report 2013 – Pakistan*)

A Reuters AlertNet report states:

"The LeJ once enjoyed the open support of the powerful spy agency, the Directorate for Inter-Services Intelligence. The ISI used such groups as military proxies in India and Afghanistan and to counter Shi'ite militant groups." (Reuters AlertNet (24 October 2012) *Special Report – Pakistan's threat within: the Sunni-Shia divide*)

In a section headed "Sacred Calling" this report states:

"Lashkar-e-Jhangvi, whose name means Soldiers of Jhangvi (after its founder, Haq Maulana Nawab Jhangvi), isn't the only lethal militant group that once enjoyed patronage from the spy agency. One is Lashkar-e-Taiba (Soldiers of the Pure), which fights against Indian control in disputed Kashmir. It is blamed for several deadly attacks on Indian soil, including the November 2008 attacks in Mumbai, and an audacious raid on India's parliament in December 2001 with another Kashmiri militant group, Jaishi-e-Mohammad (Army of Mohammad). That raid brought India and Pakistan to the brink of war. Another is the Pakistani Taliban. Its attack this month on 14-year-old Malala Yousafzai in Swat was only the most recent in a long list of strikes on civilian and military targets, mainly in the unruly tribal area along the Afghan border." (ibid)

An Issues Paper on militant groups in Pakistan published by the Refugee Review Tribunal of Australia, in a section titled “Afghan Taliban/Quetta Shura”, states:

“Quetta, the capital of Balochistan Province, and its surrounding areas have become the base for the Afghan Taliban in Pakistan. Taliban leaders, including supreme leader Mullah Mohammad Omar, have established what is known as the ‘Quetta Shura’ in the city from which they direct insurgent actions in southern Afghanistan. They also reportedly raise funds from wealthy donors throughout the Persian Gulf and act as a conduit for weapons and supplies to fighters in Afghanistan.¹ While Afghan and Western government officials have stated that the Afghan Taliban is using Quetta as a base of operations, among other towns in Pakistan near the Afghanistan/Pakistan border, Pakistani authorities have denied that the Afghan Taliban are based in Quetta.² Nonetheless, it is reported that many analysts believe that the Pakistan military and Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) tolerate the presence of the Afghan Taliban in Pakistan, that they have long been aware of their presence in Balochistan and the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), and that they ‘likely even maintain active contacts with them at some level as part of a hedge strategy in the region’.” (Refugee Review Tribunal of Australia (January 2013) *Pakistan Militant Groups*, p.2)

This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research and Information Unit within time constraints. This response is not and does not purport to be conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum. Please read in full all documents referred to.

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