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CIA Funneling Hundreds Of Million of Dollars to ISI

Roughly a Third of Secretive Spy Group's Budget Comes From CIA

Jason Ditz

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Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence agency (ISI) is the largest of the nation's many spy agencies. The secretive and enormous independent agency is a subject of almost constant controversy in the nation, where it is totally independent of the civilian government and the military exercises only modest oversight.

But the ISI could arguably be considered completely separately from the Pakistani government. After all, it was revealed today, the group gets roughly a third of its funding not from Pakistan but from the US, through covert CIA deals.

Not that American oversight over the group is any more effective, as US officials have repeatedly accused the ISI of complicity or direct involvement in terrorist attacks, including last November's Mumbai strike. Officials have also said the ISI is directly supporting the Taliban insurgency in Afghanistan in its fight against the US. This support allegedly includes direct ISI funding for the insurgency, yet another example of how US money thrown at the region seems to trickle into the pockets of its opponents.

The CIA, however, defended the payments, saying they had more than gotten their money's worth from the ISI in the form of intelligence in Pakistan's tribal areas. In addition to this funding, the CIA has also paid tens of millions of dollars to the group as rewards for capturing or killing people on its behalf through a covert program approved by President Bush.

