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## Islamic State Plans Attack on India to Provoke Armageddon

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By Bhaskar Roy

A document titled “A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE ISLAMIC STATE CALIPHATE” obtained from Pakistan by the American Media Institute (AMI) states that preparations are underway for an attack on India to provoke an all out confrontation with the United States. It goes on to say that even if the US tries to attack with all its allies as it will, “the (Muslim) Ummah will be united, resulting in the final battle.”

According to AMI, this 32- page document was procured from a Pakistani citizen (whose name has not been revealed for his security) who has contacts within Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP). The document was translated in English and its veracity authenticated by intelligence experts.

The document claims that the Caliphate according to the Prophet seeks to unite disparate factions of the Pakistan Taliban (TTP) and Afghan Taliban into a single army, and that the leader of the Islamic State, otherwise known as ISIS or ISIL, be recognized as the sole ruler of the entire Muslim people of the world. It also gives a chilling warning that the Caliphate will grow until all non-believers, including those who oppose them, are beheaded.

Apart from other details, what is important for South Asia is the Islamic State's focus on the region. They have already declared the State of Khorasan (ISK). Terrorism expert Bruce Riedel, who served with the CIA for more than 30 years and is currently senior fellow at the Brookings Institution says, “Attacking India is the Holy Grail of South Asian Jihadists,” and an attack on India will magnify the stature of the Islamic State.

Till date, the impact of the Islamic State has been very peripheral. According to intelligence sources, thirteen Indians joined the Islamic state

and around six of them have been killed in battle. But recently there have been several instances of the show of Islamic State flags in Kashmir. The senior partner in the government in Kashmir, the PDP, has not shown any strong action against these activities. The excuse is that these demonstrations are done by teenagers and are not serious.

This is both unfortunate and irresponsible. The PDP government had demonstrated a soft approach to the Kashmiri separatists. The PDP's partner, the BJP, which is ruling at the centre has not been strong enough in condemnation or action. Both appear to be working for local politics, sacrificing national security. This should not be allowed.

The Islamic State's growth in Pakistan will certainly complicate the situation in India, especially in the vulnerable state of Jammu and Kashmir. That the Islamic State document was written in Urdu, the language used in Pakistan, suggests that efforts are being made by this organization to win support and recruit members in Pakistan.

It is known that factions of the TTP and the Afghan Taliban have declared allegiance to the Islamic State. These are, however, splinter groups. Terrorist organizations split and join up with other, mainly large group, to form a new group.

With recent revelation that Afghan Taliban Amir Mullah Mohammad Omar had actually died in April 2013 in a Karachi hospital, factionalism has emerged. The Afghan Taliban is on the verge of splitting. Pakistan's ISI is manipulating the reorganization of the Taliban. Its new chief, Mullah Akhtar Mansur, is an old asset of the ISI. Splinter groups of the Afghan Taliban may shift their loyalty to the Islamic State.

The Caliph of the Islamic State, Abu Bakr al Baghdadi is a former head of the Al Qaeda in Iraq. Some of his loyalists from Al Qaeda have already joined him. More are likely to if the Al Qaeda fails to succeed. Currently, however, the two groups are in competition.

To India's east, Bangladesh already has a serious terrorism problem. In the period between 2001-2006, when the BNP-Jamaat-e-Islami (JEI) alliance was in power, extreme religious terrorist organizations were in fact encouraged, to achieve political ends. The BNP wanted to extend their rule, while the JEI was working towards establishing an Islamic State run under Sharia law. Foreign money, especially from the Gulf and West Asian NGOs came in quite freely. The number of fundamentalist terrorist organizations mushroomed, crossing well over one hundred.

Although the current coalition government under Prime Minister Sk. Hasina has launched a hard campaign against terrorism, it is very difficult to eradicate them completely, given the divided polity in the nation. One of the main terrorist organizations, the banned Jamatul Mujahidin Bangladesh (JMB) has been decapitated. (They have spread to the Indian bordering state of West Bengal). The JMB has split into three factions, and some recently arrested leaders and cadres confessed to the police that the outfit was seeking help from the Islamic State. The acting chief of this group Abu Talha Mohammad Fahim alias Pakhi, has been also arrested. Bangladeshi security agency the Rapid Action Battalion (RAB), and the Indian agency, the National Intelligence Agency (NIA) are working together.

It would have been more understandable if the JMB faction had sought the assistance of Al Qaeda since many of their leaders had fought alongside the Taliban and Al Qaeda under ISI guidance in Afghanistan. The JEI is also alleged to have had contacts with the Al Qaeda. Or, is it that the JMB faction led by Mohammad Fahim has been impressed by the ideology and cruelty of the Islamic State? If this is so, then we are in for dangerous times.

Bangladeshis are generally culturally sophisticated and sensitive people. The Sunni Islam practiced by the large majority of the population is Sufi oriented. Beheading and killing by drowning are abhorrent to their sensibilities. Yet, a section has been nurtured who have rejected the basic character of the nation. The JEI demands that the Ahmedias be disenfranchised much in the same way as in Pakistan.

Another issue of concern is the trend among Bangladeshis living in England joining the Islamic State. In April this year, a 75-year old Bangladeshi of Luton UK, took eleven of his family members including three children and crossed over from Turkey to Syria while returning from a holiday in Bangladesh. Other Bangladeshis from UK, including a group of three women, flew to Turkey to join the Islamic State in Syria.

Experts on terrorism point to the effective and powerful propaganda of the Islamic State using technology. Show of killing is show of power against enemies of Islam as they see it. Simultaneously, they are inviting the disenfranchised Muslims all over world to join them and come to paradise. They promise equality to all. Europeans are helping in swelling the ranks of Islamic State fighters.

The Islamic State is cleverer than the Al Qaeda. It does not want to take on the USA on US soil. It wants to draw the Americans to their stronghold in Iraq and Syria. When they build some strength in Afghanistan, they plan to strike at the American military and other American interests. This tactic can be extended to other countries and regions.

How serious is the international community in fighting the Islamic State? Each concerned country is only doing that much to try and secure its interests. Only after being hit by the Islamic State, Turkey finally agreed to join the American action in that region. Otherwise, there is little coordination among these countries.

The fight against Islamic State requires much more cohesion. But serious thought should be given to the social state of Muslims in the western countries. Last of all, games should not be played over extremists of different countries for political interests. The Islamic State is not going away anytime soon.

Just a footnote: Pakistan's deep state, the army and the ISI, are enjoying a new confidence now. China has made it abundantly obvious that it will protect Pakistan against charges of terrorism. The US is ambivalent, with Pakistan emerging as a critical player in the Afghan peace process.

Some old ISI assets like Afghan warlord Gulbuddin Hekmatyar have veered towards the Islamic State. Is there any guarantee that in its shortsightedness it will not encourage them to target India?

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