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# Militant Recruitment in Pakistan: Implications for Al Qaeda and Other Organizations

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Despite Pakistan's extensive contribution to the global war on terrorism, many questions persist about the extent to which Al Qaeda and its associated outfits are currently operating within Pakistan. This article examines this issue by posing several empirical questions: (1) What are the general contours of militancy in Pakistan? (2) What motivates individuals to join specific Pakistan-based militant outfits? (3) By what means do groups recruit specific individuals? (4) What do these findings suggest for Al Qaeda operations in Pakistan? (5) What linkages exist between Pakistan-based organizations to Al Qaeda? These issues are addressed through regional fieldwork, extensive literature reviews, and consultation with numerous highly regarded analysts to South Asia. This article concludes that Al Qaeda likely does not have an explicit and dedicated recruiting infrastructure to recruit Pakistanis for its operations. Rather, Al Qaeda relies upon a web of informal relations with groups based in Pakistan to gain access to operational collaborators and individuals to execute attacks within Pakistan.

U.S. officials have publicly praised Pakistan's President Pervez Musharraf for providing unstinting support to the U.S.-led global war on terrorism.<sup>1</sup> Despite these public accolades, privately several questions loom regarding Islamabad's ability and intent to cooperate as fully as possible in the global war on terrorism. Observers within and without Pakistan are dubious that the Musharraf government is doing all that it can to deny neo-Taliban forces and Al Qaeda associates use of its territory as a staging ground for attacks in Afghanistan.<sup>2</sup> Strmecki articulated these varied concerns when he wrote, "Musharraf is a vital—but profoundly flawed—vehicle for such a [counter-terrorism] strategy."<sup>3</sup>

Given these reservations about Pakistan's commitment to the war on terrorism and the centrality of that state in degrading Al Qaeda, this essay examines the extent to which Al Qaeda and its associated outfits are currently operating within Pakistan. It does so by posing several empirical questions, specifically:

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- 1. What are the general contours of militancy in Pakistan?
- 2. What motivates individuals to join specific Pakistan-based militant outfits? (What are the supply-side constraints?)
- 3. By what means do groups recruit specific individuals? (What are the demand-side constraints?)
- 4. What do these findings suggest for Al Qaeda operations in Pakistan?
- 5. What are the linkages (if any) that bind Pakistan-based militant and other Islamist organization to Al Oaeda?

To answer these questions, this research combines regional fieldwork, extensive literature reviews, as well as consultation with numerous highly regarded analysts of South Asia.

Upon detailing the research methodology employed here and its limitations, each of the five questions is addressed. This research found that historically individuals in Pakistan have been drawn to militant outfits (tanzeems) mostly due to dynamics in the Indo-Pakistan security competition. However, many observers believe that this may be changing and suggested that the pervasive anti-U.S. sentiment may motivate new cadres to join militant outfits as well. This article's findings also suggest that Al Qaeda does not have an explicit and dedicated recruiting infrastructure to recruit Pakistanis for its operations. Rather, it relies on a web of informal relations with groups based in Pakistan to gain access to operational collaborators and individuals to execute attacks within Pakistan. This analysis concludes with a discussion of outstanding concerns, potential mitigation strategies, and key challenges to the United States in Pakistan in the near and longer terms.

## Methodology, Data, and Caveats

The majority of this research draws from a review of relevant literature and several rounds of field interviews with persons in Pakistan and the United States between 2001 and 2004. Individuals interviewed in Pakistan include journalists with established ties to militant organizations, high-level retired Pakistan Army officers, independent analysts, and retired civilian bureaucrats. The author also interacted with individuals from religious political parties as well as militant outfits. The author also met extensively with individuals from various think tanks in Pakistan as well as serving officers within the army and the principal intelligence organization, the Inter-Services Intelligence Directorate (ISI). Finally, the author engaged recognized U.S.-based South Asia experts to inform this study.

A key caveat of this analysis is that field research of this type often yields data that are limited in a number of respects. First, such methodology produces a small data set restricted to the views and opinions of persons identified by the author and solicited for this study. Second, the prevailing security situation within Pakistan precluded the author from visiting the interior areas, the tribal regions, and the major commercial hub of Karachi. Third, analysts often use different definitions when referring to Al Qaeda. Pakistani analysts tend to describe Al Qaeda more narrowly as being comprised of "Arab Afghans," rather than characterizing Al Qaeda as a global terror network. Consequently, Pakistanis interviewed may not believe Al Qaeda would recruit non-Arabs.<sup>4</sup> This likely influences the types of information elicited by field interviews.<sup>5</sup>

Executing fieldwork of this type is also challenged by the tendency among some analysts to conflate Al Qaeda and the Taliban and by the general lack of precision when discussing the presence of Al Qaeda in Pakistan. For example, some analysts posit linkages

between Al Qaeda and Pakistani groups but such writers rarely characterize the nature of these linkages. Do Pakistani organizations provide manpower for Al Qaeda? Do they provide logistical support such as transport and safe houses? Do they provide moral or ideological support? Understanding the type of functions that Al Qaeda seeks to mission with Pakistani operatives may cast light on Al Qaeda demand-side recruitment preferences, such as its level of confidence in Pakistani personnel and its assessment of their comparative capabilities. Where possible, this analysis describes what is meant by Al Qaeda's linkages with other Pakistani organizations and the types of support that it receives.

# Landscape of Militant Outfits: Instruments of Domestic and International Policy

Although it is not the objective of this essay to rehearse the well-established literature detailing the varied tanzeems' structure, leadership, end-strength, and objectives, it is worth making a few observations that are most relevant to this query into Al Qaeda in Pakistan. Within Pakistan, there are many types of militant organizations that operate with relative impunity and immunity from the apparatus of state. Analytically, there are several ways of delineating the various groups. One means of doing so is to segment them according to their political and religious objectives as well as their sectarian affiliation. Such a classification scheme yields the following groupings:

- Groups that have traditionally focused on Kashmir.<sup>8</sup> This category includes Deobandi organizations such as Jaish-e-Mohammad (JM), Harkat-ul-Ansar/Harkat-ul-Mujahideen (HuA/HuM); Ahle Hadith organizations such as Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT); and those groups under the influence of the Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) such as Al Badr and Hizbul Mujahideen (HM).
- Groups that have traditionally been sectarian in nature. These include the anti-Shi'a Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ) and Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan (SSP). Both are under the sway of the Deobandi organization Jamiat-e-Ulema Islami (JUI) and funded by wealthy Arab individuals and organizations. There are also Sh'ia sectarian groups who target Sunni Muslims and obtain funding from Iran.
- Anti-state, militant groups. Most prominent is the Muttahida (formerly Muhajir) Quami Movement (MQM) and its breakaway organizations and competitors who perpetrate violence aimed at the state in pursuit of their political objectives.

In the past, the sectarian and Kashmir-oriented groups tended to have distinct operational theaters and targeting objectives. Kashmir-oriented groups tended to operate in Indian-held Kashmir or within India proper. Sectarian groups tended to act against Shi'a persons and organizations within Pakistan. Historically they have seen each other as comrades. In recent years, these distinctions have become less clear with groups such as JM committing terrorist acts within Pakistan. Further, these groups often share overlapping membership. For example, LeJ cadres may also be affiliated with JM or JUI.<sup>9</sup>

Among groups that putatively isolate their activities to the Kashmir theater, they can be differentiated by their ethnic and national composition. Non-Pakistani militants who operate in Kashmir originate from a number of Arab, Southeast Asian, and Central Asian states. Among Pakistani militants can be found both those who are ethnically Kashmiri in addition to a broad swathe of non-Kashmiri persons who come from the Punjab, the Northwest Frontier Province, Baluchistan, and Sindh.<sup>10</sup>

Each of these groups has received state support in various guises over the years. Kashmir-focused outfits have enjoyed extensive and enduring patronage of the ISI and the Pakistan army. Sectarian groups have also been engaged by various state and central governments. The details of the SSP leader Azam Tariq are instructive. Azim Tariq was issued several non-bailable warrants for his sectarian terrorist activities. Nonetheless, he was allowed to run for a seat in the National Assembly from his jail cell. He was elected as a Minister of the National Assembly (MNA) until his assassination in October 2003. Reportedly, his tenure as an MNA was a quid pro quo for supporting Musharraf's candidate for prime minister, Zafarullah Khan Jamali.

Prior to the events of September 11, there were those in Pakistan who were ambivalent about the state's support for the Taliban and by extension, tacit acceptance of Al Qaeda. There were even those who were beginning to believe that there was little to be gained by fostering militant organizations to operate in Indian-held Kashmir and within the Indian hinterland given the expanding influence of Islamic obscurantists within Pakistan itself. In this regard, many in Pakistan believed that September 11 offered Pakistan a window of opportunity to reverse its longstanding Afghanistan policy that wrought disastrous consequence for Pakistan's battered civil society.

As a part of Musharraf's participation in the U.S.-led global war on terrorism, he undertook an extensive set of efforts to counter militancy within Pakistan. Many analysts agree that Islamabad's efforts have been effective to the degree that Pakistan has enforced its own restrictions. Recent rhetoric notwithstanding, there is no evidence to suggest that Pakistan has made a strategic decision to abandon militancy in Jammu and Kashmir.<sup>11</sup> Therefore, Islamabad will attempt to both maintain this reserve capability while seeking to restrict their activities to a threshold that will not prompt Indian, U.S., or other international response. It should also be noted that apart from somewhat improved bilateral atmospherics, little has emerged from this most recent thaw in Indo-Pakistani relations that suggests that Pakistan will move away from this policy of proxy war in the policy-relevant future.

Despite this strategic stasis toward instrumentalization of militancy, there has been some movement at the tactical level. Observers in Pakistan widely believe that terrorist recruitment in Pakistan has generally become more covert as Pakistan tries to both meet Washington's demands and the regime's perceived need to keep the militancy viable. The author's interlocutors generally concurred that Pakistan's episodic efforts to diminish the profiles of the various militant organizations have restricted their ability to raise funds, recruit personnel, and launch teams into Indian-held Kashmir.<sup>12</sup>

However, these functions have not been completely ceased. Rather, these varied activities have only been attenuated and Pakistan can reverse course at its discretion.

#### Motivations to Join Tanzeems in Pakistan

A number of interviewees believed that after September 11, more Pakistani youths are turning to religious groups to address their grievances—at least in part because of the regime's persistent attack on the credibility of civilian institutions and leadership. This religious revivalism could increase the base of potential sympathizers of Islamist and militant organizations who could in turn be recruited by tanzeems. Further, this trend has created an environment that is likely more favorable for the operations of such organizations.

Many interviewees also believed that several recent events and U.S. actions have motivated a deep sense of injustice and has occasioned deep anti-U.S. sentiment.<sup>13</sup> Key precipitants include the ongoing Israeli occupation; the wide-ranging perception that Israel acts with the support of the United States; and the failure to obtain a secure

Palestinian state. The belief that the United States buttresses the Gulf state monarchies and provides unstinting support to the Pakistani Army have also engendered cynicism and antipathy toward the United States and its claim to support democracy among wide swathes of the civilian polity.<sup>14</sup>

These antagonism towards the United States also stem from Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan, Pakistan's deepening dissatisfaction with the type of government that is emerging in Kabul, Operation Iraqi Freedom, as well as the possibility (however remote) that Musharraf may contribute Pakistani troops to the United States effort in Iraq. Another source of frustration with the United States arises from the widespread reporting of alleged U.S. operations within Pakistan (e.g., "hot pursuit" and FBI raids), which has prompted many to claim that President Musharraf has compromised Pakistan's sovereignty. This pervasive indignity among many strata of Pakistanis—including the elite—is compounded by U.S. domestic policy such as the INS registration requirement for Pakistanis. There are also reports that some of these issues (e.g., the invasion of Iraq, disappointment with U.S. efforts to rebuild Afghanistan) have "deepened ambivalence in the lower ranks of Pakistan's army and law enforcement agencies." If true, this could have an untoward impact on the willingness of such individuals to act against Al Qaeda, Taliban, or other militants and could even incline them to provide assistance to these organizations and their cadres.

Finally, the coalition of religious parties, the Mutahidda Majles-e-Amal (MMA)<sup>17</sup> obtains considerable support from its vociferous criticism of the United States, the Musharraf regime, the U.S.-led global war on terrorism and Pakistan's collaboration in that effort. The MMA has also been able to cash in on the popular condemnation levied against the actions of the Pakistan Army and security forces in South Waziristan Agency.<sup>18</sup> There can be little doubt that the MMA's rhetoric will foster an environment that is even more hospitable to militarism. Furthermore, as the MMA continues to consolidate its political power, the coalition of Islamists will persist in opposing all serious efforts to rehabilitate Pakistan domestically by blocking efforts to reform both the madaris (pl. of madrassah) and public schools, to disband militant organizations, to dismantle their infrastructure, and to restrict tanzeems' ability to raise funds.

#### Militant Recruitment: Techniques and Means

Persons interviewed for this study within the United States and Pakistan generally believed that individuals elected to join specific militant groups primarily based on sectarian affinity and the personality of the group's leadership. This suggests that a follower of the Deobandi School would likely join one of the numerous Deobandi groups such as JM and HuA/HuM. Those who are of the Ahl-e-Hadith tradition and who are interested in joining a militant group would likely join LeT. The popularity of specific cadres (e.g., Masood Azhar) as well the patronage of the state enjoyed by a given group and its leadership comprise significant supply side factors that influence the number of militants available for specific tanzeems.

Although the aforementioned factors surely matter, there is evidence that groups do proselytize suggesting that groups attempt to attract persons who do not necessarily share their ideological worldview. For example, Mohammad Rana contends that the majority of LeT recruits are from the Hanaffi (both Deobandi and Barelvi) traditions. Consistent with these proselytizing objectives, the first three weeks of LeT training involves rigorous instruction in Ahl-e-Hadith tradition and performance, which includes the particular physical discipline of offering prayer. This behavior of the LeT could be motivated by the fact that there are relatively few Ahl-e-Hadith adherents in Pakistan.

Tanzeems that either control mosques or those are affiliated with sympathetic Islamist groups with such control, recruit through particular imams or through existing mosque members. For example, JUI controls a number of mosques and madaris. JUI's support to HuA/HuM and JM is well known as is JUI's association with the sectarian groups, LeJ and SSP. For example, many officials of SSP, LeJ, and other sectarian groups are also office bearers of JUI. Many observers believe that these linkages were forged in Afghanistan, *not* Kashmir. And those sectarian groups are also office bearers of JUI.

Imams, religious leadership of a given mosque, may target parents to send their children to particular madaris for indoctrination. Once ensconced at the madrassah, the student may be recruited by affiliated tanzeems and enjoined to go to a designated camp for military training. Another method to attract potential militant manpower involves inviting specific speakers to address congregations at a mosque. (For example, the speaker may address various aspects of Indian perfidy and abuse in Kashmir.) Smaller meetings are subsequently arranged on related topics. This allows the organization to continue whittling down the potential pool of recruits both through supply-side and demand-side evaluations.<sup>21</sup>

JI must resort to alternative means to recruit potential manpower. This is because JI is supra-sectarian in nature. This means that JI tends not to control mosques, which are usually affiliated with a particular tradition. However, JI does control in some way or another approximately 800 madaris in Pakistan.<sup>22</sup> Interlocutors in Pakistan maintain that JI relies more heavily on other means to attract sympathizers and potential cadres for JI-affiliated tanzeems.<sup>23</sup> JI tends to make use of its extensive infrastructure for providing social services in the *kacchi abadi* (slums) to identify and attract manpower. It also relies on its party organization and other party-related networks. Assuredly, this mode of operating is not the exclusive purview of JI: Islamist and militant groups of various orientations make use of welfare facilities in the depressed, urbanized areas to find potential recruits.

Although the madaris of Pakistan have attracted much attention in recent years as comprising a major source of militant manpower, interlocutors in Pakistan emphasized that this problem has been overstated or not well characterized. For example, estimates of the actual number of these seminaries vary tremendously as does their potential share of the educational market. Singer, for instance, reports a figure of some 45,000 madaris.<sup>24</sup> The World Bank estimates that the madaris number some 10,000.<sup>25</sup> A second area that is rife with inadequate analysis is the provision of military training at the madaris. The World Bank estimated that of these 10,000 madaris, about 15 to 20 percent is thought to provide some military training. However, others dismiss the assertions that the madaris have played any role in military training or arms provision.<sup>26</sup> Third, the emphasis on the madaris have diminished the attention to the roll of public institutions: some interlocutors maintained that as much as 40 percent of militant manpower actually comes from Pakistan's public schools and higher education institutions.<sup>27</sup>

Finally, it should be noted that as a result of Pakistan's longstanding support of militant efforts, virtually every village has someone who served somewhere. As a result, recruitment has devolved to the "grass-roots" level. Interested parties can easily find someone who can facilitate the recruitment process.

#### Al Qaeda Recruitment in Pakistan

Most people interviewed believed that Al Qaeda did not have a dedicated infrastructure to recruit Pakistanis for Al Qaeda operations. In other words, Al Qaeda is not believed

to have assets dedicated to recruiting cadres in Pakistan for operational purposes. Rather, they believed Al Qaeda uses informal networks with Pakistani organizations to obtain logistical support as well as operational collaborators, as discussed earlier. Interviewees who addressed this topic were dubious that from the perspective of a demand for manpower Pakistanis have the human capital endowments that may be of interest to an organization like Al Qaeda. For example, many suggested that Pakistanis tend to know only Urdu (or another Pakistani language such as Pashto), and are provincial in their outlook (e.g., focused on Kashmir and India). It is important to note, however, that this assertion reflects the perceptions of the interviewees on what Al Qaeda seeks from its recruits and may be therefore limited in validity.<sup>28</sup>

Moreover, there is a widespread belief that Al Qaeda did not trust the Afghans and has little reason to trust Pakistanis either. The Arabs (e.g., Al Qaeda cadres) in Afghanistan were seen as dismissive and abusive of Afghans and regarded the Afghans as unsophisticated "hicks." Afghans, for their part, resented the imperiousness evinced by Al Qaeda in Afghanistan and felt increasingly exploited by them.<sup>29</sup> Similarly, Pakistanis returning from Afghanistan in the wake of U.S. military action did not have a positive experience with the Taliban or Al Qaeda: Pakistanis were often imprisoned, robbed, abandoned, and left to be massacred.<sup>30</sup>

One analyst interviewed believed that Pakistanis in the diaspora (e.g. the Gulf, Europe, and the United States) might be more attractive to Al Qaeda because such persons would likely have the skills and backgrounds (e.g., language skills, passports, ease with working in a variety of countries) that would be desirable for a transnational enterprise like Al Qaeda. The case of Khalid Sheikh Mohammad illustrates the potential value that diasporan Pakistanis may offer to Al Qaeda. Although most accounts refer to him as Kuwait-born, relatively few reports acknowledge that he was born to Pakistani Baluchis residing in Kuwait. His father began working in Kuwait as a trader. However, he became a respected preacher by the time Khalid Sheikh Mohammad was born.<sup>31</sup>

Although highly speculative, the particulars of the Khalid Sheikh Mohammad case suggest that perhaps Pakistan's large expatriate community in the Gulf and beyond may be attractive sources of manpower for organizations like Al Qaeda. Other examples of Pakistani diasporans include Sheikh Omar, the London School of Economics–educated high-ranking cadre of Jaish-e-Mohammed who was sentenced to death for the abduction and murder of Daniel Pearl. Suicide bombers Asif Mohammed Hanif and Omar Khan Sharif were also Pakistani diasporans born in the United Kingdom and traveled with British passports. These individuals were responsible for the suicide attack in May 2003 that killed three and wounded many at a Tel Aviv bar.<sup>32</sup>

Although Al Qaeda does not appear to have a dedicated recruiting infrastructure in Pakistan, the group's informal connections with other militant groups and Pakistani state organizations provide the group at least proxy assistance and support for their operations. However, there is not much clarity on how these relationships work. For example, the conflicting reports of Sheikh Khalid Mohammed's arrest highlight the potential links between Al Qaeda, the Pakistan Army, and Pakistani religious organizations. According to some reports, he was arrested along with an accomplice in the house of Ahmed Abdul Qudoos, the son of the leader of the JI women's league.<sup>33</sup> JI denied that this arrest occurred at the home of Qudoos.<sup>34</sup> Other reports suggest that Mohammad and his associates were arrested in the custody of a serving major in the Pakistan Army.<sup>35</sup> Numerous Pakistani analysts believe that the suspect was in fact kept by a serving major but was planted in the home of the JI women's league leader both in an attempt to cover up the direct role of this officer and to create political problems for the JI, which

is a key player in the MMA and an important source of opposition to the Musharraf regime.

What is clear is that the Pakistan Army admitted in September 2003 (nearly six months after the arrest) that several low- and mid-level army officers—including a lieutenant colonel—were arrested on charges of helping Khalid Sheikh Mohammad and maintaining links to "Islamic extremist groups." The Pakistan Army claims that Al Qaeda has no support in the military beyond this "tiny cell." Interviewees in Pakistan generally did not believe that Al Qaeda had a significant support base in the Pakistan Army. Nonetheless, it remains uncertain what level of support Al Qaeda does enjoy within the army and what forms this support may take.<sup>38</sup>

Al Qaeda continues to receive various levels of sustenance among the populace in key areas such as Waziristan and even the Punjab.<sup>39</sup> Matters are further complicated by the fact that since the October 2002 elections, the Northwest Frontier Province is controlled by the MMA, whose members adamantly oppose any central efforts to permit access by the Pakistan Army much less by U.S. forces.<sup>40</sup> The March 2002 arrest of Abu Zubaydah, along with number of Al Qaeda cadres from the Palestinian territories, Saudi Arabia, Syria, and Yemen, and in the Punjab city of Faisalabad also attest to the availability of Al Qaeda safe houses far beyond Pakistan's tribal areas. Significantly, Zubaydah and associates were reportedly captured in a LeT safe house, which suggests that some LeT cadres are facilitating Al Qaeda movements. 41 Al Qaeda has established cells in key cities such as Karachi and is obtaining operational collaborators there as well.<sup>42</sup> Although this issue will be explored at length in the next section, it is useful to note that the attack on the U.S. Consulate in Karachi (14 June 2002) is seen as "Khalid Sheikh Mohammad (i.e., Al Qaeda) in conception, and local in execution." Observers of incidents conceived by Al Qaeda in Karachi (e.g., the Daniel Pearl assault, the murder of several French engineers and the attack on the U.S. Consulate) believe that there is no structural link between Al Qaeda and the groups who are accused of executing the attack (JM, LeJ, and LeT).<sup>43</sup> Rather, as one analyst noted, "they are fighters in the same trench. Organizationally, they are not in the same network but they do things together because their cause is the same. [They] are a different organization, but [they] have the same mission."44 In the words of one senior Pakistani intelligence official ". . . Al Qaeda has subcontracted some operations, like the bombing of the French engineer and the U.S. Consulate, to these local groups."45

#### Al Qaeda's Relationships with Pakistani State and Non-State Actors

Data obtained from interviews in Pakistan and from the literature review points to the existence of ties between Al Qaeda and Pakistani Islamist and militant organizations. What has been less clear is the nature and extent of these ties: Do these ties include overlapping membership as with so many Pakistani and Islamist groups such as JUI, LeJ, and JM? Is such assistance limited to the provision of safe houses, transport, and other logistical support or does it also include operational assistance? Are these ties based on formal relationships or informal alliances? Are these ties with Al Qaeda direct or have they been primarily facilitated through their connections with the Taliban in Afghanistan?

This research has tried to characterize these relationships to the extent that data are available. Fieldwork in Pakistan and interviews with South Asia analysts suggest that these ties tend to be more informal. In other words, Pakistanis providing such assistance tend not to be recognized Al Qaeda cadres. Instead, Al Qaeda has a network of persons

who act as facilitators. As one Pakistani analyst suggested, "Some of Al Qaeda people or affiliates become guests of the activists of Pakistani Islamic parties to go underground, or their connections with Pakistani Islamic groups help them to find accommodation to live." Although their organizational structures are thought to be distinct, the activists of Al Qaeda and other tanzeems see each other as "comrades." Al Qaeda's connections with Pakistani groups enable Al Qaeda activists to become absorbed into Pakistani society.

In some cases, activists of Al Qaeda and other groups have shared training in the camps in Afghanistan. Cadres of Al Qaeda and Pakistani tanzeems also may have developed personal ties through marriage or other "intimate" relationships. 46 Sometimes the relationships are based on business interactions. For example, Al Qaeda may employ Pakistanis to run commercial enterprises in Pakistan. One analyst even suggested that there are individuals who have overlapping membership with Al Qaeda and other groups.

Most analysts in Pakistan believed that the Pakistan-based groups tend to be more deeply connected to the Taliban than to Al Qaeda. The Taliban acted as a catalyst to bring Al Qaeda cadres and Pakistan militant and Islamic organizations into contact. For example, JUI's Maulana Sami ul Haq claims that Osama bin Laden is a "good friend," but many interlocutors believed that this relationship was forged through the Taliban. Pakistani militants (*inter alia*, JM, HuM, SSP, LeJ) came into contact with Al Qaeda while sharing training camps in Khost and Kandahar. Because of this shared set of experiences, these groups have a greater affinity for the Taliban and Al Qaeda than groups without such common training opportunities. (Notably, LeT had their own camps and did not use Al Qaeda camps). Although connections between Al Qaeda and JM are rather transparent, there is considerable discordance among the available data on the type of linkages that exist between Al Qaeda and LeT. Persons interviewed in Pakistan and a prominent analyst of Pakistani security argued that LeT is less inclined *organizationally* to Al Qaeda (and the Taliban). However, this assertion is not buttressed by the secondary literature. O

To summarize the connections between Al Qaeda and the Pakistan-based groups, it is widely believed that Al Qaeda has connections (in terms of operational collaborators, political sympathy, and ideological support) from a broad swathe of Pakistani militant and Islamist groups, including: JI, JUI, LeJ, JM, and SSP, among others. Although there is some discord about the relationship between Al Qaeda and LeT, it is clear that at some level Al Qaeda is obtaining forms of assistance from LeT cadres, irrespective of whether or not this support is sanctioned at the various tiers of LeT leadership. However, the details of these ties remain unclear. Moreover, data were not available to illuminate details about monetary flows between and among Al Qaeda and the other groups apart from informal commercial arrangements. Similarly, convergence in targeting appears to be recent. Groups like JM and LeT have focused in the past on targets within Indian-held Kashmir and the Indian hinterland. Similarly, groups like LeJ and SSP have traditionally been sectarian (e.g. targeting Pakistani and Iranian Shi'a organizations). If these groups are serving as sub-contractors to Al Qaeda to act against western targets, this would be a relatively new development in targeting and mission objectives.

#### **Outstanding Concerns**

This article points to a number of persistent empirical questions. First, there is a great deal of ambiguity about current Al Qaeda operations in Pakistan and how the organization recruits new members and cultivates support in that country. Greater clarity on the nature

and extent of Al Qaeda's ties with Pakistan-based organizations would be very helpful in better characterizing Al Qaeda operations and assets in that country. Equally troubling is the current position and political cache of the coalition of religious parties, the MMA.

The MMA's growing influence in Pakistan has made madrassah reform nearly impossible and the party espouses a deeply anti-U.S. rhetoric that likely contributes to a more permissive atmosphere for militancy of various sorts. The MMA has vociferously objected to Pakistani and U.S. operations in the tribal areas to ferret out Al Qaeda and Taliban fugitives—despite knowledge that such persons are lodged in these areas.<sup>51</sup> Continued successful political evolution of the MMA could have deleterious consequences for the U.S.-led war on terrorism through encouraging militant recruitment, erecting operational barriers to Pakistani and U.S. forces seeking access to the tribal areas, and continuing to provide safe havens to Al Qaeda and Taliban fugitives.

Similarly, questions remain about the nature and depth of support that Al Qaeda enjoys among the Pakistan Army and ISI. Reports of arrests of army officers linked to Al Qaeda are both comforting –in that the government has chosen to arrest and charge them—but also disturbing in that such assistance is occurring at all.<sup>52</sup> Moreover, it remains far from clear what sort of legal consequences these individuals will bear. Many of those interviewed in Pakistan believed that Al Qaeda is not an asset to the Pakistan Army and in fact, has been the source of much trouble for Pakistan's Kashmir and Afghanistan strategies. Nonetheless, there are ongoing reports that antipathy toward the United States is growing among the lower ranks of the Army and the ISI. Whether or not Al Qaeda enjoys little support beyond these known maverick cells persists as an important, but perhaps unanswerable, question.

There are several structural reasons for anti-U.S. sentiment—apart from recent policies pursued by the United States. For example, during other related fieldwork, this author found that there is considerable resentment within the Pakistani army toward the United States because of the military cutoff following the invocation of sanctions after 1989. As a consequence, Pakistan could not access spare parts for its numerous U.S.-based platforms, rendering them inutile. The United States also chose to deny delivery of a fleet of F-16s which Pakistan purchased in full. Pakistan's participation in the U.S. International Military Education and Training (IMET) was similarly terminated after 1989. As a consequence, a new generation of young military officers has been raised without extensive contact with the United States. It is possible that the renewed military-to-military contacts between the United States and Pakistan may stem this deepening antipathy among lower-level Pakistani army officers.

Many researchers within the academic and policy arenas have sought to determine whether and to what degree the Pakistan army has evolved with respect to becoming "Islamicized," anti-U.S. in outlook, or sympathetic to Islamists. This remains a critical empirical question regarding Pakistan's internal security dynamics because the Pakistani army is the single most important power broker in that country and will likely remain so for the policy-relevant future.

Finally, there are many militant organizations in Pakistan—some of which have ties to Al Qaeda—that are operating and training freely in that country. Indian, Pakistani, and other sources attest to the stream of foreign militants, including those of Arab, Afghan, European, and American heritage who are training in camps throughout Pakistan. Few in Pakistan believe that this training and recruitment can continue without the active and passive support of the Pakistan army and intelligence apparatus. It is important to consider the possibility that Pakistan could become a focal destination for individuals seeking militant training now that the camps in Afghanistan have been shut down.

Whether or not this is possible depends to a great extent on what happens domestically in Pakistan. A Pakistan that continues to desire meaningful engagement with the United States will likely be motivated to continue its current efforts to calibrate the violence that emerges from these camps. Although *any* successor to Musharraf, either civilian or military, will likely cooperate to some extent with the United States because it is in Pakistan's interest to do so, such a successor may be less interested in working as closely with the United States. It is possible that such a future regime, vexed with the United States and India, would be more permissive toward the varied tanzeems. Given that Pakistan is (and will remain) a site of militant recruiting and training for South Asia and beyond, concerns about Pakistan's role in the war on terrorism merits further monitoring. *Even in the absence of dedicated Al Qaeda recruitment infrastructure in Pakistan*, there are many reasons to remain watchful of developments within this important—if deeply flawed—allied state in the war on terrorism.

### **Concluding Observations**

In retrospect, this study generally found that Al Qaeda does not have a specifically dedicated recruitment infrastructure to recruit Pakistanis for operations. However, it did find that Al Qaeda has a number of informal connections with several Pakistan-based militant groups such as LeJ, JM, SSP, and LeT. These connections have provided Al Qaeda access to logistical support as well as operational "sub-contractors." Although Pakistan has generally demonstrated a commitment to capturing and detaining Al Qaeda fugitives, ostensibly isolated instances have occurred wherein serving officers of the Pakistan Army have been involved in aiding and abetting these Al Qaeda operatives. However, questions persist as to whether these are in fact isolated instances or whether this is a deeper problem affecting larger numbers of Pakistan's Army, which is the most powerful and policy-relevant institution in that country.

This study also generally found that at least until now, militant recruitment in Pakistan has generally been driven by dynamics in the Indo-Pakistan security competition and by Pakistan's strategic interests in Afghanistan rather than global events. However, there are reasons to believe that this may be changing. There exists deep antipathy toward the United States and the West within Pakistan. Moreover, these anti-U.S. sentiments continue to develop and are exploited by various political formations within Pakistani domestic politics, such as the MMA. Consequently, many believe that this evolving and deepening sense of hostility toward the United States may encourage militant recruiting that more specifically targets the United States and its assets.

Finally, this study has argued that irrespective of the presence of Al Qaeda in Pakistan, there are number of policy questions that persist regarding Pakistan's ongoing support of militancy in Kashmir and the militant infrastructure that this demands. Pakistan has long offered its soil for training to foreign militants, as is evidenced both by Pakistani and Indian sources. This study suggests that Islamabad's continued support of militant training and operations raise a number concerns for the United States and its security interests that warrant sustained pressure on Islamabad to abandon its support of proxy warfare.

#### **Notes**

1. In January 2003, U.S. Ambassador to Pakistan, Nancy Powell, speaking in Karachi at meeting of the American Business Council of Pakistan in Karachi proclaimed that the ". . .

United States remains fully satisfied with and appreciative of Pakistan's unstinting support in the war against terrorism." See U.S. Embassy Islamabad, "Remarks by Ambassador Nancy Powell: The American Business Council of Pakistan," 23 January 2003. Available at (http://usembassy.state.gov/islamabad/wwwhamb03022101.html). Accessed 31 October 2003.

- 2. David Rohde, "Two Years Later: Islamic Ally," New York Times, 10 September 2003, sec. A.
- 3. Marin J. Strmecki, "Our Ally, Our Problem," National Review, 1 July 2002, pp. 16-17.
- 4. In Karachi there is a sizeable Arab population and Al Qaeda is believed to have a large presence in that city.
- 5. Similarly, for many Pakistanis, the term "Taliban" now describes a reconstituted Pakhtun militia that can be used to project Pakistani equities in Afghanistan and to ensure that Karzai faces continual challenges in consolidating power.
- 6. Arguably, *formal* agreements among the leadership of the groups differ substantially from *informal* agreements among cadres.
- 7. One of the more comprehensive and recent accounts of Pakistan's numerous groups is given by Amir Rana, "Jehad Inc.—Back in Business," *The Friday Times*, 16 January 2003 (Pakistan), and Jihad-e-Kashmir Aur Afghanistant (*The Jihad in Kashmir and Afghanistan*) (Lahore: Mashaal Books, 2002). See also Alexander Evans, "The Kashmir Insurgency: As Bad as it Gets," *Small Wars and Insurgencies* 11(1) (Spring 2000), pp. 69–81; Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment—South Asia, "Internal Affairs," 30 July 2003, available at Janes.com, last accessed 24 August 2003; S. V. R. Nasr, "The Rise of Sunni Militancy in Pakistan: The Changing Role of Islamism and the Ulama in Society and Politics," *Modern Asian Studies* 34(1) (2000), pp. 139–180; Vali Nasr, "International Politics, Domestic Imperatives, and Identity Mobilization," *Comparative Politics* 30(2) (January 2000), pp. 171–190; Muhammad Qasim Zaman, "Sectarianism in Pakistan: The Radicalization of Shi'I and Sunni Identities," *Modern Asian Studies* 32(3) (1998), pp. 689–716.
- 8. It is not the objective of this article to exposit the various reasons why the Kashmir problem is so contentious. For those who are interested in following this issue more closely, there are a number of excellent resources. See for example, Alexander Evans, "The Kashmir Insurgency," Sumit Ganguly, *The Crisis in Kashmir* (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); Sumantra Bose, *The Challenge in Kashmir: Democracy, Self-Determination and a Just Peace* (New Delhi: Sage, 1997); Robert Wirsing, *India, Pakistan and the Kashmir Dispute* (London: Macmillan, 1994); Ashutosh Varshney, "India, Pakistan and Kashmir: Antinomies of Nationalism," *Asian Survey* (November 1991), pp. 997–1019; and Jonah Blank, "Kashmir–Fundamentalism Takes Root," *Foreign Affairs* 78(6) (November/December 1999), pp. 36–42.
- 9. See the Urdu language book by Rana, *Jihad-e-Kashmir Aur Afghanistan (The Jihad in Kashmir and Afghanistan)*. This text, in Urdu, is an encyclopedic treatment of Islamist groups in Pakistan.
  - 10. Ibid.
- 11. In November 2003, the Pakistan government issued new proscriptions on several militant outfits that reorganized under new names following the government's 2002 ban on their operations. See Zaffer Abbas, "Inaction Replay," *The Herald,* December 2003, pp. 55–59. Notably, the new incarnation of LeT was not banned; rather, it was put on a watch list. It remains to be seen what effect this recent crackdown will have. Observers and analysts interviewed in Pakistan in February and March 2004 did believe that this recent round has had consequences for several groups operating in Kashmir, such as JM and LeT. One interlocutor also believed that the government of Pakistan had taken a change in policy to support those groups that are more Kashmiri in composition, such as Al Badr and HM and to diminish support for others such as JM and LeT.
- 12. For more information about launching teams into Indian-held Kashmir and the changes that have occurred with respect to team size and the number of teams launched, see the two articles by Ilyas Khan: "The Waiting Game," *The Herald*, July 2003, pp. 36–41 and "Business as Usual," *The Herald*, July 2003, pp. 38–39.

- 13. See the results from the most recent survey executed by Pew: In 1999/2000 23 percent of Pakistani respondents had a favorable view of the United States. In 2002, this figure slipped to 10 percent [The Pew Research Center for the People and the Press, "What the World Thinks 2002," available at (http://people-press.org/reports/pdf/165.pdf)]. Also see the results of a *Herald-Gallup* poll in August 2003. The vast majority of respondents indicated that they feel "Pain" (47%) and "Anger" (38%) about the war in Iraq. Moreover, when asked how they would describe their reaction to U.S. strikes on Iraq, 69 percent said that they would "Hurt America where possible," compared to 39 percent who said that they would engage in "quiet protest." Only 4 percent said that they would remain inactive. No respondent indicated that they supported the U.S. (*The Herald*, "America vs. The World," April 2003, pp. 36–41; The Gallup Organization, "The 2002 Gallup Poll of the Islamic World?," available at (http://www.gallup.com/poll/summits/islam.asp), last accessed 5 November 2003).
  - 14. Fieldwork in Pakistan, January 2003 and July/August 2003.
- 15. This policy enforces the requirement for INS registration for citizens of 24 Muslim countries and North Korea who are residing in the United States.
- 16. David Rohde, "Threats and Responses: The Captive; U.S. Pressing to Get Suspect Tied to Qaeda from Pakistan," *The New York Times*, 16 September 20001, sec. A.
- 17. In the October 2002 elections, the alliance of religious parties, the Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal (MMA) won the provincial assembly of the NWFP and is sharing power with the King's Party (PML-Q) in Baluchistan. The MMA is comprised of the following. These groups include: Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI)—Fezlur Rehman Faction; Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI)—Sami Ul Haq Faction; Jamaat-i-Islami (JI), headed by Qazi Hussain; Jamiat Ulema-e-Pakistan (JUP), headed by Shah Ahmed Noorani; Jamiat Ahle Hadith (JAH), headed by Sajid Mir; Islami Tehreek Pakistan, ITP, a Shi'a organization led by Syed Sajjad Naqvi. See Khan, "Inside the MMA," *The Herald*, 22 November 2002, pp. 44b–47; and I. Khan and A. Khan, "Meet the Maulanas," *The Herald*, 22 November 2002.
- 18. Ilyas Khan, "Inside Waziristan," *The Herald*, March 2004, pp. 60–65; and Hasan-Askari Rizvi, "Political Parties and Wana Operation," *The Daily Tlmes*, 7 May 2004. Available at (http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default/asp?page=story\_29-3-2004\_pg3\_2), last accessed 7 May 2004.
  - 19. Rana, Jihad-e-Kashmir Aur Afghanistan.
- 20. Praveen Swami, "A peacemaker from Pakistan," *Frontline Inline* 20(16) (2–15 August 2003). Available at (http://www.frontlineonnet.com/fl2016/stories/20030815006603100.htm). Accessed 6 November 2003. Informants interviewed in Pakistan in July/August 2003 also held this view.
- 21. Supply-side determinants may include determination that the potential recruit decides that the particular tanzeem is not appropriate or that the type of action suggested is not suitable for the individual. Demand-side factors include the tanzeem's evaluation of a particular individual and the determination that he lacks the desired skill set, mindset, and motivation.
  - 22. Rana, Jihad-e-Kashmir Aur Afghanistan (The Jihad in Kashmir and Afghanistan).
- 23. These groups include HM and Al Badr. Whereas Pakistani interlocutors maintain the command and control arrangements are not direct between JUI and the militant groups its supports, HM and Al Badr functions according to the decisions and principles of JI. (Rana, *Jihad-e-Kashmir Aur Afghanistan.*)
- 24. P. W. Singer, *Pakistan's Madrassahs: Ensuring a System of Education not Jihad* (Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution, 2001).
- 25. Nadeem Malik, "15 to 20 pc Madaris Impart Military Training: WB," *The News International*, 2 August 2002; "Editorial, Retreating on the Madrassas," *The Daily Times*, 5 August 2002; International Crisis Group, "Pakistan: Madrasas, Extremism and the Military"; Robert Looney, "Strategic Insight—A U.S. Strategy for Achieving Stability in Pakistan: Expanding Educational Opportunities" (September 2, 2002), available at (http://www.ccc.nps.navy.mil/rsepResources/si/sept02/southAsia.asp) (accessed 30 April 2003).
- 26. Malik, "15 to 20 pc Madaris Impart Military Training: WB"; *The Daily Times*, 2002. International Crisis Group, "Pakistan: Madrasas, Extremism and the Military"; Looney, "Strategic Insight—A U.S. Strategy for Achieving Stability in Pakistan: Expanding Educational Opportunities."

- 27. Rana, Jihad-e-Kashmir Aur Afghanistan.
- 28. There are no other open-source treatments of this issue available to the author. These assertions do not seem at face value to be implausible. This author would counter that the universities of Pakistan have been a demonstrated place of militant recruitment at least with respect to the Kashmir and Afghan conflicts. It is possible that the universities could also offer Al Qaeda potential recruits as they have elsewhere such as in Malaysia.
- 29. Mohamad Bazzi, "Afghan Hatred of Arabs High," *Long Island Newsday*, 20 November 2001; Alan Cullison and Andrew Higgens, "Strained Alliance: al-Qa'ida's sour days in Afghanistan," *The Wall Street Journal (Eastern Edition)*, 2 August 20902.
- 30. Victor Mallet, "Taliban Supporters Return Home to Pakistan," *Financial Times*, 14 December 2001; and Luke Harding and Rory McCarthy, "Hundreds of Pakistanis believed massacred Alliance shoots troops Taliban left behind," *The Guardian*, 13 November 2001.
- 31. Peter Finn and Kamran Khan, "Bold Tracks of Terrorism's Mastermind; Khalid Sheikh ohammad Carried al-Qa'ida 's Hope for Revenge, Renewal," *The Washington Post*, 9 March 2003, sec. 1, p. A01.
- 32. Chris McGreal and Conal Urquhart, "The British suicide bombers: Officials say passports of attacker who died and accomplice on run show they travelled to kill," 1 May 2003. Available at (http://www.guardian.co.uk/israel/Story/0,2763,947080,00.html) (accessed 7 November 2003).
- 33. *The News International*, "Khalid Sheikh under FBI interrogation," 3 March 2003, available at (http://www.jang.com.pk/thenews/mar2003-daily/03-03-2003/main/main2.htm) (accessed 5 November 2003); *The Guardian*, "Bin Ladin Alive, Says Captured Leader," 6 March 2003, available at (http://www.guardian.co.uk/print/0,3858,4619624-103595,00.html) (accessed 5 November 2003); Abrar Saeed, "Top al-Qaeda operative arrested in Pindi," *The Nation*, 2 March 2003. Available at (http://www.nation.com.pk/daily/mar-2003/2/main/top1.asp) (accessed 28 September 2003).
- 34. Deutsche Presse-Agentur, "Pakistan's Islamic party denies links with al-Qaeda," 5 March 2003.
- 35. Tim McGirk and Hanna Bloch, "Has Pakistan Tamed its Spies?," *Time* Magazine, 6 Macy 2003, p. 32. Some accounts allege this individual was a colonel.
- 36. Rohde, "Two Years Later: Islamic Ally"; Ahmed Rashid, "Pakistan army officers arrested in terror swoop," *The Telegraph*, 1 September 2003. Available at (http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml=/news/2003/09/01/wpak01.xml) (accessed 5 November 2003).
  - 37. McGirk and Bloch, "Has Pakistan Tamed its Spies?"
- 38. Interlocutors interviewed in February and March 2003 in Islamabad and Peshawar were of the belief that this was indeed an unusual cell and did not likely suggest deeper army support.
- 39. Views expressed by Norbert Van Heyst, the outgoing commander of the NATO peace-keeping force in Kabul; Tim McGirk et al., "Is Pakistan A Friend or a Foe?" *Time Magazine*, 29 September 2003, p. 34. See also Ilyas Khan, "Inside Waziristan." According to McGirk et al., "In These Remote Hills, a Resurgent al-Qaeda: Locals Say Bin Laden's Group is Tying Up With the Taliban to Threaten U.S. Troops." *Time Magazine*, September 22, 2003, p. 36. Waziris openly admit to harboring Al Qaeda fugitives. One Waziri doctor reported that dozens of Chechens and Uzbek al-Qa'ida cadres fled with their families to South Waziristan upon the demise of the Taliban where they reportedly trade labor for room and board. Other observers have commented on the ability of Al Qaeda (as well as the Taliban) to regroup on the Pakistan side of the border to launch attacks within Afghanistan.
  - 40. McGirk and Bloch, "Has Pakistan Tamed its Spies?"
- 41. Karl Vick, "The Terrorists Next Door; al-Qa'ida Suspects Posed as Traders Before Capture in Pakistan," *Washington Post*, 4 April 2002, sec. A. U.S. Department of State, *Patterns of Global Terrorism*, 2002, April 2003.
- 42. According to one U.S. journalist reporting on the arrest of Ramzi bin al-Shibh, several Al Qaeda cells were disrupted in Karachi. These cells reportedly were comprised of three to five persons. Pakistani officials also claimed that a number of other Pakistani militant groups such as HuM, JM, and LeJ had established similar cells and were working in tandem with Al Qaeda. See Rohde, "Threats and Responses."

- 43. Reporting on the actual perpetrators of these attacks has been unclear and perhaps even unreliable. Some reports suggest that JM, LeJ, and LeT formed a new alliance called Lashkar-e-Omar. This new coalition allegedly carried out the attack on the U.S. Consulate, the murder of the French engineers and the death of Daniel Pearl (see Dexter Filkins, "Pressure on Musharraf: Anti-West Forces Brew," *The New York Times*, 15 June 2002, sec. A, and "Al-Qa'ida Paid for Car Bomb at U.S. Office, Pakistani Says," *The New York Times*, 3 July 2002, sec. A. Pakistani interviewees are dubious. They believe that the government of Pakistan has sought to inculpate LeJ in this and other attacks to justify crackdowns against this sectarian organization.
- 44. Interview with a U.S.-based Pakistani national who is a widely respected observer of Pakistani internal affairs, in October 2003.
  - 45. Filkins, "Al-Qa'ida Paid for Car Bomb at U.S. Office."
- 46. There is widespread belief in Pakistan that there are bonds of physical affection among militants. There are no secondary sources available to this author to confirm or disconfirm this assertion.
- 47. Daniel Del Castillo, "Pakistan's Islamic Colleges Provide the Taliban's Spiritual Fire," *Chronicle of Higher Education* 48(5) (28 September 2001), p. A19.
  - 48. McGirk and Bloch, "Has Pakistan Tamed its Spies?"
- 49. Several interviewees believed that dissonance arises from the fact that LeT is a staunch Ahl-e-Hadith organization and has a strong proselytizing component—as described earlier. Many interlocutors believed that as LeT is Kashmir-focused, it is "hostile" or "antagonistic" to Deobandis and Al Qaeda. Further, the leader of LeT, Hafeez Saeed has sought to differentiate LeT from Al Qaeda. "All operations by Kashmiris under Lashkar-e-Taiba's command have been carried out against the Indian Army with the sole purpose of protecting the local population from repression . . . we may differ with U.S. policy, and that is our right, but we do not mean any harm to any U.S. citizen or property." (John F. Burns, "A National Challenged: Pakistan," *The New York Times*, 24 December 2001, sec. A).
- 50. While LeT adheres to its Ahl-e-Hadith principles staunchly, this ideology is not dissimilar from that of the Wahabbi belief system that animates Al Qaeda. Amir Mohammad Rana, who wrote an extensive inventory of jihadi groups operating in Pakistan, maintains that LeT and Al Qaeda have such linkages.
  - 51. See Ilyas Khan, "Inside Waziristan."
- 52. Rohde, "Two Years Later: Islamic Ally." Rashid, "Pakistan army officers arrested in terror swoop."
- 53. Rabasa et al., The Muslim World and the United States After 9/11 and the Iraq War (Santa Monica: RAND, forthcoming).

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