Background

• Lashkar-e-Tayyiba (LeT) is a Pakistan-based Islamic extremist group founded in the late 1980s as the terrorist wing of Markaz ud Dawa ul-Irshad, a Pakistan-based Islamic fundamentalist mission organization, according to the US State Department. LeT aims to attack and expel the Indian government and people from Kashmir—a state in northern India with a large Muslim population that borders Pakistan—to establish a caliphate in South Asia.

• With an estimated several thousand members, LeT is one of the largest militant groups in South Asia and is capable of coordinating attacks in India, including the Mumbai commuter train bombings in 2006, which killed 209, and the Mumbai attacks in 2008, which resulted in 164 deaths and about 300 injuries.

• LeT views the United States, India, and Israel as existential enemies of Islam and has supported other terrorist organizations, including al-Qa‘ida and the Taliban, that have targeted American and coalition forces in Afghanistan. In December 2001, the United States designated LeT as a foreign terrorist organization and, in 2002, Pakistan officially banned the organization.

Threat to New Jersey: Low

LeT poses a low threat to New Jersey due to the group’s continued focus on local and regional issues, including its operations in Kashmir and Pakistan, and its efforts to expand foreign-based fundraising. Since its creation, LeT has threatened the United States, but has not succeeded in conducting an attack domestically.

• LeT’s leader, Hafiz Saeed, operates humanitarian projects and fundraising campaigns under the Jamaat-ud-Dawa group and various other aliases. Saeed uses these groups as a front to advertise openly in local media outlets and continue to receive donations from Pakistanis to support LeT. Internationally, the group receives funding from residents of the Gulf and Middle East states, as well as Europe and the United States.

• In 2015, Saeed openly stated the group supports the Pakistan government and military and extended LeT assistance to help liberate the Kashmiri people. In February 2016, LeT operatives targeted a military bus in Pampore, Kashmir, killing three Indian army commanders. According to Western media reports, the US Intelligence Community has documented Pakistani Inter-Services Intelligence and LeT operatives regularly sharing intelligence about India’s presence in Kashmir since at least 2008.

• In response to ISIS’s growing influence in the region, LeT has called for a global effort to confront the group, stating ISIS does not represent Islam and all Muslims. In response to an ISIS propaganda publication, LeT released a statement in 2015 saying ISIS, as an external group, has no role to play in Kashmir and Jammu and dismissed the organization as “a product of anti-Islamic Western countries.”

US Nexus

• On February 8, authorities announced they arrested Michael Sewell and Jesus Encarnacion and charged them with providing material support to LeT. Sewell allegedly used social media to recruit supporters on behalf of the group and attempted to inspire at least one person to travel overseas to join it. Additionally, Encarnacion allegedly attempted to travel to Pakistan to join LeT for the purpose of receiving “the training and experience he believed he needed to someday return to the United States and carry out attacks,” according to authorities.

• In January 2013, Daood Gilani of New York City received a 35-year prison sentence for assisting in the Mumbai attacks in 2008. From 2002-05, LeT members trained Gilani in firearms use, combat techniques, and counter-surveillance while he was in Pakistan. Once trained, Gilani, who changed his name to David Coleman Headley, traveled to India and provided surveillance videos used in the plot.

• In November 2017, a Pakistani court released Saeed, the suspected mastermind behind the Mumbai attacks in 2008, from house arrest. The United States, which placed Saeed on the US terrorist designation list on May 27, 2008, called for his re-arrest. Additionally, Saeed carries a $10 million US bounty.


It is important to note that the information provided here is based on the document's content and does not reflect any external or current events. The information is as of March 19, 2019.