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A revamp of the Pakistani intelligence community is underway.

On October 12, 1998, five days after the resignation of Gen. Jehangir Karamat as the army chief following a controversial talk delivered by him on the post-Chagai situation in Pakistan, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif replaced Lt. Gen. Nasim Rana by Lt. Gen. Ziauddin, till then the Adjutant-General, as the Director-General of the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI). Lt. Gen. Rana was subsequently posted as Master-General Ordnance.

Lt. Gen. Ziauddin of the Engineering Corps, who was promoted as Lt. Gen. on February 25, 1996, is due to retire on February 2, 2000. After the recent resignations of Lt. Gens. Ali Quli Khan and Khalid Nawaz following their supersession by Gen. Pervez Musharraf as the new army chief, Lt. Gen. Ziauddin has moved to the No. 2 slot in the seniority list of Lt. Gens. Thus, after Lt. Gen. Hamid Gul, who was appointed as the DG, ISI, by the late Gen. Zia-ul-Haq and removed by Benazir Bhutto in February, 1989, after his Jalalabad fiasco, Lt. Gen. Ziauddin has become the seniormost Lt. Gen. to occupy the post of DG, ISI. Lt. Gen. Rana, who was appointed by Benazir as the ISI chief in 1995, was a Major-General at the time of his appointment and was subsequently promoted as Lt. Gen.

Maj. Gen. Muhammad Aziz Khan, a Director in the ISI in charge of Afghan operations including overseeing the activities of the Taliban, the Harkat-ul-Mujahideen (formerly Harkat-ul-Ansar) and the Arab mercenaries under Osama alias Osman Bin Laden, has been promoted as Lt. Gen. and posted as the Chief of General Staff in which capacity he would, inter alia, supervise the work of the Directorate-General of Military Intelligence. In addition to these changes, there has been a number of reshuffles at the senior and middle levels of the ISI, many of them in the Afghan section. These reshuffles have been carried out by Lt. Gen. Ziauddin.

On November 5, 1998, Col (retd) Iqbal Niazi, till then the Principal Staff Officer in the Prime Minister's Secretariat, was appointed as Additional Director-General (ADG) of the Intelligence Bureau (IB), with an indication that he would soon be appointed as the DG. The post

of DG has been lying vacant following the removal of Manzoor Ahmed, the previous DG, by Nawaz Sharif for submitting an incorrect report that one of the Cruise missiles fired by the US Navy towards Afghanistan on August 20,1998, had hit a target in Pakistani territory killing many people. After taking over, Col. Niazi has carried out a re-shuffle of officers in the Afghan and Sindh sections of the IB. Seven senior Police officers, two of the rank of Inspectors-General and five of the rank of Deputy Inspectors-General, who were dealing with Afghanistan and Sindh, have been reverted back to their parent cadre.

Simultaneously, Lt.Gen. (retd) Javed Nasir of the Tablighi Jamaat, who was removed as DG, ISI, by Nawaz Sharif in 1993 under US pressure because of the CIA's displeasure over his alleged non-cooperation in the re-purchase of the unused Stinger missiles from the Afghan mujahideen, and Brig. (retd) Imtiaz, Director of the internal Political Division of the ISI under Lt. Gen. Hamid Gul, have started working as principal intelligence and security advisers to Nawaz Sharif. According to the "Frontier Post " of Peshawar (October 16,1998), the two work from Nawaz Sharif's residential office.

After coming to power in 1988, Benazir abolished the internal Political Division of the ISI and dismissed Brig. Imtiaz. Nawaz Sharif, then Chief Minister of Punjab, took him as his security adviser and made him responsible for assisting the Sikh extremist elements. When he became the Prime Minister in 1990, he appointed Brig. Imtiaz as the Director (the post has since been upgraded as DG) of the IB. On returning to power in 1993, Benazir again dismissed Brig. Imtiaz and had him arrested and prosecuted for illegal activities during his tenure in the ISI, including the alleged murder of a member of a leftist party. He was acquitted by the court last year.

The Pakistani intelligence community consists of the ISI, which is the external intelligence agency, the IB, the internal agency, and the Directorates-General of Intelligence of the Army, the Navy and the Air Force. The ISI, which is a totally military agency, however, works under the Prime Minister and its budget is part of the budget of the Defence Ministry as in France and Germany. The IB, which is largely officered by police officers, but increasingly headed by retired or serving military officers, comes under the Interior Ministry and its budget is part of the budget of that Ministry.

Till 1989, the ISI was always headed by a serving army officer and had primacy in the intelligence community. Even though its charter describes it as an external intelligence agency, successive Pakistani leaders have used it for internal intelligence too, particularly in the non-Punjabi minority provinces of the erstwhile East Pakistan, Balochistan, Sindh and the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP) as they did not trust the police officers of the IB belonging to the non-Punjabi communities.

In 1989, Benazir decided to restore to the civilian IB its primacy in the intelligence community and remove from the ISI internal intelligence tasks. To carry out her decisions, she appointed Maj.Gen.(retd) Shamsur Rahman Kallue, a close friend of her father's, as the ISI chief. Her decisions to restore primacy to the IB and to break with the past practice of appointing a serving Maj.Gen. as the ISI chief marked the beginning of her differences with Gen.Mirza Aslam Beg, the then Army chief, and led to her ultimate dismissal in August,1990.

On becoming Prime Minister in 1990-end, Nawaz Sharif reversed her orders, appointed Lt.Gen. Assad Durrani, a serving officer, as the ISI chief and restored to the ISI its primacy in the intelligence community . The position was again changed by Benazir on returning to power in

November,1993. She not only restored the primacy of the IB and made it exclusively responsible for internal intelligence, but also transferred many sensitive Afghan operations from the ISI to the IB. She made her Interior Minister, Maj.Gen. (ret'd) Nasirullah Babar, who as a Colonel had headed the ISI's Afghan Division under her father, exclusively responsible for Afghan operations. Maj.Gen. Babar, with the assistance of the USA's Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), was the creator of the Taliban and helped it in capturing Kabul in September,1996.

Benazir and the CIA had each their own reason for creating and backing the Taliban. A company with which Asif Zardari, her husband, was connected , had the exclusive contract for the import of cotton from Turkmenistan for Pakistan's textile industry and the Taliban protected the cotton convoys from attacks by other mujahideen groups. The CIA was interested in using the Taliban for its operations against Iran and for facilitating the construction of oil and gas pipelines by UNOCAL, the US oil company, from Turkmenistan to Pakistan.

When the Sudan asked Bin Laden to quit its territory in May,1996, Maj.Gen.Babar persuaded Benazir to agree to a request from Burhanuddin Rabbani, then in power in Kabul, to let Bin Laden travel to Jalalabad via Pakistani territory on condition that he would not act against the US and Saudi Arabia from Afghan territory. Maj.Gen. Babar, through the IB and the ISI and with the support of the Taliban which had reasons to be grateful to him, ensured this.

The caretaker Government of Meraj Khalid, which came to power after her dismissal in November,1996, and Nawaz Sharif who returned to power after the elections of February,1997, restored the primacy of the ISI once again, transferred all Afghan operations back to the ISI, dismissed and arrested Masood Sharif, DG,IB, under Benazir, for his alleged involvement in the murder of her brother Murtaza Bhutto in September,1996, and replaced a large number of Police officers of the IB with serving and retired military officers, many of them deputed from the ISI. However, Nawaz Sharif did not disturb Lt.Gen. Rana even though he was an appointee of Benazir and allowed him to continue as the DG of the ISI.

Maj. Gen.Rafiullah Niazi, who had been appointed by the caretaker Government as the DG, IB, in place of Masood Sharif, was replaced by Nawaz Sharif with Manzoor Ahmed in September,1997, following the assassination of some Iranian military trainees at Rawalpindi by the Sipah-e-Sahaba, a Sunni extremist organisation. Manzoor Ahmed himself was removed after the US bombing of Afghanistan on August 20,1998.

Four reasons are attributed for Nawaz Sharif's decision to remove Lt.Gen. Rana from the ISI and to revamp the ISI and the IB.

* Nawaz's displeasure over the failure of the agencies to effectively control the Taliban and Bin Laden, both of whom are fast becoming Frankensteins. Nawaz was reportedly unhappy with the failure of the two agencies to prevent the press conference of Bin Laden at Khost in Afghanistan on May,26,1998, in which he called for a jihad against the US and Israel. Pakistani analysts also say that the Iranian diplomats and a large number of Shias of Mazar-e- Sharif were massacred not by the Deobandi Pashtoons of the Taliban as was initially believed but by the Deobandi Punjabis of the Sipah-e-Sahaba of Pakistan who had also

joined the Taliban and the Arab mercenaries of Bin Laden in the assault on the town.

* His annoyance with both the agencies and particularly with Lt.Gen. Rana over their perceived failure to keep him correctly informed of the proceedings of a Corps Commanders conference held on September 19,1998, in which some participants with Lt.Gens. Ali Kuli Khan and Khalid Nawaz (since superseded) in the forefront, allegedly criticised Nawaz Sharif's erratic style of governance and inept handling of the economy which, they feared, could neutralise whatever advantages Pakistan might have acquired through its nuclear explosions. It is their criticism which later on impelled Gen. Karamat to make his controversial statement.

* The failure of the ISI to collect timely intelligence about India's plans to carry out nuclear tests in May.

* The poor performance of the IB in Sindh and Punjab.

It has been reported that after India's nuclear tests, Lt.Gen. Javed Nasir had commissioned a study by two of his trusted officers in the ISI on the failure to forecast Pokhran-II. They were reported to have strongly criticised the functioning of the intelligence set-up. Extracts from the report as published by the "News" of Islamabad (September 27,1998) stated as follows: " The national intelligence apparatus has considerably lost its usefulness in fulfilling the intelligence needs of the policy-makers and the entire intelligence network suffers from a grave disconnection between military and civilian efforts, leading to what may be described as undercover anarchy."

It added: " For any significant improvement in the Pakistan intelligence community, it has to be controlled by a single incontestable authority, with its funds cut by half, making business-as-usual impossible to sustain. The time has come to realise the need and importance of unclassified government information, research and open sources and integrate them with classified national intelligence. These expanding new avenues are a must to understand the context of all classified information. Unclassified sources provide you the required data base for intelligence analysis. And since most of our intelligence community does not know what is already available from unclassified sources, it lacks the context and precision and is generally busy discovering what is already discovered. Unfortunately, at present, we have no system for connecting the classified intelligence analysts to the wealth of open sources ; nor even, for that matter, to the vast quantities of unclassified information available to the rest of the Government."

One of the priority tasks of the reshuffled ISI is going to be to pressurise the Taliban to throw Bin Laden out of Afghanistan. Nawaz Sharif is under tremendous pressure from the US to make the Taliban moderate its anti-woman policies and to hand over Bin Laden to the US, failing which the US reportedly wants the ISI and the IB to co-operate with the CIA and the FBI in having him captured from his hide-out in Kandahar and flown to the US in a Noriega-style operation.

Nawaz is apparently in a dilemma. Bin Laden is a hero figure to large sections of Pashtoons not only of Afghanistan, but also of Pakistan. Any suspicion that he colluded with the US in the capture of Bin Laden could turn the Pashtoon public opinion in general and the Islamic extremists in particular against him. At the same time, failure to act on the repeated US requests could delay the lifting of the US sanctions against Pakistan even if he gives satisfaction to the US on the non-proliferation issue.

Pakistani authorities, therefore, seem to be trying to explore the possibility of helping Bin Laden to escape to the Southern Philippines where the Abu Sayyaf group might give him shelter in the territory under its control or to Chechnya. No Government of any Islamic State would accept him lest they fall foul of the US. The only way out, in Pakistani calculation, is to help him flee to a country where Muslim insurgent elements control some territory.

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