

Lashkar-e-Taiba beyond Bin Laden: Enduring Challenges for the Region and the International Community

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C. Christine Fair
Assistant Professor
Georgetown University
Security Studies Program
Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service

INTRODUCTION

Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) is the most lethal terrorist group operating in and from South Asia. LeT was founded in 1989 in Afghanistan with help from Pakistan's external intelligence agency, the Inter-services Intelligence Directorate (ISI). Since 1990 it began operations in India. Until Thanksgiving weekend in November 2008, U.S. policy makers tended to dismiss LeT as India's problem—hardly that of the United States. However, on that weekend, LeT made its debut as an international terrorist organization when it launched a multi-site siege of India's port city of Mumbai that lasted some four days. The attack, which claimed 166 lives—including several Americans and Israelis—was reported without halt on global media. It was the first time LeT had targeted non-Indian civilians. However, the group had been attacking U.S. troops and its international and Afghan allies in Afghanistan since 2004.¹ Revelations that David Headley Coleman (née Daood Gilani), an American citizen of Pakistani origin, facilitated the attack has galvanized renewed fears about American homegrown terrorism and the ability of LeT to attack the American homeland.² Headley's ties to an al Qaeda leader, Ilyas Kashmiri, have furthered speculation about LeT's ties to al Qaeda.³ Rightly or wrongly, some American officials believe it is only a matter of *when* LeT will strike a devastating attack on U.S. soil, rather than *if*.⁴

Scholars of South Asian security and media analysts explain Pakistan's reliance upon LeT—and a raft of other groups—as a response to its enduring rivalry with India over the disputed territory of Kashmir specifically and deep neuralgic fears about Indian intentions towards Pakistan more generally.⁵ Lacking military, diplomatic or political options to resolve its security competition with India, Pakistan has developed a series of proxies that operate in India and Afghanistan, with presumably plausible deniability. Pakistan's activities and use of militants in Afghanistan stems directly from Pakistan's fears about India and a desire to prevent it from developing influence and deepening its capabilities of fomenting insurgency along the border I Pakistan (e.g. in Balochistan, the Federally Administered Tribal Areas, and Khyber Pakhtunkha).

This widely-held explanation for Pakistan's reliance upon LeT among other Islamist militants results in policy recommendations that stress resolution of the enduring rivalry between India and Pakistan as a necessary if insufficient condition for Pakistan to strategically abandon its Islamist proxies. Inevitably, calls are made for international intervention to encourage both sides to reach some accommodation.⁶ Moreover, this has led to specific arguments that Afghanistan will be stabilized only when the status of Kashmir is resolved as this alone will

permit Pakistan to relax its aggressive efforts to manage efforts there with Islamist proxies, including the Afghan Taliban, the Jalaluddin Haqqani and Gulbuddin Hekmatyar networks, LeT among others.⁷

I argue in this testimony that this conventional understanding of Pakistan's reliance upon militancy, framed within the logic Pakistan's external security preoccupations, is dangerously incomplete as it excludes the domestic politics of militant groups and the support they enjoy from the state. I propose that LeT plays an extremely important *domestic* role countering the other militants that are increasingly attacking the state and that this domestic role of LeT has increased since 2002 as the other groups began attacking the Pakistani state and its citizens. Equally important, my argumentation—if valid—suggests that the death of Bin Laden will have little or no mitigating impact upon LeT or other groups operating in the region. This is true in part because, in the view of this analyst, the evidence for LeT's tight ties with Al Qaeda is not robust.

My primary evidentiary bases for these claims are also new: namely, a review of LeT's manifesto *Hum Kyon Jihad Kar Rahen Hain* (Why We Are Waging Jihad) as well as a database of some 708 LeT "martyr" biographies. This data base is derived from LeT's extensive book and magazine publication and has been compiled in conjunction with West Point's Combating Terrorism Center, where the author is overseeing this effort while Nadia Shoeb is the lead analyst of these shaheed biographies.

The implications of my argument is that a resolution of the Indo-Pakistan dispute—howsoever improbable in the first instance—will not be sufficient to motivate Pakistan to strategically abandon LeT. Moreover, Pakistan's reliance upon LeT will deepen as Pakistan's internal security situation further deteriorates. Lamentably, there is little that the United States can do to affect this reality and must prepare risk mitigation strategies and, perversely, attempt to deepen engagement with Pakistan as this is the only way of ensuring maximal visibility and exerting maximal influence, even if those opportunities are limited.

The remainder of this testimony is organized as follows. First, I provide an overview of the militant landscape in Pakistan, drawing particular attention to the way in LeT differs. These differences are important to understanding the group, Pakistan's sustained support for it and the threat it poses to the region and beyond.⁸ Second, I provide a brief history of LeT. Next, I present new evidence for understanding the organization from the point of view of domestic politics within Pakistan itself. Finally, I conclude this essay with an overview of the implications of my arguments for Pakistan's continued reliance upon LeT and for U.S. policy.

DISAGREGATING PAKISTAN'S MILITANT MARKET⁹

There are several kinds of militant groups operating in and from Pakistan. Drawing from the vast descriptive literature of Pakistan's militant group, the militant milieu can be—and should be—meaningfully disaggregated across several dimensions, beginning with their sectarian background (e.g. Ahl-e-Hadith, Deoband, Jamaat Islami, etc).¹⁰ They can also be distinguished by their theatres of operation (e.g. Afghanistan, India, Pakistan), by the makeup of their cadres (e.g. Arab, Central Asia, Pakistani and ethnic groups thereof), and by their objectives (e.g. overthrow of the Pakistan government, seize Kashmir, support the Afghan Taliban, etc.) among other characteristics. Employing these characteristics, the following clusters of Islamist militant groups can be discerned (summarized in Figure 1):

- Al Qaeda (in Pakistan): Al Qaeda operatives who are based in Pakistan are largely non-Pakistani. However, they work with and through networks of supportive Pakistani militant groups. The strongest ties are with the Deobandi groups such as the Pakistani Taliban, JM, Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ), etc. From sanctuaries in the tribal areas and from key Pakistani cities, al Qaeda has facilitated attacks within Pakistan and has planned international attacks.¹¹
- Afghan Taliban: While the Afghan Taliban operate in Afghanistan, they enjoy sanctuary in Pakistan's Baluchistan province, parts of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK, formerly known as the Northwest Frontier Province), and key cities in the Pakistani heartland (e.g. Karachi, Peshawar, Quetta). The Afghan Taliban emerged from Deobandi madaris (p. madrassah) in Pakistan and retain their nearly exclusive ethnic Pashtun and Deobandi sectarian orientation.¹²
- “Kashmiri groups”: Several groups proclaim to focus upon Kashmir. These include the Jamaat-e-Islami based HM and related splinter groups; several Deobandi groups (JM, JUJI, LeJ, etc.); and the Ahl-e-Hadith group LeT, which was renamed Jamaat ud Dawa (JuD) in December 2001. With the notable exception of HM, most of these groups claim few ethnic Kashmiris among their cadres and most came into being as surrogates of Pakistan's intelligence agency, the Inter-services Intelligence Directory (ISI). Ironically, while they are called “Kashmir groups,” many of these groups now operate well beyond Kashmir when possible.
- “Sectarian groups”: While in the past, notable anti-Sunni Shia groups existed with support from Iran, sectarian groups today are mostly Sunni who violently target Shia. Those Sunni groups targeting Shia are almost always Deobandi (Sipah-e-Sahaba-e-Pakistan (SSP), Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ)). In addition, there is considerable intra-Sunni violence with Deobandis targeting Barelvis (a heterodox Sufi order) as well Ahmediyyas, who are considered non-Muslim in Pakistan and elsewhere.¹³

- The Tehreek-e-Taliban-e-Pakistan (TTP, Pakistan Taliban). Groups self-nominating as the “Pakistani Taliban” appeared in Waziristan as early as 2004 under the leadership of Waziristan-based, Deobandi militants who fought with the Afghan Taliban in Afghanistan and earlier in the anti-Soviet jihad. By late 2007, several militant commanders organized under the leadership of South Waziristan-based Baitullah Mehsood under the moniker “Tehreek-e-Taliban-e-Pakistan.” Baitullah Mehsood was killed in a U.S. drone strike in August 2009. After considerable speculation about the TTP’s fate, it re-emerged under the vehemently sectarian Hakimullah Mehsood. After a brief interlude from violence, the TTP has sustained a bloody campaign of suicide bombings that precipitated Pakistani military activities against their redoubt in South Waziristan. The TTP sustained retaliatory suicide bombings to punish the state for launching that campaign.¹⁴ While the TTP is widely seen largely as a Pashtun insurgency, the Punjab-based groups like SSP/LeJ and other Deobandi groups are important components of this organization.

There are a number of refinements to this gross disaggregation. First, Deobandi groups have overlapping membership with each other and with the Deobandi Islamist political party, Jamiat-e-Ulema Islami (JUI). Thus, a member of JM may also be a member of LeJ or even an office holder at some level with the JUI. Second, Deobandi groups have in recent years begun operating against the Pakistani state following Pakistan’s participation in the U.S.-led global war on terrorism. JM and LeJ for instance have collaborated with the TTP by providing suicide bombers and logistical support, allowing the TTP to conduct attacks throughout Pakistan, far beyond the TTP’s territorial remit.¹⁵ Both LeT and several Deobandi militant groups have also been operating in Afghanistan against U.S., NATO, and Afghan forces.¹⁶ In contrast, other Kashmiri groups are operating under the influence of the Islamist political party Jamaat-e-Islami, such as al-Badr and HM, which tend to be comprised of ethnic Kashmiris and have retained their operational focus upon Kashmir.

Pakistan has been a victim of sectarian violence by anti-Shia and previously by anti-Sunni militias since the late 1970s. However, the current insurgency confronted by Pakistan is different from those older internal security threats. As is well-known, then President and General Pervez Musharraf joined the U.S.-led global war by supporting Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF)¹⁷ in September of 2001.¹⁸ In December 2001, JM attacked the Indian parliament. India held Pakistan directly responsible for the actions of its proxies and commenced the largest military buildup since the 1971 war. After intense diplomatic intervention by Washington, war was averted but the military buildup remained on both sides of the border until October 2002. Tensions again flared when LeT attacked the wives and children of Indian army personnel in Kaluchak in May

2002. The United States again intervened to prevent war. The compound crisis that spanned December 2001 through October 2002 imposed severe costs upon U.S. military operations in Afghanistan as Pakistan moved its forces from the west to the east. Taliban and Al Qaeda operatives easily fled into Pakistan's tribal areas with Pakistani forces redeployed to the east.¹⁹

Washington compelled President Musharraf to adopt a "moderated jihad policy" according to which he agreed to minimize the infiltration of Pakistani militants into Pakistan.²⁰ Tensions between the Pakistani government and its suite of militant proxies had already come into focus when Musharraf abandoned the Taliban (howsoever briefly) and cooperated with the United States in the "global war on terror." Many militant groups rejected their patron's decision and rebelled. In late 2001/early 2002, JM split into a faction that remained loyal to the state under its founder Masood Azhar and those that actively began a suicide campaign against the state, including against President Musharraf, the Karachi Corps Commander and several civilian leaders.²¹ Since then, Pakistan's Deobandi groups continue to factionalize and target Pakistani military installations and personnel, political leadership and civilians alike.

It is extremely important to note that the groups that split and rebelled are *all* Deobandi. In contrast, LeT remained loyal to the state and began reorganizing in December 2001, days prior to the U.S. designation of LeT as a Foreign Terrorist Organization. American and Pakistani analysts alike believe that the ISI alerted LeT to this impending designation. This advance warning allowed LeT to transfer all of his financial assets to accounts under the new name of JuD.²² LeT's leader, Hafiz Saeed, declared there would be two organizations: the militant component would be commanded by Maulana Rehman Lakhvi and a larger umbrella organization became known as JuD, into which LeT transferred most of its personnel. Moreover, LeT's old offices and buildings were simply rebadged as JuD facilities. The militant cells of the organization uses JuD's facilities for its activities and shares phone numbers, personnel, bank accounts and offices. Thus for all practical purposes the organizations are really one: JuD.²³ With this structure, which I will elaborate below, the organization has been able to retain its stock of cadres while also expanding its recruitment base through its social service provision. Equally important, JuD would be able to propagate LeT/JuD's unique doctrine and philosophy described below.

Thus the LeT differs from the other militant groups in several important ways. First, the LeT has never targeted the Pakistani state or any target (international or otherwise) within Pakistan. It exclusively operates outside of Pakistan. This is further evidence of the tight linkages between LeT and the Pakistani security establishment. Arguably, further evidence yet of LeT's ongoing ties to Pakistan's intelligence agency is the simple fact that while several LeT cells and operatives have been based in the United States, the organization has *never* conspired to attack the U.S. homeland. This is true despite operating against Americans in Afghanistan as well as in the 2008 Mumbai attack. The ISI likely understands that this would be a serious red-line which

would provoke unrelenting retaliation. Indeed, U.S. legislation such as the “Pakistan Enduring Assistance and Cooperation Enhancement (PEACE) Act of 2009” (generally known as Kerry-Lugar-Berman) specifically focuses upon LeT by name. While the U.S. homeland has been vulnerable to LeT attacks, such an attack would be unlikely without an explicit nod from the ISI.²⁴

Second, unlike all of the aforementioned groups, the LeT has never experienced an exogenous leadership split of any consequence since its founding years. The organization has at various times reorganized, as described elsewhere in this essay. But this is not the same as leadership quarrels that has resulted in disgruntled factions in opposition to each other. In fact, the ISI often engineers or foments dissent among the other Deobandi and JI-backed militant groups to retain some control over them and to limit their ability to develop independently of the state. The LeT is the only group that the ISI has kept intact without significant cleavages at the apex body of decisions makers. (As with all organizations, some discord has been observed among local commanders.)

Finally, whereas the state has taken on several of the Deobandi groups and al Qaeda through inept and not always efficacious military operations, it has taken only marginal and cosmetic steps in the wake of the Mumbai 2008 attacks.²⁵ The Pakistan government has refused to ban JuD. After several groups were banned in 2002 (including LeT), all of them regrouped under other names with their financial assets largely intact.²⁶ After the U.S. ambassador complained that the bans had no consequence upon these groups, the Pakistan government banned the reformed groups in 2003. As before, the groups reformed without loss of operational capabilities. JuD was the only group that was not banned at that time. This enabled JuD to continue to expand its overt as well as covert actions with preferential state treatment.²⁷ In the wake of Mumbai, Pakistan promised to ban JuD after the U.N. Security Council proscribed the organization and identified its leadership as terrorist in early 2009.²⁸ However, Pakistan never honored this commitment. While some of its leadership is in jail to appease Washington after Mumbai, they continue to meet their associates and plan operations. JuD convenes high-profile demonstrations including recent mobilization around Pakistan’s abrogated sovereignty with the Bin Laden raid and assignation, the fate of Raymond Davis (the CIA contractor who killed two ISI operatives during an altercation)²⁹ and to show support for Pakistan’s blasphemy law and even to demonstrate support for the killer of the Punjab Governor, Salmon Tasseer, who wanted to reform the blasphemy law. The LeT/JuD continues its domestic social work and relief activities increasingly within the eyes of the Pakistani public. Frighteningly, JuD—and other Islamist organizations—have taken the lead in shaping public opinion about these events which necessarily center on loathing of the United States and calls for the government and military to sever ties across the board. This is an easy sell to Pakistan’s increasingly anti-American public.³⁰

LASHKAR-E-TAIBA AND JAMAAT UD DAWA: A BRIEF HISTORY³¹

The LeT originally emerged as the military wing of the Markaz Daawat ul Irshad (MDI), headquartered in Muridke near the Punjabi city of Lahore. MDI was founded in 1986 by two Pakistani Engineering professors, Hafiz Muhammad Saeed and Zafar Iqbal with the assistance of the ISI.³² Abdullah Azzam, a close associate of Bin Laden who was affiliated with the Islamic University of Islamabad and the Maktab ul Khadamat (Bureau of Services for Arab mujahedeen, which was the precursor to al Qaeda), also provided assistance. He was killed in Peshawar two years after the MDI was founded. MDI, along with numerous other militant groups, was involved in supporting the mujahidin in Afghanistan from 1986 onwards, and established militant training camps for this purpose. One camp was known as Muaskar-e-Taiba in Paktia and a second known as Muaskar-e-Aqsa in the Kunar province of Afghanistan.³³ (Kunar is known to be home to numerous Ahl-e-Hadith adherents in Afghanistan, which overall has few followers in that country. For this reason, Kunar has been an attractive safe-haven for Arabs in Afghanistan.) Pakistan-based analysts note that MDI/LeT's training camps were always separate from those of the Taliban, which hosted Deobandi militant groups such as HUJI and HuM. This has led some analysts to contend that LeT has not had the sustained and organic connections to Al Qaeda as enjoyed by the Deobandi groups, many of which became "out sourcers" for al Qaeda operations in Pakistan.³⁴

In 1993, MDI divided its activities into two related but separate organizations: MDI proper continued the mission of proselytization and education while LeT emerged as the militant wing. After the Soviets withdrew from Afghanistan, LeT/MDI shifted focus to Indian-administered Kashmir. It staged its first commando-style attack in Kashmir in 1990. The organization has spawned a vast training infrastructure throughout the country to support its dual mission of training militants and converting Pakistanis to the Ahl-e-Hadith interpretative tradition. For much of the 1990s (with few exceptions), LeT operations were restricted to Indian administered Kashmir.

LeT's 200-acre headquarters is in Muridke (Punjab) located some 30 kilometers from Lahore.³⁵ However, the organization maintains offices in most of the major cities throughout Pakistan. (See Figure 2, which shows a business card of Yayha Mujahid, LeT's spokesperson, with office locations throughout Pakistan.) These offices undertake recruitment as well as funds collection. In addition to overt offices open to the public, JuD/LeT maintains covert training camps throughout Pakistan.³⁶ Hafez Saeed is the Amir (supreme commander) of the organization.³⁷ As noted above, since December 2001, the organization essentially exists as JuD within Pakistan while LeT is nominally the organization that operates outside of Pakistan although this distinction is insignificant. In this essay, I use JuD and LeT interchangeably

because this was reorganization by the organization itself rather than a split.³⁸ Operations tend to be conducted with a relatively small unit of few than a dozen.³⁹

Recruits typically come from cities in central and southern Punjab (e.g. Faisalabad, Gujranwala, Bahawalpur, Vehari, Khaneval, Kasur), reflecting the Punjabi nature of the group and the fact that its main infrastructure is in the Punjab. In addition, some come from Afghanistan and Pashtun areas in Pakistan.⁴⁰ There is no publically available—much less accurate—accounting of the organization’s end-strength. But the State Department estimates that it has “several thousand” members in Pakistan Administered Kashmir, Pakistan, in the southern Jammu and Kashmir and Doda regions (in Indian Administered Kashmir), and in the Kashmir Valley.⁴¹ In contrast, the Delhi-based South Asia Terrorism Portal estimates that, with some fluctuation, it has more than 750 cadres in Jammu and Kashmir, which comprise the overwhelming bulk of the foreign militants in the Kashmir valley.⁴²

A perusal of LeT literature demonstrates a commitment to targeting Indian Hindus, Jews, and other Kafirs *outside of Pakistan*.⁴³ LeT has a hallmark modus operandi, which has often been misconstrued as simply “suicide operations.” In fact, the LeT does not do suicide operations, per se, in which the goal of the attacker is to die during the execution of the attack. Rather, LeT’s “fidayeen” missions are more akin to high-risk missions in which well-trained commandos engage in fierce combat during which death is preferable to capture. While martyrdom is in some sense the ultimate objective of LeT operatives, the LeT selects missions where there is a possibility, however slim, of living to kill more enemy operatives. The goal of LeT commandos therefore is not merely to commit suicide attacks; rather, they seek to kill as many as possible until they ultimately succumb to enemy operations, barring their ability to survive enemy engagement.⁴⁴

Consonant with the rigor of a typical LeT mission, LeT recruits do not predominantly draw from Pakistan’s madaris (pl. of madrassah) as is commonly asserted. Rather, LeT recruits are generally in their late teens or early twenties and tend to be better educated than Pakistanis on average, or even than other militant groups such as the Deobandi SSP or JM. A majority of LeT recruits have completed secondary school with good grades and some have even attended college. This reflects both the background of LeT’s founding fathers who were engineering professors and MDI commitment to technical and other education. This stands in sharp contrast to the madrassah-based networks of many of the Deobandi groups including the Afghan Taliban.⁴⁵ The fraction of madrassah-educated LeT operatives is believed to be as low as ten percent.⁴⁶ LeT also actively targets women both to expand their recruitment base of males, and reportedly, to recruit women for militant operations.⁴⁷

Since the late 1990's, LeT has continued to develop its operational reach into India. This has involved recruiting Indian citizens and increasingly entails developing an indigenous Indian franchise, the Indian Mujahedeen.⁴⁸

DOMESTIC POLITICS OF LASHKAR-E-TAIB: AN ALTERNATIVE EXPLANATION

As noted above, the groups that have reorganized and begun targeting the state are *all Deobandi*. LeT is not Deobandi. This theological distinction is exceedingly important if underappreciated. First, these Deobandi groups are intimately sectarian. They have long supported the targeting of Pakistan's Shia and Ahmediyyas. (Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto declared the Ahmediyyas to be non-Muslim in 1974 to placate Islamist opposition groups who demanded this.) These Deobandi groups also began attacking Sufi shrines in Pakistan in recent years. The most recent such attack occurred in April 2011 when suicide bombers assaulted a shrine dedicated to a saint, Sakhi Sarvar, in Dera Ghazi Khan.⁴⁹ Previously, they attacked extremely important an shrine in Lahore, Data Darbar, on July 1, 2010.⁵⁰ These Sufi shrines follow the Barelvi school of Islam in Pakistan. Barelvi adherents believe in mysticism, revere saints and shrines, and frequent shrines where the saint's descendent spiritual guide may intercede on behalf of these worshipers. Many, if not most, Pakistanis are believed to be Barelvi although there are no data on this question. Pakistanis generally hold these shrines in high esteem as these Sufi saints brought Islam to South Asia. However, Deobandi loath and denounce these mystical practices and beliefs as un-Islamic accretions derived from Hinduism. Deobandis also encourage attacks against Pakistan's non-Muslim minorities, such as Christians.

In short, Barelvis, Shia and Ahmediyyas all espouse religious practices that Deobandis find anathema because they practice what Deobandis deem *munafiqit*, or acting to spread disunity. (The term *munafiqit* is sometimes translated as a hypocrite in English, implying that they are not truthful to themselves or others.) Perpetrator of *munafiqit* are called *munafiq* (plural is *munafiqin*). Deobandi militant groups, which include the Pakistan Taliban and its constituent members from JM, SSP and LeJ among others, have come to conclude that anyone who does not espouse their beliefs is *munafiq*. This includes Pakistani security personnel as well civilian leadership and individuals who oppose these groups and their sanguinary agenda. Under these pretexts, Deobandi groups have launched a sustained campaign of violence that first began in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), and then expanded into the settled parts of the frontier in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa and well into the Punjab.

The results of this Deobandi campaign have been lethal. Using data that are available from the Combating Terrorism Center at West Point, between January 1, 2004 (when the

database begins) and December 31, 2010 (the last date available), there have been over 3,517 attacks by Islamist militant groups the vast majority of which are Deobandi. These attacks have claimed more than 25,116 victims among whom 24,796 were injured but survived. These attacks expanded precipitously after 2006 when the Pakistani state began engaging in vigorous anti-terrorism efforts against these groups. (Yearly breakdowns of incidents and victims are available in Figure 3.)

Understanding this anti-Munafiqin violence perpetrated by these Deobandi groups is critical to understanding the domestic utility of LeT. (A photo of Pakistan Taliban graffiti denouncing munafiqit in a TTP redoubt in South Waziristan is available in Figure 4.)

In stark contrast, LeT does not fight in Pakistan and does not target Pakistanis. In its manifesto “Hum Kyon Jihad Kar Rahen Hain?” (Why Are We Waging Jihad), the author details why it is that LeT “Does not wage jihad in Pakistan instead of Kashmir” and other venues in the Muslim world where Muslims are oppressed.⁵¹ This section above all other sections explains the domestic importance of the organization. In contrast to the Deobandi groups which savage the state and its citizens, this LeT manifesto reveals LeT’s fundamental non-sectarian nature and robust commitment to the integrity of the Pakistani state and its diverse polity.

The manifesto forthrightly addresses this fundamental accusation waged against the government by the Deobandis. This critique has particular salience in the post-2001 era when the government of Pakistan began collaborating with the United States and the subsequent emergent of a domestic insurgency. The author explains LeT’s logic by arguing that while the state is indeed guilty of these things, Pakistanis who are Muslim are all brothers irrespective of the sectarian commitments.⁵² The author says that Barelvis, Sufis or Shia not be attacked.⁵³ Equally important, this document argues against the Deobandi position that these persons are Munafiqin worthy of death in the first place.

In contrast, the manifesto’s author argues that Kafirs *outside* of Pakistan (Hindus, Jews, Christians, atheists, etc.) *are* at war with Muslims and should be attacked.⁵⁴ The author urges all Muslims to fight the Kafirs lest Pakistanis turn on each other, as indeed they have in ample measure.

In this manifesto lie the domestic politics of LeT and its state support. It is the only organization that actively challenges the Deobandi orthodoxy that has imperiled the domestic security of the state. It is the only militant organization that enunciates the legitimate targets of jihad and the utility of external jihad to the state in a way that the common Pakistani can understand. Thus, LeT’s doctrine works to secure the integrity of the Pakistani state domestically even while it complicates Pakistan’s external relations with India, the United States and others.

This orientation is more important than it may seem at first blush. Drawing from previous and current work, LeT does not primarily recruit from adherents of the theological tradition to which it derives: Ahl-e-Hadith for two reasons.⁵⁵ First, because many of religious scholars (ulema) of Ahl-e-Hadith have rejected violent jihad, LeT has split from its sectarian roots. Given its differences of opinion with the Ahl-e-Hadith ulema, it should not expect many recruits from Ahl-e-Hadith adherents.⁵⁶ Another reason is that overall in Pakistan, the Ahl-e-Hadith community is quite small, perhaps less than 10 percent of Pakistan's population of 180 million.⁵⁷ In fact, LeT overwhelmingly recruits Deobandis and Barelvis. In Daur-e-Aam (the basic training) recruits are undergo rigorous religious indoctrination. This is an important opportunity to attract those who have a taste for violence to a pro-state militant organization rather than a Deobandi group which may target the state. It also provides LeT the opportunity to dissuade Deobandis (or others) who believe in attacking Pakistanis be they civilian leaders, security forces or citizens.

Pakistan's support of LeT/JuD's expansion into providing social services after 2002 also makes sense. By 2004 JuD was expanding schools (not madrassahs), clinics and other social services throughout Pakistan.⁵⁸ In 2004, LeT/JuD raised enormous funds and relief supplies for the victims of the 2004/2005 Asian Tsunami, it provided a variety of relief and medical assistance in the 2005 Kashmir earthquake, and provided social services to internally displaced persons who fled military offensive in Swat in 2009 as well as the victims of the 2010 monsoon-related super flood. Granted, the organization was not at the forefront of relief as the media reported. It is likely that Pakistan's media sensationalized LeT's contribution deliberately to foster popular support for the organization. This is entirely possible as many journalists are explicitly on the ISI's payroll and routinely plant stories on behalf of the ISI or characterize a story to suit the ISI's interests.⁵⁹

Pakistan has sustained serious criticism for refusing to crack down on the organization and indeed permit it to sustain an extremely public profile. (Evidence of the organization's intent to inflame the United States and other international observers is manifested in its various banners in (often broken) English. Few Pakistanis can read English and thus is likely intended to ensure that American and others can see understand their claims.) However, when one appreciates the domestic importance of LeT in dampening internal insecurity, the state has an enormous incentive to encourage and facilitate this expansion of JuD throughout Pakistan. By bolstering the organization's domestic legitimacy, JuD becomes an ever-more effective organization in countering the competitive dangerous beliefs of the Deobandi groups. Pakistan's support of the organization has taken unusual turns. After the Mumbai attack of 2008, the Punjab provincial government began managing the organization's substantial assets in the Punjab and has even placed many LeT/JuD workers employed in various purported charitable

activities on its official payroll. In addition, the Punjab government has even made substantial grants to the organization.⁶⁰

When we appreciate the important domestic role that LeT/JuD plays in helping to counter the Deobandi violence that has ravaged Pakistan, it logically follows that this organization will become more important as Pakistan's domestic security situation degrades. This suggests that no matter what happens vis-à-vis India, Pakistan is unlikely to put down this organization as long as it serves this important domestic political role.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE UNITED STATES

Implications of this evidence for LeT: It's not going away

The implications of my argument and new evidence are important and suggest strongly that international intervention to resolve Pakistan's outstanding dispute with India is unlikely to be a sufficient condition for Pakistan to abandon its reliance upon LeT/JuD. This is true despite the increasing threat the organization poses to international security and despite the fact that Pakistan will be held accountable for attacks perpetrated by the group. This is true despite the fact that an LeT/JuD attack in India may be one of the quickest route to an outright conflict with India. Needless to say an attack by the LeT/JuD on American soil would be a catastrophic game changer. While Pakistan's reliance upon LeT may be a risky proposition, JuD/LeT appears to have an enormous role in securing Pakistan's interests externally. Equally and perhaps more importantly, LeT secures a more primal state interest: internal cohesion and survivability of the state.

Can Pakistan Abandon Militancy as a Strategic Tool? Not Likely

Similarly, prospects are slim that Pakistan will be able to reverse course with its proxies who have turned against the state with devastating violence. This is in part because part of the Pakistan Taliban have important overlaps with groups which Pakistan still considers to be assets: namely, groups like JM who retain an interest in targeting India rather than Pakistan. Moreover, as the army's various attempted peace deals demonstrate, there remains a latent hope that these groups can be rehabilitated and realign with Pakistan's foreign interests. Pakistan's likely inability to counter the domestic threat comprehensively is also due in part due to Pakistan's shortcomings in countering those groups and individual commanders that they have taken on as enemies of the state. These shortcomings are evidenced in the armed forces, intelligence

agencies, police and other law enforcement entities, Pakistan's legal statutes, and other entities within Pakistan's rule of law system such as the judiciary.

It is important to understand that no state will act against its own self interests. Given that Pakistan is unlikely to be induced to abandon its reliance upon militancy under its nuclear umbrella for both external and internal reasons, the international community—including the United States—should abandon its Panglossian optimism that additional foreign assistance or security assistance will shift Pakistan's strategic calculus away from using LeT or other militants to service its internal and external goals. For Pakistan, LeT is an existential asset in the same way that it is an existential enemy for countries like India and even the United States. This suggests an urgent need to conceptualize and implement a robust *threat* containment strategy.

Mitigating the Threats? Limited But Important to Keep Trying

Containing Pakistan *per se* is not feasible nor is attempting to do so even desirable. Pakistan simply has many asymmetric options which the United States should consider heavily. Any serious consideration of options to contain Pakistan must be gamed, re-gamed and multiple levels of contingency plans must be formulated. This is an option that is fraught with danger and should be considered *only* as a last resort.

However, there are means of containing the *threats* that Pakistan pose even if containing the country is impossible. The United States, India, the United Kingdom and other states victimized by LeT and similar groups should forge closer cooperation on intelligence and counter-terrorism initiatives to interdict planned attacks and to identify and prosecute individuals after the fact. Such prosecutions will likely present evidence that will incriminate others who remain active in the organization, contributing to further efforts to downgrade their efficacy.⁶¹ Greater contacts must be forged with immigration, treasury and other government agencies in those states in North America, Europe, the Middle East, South and South East Asia that LeT/JuD uses for logistical purposes, movement of recruits into and out of Pakistan, transfers of funds, and other materials to sustain operations. The goal of these engagements is to deny Pakistani militant groups freedom of movement of all assets and disrupting potential cells and plots.

Because the Pakistani diaspora communities and converts to Islam remain important sources of financial support to LeT/JuD and recruits for operations,⁶² the U.S. and other governments will have to forge sensitive policies that consider the diaspora as an important source of insecurity while ensuring that innocent persons are not singled out without cause. This has been and will remain a delicate and fraught public policy issue.⁶³ How can governments forthrightly concede these threats without alienating Muslims at home, who are important sources of information that have helped deter potential attacks and catch those who have

successfully executed attacks? However, Pakistan's refusal to shut down militant training camps in Pakistan leave few options to states seeking to protect their citizenry and their allies from attacks by Pakistan-based groups or by individuals who have trained with such groups in Pakistan.

National and multi-lateral institutions (e.g. the U.S. Department of Treasury, the United Nations Security Council, the European Union) should work to target specific individuals within the militant organizations in question, as well as individuals within the Pakistani state found to be supporting these groups. Admittedly, the latter may be awkward. In the case of the UN Security Council (UNSC), this may mean working to forge coalitions with Pakistan's key supporter on the UNSC: China. More generally, the United States will have to reach out to Pakistan's friends—as well as foes—to forge a consensus on the best way to help Pakistan help itself. Indeed Washington will need to develop broad-based engagement strategy of all countries relevant to Pakistan (e.g. Iran, Saudi Arabia, UAE, China) to help forge a parallel if not convergent threat perception of Pakistan and develop policies to best address them.

Finally, while I understand that the United States is facing a severe budgetary crisis and while I understand that there is a long-simmering interest in “cutting off” Pakistan, these urges must be tempered. While it is true that financial and military assistance is not ever going to be adequate to alter Pakistan's threat perceptions and that Pakistan's military and intelligence agencies will seek to circumscribe U.S. engagement, the United States should make every effort to *intensify* and *expand* engagement after the demise of Bin Laden. U.S. interests endure well beyond his death whether securing resupply of U.S. and allied troops in Afghanistan, securing maximal visibility into and influence in Pakistan's oversight of its nuclear weapons, and of course the myriad militant groups operating in and from Pakistan.

Impact of Bin Laden's Death on Pakistan's Militant Landscape: Likely Little or None

Bin Laden's death does not dampen the domestic or external utility of LeT. His death will not temper the vicious violence of the Pakistan Taliban and their relentless attacks upon the Pakistan state. It may even encourage ever-more sophisticated violence from the TTP, which has ties to al Qaeda and the Haqqani network. (Haqqani has long been close to Bin Laden.) And of course Bin Laden's death does not affect enduring and long-term U.S. concerns about nuclear proliferation, security of peace-time positioning of Pakistan's nuclear weapons, mobilization during a crisis with India, command and control arrangement, much less the steepness of the escalation latter of an actual crisis with India among other salient concerns.

Staying the Course and Seeking New Opportunities

Despite all impulses to the contrary, the United States needs to stay the course and continue to invest in civilian institutions. The United States must make every effort—where possible—to invest in civilian-led security governance, provide technical and other support to empower Pakistan’s parliament to incrementally increase its ability to exert oversight of Pakistan’s defense and intelligence agencies. While a genuinely-civilian led Pakistan seems an impossible dream, any progress—however slim—will be important. Finding ways of providing meaningful support to Pakistan’s law enforcement agencies and judicial system remains a critical set of activities. Admittedly, access will be tough through the U.S. mission. Provincial assemblies also need technical skill training and other professional development. Perhaps U.N.D.P. (United Nations Development Program) is the best route for such activities such as strengthening Pakistan’s judicial system and national and provincial assembly.

Devolution may present new opportunities for engagement as each province may have specific needs and depending upon the program may be more receptive. Provincial planning councils and ministries offer new opportunities even if negotiating what devolution means will remain a medium-term challenge.

Needless to say, the ways in which the United States does aid programming is and has been deeply problematic for institutional and other reasons. USAID does not require Pakistani matching grants. Thus any allocation from USAID for development displaces the same amount in Pakistan’s budget. This allows Pakistan to be insouciant about the program as the appropriate organization has no incentive to care: Pakistan’s money is not on the line. While a detailed exposition of this concept is beyond the scope of this testimony; USAID’s chronic inability to deliver value needs to be re-evaluated. In fact, perhaps the Bin Laden event and the emerging rift with Pakistan may occasion an opportunity to re-optimize Kerry Lugar Berman. Such a concept of aid will allow Washington to do more with less and will avoid the costly and unproductive expenditures on programs for which there is no *financial* or organizational buy-in.

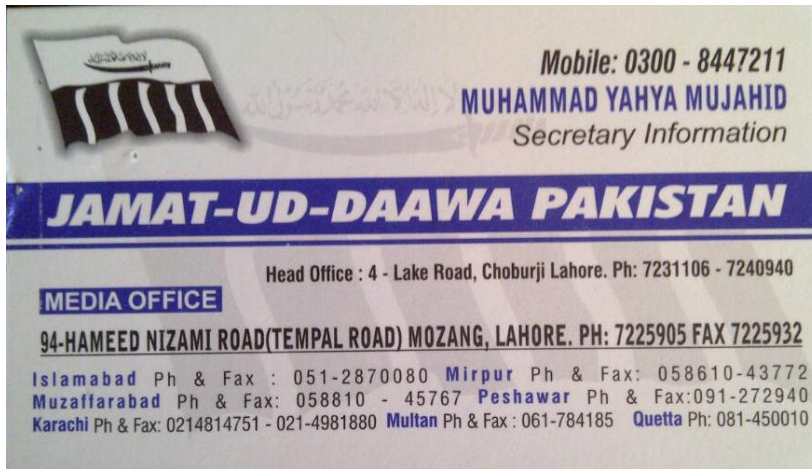
Finally, while it seems dismaying that the U.S. investment in Pakistan has not yielded hoped for security payoffs, this pessimism is not entirely justifiable. Had it not been for the investments thus far, the United States would not have been in the position to have the assets required to identify and neutralize Bin Laden as well as a host of other al Qaeda operatives. And, as Secretary of Defense Robert Gates has recently claimed, he has seen evidence that high level Pakistani officials did *not* know about Bin Laden’s whereabouts. The lamentable truth is that even if they had, the United States would make a catastrophic error in judgment in walking away as it will forfeit any opportunities to develop needed information on key concerns and it will forego any opportunity—even if limited—in helping to power civilian institutions in Pakistan.

All of these options seem inordinately difficult given the political priorities of the United States and other critical countries; however, other more feasible options simply do not appear to be available.

Figure 1. Summary of Militant Groups Operating in and From Pakistan

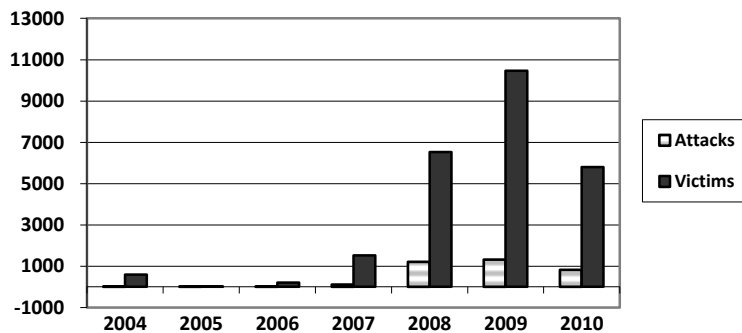
Group Name	Sectarian Background	Regional Activities	Overlapping Membership
Al Qaeda (in Pakistan):	Salafist	Facilitated attacks within and without Pakistan and has planned international attacks from safe havens in Pakistan.	TTP, Afghan Taliban, other Deobandi militant groups
Afghan Taliban	Deobandi	Wages insurgency in Afghanistan, enjoys safe havens in Pakistan.	TTP and other Deobandi militant groups, Al Qaeda
Jaish-e-Mohamed (Harkat-il-Jihad-Islam (JUJI), Harkat-ul-Ansar/Harkat-ul-Mujahedeen etc.)	Deobandi	Traditionally focused upon Indian-administered Kashmir, has operated in Afghanistan and continues to do so, factions have targeted the Pakistani state.	Al Qaeda, TTP, Afghan Taliban, Deobandi sectarian militant groups as well as JUI.
Sipha-e-Sahaba-Pakistan/ Lashkar-e-Jhangvi	Deobandi	Historically anti-Shia, has operated in Afghanistan for decades, currently targeting the Pakistani state with the TTP and allied groups.	TTP, Afghan Taliban, Al Qaeda, other Deobandi militant groups and JUI.
Hizbul Mujahedeen and al Badr	Jamaat-e-Islami	Indian administered Kashmir.	Jamaat-e-Islami
Tehreek-e-Taliban-e-Pakistan (TTP, Pakistani Taliban)	Deobandi	Targeting the Pakistani state with some commanders mobilizing fighters in Afghanistan	Afghan Taliban, Deobandi militant groups in Pakistan and possibly al Qaeda.
Lashkar-e-Taiba	Ahl-e-Hadith	Fights in Indian administered Kashmir and the Indian hinterland, limited out of theatre operations.	Historical links with al Qaeda. Al Qaeda members have been detained in LeT safe havens. Organizational ties to Al Qaeda remain controversial.

Figure 4. Business Card of Mr. Yayha Mujahid (c. 2004)



Source: Mr. Yayha Mujahid gave this card to the author in 2004.

Figure 3: Islamist Terrorist Attacks and Victims: January 1, 2004-December 31, 2010



Source: Worldwide Incident Tracking System, Combating Terrorism Center at West Point. Data accessed April 24, 2011. Like all datasets on violence, this too is not a comprehensive database. Thus one should not look at any one year, rather the trend over several years. Available at <https://wits.nctc.gov>.

Figure 4. Anti-Munafiqat Graffiti from the Pakistan Taliban in South Waziristan



Source: Author photograph from a Pakistan Taliban hideout captured by the Pakistan army in the Makeen Valley in South Waziristan, July 2011. This Pashto caption translates as “Don't indulge in *munafiqat* (hypocrisy) or you will be debased.” This inscription is believed to be written in blood by the Pakistan army, but the author cannot confirm this claim.

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³⁷ South Asia Terrorism Portal, "Lashkar-e-Toiba [sic]Army of the Pure."

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