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In an article written on June 12, 2004, I had inter alia stated as follows:

“For its intelligence-collection and covert action operations directed against India, Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) uses four external bases - Kathmandu, Dubai, Bangkok and Colombo.

“While Kathmandu and Dubai are used by the ISI for intelligence collection as well as covert actions, Bangkok is used as an alternate sanctuary and as a clandestine meeting place to brief and debrief its agents in India. After the Mumbai blasts of March, 1993, the ISI had the perpetrators of the terrorist attack shifted to Bangkok from Karachi and kept them there for some time in different hotels in order to prevent the detection of their links with the ISI by the US diplomatic missions in Pakistan, which were enquiring into Indian allegations in this regard.

“Past evidence indicated that the main interest of the ISI in using Colombo as a base was to collect intelligence about developments in sensitive Indian nuclear and missile establishments, many of which are located in South India, particularly in Tamil Nadu and Kerala.

“For collecting intelligence about these establishments, the ISI generally uses Sri Lankan Tamil-speaking Muslims visiting India as well as South Indians visiting Colombo. Colombo also serves as a convenient transit point for arranging clandestine visits of Indians co-operating with the ISI to Karachi by the flights of the Pakistan International Airlines without any entry of their visits in their passports.

“There has been no evidence so far of the ISI using Colombo as a base for covert actions directed against India. However, the Lashkar-e-Toiba (LET) has been showing increasing interest in taking jihad to the Muslims of the Eastern Province of Sri Lanka. There have been persistent reports of the beginning of a radicalisation of small sections of the Tamil-speaking Muslim youth of the Eastern Province. During the riots in the Eastern Province in the middle of 2002, pamphlets in the name of a so-called Osama Brigade came to notice. The Chennai media had reported subsequently that some members of an organisation called the Muslim Defence Force (MDF) arrested by the Chennai Police had been in touch with one Abu Hamza of the LET based in the Gulf and that they were to meet him clandestinely in Sri Lanka. However, the meeting did not materialise as Abu Hamza did not come.

“The LET is very close to the ISI and it would not have taken its initial moves to explore the possibility of using Sri Lanka as a clandestine base for its activities and for creating sleeper cells there without the knowledge and prior clearance of the ISI.

“The recent investigations into the clandestine nuclear proliferation activities of A.Q.Khan, the so-called father of the Pakistan atom bomb, have revealed that Bukhary Seyed Abu Tahir, a Sri Lankan Tamil Muslim of Indian origin, married in Malaysia and with business interests in Kuala Lumpur and Dubai, was one of the external kingpins of Pakistan's clandestine nuclear procurement network. In a speech at the National Defence University of Washington DC in February last, President Bush had described this Sri Lankan Tamil-speaking Muslim as the "chief financial officer and money-launderer" of A.Q.Khan's clandestine operations.

“In the past, the ISI had posted its officers in junior and middle level clerical posts as well as in diplomatic posts in the Pakistani High Commission in Colombo. While it had never posted its officers as the head of the Pakistani diplomatic mission, Hussain Haqqani, a journalist who was then allegedly close to the ISI, was posted as the Pakistani High Commissioner to Sri Lanka during the first tenure of Nawaz Sharif as the Prime Minister (1990-93).

“The "Jang", the Urdu daily of Pakistan, has now reported that the Pervez Musharraf regime has decided to post Col (ret'd) Bashir Wali, former Director of the Pakistani Intelligence Bureau (IB), as the new High Commissioner to Sri Lanka. It is not clear at what stage is the proposal. Has his name been already sent to the Sri Lankan Government for agreement? If so, has the Sri Lankan Government given its consent?

“The IB is part of Pakistan's Ministry of the Interior. Like its Indian counterpart, it used to be a largely Police organisation, but since the days of the late Gen.Zia-ul-Haq, there has been a gradual militarisation of the organisation. Musharraf has made it for all practical purposes a wing of the ISI, with Lt.Gen.Ehsan-ul-Haq, the Director-General of the ISI, exercising powers of supervision and co-ordination over it.

“It was reported in the Pakistani media last year that Musharraf had tried to send Brig. (ret'd) Ejaz Shah, who used to handle Omar Sheikh, the accused in the kidnapping and murder case of Daniel Pearl, the US journalist, in the ISI as the Pakistani High Commissioner to Australia,

but the Australian Government did not reportedly give its agreement. He then tried to send him as Ambassador to Indonesia, which also did not give its agreement. It has recently been reported that he has since been posted to the IB to supervise operations relating to India.

“If the "Jang" report is correct, the posting of a former Director of the IB to Colombo as High Commissioner could have serious implications for India's national security. The Government of India should immediately express its concerns to the Sri Lankan Government and oppose his being based in Colombo. “

2. Subsequently, on June 18,2004, I wrote as follows:

"The Island", a daily of Sri Lanka, has reported as follows on June 17,2004: "Pakistan with the concurrence of Sri Lanka has appointed Colonel (ret'd) Bashir Wali as Islamabad's top envoy here, Sri Lankan and Pakistan High Commission officials said. "He is expected to take over the mission before end of this month," an official said. "We don't see any reason to disagree with Pakistan's choice," the official said, dismissing concerns over the planned appointment among a section of political analysts in India."

“For Col. Wali, this would be the second posting in the Pakistani High Commission in Colombo. He had earlier served as the head of the Pakistani intelligence set-up in the High Commission in the 1990s and then as an intelligence officer in the Pakistani High Commission in London.

“It was during his previous stay in Colombo that Al Ummah, the terrorist organisation of Tamil Nadu, expanded its activities in Tamil Nadu and Kerala and , during his stay in London, the Lashkar-e-Toiba (LET) set up secret cells in the UK to recruit volunteers for its jihadi terrorist operations from amongst the members of the Muslim community in the UK. This ultimately led to a ban on the LET by the British Government.

“It is reported that Col. Wali was and still is an active member of the Tablighi Jamaat (TJ), which acts as the cover organisation of Pakistani jihadi organisations such as the LET, the Harkat-ul-Mujahideen (HUM), the Harkat-ul-Jihad-al-Islami (HUJI) and the Jaish-e-Mohammad (JEM) and helps them in their recruitment of cadres not only in Pakistan, but also in other countries of the world. During his earlier stay in Colombo, he had reportedly sent a number of Tamil Muslims from the Eastern Province to Karachi to study in the Binori madrasa on scholarships provided by the TJ. Mufti Nizamuddin Shamzai of this madrasa, who was considered the mentor and god father of the Taliban, Al Qaeda and the Pakistani jihadi and anti-Shia organisations, was assassinated by unidentified elements in Karachi on May 30, 2004.

“While in Pakistan, Col. Wali used to attend regularly the annual conventions of the LET at Muridke, near Lahore, and was also attached to the Taliban as an adviser for some months in the 1990s. He was considered a protege of Brig (retd).Imtiaz, who headed the political division of the ISI during the tenure of the late Gen.Zia-ul-Haq, and had helped Imtiaz in running the ISI operations for training the terrorists from India's Punjab in Pakistani territory and arming them.

“When Benazir Bhutto came to power in 1988, she sacked Imtiaz, who was taken by Nawaz, the then Chief Minister of Pakistani Punjab, as his intelligence adviser. After the sacking of Benazir by the then President Ghulam Ishaq Khan in 1990, Nawaz, on taking over as the Prime Minister, appointed Imtiaz as the Director of the IB, a post which has since been upgraded as Director-General. Imtiaz took Wali into the IB and made him responsible for assisting the terrorists in Punjab and J&K. The training of the terrorists from Mumbai, responsible for the blasts of March,1993, was allegedly organised by him on behalf of the ISI in association with Dawood Ibrahim, the mafia leader, who was designated by the US in October last year as an international terrorist because of his linkages with Al Qaeda and the LET.

“ Now that the Sri Lankan Government seems to have confronted India with a fait accompli by agreeing to the appointment of a die-hard anti-Indian sponsor of terrorism against India as the head of the Pakistani diplomatic mission in Colombo, India has to carefully analyse the implications of his presence in Colombo and take the necessary follow-up action. His presence in Colombo will pose a threat not only to India's national security, but also to stability and law and order in Sri Lanka's Eastern Province. “

3. On August 14, 2006, seven persons, including four special commandos of the Special Diplomatic Security Unit, providing VVIP escort to the vehicle of Col. (retd) Bashir Wali were killed in a three-wheeler explosion that targeted the military convoy that was escorting the diplomatic vehicle of Col. Bashir Wali in the heart of Colombo city, on Flower Road in Kolpity. Col. Wali escaped unhurt and was subsequently withdrawn to Pakistan.

4. Commenting on the incident, I wrote as follows:

“Since taking over as the Pakistani High Commissioner in Colombo, he (Col.Wali) has been very active in promoting military-military relationship between Sri Lanka and Pakistan and liaison between the intelligence agencies of the two countries. “ It was suspected that the LTTE targeted him because of this.

5. The Indian media has reported last week the arrest of a suspected spy of an ISI officer posted in Colombo by the Tamil Nadu Police. Our media has stated as follows: “The arrest of Dhameem Anzari, the alleged spy nabbed while attempting to pass on sensitive information to the ISI in Colombo, has reportedly exposed an increase in the activities of the Pakistan intelligence agency in Sri Lanka. Anzari had reportedly confessed to Q Branch police during initial interrogation that the ISI, which operated out of the Pakistani Embassy in Colombo, had increased its activities of monitoring the southern states of India. Police said Anzari (35), son of Abdul Rahman of Thanjavur, went to the

Pakistan consulate (High Commission in Colombo) and met Boss alias Ameer Subbiah Siddique, said to be the man in charge of the TN unit of the ISI at the Consulate. Ameer reportedly had asked Anzari to get him security details of installations in India, especially TN, and promised a hefty sum in return. He tried to send the information online but it failed to reach Ameer. So, he was waiting to hand it over to Ameer personally. Anzari took footage and photos of security installations in South India and reportedly told several acquaintances that he was making a movie to portray how secure India was.”

6. While the activities of the ISI and the Pakistani IB from the Pakistani High Commission in Colombo have been well known in the past, this is possibly the first time a suspected Tamil agent of the ISI operated from Colombo has been caught. He needs to be thoroughly interrogated to establish whether he was operating alone or was part of a network.

7. In the light of the details ascertained from him, our counter-intelligence capability for monitoring the activities of the Pakistani intelligence from their station in Colombo needs to be reviewed to remove any loopholes.

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