



Defeating Terrorist Support Structures After Mumbai II

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The November 2008 terrorist attack on Mumbai underscored a central challenge in the global counterterrorism struggle: defeating broad terrorist support structures. This is the second of a three-part series to address this fundamental and often controversial aspect of countering the financing of terrorism (CFT).

The issue is fundamental because without solid recruitment and funding structures, the active terrorist cells are debilitated to a significant degree. The issue is controversial because broad organizational infrastructures often encompass non-profit fronts that carry out vital humanitarian activities irrespective of their involvement in militancy or terrorism.

Non-profit organizations continue to be an effective way for terrorist organizations to raise money and build their infrastructures. The February 2008 FATF report indicated that non-profit organizations are “coming to be recognized as a crucial weak point in the global struggle to combat terrorist finance.” This trend is not a new one. Charitable fronts have long been associated with controversial causes.

In the context of November’s attack, this second report will examine the Pakistan-based non-profit organization Jamaat-ud-Dawa (JuD), allegedly the public face of Lashkar-e-Tayyiba (LeT), which is thought to be responsible for the horrific siege of Mumbai. JuD denies any link to LeT. The third report will consider whether the UN Security Council’s decision to ban JuD following the attack will eliminate the organization or its activities, and will also provide recommendations for the private and public sectors to fortify the system to reduce the risk of breach by terrorists and their financiers.

Background

JuD evolved as the public face – due to its extensive social, educational, humanitarian and medical work – of the LeT, which

Pakistan officially banned in 2002 due to US pressure. Before examining JuD, it is important to detail the organizational background of LeT and its precursor Markaz-e-Dawa. LeT had actively cooperated with al-Qaeda and the Taliban since the 1980s and Southeast Asia’s Jamaa Islamiyya since the early 1990s. LeT has executed a spate of terrorist attacks in Kashmir and India for over two decades. LeT began as the paramilitary apparatus of the Marka-e-Dawa wal Irshad (Centre for Preaching and Guidance), which was created in 1986 by Hafez Mohammed Saeed. Saeed had studied in Saudi Arabia prior to founding the organization and was strongly influenced by his relationship with Abdullah Azzam, the Palestinian ideologue and Bin Laden’s mentor who founded al-Qaeda’s precursor the Maktab al-Khidmat (Office of Services) during the Afghan Jihad against the Soviets.

In the early 1990s Markaz al-Dawa organized itself into two wings: the political and social services wing which retained the same name; and the military wing named Lashkar-e-Tayyiba. LeT initially fought the Soviets and their client, Najibullah, in Afghanistan but later redirected efforts to fight in Jammu and Kashmir and Bosnia. After 9/11 the group grew exponentially and was soon banned in Pakistan in 2002 for its links to al-Qaeda, following diplomatic pressure from the US. Just before the ban, Hafiz Saeed officially left the group and created Jamaat-ud-Dawa, ostensibly a non-profit organization involved in social, political and humanitarian activities. LeT went underground and Markaz al-Dawa became defunct as JuD claimed to be the new iteration of the group.

It is believed that JuD became the public face of LeT with Hafiz Saeed still in charge of both groups. JuD could then be used to tap the same radical networks for promulgation of the same Salafi Jihadi ideology, funding, recruitment and community services activities to bolster the organization’s broader infrastructure while maintaining direct operational capabilities for political violence and terrorism through covert LeT structures.

JuD runs a wide network of offices throughout Pakistan, Afghanistan and a few in Southern Africa and India. The number of representative offices in Pakistan, each of which is also a proselytizing center, has been estimated to exceed 2,500. According to JuD’s website, the group has organizationally divided Pakistan into provinces, districts and sectors.

The departments of JuD include the following:

- Proselytizing
- Humanitarian relief
- Education
- Media and Propagation
- Construction Department
- Teacher's wing
- Student's wing
- Women's wing
- Worker's wing
- Doctor's wing
- Public relations
- Political affairs

Capitalizing on Natural Disasters

JuD's model for expanding its influence, capacity and ideology involves providing relief after natural disasters. One successful example of this approach took place in 2005 following the earthquake in Kashmir that killed nearly 80,000 people and left over 10,000 children orphaned. JuD and other banned charities such as al-Rashid Trust had not previously had much influence in the area. But after several international organizations injected substantial cash flows for the charities to administer in the form of aid, their influence and trust within the affected communities naturally grew rapidly.

JuD reportedly was selecting fatherless orphans after the disaster to place in their madrasas around Pakistan. The madrasas have a broad-based curriculum that includes science and English, but the JuD's radically interpretation of Islam – which includes virulent attacks on minorities, the West, Jews and Christians – is generously added to the general curriculum and ethos of the schools. According to the BBC, at one JuD school in Kashmir, funded by the United Nations Children's Fund, primary children were singing a song at morning assembly that included the line: "When people

deny our faith, ask them to convert and if they don't, destroy them utterly." There is a reasonable expectation that within this student population, there is a veritable reservoir of radicalized and loyal candidates for future terrorist operations. Most, however, will fulfil other roles within the movement.

The potential danger of JuD's broad infrastructure is underscored by the Mumbai attackers rapid radicalization in the months prior to the incident. According to the reported admissions of Mohammed Ajmal Kasab, the lone surviving terrorist captured by the Mumbai police, JuD provided the gateway through which Kasab passed to undertake LeT's curriculum of intensive paramilitary and ideological training. Kasab approached a JuD stall at the Rawalpindi public market 18 months before carrying out the Mumbai attack. Initially set on gaining only the paramilitary training useful for a life of crime, Kasab received ideological conditioning that indoctrinated him into a firm Salafi Jihadist worldview, which would re-channel his earlier criminal ambition towards the aim of becoming a terrorist.

The ideological requirement for carrying out terrorist attacks is perhaps more important and difficult to achieve than the military component. Therefore, it is particularly worrying that JuD is able to ideologically and educationally condition a large population of orphaned students, which may be used later for "martyrdom" operations as LeT's terrorist strategies unfold. This facet of the counterterrorism challenge highlights the principal concern of broad organizational infrastructures.

1 <http://www.fatf-gafi.org/dataoecd/28/43/40285899.pdf>

2 http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/5402756.stm

3 It is interesting to consider that within the large marketplace for martial skills in Pakistan, Kasab wasted little time before contacting JuD. This suggests that despite JuD's charitable face, JuD's relationship to LeT and its paramilitary activities was an open secret, enabling prospective recruits a clear point of contact and path to militancy.

NEXT TIME...

The third report of this three-part series will consider key vulnerabilities that the LeT and JuD breached with regard to the Mumbai attack. In addition, the report will address whether the recent UN ban will eliminate JuD and LeT. Recommendations for the private and public sector to enhance their counterterrorism capabilities will be offered.