

TANZEEM-E-ISLAMI



Striving for the Law of Allah, on the Land of Allah

PERSPECTIVE

The official online newsletter of Tanzeem-e-Islami

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PATRON: Ameer of Tanzeem-e-Islami, Mohtaram Shujauddin Shaikh

'PERSPECTIVE' is a trend-setting newsletter issued by Tanzeem-e-Islami that focuses on a candid commentary on the current national and international issues, in the light of the Qur'an and the Sunnah.

A blend that gives Muslims an insight into the events of the past, those happenings at present and the Signs of things to come...

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From the Qur'an:

"Corruption has appeared throughout the land and sea by [reason of] what the hands of people have earned so He [i.e., Allah] may let them taste part of [the consequence of] what they have done that perhaps they will return [to righteousness]."

"Say, [O Muhammad], "Travel through the land and observe how was the end of those before. Most of them were associators [of others with Allah]."

"So direct your face [i.e., self] toward the correct religion before a Day comes from Allah of which there is no repelling. That Day, they will be divided."

(Surah Ar-Rum: Verses 41 - 43)

Selected Ahadith:

Abu Sa'id al-Khudri (RA) reported:

The Messenger of Allah (SAAW) said, "Whoever among you sees evil, let him change it with his hand. If he is unable to do so, then with his tongue. If he is unable to do so, then with his heart, and that is the weakest level of faith."

(Sahih Muslim)

It has been reported that the Messenger of Allah (SAAW) said:

"By Him in Whose Hand my life is, you either enjoin good and forbid evil, or Allah will certainly soon send His punishment to you. Then you will make supplication and it will not be accepted".

(Riyadhus Saliheen)

All praise is due to Allah (SWT), and peace & blessing on his noble Messengers (AS), in particular, on the last of them all the blessed Prophet Muhammad (SAAW).

They keep insisting they do not do it. But companies such as the Israeli-sponsored NSO Group are global vendors for regimes, whatever stripe or color, for surveillance tools to spy on those they deem of interest. The 2013 revelations by Edward Snowden that exposed the warrantless world of mass surveillance by entities such as the US National Security Agency and Britain's GCHQ caused a global rush towards encryption. Governments, left groping in the dark, sought out private providers of surveillance devices in an unregulated market. Not only could they get effective spyware; they could do so at very affordable prices.

Throughout the past two weeks, we have seen story after story about a company called NSO Group, and a piece of spyware called Pegasus. Some of the stories have been shocking, with allegations that fully updated smartphones of even the most important people can be hacked with a single text message.

A coalition of news outlets, including The Washington Post, Le Monde, and The Guardian is behind the reporting, and they are calling it the Pegasus Project. The project was led by Forbidden Stories, an organization of journalists that works on stories after the original reporters have been silenced in some way. Amnesty International ran detailed forensics on 67 smartphones to look for evidence that they were targeted by Pegasus spyware — and 37 of those phones tested positive. But many crucial details still are not clear.

Pegasus is spyware developed by a private contractor (based in and fully sponsored by Israel) for use by government agencies. The program infects a target's phone and sends back data, including photos, messages, and audio / video recordings. NSO Group says that the software cannot be traced back to the government using it — a crucial feature for clandestine and state-sponsored terrorism operations.

In short, NSO Group makes products that let governments spy on citizens. The company describes the role of its products on its website as helping "government intelligence and law-enforcement agencies use technology to meet the challenges of encryption" during terrorism and criminal investigations.

The Forbidden Stories organization, which helped lead the Pegasus Project's efforts, has a write-up of the company's exploits and controversies over the past decade, some of which have inspired lawsuits from journalists and activists arguing that NSO's software has been used improperly. The Washington Post also has an interview that covers the company's own story about how it was founded and how it got started in the surveillance industry.

However, much of the reporting centers around a list containing 50,000 phone numbers, the purpose of which is unclear. The Pegasus Project analyzed the numbers on the list and linked over 1,000 of them to their owners. When it did so, it found people who should've been off-limits to governmental spying (based on the standards NSO says it holds its clients to): hundreds of politicians and government workers — including three presidents, 10 prime ministers, and a king — plus 189 journalists, and 85 human rights activists.

At this point, that's clear as mud. NSO says the list has nothing to do with its business, and claims it's from a simple database of cellular numbers that's a feature of the global cellular network. A statement from an Amnesty International spokesperson, posted to Twitter by cybersecurity journalist Kim Zetter, says that the list indicates numbers that were marked as "of interest" to NSO's various clients.

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The Washington Post says that the list is from 2016. Was the list curated by a shadowy government agency trying to get on the good side of other governments? Was it maintained by a Slack group of Pegasus users? It's an essential question that remains frustratingly unclear.

The Washington Post, however, reports that some of the phones analyzed were targeted shortly after they were added to the list. In some cases, only a few seconds separate timestamps that indicate when the phone number was added to the list and incidents of Pegasus attacks on the phones.

A Washington Post report details some of the highest-ranking officials with numbers on the list. According to an analysis done by the Post and other Pegasus Project members, the current presidents of France, Iraq, and South Africa were included, along with the current prime ministers of Pakistan (Imran Khan, whose phone had been hacked before he became the PM), Egypt, and Morocco, seven former prime ministers, and the king of Morocco. It has been confirmed that the Pegasus spyware is used regularly by India to spy on the Kashmiri Hurriyat leaders, as well as the leader of the Indian opposition. Moreover, it has also been confirmed that Israel uses the spyware to constantly monitor its 'targets' in Occupied Palestine, Gaza and abroad. Also on the list were two women close to Jamal Khashoggi, a journalist who was murdered in 2018.

Recent versions of the spyware, according to analysts, have reportedly been able to do the spying without having to get the user to do anything — a link is sent to their phone, without a notification, and Pegasus starts collecting information. In other cases, Pegasus has reportedly relied on users to click phishing links that then deliver the Pegasus payload.

Both The Guardian and The Washington Post have articles explaining how even modern phones with the latest software updates can be exploited. (Amnesty has shown that even some of the most recent versions of iOS are vulnerable to methods used by NSO.) The summary is that no software is perfect. Where there's complicated software, like iMessage or WhatsApp, there will be bugs, and some of those bugs will give hackers access to more than many would think is possible. And, with millions of dollars at stake, hackers and security researchers are very motivated to find those bugs, even if they'll only be usable for a short amount of time.

A lot of the reporting focuses on iPhones, but that's only because they've proven easier to analyze for signs of a Pegasus infection than Android phones have. Pegasus can, however, infect both iPhones and Android phones, according to an NSO informational document. Both Apple and Google have commented on the situation, with Apple condemning attacks against journalists and activists, and Google saying that it warns users of attempted infiltrations, even those backed by governments.

The spyware has been in the news for years, often in connection with incidents similar to what's currently being reported. In 2017, reports surfaced that the software had been used in attacks against Mexican reporters and activists. In 2019, WhatsApp sued NSO Group, alleging that the software developer was involved in the hacking of around 1,400 devices using an exploit found in WhatsApp's code. Microsoft, Google, Cisco, and other tech companies signaled support for WhatsApp's suit. (As of April 2021, the case was ongoing, according to a report from Politico.)

In 2020, it was reported that NSO was being investigated by the FBI, in connection with the 2018 hack of Jeff Bezos' cellphone. At the time, NSO denied knowledge of the FBI's probe, according to Reuters, and the FBI recently declined to comment about the matter to The Washington Post.

In a recent interview with Calcalist, NSO Group's CEO and co-founder Shalev Hulio (former Israeli Mossad and special forces officer) broadly denied the allegations, claiming that the list of numbers had nothing to do with Pegasus or NSO. He argued that a list of phone numbers targeted by Pegasus (which NSO says it doesn't keep, as it has "no insight" into what investigations are being carried out by its clients) would be much shorter — he told Calcalist that NSO's 45 clients average about 100 Pegasus targets per year. Hulio also claims that NSO has investigated its clients' use of the software, and hasn't found evidence that they targeted any of the phone numbers NSO had been given, including the one linked to Khashoggi's wife. He also says that it's NSO policy to cut off clients' access to Pegasus if it discovers that they are using the system outside of its intended use. Hulio told The Washington Post that the reports were "concerning," and that the company would investigate. He told Calcalist that NSO had been running checks with present and past clients for the past week. Israeli-backed NSO Group seems to see its software as a necessary, if unpleasant, part of modern surveillance, with its CEO telling The Washington Post that "somebody has to do the dirty work" and that Pegasus is "used to handle literally the worst this planet has to offer."

The truth is that Israeli-sponsored NSO Group sees its mission as a noble thing, marketing itself as a creator of "technology that helps government agencies prevent and investigate terrorism and crime to save thousands of lives around the globe." We all know that is a plain lie!

Israeli-sponsored NSO Group also emphasizes their mission to target those "terrorists" and "criminals" who have gone dark. "The world's most dangerous offenders communicate using technology designed to shield their communications, while government intelligence and law-enforcement agencies struggle to collect evidence and intelligence on their activities." The group insists that its "products help government intelligence and law-enforcement agencies use technology to meet the challenges of encryption to prevent and investigate terror and crime."

We all know that these claims too are pure fiction!

Signing off...

Raza ul Haq (Editor)



Press Releases issued by Tanzeem-e-Islami

Date: 30 July 2021

Lahore (PR): “The visit by the delegation of the Afghan Taliban to China is a potential game changer not only for our region but the entire world.”

This was said by the Ameer of Tanzeem-e-Islami, **Shujauddin Shaikh**, in a statement. He noted that the visit to China by a high-ranking delegation of the Afghan Taliban, led by Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar, on Chinese invitation, and its meeting with high-ranking officials of China, including the Foreign Minister, gives a clear indication that China is willing to recognize the legitimacy of the future government of the Afghan Taliban in Afghanistan, following the complete withdrawal of US troops. The meeting between the high-ranking officials of both sides during this visit has given the obvious perception that China has reached the conclusion that the prevalence of peace in our region in the future is dependent on not only recognizing the authority of the (forthcoming) government of the Afghan Taliban but also fully supporting it. The Ameer remarked that the coinciding visit by the US Secretary of State, Anthony Blinken, to India, during which he not only met with Indian officials but also held an exclusive meeting with the Dalai Lama, clearly shows that the US and India want to antagonize China as well as ruin the peace and stability of the region. The Ameer asserted that the Government of Pakistan must, now, not only recognize the unconditional right of the Afghan Taliban to establish an Islamic government in Afghanistan but also provide them with full support in the matter, if requested. The Afghan Taliban ought to be given the opportunity to undertake the responsibility of rebuilding their country devastated by USA, bring peace and stability in Afghanistan and, corresponding to the wishes of the Afghan public, revive the Islamic system of governance, i.e., the Islamic Emirates of Afghanistan. The Ameer emphasized that malevolent powers such as the US, Israel and India want to ignite the flames of war in this region and it is imperative for the Afghan Taliban, Pakistan, China and all other peace-loving powers of our region to stand tall and function like an unmovable object to defeat their nefarious designs. The Ameer concluded by stating that only then would our region flourish, prosper and become a cradle of peace and stability.

Date: 23 July 2021

Lahore (PR): “Tayyip Erdoğan will have to pay a steep price for interfering in the internal affairs of Afghanistan.”

This was said by the Ameer of Tanzeem-e-Islami, **Shujauddin Shaikh**, in a statement. He noted that Turkey had been taking part in war efforts against the Afghan Taliban as a member of NATO during the last 20 years. Was that not a reprehensible act, blatantly in violation of the principles of Islamic affection and brotherhood? The Ameer remarked that today Tayyip Erdoğan is impressing upon the Afghan Taliban to forego their principled stance and make all kinds of compromises to accommodate the ‘made in USA’ regime of Ashraf Ghani in their future plans. He said that the puppet regime of Afghanistan, at the behest of India, had enacted the drama of abduction of the daughter of the Afghan ambassador to Pakistan and made every possible effort to malign Pakistan in the world in collusion with the enemies of Islam and Pakistan. He lamented that involving a woman in such sinister diplomatic incitements is extremely abhorrent. He said that the puppet regime of Ashraf Ghani is, in fact, dancing to the tune of the enemies of Islam including the US, India and Israel. He said that the secular and liberal sections in Pakistan had jumped on the bandwagon of defaming the institutions of Pakistan, without caring about due diligence, as soon as the fake news about the abduction of the Afghan ambassador’s daughter was propagated, yet they are totally silent after the drop scene of the drama. They ought to have shown the moral courage to criticize the puppet regime of Afghanistan and apologize to all those whom they had smeared, as soon as the truth had been uncovered. He emphasized that it is the obligation of a Muslim to stand with the truth and shun all kinds of falsehood. The Ameer concluded by asserting that only such an attitude can make an individual, an organization, an institution and the state successful and also save from any future embarrassment.

Date: 16 July 2021

Lahore (PR): “The government of Pakistan should support the Afghan Taliban wholly and candidly.”

This was said by the Ameer of Tanzeem-e-Islami, **Shujauddin Shaikh**, in a statement. He noted that the Afghan Taliban have vigorously battled the imperial powers for almost 20 years and forced them to depart from Afghanistan in utter humiliation. Now it is the right of the Afghan Taliban to take over the reins of power in Afghanistan and implement the Islamic System for which they have been waging a mighty Jihad for two decades. The Ameer remarked that it must be kept in mind that the Islamic government of Mullah Umar (RAA) was toppled by force almost 20 years ago and, now, that the Afghan Taliban have become clear victors, no foreign power has the right to try to force or even suggest that the Afghan Taliban should share their authority and power with any such group that is not interested in the remotest with the enforcement of the Islamic system in Afghanistan. He emphasized that the Afghan situation cannot be resolved until all outside powers totally disassociate themselves from the issue of Afghanistan and let the Afghans take care of their own business and governance. In his special message to the president of Turkey, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, the Ameer of Tanzeem-e-Islami said that President Erdoğan ought not to provide assistance to USA for the ‘protection of the Kabul’ airport or for any other reason. The Afghan Taliban, too, have expressed concern over this attitude of Turkey, he remarked. The Ameer concluded by emphasizing that the government of Pakistan must terminate the agreements made with USA and NATO in 2001, accept the victory of the Afghan Taliban with an open heart and, if requested, provide assistance to the Afghan Taliban in forming a government.