

In their own words : understanding Lashkar-e-Tayyaba (/review/10.5860/CHOICE.213976)

Fair, C. Christine. (/search?exactauthor=Fair, C. Christine) Oxford, 2018

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Fair (Georgetown Univ.) has already established herself as a keen and resourceful scholar of Islamic extremism, particularly in Pakistan. This latest book, which draws in part on some previous work, serves to enhance that reputation. In examining the well-known but little-understood group Lashkar-e-Tayyaba (LeT), Fair advances two interesting claims. First, with its ability to launch fairly "complex" terror attacks in India and Pakistan, LeT often functions as a proxy of the Pakistani security apparatus and—in gradually becoming part of the mainstream political process—is increasingly becoming an ally of Pakistan's "deep state." Second, though LeT embraces the practice of violence abroad, it abjures attacks against religious minorities or ideological opponents within Pakistan, preferring peaceful conversion at home. Fair examines two sets of primary evidence: LeT's copious written propagandist materials and a random sample of "martyr biographies" (the author identifies the role of women, particularly mothers, as part of LeT's sophisticated recruitment efforts). In the process she also ably describes the byzantine, and constantly shifting, extremist landscape in Pakistan, with its multiple leaders, organizations, agendas, splits, and alliances. The information presented here is rich, the analysis insightful, and the conclusions (and advice for US policy makers) most reasonable.

Summing Up: Highly recommended. Upper-division undergraduates through faculty.

Reviewer: [A. Ahmad \(/search?reviewer=A.Ahmad\)](/search?reviewer=A.Ahmad), emeritus, Black Hills State University

Recommendation: Highly recommended

Readership Level: Upper-division Undergraduates, Graduate Students, Researchers/Faculty

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