

**BAD COMPANY: LASHKAR E-TAYYIBA AND  
THE GROWING AMBITION OF ISLAMIST  
MILITANCY IN PAKISTAN**

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**HEARING**  
BEFORE THE  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON  
THE MIDDLE EAST AND SOUTH ASIA  
OF THE  
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
ONE HUNDRED ELEVENTH CONGRESS  
SECOND SESSION

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# **BAD COMPANY: LASHKAR E-TAYYIBA AND THE GROWING AMBITION OF ISLAMIST MILITANCY IN PAKISTAN**

**THURSDAY, MARCH 11, 2010**

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON THE MIDDLE EAST  
AND SOUTH ASIA,  
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS,  
*Washington, DC.*

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 2:36 p.m. in room 2172, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Gary L. Ackerman (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

Mr. ACKERMAN. The committee will come to order. While U.S. attention has focused primarily on al-Qaeda and the Afghan and Pakistan Taliban, the Lashkar e-Tayyiba, or LET, and other violent Islamic extremist groups in Pakistan have been growing in both capability and ambition. As was demonstrated in the horrific Mumbai attack in November 2008, the al-Qaeda model of perpetrating highly visible, mass casualty attacks appears to have migrated with enormous potential consequences for the United States.

With a team of ten well armed terrorists, a carefully coordinated plan of attack, and a team of controllers back in Pakistan in constant communication with the terrorist attack team, the LET in 3 days killed 173 innocent people, wounded 308 others, and grabbed hold of the entire world's attention. Communications intercepts that have been made public by the Government of India include an attack controller broadcasting about the carnage in Mumbai. This is just the trailer, he said, the main movie is yet to come.

We need to take this threat very very seriously. The LET is a deadly serious group of fanatics. They are well financed, ambitious, and most disturbingly, both tolerated by and connected to the Pakistani military, the same Pakistani military to which we are selling advanced arms, the same Pakistani military that objected so bitterly to legislation this Congress passed to provide a massive \$7.5 billion plus-up in American assistance to their country, Pakistan, because our accompanying language with all that money suggests that Pakistan's military should be answerable to a democratically elected government.

Lashkar e-Tayyiba, which means the army of the righteous or the army of the pure, was set up with help from the Pakistani military as a proxy weapon for use in Jammu and Kashmir, parts of India that Pakistan has contested since partition in 1947. After 9/11 Pakistan officially banned the LET, but the reality is that it

is like other Islamist terrorist groups, LET maintains a clear public presence and a vast recruiting network by providing extremely useful charitable and social services to millions of impoverished people in Pakistan.

Public estimates suggest LET operates some 2,000 offices in towns and villages throughout Pakistan as well as maintaining ties with the Pakistani military. There is in fact no reason to doubt that Pakistan's military is likely paying compensation to the families of the terrorists killed in the Mumbai attacks. These are our allies in the war on terror. Operational funding for the LET comes from charitable fundraising amongst the general population in Pakistan, but also depends heavily upon contributions by Pakistani businessmen living abroad and other wealthy individuals from the Persian Gulf. Let us note too, these states are also our allies in the war on terror.

But it would be unfair and wrong to suggest that the LET problem is strictly confined to Pakistan and Middle East. In fact, one of the key facilitators in the Mumbai attacks was an American of Pakistani extraction. Unfortunately, the LET enjoys a substantial global network stretching from the Philippines to the United Kingdom. There is a temptation to think that the LET is really India's problem, that the LET is just interested in the so called liberation of Jammu and Kashmir. While it is true that the primary area of operations for the LET has historically been the Kashmir valley and the Jammu region, the LET has also undertaken repeated and numerous mass casualty attacks throughout India and in particular directed at the Indian Government.

But the idea that this group can be appeased on the subject of Kashmir is dangerous nonsense. The LET's true goal is not Kashmir, it is India, and the LET is not shy about announcing that its intention is to establish an Islamic state in all South Asia. Neither does it hide or try to play down its declaration of war against all, all Hindus and Jews, who they insist are "enemies of Islam." In the wake of the Mumbai attack, investigators uncovered in controller records and email accounts a list of 320 locations worldwide deemed by the LET as possible targets for attack. Only 20 of the targets were located within India.

The LET has been attacking U.S. forces in Afghanistan almost from day one, and their forces are present throughout Afghanistan. The LET has been slaughtering Indians by the score for decades. The LET has put the world on notice that they intend to escalate the carnage and spread it worldwide. This group of savages needs to be crushed, not starting in a month, not in a year, not when the situation stabilizes in Afghanistan, not when things are under control in Pakistan, now, today, and every day going forward. We are not doing it, and we are not effectively leading a global effort to do it, and we are going to regret this mistake, we are going to regret it bitterly. The ranking member.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Ackerman follows:]

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**Rep. Gary L. Ackerman, Chairman  
House Subcommittee on the Middle East and South Asia  
“Bad Company: Lashkar e-Tayyiba and the Growing Ambition of Islamist  
Militancy in Pakistan”**

While U.S. attention has focused primarily on al-Qaida, and the Afghan and Pakistani Taliban, the Lashkar e-Tayyiba (LeT) and other violent, Islamist extremist groups in Pakistan have been growing in both capability and ambition. As was demonstrated in the horrific Mumbai attack of November 2008, the al-Qaida model of perpetrating highly visible, mass-casualty attacks appears to have migrated, with enormous potential consequences for the United States.

With a team of 10 well-armed terrorists, a carefully coordinated plan of attack, and a team of controllers back in Pakistan in constant communication with the terrorist attack team, the LeT in three days killed 173 innocent people, wounded 308 others, and grabbed hold of the entire world’s attention. Communications intercepts that have been made public by the Government of India include an attack controller boasting about the carnage in Mumbai, “This is just the trailer. The main movie is yet to come.”

We need to take this threat very, very seriously. The LeT is a deadly serious group of fanatics. They are well financed, ambitious, and most disturbingly, both tolerated by, and connected to, the Pakistani military.

The same Pakistani military to which we are selling advanced arms. The same Pakistani military that objected so bitterly to legislation this Congress passed to provide a massive \$7.5 billion plus-up in American assistance to their country, Pakistan, because our accompanying language suggests that Pakistan’s military should be answerable to a democratically elected government.

Lashkar-e-Tayyiba, which means “the army of the righteous” or “the army of the pure” was set up with help from the Pakistani military as a proxy weapon for use in Jammu and Kashmir, parts of India that Pakistan has contested since partition in 1947. After 9/11, Pakistan officially banned the LeT, but the reality is that like other Islamist terrorist groups, LeT

maintains a clear public presence—and a vast recruiting network—by providing extremely useful charitable and social services to millions of impoverished people of Pakistan. Public estimates suggest LeT operates some 2,000 offices in towns and villages throughout Pakistan, as well as maintaining ties with the Pakistani military.

There is, in fact, no reason to doubt that Pakistan's military is likely paying compensation to the families of the terrorists killed in the Mumbai attacks. These are our allies in the war on terror.

Operational funding for the LeT comes from charitable fund-raising amongst the general population in Pakistan, but also depends heavily on contributions by Pakistani businessmen living abroad and other wealthy individuals from the Persian Gulf. Let us note too, these states are also our allies in the war on terror.

But it would be unfair and wrong to suggest that the LeT problem is strictly confined to Pakistan and the Middle East. In fact, one of the key facilitators of the Mumbai attack was an American of Pakistani extraction. Unfortunately, the LeT enjoys a substantial global network stretching from the Philippines to the United Kingdom.

There is a temptation to think that the LeT is really India's problem; that the LeT is really just interested in the so-called "liberation" of Jammu and Kashmir. While it's true that the primary area of operations for the LeT has historically been the Kashmir valley and the Jammu region, the LeT has also undertaken repeated and numerous mass casualty attacks throughout India and, in particular, directed at the Indian government. But the idea that this group can be appeased on the subject of Kashmir is dangerous nonsense.

The LeT's true goal is not Kashmir, it is India. And the LeT is not shy about announcing that its intention is to establish an Islamic state in all of South Asia. Neither does it hide or try to play down its declaration of war against all Hindus and Jews, who they insist are "enemies of Islam."

In the wake of the Mumbai attack, investigators uncovered in computer records and email accounts a list of 320 locations worldwide deemed by the LeT as possible targets for attack. Only 20 of the targets were locations within India.

The LeT has been attacking U.S. forces in Afghanistan almost from day one and their forces are present throughout Afghanistan. The LeT has been slaughtering Indians by the score for decades. The LeT has put the world on notice that they intend to escalate the carnage and spread it world-wide.

This group of savages needs to be crushed. Not in a month. Not in a year. Not when the situation stabilizes in Afghanistan. Not when things are under control in Pakistan. Now. Today and everyday going forward. We're not doing it, and we're not effectively leading a global effort to do it. And we're going to regret this mistake. We're going to regret it bitterly.

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Mr. BURTON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thanks for calling this hearing today so we can examine the ongoing struggle with Pakistan to deal with radical militants seeking to undermine Pakistan's Government and threaten regional efforts to bring stability and peace to Pakistan as well as Afghanistan. For a very long time I have been a champion of Pakistan and a co-chairman of the Pakistani Caucus in Congress because I fundamentally believe that a stable, democratic, and prosperous Pakistan is vital to our interests.

And I am extremely concerned, as are many other members of the committee, about the increasingly negative news reports coming out of Pakistan. A new threat has emerged within Pakistan that may perhaps be more powerful and dangerous than al-Qaeda, and that is the LET you talked about. It has proven in recent years that it is strong, well organized, and well resourced as a terrorist organization. LET's growing influence has serious implications for regional, national, and international security interests.

As we all know, Pakistan has a nuclear arsenal, which would pose a grave threat to the entire region should it fall under the control of the extremists. Since the LET's most famous attack, the 2008 incident in Mumbai, we have seen LET expand its stated objectives of liberating Kashmir to an embrace of global jihad against the West. In my opinion, resolving the dispute on Kashmir should be a crucial component of any military plan to defeat the militants and stabilize Pakistan.

I do not know how the problem in Kashmir will ultimately be solved, however I personally believe that the people of Kashmir should be given the plebiscite that they were promised by the United Nations back in the '40s. I have been a very strong supporter of a plebiscite on Kashmir and to let the Kashmiri people have the voice that they should have for a long time. And there have been thousands and thousands of Indian troops up there in that region imposing what in effect is martial law, and it has been a real problem.

And I talked to President Musharraf and Prime Minister Singh about this when I was over there not long ago, and they came close to finding a compromise when they presented a proposal to pull the troops out of the cities and open crossings between India controlled Kashmir and Pakistan controlled Kashmir and allow the people to largely govern themselves. If this effort had been successful, I wonder if we would be looking at a different Pakistan today.

And I would just like to add one other thing in here before I go on with my statement, and that is, I really believe Kashmir, the Kashmir problem, could be resolved if we could get the leaders in Pakistan and India to sit down together and look at this from a realistic point of view. It might take the wind out of the sails of some of the terrorist organizations. And so, while we don't have a lot of television cameras here today, I hope that this message goes out to anybody beyond this room that they know that I feel very strongly that India and Pakistan ought to sit down and work this out so the people of Kashmir get what they have been promised for the last 50 or 60 years.

Nevertheless, the immediate problem is confronting and destroying terrorist groups like al-Qaeda and LET before they can bring

down another, either the Afghan or Pakistani Government and once again allow the region of the world to become a base for terrorists who want to kill as many of the people as they possibly can, it gets no clearer than that. Much like our efforts to eliminate al-Qaeda though, eliminating LET is proving to be a very daunting task as LET enjoys a stronghold, as the chairman said, and safe haven in parts of Pakistan.

Furthermore, as Jeremy Khan, author of the recent Newsweek article, "The next al-Qaeda," pointed out, LET's parent organization has developed a large charity arm that is popular in both Punjab and Kashmir, where it runs schools and ambulance service, mobile clinics, and blood banks. It earned tremendous good will in Kashmir providing assistance after the 2005 earthquake, and I was over there and saw some of the damage that was done. As Khan warns in his article, moving against it could provoke civil unrest or even civil war.

And that is why I think it is important that in addition to the problems we face in Afghanistan and Pakistan with the Taliban and al-Qaeda that we really take a hard look along with our allies Pakistan and India in trying to resolve this problem of Pakistan and Kashmir and Punjab as a way of de-emphasizing this problem and maybe slowing down the terrorist threat that is posed by LET. Clearly, that is no easy task, but we can't shy away from it as the stakes are too far too high.

As Pakistan goes, so goes Afghanistan, and while I disagree with the President on many foreign and domestic policy questions, I do believe that President Obama was right a few months ago when he declared the conflict in Afghanistan as not a war of choice, this is a war of necessity, this is fundamental to the defense of our people. I believe the President is also right to treat Afghanistan and Pakistan as one conflict. A destabilized Pakistan can only lead to a destabilized Afghanistan because the threat in Afghanistan feeds off the threat in Pakistan and vice versa.

Victory is definitely possible, but it is not going to be easy. There is nothing easy about war, and this is especially true in these types of counterinsurgency efforts. These efforts require our troops to get out and do everything they can to gain the support of the populace and help them to rebuild. However, if we and our allies, including the Governments of Afghanistan and Pakistan, go all in and do what is required, we can still win. I look forward to hearing from our expert witnesses regarding what they feel is the winning formula for success.

But I want to emphasize one more time—and I realize that I have gone over my time, Mr. Chairman—and that is that I have been working on this Kashmir and Punjab issue for years now, and even you and I have had some debates on it over the years, and I don't believe we are ever going to solve that problem up there in Kashmir until India and Pakistan sit down together and say, what can we do to solve the problem so the people in Kashmir feel like they have a legitimate voice as was promised to them in the '40s, late '40s. And if we can get them to do that and include in the discussions the people from Kashmir, I think that we can defang in large part the LET, which has become a bigger threat. And with that, thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Thanks the ranking member. We will proceed now to introducing our distinguished panel. Dr. Marvin Weinbaum is a scholar-in-residence at the Middle East Institute. Previously Dr. Weinbaum was an analyst in the Bureau of Intelligence and Research at the Department of State, where he focused on Afghanistan and Pakistan. Dr. Weinbaum has also been director of the South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies program at the University of Illinois, senior fellow at the U.S. Institute of Peace, and has held the Fulbright research fellowships in Afghanistan and Egypt.

Ms. Lisa Curtis is a senior research fellow on South Asia at the Heritage Foundation. Before going to Heritage, Ms. Curtis worked for the Senate Foreign Relations Committee as a professional staff member heading the South Asia portfolio for Senator Luger, former chairman of the committee. From 2001 to 2003 she served as senior advisor to State Department's South Asia Bureau, where she advised the Assistant Secretary for South Asia on India-Pakistan relations.

Dr. Ashley Tellis is a senior associate at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. Commissioned into the Foreign Service, Dr. Tellis served as a senior advisor to both the U.S. Ambassador in New Delhi and to Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Nick Burns, as well as serving on the National Security Council Staff as a special assistant to the president and senior director for strategic planning in South Asia. Prior to his government service, Dr. Tellis was a senior policy analyst at the Rand Corporation.

Mr. Shuja Nawaz is the director of the South Asia Center at the Atlantic Council of the United States. Prior to joining the Atlantic Council, Mr. Nawaz held senior positions at the International Monetary Fund, the World Health Organization, and the International Atomic Energy Agency in Vienna. Dr. Nawaz was also a newscaster and producer for Pakistani television and covered the 1971 war with India from the western front. I want to thank our panel for being with us today.

Mr. BURTON. Chairman, before we go to our panel, our colleague from California just came and he has a short opening statement he would like to make if it is all right with you, sir.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Well, he can make as long a statement as he has.

Mr. BURTON. Okay.

Mr. ROYCE. That is very kind of you.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Mr. Wilson—Mr. Royce, sitting in Mr. Wilson's chair.

Mr. ROYCE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for calling this hearing. Al-Qaeda has been our focus since 9/11. Yet the LET, the Pakistani based jihadist group that carried out the days long rampage in Mumbai, India, demands our attention. We will hear words today on the threat from the LET, but nothing more powerfully presents that case than the recent documentary, "Terror in Mumbai." For those of you who have not seen it, I really suggest you do, because there you see the terrorists and you hear their words as they receive instructions from the controller safe in Pakistan.

You hear the handler, anxious for the terrorists to hit the Jewish Cultural Center: "Every person you kill where you are is worth 50

of the ones killed elsewhere.” Lashkar e-Tayyiba, or “Army of the Pure,” traces its roots to Afghanistan and the war against the Soviets, where Pakistani intelligence backed it. I should also say that part of its intellectual roots are in the Muslim Brotherhood, and frankly some of the architects come out of the Middle East for the LET. But afterwards, Pakistan’s ISI refocused LET to fighting India over disputed Kashmir.

Given LET’s deep roots within Pakistan’s security services and its popular charity services, Pakistan is in a delicate dance “with a Frankenstein of its own making,” notes a former top counterterrorism official. Reading today’s testimony, it is clear that another Mumbai could happen again, along with all the accompanying tensions of two nuclear armed rivals that it would bring. But this isn’t just India’s problem. Mr. Chairman, Frankenstein is going global.

The director of national intelligence just testified that LET is “becoming more of a direct threat” and “placing Western targets in Europe in its sights.” Disturbingly, an American citizen was at the heart of the Mumbai attacks. He is now awaiting trial. Reportedly, a captured LET laptop contained a list of 320 potential targets, many outside of India. How many are American targets? As Lisa Curtis will testify this afternoon, “overlooking the activities of LET in Pakistan is equivalent to standing next to a ticking time bomb waiting for it to explode.” Mr. Chairman, the clock is running, and I thank you for holding this hearing. I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Thank you very much. We are joined by Mr. Bilirakis.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I appreciate it so much. Good afternoon, and welcome to our distinguished panel of witnesses today. I appreciate the chairman calling this hearing and allowing us the opportunity to learn more about the emerging global threat of the Pakistani based terrorist group LET. I am very concerned with how much of the people of Pakistan have suffered as a result of terrorists operating in western Pakistan and Afghanistan.

Sadly, these terrorist groups have targeted religious minorities and other Pakistanis who oppose them. The most recent incident involved the Taliban capturing and beheading a Pakistani Sikh. While Pakistan has cooperating with the U.S. to combat these terrorist groups, it is vital that the U.S. develop a more comprehensive strategy with Pakistan in dealing with the threat of other terrorist groups and religious extremists that threaten both Pakistani and international security.

The LET involvement in the Mumbai bombings in late 2008 and their growing involvement in attacks on the West necessitate the Pakistan end all ties with these terrorist groups and work to eliminate the threat they pose to the West. In light of these challenges, I look forward to hearing what the panel has to say about the threat of the LET and their suggestions for how this threat should be addressed. Again I thank you for your testimony this afternoon. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. ACKERMAN. We will now go directly to our previously introduced panel. Dr. Weinbaum?

**STATEMENT OF MARVIN WEINBAUM, PH.D., SCHOLAR-IN-RESIDENCE, THE MIDDLE EAST INSTITUTE**

Mr. WEINBAUM. Thank you. Lashkar e-Tayyiba has evolved from being a government sponsored Pakistani jihadi group dedicated to the insurgency in India and Kashmir into a terrorist organization with regional and global ambitions and reach. In the U.S. focus on al-Qaeda, it has failed to take into full account the presence of other organizations capable of surpassing and replacing al-Qaeda as a terrorist threat worldwide. LET is probably the leading candidate for such a role.

It exceeds al-Qaeda in its capacity for recruitment and fundraising across the Islamic world. Unlike al-Qaeda, LET has strong societal roots and enjoys the protection of the institutions of a state. LET is determined to use violent means to inflict damage on American and Western interests internationally. Despite its transnational views that envision the emergence of a "caliphate" across the Islamic world, the organization champions militant Pakistani nationalism and thrives on its association with domestic charitable activities.

LET was originally the offspring of a group called Markaz Al-Dawa-Wal-Irshad, which was founded in the early 1980s by a Palestinian who was for a time at least an ideological mentor to Osama bin Laden. This parent organization created a military wing which was the LET in 1990. LET was principally designed to provide Pakistan's military with a proxy force of recruited fighters to augment the Islamic insurgency in India and Kashmir. But by the late 1990s, LET was engaged as well in training Islamic militants in Afghanistan and Pakistan coming from countries ranging from Egypt to the Philippines.

In 2001, LET's parent organization changed its name to Jamaat-ud-Dawa, and LET, the following year, was banned by the Pakistan Government, it simply folded itself into the charity organization. The organization directs a wide network of social services and institutions, including Madrassas, secondary schools, and a major medical mission. It receives funding from mosque collections, expatriate Pakistanis in the Gulf and Britain, Islamic NGOs, and Pakistani and Kashmiri businessmen.

Like other extremist organization, it also draws money from drugs and smuggling. There are suspicions that it gets direct financial assistance from the Pakistani Inter-Services Intelligence agency as well. When Pakistan in 2002 curtailed its assistance to Pakistani insurgents after a U.S. broke its ceasefire that year in Kashmir, the organization with the knowledge of the ISI shifted most of its training camps and militant operations to the western border with Afghanistan.

Despite the government's ban of LET, Pakistan's ISI continues to consider the organization an asset. The ISI is believed to share intelligence and provide protection for LET. We could talk about if we had time Muhammad Saeed and his virtual impunity and what that demonstrates. Let me say that there has been reciprocation on the part of LET and that it has refrained from involvement in attacks against the Pakistan army and against Pakistani civilians.

In fact, although it is very definitely part of the terrorist network which includes the Tehriq-e Taliban, the Pakistan Taliban, and al-

Qaeda and the Haqqani network, it is viewed by some of the jihadi groups as being too soft on the state of Pakistan, and other extremist groups are skeptical of its linkages with ISI. The current leadership in Pakistan may recognize, as it turns out, better than any previous government the dangers that LET and its groups pose to the state.

But the organization's deep penetration of the country's social fabric makes any attempt to reign it in by the beleaguered People's Party impossible without the military's full commitment. Moreover, party and provincial politics in Pakistan adds a further obstacle. The major opposition, the Nawaz Sharif's Muslim League resists a challenge to the feared LET that could put at risk the party's ascendant position in the Punjab. I assume my time has just about run out, unfortunately.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Weinbaum follows:]

**Testimony of Dr. Marvin G. Weinbaum**, Scholar-in-Residence,  
Middle East Institute on "Bad Company: Lashkar-e-Tayyiba and the  
Growing Ambition of Islamist Militancy in Pakistan"

Subcommittee on the Middle East and South Asia,  
House Committee on Foreign Affairs

March 11, 2010

Lashkar-e-Tayyiba (LeT), the Army of the Righteous, has evolved from being a government-sponsored Pakistani jihadi group dedicated to an insurgency in Indian Kashmir into a terrorist organization with regional and global ambitions and reach. In the U.S.'s focus on homeland security and al Qaeda it has failed to take into full account of the presence of other organizations capable of surpassing or replacing al Qaeda as a terrorist threat worldwide. LeT is probably the leading candidate for such a role. LeT is the largest militant network in Pakistan. It exceeds al Qaeda in its capacity for recruiting and fundraising across the Islamic world. Unlike al Qaeda, LeT has strong societal roots, and enjoys the protection of the institutions of a state.

LeT is determined to use violent means to inflict damage on American and Western interests internationally. Its leaders seek the creation of a purer Islamic state whose beliefs closely resemble Wahabism, a Sunni branch of Islam that subscribes to a literal interpretation of the Koran. But despite its transnational views that envision the reemergence of a caliphate across the Islamic world, the organization champions militant Pakistani nationalism and thrives on its association with domestic charitable activities.

**LeT As a Domestic Organization**

LeT was originally the offspring of Markaz-al-Dawa-wal-Irshad (MDI), a service organization founded at Muridke near Lahore in the early 1980s by a Palestinian, Abdullah Azzam, who was for a time an ideological mentor of Osama bin Laden. This parent organization created a militant wing, LeT, in 1990. LeT was principally designed to provide Pakistan's military with a proxy force of recruited fighters to augment the Islamic insurgency in Indian Kashmir. But by the late 1990s, LeT was also engaged in training Islamic militants in Pakistan and Afghanistan coming from countries ranging from Egypt to the Philippines. In 2001, MDI became Jamaat-ud-Dawa and the following

year, after LeT was officially banned by the Pakistan government, it supposedly dissolved, leaving only the newly named charitable organization.

LeT's cover organization directs a wide network of social services and institutions, including madressahs, secondary schools, and a major medical mission. Its heavily guarded headquarters occupy a 200-acre site at Muridki on land given by the government for a religious educational center, a hospital, and residential complex. Whether as Jamaat-ud-Dawa or LeT, the organization is especially effective in rural areas where it does much of its recruiting and its collection boxes are widely found. LeT is especially successful in recruiting members from Tabliqi Jammāt, a popular Islamic moral rearmament movement.

LeT receives its main funding from multiple sources. It raises money from mosque collections, expatriate Pakistanis in the Gulf and Britain, Islamic NGOs, and Pakistani and Kashmiri businessmen. Like other extremist and militant organizations, money from drugs and smuggling also undoubtedly enter its coffers. There are suspicions that LeT receives financial assistance from Pakistan military's Inter-Services Intelligence agency (ISI).

Until 2002, LeT had the full backing of the Pakistan military for its operations in Kashmir. When the Pakistan government curtailed assistance to Pakistani insurgents after a US-brokered ceasefire that year, the organization, with the knowledge of the ISI, shifted most of its training camps and militant operations to the western border with Afghanistan. Despite the government official ban of LeT, Pakistan's ISI continued to consider the organization as an asset. The ISI is believed to continue to share intelligence and provide protection to LeT.

It is a measure of the impunity with which LeT is allowed to operate in Pakistan that the authorities have been unwilling to contain LeT chief Hafiz Mohammad Saeed, who attracts thousands across the country with his fiery sermons. His inflammatory remarks would be expected to land him among the hundreds of disappeared political activists in the country. Although he has been periodically arrested, his house detentions have been cosmetic.

LeT has been allowed to gain notoriety and kudos for its relief activities in Pakistan. Its members worked alongside the U.S. military in the 2005 earthquake in Azad Kashmir, and the organization was visibly present in camps to care for displaced residents of Swat during the Pakistan's army's campaign against Pakistani Taliban militants.



Although the U.S. provided the largest assistance package to the refugee camps, the Pakistan government denied U.S. aid workers the same opportunity to have a presence and identify the American contribution.

In reciprocation for government policies, the LeT has refrained from involvement in attacks against the Pakistani army and against Pakistani civilians. The Tehriq-e-Taliban (TTP), Pakistan's principal insurgent group, has accused the LeT of being too soft on the state of Pakistan, and other extremist groups are also skeptical of its strong linkages with ISI. At the same time, LeT's relations with the Pakistan government are under strain. The LeT has been displeased with the constraints placed on its jihadi operations as a result of Indian and international pressures. Some of the recent spectacular terrorists operations in India and Afghanistan may have been planned and executed without the approval of the ISI. The Islamabad government's cooperation with India in investigating and trying those accused in the November 2008 Mumbai attacks is also unwelcome. LeT is linked increasingly with the Lashkar-e-Jhangvi, a sectarian terrorist organization over which Pakistan's ISI has little control. In June 2009, plans by a major terrorist cell to target Pakistani President Asif Ali Zardari and a number of provincial chief ministers was reportedly disrupted in Karachi. Allegedly, the plotters included members of the LeT, al Qaeda and the TTP.

The current leadership in Pakistan may recognize better than any previous one the danger that LeT and groups like it pose to the state. But the organization's deep penetration of the country's social fabric makes any attempts to rein it in by the beleaguered Peoples Party impossible without the military's full commitment. Moreover, party and provincial politics add a further obstacle. The major opposition, Nawaz Sharif's Muslim League, resists a challenge to a feared LeT that could put at risk the party's ascendant position in the Punjab.

#### LeT's Ambitions and Reach

LeT's activities beyond Pakistan's borders are not new. For more than a decade, it was the most organized, trained, and heavily armed of the insurgent groups in Kashmir. LeT has not lost interest in Kashmir or in a jihad against India aimed at liberating "oppressed" Muslims in the Hindu majority state. LeT's Hafiz Saeed calls for resistance against India's "water aggression," a reference to India's construction of several dams on rivers flowing into Pakistan. The

recent bakery bombing in Puna, India, has been traced to indigenous militants linked to LeT. A laptop from an alleged LeT communications specialist is said to have reveal 320 potential targets, most in India. The Pakistan army, for all of the challenges it faces from its domestic terrorists, still considers India its principal national security threat. Early last month, Pakistan's army chief, General Pervez Ashfaq Kayani, asserted that the Pakistan army was an "India-centric institution," adding this "reality will not change in any significant way until the Kashmir issue and water disputes are resolved." His words are not dissimilar in substance from the language used by Saeed in recent speeches.

Before 9/11, LeT operated camps in Afghanistan where it gave training to thousands of militants over more than five years. Among the Pakistanis fighting along with the Taliban during the 1990s, there were many belonging to LeT. There have been contradictory reports about the LeT's role in the ongoing fighting between Taliban and the U.S. and allied troops. LeT openly supports the cause of driving foreign forces out of Afghanistan. There is considerable evidence of logistical and technical training being offered by LeT to Afghan insurgents inside Pakistan. LeT often works abroad closely with other Pakistani extremist groups and those in Afghanistan and India. Last month's attack on guesthouses in Kabul that was aimed at Indian nationals appears to have a LeT imprint.

Members of LeT are also known to have fought in the 1990s Tajik civil war and the conflict in Bosnia. LeT is believed to have ties to militant religious groups worldwide, and claims to have its own chapters in 17 countries including the U.S. It has recruited and trained foreigners such as the would-be shoe bomber Richard Reid. More typically, as a terrorist organization, LeT creates cells of just a few people who come together for a specific operation. While there is less evidence of joint terrorist operations with al Qaeda, Abu Zubadah, the senior al Qaeda leader implicated in the 9/11 attacks, was captured in 2002 at a LeT safehouse.

#### Reason for U.S. Concern

If our counter-insurgency fails in Afghanistan, there should be little doubt that LeT will establish a major presence alongside the Taliban. While drone attacks and Pakistan raids have apparently disrupted al Qaeda and also eliminated leaders from among Pakistan's Taliban, LeT activities have been minimally disrupted. The U.S. may take some pleasure in seeing that the government of Pakistan and its

military are increasingly willing to cooperate tracing and destroying leaders of al Qaeda and the Pakistan Taliban. There is no similar interest on Pakistan's part to weaken LeT. And even were Pakistan to take a harder line on the LeT, the fluidity of membership among militant groups in Pakistan and their overlapping and shifting alliances makes it difficult for LeT's activities to be tracked. There is little doubt that LeT would find common purpose with other dissident groups, as well with al Qaeda, against an Islamabad civilian government that it sees as pro-West.

LeT appears to be drawing strength from a deepening hyper-nationalism that has taken hold at all levels of society in Pakistan. Fed by conspiracy theories, India and the U.S. are implicated in various plots, above all, to breakup Pakistan and seize its nuclear weapons. Stepped up American military efforts in Afghanistan and perceived threats from India over terrorist activity have increased a patriotic rhetoric that validates the need for extremist groups like LeT that have an international agenda. The case is easily made that LeT can provide an important tool for the Pakistan military's ability to respond to Indian aggression or for helping the country to secure a sphere of influence when, as expected, American and coalition forces' strategies will have failed in Afghanistan.

LeT could become even more empowered should it by adopting a domestic agenda join hands with other extremist groups to mobilize the wide popular resentments that exist in the country because of rampant corruption and economic hardship. When the TTP insurgency was at its apogee early in 2009, concerns were raised that the largely Pashtun tribally-based insurgency might link up with extremist forces across the country, but notably those in the southern Punjab where LeT has its strongest presence. That such a national movement failed to materialize resulted mainly from strategic miscalculations by the TTP, and a failure to develop a well-articulated program that could transcend ethnic differences to appeal to the large political underclass in Pakistani society.

LeT's organizational infrastructure, its network in the Islamic world, and its access to funds for stepping up acts of terrorism against the state of Pakistan make it attractive to many groups, including al Qaeda, that seek to step up acts of terrorism against the Pakistani state and beyond. Of particular note, LeT's chief Hafiz Saeed is believed to have many sympathizers within the Pakistan's scientific community, especially in the nuclear and missile fields, by virtue of having spent decades indoctrinating the youth of Pakistan while a

professor in one of the country's top engineering universities. Were Pakistan to become seriously destabilized, LET's reputation for charity, piety and patriotism, together with its close ties to senior officers of the Pakistani military and intelligence establishment, would make it a potential vehicle to transform the Pakistani society into a Sharia state similar to that of Afghanistan in the 1990s. The U.S. would then be faced in Pakistan with the jihadi-dominated state that it has most to fear.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Thank you very much.

Ms. Curtis? Everybody's full statement will be part of the record.

**STATEMENT OF MS. LISA CURTIS, SENIOR RESEARCH FELLOW, ASIAN STUDIES CENTER, THE HERITAGE FOUNDATION**

Ms. CURTIS. Thank you very much, Chairman Ackerman, Ranking Member Burton, and thank you very much for holding this very important hearing. The Lashkar e-Tayyiba was not a widely known group before the 2008 attacks on Mumbai, but its links to al-Qaeda go back over a decade, and it has long posed a threat to vital U.S. national security interests including promoting stability in South Asia and degrading the overall terrorist threat emanating from the region.

Although its primary focus has been India, its sharp anti-West ideology, willingness to kill innocents on a massive scale, and operational ties to al-Qaeda, should have raised alarm bells in Washington long ago. Instead, the U.S. Government has tended to view the LET primarily through the Indo-Pakistani prism, and thus has not taken the group as seriously as it has al-Qaeda. That attitude has proved short sighted.

The arrest of Pakistani-American David Coleman Headley at Chicago's O'Hare Airport on October 3rd, 2009, may mark one of the most significant counterterrorism breakthroughs since 9/11. Headley was arrested for conspiring with the LET in Pakistan to conduct attacks in India and for plotting an attack on the Danish newspaper that first published controversial cartoons of the prophet Mohammed in 2005. Headley traveled frequently to Pakistan, where he trained with the LET. He also went to India where he scouted sights for the Mumbai attacks as well as sights for future attacks including on India's National Defense College in New Delhi and two well known boarding schools.

The findings from the Headley investigations have awakened U.S. officials to the gravity of the international threat posed by Pakistan's failure to crack down on terrorist groups including those that primarily target India. The Headley investigations are changing the way the U.S. Government views the LET. State Department Counter-Terrorism Coordinator Daniel Benjamin, for instance, recently said that the Headley investigations show the LET has global ambitions and is willing to undertake bold, mass-casualty operations.

But what is most troubling about the Headley case is what it has revealed about the proximity of the Pakistan military to the LET. The U.S. Department of Justice indictment that was unsealed on January 14th names a retired Pakistani Army Major as Headley's handler. While the allegations do not point to any serving Pakistani army or intelligence officials as being involved in the Mumbai attacks, they do reveal the Pakistan army's past support and continued toleration of the LET contributed to the group's ability to conduct those attacks.

It took several months for Islamabad to admit publicly that Pakistanis had been involved in the Mumbai tragedy. Islamabad did eventually arrest seven LET operatives, including those that India fingered as being the masterminds of the attack. However, there are indications that the LET as an organization continues to operate relatively freely in the country. On February 5th, for example, Hafiz Muhammad Saeed, one of the cofounders of the LET, addressed a crowd of thousands in Lahore, Pakistan, where he called for additional attacks on India. Eight days later, terrorists bombed a German bakery in Pune, India, killing at least 15.

Saeed's release from jail and ability to hold public rallies sends a strong signal that terrorism will be tolerated in Pakistan. Now, the degree of control that the Pakistani intelligence services retain over LET's operations remains an open question. Some Pakistani officials claim al-Qaeda has infiltrated the LET and that elements of the LET were freelancing. Regardless of whether the Pakistani authorities did or did not have control of the group that carried out the Mumbai attacks, they are now responsible for taking actions that close down the group.

Therefore, the U.S. must develop policies that approach the LET with the same urgency as that which the U.S. deals with the threat from al-Qaeda. The Mumbai attacks and the Headley investigations reveal that the LET has the international capabilities and the ideological inclination to attack Western targets whether they are located in South Asia or elsewhere. The U.S. must convince Islamabad to take decisive action to neutralize the LET before it can conduct additional attacks that could well involve Western targets and possibly precipitate an Indo-Pakistani military conflict.

Moving forward, the U.S. needs to closely monitor Pakistani actions to dismantle the LET. Merely banning the organization has done little to degrade its capabilities. The U.S. should also avoid conveying a message that the U.S. is more interested in some terrorist groups than others, which only encourages the Pakistani leadership to avoid confronting the LET. Washington also should repeat messages like that of Defense Secretary Robert Gates, when he wrote in a recent op-ed about the futility of trying to distinguish between terrorist groups that share more commonalities than they do differences. Lastly, the U.S. should assure Pakistani leaders that the U.S. will monitor closely India's military posture toward Pakistan as it seeks to dismantle dangerous groups like the LET. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Curtis follows:]

**“Bad Company: Lashkar-e-Tayyiba and the Growing Ambition of Islamist Militancy in Pakistan”**

**Testimony before the United States House of Representatives Committee on Foreign Affairs,  
Subcommittee on the Middle East and South Asia**

**March 11, 2010**

**Lisa Curtis, Senior Research Fellow, The Heritage Foundation<sup>1</sup>**

My name is Lisa Curtis. I am a senior research fellow at The Heritage Foundation. The views I express in this testimony are my own, and should not be construed as representing any official position of The Heritage Foundation.

The Lashkar-e-Tayyiba, a Pakistan-based terrorist organization, poses a threat to U.S. citizens as well as to critical U.S. national security interests, including promoting stability in South Asia and degrading the overall threat from terrorism emanating from the region. The U.S. government has previously associated the Lashkar-e-Tayyiba (LeT—“Army of the Pure”) primarily with the Indo–Pakistani dispute over Kashmir and has viewed the group as less inimical to U.S. interests than al-Qaeda, although the U.S. State Department has listed the LeT as a Foreign Terrorist Organization since December, 2001. In my testimony, I will argue that the U.S. must develop policies that approach the LeT with the same urgency as that which the U.S. deals with the threat from al-Qaeda. Given the potential for LeT-linked terrorist cells to conduct a Mumbai-style attack here in the U.S., Washington must pursue policies that contain and shut down the operations of this deadly organization. This will require close cooperation with the

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<sup>1</sup> The Heritage Foundation is a public policy, research, and educational organization operating under Section 501(C)(3). It is privately supported and receives no funds from any government at any level, nor does it perform any government or other contract work.

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Pakistani government, which has in the past supported the LeT, and only recently and haltingly begun to take steps to rein in the group's activities.

### **Mumbai Attacks**

The world was shocked by the 2008 terrorist attacks in Mumbai from November 26 to 28 that killed nearly 170 people, including six Americans. The ten perpetrators of the attacks had traveled from Pakistan by sea, and were armed with AK-56 automatic assault rifles, hand grenades, GPS devices, and cell phones. For nearly three days the attackers terrorized Mumbai, gunning down innocent civilians at a train station, hospital, two five-star hotels, a Jewish center, and a restaurant frequented by Westerners.

The attackers were in constant contact via cell phone with their controllers in Pakistan, who provided them detailed instructions on where to go and whom to murder. Released recordings of those cell phone conversations reveal the diabolical nature and sheer ruthlessness of the leaders of the LeT—a group that has long been supported by Pakistan's military and intelligence service. The attackers were clearly under the control of their masters in Pakistan, who reveled in the media attention given to the attacks and who exhorted the attackers to massacre as many innocents as possible, while ordering them not to let themselves be captured alive. The operation did not go according to plan, however, and the Indian authorities were able to capture one of the gunmen, Mohammed Ajmal Amir Kasab. Kasab confessed to being recruited and trained by the LeT and identified the leader of the operation as Zaki ur Rehman Lakhvi.<sup>2</sup>

The Mumbai attacks represented a watershed event for most Indians. The country had faced a series of smaller-scale terrorist attacks in the 18 months leading up to the November 2008 attacks. Mumbai had also experienced a major terrorist attack just two years prior, in July 2006, when terrorists bombed commuter trains, killing 180—about the number killed in the 2008 attacks. What made the 2008 attacks unique was that multiple locations were targeted, including a train station and hospital, and five-star hotels that serve mainly Westerners and upper-class Indians. The 2008 rampage also differed from previous assaults in that they lasted over a period of three days, with the attackers holing up inside the hotels and Jewish center, where they fought Indian commandos to the death under the glare of the media. By attacking multiple targets almost simultaneously, the terrorists created a sense of chaos and fear throughout the city.

The inadequate response to the attacks by the Indian security forces provoked severe criticism of Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's government and prompted the resignation of Home Minister Shivraj Patil. Much like the effects of 9/11 on the U.S., the Mumbai attacks catalyzed Indian efforts to adopt a more integrated and structured approach to homeland security. Shortly after the attacks, the Indian cabinet approved proposals to increase the number of police officers in major cities, install closed-circuit televisions in busy areas, and create a research wing to investigate terrorist threats in the country's internal intelligence service.

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<sup>2</sup>Bruce Riedel, "The Mumbai Massacre and its Implications for America and South Asia," *Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 63, No 1, (Fall/Winter 2009), p. 112.

Two major challenges India faces with securing its homeland are lack of information-sharing among the different intelligence agencies and difficulties in conducting investigations across state jurisdictions. To overcome these obstacles, the government passed legislation in late 2008 establishing a National Investigation Agency (NIA), much like America's FBI, to investigate threats or acts of terrorism. Senior NIA officers are granted unique authority to pursue and investigate terrorism cases throughout the country, thereby addressing the challenge of separate jurisdictions between Indian states. The new Indian Home Minister P. Chidambaram also issued an executive order to start the functioning of the Multi-Agency Center (MAC) as an interagency counterterrorism center similar to the CIA's National Counterterrorism Center. The MAC was created several years ago, but it has been plagued by lack of staffing and resources.

One result of the Mumbai attacks was an unprecedented level of counterterrorism cooperation between India and the U.S., breaking down walls and bureaucratic obstacles between the two countries' intelligence and investigating agencies. The U.S. and India should continue to recognize the value of their shared experiences in dealing with terrorist threats and enhance their counterterrorism dialogue further and develop joint strategies, thereby improving the security of both nations.

#### **Headley Investigations**

The arrest of Pakistani-American David Coleman Headley in the U.S. in October 2009 provided a major breakthrough in the Mumbai attack probe and shed fresh light on the operations and objectives of the LeT. On October 2, 2009, U.S. authorities in Chicago arrested David Coleman Headley (also known as Daood Gilani) for conspiring with LeT in Pakistan to conduct attacks in India, and for plotting an attack on the Danish newspaper that first published cartoons of the Prophet Muhammed in 2005. Headley had apparently traveled frequently to Pakistan, where he received terrorist training from the LeT. He allegedly scouted the sites of the Mumbai attacks as well as sites for subsequent attacks in India, including the National Defence College in New Delhi and two well-known boarding schools. Headley's alleged co-conspirator, Pakistani-born Canadian citizen Tahawwur Rana was also arrested in the U.S. in mid-October 2009.

The findings from the Headley investigations have awakened U.S. officials to the gravity of the international threat posed by Pakistan's failure to crack down on terrorist groups, including those that have primarily targeted India. U.S. officials had previously viewed the LeT solely through an Indo-Pakistani lens rather than as an urgent international terrorist threat. The Headley investigations appear to be changing the way the U.S. government views the LeT. U.S. State Department Counterterrorism Coordinator Daniel Benjamin, for instance, recently said that the Headley investigations show the LeT has global ambitions and is willing to undertake bold, mass-casualty operations.

Most troubling about the Headley case is what it has revealed about the proximity of the Pakistani military to the LeT. The U.S. Department of Justice indictment that was unsealed on January 14, 2009 names a retired Pakistani army major, Abdul Rehman Hashim Syed, as Headley's handler, and Ilyas Kashmiri, a former commando with Pakistan's elite Special Services Group, and now leader of the Harakat-ul-Jihadi-Islami, as the operational commander behind the Mumbai attacks. While the allegations do not specify that serving Pakistani army or intelligence officials were involved in the attacks, they reveal that the Pakistani army's past



support and continued facilitation of the LeT contributed to the terror group's ability to conduct the assaults.

### **Pakistan's Response**

Pakistan initially denied any Pakistani or LeT involvement in the Mumbai attacks. It took several months for Islamabad to admit publicly that Pakistanis had been involved. Islamabad eventually arrested seven LeT operatives, including those that India had fingered as the ring leaders of the attacks—Zaki ur Rehman Lakhvi and Zarar Shah. The Pakistani government also reportedly shut down some LeT offices throughout the country. Despite these actions, there are indications that the LeT continues to operate relatively freely in the country.

The revelations from the Headley investigations prompted fresh U.S. demarches on the Pakistani government to crack down more forcefully on the LeT. Just before the one-year anniversary of the attacks, and perhaps in response to this increased U.S. pressure, Pakistan finally charged the seven LeT operatives in an anti-terrorism court. Pakistani authorities have not charged LeT leader Hafez Muhammed Sayeed, however, even though Kasab has indicated that Sayeed gave his blessing to the attackers before they departed Pakistan. In fact, on February 5, 2009, Sayeed reportedly addressed a crowd of around 10,000 in Lahore, Pakistan, where he called for additional attacks on India. Eight days after Sayeed's speech, terrorists bombed a German bakery in Pune, India, killing nine and wounding dozens of others. Indian Home Minister P. Chidambaram last week criticized Pakistan for allowing Sayeed to make provocative anti-Indian statements, especially after the Indian government had provided information on his role in the Mumbai attacks.<sup>3</sup>

Pakistan had detained Sayeed up until June 2009, when the Lahore High Court called for his release on grounds of insufficient evidence. Sayeed was one of the original founders of the LeT and is one of its most charismatic leaders, as evidenced by the crowd he attracted in early February. Sayeed's release from jail and ability to hold public rallies sends a strong signal that terrorism will be tolerated in Pakistan, especially if it is directed at arch-rival India. Pakistani parliamentarian and former Information Minister Sherry Rehman, during a recent address to Pakistan's parliament, criticized Pakistani authorities for allowing Sayeed to hold public rallies, noting that they undermined the authority of the state. She asked, "What is the point of our innocent civilians and soldiers dying in a borderless war against such terrorists, when armed, banned outfits can hold the whole nation hostage in the heart of Punjab's provincial capital?"

The degree of control that Pakistani intelligence retains over LeT's operations remains an open question. Some Pakistani officials claim that al-Qaeda has infiltrated the LeT, implying that Pakistani officials were not involved in the planning and execution of the Mumbai attacks, and that elements of the LeT were "freelancing." Regardless of whether the Pakistanis did or did not have control of the group that carried out the Mumbai attacks, they are now responsible for

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<sup>3</sup>“Pakistan Should Have Acted Against Saeed: Chidambaram,” *Hindustan Times*, March 2, 2010 at <http://www.hindustantimes.com/Pakistan-should-have-acted-against-Saeed-Chidambaram/H1-Article1-514476.aspx> (March 10, 2010).

taking actions that seek to ensure the LeT and its affiliates are incapable of conducting additional attacks. The appearance of LeT leader Hafez Muhammed Sayeed at a public rally casts grave doubts about Pakistan's commitment to reining in the group's activities.

#### **LeT Ambitions and Links to International Terrorism**

The U.S. government has viewed LeT primarily through an Indo-Pakistani lens and calculated that the group did not pose a direct threat to U.S. interests. This view is short-sighted. LeT leaders themselves view the group as part of a global jihad movement and seek not only to undermine India but also to attack any countries they view as threatening Muslim populations. The LeT's operational focus has evolved considerably over the last several years. Throughout the early and mid-1990s, the LeT focused primarily on attacking Indian security forces in Kashmir. By the late 1990s, the LeT began calling for the break-up of the Indian state. In 2001, the LeT and another group, the Jaish-e-Muhammed (JeM), attacked the Indian parliament in the heart of New Delhi, precipitating a military crisis between India and Pakistan and demonstrating the LeT's ability to put the subcontinent on the edge of a potential nuclear catastrophe.

Even after the 2001 attack on the Indian parliament, U.S. officials tended to view the LeT (and the JeM) as less threatening to U.S. interests than al-Qaeda, despite well-known links between these groups and international terrorism. For instance, shoe bomber Richard Reid apparently trained at an LeT camp in Pakistan; one of the London subway bombers spent time at an LeT complex in Muridke, Pakistan; and al-Qaeda leader Abu Zubayda was captured from an LeT safe house in Faisalabad, Pakistan. But the LeT links to al-Qaeda go back even further. In 1998, the LeT signed Osama bin Laden's fatwa for Muslims to kill Americans and Israelis. The revelations from the Headley investigations that the LeT in coordination with the Harakat-ul-Jihadi-Islami planned to attack the U.S. Embassy and Indian High Commission in Bangladesh around the one-year anniversary of the 2008 Mumbai attacks should help convince U.S. officials that LeT ambitions include hitting U.S. targets.

LeT involvement in Afghanistan has picked up since 2006. LeT apparently trained at camps in Kunar and Nuristan provinces in the 1990s but did not fight alongside the Taliban at that time.<sup>4</sup> In the last four years, however, as the Taliban has regained influence in Afghanistan, the LeT has supported the insurgents by recruiting, training, and housing fighters and facilitating their infiltration into Afghanistan from the tribal areas of Pakistan. LeT has also helped al-Qaeda by recruiting men from the Jalozai refugee camp in Peshawar for training at al-Qaeda camps to become suicide bombers in Afghanistan.<sup>5</sup> LeT fighters were also likely part of the group that attacked a U.S. outpost in Wanat, Afghanistan in 2008 that killed nine U.S. soldiers.

#### **U.S. Policy Moving Forward**

It has been a failure of U.S. policy to not insist Pakistan shut down the LeT long ago. U.S. officials have shied away from pressuring Pakistan on the LeT in the interest of garnering

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<sup>4</sup>Stephen Tankel, "Lashkar-e-Taiba in Perspective: An Evolving Threat," *Counterterrorism Strategy Initiative Policy Paper*, New America Foundation, February 2010, p. 2.

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 4.

Pakistani cooperation against targets the U.S. believed were more critical to immediate U.S. objectives, i.e., al-Qaeda shortly after 9/11 and the Afghan Taliban more recently. But overlooking the activities of LeT in Pakistan is equivalent to standing next to a ticking time bomb waiting for it to explode. Furthermore, given that the LeT has cooperated with al-Qaeda and shares a similar virulent anti-west Islamist ideology, it makes little sense to believe one can dismantle al-Qaeda without also shutting down the operations of the LeT.

U.S. officials have begun to acknowledge the importance of Pakistan pursuing more consistent counterterrorism policies, rather than relying on its past tactic of fighting some terrorists, while supporting others. U.S. Defense Secretary Gates argued in a recent op-ed that ran in the Pakistani daily *The News* that seeking to distinguish between different terrorist groups is counterproductive. U.S. Director of National Intelligence Admiral Dennis Blair elaborated on this point when he testified before Congress on February 2, 2010 that, “Pakistan’s conviction that militant groups are strategically useful to counter India are hampering the fight against terrorism and helping al-Qaeda sustain its safe haven.”

To degrade the overall international terrorist threat emanating from Pakistan, the U.S. must convince Islamabad to confront those groups it has supported against India. The Mumbai attacks and subsequent Headley investigations reveal that the LeT has the international capabilities and ideological inclination to attack western targets whether they are located in South Asia or elsewhere. The boldness and sophistication of the Mumbai attacks demonstrate that Pakistan needs to take decisive action to neutralize the LeT before it conducts additional attacks that could well involve western targets and/or precipitate an Indo-Pakistani military conflict. More specifically the U.S. must:

- **Closely monitor Pakistani actions to dismantle the LeT.** Merely banning the organization has done little to degrade its capabilities. The U.S. in collaboration with other allies must increase pressure on Pakistan to take specific steps like denying the LeT leaders the ability to hold public rallies, collect donations, and engage in paramilitary training on Pakistani territory.
- **Avoid conveying a message that the U.S. is more interested in some terrorist groups than others,** which only encourages the Pakistani leadership to avoid addressing the issue of confronting the LeT. Washington should repeat Defense Secretary Gates’ message about the futility of trying to distinguish between terrorist groups that share more commonalities than differences.
- **Convey to the Pakistani leadership that the U.S. will monitor closely India’s military posture toward Pakistan as it dismantles groups like the LeT.**

Mr. ACKERMAN. Thank you.  
Dr. Tellis?

**STATEMENT OF ASHLEY J. TELLIS, PH.D., SENIOR ASSOCIATE,  
SOUTH ASIA PROGRAM, CARNEGIE ENDOWMENT FOR  
INTERNATIONAL PEACE**

Mr. TELLIS. Mr. Chairman, Mr. Ranking Member, thank you for inviting me this afternoon. Last year I had the opportunity to testify before the Senate Committee on Homeland Security on the LET as an organization and its ideology. I won't go over the substance of that testimony again here, but I wanted to focus on the issue that I was asked to, which is the impact of LET on India-Pakistan relations. Let me summarize my testimony today in the form of eight propositions.

First, let me affirm what others have said before me, that the LET today, after al-Qaeda, remains the most important terrorist group that operates in South Asia. But what is important to recognize is that it has become the spearhead of the Pakistan military's campaign against India. This campaign no longer consists of fomenting insurgencies within India, as was the case in the 1990s. In the early 1990s, the Pakistan military sought to exploit domestic discontent within India, and exploit it for its own purposes. After 1993, the strategy changed. It moved from exploiting domestic discontent to unleashing terrorism, which is aiding groups whose only purpose of existence is to engage in indiscriminate attacks against civilians throughout the length and breadth of the Indian landmass.

The second proposition, LET has grown enormously in competence and its capabilities. Its capacity to engage in terrorist attacks worldwide has increased. But today, it does not need the constant operational support that it once needed from the ISI to conduct these operations. Yet, the tight organizational linkages between LET and the ISI persist to this day, even though Pakistan remains officially an ally of the United States in the war on terror and even though Pakistan officially has banned LET and its parent organization.

Third, the Pakistan army and the ISI have certain objectives with respect to LET. They seek to modulate its terrorism, not to end it. They seek to modulate it in order that its actions do not embarrass the Pakistani state or provoke a major Indo-Pakistani war. But the record since 2001 shows clearly that they have no intentions of putting LET out of business.

Fourth, it is important that the United States recognize Pakistan's deep investments in the LET and cease to refer to LET as if it were an independent actor whose actions are intended to embarrass the Pakistani state. Rather, LET remains to this day an instrument of the Pakistani intelligence services. The investigations that have occurred in the context of the Headley case demonstrate clearly ISI's links with the attacks that took place in Bombay.

Fifth, it is to President Obama's credit that he has made it an important objective that Pakistan target LET if a new U.S.-Pakistan strategic relationship is to be sustained. I believe a U.S.-Pakistan strategic relationship is in the interest of both countries. But thus far, the Pakistani state has been unresponsive to the Presi-

dent's entreaties to suppress LET. Sixth, the most immediate challenge that LET poses for the United States is the risk that its operations in India will provoke a crisis in India-Pakistan relations that end up with the threat of war. If we have been lucky to escape that problem so far, it has been largely because Prime Minister Manmohan Singh has been forbearant in terms of his response to Pakistan.

Seventh, despite the provocations posed by LET's actions, Prime Minister Singh has yet made another attempt to restart the dialogue with Pakistan. But by all accounts, this dialogue is unlikely to be fruitful in the near term for want of a suitable partner in Pakistan capable of conducting a dialogue that leads to the agreement that the ranking member rightly pointed out is necessary if we have to close the books on this group.

Eighth and last, all U.S. efforts so far to encourage Pakistan to suppress the LET have failed. I think we need to face up to that fact. And therefore we will have to increasingly consider what is a very unpalatable possibility, that we might have to target LET and its operatives unilaterally as part of our efforts in Pakistan and Afghanistan. Thank you very much for your attention.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Tellis follows:]



**BAD COMPANY—LASHKAR E-TAYYIBA AND  
THE GROWING AMBITION OF ISLAMIST  
MILITANCY IN PAKISTAN**

Testimony by **Ashley J. Tellis**  
Senior Associate  
Carnegie Endowment for International Peace

United States House of Representatives, Committee on Foreign Affairs,  
Subcommittee on the Middle East and South Asia  
March 11, 2010

Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman, and Members of the Subcommittee. Thank you for your invitation to testify on Lashkar e-Tayyiba (LeT) and the growing ambitions of Islamist militancy in Pakistan. In my judgment, LeT today remains—after al-Qaeda—the most important terrorist group of global reach operating from South Asia. Like al-Qaeda, LeT too has a universalist ideology focused on establishing a universal Islamic Caliphate through the instrument of jihad, but unlike al-Qaeda, which is truly a stateless terrorist organization, LeT remains primarily Pakistani in its composition, uses Pakistani territory as its primary base of operation, and continues to be supported extensively by the Pakistani state, especially the Pakistani Army and its Directorate, Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI). Since I have testified previously on LeT's organization, ideology, and activities before the United States Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs on January 28, 2009,<sup>1</sup> I will focus my remarks today, as requested, principally on assessing the impact of LeT's actions on Indo-Pakistani relations and their implications for U.S. policy. Specifically, I will describe how LeT fits into the Pakistani military's strategy towards India and what its consequences have been for Indo-Pakistani ties and the United States. I respectfully request that my statement be entered into the record.

#### **LeT as an Instrument of Pakistan's National Strategy**

LeT was founded in 1987 by Hafiz Saeed, Abdullah Azzam, and Zafar Iqbal as the armed wing of the Markaz Dawat-ul Irshad (MDI), the Center for Proselytization and Preaching, which sought to realize a universal Islamic state through *tabligh* (preaching) and *jihad* (armed struggle). The group's founding occurred at a time when Pakistan was in the throes of Islamic ferment. General Zia ul-Haq's decade-long program (1977-88) of Islamizing Pakistan had by then grown strong domestic roots, providing a plethora of armed groups such as LeT with a steady supply of volunteers, funding and, most important of all, concerted state support.

Given the current propaganda about LeT being a Kashmiri organization, it is worth remembering that the group's earliest operations were focused on the Kunar and Paktia provinces in Afghanistan, where LeT had set up several training camps in support of the jihad against the Soviet occupation. This contribution to the anti-Soviet campaign was consistent with LeT's mission of armed struggle against the infidels and in its earliest official supporters, General Akhtar Abdur Rahman and Lieutenant General Hamid Gul, the ISI's directors-general during the late 1980s, the group found kindred spirits who were also tantalized by the lure of an international jihad. The mujahideen's defeat of the Soviet Union in Afghanistan empowered both the ISI and various jihadi groups within Pakistan which came to see state-sponsored insurgency as the key to advancing Islamabad's myriad strategic interests. Jihad undertaken by sub-national groups with state support would thus become the instrument that allowed

<sup>1</sup> Prepared Testimony by Ashley J. Tellis, Senior Associate, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace to the United States Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, *Lessons from the Mumbai Terrorist Attacks, Part II*, January 28, 2009. [http://hspgs.senate.gov/public/index.cfm?FuseAction=Hearings.Hearing&Hearing\\_ID=6117251e-16da-46ac-929b-9d2991bd1141](http://hspgs.senate.gov/public/index.cfm?FuseAction=Hearings.Hearing&Hearing_ID=6117251e-16da-46ac-929b-9d2991bd1141).

Pakistan to punch above its geopolitical weight: its campaign in Afghanistan had already contributed to the fall of a superpower and Pakistani military and intelligence officials were nothing if not ambitious during the 1980s and the 1990s when they sought to replicate the same outcome against India.

The indigenous uprising which broke out in 1989 in Jammu and Kashmir provided this opportunity. Just as Pakistan had supported the Sikh insurgency against New Delhi earlier in the decade, Islamabad now threw its weight behind the Kashmiri resistance—a development that was in many ways inevitable, given Pakistan's longstanding claims on this disputed state. Unfortunately for Pakistan, its strategy of defeating India through armed insurgencies failed in Kashmir, just as it failed in the Punjab. By 1993, the native Kashmiri uprising spearheaded by the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF), a secular organization composed largely of Kashmiris, was defeated by the Indian military, just as the Khalistan movement in the Punjab, also supported by Pakistan, was slowly being ground down at about the same time.

These twin defeats, first in the Punjab and then in Jammu and Kashmir, demonstrated that Pakistan's national strategy of supporting domestic insurgencies in order to checkmate Indian power had failed conclusively. But the larger objective of keeping India "off-balance" and weakening it through persistent attacks would not disappear because it is rooted in a dangerous medley of deep geopolitical dissatisfactions, the ambitions of a self-serving military that rules even when it does not govern, and the possession of nuclear weapons.

The advent of nuclear weapons in the Pakistani arsenal only reinforced Islamabad's commitment to pursuing the bold and provocative national strategy centered on aiding insurgencies abroad. Unable to secure its political objectives through conventional war against its stronger neighbor, the Pakistani military began to exploit its evolving strategic capabilities as cover to support various insurgencies within India as a means of either realizing its territorial claims or merely wearing India down. Both these actions operated on the premise that New Delhi would be unable to retaliate conventionally against Islamabad's sub-conventional offensive for fear of provoking a major war that could end up in a nuclear holocaust. This realization—that Pakistan's nuclear weapons could be used offensively to resolve outstanding disputes with India or enervate New Delhi because its larger successes could not be constrained in any other way—provided fresh impetus to Islamabad's longstanding competition with its larger neighbor.

By 1993, when it became clear that the strategy of sustaining domestic insurgencies against India was simply not paying off in the manner expected—a sorry record that goes back to Pakistan's earliest experiments in 1947 in Kashmir—Islamabad responded with a new strategy of fomenting *terrorism* instead. Using the instruments engendered by the jihad in Afghanistan, Pakistan quickly shifted to an alternative approach: instead of continuing to rely on dissatisfied indigenous populations to advance Islamabad's interests through their own struggles with New Delhi, the ISI focused on injecting



combat-hardened aliens into India in order to sustain a large-scale campaign of murder and mayhem intended to bring New Delhi to its knees. Consistent with this strategy, the earliest LeT presence in India was detected in 1993 when a cohort of the group's Punjabi cadres crossed the Line of Control into Jammu and Kashmir. Its presence was publicly recognized by early-1996—a full six years after the local Kashmiri resistance burst forth—when a group of LeT terrorists massacred sixteen Hindus at Barshalla in Kashmir's Doda district. Since then, literally hundreds of terrorist attacks involving LeT militants have occurred throughout India, although it took the devastating attacks of November 2008 in Bombay—a bloodbath that claimed the lives of close to 200 people, including 26 foreigners of 15 nationalities—for the international community to recognize that LeT's ambitions, transcending India, were actually part of a larger war with the West and with its liberal democracies more generally. Today, LeT's close ties with al-Qaeda in Pakistan, its support for the Afghan Taliban's military operations (despite the ideological divide between the Deobandi and the Ahl-e-Hadith interpretations of Islam), and its close collaboration with Jamiat al-Dawa in operations directed at American troops in Afghanistan's Korengal Valley, remain only the latest in a long line of hostile activities—most of which have remained *sub rosa*—affecting U.S. citizens, soldiers or interests.

That LeT pursues goals that go beyond India, even if it has focused on the latter disproportionately, is now acknowledged even by those who were initially skeptical of the group's larger ambitions. The concerted focus on India since 1996—and one that still continues—is largely due however to the interests of its state patrons in Pakistan, namely the Army and the ISI. Since the mid-1990s, ISI favored LeT as its preferred instrument for war against India: the group's dominant Punjabi composition, which matched the ethnicity of most of the Pakistani Army and ISI, its willingness to engage in risky military operations throughout India, its demonstrated savagery in encounters with the Indian military, its readiness to inflict high and indiscriminate levels of violence on its targets, and above all, its absolute loyalty to its state sponsors, made it the favored among other state-supported groups such as Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM), Harkat ul-Mujahedin (HUM), Harkat ul-Jihad-al-Islami (HUJI), and even the dominantly Kashmiri Hizb ul-Mujahedin (HM).

In an environment where terrorist groups often turn against their patrons, there is no record of any LeT attacks either inside Pakistan or against Pakistani Army and ISI interests. This loyalty is owed partly to the common ethnic bonds among these entities and partly to the disproportionate support offered by the ISI. At the beginning, this support was comprehensive: being a special ward of ISI's Directorate S, the organization with responsibilities for all external operations, LeT received assistance from its sponsors in the form of operational funding, specialized weapons, sophisticated communications equipment, combat training, safe haven for the leadership, hides and launching pads for the cadres, intelligence on targets and threats, campaign guidance, infiltration assistance, and, in coordination with the Pakistani Army, fire support when crossing the border into India. A highly specialized section within Directorate S, which has primary responsibility for covert operations against India and is manned by Pakistani Army officers on secondment, traditionally had responsibility for liaising with all terrorist groups engaged in these operations.

As LeT grew over the years, in part by siphoning resources from its charities run under the rubric of Jamaat-ud-Dawa, the group's autonomy from the ISI has gradually increased. Thus, for example, LeT's ability to raise funds independently from mosques in Pakistan and business and charities in the Middle East and Europe, has allowed it greater freedom of action than existed during the 1990s. Today, for example, LeT relies on the ISI primarily for safe haven and political protection for its leadership, intelligence on selected targets and threats, campaign guidance when necessary, and infiltration assistance, particularly in regard to long distance operations involving transits through third countries. Most LeT operations against India today do not require the other forms of assistance witnessed during the early years. They also do not require either formal sanction from the ISI or even exchanges of information: operating within the bounds of the extant strategy of striking India by any means, LeT operations can be undertaken with minimal reference to its state guardians so long as sufficient care is taken to ensure that these attacks cannot be readily attributable to the ISI, the Pakistani Army, or formally to the Pakistani state. Because the requirement of plausible deniability lies at the heart of ISI's relationship with LeT operations against India, directive, as opposed to detailed, control has always been preferred by the Pakistani intelligence services.

Given the objective of bleeding India through a thousand cuts, but not wounding it to a point that automatically embarrasses Pakistan or precipitates a major subcontinental war, the ISI has only sought—especially after the post-2001 era—to “modulate” the object and intensity of LeT's violence, but emphatically not to end it. The record of ISI behavior in the aftermath of the carnage in Bombay clearly confirms this fact. Although the interrogation of David Headley has now established that there were clearly some shadowy ISI connections with the Bombay attacks, the management of the LeT detainees by the Pakistani state and the tortured progress of their trial demonstrates that, whatever the outcome of this charade, the ISI has simply no intention of eviscerating LeT (or any other anti-Indian jihadi groups) because of their perceived utility to Pakistan's national strategy vis-à-vis India. Whether the strategy succeeds or fails ultimately in destroying the Indian polity has become quite irrelevant; rather, attacking India appears to be an end that justifies itself.

#### **LeT, Indo-Pakistani Relations, and the United States**

The threat posed by LeT to India today is not a danger posed by “a stateless sponsor of terrorism,” as it was unfortunately described by President George W. Bush on December 21, 2001. Rather, LeT represents a specific state-supported and state-protected instrument of terrorism that operates from the territory of a particular country—Pakistan—and exemplifies the subterranean war that Islamabad, or more specifically Rawalpindi, has been waging against India since at least the early 1980s. It is not a war that relies any more on “fomenting insurgencies,” that is, exploiting the grievances of a dissatisfied section of the Indian populace against its state. Instead, it is a war that is centered on “fomenting terrorism,” that is, unleashing groups, which have little or no connection to any existing internal grievances within India, on murderous surprise attacks aimed at indiscriminately killing large numbers

of civilians whose only fault lies in being at the wrong place at the wrong time. In other words, LeT represents one heinous face of the Pakistani Army's ongoing war with India. Yet, because of what LeT is—a terrorist organization that counts in addition Israel and the United States as its enemies solely for ideological reasons—it also represents the war that extremist forces in Pakistan, including some in its own government, are waging against many liberal states in the international community.

While it is, therefore, tempting to treat LeT as the cause of the current crisis in Indo-Pakistani relations—particularly in the aftermath of the Bombay attacks—it should instead be understood as a manifestation. The real cause of the problems in Indo-Pakistani relations remains those political forces within Pakistan that profit from continued hostility with India, namely the Pakistani Army, its key intelligence services, mainly the ISI, and their narrow bases of support among the general population. The civilian government in Pakistan, and in particular, the current regime of President Asif Ali Zardari, has a very different view of the bilateral relationship. They recognize that India represents a tremendous commercial opportunity that could contribute to Pakistan's economic growth and social uplift. Cognizant of the fact that Pakistan will never be able to favorably resolve its disputes with India through force, Zardari has sought a non-confrontational affiliation with New Delhi that would set aside existing disputes, if not resolve them, while increasing economic opportunities to permit Pakistan to deal with its many—and deteriorating—internal conditions.

Unfortunately for Pakistan, for India, and for the United States, Zardari and his civilian cohort do not make national security policy in Islamabad. All such matters, especially those relating to the nuclear program, resource allocations between military and civilian activities, and foreign relations with key states, particularly India, remain very much the provenance of the Pakistani Army. As a result of the poisoned history of the subcontinent, manifested by the pathological insecurity, fear and hatred of India in every Pakistani cantonment, the necessity of sapping India's strength through multiple kinds of warfare—economic closure, terrorist attacks, and nuclear competition—remains deeply entrenched in the Pakistani military psyche.

Ever since President George W. Bush initiated the global campaign against Islamist terrorism, his administration and that of his successor have struggled mightily to convince Pakistan that its deepest threats emerge from within its own country and not from the outside. Although this reality appears self-evident to most in the United States and in the international community, ten years and many billions of dollars in military and economic assistance later, we have to admit—with deep regret—that our efforts to wean Pakistan away from its obsession with India and away from fomenting terrorism to satisfy this obsession have failed. Consequently, the expectation that the Pakistani Army would give up its investment in jihadi groups, such as the LeT, in order to repair the damage done by such forces to its country's political fabric, has been fundamentally belied. The evidence since 2001, in fact, demonstrates conclusively that Islamabad has been content to continually play the American expectation that a fundamental shift in its national strategy might be in the offing—so as to avoid sacrificing the large quantity of U.S. assistance that seems always on offer—while it continues to

implement a self-serving counterterrorism strategy that involves targeting only those terrorist groups that threaten its own security (such as the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan) even as it brazenly continues to provide succor and support to those elements that threaten India and Afghanistan (such as LeT and the Afghan Taliban) to this day.

The survival of groups such as LeT—despite President Barack Obama’s valiant, but thus far unsuccessful, efforts to enjoin Islamabad to target them as part of the promise of a new, long-term, U.S.–Pakistan partnership—has grave consequences for regional stability and for American security. The outrage at Bombay demonstrates one fact with clarity: strategic stability in South Asia may now depend precariously on the success or failure of a handful of lightly armed terrorists who have the ability to bring two nuclear powers to war. The Pakistani Army and the ISI may attempt to stave off this worst outcome by attempting to better control their terrorist clients, but because their focus still remains centered on modulating the activities of these groups rather than eviscerating them altogether, the very existence of these forces ensures that the threat of “catalytic” war in the Indian subcontinent remains an ever-present possibility—and this condition will persist so long as the Pakistani military concludes that its interests are better served by protecting its terrorist clients instead of putting them out of business.

That a conflict has been avoided thus far has been solely due to Prime Minister Manmohan Singh’s courageous decision to stay India’s hand, despite enormous pressure to the contrary. Against much opposition, including from within his own party, he has even resumed the dialogue with Pakistan. This effort, which most recently took the form of a meeting between the Indian and Pakistani foreign secretaries, brings respite, but not necessarily hope. This is because there is no “peace party” in Pakistan today that is both politically effective and committed to reconciliation with India: those who seek to turn the page in relations with New Delhi are for most part feckless; those who truly hold power in Islamabad do not consider making peace with India a particularly pressing priority. Consequently, all of Prime Minister Singh’s initiatives, no matter how well intentioned, appear to face bleak prospects for want of a suitable partner in Pakistan capable of effective reciprocity. Singh’s efforts to reach out to Islamabad will, as a result, buy some time, but they will not and have not remedied what remains the fundamental problem of strategic stability in South Asia: that regional peace and security is now hostage to bands of terrorists whose actions, even when unbeknownst to their state patrons, have the potential of provoking major war.

This danger has resulted in many senior U.S. officials characterizing terrorist groups such as LeT as if they were comprehensively rogue actors, intent on destroying the fragile peace process between India and Pakistan. Although some jihadi actions may indeed have just this effect, it is important to end the farce of treating these entities as if they are truly free agents, acting of their own accord, untethered to the state organs from which they derive protection, succor, and support. If groups like LeT continue to thrive and operate effectively—despite the risks of war attendant upon their actions—it is fundamentally because they are aided and supported by the Pakistani military, which,

however regrettable it may be, has concluded that its interests are more enhanced than subverted by the continued sustenance of such “strategic assets.” Accordingly, U.S. policy towards South Asia will fail if it does not accept the reality that all the Islamist terrorist groups operating within the region are, far from being anarchic free agents, actually instruments of state authority.

Whatever its public rhetoric, the Obama administration understands this fact clearly, just as its predecessor did. Consequently—and to its credit—it has invested much effort in attempting to persuade Pakistan, and in particular the Pakistani Army, to change course with respect to supporting various terrorist groups, especially LeT. President Obama in his personal letter to President Zardari delivered in November 2009, in fact, made targeting LeT, among others, one of the conditions for a renewed U.S. strategic partnership with Pakistan. Thus far, however, Islamabad has been non-responsive, preferring instead to emphasize the threat India poses to Pakistan (thereby implicitly justifying its continued reliance on terrorist groups), while demanding further U.S. assistance that is explicitly intended to inveigle the United States into Rawalpindi’s relentless security competition with India.

Whether the administration’s entreaties to Pakistan will be more successful in the future is any one’s guess. But, if the record of this decade is any indication, President Obama will be just as unsuccessful as President Bush was in getting the Pakistani military to reverse course in regards to its support for terrorism. In part, this is because senior Pakistani military officers read all American admonitions regarding LeT in particular as special pleading on behalf of India. Decision makers within the Pakistani security establishment have not yet internalized the fact that American concerns about LeT date back to the 1990s and particularly after the events in Bombay have increased in salience because of the growing conviction—with much supporting evidence from the U.S. intelligence community—that LeT’s activities in Afghanistan, South Asia (outside of India), the Middle East, China, Europe, and North America, make it increasingly a direct threat to the United States.

Even as U.S. efforts to persuade Pakistan of its concerns are floundering, the intelligence and counterterrorism cooperation with India on the other hand has been flourishing, at least since the LeT attacks in Bombay. This cooperation was driven in part by the U.S. calculation that if Pakistan could not be persuaded to interdict LeT, aiding India to cope with the threats posed by this group at least offered a near-term palliative while American diplomacy worked its course. Although the Indian government would very much prefer that Washington recognize the limits of its leverage with Pakistan and shift towards a tougher policy towards Islamabad as a means of mitigating the continuing threat of Pakistani terrorism, it has embarked on a historically unprecedented program of counterterrorism cooperation with the United States. The fruits of this effort thus far have been remarkable: although most of the details are classified, the information shared between the United States and India about LeT activities has led to the foiling of numerous planned attacks, although it is certain that planning for future attacks continues in Pakistan just as vigorously as counterterrorism officials in Washington and New Delhi cooperate to defeat them. The difficulty in this arena is that counterterrorism activities

have to be successful every time if a tragedy is to be avoided, whereas LeT plotters and their handlers have to be successful only occasionally in order to wreck the mayhem that precipitates a crisis.

The only lasting solution to this danger is to press Pakistan to target groups such as LeT conclusively. Many in the United States imagine that the fix actually lies in pressing India to make peace with Pakistan; such an outcome would eliminate the Pakistani military's incentives to support a sub-conventional conflict against New Delhi—or so the theory goes. There is no doubt that a lasting reconciliation between India and Pakistan would be fundamentally in the interests of both countries—and of the United States. To that degree, Washington should certainly use its influence with both India and Pakistan to encourage the dialogue that leads to a resolution of all outstanding disputes, including the vexed problem of Kashmir. But, unfortunately for those who advocate pressing India, the impediments to a lasting peace in South Asia do not emanate from New Delhi. Rather, they are incubated in Islamabad, or to be more precise, in Rawalpindi.

So long as the Pakistani Army and the security establishment more generally conclude that their private interests (and *their* conception of the national interest) are undermined by a permanent reconciliation between India and Pakistan, they will not rid themselves of the terrorist groups they have begotten and which serve their purposes—irrespective of what New Delhi or Kabul or Washington may desire. This fact ought to be understood clearly by the Obama administration. Once it is, it may push the United States to either compel Pakistan to initiate action against LeT or hold Pakistan responsible for the actions of its proxies. If these efforts do not bear fruit, the United States will have to contemplate unilateral actions (or cooperative actions with other allies) to neutralize the most dangerous of the terrorist groups now resident in Pakistan. Doing so may be increasingly necessary not simply to prevent a future Indo-Pakistani crisis, but more importantly to protect the United States, its citizens, its interests, and its allies.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and Members of the Subcommittee for your attention and your kind consideration.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Thank you.  
Mr. Nawaz?

**STATEMENT OF MR. SHUJA NAWAZ, DIRECTOR, THE SOUTH ASIA CENTER**

Mr. NAWAZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Congressman Burton, and members of the committee, I am honored to speak before you today. Today's topic is at the heart of the dangers that confront Pakistan today. The Lashkar e-Tayyiba represents a word that has been used often, a Frankenstein's monster created for the purpose of assisting the Kashmiri freedom movement but that ended up becoming a powerful Sunni Punjabi movement with an independent agenda that appears to have taken on a broader regional role.

It was born out of the U.S. backed Afghan jihad against the Soviets and built on the training provided by that war to Punjabi fighters who could then inculcate Kashmiri fighters in their ways. Successive civil and military leaders of Pakistan supported the movement as a strategic asset to counter a powerful India to the east and to force it to negotiate for a settlement of the disputed territory by waging a war of "a thousand cuts." Over time, however, the sponsored organization took a life of its own, finding the economically disadvantaged area of central and southern Punjab to be fertile territory for recruitment of jihadi warriors.

In a country, Mr. Chairman, where the median age is estimated to be 18 years, and hence half the population of 175 million is below that age, the recruitment pool of unemployed and impressionable youth is large. The attraction of the militant's message cannot be countered by military might alone. It has to be addressed at the core by changing the underlying socioeconomic conditions that foster militancy as a passport to a better life here and in the hereafter.

LET spread its wings nationwide using its contacts to raise funds from the public and gradually has attained autarkic status. It spun off a social welfare organization, the Jamaat ud Dawa, that proselytizes on behalf of the LET while providing much needed social services. In doing this, the LET was playing to the weakness of the corrupt political system of Pakistan that failed to recognize and meet the basic needs of its population at large while only catering to the elites.

Over time, the Inter-Services Intelligence began losing its control as the LET became self sufficient. But the realization that the LET had become autonomous was slow in being understood or accepted in the ISI and by the military leadership of Pakistan under General Pervez Musharraf. Now, General Musharraf did make an effort to lower the political temperature in Kashmir and began distancing the state from the LET. However, the process was not handled as well as it could have.

Similar to the disbanding of the Iraqi army after the U.S. invasion, when thousands of trained soldiers and officers were let go, the LET was cut loose without a comprehensive plan to disarm, retrain, and gainfully reemploy the fighters. A dangerous corollary was the induction into the militancy of some former members of

the military who had trained and guided them in their war in Kashmir.

What should we do? I believe that it may not be too late to assist Pakistan in crafting a plan to reach out to the fighters of the LET and other Punjabi militant organizations and by involving their extended families in the process provide trainings and stipends to wean them away from their militant path. The extended family unit can play a role in ensuring against recidivism on the part of the fighters.

Simultaneously it is critical to focus on drastically changing the Islamist curriculum of public schools, a vestige of the period of General Zia-ul-Haq's rule, and invest in south and central Punjab to create job opportunities that would lift up the relatively backward population of this area. Mr. Chairman, enough evidence exists now to link the Sunni militant groups Sipah-e-Sahaba and Jesh Muhammad with al-Qaeda and the Taliban, and the LET's emerging role as a trans-regional force that has broadened its aim to include India and perhaps even Afghanistan.

By linking with the students Islamic movement of India and the Harkat-ul-Jihad-al-Islami of Bangladesh, it poses a serious threat to regional stability. As has been said before, another Mumbai type attack involving the LET might bring Pakistan into conflict, a prospect that should keep us awake at night. Now, it appears that the army's recent actions has dislocated the Teriki Taliban of Pakistan, yet it faces a huge, and to my mind greater, threat in the hinterland in the form of the LET.

My own research into the recruitment of the Pakistan army over 1970 to 2005 indicates that the army is now recruiting heavily in the same area from where the LET springs. Unless we change the underlying social and economic conditions there, the Islamist militancy will start seeping into the military. Mr. Chairman, I am grateful that this committee is focusing on this issue, and thank you for allowing me to share some of my ideas. I shall be glad to take questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Nawaz follows:]



Testimony before the House Subcommittee on the Middle East and South Asia (MESA) on

**"Bad Company: Lashkar e-Tayyiba and the Growing Ambition of  
Islamist Militancy in Pakistan."**

By

Shuja Nawaz

Director, South Asia Center, The Atlantic Council of the United States

2:30 PM, Thursday, March 11th, 2010

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Congressman Burton, Members of the Committee, I am honored to be invited to speak before you today.

I speak as a Pakistani who follows closely developments inside Pakistan and the US-Pakistan Relationship. At the Atlantic Council, we are committed to "waging peace" in the region and to finding practicable solutions to the security, economic, political, and social challenges facing greater South and Central Asia. Last year we issued a detailed report on Pakistan, warning of troubles ahead if we did not support that country's fledgling democracy as it took on a rising insurgency. We are shortly going to issue another report that focuses on the progress made to date but warns of dangers ahead if we ignore systemic issues domestically and in the US-Pakistan relationship.

Today's topic is at the heart of the dangers that confront Pakistan today. The Lashkar e Tayyiba represents a Frankenstein's Monster created for the purpose of assisting the Kashmir freedom movement but that ended up becoming a powerful Sunni Punjabi movement with an independent agenda that appears to have taken on a broader regional role. It was born out of the US-backed Afghan Jihad against the Soviets, and built on the training provided by that war to Punjabi

fighters who could then inculcate Kashmiri fighters in their ways. Successive civil and military leaders of Pakistan supported the movement as a strategic asset to counter a powerful India to the East and to force it to negotiate for a settlement of the disputed territory by waging a war of “a thousand cuts”.

Over time, however, the sponsored organization took on a life of its own, finding the economically disadvantaged area of Central and Southern Punjab to be a fertile territory for recruitment of Jihadi warriors. In a country where the median age is estimated to be 18 years (and hence half the population of 175 million is below that age), the recruitment pool of unemployed and impressionable youth is huge.

The attraction of the militants’ message cannot be countered by military might alone. It has to be addressed at the core by changing the underlying socio-economic conditions that foster militancy as a passport to a better life here and in the hereafter.

LeT spread its wings nationwide, using its contacts to raise funds from the public and gradually attained autarkic status. Collection boxes for the Kashmiri jihad in shops, at mosques, and around the festivals of Eid al Fitr and Aid al Adha gave it a steady source of income. It spun off a social welfare organization, the Jamaat ud Dawa that served to proselytize on behalf of the LeT while providing much needed social services. In doing this, the LeT was playing to the weakness of the corrupt political system of Pakistan that failed to recognize and meet the basic needs of its population at large while catering to the elites. The performance of the Jamaat ud Dawa during

the earthquake of 2005 won it more followers in a critical region of the country that straddled the Karakoram Highway linking China to Pakistan.

The Inter Services Intelligence began losing its control as the LeT became more self sufficient. But the realization that the LeT had become autonomous was slow in being understood or accepted in the ISI and by the military leadership of Pakistan under General Pervez Musharraf. His ambivalence about the LeT even in 2002 was evident in his confusion during an interview with Australian Broadcasting Corporation, when he challenged the interviewer who stated that the LeT had been banned. Musharraf thought only the Jaish e Mohammed had been banned, referring to another surrogate of the ISI in Kashmir. Today, LeT is banned. But its social services wing, the Jamaat ud Dawa, is not and remains an active surrogate.

General Musharraf made an effort to lower the political temperature in Kashmir and began distancing the state from the LeT. However, the process was not handled as well as it could have been. Similar to the disbanding of the Iraqi army after the US invasion when thousands of trained soldiers and officers were let go, the LeT was cut loose without a comprehensive plan to disarm, re-train, and gainfully employ the fighters. A dangerous corollary was the induction into the militancy of some former members of the military who had trained and guided them in their war in Kashmir.

What should we do? I believe that it may not be too late to assist Pakistan in crafting a plan to reach out to the fighters of the LeT and other Punjabi militant organizations and by involving their extended families in the process, provide training and stipends to wean them away from

their militant path. The extended family unit could play a role in ensuring against recidivism on the part of the fighters. Simultaneously it is critical to focus on drastically changing the Islamist curriculum of public schools, a vestige of the period of general Zia ul Haq's rule, and invest in South and Central Punjab to create job opportunities that would lift up the relatively backward population of this area.

Enough evidence exists now to link the Sunni militant groups Sipah e Sahaba and Jaish e Mohammed with Al Qaeda and the Taliban. The LeT's emerging role as a trans regional force that has broadened its aim to include India and perhaps even Afghanistan, by linking with the Students Islamic Movement of India or SIMI and the Harkat ul Jihad al Islami or HUJI of Bangladesh poses a serious threat to regional stability. Another Mumbai-type attack involving the LeT might bring India and Pakistan into conflict, a prospect that should keep us awake at night. In Pakistan, both the civil and the military now appear to recognize the existential threat from home grown militancy. The army appears to have dislocated the Tehreek e Taliban of Pakistan. Yet, it faces a huge and, to my mind, greater threat in the hinterland, in the form of the LeT.

My own research into the recruitment of the Pakistan army over 1970 to 2005 indicates that the army is now recruiting heavily in the same area. Unless we change the underlying social and economic conditions, the Islamist militancy that appears to be taking root there will start seeping into the military.

Mr. Chairman, I am grateful that this committee is focusing on this issue and thank you for allowing me to share some of my ideas. I shall be glad to provide more details in my replies to queries.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Thank you, and thank all of you. Well, it seems we have a unanimity in a panel in that everybody is an alarmist. Now where do we go? I think there is also general agreement that the ISI/Pakistani military has been complicit in creating the Frankenstein monster, seems not to be able to control the Frankenstein monster, they are still able to influence it, and that if I am not mistaken everybody made reference to a belief or suspicion that the Frankenstein monster can live independently even were it not receiving substantial support from the Pakistan military. I would surmise if that is accurate that the Pakistan military could make it a little bit more difficult and uncomfortable.

The threat that this posed in the creation of this terrorist that everybody considers an international terrorist group at this point, everybody on the panel, the question is whose responsibility is it? The answer to that is everybody's, because it is international. My question is, in addition to how big is this Frankenstein monster—can anybody quantify the number of people or the rate of growth that it might have? But what strategy might be employed and what expectation might there be that we get Pakistan, its military and the intelligence services, to determine that LET is no longer useful, is counterproductive, and to concur in the fact that it must be done away with? That is a big question. Let us start with Dr. Weinbaum.

Mr. WEINBAUM. With regard to your question, Congressman, I think something else has to happen, and that is the attitude of the people of Pakistan. I think it is more than simply a decision here on the part of the government, which would be very difficult without a different view of particularly the charity work with which LET is associated, although not the name LET. We have a larger task here. It is part of this larger problem that we see here about the poisonous atmosphere that exists and the willingness of people to accept conspiracy theories as facts.

So this is a formidable task, of course, but it is more than simply convincing the elites in Pakistan what to do, I don't believe that there is any likelihood that they are going to move without a change of attitude by the people of Pakistan, and what that means is that they have to be addressing the people themselves and pointing out what counterproductive ways in which LET is operating for the security of Pakistan.

Mr. ACKERMAN. I think, before going down the rest of the line, I think the dilemma the world is facing is that all of these groups, whether it be Hamas or Hezbollah or LET or Robin Hood and his Merry Men, have captured the imagination of the general population by providing social services that governments have not provided to a rather desperate people and societies. And without being accused of being a wild-eyed liberal and saying, you know, thinking we have to just redistribute the wealth in the world, certainly you have to give poor people and disadvantaged people a stake in their own societies in those countries that we are talking about where there is none. That is a huge undertaking. In the mean time, somebody has to provide law and order and get rid of bad guys. You know, it will be generations before you can build up the economy of any of these places to Scandinavia. Anybody just want to com-

ment on that? My time is over but Ranking Member is concurring in my generosity to myself. Mr. Nawaz?

Mr. NAWAZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Since I have spent a substantial portion of my life at the IMF and the World Bank, I believe that economics is at the heart of it and you have quite rightly identified that. But I believe that it is possible to accelerate the process of change, and it has to be an internal process of change, it is not something that will come from outside. First of all, a recognition by Pakistan that it faces an existential threat from within and not from outside.

Secondly, the possibility of opening those areas where the terrorist groups and the extremists are recruiting heavily, and my research on this indicates as well as juxtaposed against the recruitment of the Pakistan military, it is central and southern Punjab. It is a vast area, very heavily populated, the military cannot take military action given the fact that it is now fighting on the western frontier.

So what is the best way? The best way probably is to open up the economies of this. And what is the best way of opening up the economy of the Punjab is to open up the border with India. The moment you return to trade of 70 percent between India and Pakistan instead of the 2 or 3 percent that it is currently of GDP, you can I think overnight transform that region. The kind of employment generation that will occur on the Indian side of the border as well as on the Pakistan side of the border will make it impossible for people to be lured away by the kind of payments that the terrorist groups now make.

Mr. TELLIS. If I may make two points. First I would like to qualify the analogy of the Frankenstein's monster. We think of it as the Frankenstein's monster. I don't think the Pakistani state thinks of the LET as a Frankenstein's monster, because the LET as Dr. Weinbaum has pointed out has been very careful not to attack state interests in Pakistan, to maintain its links with key institutions like the Pakistani intelligence services. And so the idea that somehow this is a organization that is going to turn back and bite the Pakistani state, that urgency is certainly not shared by key institutions in Pakistan.

Secondly with respect to dealing with the challenge, LET certainly has two streams. There is a civilian stream that is focused on its charities, but there is a very distinct military stream that is involved in its operations, and there is no reason why in principle the Pakistani state cannot make a distinction between these two streams. These are two different categories of people. The people who go out to do charitable work are not the people who do the gunrunning and who do the killing. If the Pakistani state decided that it wanted to go after the military components while leaving the civilian or the charitable components aside, it could. The reason it won't is because it does not really accept the fundamental analogy of the Frankenstein's monster.

Ms. CURTIS. Mr. Chairman, if I might just emphasize Dr. Tellis's point that we may be missing the forest through the trees here. There are steps that the Pakistan Government, namely the Pakistan military and intelligence services, can take. Number one, they can prevent Hafiz Muhammad Saeed from making provocative

statements calling for attacks on India. That has nothing to do with charity work. They can disrupt the ability of this group to train on Pakistani territory, to finance itself.

And I also want to point out I don't see the LET as having this broad support base in Pakistan. In fact, I would like to quote Pakistan's former Information Minister, Sherry Rehman, who said shortly after Hafiz Muhammad Saeed made this very provocative statement, she said this in Parliament, "What is the point of our innocent civilians and soldiers dying in a borderless war against such terrorists when armed, banned outfits can hold the whole nation hostage in the heart of Punjab's provincial capital?" So the point is, this group is not widely supported in Pakistan, in particular by the civilian leadership, and if we want something done, we need to prevail particularly on the Pakistan military to take steps to prevent this group from being able to operate militarily.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Mr. Burton?

Mr. BURTON. You know, I have been involved along with the chairman probably for 15 or 20 years on the Kashmiri and Punjab issue, and I believe after all the years I have talked to people from Kashmir and Punjab and Pakistan and India that until you solve the problems up in Punjab and Kashmir you are never going to solve the problems that you are talking about today, it just is not going to happen. You know, it is just not going to happen.

Now, you have got a nuclear power in Pakistan and you have got a nuclear power in India, and if all hell breaks loose, it is going to be a mess there. Everybody knows that, it could disrupt the whole region. And then you have got of course Iran over there trying to develop a nuclear capability, it just could be a horrible situation. But the thing that bothers me is that for 20 years now, and the chairman and I have had our differences over this, there has been no resolution of the Kashmir province.

Since 1947 when they had partition, the U.N. resolution that dealt with Kashmir has never been carried out, there has never been a plebiscite on that up there. India has claimed it, and there has been a lot of reasons why some royal leaders up there have ceded some of the territory to India, which I am not sure they had the ability to do, but nevertheless it has continued to be a problem, and the people in Kashmir where a lot of this has started, they are not going to stop. And they are going to get support from people who are sympathetic to them from military or religious standpoint.

And so I don't know why our learned experts here, and I know you are very knowledgeable, and the people in the military in India and in Pakistan, don't realize that everybody is walking around with a fuse in their hand that could blow up at almost any time. The Mumbai attack could have precipitated something but cooler heads did prevail. But I have seen, they have brought me pictures time and time again of people who had been disemboweled and sewed up and thrown in rivers up there in Kashmir and the people who had been tortured and killed in Punjab by the military, and I am sure there is atrocities coming the other way as well, but it is not going to go away.

And you know, I don't know how many hearings we have had on these subjects but there have been a lot of them, and everybody talks about, today it sounds like predominantly that Pakistan and



their connection with the LET and other things are mainly responsible and I am sure there is a lot of blame there, but there is blame on the other side too. And I wish all of the experts and the people in the governments involved as well as the United States would make as their number one goal resolving the issues that have been prevailing for a long, long time, and that is resolving the issue of Kashmir.

And I think the only way to do that is to get the Pakistani Government and the India Government and the people in Kashmir together and resolve some way for them to solve that problem in Kashmir that has been existing since 1948. And until you get that done, you are not going to solve this problem. And India can't attack Pakistan because if they do Pakistan has got the ability to retaliate with a nuclear weapon and vice versa. And so the killing is going to go on, and the festering that is created from this impasse is just going to grow.

And I just asked my staff how many people live up there, and there is at least 10 million people, so there is a reservoir of people to become terrorists. A lot of these young people, I mean they hear their parents and they see the things that is happening with the Indian troops occupying that area and they have seen the atrocities on both sides, and they say, you know, to hell with it, let us just fight them, we will kill them. And it just gets worse and worse and worse.

So that is why I went over there and I talked to Prime Minister Singh personally, and I talked to President Musharraf personally, and they had opened a small opening in the border so that there could be some communication and traveling back and forth. But as far as moving troops back from Kashmir, even 50 miles or 25 miles so that they could feel a little autonomy there and actually start discussions on how to solve the problem, you know, I just don't think it is going to be resolved.

And I think as the chairman said, you know, this is kind of like the Gordian knot. And the Gordian knot by Alexander was not untied, he just chopped it in two, and I think the way to chop this in two is to get the parties together. And the United States has been working in the Middle East between the Palestinians and the Israelis for years, and the Egyptians and the Lebanese and all the countries involved, Jordan, to try to solve their problems.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Gentleman is yielded an additional 5 minutes.

Mr. BURTON. Well, I am not going to take that much time, Mr. Chairman, I am just feeling exasperated, and I know you feel that way too because we have talked about this on the floor, this has been going on forever, and it is an issue that could blow up at any time into something much larger than what we have seen in Mumbai or any of the other attacks over there. And all we do is we keep talking about who is at fault and who is doing this and who is doing that. We ought to look at the U.N. resolutions of the late '40s, which are still in effect, and we ought to try to live up to those. And there has got to be some way to do that and to cut through this Gordian knot.

And I really appreciate the expertise of the people here, but I get so frustrated because I see the killing and I see this thing festering and getting into a bigger and bigger problem because there is no

way to exhaust the kind of weapons these people can get, and they are going to be more and more sophisticated, and then you have got nuclear weapons. I mean we keep talking about it and tinkering around with it, but nothing gets done and we run the risk of a major conflagration which could erupt if not now, 2 years in the future, 5 years in the future, because we aren't realistically looking at how to solve the problem.

And the way to solve the problem is to do like we are trying to do between Palestine and Israel and get these people together and find out what they can all live with. And then if you do that, you start to do as I said earlier in my remarks, defang the terrorist groups. Because the reason they were originated is not just because of poverty, it is because they hate the Indians and they want their autonomy and they want the plebiscite they were promised and all that other stuff. So it is a combination of things. You can respond if you want to. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Any takers? Dr. Weinbaum?

Mr. WEINBAUM. If I could just add on to the problem in a way. Because, without discounting the importance of LET in terms of the reconciliation between India and Pakistan and the spoiler role that it can play, I don't think we have given enough attention this afternoon to LET as a global organization. I believe that it has demonstrated that in the past its members, for example, took part in the Balkans, they were involved in the war in Tajikistan. What we see here is a capacity on the part of the LET that certainly which reaches into Afghanistan.

If we should fail in Afghanistan, I think there is no doubt that the LET would become along with the Taliban a force here which has implications that go beyond just this area. I might mention that we know of at least 17 countries where the LET has chapters. So my point here is that, as much of a concern as the LET poses to Pakistan and to Indo-Pakistani relations, LET is evolving into something which is far greater, an organization which has by its own statements has global ambitions, and what I am also saying it is also developing a global capacity.

Ms. CURTIS. Just quickly, you talked about the problem and a possible resolution as being a plebiscite. But frankly, in my visits to the region I haven't heard support for the idea of a plebiscite. And in fact I think one of the most significant things that has happened over the last decade was President Musharraf actually dropping Pakistani insistence on having a plebiscite, and in fact he made a very important statement in December 2006 where he said Pakistan would be willing to give up its claim on Kashmir if four things happened.

He said, if the line of control that divides Kashmir was made irrelevant—which means people could freely pass back and forth, goods could pass back and forth—two, if Kashmir was given greater autonomy, three, if both sides could figure out a joint mechanism to interact, to have the two sides of Kashmir, Pakistani Kashmir and Indian Kashmir, interact. So he made a very forward looking proposal, and as we know from Steve Coll who wrote about this in the *New Yorker* magazine not too long ago, they were very close to coming to some kind of agreement or understanding on Kashmir.

So I think the point is the two sides are capable of moving forward. And I agree, they should sit down and do this, but I think we have to look at what right now at this moment, 2010, is preventing that. And I think that is where we have to in a sense, you do have to assess blame. If you want them to really get back to genuine negotiations then we have to look at what is holding that up at this particular moment.

Mr. BURTON. I just want to make a couple comments. The plebiscite was promised in 1948. I know what he said, and I think that is great, that is a great step in the right direction, because I talked to President Musharraf just about that. And the other thing I would like to say is that this is a breeding ground for the expansion of the LET, in my opinion. And I think that if we could figure out a way to solve this problem, as President Musharraf laid out, I think it would be a step in the right direction, which could possibly lead, maybe not, could possibly lead to helping reduce the aggressiveness of that organization. Because an awful lot of that stems from what was been going on for 20 years in Kashmir and that whole region.

Mr. ACKERMAN. We will try to come back. Mr. Connolly?

Mr. CONNOLLY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And I would ask unanimous consent that my opening statement be entered into the record.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Without objection.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And welcome to all of our panelists. I am going to try to squeeze in four questions, so if we could all be concise, that would be great. First question, what in your opinion is in fact the current nature of the relationship between LET and ISI, the Pakistani intelligence service? Who wants to begin? Mr. Nawaz?

Mr. NAWAZ. Well, yes, Congressman, I would be happy to address that. As I stated in my opening remarks, I think that relationship has changed over time, and that after President Musharraf made a decision to distance himself from the groups that were operating in Kashmir that there was a kind of a hands off approach, and I think it was not a part of a comprehensive plan. And it has backfired, as a result of which the group has basically become completely independent. But I did mention that the former trainers and associates from the ISI perhaps now have an opportunity of independently working with the LET.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Well, let me ask a follow-up question to that, because we have the same kind of problem frankly with the ISI and the Taliban. Are we to believe that the ISI can operate sort of a rogue mission independent of the central Government of Pakistan, or is it done with a wink and a blink from the central Government of Pakistan? Because we hear denials about that relationship with the Taliban as well, and yet we know that there are deep historical ties between the two.

Mr. NAWAZ. I don't believe the ISI acts independently of the government or the power centers in Pakistan, and I use my words very carefully. I think at the operational level, and particularly when you refer to Fatah, the border region, because of the nature of the recruitment pool of the operatives at the field there is a tremendous amount of ambivalence, because you have to go into the tribal

system and recruit people there. So you cannot have 100 percent control over people in the field.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Anyone else on this? Dr. Tellis?

Mr. TELLIS. Let me answer that as specifically as I can. The relationship between LET and ISI is still extremely tight, and there are four specific dimensions of that relationship. The ISI protects the LET leadership, it gives safe haven to the cadres, and it provides protection to the leadership, that is number one. Two, it provides the organization with intelligence on specific threats to the organization and specific targets that may be of interest to the organization.

Three, it provides campaign guidance when required. LET does quite well on its own and can do scouting of its own targets independently today, but there have been instances where ISI has continued to provide campaign guidance. And four, ISI continues to provide infiltration assistance, particularly when LET operatives have to go to third countries using the assistance of ISI stations. So there are four distinct ways in which LET and ISI operations continue to be coordinated.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Thank you.

Ms. CURTIS. I would just reiterate, I don't think ISI is a rogue operation, and they do have tight links with the Lashkar e-Tayyiba. But I would say what is most dangerous, it seems to be when you have these retired officials. In my opening I talked about the Headley investigations and how the U.S. affidavit names a former Pakistani Army Major as being the actual handler for Headley. And so the question is, did he leave on his own volition? Is he retired because that provides more deniability? So these are a lot of the questions that I think need to be asked.

Mr. WEINBAUM. I just have one comment, and that is to repeat something I said earlier, that as far as Pakistan is concerned, the LET does not present the same kind of threat that many of the other organizations, Lashkar Jhangvi particularly, are threats to the state of Pakistan. So that there is an opportunity here for a modus vivendi so that they share common objectives. Therefore, to the degree in which LET continues to do so, and it is a question about whether it will continue to do so, there is no reason for the ISI as such to turn against it.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Thank you, and my time is up, Mr. Chairman, and I got one question in. Thank you.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Thank you. Stick around. Mr. Royce?

Mr. ROYCE. Thank you, Chairman. Dr. Tellis: Of the amalgam of jihadists that operate in Pakistan, is it safe to say that the LET receives the least amount of scrutiny from the Pakistani Government?

Mr. TELLIS. That is correct.

Mr. ROYCE. A recent Newsweek article reported that "unlike al-Qaeda which is on the run and largely confined, LET operates terrorist training camps more or less in the open" in Pakistan. I would ask you, is this an accurate description of this, do people agree that this is?

Mr. TELLIS. That is correct, and they have an annual meeting which is often attended by important political personalities in Paki-

stan. And the annual meeting is essentially a jamboree for jihadists that takes place in Muridke, and it is an open event.

Mr. ROYCE. But some of the officials that attend, are they parliamentarians?

Mr. TELLIS. There are both elected officials and there are officials from more shadowy parts of the Pakistani Government that attend these meetings.

Mr. ROYCE. And if I could ask Dr. Weinbaum, you note in your testimony that LET's chief, Hafiz Saeed, because of his work with young people during his time at an engineering university became in your words, you said he is believed to have many sympathizers within Pakistan's scientific community, especially in the nuclear and missile fields.

Mr. WEINBAUM. Correct.

Mr. ROYCE. People have often asked how many al-Qaeda sympathizers are in Pakistani security establishment. You know, your question strikes us that maybe we are asking the wrong question. Maybe the real question we should have been asking ourselves is, what about LET elements in the nuclear field? And have you given some thought to that?

Mr. WEINBAUM. Well, I believe that what we have here is obviously just circumstantial evidence.

Mr. ROYCE. Yes.

Mr. WEINBAUM. But what we do know, and obviously we are concerned about—

Mr. ROYCE. Well, their membership is 150,000 people, according to Newsweek, in Pakistan.

Mr. WEINBAUM. Well, again, how do you separate Jamaat-ud-Dawa, the charity wing, from the political military wing that LET constitutes? that is very blurred. And it is really the strength of the organization is the fact that it has this charity persona.

Mr. ROYCE. No, I understand that.

Mr. WEINBAUM. Yes.

Mr. ROYCE. Well, so let me ask Lisa a question here. British Pakistanis have been known to use the "Kashmir escalator" after getting introduced to LET or others in Kashmir, then they connect with al-Qaeda operatives. And last year a British official estimated that 4,000 people were trained in this way since 9/11, and it accounted for three out of four of the serious terrorist plots faced by the UK. Now, of course many of these people also could get into the United States without a visa, right, because they are British citizens. How deep are the LET ties within the British and French Pakistani communities in your view, and how are we working with the British on this?

Ms. CURTIS. Well, there was information that one of the London subway plotters was actually trained at an LET camp, so I think there are some connections there. But in terms of the U.S. and whether or not we are working with the UK, I think I raised in my testimony that I don't think the U.S. Government has given the LET the attention that it deserves.

Mr. ROYCE. And that goes to another point I was going to ask you about, Ms. Curtis. Have we gotten to that point where we approach the LET as we approach al-Qaeda? You say no, but we have got the Headley case as you point out. He was born in the United

States to a Pakistani diplomat and a Philadelphia socialite. He was charged in December with providing material support to the LET for scouting locations for the Mumbai terror attack. He made multiple trips to India taking videos of the hotels and restaurants in advance in order to carry out these attacks. What would you tell U.S. policy makers regarding the need to change our view of the LET?

Ms. CURTIS. Well, I think we need to focus on the masterminds of the attack. Yes, Headley was a facilitator, he scouted sites, but what is important is his handler, who was directing him, who was really the one on the other line of the cell phone telling the killers who to kill, who to murder. So that is why it goes back to Pakistan and focusing on taking down the LET in Pakistan. Because yes they do have an international network and we need to work with our allies in focusing on that international network, but if you have the masterminds directing the other arms of this operation, then you will go a long way to decimating it.

So again I come back to how important it is to focus on disrupting that leadership in Pakistan, convincing the Pakistan military that this group is a threat not only to India, to the international community, but also eventually to themselves, and that they do have an international viewpoint. I think that is what I would tell our policy makers to focus on.

Mr. ROYCE. Thank you, Ms. Curtis. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Mr. Bilirakis?

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I appreciate it very much. I have a couple questions. And I know you touched on this but maybe you can elaborate a little more or the panel can. Is the Pakistan Government as a whole seriously interested in combating religious extremism or are there divisions within the country and government that prevent the government as a whole from being able to take immediate steps to address these threats?

Mr. NAWAZ. Maybe I can attempt to reply to that, Congressman.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Thank you.

Mr. NAWAZ. I think in the last couple of years particularly, the people of Pakistan have put pressure on the government and the military. And the military particularly now recognizes the growing threat from within. I think this is being reflected in the support that was given to the Pakistan army in its operations in Swat and in the renewed operations in Fatah. And this is something that we should perhaps capitalize on, which is to strengthen these movements.

And also to build up on an earlier point, to recognize that if you change the landscape and effect it particularly in the recruitment area of the LET which is the Punjab, not just the economic landscape but return Islam to the predominant Sufi Islam that dominates Pakistan as a religious entity, that is really where the strength is going to lie because you will yank the carpet from under the feet of these groups.

And then finally, I think on the external front, as the ranking member has said a number of times, if you could just go back to the road map that had already been achieved in the composite dialogue between India and Pakistan, it exists on paper and I can confirm that President Musharraf has personally confirmed to me the

outlines of that agreement. It is the question of going back and picking it up from there, for which the current reopening of the dialogue is a very good sign. This has to be a multifaceted effort, I don't think there is any silver bullet solution to it.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Thank you, sir. Anyone else on the panel?

Mr. TELLIS. If I may take a crack at that. I think in principle Pakistan as a country has come to the point where they recognize that they cannot avoid dealing with the challenges of religious extremism. But it breaks down once you start looking at different groups within Pakistan. The body politic, the public, are clearly sick and tired of the deterioration that has taken place in Pakistani politics. You get poll after poll that shows people having absolutely no appetite for sustaining these groups anymore.

The civilian regime, the regime of President Zardari, I think very much shares that conviction as well. Where uncertainties arise are the Pakistani military and intelligence services. And there it is not that they don't recognize the nature of the problem, it is that they are deeply conflicted about the utility of some of these players to their own interests. And so you get a truly schizophrenic attitude where the Pakistani military and intelligence services want to confront the problem but they want to confront it selectively and they want to pick and choose.

And there are some terrorist groups that affect their own interests adversely whom they are content to go after, and there are other terrorist groups who they think they can live with because they are assets in the military's campaign against India and Afghanistan. Now, as long as this schizophrenia exists in the national security establishment, the kinds of problems that you are alluding to will continue to persist.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Thank you.

Ms. CURTIS. Yeah, I just want to also highlight that. I think that there is thinking within the Pakistani security establishment that you can support some terrorists or tolerate some terrorists and fight others. I think this is counterproductive. I think the reality is that these terrorists they get stronger and stronger, they have such a virulent ideology, and the LET is a case in point, that they will eventually go off on their own and start attacking the state.

Now, the LET has not started attacking the state yet but they are extending their sights internationally, more Westerners are becoming involved in their attacks, a more pan-Islamist ideology. So I think it is almost there is a lack of strategic thinking within the Pakistan military establishment that doesn't understand that by supporting some of these groups you are actually undermining your overall ability to get a handle on the terrorism problem in your own country. And Secretary Gates tried to explain this in an op-ed that he wrote which ran in a Pakistani daily a few weeks ago. But I think we need to keep hammering home that point, that it is bad policy for them to try to support some terrorists and fight others.

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, appreciate it.

Mr. ACKERMAN. We have about reached that time, but what I think I would like to do, rather than let you all go right now, because as soon as you are halfway down the hall you are each going

to say, I wish I had another half a minute, I would have said X. You each have 45 seconds to fill in the blank if you would like.

Mr. WEINBAUM. To sum up what I said in my statement. LET's reputation for charity and piety and patriotism together with its close ties to the senior officers of the Pakistan military and intelligence establishment give it the potential I believe to transform Pakistan society into a Sharia state similar to that of Afghanistan in the 1990s. I don't see that as imminent, but I think that that potential exists. The U.S. therefore would be faced in Pakistan with a jihadi dominated state that it has most to fear and a global threat that I believe dwarfs al-Qaeda. Thank you.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Ms. Curtis?

Ms. CURTIS. I guess I would just like to reiterate what Congressman Royce quoted out of my testimony, that if we just keep allowing this group to exist we are sitting next to a ticking time bomb. I think it does pose a threat to U.S. interests. It is a very short step to go from the attacks in Mumbai, in which of course six Americans were killed, it is a very short step for them to then, you know, target a strictly Western target. And I think that we need to take this problem more seriously and raise it to the top of our agenda with Pakistan.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Dr. Tellis?

Mr. TELLIS. I would just like to end by responding to the remarks that the ranking member made because I think they are very important. There is no doubt in my mind that we have to find ways to resolve the issues relating to Kashmir, but I think resolving Kashmir is not going to solve the problems relating to LET. I always find it interesting that the people conducting the murder and mayhem in the subcontinent today are not Kashmiris, the people who actually are deprived of all their political rights, they are not conducting the murder and mayhem.

The murder and mayhem is being conducted by groups that have absolutely no connections to Kashmir, and to my mind that tells me a story, the fact that this is a group that has operations in 21 countries, that has an ideology that is completely anti-Western, that is opposed to modernity and secularism and all the kinds of values that we take for granted. This group is not going to be satisfied by dealing with the issues of Kashmir. So we have to deal with Kashmir, but it is not going to solve this problem.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Mr. Nawaz?

Mr. NAWAZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to make two points. First of all, I agree with Ashley Tellis that resolving the Kashmir problem by itself is not going to remove this threat because the aim of these groups is to leverage themselves into a position of power inside Pakistan and to take control. They are going to face a very uphill task because the majority of the population doesn't believe in their brand of Islam or their tactics. Secondly, I think we need to support the ideas of the people of India and Pakistan for peace.

A recent simultaneous poll conducted by the Times of India and the Jang newspaper group in Pakistan indicates that 70 percent of the people polled want peace between India and Pakistan. I think that is the kind of movement that needs to be supported from within and from outside, because once you achieve that you create eco-



conomic openings and those openings will allow the people of Pakistan and India to prosper and remove these terrorist groups from their midst. Thank you.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Thank you. Thank the entire panel, you have been very very helpful, very informative, and very persuasive. The committee stands adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 4:01 p.m., the subcommittee was adjourned.]



# A P P E N D I X



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**SUBCOMMITTEE HEARING NOTICE**  
**COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS**  
*U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES*  
*WASHINGTON, D.C.*

**Subcommittee on the Middle East and South Asia**  
**Gary L. Ackerman (D-NY), Chairman**

March 10, 2010

**TO: MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

You are respectfully requested to attend an OPEN hearing of the Subcommittee on the Middle East and South Asia, to be held in **Room 2172 of the Rayburn House Office Building**:

**DATE:** Thursday, March 11, 2010

**TIME:** 2:30 p.m.

**SUBJECT:** Bad Company: Lashkar e-Tayyiba and the Growing Ambition of Islamist Militancy in Pakistan

**WITNESSES:** Marvin Weinbaum, Ph.D.  
Scholar-in-Residence  
The Middle East Institute

Ms. Lisa Curtis  
Senior Research Fellow  
Asian Studies Center  
The Heritage Foundation

Ashley J. Tellis, Ph.D.  
Senior Associate  
South Asia Program  
Carnegie Endowment for International Peace

Mr. Shuja Nawaz  
Director  
The South Asia Center  
Atlantic Council of the United States

**By Direction of the Chairman**

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