CHAPTER VII

ISI's "KASHMIR CONTRA AFFAIR"

The parallelism between ISI and Pakistan's involvement in Kashmir and that of CIA and America's involvement in Nicaragua is so uncanny that it deserves a mention here. In the 80's, America authorised CIA to create a covert armed insurrection in the form of guerrilla war against the legitimate Sandinistan Government of Nicaragua because of its pro-Communist leanings. Nicaraguan dissidents and exiles, who were supporters of the erstwhile Samoza regime were trained armed, paid and launched into Nicaragua, by the CIA, from bases in Honduras, Guatemala, Costa Rica and Panama, which bordered Nicaragua. These rebels were called Contras. Funds for this operation were obtained by the CIA by transferring residual money from US arms sales to Iran (As was done by Pakistan with the Afghan war funds and arms) and other sources. "President Reagan personally interceded with Saudi King Fahd to obtain a large contribution for the contra cause... other high US officials also participated in an extensive programme of bribery, coercion, and quid pro quo aimed at the countries of Central America who political, military and logistical support was pivotal to sustaining the contra war... United States employed retired CIA and defence department Special operations personnel, foreign saboteurs, anti-Communist mercenaries, and even international terrorists".1

The similarity between the two operations launched in the opposite sides of the hemisphere, lies in the involvement of one countries intelligence agencies and top government officials including the security forces in exporting a proxy war in another country by using resources generated from a third source (Saudi Arabia was a common source for generating financial resources). Establishing bases and training camps outside the territory of the target country and recruiting and launching foreign mercenaries and terrorist into the target country to cause widespread subversion and disturbance. Even the period of mid 80's is the same. The difference lies only in the cause, while the aim of USA and Contras was to ensure the

downfall of the pro-Communist Saudinistan regime in Nicaragua, the aim of Pakistan and its Afghan mercenaries is the accession of Kashmir. From the foregoing, if an assumption is made that the CIA gave the ISI a blue print of their Contra operations for replicating the same, first in Afghanistan and then in Kashmir, then that assumption could be termed reasonable. With this as the background, the aspect of ISI's hand in Kashmir is proposed to be studied.

The Inter Service Intelligence Directorate of Pakistan, ISI for short, has from the 80's gained such notoriety in India that its infamous “foreign hand” seems to be not only omnipresent and responsible for all mischief as well as ills of this country but has become a house hold name. The infame and capabilities ascribed to this organisation may at times be grossly exaggerated but the fact remains that it truly is the most potent and feared intelligence agency in the third world, the contribution of the ISI in the implementation of level one of Pakistan’s strategy in J&K since the late eighties has been fairly successful. The events and results of the ongoing subversive offensive against India stand a proof of it. Its main weapons of sponsored Islamic militancy, fundamentalism, Jihad mainly by foreign mercenaries imported into J&K to wage a proxy war against the Indian Union, have caused a several cuts that are bleeding. Writing about the ISI of the ‘eighties’, Selig Harrison, the well known American expert on South Asian affairs writes, “President Zia had converted the ISI into a Pakistan style blend of the CIA, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and the Iranian Savak. In addition to expanding its foreign intelligence machinery he systematically built up a vast ubiquitous apparatus inside the country for serving as a powerful weapon against his political opponents. It thus, became one of the most effective and sophisticated intelligence services in the Third World”. ² Brigadier Syed A.I. Tirmazi, an ex-officiando of ISI has further elaborated the importance and efficacy of this organisation stating: “In the ISI every new sun rises with new problems and new challenges. As a matter of fact the sun never sets in the ISI”.³ Symbolically the empire of the ISI within Pakistan is, may be, as vast and as powerful as the erstwhile British empire.

This may be an overstatement, but there is unanimous agreement to the fact that besides the Army, the clergy, the feudalism and politics, the ISI forms an important ‘power centre’ in the body politic of Pakistan. ISI has on more than once played the role of king maker in Pakistan - the ouster of Ms. Benazir Bhutto and the instalement of Nawaz Sharif as the Prime Minister of Pakistan in the 1990 general elections is a case in point. That the ISI provided full support including monetary to Sharif’s PML (Pakistan Muslim League) against Ms. Bhutto’s PPP is now common knowledge. In countries which are politically and economically unstable and weak, where a number of national and non-national institutes start playing power games and intrigue, corruption and inept governance become the order of the day, the Army supported by the intelligence organisation become a state within a state. This is true of not only South and Central American states, the so called “Banana Republics”, or some Arab or African states but also Pakistan. Peter Gill writes: “The growth of an unrepresentative and unaccountable state within the state has been a product of the twentieth century. Its growth was, paradoxically, actually aided by the unpopularity of security and policing agencies: forced by this into the lowest possible visibility, they learned to develop techniques of invisible influence and control”. The ISI in Pakistan is therefore one of the most important entities in the contextuality of not only Pakistan, but India and the entire South Asian subcontinent. Its contribution towards implementation of Pakistan’s two level strategy in J&K, specifically, post 1987, can never be over-estimated. To state that the entire Kashmir embroglio is actually a single handed creation of the ISI would just be apt. This aspect is dealt in detail subsequently. It is thus appropriate that we start with the ISI from the beginning.

The Origins of ISI

In the post independence era immediately after partition Pak found its dependence on the Pak Intelligence Bureau (PIB) a civilian intelligence set up. Since the politics in Pak has always been army oriented from the beginning, they wanted their own intelligence set up. In 1948, the Inter Services Intelligence Directorate (ISI) came into being under an Australian born, British Army Officer, Major General R. Cawthorne. ISI was reorganised in 1966 and expanded in 1969, today it is purported to have a strength of over 25,000 in its rolls. During the regime of President Ayub Khan its role was more defence oriented. It was during General

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Zia-ul-Haq’s tenure that the ISI rose to such prominence that it strode the politics of Pakistan like a ‘colossus’. The reasons for the ISI rising to such dizzy heights are not difficult to analyse. Some of them could be, one, Zia was aware that his coup was unconstitutional and unlawful. He therefore needed to secure his own position for which he had a political as well as a subversive agenda but no institutional instrument to implement these agendas. In ISI he saw a potent weapon of executing his plans and thus it received Zia’s trust and whole hearted support. In return the General President did not find ISI wanting in any respect, the ISI chiefs who served Zia during this 10 years tenure were some of the most loyal, efficient and ruthless people. They included, Lt. Gen. Ghulam Jilani Khan, Lt. Gen. Akhtar Abdur Rehman and Lt. Gen. Hamid Gul, who together ensured Zia’s political stability even at the cost of the sub continents in-stability. Two, Zia found an ideal instrument in the ISI for the implementation of his twin policies of aggressive Islamization in Pakistan and totalitarian state-craft outside. ISI successfully synthesized “the two with a view to eliminating internal opposition and promoting fanaticism which ‘inter alia’ included such insidious plays as exporting terrorism in the name of Jihad. He cleverly manipulated the diverse, yet co-terminus aphorism of Khomeini’s Islamic revolution and American foreign policy objectives in support of policy of subversion in Afghanistan and when that showed promise made a grand design to destabilize India. Three, co-incidentally during this period the Afghan crisis erupted as a focal-point of the cold war, where, America decided to avenge its ‘Vietnam’ by creating Afghanistan as a ‘Vietnam’ for the Soviets. “In pursuance of this objective CIA forged a close relationship with the ISI, through which three billion dollars worth of arms were channelled to the Afghan Mujahideen. Hekmatyar was adopted as the intelligence agencies favourite surrogate to prosecute America’s proxy war against the Soviet Union. Zia utilized the opportunity not only to rehabilitate his tarnished international image by becoming a frontline warrior against the Communist menace but also to settle scores with India”.

Thus after the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan and the end of the cold war ISI was not all powerful but had become a past master at the art of subversion, proxy war, terrorism and jihad. It had unlimited and unaccounted stocks of weapon’s and ammunition,

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6 Ibid.
left overs of the Afghan war, its coffers were full of ill gained wealth through drugs, aid from
the US, illegal sale of arms and donation from other Islamic countries, having trained over
83,000 Afghan Mujahideen between 1983 and 1987, it had not only become masters in the
art of imparting subversive training but also had a large pool of trained and armed manpower
at its beck and call. Having done the deed on its western borders ISI turned towards the east,
in its appreciation J&K and Punjab were ideal spots to implement, their national objectives.
As also, to keep the monster engaged elsewhere, lest the ‘Frankenstien’ that it created turn
upon its master. The signs were already there “In 1987, nearly 90 per cent of the 777 terrorist
incidents recorded world-wide took place in Pakistan alone”. 7 In the application of its national
objectives and policies the Army and the IS in Pakistan form the main elements. The Army,
as is no secret now after Kargil in May 1999 and the November 1999 coup, actually wields
real power and has been doing so since 1947-48, sometimes overtly and sometimes covertly.
ISI has always been its ‘comrade in arms’.

Army ISI Equation

Though ISI is a combined services organisation comprising of representatives from
the Army, Navy and the airforce. The primacy and pre-dominance of the Army in the ISI
cannot be debated. Initially it was carved out of the army only, even today the majority of its
personnel belong to the land force. Its supremacy can be judged from the fact that all its
chiefs since 1948 have been from the Army, as indeed all its four dictators (Ayub Khan,
Yahya Khan, Zia-ul-Haq and Pervez Musharraf). As pointed out by a Pakistani author:
“What is perhaps not fully realised by successive civilian governments in Pakistan is that
notwithstanding the nominee on the top, down below the ISI is composed of senior Army
Officers who owe their future promotions to the Chief of Army Staff. Hence, the ISI will
always remain an extension of GHQ (General Head Quarters).” 8 Consequently, the ISI and the
Army are two sides of the same coin, same mission, same leadership and same funding.

The ISI comes directly under the Chief of the Army Staff. As K.N. Daruwalla, a
former Chairman of India’s Joint Intelligence Committee, has very lately written: “While the
ISI did come squarely under the control of the Chief of the Army Staff (COAS) and the

7 Rajeev Sharma, Pak Proxy War: A Story of ISI, Bin Laden and Kargil, (New Delhi: Kaveri Books,
8 Nation (Lahore, Pakistan), 19 April, 1992, (An article by Mushahid Hussain).
DGISI (Director General of ISI) was normally appointed with his consent... The ISI is almost a corollary to the self belief of the military that no one else (and certainly not the politicians) can run the country better than them. Like the military of which it is a part, the ISI is not hamstrung by any constitutional niceties circumscribing its role and hence the right instrument for the ambitious army brass. When Prime Ministers tried to use the ISI as a sort of a private militia of informers and hatchet men, they normally got a rap on their knuckles from the GHQ... there is a risk of the ISI turning into a tentacle of the Pakistani military octopus, with its grip - now loose, now firm - round the throat of the polity”.9 However, the tact of the ISI functioning totally under the Army must not be taken at face value. There have been instances when it has ‘renegaded’ and turned rogue against the army. It happened during the Afghan war where the Army Chief and the ISI Chief came to head concerning Afghan policies, just because Gen. Hamid Gul, the ISI Chief, seemed to be supporting the civilian Government. K.N. Daruwala writes: “Hamid Gul had somehow angered the Army Chief, General Asif Nawaz Jajua. Even after he was shifted and became Corps Commander Multan, he seemed to be directing the Afghan policy... he was retired from the Army despite being favoured by the Prime Minister”.10

Similar conflicts between the Army and the ISI have occurred in the past also, but the latest one is more pertinent and worth a recall. This one refers to the 12 October 1999 coup in Pakistan which brought Gen. Musharraf to power. The involvement of Lt. Gen. Ziauddin, the DSISI in supporting Nawaz Sharif the Prime Minister is rather implicit. K.N. Daruwala commenting on its writes: “The clearest evidence of the ISI intrigue and the kind of trouble it can get the government into is revealed by the role of the ambitious Lt. Gen. Ziauddin... It would be logical to conclude that the PM would not have sacked Musharraf the way he did, had Ziauddin not convinced him of this ability to see the whole operation through. The way it was dealt with, the announcement of Musharraf’s removal coinciding with the time that the plane carrying him took off from Colombo, not allowing the aircraft to land at Karachi, smacks of a typical ISI intrigue that has landed its chief in jail, along with the PM”.11

10 Ibid., p.79.
11 Ibid., pp.79-80.
The proclivity of the ISI, therefore, to pursue its own agenda, despite the supremacy of the army is in evidence. Since, the ISI is the main policy enforcing agency involved in the proxy war in J&K the chances that it may follow independent or semi independent or clandestinely independent policies in J&K cannot and must not be ruled out in future. Specially if the ISI and its fanatic Islamic interlock is studied in prospection with the knowledge of its actions in Afghanistan in hindsight. The ISI was deeply involved along with the CIA in supporting the fanatical Islamic Jehad by the Afghans against the Soviets in Afghanistan. Initially, their support for the fanatical Harkat-ul-Ansar and other factions of the Mujahideen and later for the Taliban had been intimate and total. This interlock seems to have created a kind of a reverse “Stockholm Syndrome” within the ISI wherein the Controller (ISI) of the Islamic terrorist groups also got indoctrinated with the fanatical Islamic zeal of their ‘hostage’ Islamic militants groups which could make them go against the wishes of their superiors in Pakistani Army as well as in the civilian Government in power (if there is one). This could create a situation which could send militancy in J&K in a ‘tailspin’ where-in the Pakistani Government or its Army would have no control over it. The rampaging Islamic militants and even the Taliban supported by the ISI could wreck havoc in J&K. This kind of a scenario could spell disaster for the sub-continent. Thus, the damage causing potential of the ISI in J&K are truly gigantic in proportion.

Evidence of the above mentioned kind of scenario is available. From March 1992 to May 1993, when Lt. Gen. Javed Nasir, a beared Tablighi (youth wing of the Jamaat-e-Islami) a fanatical born again Islamic zealot was appointed the DG ISI by Nawaz Sharif. “Gen. Nasir, a Kashmiri, was described by his colleagues as a true Pakistani Muslim and a soldier who was not only a preacher of religion but also believed that all infidels would ultimately submit to Muslims... a normal Army Officer, steeped in the anti Indian indoctrination that makes a good soldier with the added panache of war like religiosity that people have grown to favour in Pakistan” 12 The fact that during this tenure militancy in J&K reached its pinnacle cannot be disputed latest table of incidents. A table of separatist incidents during the period 1988-1993 would substantiate this statement.13

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total incidents</th>
<th>Attacks on Security Forces</th>
<th>Attacks on others</th>
<th>Explosions and Arson</th>
<th>Other incidents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>390</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>241</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>2154</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>840</td>
<td>1192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>3905</td>
<td>1098</td>
<td>485</td>
<td>1,810</td>
<td>512</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>3122</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>321</td>
<td>611</td>
<td>191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>4971</td>
<td>3413</td>
<td>507</td>
<td>744</td>
<td>307</td>
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<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>2113</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>245</td>
<td>445</td>
<td>220</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(4457*)</td>
<td>(2573*)</td>
<td>(539*)</td>
<td>(900*)</td>
<td>(445*)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Upto May 93)</td>
<td>16,655</td>
<td>7,768</td>
<td>1,632</td>
<td>4592</td>
<td>2663</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Incidents for the whole year.

The above table reveals that out of a total of 16,655 total incidents in 5½ years in J&K, Gen. Nasir’s period of 1 year and 2 months accounted for a total of 7084 or the percent wise rate of increase in the number of incidents during Gen. Nasir’s tenure has been an alarmingly high figure of 235%. Even the Pakistani media was forced to admit: “There were speculations that Gen. Nasir was responsible for attracting international approbrium for carrying out or causing terrorism in India and allowing Pakistan’s territory to be used for terrorism in some Arab states”.

Nasir’s aggressive sponsorship of Terrorism also attracted international attention, notably that of the US. Maleeha Lodhi, presently Pakistani ambassador to the US, then writing in the ‘Newsline’ of Pakistan stated:

“All allegations about the involvement of the ISI in fanning cross border turbulence (in India) reached a peak in December 1992 when the US government issued its most serious warning to date that it could declare Pakistan a terrorist state. The main American concern related to the change that support for militants in Kashmir and Indian Punjab was continuing despite Islamabad’s repeated assurances that no official agency was involved in providing any material help. Nasir’s apparent links with the Jamaat Islami gave rise to allegations that he was permitting or encouraging it to provide arms to the militants in Kashmir... Echoing these accusations, the Americans also believed that the ISI was fanning conflicts in the region due

to the irresponsible conduct of a single individual, Lt. Gen. Nasir".\textsuperscript{15} Pakistani government was consequently forced to replace Lt. Gen. Nasir. The sacking of Nasir was welcomed in Washington stating that it was "a step in the right direction".\textsuperscript{16} The Clinton Administration followed it up by deciding on 14 July 1993, not to declare Pakistan as a state supporting terrorism.\textsuperscript{17} The entire Nasir episode exposes the impact of the ISI in relation to the role it is capable of playing not only in the national, regional but in the international political arena. Definitely, it reflects the influence it has on the militant organisations in Kashmir and inter­alia on the issue of cross border terrorism between India and Pakistan in J&K. The ongoing proxy war in J&K, supporting to insurgencies and anti national activities in the North East, UP, Bihar, the Bomb blasts in Bombay in 1993, the killing of American CIA operatives in Pakistan and the USA and more recently the Kargil episode and the hijacking of Indian Airlines flight 814 to Kandhar, all highlight the increasing power of mischief of the ISI at a global level.

Structure of the ISI

The Headquarter of ISI is located at Islamabad and it is headed by a Director General of the rank of Lt. Gen. and is always a serving officer, currently Lt. Gen. Mehmood Ahmed is the DGSI, appointed by Gen. Musharraf on 20 October 1999. There is an additional Director General and three Deputy Director Generals (DDG’s) of the rank of Major Generals/Brigadiers, besides a special wing. The outline organisation of ISI is as given below.\textsuperscript{18}

\textsuperscript{16} Dawn (Karachi), 20 May 1993.
\textsuperscript{17} Hindustan Times (New Delhi), 28 July 1993.
\textsuperscript{18} Rajeev Sharma, Op.cit., p.117.
Joint Intelligence Bureau (JIB): It is the largest wing of the ISI comprising of about 60% of its total strength. It functions under DDG (Political). Director JIB is assisted by five Assistant Directors, namely, Assistant Directors (AD’s), Labour, Students, political parties, anti-terrorism and VIP security. It also covers all neighbouring countries and their internal, political and economical situation. It controls the positioning and functioning of Pakistani defence attaches abroad. There are three sub-sections dealing exclusively with political and economic developments in specified regions - India and Far East, Communist Countries and Africa and West Asia. Earlier this wing also dealt with the Afghan affairs, however now it has been wound up.

Joint Intelligence Miscellaneous (JIM): JIM is responsible for carrying out espionage activities and special intelligence operations in foreign countries primarily inside India and Afghanistan. Besides sending their officers under diplomatic cover, it also inserts agents
across the border for carrying out intelligence operations. JIM also conducts espionage in Europe, America, Asia and Middle East.

**Joint Intelligence North (JIN):** In the Indian context this is the most important directorate. It is meant to carry out special operations in J&K including provisions of training of Kashmiri militants, arms, ammunition, funds, plans for carrying out sabotage, subversion and terrorism, inside J&K. It also collects political, social, cultural and topographical information about J&K.

**Joint Intelligence Technical (JIT):** It handles all electronic gadgets concerned with the work of intelligence, it has a laboratory. It carries out limited fabrication and research work on intelligence related gadgetry.

**Joint Counter Intelligence Bureau (JCIB):** JCIB comes under DDG External I and is responsible for the coordination of all counter intelligence effort of the ISI. It has four directorates, one, keeps a watch on the activities of all foreign diplomats and foreign nationals. It also keeps surveillance on own political leaders and personnel. The second directorate is responsible for keeping surveillance of political activities outside the country, specially foreign. The third directorate is responsible for counter intelligence in respect of countries of Asia, Europe and Middle East. the fourth directorate is responsible for advising the Prime Minister on matters related to counter intelligence.

**Joint Signal Intelligence Bureau (JSIB):** Comes under DDG External II, it is responsible for collecting signal intelligence from neighbouring countries, primarily India and Afghanistan by tapping, monitoring (wireless communication). It also provides communication within the ISI. It operates a chain of signal intelligence collecting stations along the Indo-Pak border and is the main agency for providing communication to militant groups operating in J&K.

**Joint Intelligence X (JIX):** Looks after the administration and financial matters of ISI.

**Special Wings:** The two Special Wings of ISI are as under:

- **ISI Academy:** Responsible for providing training to ISI personnel and is located on the outskirts of Rawalpindi. It is called the ‘Defence Services Intelligence Academy’.

- **Military Liaison Sections (MLS):** Though a part of Pakistan’s Ministry of Interior it functions directly under the ISI. It is represented by all civilian security and intelligencies,
para military Organisations Federal Investigation Agency, Passport and Immigration Directorate, economic intelligence division and sectarian strife, arms, narco smuggling/terrorism division.

ISI’s Kashmir Operation

The BJP led government of Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee, notably, Mr. Advani the Home Minister has been re-iterating since 1998 that a white paper on the ISI’s activities in India is ready for tabling in the parliament. However, its release kept getting delayed, first due to the Prime Minister’s Lahore bus trip, then because of President Bill Clinton’s visit to India and now finally it has been decided not to release it at all. Though the release of the white paper would have definitely accorded the activities of ISI a stamp of credibility. However, the activities of the ISI in India and specially in Kashmir are so well known and credibly documented in India and abroad that the release of a white paper would be quite immaterial. A front page report in the Times of India states: “The governments decision to withhold the white paper on the activities of Pakistan’s Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) in India was promoted by fears of a back lash... with some sections of society becoming the target of public ire... there was little doubt that the Pakistani agency had spread its network far and wide. The agency has been liberally doling out money channelled through social, political and religious bodies... the government sees no reason to go ahead with the publication of the white paper since the US is now convinced that most of the terrorism in India, particularly in Jammu and Kashmir is sponsored by Pakistan, President Clinton, during his visit to the sub continent, had mentioned this in his speeches”.

As mentioned earlier that covert action as an integral part of Pakistan’s state policy in Kashmir is an approved prong of its two level strategy. Even though for civilised, democratic nations such actions are incompatible with established norms, international practices and are in contravention to the UN Charter. Having successfully applied this strategy in Afghanistan with the full fledged and active support of the US. ISI, which had surreptitiously siphoned off nearly 60 percent of the small arms, light weapons, ammunition and explosives supplied to it by the CIA for onward despatch to the Afghan Mujahideen.

19 The Times of India (New Delhi), March 29, 2000, p.1 (Headline report by Ravi Bhatia).
ISI used to arm the Mujahideen for the ‘Jehad’ in Kashmir. Funds freely flowed into ISI coffers from the smuggling of narcotics from Afghanistan, donations from Islamic countries (notably Saudi Arabia), organisations and individuals and from the Government. The Ministry of Home Affairs quotes a figure of 61,900 sophisticated weapons smuggled into India (47,700 recovered till date), 51,810 kg of explosive mostly RDX (43,700 kg recovered). It quotes 7,125 Pakistani and foreign mercenaries infiltrated into Kashmir and 19,800 Indian Kashmiris subverted, trained and infiltrated into India since 1989. The importance of ISI grew phenomenally after the end of the Afghan war, it emerged as an ‘convert action expert’ having trained by the CIA and other western countries covert intelligence organisation which were involved with the Afghan war. It also came out as a more confident and efficient covert action group after its successes against a super power. No surprise then that the Pakistani Government allowed ISI to get involved with Kashmir. Having lost three wars with India, it felt that the only option left was through an aggressive and sustained proxy war at which the ISI was already a past master now.

As per Rajeev Sharma (who may have had access to the draft white paper on ISI):

"According to the documents prepared by India’s Ministry of Home Affairs, the ISI has the four broad policy objectives:

i) Sustain Kashmir movement at minimal cost and force its settlement on terms acceptable to Pakistan.

ii) To weaken India’s potential strength and national will by hitting at its perceived “fault lines” and to pursue the policy of “thousand cuts”.

iii) To prevent India from emerging as a strategically dominant power in the region.

iv) To render Indian borders porous and bordering states vulnerable.

Here is low ISI has been acting to achieve its objectives:

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Political Action:

- Project existence of a vibrant “Freedom movement” in Kashmir by orchestrating activities of the terrorists, Pakistan-sponsored politico-religious organisations and media manipulation.

- Bolster pro-Pak support groups, human right lobbyists, foreign Parliamentarians, academicians, etc., to promote secessionist cause.

- Float and sustain and overground conglomerate, inclusive of political parties, subservient to Pakistan and project it as “Third Party” to the dispute representing “wishes and aspirations” of the Kashmiri people.

- Cause disaffection and alienation among Kashmiris using the religion card, non-performance of the elected government and alleged atrocities of security forces.

- Create and exploit pro Pakistan “front organisations” among religious bodies, students, youth, government servants, judiciary, bar, intellectuals etc.

- Organise agitations, bandhs and seminars. Both within Jammu and Kashmir and abroad to provide legitimacy to the secessionist ideology and achieve publicity mileage for the ‘cause’.

Propaganda Action:

- Build up assets in the local media and finance them to follow pro-Pakistan agenda.

- Use terrorists to coerce into submission the otherwise recalcitrant journalists.

- Use media for intensive propaganda against India and its security forces eulogising actions of terrorists as “freedom fighters” and highlighting activities of over ground secessionist organisations.

- Use Pakistan T.V., Radio and Special Broadcasting Stations like Sada-e-Hurriyat and influence section of the international media to support the Pakistani position on Kashmir.

Para Military Actions:

- Recruit, train, motivate and coordinate covert actions of various terrorist groups.
• Build up elaborate border penetration capabilities, raise guides/couriers and develop
dumping and distribution mechanism to ensure uninterrupted supply of arms,
ammunition, explosives, communication equipment and other terrorist hardware to
the militants.
• Build up channels for financial assistance to militants and subversive groups.
• Control and direct activities of militant groups through an elaborate communication
system with main controls in POK at Muzaffarabad, Kotli and Sialkote, etc.
• Identify anti movement elements particularly intelligence assets and former militants,
now supporting the government, to eliminate them.
• With local recruitment nearly stopped, induct large number of foreign mercenaries.
• Bring hitherto unaffected areas, particularly of Jammu region into vortex of militancy.
• Use terrorist threat to seek acquiescence of moderate political leaders, government
functionaries, media persons, religious leaders, social activists and academicians.
• Engineer terrorist attacks aimed at communal divide and possible backlash.

Covert Action :
• Pursue the “Qurban Ali Doctrine” of the “inevitable balkanisation of India, identify
the fault lines, carry out intensive operational intelligence research and build covert
capabilities in targetted areas.
• Carry out low intensity warfare in different parts of India with special emphasis on
• Target VIP’s.
• Forge operational and ideological alliance of Kashmiri militants and fundamentalists
groups with covert networks in the hinterland and international terrorist outfits.
• Push counterfeit currency in the country through various inlets and use hawala
operators to finance covert action programme.
Embarrass India by internationalising Kashmir issue, projecting India as violator of UN resolutions and charge it with dismal human rights record.

Emphasise strategic parity with India as a guarantor of stability in the region.

Build and support anti Indian lobbies abroad among Parliamentarians, strategic opinion makers, think tanks and OIC leaders.

Emphasise commonality of strategic interests of powers like China and the US to support Pakistan and underplay its role in promoting international terrorism, drug trafficking, acquisition of strategic weapon capabilities through clandestine means.

Intelligence encirclement of India by establishing covert networks its neighbourhood.

Diversion of substantial manpower and economic resources on security related tasks and making its battle against terrorism increasingly expensive.

Tie down Indian security forces in large numbers on internal duties, thereby impairing their offensive capabilities.

Cause demoralisation among Indian security forces through the casualties inflicted on them, pressure of human right groups and strains and stresses of hazardous anti-terrorist duties.

The role of the Pakistan Army and ISI has been clearly and probably most dispassionately brought out by a report of the Kashmir Study Group (KSG), a US based forum. The group comprised of Dr. Ainslie T. Embree, Professor emeritus, Columbia University, Dr. Charles H. Kennedy, Wake Forest University, Ambassador Howard B. Schaffer, Geogetown University, Dr. Joseph E. Schwartzberg University of Minnesota and Dr. Robert G. Wirsing, University of South Carolina. The group visited India from March 24 to April 26 and Pakistan from May 1 to 18. It held 118 meetings (78 in India, 40 in Pakistan involving approximately 182 individuals (106 in India, 76 in Pakistan). It visited 11 separate locations (7 in India, 4 in Pakistan). The respondents from both the countries comprised of Politicians, diplomats, bureaucrats, service personnel (retired and servicing), strategy and security related

think tanks in the government and outside it, academicians, journalists, writers and even common people of different age groups and sexes. The findings of the group are revealing and some relevant one’s deserve to be mentioned here:

The opinion of a majority of Indian interlocutors regarding the ambiguity as to who is actually calling the shots in policy making in Kashmir from amongst the Pakistani establishment is reflected in the findings of the report: “Was it the President, the Prime Minister, the army Inter-Services Intelligence Directorate (ISI), or perhaps even rogue elements within the ISI. And, if Pakistani representatives were to make forthcoming gestures on Kashmir under these circumstances, who could be sure that they spoke for other key players within the Pakistan civilian and military establishment?” This shows the ambiguity as to which of the power centres are actually responsible for the Kashmir policy. The next finding does attempt to clear this doubt. A large number of Pakistani respondents hold the Pakistan Army and the ISI responsible for the Kashmir policy: “These respondents were sharply critical of the important role of the military and the intelligence services in shaping Pakistani policy or, in regard to the intelligence services, of their presumed actions, independent - or even in defiance - of official policy”. This stand is further strengthened by other Pakistani respondents of the KSG team, – view of senior member of legal profession: “The army has areas of special concern to it – Afghanistan, for instance, which is handled by the armed forces and Inter Services Intelligence Directorate (ISI). Since Kashmir is also heavily a security matter, so in regard to it too no decision can be taken without the army’s going along with it… No political leader can take the risk of annoying them”. This stood proved, subsequently, on 12 October 1999, when the army staged a coup against their Prime Minister, Mr. Nawaz Sharif, ostensibly for his decision of withdrawing the army-Mujahideen combine from the Kargil heights. A senior journalist said “Any civilian government in Pakistan would have to seek approval (for its Kashmir policy) of the Army”. A peace movement activist said: “Pakistan’s political leadership is hostage of the military; the ISI

24 Ibid., p.36.
25 Ibid., p.40.
26 Ibid.
commands greater information than anyone else and thus dominates decision-making. One must understand the military’s role to understand Kashmir and its solution.27 A senior Pakistani diplomat postulated: “In addition to nuclear weapons, Afghanistan, and relations with the United States, the army GHQ takes a leading role in training policy on Kashmir. Initial drafts of policy positions are, of course, formulated and then discussed in the foreign office, but, on relations with India, the army continues to exercise considerable influence on policy. It is well equipped to do so. In terms of resources, budget, and capabilities, between the India Cell of the army’s ISI and the South Asia Division of the foreign office, there is no comparison, (specially in regard to the current initiative on Kashmir, the Prime Minister must have the blessings of the army. The army and the ISI clearly dominate policy on Kashmir).28

If such was the hold of the Army and the ISI in regards to Pakistan Kashmir policy, then would the army and ISI obstruct any peace initiatives towards Kashmir. In this also the Army and ISI was portrayed in an unfavourable light. An activist of a peace movement organisation said: “With the ISI’s help, he said, foreign Islamist support was being extended to militant Kashmiris, forcing India to respond militarily. A few militants have had vast impact in the valley, he argued, increasing the repression. The permanent hold on the Government of Pakistan by the army, he insisted, was the most significant factor perpetuating the Kashmir conflict”.29 Perhaps the most insightful and nuanced comments were those of a senior journalist with extensive military contacts, he said: “The current army Chief (General Jehangir Karamat) differs from his predecessors. He thinks - “we’ve gone too far in Kashmir; we need to pull back a bit" - However, he insists that Pakistan’s Kashmir policy must be a product of discussions that include the army and the ISI”.30 The question that then arises is, should the Pakistan army/ISI suspend covert operations in Kashmir in order to encourage settlement of the issue. The journalist quoted above said: “No, the ISI won’t stop. Its leaders want the leverage this supplies. Only in case of a full settlement of Kashmir would the ISI relent”.31

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27 Ibid.
28 Ibid.
29 Ibid.
31 Ibid.
foreign affairs bureaucracy said that the Pakistan army had already lowered the threshold of military’s involvement. Nevertheless, it would keep the insurgency in Kashmir going. It had to, he insisted; it couldn’t just turn it off. The insurgency provided too good a resource for that. The army, he said, would maintain it, but at a lower level.  

The study group report, therefore clearly reveals the important role being played by the ISI in Kashmir and brings out the following facts clearly:

- ISI is responsible for the Kashmir policy.
- ISI will not stop its subversive activities in Kashmir till a full settlement is reached.

All this was before Kargil. During and after Kargil, the heightened involvement of ISI has been covered separately. However, mention of ISI’s complicity in the hijacking of IC-814, at this stage seems appropriate.

IC-814 Hijack and the ISI

As has already been enunciated earlier, an Indian Airlines Airbus-300 (Flight IC-814) carrying 189 passengers and a crew of 11, was hijacked by five heavily armed men at 5.22 p.m. on 24 December, 1999, the flight was enroute from Kathmandu to New Delhi. The hand of the ISI in the hijack has been strongly suspected. Primarily because Nepal happens to be a major nerve centre for ISI activities against India. Since the creation of Bangladesh, ISI has gradually made Nepal its biggest station in the world. From 1989 onwards, ISI further enhanced its strangle hold there so as to support its proxy war in J&K. Pankaj Vohra writing for Hindustan Times states: “Kathmandu is known to be the place where Inter-Service Intelligence (ISI) of Pakistan has its biggest presence outside its own country”. The ISI hand was further confirmed when on January 6, 2000, Indian investigative agencies arrested four key accomplices of the hijack case from Mumbai. These arrests “established the identity of the five Pakistani hijackers and came up with a lot of evidence on Islamabad’s neck-deep involvement in the whole episode... the arrested persons, Mohammad Rehan and Mohammad Iqbal are Pakistani nationals. The other two as Yusuf Nepali of Nepal and Abdul Latif, an Indian. All the four are ISI operatives.... Their interrogation led to the identification of the five hijackers: Ibrahim Akhtar (from Bahawalpur), Shalid Akhtar Sayed Gulshan Iqbal, (Karachi),

32 Ibid.

33 The Hindustan Times (New Delhi), December 26, 1999, p.3.
Sunny Ahmed Qazi (Defence Area, Karachi), Mistri Zaboor Ibrahim (Akhtar Colony, Karachi) and Shakir (Sukkur City). All the five hijackers are Pakistani nationals. The report further gave six clues of Pakistan's complicity- one, shortly before IC-814 left Kathmandu, a Pakistan Embassy Car (42CD14) with three officials reached the airport. One Pak official went towards the departure lounge. Two, soon after the hijackers took control, they directed the pilot to proceed to Lahore. The ATC Lahore refused permission when the pilot made the request. But when the hijackers sought permission later it was granted immediately. Four, thirty three of the 36 militant prisoners whose release was sought by the hijackers are Pakistanis. Five Pak Government had officially made two attempts earlier for Masood Azhar's release, in writing. Six, the three released militants surfaced later in Pakistan, with Masood Azhar openly appearing on TV and giving provocative speeches.

B. Raman, Director, Institute for Topical Studies has made some revealing statistical observations. He states, “7 out of the 13 hijackings since the hijacking of Indian planes started in 1971 are by ISI trained groups... all 13 of them (hijackings) are of Indian Airlines aircrafts. During the training of terrorists, the ISI instructs them to avoid Air India planes lest international concern be aroused due to the presence of a large number of foreign passengers. Three of these hijackings took place in the 1970’s, of which one by Kashmiri extremists was sponsored by the ISI, while the other two were personally-motivated. There were five hijackings in the 1980’s... all by Sikh extremists backed by the ISI. There were five the 1990’s... four of them in 1993, all personally motivated, and the fifth, the latest of IC-814, was by an international Islamic Jihadi organisation backed by the ISI.... All these hijackings took place when the military was in power". The strategy of hijacking therefore is one of ISI’s favourite instruments of terrorism against India, primarily aimed at inviting international attention to the Kashmir issue.

ISI, therefore is pivotal to Pakistan in ensuring the success of its two level strategy there. Level one of the strategy, involving covert actions and subterfuge in J&K is entirely an ISI operation, in which they have been fairly successful till date. With the Afghan issue

34 Hindustan Times (New Delhi), January 7, 2000, p.1. (Quoting from a Press Conference given by Shri L.K. Advani, the Home Minister).
35 B. Raman, Director, Institute for Tropical Studies, Chennai, E-mail dated 7 February 2000, addressed to USI Library (Tropical Studies File), E-mail Corde@usnl.com.
settled fairly well in favour of Pakistan, the ISI is now fully focussed on J&K. The Kargil conflict was one example of their diabolical designs on Kashmir. They yet have numerous similar aces up their sleeves. India needs to be fully aware of this dangerous and mischief creating organisation and take suitable steps to neutralize its plan.