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China indicates Uighur terrorists have close links with Pak

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BEIJING: Within five days of Pakistani president Asif Ali Zardari visiting Beijing, Chinese authorities on Tuesday indicated that most of the terrorists operating on its soil have close links with similar groups and base camps in Pakistan. The statement is meant to exert serious pressure on Pakistan at a time with Islamabad is desperately seeking financial and nuclear assistance from Beijing.

China's Ministry of Public Security on Tuesday listed major terrorist leaders of the East Turkistan Islamic Movement while saying that they were involved with similar groups and base camps in a "south Asian country" for the purpose of training and exchange of arms and ammunitions. The movement is fighting for carving out China's Xinjiang province and other parts of Central Asia to create an East Turkistan nation for several decades, sources said.

The ministry did not identify the "south Asian country". But terrorism experts say that the reference to Pakistan, which borders China's troubled Xinjiang province, is obvious. ETIM, which has been identified by the United Nations as a terrorist group, is known to be head quartered in Federally Administered Tribal Areas (Fata) of Pakistan.

Rohan Gunaratna, who heads the Singapore based International Centre for Political Violence and Terrorism Research, recently said there is overwhelming evidence that the ETIM has been providing training to Uighur terrorists at camps located in Pakistan and Afghanistan. ETIM has also "built a village exclusively for the Uighurs" in the White Mountains of Afghanistan near Jalalabad and the Pakistan border, he said.

Indications are that the Chinese government is asking Pakistan to provide all the necessary assistance in order to apprehend the Uighur outlaws. Most of the major terrorists leaders are on the run and enjoy the backing of groups based in Pakistan, Afghanistan and Central Asia, sources said.

As its first target, the ministry named Memetiming Memeti, head of ETIM since 2003, who was last seen in a video distributed over the Internet in June this year. He "illegally exited China and joined the ETIM terrorist organization in a south Asian country" in 1998 and went on to become the main organiser for the groups training camps. "In January, he issued an order to conduct terrorist attack specifically targeting the Beijing Olympic Games," the ministry said.

"Muslims from the Uighur region have travelled to Pakistan and Central Asia for terrorist and extremist training, where they have been exposed to the global jihad movement. For example, the two Uighur women involved in the March 18 attack on China Southern Airlines flight CZ6901 were controlled by a Pakistani militant group," Gunaratna said in an article recently.

The ministry released details of the terrorist activities of eight ultra leaders revealing that they have wide ranging links in East Asia, South Asia and West Asia. But it did not name any country specifically. The ministry's list of terrorists include Emeti Yakuf, also know as Aibu Abudureheman and Saifula, Memetituersun Yiming, also known as Abuduaini, Memetituersun Abuduhali, also known as Metusun Abuduhali, Ansarui, Xiamisidingaihemaiti Abudumijiti, also known as Saiyide, Aikemilai Wumaierjiang and Tuersun Toheti.

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