



INDIA

Quick Facts

Population: 1,281,935,911 (July 2017 est.)
Area: 3,287,263 sq km
Ethnic Groups: Indo-Aryan 72%, Dravidian 25%, Mongoloid and other 3% (2000)
Government Type: Federal parliamentary republic
GDP (official exchange rate): \$2.439 trillion (2017 est.)

Source: CIA World FactBook (Last Updated April 2018)

INTRODUCTION

Few countries have felt the deadly consequences of Islamist extremism more acutely than India. South Asia and nearby regions host a multiplicity of centers of Islamist militancy that have affected India, including Pakistan, which is a key sponsor and instigator of international Islamist terrorism; Iran, the principal driver of Shi'a militancy; Afghanistan and Bangladesh, where Sunni militancy has flourished; and the Arab states, where radical interpretations of Sunni Islam have affected the large community of expatriate Indian workers and their families.

However, the Indian Muslim community has in large part refused to yield to the call of militancy. A community of well over 172 million Muslims¹—the second largest in the world, after that of Indonesia²—lives in relative harmony within India's multicultural, multi-religious, secular democracy. Such coexistence is not without its frictions: strife between the various religious communities has been a significant feature in India since (and, indeed, long before) the carnage of the partition of India in 1947. That conflict, in which the British cleaved the Indian Empire in two, killed nearly half a million people. However, the Indian Muslim community has largely rejected broader attempts at radicalization and indoctrination and remains integrated into the fabric of Indian society.

Arguably Islamist terrorism in India has most impacted the state of Jammu and Kashmir, where a separatist movement, inspired by Sunni extremism and sustained by Pakistani support, has plagued the region for over two-and-a-half decades.³ Islamist terrorist attacks on a smaller scale by both foreign and indigenous groups, meanwhile, have occurred in many other parts of the country.

ISLAMIST ACTIVITY

Islamist terrorism in India, overwhelmingly generated and supported by Pakistan, has long found its principal concentration in the north Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K). Though J&K has often been the site of Islamist violence, the situation has improved in recent years, as the changes on the world

stage since 9/11 and Pakistan's growing instability have led to a diminution in violence. At its peak in 2001, Islamist violence in J&K killed over 4,500 people. Fatalities dropped to 117 in 2012, but have risen gradually since, to 174 in 2015, 267 in 2016 and 253 in 2017 (through early September of that year).⁴

India has been confronted with Pakistani-backed Islamist subversion virtually since the birth of both nations,⁵ but experienced an asymmetric escalation after 1988, when then-Pakistani dictator General Zia-ul-Haq, flush from the successful jihad against the Soviets in Afghanistan (1980–1989), decided to extend his strategy to J&K. Successive governments in Islamabad have actively sustained this policy, leading to unrelenting terrorism in J&K for nearly three decades and inflicting—as of September 2017—a total of 44,397 fatalities since 1988.⁶

Gradually, as international pressure to curtail jihad in J&K mounted and as domestic circumstances in Pakistan worsened, terrorist groups largely controlled by Pakistan's notorious spy agency, the Inter-Services Intelligence Directorate (ISI),⁷ have increasingly found it necessary to base their cadres in areas outside of J&K. They have also had to rethink their approach within a wider pan-Islamist ideological framework that dovetails more seamlessly into the psyche of extremist groups and the logic of the global jihad. Ever-growing levels of Islamist subversion and terrorism were sustained across India since the start of the new century,⁸ culminating in the Mumbai attacks of November 26, 2008,⁹ though there has been a dramatic fall in incidence and fatalities since.

The networks and support structures of the many Islamist terrorist organizations operating in India have been painstakingly constructed by the ISI and backed by enormous flows of financial support from West Asia, as well as from affluent expatriate Muslim communities in the West, as part of a sustained strategy of “erosion, encirclement and penetration” that has been exhaustively documented elsewhere.¹⁰

Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT)

Pakistan's ISI created Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) in Kunar, Afghanistan in 1990 under the leadership of Hafiz Mohammad Saeed. LeT is part of the “al-Qaeda compact”¹¹ and is a member of the International Islamic Front for the Struggle Against the Jews and the Crusaders (Al-Jabhah al-Islamiyyah al-'Alamiyyah li-Qital al-Yahudwal-Salibiyyin) established by Osama bin Laden in February 1993. In 1993, LeT's forces were diverted to the Pakistan-backed jihad in J&K, where they have operated since. At the same time, LeT has extended its networks and attacks across the rest of India, crystallizing the strategy that Saeed first articulated publicly on February 18, 1996, in an address at the Lahore Press Club: “The jihad in Kashmir would soon spread to entire India. Our mujahideen would create three Pakistans in India.”¹²

The organization is headquartered at Muridke on a large plot of land widely acknowledged to have been gifted to it by the Pakistan government,¹³ and is known to have operated terrorist camps in Muzaffarabad and Gilgit (in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir), Lahore, Peshawar, Islamabad, Rawalpindi, Karachi, Multan, Quetta, Gujranwala, and Sialkot. The group manages at least 16 Islamic centers, 135 secondary schools, 2,200 offices, and a vast network of madrassas (religious seminaries), orphanages, medical centers, and charities across Pakistan.¹⁴

Until its designation as a terrorist group by the UN Security Council in December 2008, the LeT published a variety of papers, websites, and journals.¹⁵ Crucially, it remains loyal to Pakistan and, unlike many other organizations created by the ISI which have since turned against Islamabad or whose loyalties are now suspect, continues to coordinate its activities with Pakistani state agencies. Finances for the group—as for all Pakistan-backed Islamist terrorist groupings—are provided via tacit state support, including the transfer of large quantities of fake Indian currency that Indian intelligence sources contend, on the basis of interrogations of arrested terrorists and couriers, is printed at Pakistani Security Presses at the Malir Cantonment in Karachi and at Lahore, Quetta, and Peshawar.

In August 2009, the Indian government announced that it intended to take up the issue of the importa-

tion of currency-standard ink and paper by Pakistan from the UK, Sweden, and Switzerland, with various international agencies, including Interpol.¹⁶ In addition to seizing substantial amounts of fake Indian currency notes (FICN) from Pakistan-linked couriers, they have also recovered such currency from Pakistan Embassy staff.¹⁷ India's Ministry of Home Affairs has reportedly found that "the ISI has managed to get access to the configuration, specifications and other secret codes of the genuine Indian currency notes from six European companies that supply Indian currency papers fitted with security features, and another company in Switzerland that supplies the security ink used in printing these currency notes in India."¹⁸ Neutralizing FICN in circulation was also one of the objectives of the demonetization of INR 1000 and 500 notes in November 2016, and there were claims that this action had led to the closure of printing presses in Pakistan where FICNs were printed.¹⁹ The government claimed that demonetization had instantly extinguished Pak-printed high quality fake Indian currency notes, that it had adversely affected hawala operators (an informal financial remittance system),²⁰ and that "after demonetisation, separatists in Jammu and Kashmir" became "fund starved."²¹ These claims do not appear sustainable after subsequent disclosures indicating that FICN of the new notes were in circulation within weeks of demonetization of the old currencies,²² and that nearly ninety-nine percent of all demonetized currencies eventually found their way into the Reserve Bank of India.²³

LeT's financial sources also include "charitable" contributions that support both its vast social network across Pakistan and its terrorist activities. These sources can range from external contributions from diaspora communities to international Islamist charities, including several prominent ones from Saudi Arabia. The Pakistani state channeled a large proportion of international aid received in the wake of the earthquake in Kashmir in 2005 through the LeT, withholding state relief operations in order to facilitate the LeT's further consolidation in the affected areas.²⁴

There is now no doubt that the massive terrorist attack on Mumbai November 26–29, 2008—in which Pakistan-backed militants went on a four-day shooting and bombing rampage in India's commercial capital, killing 164 and wounding over 300—was engineered by the LeT, which is now permitted to operate openly in Pakistan under a different name, Jamaat-ud-Dawa (JuD), after its supposed official ban (imposed as a result of U.S. pressure) in 2002. American involvement and pressure on Pakistan in the aftermath of that attack forced some apparent action against visible leaders of the LeT/JuD, though a long process of denial and obfuscation by Pakistan's top leadership and authorities suggests that the group will be allowed simply to reinvent itself under a new identity, as it has done previously.

As a result of tremendous international focus and pressure, LeT has not been able to execute many significant incidents of terrorist violence in India outside J&K since the Mumbai attacks of 2008, yet the group nevertheless was reportedly involved in at least four, namely the Pune German Bakery blast (February 13, 2010), the Mumbai serial blasts (July 13, 2011), the Delhi High Court Blast (September 7, 2011), and the Dinanagar Police Station attack in Gurdaspur, Punjab (July 27, 2015). Moreover, the group's involvement was confirmed in at least 91 incidents (36 of them violent) in J&K during 2011, 66 incidents (26 of them violent) in 2012, 51 incidents (12 of them violent) in 2013, 61 incidents (27 of them violent) in 2014, 66 incidents (33 of them violent) in 2015, and another 67 incidents (39 of them violent) in 2016 as of August 2017.²⁵ In the worst attack on civilians of 2017, LeT terrorists killed seven Amarnath pilgrims and injured 19 as they struck at a bus in the Batangoo area, near Pahalgam, Anantnag District, on July 10. One injured civilian later died on July 16, 2017, raising the death toll to eight.²⁶ This was, in fact, the worst attack targeting civilians recorded in the state since June 13, 2005, when at least 13 civilians, including two schoolchildren and three officers of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), were killed and over 100 people sustained injuries when an explosives-laden car blew up at a crowded marketplace in front of a government school in the Pulwama township of south Kashmir.²⁷

The Harkat Triad

In addition to the LeT, the three most significant terrorist groups that operate in India comprise the Harkat Triad. These groups are the Harkat-ul-Jihad-Islami (HuJI), the Harkat-ul-Mujahideen (HM), and the Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM), each of which is also linked to the Taliban and al-Qaeda.

HuJI came into existence in 1980 and fought the Soviets in Afghanistan. After the Afghan war, HuJI focused much of its resources on the fighting in Kashmir while also dispatching cadres to fight in other Islamist campaigns in a number of other countries, including Bosnia, Myanmar, and Tajikistan. HuJI was one of the organizations that sent hundreds of its mujahideen into Afghanistan after 2001 during the campaigns against the Northern Alliance and the U.S.-led coalition's Operation Enduring Freedom. It is also a member organization of bin Laden's International Islamic Front. However, the emergence and consolidation of more effective terrorist organizations has marginalized HuJI in Pakistan. Consequently, the group is now strongest in Bangladesh, where HuJI Bangladesh (BD) was established as a distinct organization with direct aid from Osama bin Laden in 1992 and now seeks to establish Islamic hukumat (rule) there.²⁸ Since 2005, HuJI-BD has been involved in a number of major Islamist terrorist operations in India, executing joint operations with Pakistani terrorist groups including LeT, JeM, and HuM, and coordinating closely with ISI.

HuM is one of the original member organizations of bin Laden's International Islamic Front. It was established in 1985 at Raiwind in Pakistani Punjab by Maulana Samiul Haq and Maulana Fazlur Rehman, leaders of factions of the Jamiat-ul-Ulema-e-Islam (JUI), to participate in the jihad against Soviet forces in Afghanistan. Samiul Haq's madrassa, the Dar-ul-Uloom Haqqania at Akora Khattak near Peshawar, later emerged as a primary training ground for the Taliban and also came to dominate the HuM's terrorist mobilization and training projects. Within months of its creation, HuM was exporting recruits to Afghanistan, initially from Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, but subsequently from other countries, including Algeria, Egypt, Tunisia, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Bangladesh, Myanmar, and the Philippines. The primary area of HuM's activities, after the Afghan campaigns, was J&K, though HuM has suffered a continuous erosion of its stature as a leading player as Lashkar-e-Taiba and HuM's breakaway, Jaish-e-Mohammed, consolidated their role through a succession of dramatic attacks, both within and outside Pakistan.

HM is the second largest terrorist formation operating in J&K after LeT in terms of strength and capacity to carry out terror strikes.²⁹ India, the United States, and the European Union have declared HM a terrorist group. Significantly, on August 16, 2017, the U.S. State Department designated HM as a Foreign Terrorist Organization³⁰ after declaring HM's chief, Syed Salahuddin, a Specially Designated Global Terrorist³¹ on June 26, 2017. Overseas, HM is allegedly backed by Ghulam Nabi Fai's Kashmir American Council and Ayub Thakur's World Kashmir Freedom Movement in the United States. Early in its history, HM established contacts with Afghan mujahideen groups such as Hizb-e-Islami, which allegedly gave some of its cadres arms training. In January 2013, it was reported that HM had joined hands with HuJI to engage in operations to strike fear among Kashmiris.³² The proscribed Students Islamic Movement of India is also believed to have links with HM.³³

Recent reports also suggest that the terrorist groups like HM, JeM, and LeT are operating jointly in J&K, especially since the killing of HM operational commander Burhan Muzaffar Wani on July 8, 2016, and the subsequent unrest.³⁴ The increasing closeness was particularly visible during the funeral services of killed terrorists.³⁵

At one time, HM was the most important militant group of the Harkat Triad in terms of its effectiveness in perpetrating terrorist violence, but has been progressively marginalized by LeT and JeM, as those groups have become more central to Pakistan's strategic objectives in India. More recently, with the LeT and JeM bases and networks in Pakistan coming under increasing international scrutiny, there has been some effort to restore HM's operational ascendancy in J&K. It has, however, met with limited success in this endeavor, as the group's operational leadership was systematically decimated over the past few

years.³⁶ Among its new generation leadership, HM's most prominent loss in recent years was the killing of its operational commander in Kashmir, Burhan Muzaffar Wani (on July 8, 2016), who had emerged as the poster boy for a new generation of Kashmiri terrorists, and his successor, Sabzar Ahmed Bhat (on May 27, 2017). In the most recent success against the group, security forces killed HM's operational commander Yasin Ittoo, alias Mehmood Ghaznavi, in an overnight encounter at Awnera village in Shopian District on August 13, 2017.³⁷ Nevertheless, the group continues to operate openly from its headquarters at Muzaffarabad in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, under the leadership of Yusuf Shah (a.k.a. Syed Salahuddin), who also serves as the chairman of the United Jihad Council—a conglomerate of India-directed jihadi organizations supported by the Pakistani state and also headquartered at Muzaffarabad.

JeM is one of the most aggressive Pakistani groups operating in India. It was established in early 2000, following known terrorist Azhar Masood's triumphant return to Pakistan upon his release from India as part of a hostage exchange. Masood, originally part of HuM, split with that organization as a result of differences over matters of "finance and influence."³⁸ Bin Laden is believed to have extended generous funding to JeM.³⁹ JeM has also been extraordinarily successful in motivating second-generation South Asian Muslims in the West to join its jihad. These include Ahmed Sayeed Omar Sheikh, one of the conspirators in the 9/11 attacks in the United States and the killer of journalist Daniel Pearl, as well as Abdullahbhai, a Birmingham (UK) resident who served as the first suicide bomber in Jammu and Kashmir in the Badami Bagh incident of December 2000.

JeM has been very active in recent times and was involved in two of the deadliest attacks in India in 2016. On January 2, 2016, JeM terrorists attacked an India Air Force base at Pathankot in Punjab, killing seven soldiers. All six attackers were also killed.⁴⁰ In September 2016, after infiltrating from across the Line of Control (the de facto border between Pakistan and India), JeM terrorists attacked the administrative base of a brigade of the Indian Army in Uri, Baramulla District. The militants killed 18 soldiers and injured 19. Two of the injured soldiers died subsequently, raising the death toll to 20.⁴¹

Other factions

There are a number of other Pakistan-based groups operating in India, playing roles of varying significance in the machinery of Islamist terror that has been assembled over the years, including some that boast substantial Indian membership.⁴² The Indian Mujahideen (IM) is believed by intelligence agencies to be a shadow amalgam of the SIMI. As the pressure of arrests built up on the top SIMI leadership, the most radical elements within the organization went on to form IM, with SIMI continuing as the feeder agency for IM recruits, engaging in continuing political mobilization and ideological subversion. IM leaders like Mohammad Sadique Issar Sheikh, Riyaz Bhatkal, Iqbal Bhatkal, Amir Reza Khan, and Tariq Ismail have all graduated from SIMI. On February 23, 2012, IM's ideologue and principal recruiter, Mohammad Kafeel Ahmed, confirmed that SIMI's vast networks were now being used by the IM. Intelligence sources indicate that money raised through arms smuggling, circulation of fake currency, hawala transactions, extortion, and the diversion of political funds had, by late 2012, made IM worth an estimated INR 450 million (about \$8.5 million),⁴³ with a large chunk of this money coming from Saudi Arabia. IM is the first India-based terrorist group to be designated as a foreign terrorist organization (FTO) by the United States, according to a September 19, 2011 notification.⁴⁴ The group has reportedly been found to be involved in ISI-LeT-led attacks, prominently including the Pune German Bakery blast (February 13, 2010), Mumbai serial blasts (July 13, 2011), the Delhi High Court Blast (September 7, 2011), and the twin blasts in Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh (February 21, 2013).

Global jihad's apparent appearance in India, evidenced by the formation of al-Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent (Jamā'at Qā'idat al-Jihād fī Shībh al-Qārrah al-Hindīyah or Organization of the Base of Jihad in the Indian Subcontinent, AQIS), and the Islamic State announcements regarding Khorasan Province (which includes the Indian Subcontinent), has attracted enormous interest. In reality, the impact of AQIS has been negligible, and the "Islamic State has not arrived in India because its ideology has no takers."⁴⁵

Nevertheless, after the fall of Mosul, Iraq, in June 2014 and the Islamic State's declaration of a Caliphate soon thereafter, there was a flurry of interest in the Islamic State in India. Indeed, security forces have identified at least 221 IS sympathizers/recruits from across the country and have arrested or detained at least 159 (data till August 30, 2017) of them. Sixty-two were reported to have left the country and travelled to Afghanistan, Iraq, or Syria to join IS forces fighting in those territories. Nineteen of these sixty-two have been killed thus far.⁴⁶

There have also been a few incidents of flag waving, provocative posters, and symbolism (such as wearing Islamic State T-shirts in one incident in Tamil Nadu in August 2014). According to charge sheets filed by India's premier investigator, the National Investigation Agency (NIA), members of Islamic State were responsible for a bomb blast that occurred in a passenger train near Jabri station in the Shajapur District of Madhya Pradesh on March 7, 2017, in which 10 people were injured and railway property was damaged.⁴⁷ NIA is investigating another eight cases allegedly related to Islamic State activities in India. Likewise, though AQIS exists in India, its impact has been minimal. On September 3, 2014, Ayman al-Zawahiri announced the formation of AQIS with Maulana Asim Umar, a leader of a breakaway faction of the Indian Mujahiddeen based in Pakistan, as its chief. Significantly, India has been unsuccessfully targeted by al-Qaeda at least since 1996, when Osama bin Laden referred to India as being among the lands where the Muslims were living under "oppression," and thus a legitimate theater of jihad.⁴⁸ There has, as of this writing, been no incident of terrorist violence directly related to AQIS and no significant recruitment on Indian soil. However, the activities of the Base Movement, an al-Qaeda-affiliated group, has drawn the attention of security agencies. According to reports, the Base Movement is suspected to have orchestrated five different bomb blasts in Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, and Karnataka since April 2016.⁴⁹

In a significant development, on July 27, 2017, the *Global Islamic Media Front*, an al-Qaeda online propaganda platform, issued a statement announcing former HM leader Zakir Rashid Bhatt, alias Zakir Musa, as commander of its new-found Ansar Ghazwat-ul-Hind (supporters of holy war in India) for J&K.⁵⁰ Reports suggest that Musa's group comprises less than two dozen terrorists.⁵¹

Islamism and Society

Islamism in Indian society occupies a continuous ideological spectrum. Indeed, many of the root ideologies that have fed terrorism in South Asia find their sources on Indian soil—though, as already stated, at least some of these sources have sought to distance themselves from the interpretations and activities of terrorists.

Four broad sources can be identified on the landscape of revivalist, fundamentalist, and extremist Islamism in South Asia: the Deobandi school; the Barelvi school; the modernist-revivalist streams, such as the influential Jamaat-e-Islami; and the Ahl-e Hadith, which finds its inspiration in Wahhabi doctrines and support and funding from Saudi Arabia.

The Deobandi, the oldest of these four groups, dates back to 1867 and the establishment of the Dar-ul-Uloom seminary at Deoband, a small town in western Uttar Pradesh in India. Founded by Maulana Muhammad Qasim Nanautawi and Maulana Rashid Ahmed Gangohi, the seminary developed a structured curriculum with an overwhelming emphasis on religious education based on original Arabic texts, rather than on later and "corrupted" interpretations. The impetus for these developments was the marginalization of the Muslim community in British India and concerns about the growth of Western and other non-Islamic influences. The Deobandis formally subscribe to the Hanafi School of Islamic jurisprudence and emphasize a puritanical interpretation of the faith.

In 1919, Deobandi leaders created a political front, the Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind (JUH). Later, the demand for a separate state of Pakistan for Muslims of the subcontinent split the JUH, and the JUI came into being in 1945, uniting the votaries of Partition. This group lent its support to the dominant political formation favoring the communal division of British India, the Muslim League (ML).

The JUI and a variety of Deobandi formations have been immensely influential, both socially and politically, in Pakistan, shaping the course of sectarianism, extremism and militancy. The Taliban in Afghanistan and the Harkat Triad in India also claim Deobandi affiliation. Significantly, however, the ulema of the Dar-ul-Uloom Deoband have repeatedly and explicitly condemned all aspects of terrorism, stating that “there is no place for terrorism in Islam” and declaring it to be an “unpardonable sin.”⁵² In February 2008, for instance, the Deoband Ulema organized an anti-terrorism conference at the Dar-ul-Uloom, which was attended by “tens of thousands of clerics and students from around India.”⁵³

The Barelvi order, established by Ahmed Raza Khan toward the end of the nineteenth century in Uttar Pradesh state, also adheres to an interpretation of the Hanafi School, but one that is at wide variance with the Deobandi reading. The Barelvi School, in fact, seeks to emphasize the very syncretic elements of South Asian Islam that were explicitly rejected by the Deobandis. Deeply influenced by mystical Sufi practices and beliefs, it attributes many extraordinary, perhaps even divine, qualities to the Prophet, conceiving of him more as a holy presence than a mortal man. They likewise believe strongly in the power of intercession by holy personages and saints and give greater import to the personal (rather than social and political) aspects of religion. Unsurprisingly, the Barelvi philosophy is anathema to the puritan reformist movements and schools of Islam, which condemn the Barelvis as shrine- and grave-worshipping deviationists. The Barelvis have not been significantly associated with terrorism in India and have been systematically targeted by Deobandi terrorist groups in Pakistan.⁵⁴

Another movement is Ahl-e Hadith, a relatively small movement that has benefited enormously from Saudi support in recent times. It represents one of the most radicalized elements within the Sunni fundamentalist factions of South Asia. Inspired by Sayyed Ahmed “Shaheed” (The Martyr) of Rae Bareilly (in the present Indian State of Uttar Pradesh), who fought the Sikh Maharaja Ranjit Singh in 1826–31 in the Peshawar region, the Ahl-e Hadith has sought to restore Islam to the purity of the original faith, as articulated in the Koran and the Hadith. It formally claims to be distinct from the Wahhabis, but the movement’s beliefs and practices have much in common with the dominant creed of Saudi Arabia. While the Ahl-e Hadith insists that it does not follow any one of the four schools of Islamic jurisprudence, its practitioners have moved progressively closer to the Hanbali interpretation that is also the basis of Wahhabi practices. Their interpretation of Islam is puritanical and legalistic, and they reject all manner of perceived deviations and “idolatrous” practices that they claim have crept into the other major traditions. While its numbers are believed to be small, and the movement no longer has more than a trace presence in India, it has remained vibrant in Pakistan, from where it has exercised disproportionate influence and demonstrated a great capacity for violence in recent years. Lashkar-e-Taiba proclaims adherence to the Ahl-e Hadith ideology.

The Jamaat-e-Islami is one of the most influential revivalist movements in South Asia and has had tremendous political influence, both in pre-partition India and, subsequent to its creation, in Pakistan. It is the most explicitly political of the various movements and categorically denies the very possibility of a distinction between the religious and the political or, indeed, even between the religious and the personal, within a genuinely Islamic order. Abu Ala Maududi, the ideologue and founder of the Jamaat-e-Islami, declared that in an Islamic state—the ideal and objective of the organization—“no one can regard his affairs as personal and private... An Islamic state is a totalitarian state.”⁵⁵ Maududi sought to “enunciate an all-inclusive school of Islamic thought,” one that was “not bound by any school of law.”⁵⁶ To a large extent, Jamaat practice follows upon interpretations of Maududi’s vision.

Hizb-ul-Mujahideen and the Students’ Islamic Movement of India trace their roots to Jamaat ideology. Nevertheless, the Jamaat-e-Islami Hind (JIH) rejects all linkages with these groups, includ-

ing SIMI—which it created as its student wing in 1977, but which was expelled in 1981 due to its increasing radicalization. The Hizb remains intimately connected with the Jamaat-e-Islami Jammu and Kashmir.

Tablighi Jamaat (TJ) is a radical Muslim revivalist movement, founded by Muhammad Ilyas in 1926 in Mewat (in the present Indian State of Haryana), which reaches out to Muslims of all social and economic classes and seeks to purify the Islamic faith of all “idolatrous deviations.” One of the most rapidly growing Islamist organizations, TJ primarily operates in India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh, but has extended its network in other parts of the world as well. It is “a loosely controlled mass movement, not a rigidly controlled organization” and “has no fixed membership and the leaders of the movement do not exercise a total control on its activists.”⁵⁷ TJ’s founder, Mohammad Ilyas, emphasized the *jihad-bin-nafs*, or the internal *jihad* of the spirit, over the *jihad-bin-saif*, *jihad* by the sword, and the organization has long been criticized by other Islamists for its apolitical orientation. In recent years, however, linkages between TJ followers and Islamist terrorism have surfaced with increasing frequency.⁵⁸

Today, some of the Indian Muslim community’s disadvantages are structural and relate to accidents of history and of geography. The partition divested the community of its leadership and its elites across North India, and Muslims have remained largely directionless and socially, politically, and economically underdeveloped over the intervening decades. On virtually all social indicators, Muslims are worse off than the other major religious communities in India. Higher poverty and illiteracy levels in the community limit capacities for productive employment, especially at higher levels. 26.5 percent of Muslim Other Backward Castes (OBCs) and 19.3 percent of other Muslims were below the poverty line in urban areas, and 30.8 percent of Muslim OBCs and 25 percent of other Muslims were below the poverty line in rural areas in 2011–2012, as compared to an Indian average of 13.7 and 25.7 percent, respectively.⁵⁹ Literacy among Muslims stands at 57.3 percent as against a national average of 63.1 percent.⁶⁰ The distribution of Muslim populations has a crucial impact on these factors: The community is disproportionately located in some of the poorest, most backward, and ill-governed states of India. In 2011, for instance, just four of India’s twenty-eight states and seven union territories—Uttar Pradesh (38.4 million Muslims), Bihar (17.5 million Muslims), West Bengal (24.6 million Muslims), and Assam (10.6 million Muslims)—with some of the poorest human-development profiles in the country, accounted for 53.04 percent of India’s Muslim population.⁶¹ Relatively higher Muslim population growth, disproportionately concentrated in the most backward regions and among the most disadvantaged population segments only serves to exacerbate existing ills. Higher poverty and illiteracy levels are directly related to higher reproduction rates among the Muslims, though rates have declined proportionately among segments of the Muslim population that have escaped these blights.⁶² Significantly, in many of the better-administered and more prosperous states, the gap between the general population profile and the Muslim population profile tends to diminish on a number of variables. In Kerala, for instance, Muslim literacy in 2011 stood at 93.29 percent⁶³ compared to a State average of 94 percent.⁶⁴ Nevertheless, Muslim poverty remains higher than the average in most states in the country.

In terms of Muslim education, it is crucial to understand that the Indian madrasa has little in common with the “*jihad* factories” that have been established in a large proportion of Islamic educational institutions in Pakistan and, to some extent, in Bangladesh as well. There are no authoritative estimates of the number of madrasas in India, but recent approximations put the figure at roughly 94,528.⁶⁵ According to estimates, 2.2 percent of Muslim children ages six to fourteen go to madrasas.⁶⁶ The proportion is higher in rural areas and among males.⁶⁷ The government runs programs supporting modern curricula in madrasas, and a significant number of such institutions have accepted such curricula.⁶⁸ One such program is the Scheme for Providing Quality Education in Madrasas (SPQEM). It aims to encourage madrasas to pro-

mote mainstream education along with their traditional religious teachings.⁶⁹ Crucially, madrassas are often found to be providing the only option for schooling in areas where the state's education system has failed. However, the Union Ministry of Home Affairs has developed a "multi-pronged" policy focusing on counter-radicalization, involving several ministries and state governments, and including a program for skill development for madrassa students.⁷⁰

Nevertheless, a fraction of madrassas have been found to have at least some linkages with the Islamist extremist enterprise, and there has been a pronounced growth of such institutions—funded from outside the country—along the most porous stretches of India's borders. In February and March 2006, for instance, officers of a border security agency disclosed that 2,365 mosques and madrassas had sprung up on the Indian side of the Indo-Nepal border and some 700 had done so on the Nepal side over the preceding decade—of which some 50 or 60 were considered "sensitive."⁷¹ A significant rise in the number of madrassas along the Indo-Bangladesh border also has been reported.⁷² Reports also indicate a mushrooming of madrassas along the Indo-Pakistan border in Rajasthan.⁷³ At least some terrorist incidents have been linked backward to networks established among elements within the mosque-madrassa complex in the country.⁷⁴

There has also been a proliferation of Wahabi madrassas and mosques in troubled Jammu and Kashmir, with the Ahl-e-Hadith leading the pack. These have reportedly been funded overwhelmingly through hawala channels and through physical transfer of currencies across the Line of Control with Pakistan. While intelligence and enforcement agencies were well aware of the problem, they remained mute bystanders in the absence of a political mandate to act, and because of the sensitive nature of the issue.⁷⁵ Similar patterns were visible in several other states across the country.⁷⁶

Recent developments have, however, been encouraging. On May 30, 2017, NIA registered a case to investigate funding to separatist organizations in J&K and conducted widespread searches in J&K, Delhi, and Haryana. Eight persons have been arrested in this connection thus far—seven on July 24, 2017,⁷⁷ and one on August 17, 2017⁷⁸—and incriminating documents, electronic devices, cash, and other valuables worth billions have been recovered. Crucially, Altaf Ahmad Shah Funtoosh Geelani, the son-in-law of the Chairman of the All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC-Geelani), Syed Ali Shah Geelani, was among the arrestees. Further, on August 28, 2017, NIA questioned Naeem Geelani and Naseem Geelani, sons of Syed Ali Shah Geelani, in connection with the case.⁷⁹

ISLAMISM AND THE STATE

"India's secular democratic constitution," observes scholar and diplomat Husain Haqqani, "empowers the country's Muslims more than their co-religionists in Muslim majority states."⁸⁰ India's constitutional and legal order is rigorously secular⁸¹ and goes out of its way to protect minorities or to accommodate them through "reverse discrimination" provisions.

Nevertheless, Muslims—along with other disadvantaged groups—do endure significant discrimination in a deeply inequitable social, economic, and political order. Weak governance and a crumbling justice system across vast areas of the country have meant that injustice, neglect, and injury are often disregarded, and their victims have little practical recourse, despite the elaborate framework of statutory provisions. While the broad trajectory of trends in communal violence is not discouraging,⁸² periodic bloodbaths—the worst of these to date in the new millennium taking place in Gujarat in 2002, where some 2,000 persons were killed, primarily Muslims—continue to poison relationships between communities and undermine the confidence of the country's minorities in the institutions of the state. 62 persons were killed, 98 injured and over 55,000 displaced in the most recent of major cycles of communal rioting, in Uttar Pradesh in 2013.⁸³ Crucially, such violence often "bears the imprimatur of the state,"⁸⁴ as parties in power abandon constitutional values and subvert the agencies of the state.

Among the most visible indicators of systemic discrimination against Muslims in India is their share in government employment, which relatively recently stood nationwide at 4.9 percent of the total number of such employees, when Muslims constituted 13.4 percent of the country's population.⁸⁵ When tallied in 2016, Muslims made up just 3.3 percent of the Indian Administrative Service and 3.2 percent of the Indian Police Service.⁸⁶ Much of this is, however, a consequence of poor education and the relative paucity of qualified aspirants to these posts. Thus, "the success rate of Muslims is about the same as other candidates," though the "small number of Muslim candidates appearing in the written examination of the civil services was a cause of concern."⁸⁷

Despite the popular narrative, however, the successes of Islamist radicalism demonstrate no coherent correlation to specific grievances, atrocities, or deprivations among the Muslim community.⁸⁸ Islamist extremism is, in fact, rooted in a powerful, sustained process of ideological mobilization that has its roots in Pakistan. Indian Muslims have overwhelmingly resisted these efforts at subversion and radicalization. Nevertheless, fringe elements within the community remain vulnerable to radicalization and recruitment by terrorist and anti-state forces. Clearly, areas with heavy Muslim concentrations would be more susceptible to such extremist mobilization, and these vulnerabilities are compounded where these areas lie along borders with hostile neighbors—particularly Pakistan and, at least until recently, Bangladesh. The growth of madrasas, particularly where these are substantially foreign-funded, along and on both sides of India's borders, is, in this context, a matter of deep concern, though only a small minority of all madrasas in the country have proven to be susceptible to radicalization.

The critical element of India's abiding success against radical Islamist mobilization is the constitutional and civilizational underpinnings of secularism within the country. Of course, Indian society and politics have yet to become "socially and emotionally secular,"⁸⁹ despite constitutional secularism and a long history of confessional co-existence. The periodic recurrence of communal conflagrations and manifestations of religious extremism are evidence of this. Nevertheless, structural and cultural factors constrain even radical players from their greatest excesses. For instance, electoral considerations have repeatedly forced the Hindu right to accommodate Muslim concerns. Similarly, even where some state agencies have colluded with extremist elements—as, for instance, in the Gujarat riots of 2002—constitutional checks and balances have, eventually, reasserted themselves to bring offenders to some measure of justice.

While the threat of Islamist radicalization and terrorism has endured for decades, and Pakistan gives every sign of being intent upon an asymmetric war of attrition, Indian responses have remained largely fitful, event-led, and ad hoc. Indeed, India has no clearly articulated counterterrorism policy.⁹⁰ This deficiency is compounded by endemic deficits of capacity in the security, intelligence, and justice systems,⁹¹ which make any planned and comprehensive response impossible. As noted elsewhere,

The absence of strategy and the incoherence of tactics have long afflicted India, as the country finds itself responding continuously and insufficiently to provocations by its neighbors, and to a rising tide of subversion and terrorism. Worse, the pattern of responses has, with rare exception, reflected a quality of desperation and directionlessness that, after decades of contending with these problems, is impossible to fathom. With over 25 years of Pakistan-sponsored Islamist terrorist activity on Indian soil, the country is still to correctly define the problem that confronts it, or to craft an appropriate 'strategic architecture' and to derive policies and practices that are in conformity with such an overarching design.⁹²

If Islamist terrorism, nevertheless, gains little traction, and if the state is still able to achieve significant successes against both terrorists and against extremist ideologies, the credit must go to small handfuls of exceptionally dedicated individuals in the intelligence and security community, on the one hand, and an enveloping culture that rejects terrorism on the other. India's democracy, which has gone great lengths to accommodate minority sentiments, is a part of this culture, and it is through the instruments and dynamics of democracy that extremism is constrained.

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