

The Possibility of Foreign Powers Training Intelligence Agencies of Pakistan

Raja Saadat

Abstract:

An attempt is made in this paper to emphasize the need for training of Pakistani intelligence agencies by Western countries and identify the areas which hinder a meaningful interaction. To do this it is necessary to understand the constraining factors of both sides. Pakistan's security compulsions which lay down the guidelines for the use of its intelligence apparatus, past experiences, present degree of cooperation with other countries will be discussed for better understanding of the subject. To explore the possibility of Pakistan's intelligence agencies being trained by foreign powers.

Keywords:

Terrorism, Intelligence, Training, Foreign Powers, Security

General

1. The success of terrorists in 9/11, 7/7 and Madrid bombings has revealed new trends in terrorism. Terrorists now function internationally through various regional groups having common ideology and strategy. These groups support each other across countries and regions and have adopted a new form of warfare¹ commonly known as 'unrestricted warfare'. Presumably this kind of warfare enables them to take their fight to homeland of the enemy and strike at his soft underbelly. Such a strike is highly preferred due to the ability to target the enemy's sensitivities, wide media coverage, and avoidance of direct engagement with regular military forces. The menace of international terrorism knows no physical, religious or cultural boundaries and targets Muslims and non Muslims alike.
2. In the wake of recent events of international terrorism across the globe, there has been a growing realization amongst many countries to enhance their intelligence relationships with nations, with proximity to Afghanistan, especially Pakistan. The affected countries which are being used as terrorists' bases, safe havens or staging areas, also realize the importance of such cooperation. However, it is being experienced that despite genuine desire on both sides, an intelligence cooperation which is sincere in nature and meaningful in results is difficult to attain due to mutual suspicion on both sides. Resultantly, despite sincere desire of all willing parties, optimum results cannot be achieved and the terrorists continue to succeed in striking their targets across the globe at will. Pakistan afflicted by terrorists and certain extremist

tendencies in its society though willing to curb these is constrained by certain internal and external dynamics. Terrorist networks present a challenge for the Pakistani intelligence which has limited capabilities and can benefit greatly from modern training imparted on scientific lines by foreign powers in general and Great Britain and USA in particular.

3. Regional Security Environment

Before an attempt is made to comprehend the organizational structure and working methodology of Pakistan's intelligence agencies, it will be pertinent to first fully understand the factors which act as a driving force. Regional environment coupled with internal dynamics to include domestic political, economic and security situation shapes Pakistan's threat perception. This threat perception helps in formulation of national policy which then dictates the type of state resources and the manner in which these are to be employed.

4. Conclusions From Environment

Some conclusions from the security environment which are responsible for Pakistan's threat perception and also necessitate the requirement of cooperation in intelligence field are:-

a. Regional Environment

Regional security landscape is festering with numerous flash points (Kashmir, Chechnya, Palestine, Aceh) and, is therefore, likely to take much longer time to stabilize than anticipated. These flash points provide the terrorists with ideal grounds for recruiting dissidents, radicals and rogue elements for furthering their cause. Pakistan would continue to be affected by regional events in general and all significant events in Afghanistan, Iran and India in particular. As such its internal/domestic administration would be greatly influenced by its threat perception.

1. India

- a. Pakistan's geopolitical environment remains a threat to its external and internal security. Relations with India are a case in point. India and Pakistan may have come a long way from their posture of confrontation, but peace between them is still far off.²
- b. As long as India is pursuing her objective of acquiring the status of permanent member of UN Security Council, she would not like any distractions and hence would engage Pakistan through a strategy of long drawn peace process without yielding on any issue. It would continue endeavors to improve relations with China while portraying itself to the US as a readily available regional power for containment of the former.

- c. Despite the ongoing peace process, Pakistan's relations with India are not likely to experience any drastic change unless progress is made on the core issue of Kashmir. Her external threat perception, is therefore, not likely to register any major change in the foreseeable future.
2. Afghanistan
 - a. An unsettled Afghanistan, especially where the Taliban rump which has affinities with and support from Pakistan's tribal areas still remains a source of potential instability on the Pakistan-Afghan border and an irritant in the relations between the two countries.³
 - b. Its geographic location provides natural connectivity between Pakistan, Iran and Central Asian Republics for the transportation of energy resources and trade; therefore, its stability will play a major role in shaping future of the region.
 - c. The region in general and Afghanistan in particular could be subjected to narco-politics that may be exploited by the terrorists.
 3. Iran
 - a. On the Western front, Iran, with its regional ambitions, emerging nuclear capability, strategic rivalry with Pakistan, and suspicions of a U.S.-Pakistan axis, has the motive and capability, if not the intention, to leverage Pakistan's policies.⁴
 - b. Iran is also a rival influence in Afghanistan and an economic competitor for access to Central Asia, which itself remains unstable.⁵ It continues to assert itself in the region through ideological values and revolutionary agenda. It would like to continue to exploit like minded societies and groups in the region to pursue its economic objectives. It is likely to continue a strategy of conflict with its neighbors on account of ideological divide and economic competitiveness.
 4. Central Asia
 - a. Central Asian Republics are currently in the process of asserting themselves and discovering their sovereign status. This process would continue to create a state of chaos and flux in the region.

b. Internal Security Environment

Pakistan's internal security is closely linked with politico-economic stability and law and order situation. As long as progress is being made in these fields, the internal situation would remain normal and radical/extremists elements are not likely to gain any support of the masses.

5. Pakistan's Intelligence Community

Pakistan has three main intelligence services; Intelligence Bureau (IB), Military Intelligence (MI) and Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI). The common goal of these agencies is to look after national interests and preserve security of Pakistan on both external and internal fronts.

6. Intelligence Bureau

IB is the oldest dating from Pakistan's creation in 1947. It was formed by the division of the pre-partition IB of British India. Its primary job is to monitor politicians, political activists, suspected terrorists, and suspected foreign intelligence agents. The IB keeps tabs on political operatives from countries it considers hostile to Pakistan's interests. IB is headed by a director general and is part of the Interior Ministry of Pakistan.⁶ DG IB reports directly to the Prime Minister's office. Unsatisfactory performance of IB in the first Indo-Pak war of 1947-48 led to the decision in 1948 to create the ISI, manned by officers from the three Services.

7. Military Intelligence

MI is tasked with counterinsurgency operations, identifying and eliminating sleeper cells, foreign agents and other anti Pakistani elements within Pakistan. Additional functions involve monitoring high level military and political leaders and safe guarding critical facilities such as military and non-military installations. MI also has limited external role as well.⁷

8. Inter-Services Intelligence

ISI is one of the best and most well organized intelligence agency. It was founded in 1948 by a British army officer, Maj Gen R Cawthome, then Deputy Chief of Staff in the Pakistan Army.⁸ ISI is tasked with collection of foreign and domestic intelligence; co-ordination of intelligence functions of the three military services; surveillance over its cadre, foreigners, the media, politically active segments of Pakistani society, diplomats of other countries in Pakistan and Pakistani diplomats serving outside the country; interception and monitoring of communications; and the conduct of covert operations.⁹

9. ISI works under a Director General, a serving Lieutenant General of the Pakistan Army. There are three Deputy Director Generals-designated as DDG (Political), DDG (External) and DDG (General).¹⁰ There are over 25,000 active men on the staff of ISI who are drawn mainly from the army, para-military forces and the police. ISI is organized into following divisions:-
- a. Joint Intelligence X
JIX serves as the secretariat which co-ordinates and provides administrative support to the other ISI wings and field organizations. It also prepares intelligence estimates and threat assessments.¹¹
 - b. Joint Intelligence Bureau
JIB, responsible for political intelligence, was the most powerful component of the organization during the late 1980s. The JIB consists of three subsections, with one subsection devoted to operations involving India, other operations involve, anti-terrorism and VIP security.¹²
 - c. Joint Counter Intelligence Bureau
JCIB is responsible for field surveillance of Pakistani diplomats stationed abroad, if need be monitoring foreign diplomats, as well as for conducting intelligence operations in the Middle East, South Asia, China, Afghanistan and the Muslim republics of the former Soviet Union.¹³
 - d. Joint Intelligence / North
JIN is responsible for Jammu and Kashmir operations, including monitoring Indian forces deployed within disputed Kashmir.¹⁴
 - e. Joint Intelligence Miscellaneous
JIM is responsible for offensive intelligence operations and war time espionage.¹⁵
 - f. Joint Signal Intelligence Bureau
JSIB, which includes Deputy Directors for Wireless, Monitoring and Photos, operates a chain of signals intelligence collection stations, and provide communication support to its operatives.¹⁶
 - g. Joint Intelligence Technical
JIT, not much is know about this section however it is believed that JIT includes a separate explosives section and a chemical warfare section.¹⁷
10. Intelligence Cooperation Between Pakistan and Western Countries
- During the Cold War Pakistan was deeply conscious of the power disparity in the Subcontinent and was actively looking for ways to redress it. The heightened security concerns and need for economic development compelled

Pakistan to reach out to the United States, which was then trying to promote a strategic alliance of Asian states to check the expanding lines of Soviet influence. The United States strengthened Pakistan's defense capabilities and potential for economic development.¹⁸ Pakistan also leased bases to the United States for intelligence-gathering and communications facilities.¹⁹

11. The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan from 1979 to 1989 made Pakistan a country of paramount geo-strategic importance. In a matter of days, the United States declared Pakistan a "front line state" against Soviet aggression and offered to reopen aid and military assistance deliveries.²⁰ Cooperation between Pakistan's ISI and America's CIA was exceptional. Initially Pakistani intelligence was trained along British lines, but subsequently CIA, trained 200 ISI officers in improved intelligence methods. Using Pakistan as a conduit, US funded large numbers of jihadists through Pakistan's the ISI.²¹ ISI monitored the activities of and provided advice and support to the mujahidin, and commandos from the Army's Special Services Group helped guide the operations inside Afghanistan. The ISI trained about 83,000 Afghan Mujahideen between 1983 to 1997 and dispatched them to Afghanistan.²² Throughout the years of Soviet occupation of Afghanistan, relations between the United States and Pakistan were best characterized by close cooperation. But Pakistan paid a price for its activities. Afghan and Soviet forces conducted raids against mujahidin bases inside Pakistan, and a campaign of terror bombings and sabotage in Pakistan's cities, guided by Afghan intelligence agents, caused hundreds of casualties. In 1987, some 90 percent of the 777 terrorist incidents recorded worldwide took place in Pakistan.²³

Current Cooperation in the War on Terror

12. USA

The current U.S.-Pakistan cooperation in the war on terrorism is focused on building the military-intelligence partnership between the two countries. Pakistan has cooperated with the United States by granting logistics facilities, sharing intelligence, and capturing and handing over al-Qaida terrorists. The intelligence provided by Pakistan has led to successes against terrorism around the world.²⁴ USA has helped Pakistan with some specialist training and even some high-tech surveillance equipment, such as ground sensors that can monitor vehicle movements.²⁵ Pakistan has arrested more than seven hundred terror suspects. It is currently creating a national criminal database and is the first country to successfully install PISCES, a terrorist-interdiction program set up at seven Pakistani airports and at border crossings with India.²⁶

13. UK.

Historically Pakistan has always had closer ties with Great Britain. Although relations between both the countries have remained friendly, however, during the Cold War, USA gradually moved in to replace Great Britain. Since 9/11 and 7/7 there have moves from both the sides to revive their traditional relationship. Pakistan and United Kingdom started cooperating in the international efforts against terrorism immediately after the 9/11 incidents.²⁷ Pakistan has an intelligence sharing mechanism with more than 48 countries including the UK.²⁸ Recently Pakistan and United Kingdom signed a memorandum of understanding for enhancing military and intelligence cooperation. So far United States is the major source of weapons systems supplied to Pakistan for use in anti-terrorism efforts. However, it appears the United Kingdom will also provide latest equipment to Pakistan for bolstering the capability of its security forces in the war against terrorism.²⁹

Impediments to Intelligence Cooperation

14. Terrorist networks present a peculiar challenge for those countries which have limited capabilities in areas such as law enforcement, intelligence and border control. There is the risk that terrorists may see some countries, or regions, as attractive places to plan and operate with low risk of detection or disruption. While there is a realization on part of both the western nations and Pakistan that a lot can be achieved through close cooperation in intelligence field, national interests and perspective as well as mutual suspicion prohibits any meaningful agreement. Pakistan is cognizant of the limitations of its intelligence agencies and would welcome assistance from western states in the shape of training and equipment but on its own terms and conditions. It is aware that there are always some strings attached to the package being offered by the west. Some of the problems which prohibit a close cooperation are discussed in the succeeding paragraphs.

15. Approach to Cooperation

Intelligence relationship between international allies especially a third world country and a developed country has typical problems. While a third world country normally responds to regional impulses, the major partner tends to consider global dynamics in its relationships.³⁰ A case in point United States which failed to see Pakistan's perspective on the nuclear issue and left it heavily sanctioned. Resultantly Pakistan's relationship with the west has always lacked continuity and a common vision. It is for this reason that as soon as the western powers achieved their objectives vis-à-vis Pakistan in past engagements, they abandoned it either consigned to benign neglect or hit with a succession of punitive sanctions that left in their trail resentment and a sense of betrayal.³¹

16. East West Divide

Islamic countries which remained colonies or experienced Western domination are faced with the dilemma of searching for their true identities. Pakistani society has been torn apart by the stark choices of deciding between Muslim identity, following the western ways left behind by the colonial power or adopting a new compromise identity which is a merger of both the Islamic and the Western ways. Irrespective of the official decision, the society always remains deeply divided. The war on terrorism has sharpened the tensions within the Pakistani society and between Islam and the West. The United States seems to be fighting terrorism with traditional instruments of power, whose bluntness obscures the subtlety and complexity of the issues involved, and with a crusading zeal that speaks of an ideological struggle and clash of civilizations.³² All conservative Muslims as well as their religion is being labeled as extremist. Both sides are judging each other with their own ideals.

17. Provision of Technology

While the Western countries which have latest technology available to them are willing to train Pakistan's intelligence agencies and in return demand full cooperation, they fail to provide any state of the art technology to Pakistan. In the end Pakistan has to rely on the use of human intelligence resources which though available in abundance are no match to the latest technology. Moreover, Pakistan considers that its intelligence agencies are vastly experienced and need no outside training in handling their indigenous resources. What it needs is latest intelligence collection equipment and requisite training in its handling. However, while the Western countries are labeling Pakistan as the front line state in the war on terror and an invaluable ally they are reluctant to provide any modern technological assistance to Pakistan. The information provided to Pakistan is also on selective basis.

18. Mutual Suspicion

- a. The West in general and USA and Great Britain in particular have the tendency of viewing Pakistan with suspicion. USA was responsible for the civil war in Afghanistan as immediately after the soviet withdrawal, it abandoned the Afghan Society which suffered a decade long civil war. This civil war resulted in anarchy and the Mujahideen collected from all over the world were left to take advantage of the situation by pursuing their own agenda. Pakistan which was left stranded by the Western powers had to deal with the situation at its own. It tried to bring some stability in the region and end the chaotic state in its neighborhood. Ultimately it was blamed for all the crises in Afghanistan after 9/11. Similarly in the

wake of 7/7 bombing in Britain, there is frustration and helplessness over the suspicion that a former colony could be serving as a school for would-be terrorists. In Pakistan, meanwhile, there is indignation and resentment at being blamed for acts committed by Britons in Britain.³³ In response Ex-President Musharraf was careful to emphasize that fighting terror was not a job for Pakistan alone. In an address to the nation, he said that while Pakistan had a problem, "England has a problem also. "There is a lot to be done by Pakistan internally. And may I suggest there is a lot to be done in England also."³⁴

- b. Historic facts prove that the West is eventually responsible for the prevalent problems. Following examples point in this direction:-
 1. During the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan in the 1980s, the US funded large numbers of jihadists through Pakistan's secret intelligence service, the ISI. Later the US wanted to raise another jihadi corps, again using proxies, to help Bosnian Muslims fight to weaken the Serb government's hold on Yugoslavia. Those they turned to included Pakistanis in Britain.³⁵
 2. For nearly a decade the US helped Islamist insurgents linked to Chechnya, Iran and Saudi Arabia destabilize the former Yugoslavia. The insurgents were also allowed to move further east to Kosovo. By the end of the fighting in Bosnia there were tens of thousands of Islamist insurgents in Bosnia, Croatia and Kosovo; many then moved west to Austria, Germany and Switzerland.³⁶
 3. Less well known is evidence of the British government's relationship with a wider Islamist terrorist network. During an interview on Fox TV, former US federal prosecutor John Loftus reported that British intelligence had used the al-Muhajiroun group in London to recruit Islamist militants with British passports for the war against the Serbs in Kosovo. Since July Scotland Yard has been interested in an alleged member of al-Muhajiroun, Haroon Rashid Aswat, who some sources have suggested could have been behind the London bombings. Loftus claimed that Aswat is a British-backed double agent, pursued by the police but protected by Mi6.³⁷

Possibility of Cooperation and Training in Intelligence Field

19. Trust and Confidence. The war on terrorism has sharpened the tensions between Islam and the West. The United States seems to be fighting terrorism with traditional instruments of power, and with a crusading zeal that speaks of

an ideological struggle and clash of civilizations. Elements on both sides see their basic value system as under siege and have exaggerated their mutual fears and are busy defaming and demonizing each other. Moral issues have been confused, or sacrificed to self-righteousness. Each side is judging the other with its own ideals, ideals from which it has fallen short itself. There is a dire need to stop all such practices immediately as the terrorists are taking full advantage of such a divide. Instead all relationships and dealings should be carried out under an atmosphere of trust and confidence. Partners have to stop blaming others for their own failings and should have the courage to come forward and accept own mistakes. Instead of blaming each other a helping attitude towards the others would be more beneficial.

20. Technological Assistance.

USA operates the most technologically sophisticated international surveillance network in the world. In co-operation with other western nations, it runs an international eavesdropping system known as "Echelon". A system of newly installed internet taps code-named Carnivore also gives US law enforcers the power to trawl email messages.³⁸ For surveillance in Afghanistan, USA is relying on the use of unmanned drones and sophisticated aircraft such as the Rivet Joint - which can monitor communications and other electronic activity and the Joint Stars, which uses radar to monitor ground movements.³⁹ Provision of this kind of equipment along with training to the Pakistani personnel to operate and maintain the equipment will certainly be welcomed by Pakistan and also boost the surveillance capability.

21. Tracking Terrorist Finances. An important aspect of fighting terrorism is to track and disrupt terrorist financing. USA is already imparting training to willing partners in this field. US State Department, has obligated over \$11.5 million to provide technical assistance and training to develop and reinforce counter-terrorist financing/anti-money laundering regimes of front line states.⁴⁰ These comprehensive training and technical assistance programs include legislative drafting, financial regulatory training, financial intelligence unit development, law enforcement training, and prosecutorial/judicial development. Such training can also be imparted to Pakistani personnel.

23. Weapons in Counter Terrorism Operations. Owing to the availability of latest weapons to the terrorists and the ever improving insurgent tactics, there is a greater requirement of weapons technologies and weapon systems that cater for surveillance, early warning, detection, night fighting aids and digital communications. For high-tech weapons technologies Pakistan would continue to be dependent on imports from foreign countries. Provision of these

Endnotes

¹Robert Hill, Security, terrorism and the new global security environment, address to the “Terrorism and Counter Terrorism Course graduates at Murdoch University, Perth, Western Australia, 18 May 2005

²Hussain Touqir, U.S.-Pakistan Engagement ,The War on Terrorism and Beyond, Special Report 145, United States Institute of Peace August 2005

³Hussain Touqir, U.S.-Pakistan Engagement ,The War on Terrorism and Beyond, Special Report 145, United States Institute of Peace August 2005

⁴Ibid

⁵Ibid

⁶Intelligence Bureau, <http://www.fas.org/irp/world/pakistan/ib/>

⁷PakistaniDefence.com, Military Intelligence

⁸Global Security.org, Pakistan Intelligence - Background

⁹Directorate for Inter-Services Intelligence [ISI], <http://www.fas.org/irp/world/pakistan/isi/>

¹⁰PakistaniDefence.com, Pakistan Intelligence - Background

¹¹Global Security.org, Pakistan Intelligence - Background

¹²bid

¹³Ibid

¹⁴Ibid

¹⁵Ibid

¹⁶Global Security.org , Pakistan Intelligence - Background

¹⁷Ibid

¹⁸Hussain Touqir, U.S.-Pakistan Engagement ,The War on Terrorism and Beyond, Special Report 145, United States Institute of Peace August 2005

¹⁹Global Security.org, Pakistan Intelligence - Background

²⁰Global Security.org , Pakistan Intelligence - Background

²¹Meacher, Michael, Comment & Analysis: Britain now faces its own blowback: Intelligence interests may thwart the July bombings investigation, The Guardian (London) - Final Edition - September 10, 2005

²²Global Security.org , Pakistan Intelligence - Background

²³Ibid

²⁴Hussain Touqir, U.S.-Pakistan Engagement-The War on Terrorism and Beyond, Special Report 145, United States Institute of Peace, August 2005

²⁵Nick Childs, US-Pakistan co-operation strengthens BBC 26 March, 2004

²⁶Hussain Touqir, U.S.-Pakistan Engagement-The War on Terrorism and Beyond, Special Report 145, United States Institute of Peace, August 2005

²⁷Farooq Umer, Pakistan, Britain sign arms deal, The Nation Islamabad, 19 May, 2005

²⁸Pakistan intelligence probes links with London bombers, China Daily.com,15-7-2005

²⁹Farooq Umer, Pakistan, Britain sign arms deal, The Nation Islamabad, 19 May, 2005

³⁰Hussain Touqir, U.S.-Pakistan Engagement-The War on Terrorism and Beyond, Special Report 145, United States Institute of Peace, August 2005

³¹Hussain Touqir, U.S.-Pakistan Engagement-The War on Terrorism and Beyond, Special Report 145, United States Institute of Peace, August 2005

³²Ibid

³³Mark Rice-Oxley and Owais Tohid, British keep a wary eye on Pakistan, Three of the four 7/7 suspects were of Pakistani origin. President Musharraf says both countries have a 'problem.', Christian Science Monitor July 27, 2005

³⁴Mark Rice-Oxley and Owais Tohid, British keep a wary eye on Pakistan, Three of the four 7/7 suspects were of Pakistani origin. President Musharraf says both countries have a 'problem.', Christian Science Monitor July 27, 2005

³⁵Meacher Michael, Comment & Analysis: Britain now faces its own blowback: Intelligence interests may thwart the July bombings investigation, The Guardian September 10, 2005

³⁶Meacher Michael, Comment & Analysis: Britain now faces its own blowback: Intelligence interests may thwart the July bombings investigation, The Guardian September 10, 2005

³⁷Ibid

³⁸Will Knight, Intelligence technology may not stop terrorists, New Scientist magazine, 13 September 2001

³⁹Nick Childs, US-Pakistan co-operation strengthens BBC 26 March, 2004

⁴⁰E. Anthony Wayne, Assistant Secretary for Economic and Business Affairs, Testimony before the Joint House Financial Services Subcommittees, 9/11 Commission Report Recommendations, 14 September 2004

References

1. Will Knight, Intelligence technology may not stop terrorists, *New Scientist Magazine*, 13 September 2001
2. Nick Childs, US-Pakistan co-operation strengthens BBC 26 March, 2004
3. E. Anthony Wayne, Assistant Secretary for Economic and Business Affairs, Testimony before the Joint House Financial Services Subcommittees, *9/11 Commission Report Recommendations*, 14 September 2004
4. Meacher Michael, Comment & Analysis: Britain now faces its own blowback: Intelligence interests may thwart the July bombings investigation, *The Guardian* September 10, 2005
5. Mark Rice-Oxley and Owais Tohid, British keep a wary eye on Pakistan, Three of the four 7/7 suspects were of Pakistani origin. President Musharraf says both countries have a 'problem.', *Christian Science Monitor* July 27, 2005
6. Robert Hill, Security, terrorism and the new global security environment, address to the "Terrorism and Counter Terrorism Course Graduates at Murdoch University, Perth, Western Australia, 18 May 2005
7. Hussain Touqir, U.S.-Pakistan Engagement, The War on Terrorism and Beyond, Special Report 145, United States Institute of Peace August 2005
8. Intelligence Bureau, <http://www.fas.org/irp/world/Pakistan/ib/>
9. PakistaniDefence.com, Military Intelligence
10. Global Security.org, Pakistan Intelligence - Background
11. Directorate for Inter-Services Intelligence [ISI], <http://www.fas.org/irp/world/pakistan/isi/>
12. Farooq Umer, Pakistan, Britain sign arms deal, *The Nation* Islamabad, 19 May, 2005

Raja Saadat Ali Asad, PhD in Criminology. He has written many articles on criminology.