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Jaish-e-Mohammed

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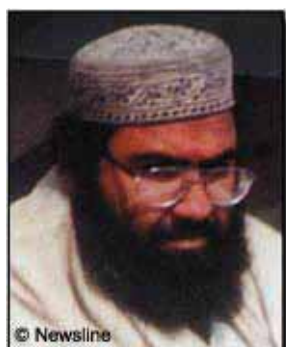
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JAISH-E-MOHAMMED

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BACKGROUND

Jaish-e-Mohammed, also known as the 'Army of Mohammed' is an Islamist extremist group based in Pakistan. The group is led by Maulana Masud Azhar who was previously the leader of the Harakat ul-Ansar (HuA) terrorist organization, which later became the Harkat-ul-Mujahideen in 1998, because of its known association with Osama bin Laden. Azhar was arrested by Indian security forces shortly after the HuA was established in 1994, while on a 'mission' to Kashmir, to wage jihad against the Indian government. He was released from an Indian prison in exchange for a hundred and fifty five hostages of a hijacked Indian Airlines flight IC-814 in December 1999. The group was established on February 4, 2000 at a congregation at Masjid Falal in Karachi. Azhar received widespread support from members of his former group, believed to be somewhere in the region of three quarters of the cadre joining him, while the JeM was also acknowledged and endorsed by three religious school chiefs, Maulana Mufti Rashid Ahmed of the Dar-ul Ifta-e-wal-Irshad, Maulana Sher Ali of the Sheikh-ul-Hadith Dar-ul Haqqania and Mufti Nizamuddin Shamzai of the Majis-e-Tawan-e-Islami. The group is also politically aligned with the radical Jamiat-I Ulema-I Islam Fazlur Rehman faction.



Maulana Masud Azhar

Soon after his release, Maulana Masud Azhar is believed to have traveled to Afghanistan to meet with Osama Bin Laden

and other Taliban leaders, whom provided extensive funding for Jaish-e-Mohammed. It was also during this time that Azhar rallied for support across Pakistan, calling for jihadi's to join him in the fight to liberate Kashmir. The group has also received funding through donation requests in pamphlets and magazines.

Upon returning to Pakistan, Azhar faced resistance from Maulana Fazl-ur-Rehman Khalili, his compatriot and co-founder of HuM. Khalili was determined to keep HuM intact, and went so far as to resign and offer his position to Azhar. However, Azhar refused and went ahead with the formation of JeM, which later merged with HuM in 1999. Despite the merger, animosity and differences existed over the control of HuM's assets in Pakistan, leading to the eventual assassination of Maulana Ludhyanavi, one of JeM's top supporters. Azhar was un-perturbed by the killing, and had the added advantage of receiving support from Mushtaq Ahmad Zargar, a young Srinagar youth, who headed the Al-Umar Mujahideen, and dedicated his life and his cadre's to JeM's movement.

By 2003, JeM had split into the Khuddam ul-Islam (Kul), led by Azhar and Jamaat ul-Furqan (JUF), led by Abdul Jabbar. Despite the splintering of JeM, the group continues to assume and be associated with its original identity.

OBJECTIVES - IDEOLOGY

Jaish-e-Mohammed's primary objective is to 'liberate' Kashmir from Indian control and integrate the state within Pakistan. The group aims to achieve this by engaging the Indian security forces in a proxy or holy war, hoping that there will be an eventual withdrawal from the state of Jammu and Kashmir.

JeM openly acknowledges the existence of its schools across Pakistan which train and

prepare young men about the importance of engaging in jihad against Indian rule. Maulana Masud Azhar has also stated his distrust and disliking for India's former Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee, calling for his assassination. Apart from 'liberating' Kashmir, Azhar has also stated his desire to take control over the Babri Masjid in Ayodhya, Delhi and Amritsar.

While there are several groups operating in Jammu & Kashmir, there is no official linkage between them, leading to radical groups such as Jaish to be critical of the more moderate organizations in the Valley, such as the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) as well as the Hindu and Village self defence forces.

JeM's ideological beliefs extend beyond J&K, with the group calling for the 'destruction' of India, Israel and the United States of America by waging jihad against the respective nations, which it regards as having violated the rights of Muslim people.

FACTIONS

Following the government ban on Jaish-e-Mohammed in January 2002, the organization has re-invented itself into the Khudam-ul-Islam, allowing it to legitimately exist in Pakistan. However, mounting pressure from Indian security forces and authority agencies to clamp down and enforce the ban has meant, that on the surface, the government of Pakistan has had to follow through with its promise, forcing JeM to shut down its operations. This has led to splinter groups attached to JeM cropping up, allowing the terrorist organization to operate under different aliases. Smaller groups believed to be attached to JeM include the Convoy of Mercy, Al Hadid, Muslim Brotherhood, Al Faran Al Jihad, Mujahideen E-Tanzeem, Mohammed's Army, National movement for the restoration of Pakistani sovereignty, Army of the Prophet and Tehrik-ul-Furqaan.

While JeM and its splinter groups represent the militant faction of the

movement, the group is politically aligned with the radical party Jamiat-i-Ulema-Islam, led by Maulana Fazlur Rehman. This association provides for an interface between JeM and the mainstream Pakistan society, allowing it to garner support and funding. The organization is also supported by Pakistan's top Islamic scholars and is believed to have close affiliations to the Binori Town Mosque. It is also believed that Jaish is linked with the Jamia Manzoorul Islamia school in the eastern city of Lahore, which is thought to have taught one of the men responsible for the London suicide bombings in July 2005.

STRENGTH

Maulana Masud Azhar, a self proclaimed, gifted orator, is believed to have recruited several Jihadi's to fight in Kashmir, in rallies that were held across Pakistan and advertised on the country's state owned television station. The group is believed to have several hundred supporters located mainly in Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (POK), Pakistan and India's southern Kashmir and Doda regions. A large number of men are also recruited from Pakistan's so called 'Jihad factory' of Punjab province, with an especially large percentage from Multan, Bahawalpur and Rahim Yar Khan Districts. The easy availability and large number of cadre recruited from Punjab province can be attributed to the high unemployment levels and the lack of education prevalent in the surrounding districts. JeM's ability to transcend the entire population of the district, and play on its fears with the promise of money and a better life, has provided it with a mass of semi-literate, unemployed youth, who are easily indoctrinated and lured into fighting in Kashmir and other parts of India. The group also received a major boost to its insurgency efforts, when the ultra-right Sipah-e-Sahiban of Pakistan pledged at least one lakh cadre to Masud Azhar in 2002.

Despite the large numbers of supporters, the group suffered a major setback in 2003, when Pakistan law enforcement

agencies, arrested hundreds of the JeM cadre and sealed several of the Khudam offices across the country.

While JeM does not constitute as large a group as some of the other major terrorist outfits operating in the Valley, it does enjoy the benefit of being associated with the Binori town Mosque, and the more than 8,000 students whom learn at the location. The groups command structure is mainly comprised of individuals who belong to countries other than Pakistan, while the cadre is largely from POK or other parts of the country.

TRAINING CAMPS – AREAS OF INFLUENCE

While the leaders of JeM are mainly foreigners, the group's supporters comprise of mostly Pakistanis and Kashmiris, making for a formidable adversary, as their knowledge of the region and beyond is extensive. There are also a large number of Afghans and Arabs, veterans from the conflict in Afghanistan, adding an element of determined and hardened fighters, dedicated to a cause which they regard as defending and upholding the values of Islam. Until 2001, the JeM had training facilities in Afghanistan, although they have now been re-located to Balakot, in the North West Frontier province, Peshawar and in parts of Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (POK), namely Muzaffarabad. Islamabad has denied the existence of these camps and has not taken any steps at dismantling the infrastructure of the group, such as its communication links, launching pads and other facilities.

Members of the group are trained in the use of highly sophisticated weapons, including light and heavy machineguns, assault rifles, mortars, rocket grenades and improvised explosive devices. The combination of foreign and local militants poses a challenge to security forces as several of the leaders operate from beyond India's borders. Added to this is the fact that several of the militants are battle hardened, well trained and closely resemble a small, but disciplined army.

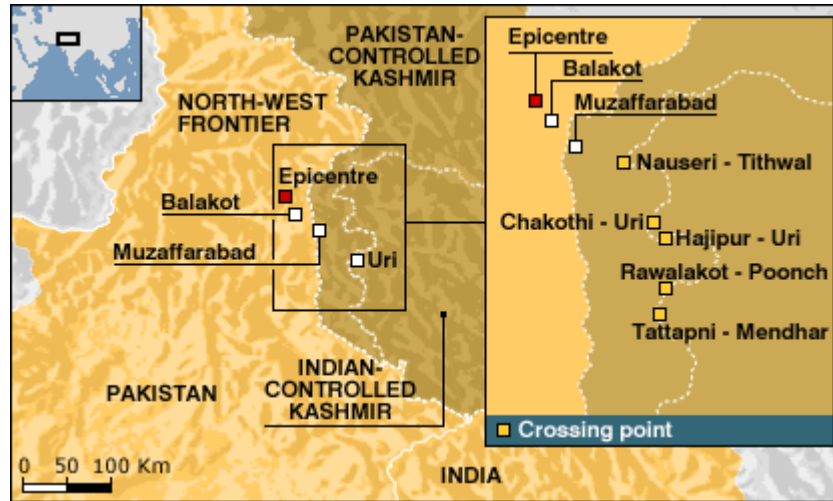


Jaish-e-Mohammed cadre training

The group also operates several cells in Jammu & Kashmir and in the larger cities across India, meaning that its scope of activities is not only restricted to the conflict region of the state. JeM is also believed to operate foreign cells across Central Asia and certain parts of South East Asia, providing it with an opportunity to build linkages with other groups and to rally for support and funding.

Over the years, the JeM has been held accountable for numerous attacks both in Jammu & Kashmir and other parts of India. The JeM has laid claim to being the pioneer of suicide or fidayeen attacks in J&K when it rammed an explosives laden vehicle into the gates of the Badami Bagh Cantonment area of Srinagar in April 2000. The attack was the first of its kind in the 13 year history of militancy in the valley, and developed a modus operandi, of sorts, that has continued till date. Apart from daring fidayeen attacks in the Valley, JeM has also made numerous attempts at infiltration across the LoC and has frequently engaged against security forces in gun battles and bombings. The groups association with suicide bombings extended beyond the border, to a failed assassination attempt on Pakistani President, Pervez Musharraf in 2002, for his stance on purging Pakistan of terrorism.

Map showing areas of JeM training camps and points of infiltration



ACTIVITIES

The relative infancy of JeM has meant that the group has not been directly associated with acts of terrorism prior to 1999. This however, does not mean that the group is not a major perpetrator of terrorist violence, having carried out several attacks in J&K, India and overseas.

The affiliation of the group to HuM and HuA has meant that it has been in-directly linked to the 1994 kidnappings of US and British nationals by Omar Sheikh in New Delhi and the 1995 kidnappings of foreigners in Kashmir.

More recently, Jaish operatives are believed to have been responsible for the bold and daring attack on India's parliament in New Delhi which left 10 people dead, and brought India and Pakistan dangerously close to war.

JeM has by no means confined its operations to J&K and India, and is suspected by Pakistani authorities of being affiliated to the perpetrators of the deadly anti-Christian attacks in Islamabad, Murree and Taxila in 2002. British authorities also suspect JeM's involvement in training at least one of the terrorists who carried out the attacks on London's transport system in July 2005.

MAJOR TERRORIST ATTACKS BY JEM POST SEPTEMBER 11, 2001

Date	Incident	Location
1 October 2001	Attack on State Legislative Assembly Complex	Srinagar, India
13 December 2001	Attack on India's Parliament	New Delhi, India
August 2002	Anti-Christian attacks across Pakistan	Islamabad, Muree and Taxila, Pakistan
13 March 2003	Bomb explosion on train	Mumbai, India
25 December 2003	Assassination attempt on President Pervez Musharraf	Rawalpindi, Pakistan
5 July 2005	Attack on Ayodhya Complex	Ayodhya, India
7 July 2005	Links to series of bomb explosions on London transport system	London, United Kingdom

In comparison to other major terrorist groups in the Valley, such as Lashkar-e-Toiba and Hizbul Mujahideen, JeM has been involved in relatively fewer acts of violence. However, more significant than the number of attacks, it has been the resulting impact which has been more devastating.

The attack on India's parliament was not only an act of violence against the heart of the nations' political and democratic establishment, but at a time of nuclear weapons, brought the sub-continent to the brink of a full fledged war. Pakistan's alleged involvement in fueling the attack disrupted the peace process and undid all confidence building measures between the two countries – an outcome which analysts believe to have been intended, rather than the widespread casualties. Equally important, is the meticulous planning and implementation required to carry out such an attack, hinting towards an extensive financial and weapons support network for JeM.

Similarly, rather than causing widespread fatalities, the attack on the Ayodhya complex, is believed to have been intended at 'destabilizing' India's political and societal establishment. JeM's interests not only lie with inflicting a blow on Indian society, but at achieving its objectives through the more carefully planned erosion of India, from within. To achieve this, the group's agenda involves attempting to destabilize the Indian economy by flooding it with counterfeit currency, and by increasing the inflow of narcotics.

EXTERNAL LINKAGES

While the acts of terrorism committed by JeM are largely confined to J&K, the group is believed to have an expansive international network, both financially and in terms of availability of cadre. JeM is suspected to have drawn a large amount of material resources and cadre strength from militant groups such as Harkat-ul-Ansar, which later became HuM in 1998,

and the Harakat-ul-Jihad-i-Islami (HUJI). The group is also a member of the United Jihad Council (UJC), an amalgam of 14 militant outfits based in POK. There is also speculation that the group shares good relations with Osama Bin Laden and his Al-Qaeda network, receiving substantial funding from Afghan Arabs and the Taliban.

The link with between JeM and the Taliban exists due to the strong Deobandi creed which forms the primary ideological and religious base for both groups. It also believed that members of both groups are part of a larger network which trained in Madrassahs (Muslim seminaries) at the same time. Soon after Masud's release from Indian custody, the HuM leader traveled to Kandhar to receive blessings from the Taliban in support of his launching of JeM.

There are also indications that JeM is gaining significant support amongst militant Kashmiri separatists in the UK, with a growing number of supporters around the country. The JeM has also received support from a large number of Madrassahs in Pakistan as well as from sympathetic civilians in the mainstream society.

The Indian government has claimed that the group is backed and funded by Pakistan's Inter Services Intelligence (ISI) agency, which has aided the JeM in recruiting and training militants as well as allegedly paying them large sums of money to carry out operations in Kashmir. These allegations have been denied by the Pakistan government, which has repeatedly distanced itself from any involvement. The assassination attempt on Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf in 2003, is thought to have been the final straw in the governments decision to pull the plug on all forms of support for JeM. However, it is believed that the ISI continues to provide un-equivocal moral, logistical and financial backing to the group, whether legitimized or not, is questionable.

THE MEDIA AND THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

Jaish-e-Mohammed's attack on India's parliament, not only received widespread international and domestic condemnation, but the resulting implication by the Indian government forced Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf to pledge that Pakistan would not allow its territory to be used for terrorism, resulting in an official ban and freezing of assets in January 2002. Following suit, the United States announced an official ban on JeM shortly afterwards, freezing all assets under its name and re-designating the group as a Foreign Terrorist Organization, in accordance to the Immigration and Nationality Act. Despite the ban, the impact of this move has been questioned, since JeM has already assumed a new face and a new name, subsequently rendering the United States move as obsolete.

Keeping in mind the listing of terrorist organizations by the United Nations Security Council, the Australian government has outlawed JeM under its counter-terrorism laws, making it illegal for Australians to train, recruit, receive funds or make funds available to the group.

Despite international recognition of Jaish-e-Mohammed as a terrorist organization, the Indian government has been advised to maintain restraint in its intended approach at dealing with the group, in the past. It was not until the July 7, 2005 suicide bombings in London, that the world realized the extent to which JeM had penetrated societies across the globe. One of the four suicide bombers who detonated a rucksack is said to have contacted members of Jaish-e-Mohammed while on a religious studies course in Pakistan. It is also believed that a former Jaish operative, by the name of Ahmed Omar Sheikh, not only fought in Kashmir, but operated training camps which the bombers visited in Mansehra district in the North West Frontier Province.

As with other terrorist organizations, JeM relies heavily on the media to promote its

activities. An attack by the group is regarded as a publicity statement, with a failed attempt going just as far as a successful bombing. Unknowingly the media often appears as an invisible ally, providing groups such as Jaish extensive coverage, leading to dissent, paranoia and disruption of civil society, as well as denting the morale of security forces and the government.

JAISH-E-MOHAMMED IN 2005

Following the September 11, 2001 terror attacks on the United States and the ensuing 'war on terror', JeM has had to re-structure their modus operandi. The group has withdrawn all its funds from bank accounts and invested in businesses such as real estate, commodity trading and the manufacturing of consumer goods. Furthermore, accounts have also been opened under the various alias names and other organizations which the group is associated with. A spokesman for JeM openly admitted that they had "... withdrawn our money from the bank accounts and reopened them in the name of our low-profile supporters". The ease at which money is transferred and utilized, demonstrates the gaping loopholes which exist in Pakistan's counter-terrorism laws. It is also well acknowledged, that although the Pakistani political and military establishment decided to tow the line with the United States in the Global War on Terror, Jaish militant commanders fighting in Kashmir have been spared, and continue to roam freely and associate with their cadre.

Till date, JeM continues to enjoy close relations with Osama Bin Laden and the Al-Qaeda network, which, as a senior Pakistani security official said, makes it "...impossible to tell which of the militants earlier engaged in Kashmir are now wedded to the Al-Qaeda ideology". This has however, prompted the Pakistani administration to engage in a dangerous game, allowing Jaish militants to continue fighting in Kashmir, with the hope that they will eventually lead security forces to Al-Qaeda operatives and Osama Bin Laden.

The earthquake which struck Kashmir and Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (POK) on October 8, 2005, temporarily crippled the operations of JeM. The group is believed to have lost a substantial number of militants, although it is thought that most of them were of the lower cadre, thus not affecting their operations to a great extent. The survival of the commanders has meant that JeM will continue to have its 'brains trust' capable of leading the militants against security forces. Apart from the death of militants, it is also

believed that the group had support structures, such as its training camps, communications facilities and launching pads destroyed by the earthquake.

While the recent turn of events have temporarily dented the operations of Jaish-e-Mohammed, the group is still active and remains focused on waging jihad against the Indian political and military establishment in order to liberate Kashmir from India.