



HEARING OF THE MIDDLE EAST AND SOUTH ASIA SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE HOUSE FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

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WASHINGTON, D.C.

CHAIRED BY: REP. GARY ACKERMAN (D-NY)

WITNESSES:

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

With a team of 10 well-armed terrorists, a carefully coordinated plan of attack, and a team of controllers back in Pakistan in constant communication with the terrorist attack team, the LeT in three days killed 173 innocent people, wounded 308 others, and grabbed hold of the entire world's attention. Communications intercepts that have been made public by the government of India include an attack controller broadcasting about the carnage in Mumbai, "this is just the trailer," he said. "The main movie is yet to come." We need to take this threat very, very seriously. The LeT is a deadly serious group of fanatics. They are well financed, ambitious, and most disturbingly, both tolerated by, and connected to, the Pakistani military. The same Pakistani military to which we are selling advanced arms, the same Pakistani military that objected so bitterly to legislation this Congress passed to provide a massive \$7.5 billion plus-up in American assistance to their country, Pakistan, because our accompanying language with all that money suggests that Pakistan's military should be answerable to a democratically elected government.

Lashkar-e-Taiba, which means "the army of the righteous" or "the army of the pure" was set up with help from the Pakistani military as a proxy weapon for use in Jammu and Kashmir, parts of India that Pakistan has contested since partition in 1947. After 9/11, Pakistan officially banned the LeT, but the reality is that like other Islamist terrorist groups, LeT maintains a clear public presence and a vast recruiting network by providing extremely useful charitable and social services to millions of impoverished people of Pakistan. Public estimates suggest LeT operates some 2,000 offices in towns and villages throughout Pakistan, as well as maintaining ties with the Pakistani military. There is, in fact, no reason to doubt that Pakistan's military is likely paying compensation to the families of the terrorists killed in the Mumbai attacks. These are our allies in the war on terror.

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

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

There is a temptation to think that the LeT is really India's problem, that the LeT is just interested in the so-called "liberation" of Jammu and Kashmir. While it's true that the

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primary area of operations for the LeT has historically been the Kashmir Valley and the Jammu region, the LeT has also undertaken repeated and numerous mass casualty attacks throughout India and, in particular, directed at the Indian government. But the idea that this group can be appeased on the subject of Kashmir is dangerous nonsense.

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

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

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

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

Ranking Member?

REP. DAN BURTON (R-IN). Thank you Mr. Chairman and thanks for calling this hearing today so we can examine the ongoing struggle of Pakistan to deal with radical militants seeking to undermine Pakistan's government and threaten regional efforts to bring stability and peace to Pakistan, as well as Afghanistan.

For a very long time, I have been a champion of Pakistan and a co-chairman of the Pakistani Caucus in Congress because I fundamentally believe that a stable, democratic, and prosperous Pakistan is vital to our interests. And I'm extremely concerned, as are many other members of the committee about the increasingly negative news reports coming out of Pakistan.

A new threat has emerged within Pakistan and may perhaps be more powerful and dangerous than al Qaeda and that's the LeT you talked about. It's proven in recent years that it's strong well organized and well resourced as a terrorist organization. LeT's growing influence has serious implications for regional, national, and international security interests. As we all know, Pakistan has a nuclear arsenal, which would pose a great threat to the entire region, should it fall under the control of the extremists.

Since the LeT's most famous attack, the 2008 incident at Mumbai, we have seen LeT expand its stated objectives of liberating Kashmir to an embrace of global jihad against the West. In

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my opinion, resolving the dispute on Kashmir should be a crucial component of any military plan to defeat the militants and stabilize Pakistan.

I do not know how the problem in Kashmir will ultimately be solved; however, I personally believe that the people of Kashmir should be given the plebiscite that they were promised by the United Nations back in the '40s. I have been a very strong supporter of a plebiscite on Kashmir and to let the Kashmiri people have the voice that they should have for a long time. And there've been thousands and thousands of Indian troops up there in that region, imposing what in effect is martial law and it's been a real problem. And I talked to President Musharraf and Prime Minister Singh about this when I was over there not long ago, and they came close to finding a compromise when they presented a proposal to pull the troops out of the cities and open crossings between India controlled Kashmir and Pakistan controlled Kashmir and allow the people to largely govern themselves. If this effort had been successful, I wonder if we'd be looking at a different Pakistan today.

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

Nevertheless, the immediate problem is confronting and destroying terrorist groups like al Qaeda and LeT before they can bring down another -- either the Afghan or Pakistani government and once again allow the region of the world to become a base for terrorists who want to kill as many of the people they possibly can. It gets no clearer than that.

Much like our efforts to eliminate al Qaeda tough, eliminating LeT has proven to be a very daunting task as LeT enjoys a stronghold, as the Chairman said, and safe haven in parts of Pakistan.

Furthermore, as Jeremy Kahn, author of the recent Newsweek article "The Next Al Qaeda" pointed out, LeT's parent organization has developed a large charity arm that is popular in both Punjab and Kashmir, where it runs schools and ambulance service, mobile clinics, and blood banks. It earned tremendous good will in Kashmir providing assistance after the 2005 earthquake. And I was over there and saw some of the damage it was done.

As Kahn warns in his article, moving against it could provoke civil unrest or even civil war. And that's why I think it's important that in addition to the problems we face in Afghanistan and Pakistan with the Taliban and al Qaeda, that we really take a hard look, along with our allies, Pakistan and India, in trying to resolve this problem of Pakistan and Kashmir and Punjab as a way of maybe deemphasizing this problem and maybe slowing down the terrorist threat that is posed by LeT.

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Clearly, that's no easy task, but we can't shy away from it as the stakes are too far, too far high. As Pakistan goes, so goes Afghanistan. And while I disagree with the president on many foreign and domestic policy questions, I do believe that President Obama was right a few months ago when he declared the conflict in Afghanistan is not a war of choice. This is a war of necessity. This is a fundamental to the defense of our people.

I believe the president's also right to treat Afghanistan and Pakistan as one conflict. A destabilized Pakistan can only lead to a destabilized Afghanistan because the threat in Afghanistan feeds off the threat in Pakistan and vice versa.

Victory is definitely possible, but it's not going to be easy. There's nothing easy about war and this is especially true in these types of counterinsurgency efforts. These efforts require our troops to get out and do everything they can to gain the support of the populace and help them to rebuild. However, if we and our allies, including the governments of Afghanistan and Pakistan, go all in and do what's required, we could still win.

I look forward to hearing from our expert witnesses regarding what they feel is the winning formula for success, but I want to emphasize one more time and I realize that I've gone over my time, Mr. Chairman, and that is that I've been working on this Kashmir and Punjab issue for years now. Even you and I have had some debates on it over the years. And I don't believe we're ever going to solve that problem up there in Kashmir until India and Pakistan sit down together and say, "what can we do to solve the problems so that people in Kashmir feel like they have a legitimate voice as was promised to them in the '40s, late '40s?" And if we can get them to do that and include in the discussions the people from Kashmir, I think that we can defang in large part the LeT, which is becoming a bigger threat.

And with that, thank you, Mr. Chairman.

REP. ACKERMAN: Thank you, Ranking Member. We'll proceed now to introducing our distinguished panel.

Dr. Marvin Weinbaum is a scholar and resident at the Middle East Institute. Previously Dr. Weinbaum was an analyst in the Bureau of Intelligence and Research at the Department of State, where he focused on Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Dr. Weinbaum has also been director of the South Asian and Middle Eastern studies program at the University of Illinois, senior fellow at the U.S. Institute of Peace, and has held the Fulbright research fellowships in Afghanistan and Egypt.

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

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Dr. Ashley Tellis is a senior associate at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. Commissioned to the Foreign Service, Dr. Tellis served as senior advisor to both the U.S. ambassador in New Delhi and to Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Nick Burns, as well as serving on the National Security Council staff as a special assistant to the president and senior director for strategic planning in South Asia.

Prior to his government service, Dr. Tellis was a senior policy analyst at the RAND Corporation.

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

I want to thank our panel for being with us today.

REP. BURTON: Chairman, before we go to our panel, our colleague from California just came in. He has a short opening statement he'd like to make if it's all right with you, sir.

REP. ACKERMAN: Well, he could make it, as longer statement that he has.

REP. BURTON: That's very kind of you. Mr. Wilson -- Mr. Royce.

REP. EDWARD ROYCE (R-CA): Thank you. Sitting in Mr. Wilson's chair.

I want to thank you, Mr. Chairman, for calling this hearing. Al Qaeda has been our focus since 9/11 and the LeT, the Pakistani based jihadist group that carried out the days long rampage in Mumbai, India, demands our attention.

We'll hear words today on the threat from the LeT, but nothing more powerfully presents the case, than a recent documentary "Terror in Mumbai." For those of you who've not seen it, I really suggest you do because there you see the terrorists and you hear their words as they receive instructions from the controller safe in Pakistan. You hear the handler anxious for the terrorists to hit the Jewish Cultural Center. Quote, "every person you kill where you are is worth 50 of the ones killed elsewhere," end quote.

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

Given LeT's deep roots within Pakistani security services and its popular charity services, Pakistan is in a delicate dance, quote, "with a Frankenstein of its own making," notes a former top counterterrorism official.

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Reading today's testimony, it's clear that another Mumbai could happen again, along with all accompanying intentions of two nuclear armed rivals that that would bring. But this isn't just India's problem. Mr. Chairman, Frankenstein is going global. The director of National Intelligence just testified that LeT is quote, "becoming more of a direct threat and placing Western targets in Europe in its sights," unquote.

Disturbingly, an American citizen was at the heart of the Mumbai attacks. He's now waiting trial. Reportedly, a captured LeT laptop contained a list of 320 potential targets, many outside India. How many American targets?

As Lisa Curtis will testify this afternoon, quote, "overlooking the activities of LeT in Pakistan is equivalent to standing next to a ticking time bomb, waiting for it to explode," unquote, Mr. Chairman, the clock is running and I thank you for holding this hearing.

I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

REP. ACKERMAN: Thank you very much. We're joined by Mr. Bilirakis.

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

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

The LeT involvement in the Mumbai bombings in late 2008 and their growing involvement in attacks on the West necessitate that Pakistani government end all ties with these terrorist groups and work to eliminate the threat they pose to the West.

In light of these challenges, I look forward to hearing what the panel has to say about the threat of the LeT and their suggestions for how this threat should be addressed.

Again, I thank you for your testimony this afternoon. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back the balance of my time.

REP. ACKERMAN: We will now go directly to our previously introduced panel. Dr. Weinbaum.

MARVIN WEINBAUM: Thank you. Lashkar-e-Taiba has evolved from being from being a government-sponsored Pakistani jihadi group dedicated to the insurgency in Indian

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Kashmir into a terrorist organization with regional and global ambitions and reach. In the U.S.'s focus on al Qaeda it's failed to take into full account of the presence of other organizations capable of surpassing and replacing al Qaeda as a terrorist threat worldwide.

LeT is probably the leading candidate for such a role. It exceeds al Qaeda in its capacity for recruitment and fundraising across the Islamic world. Unlike al Qaeda, LeT has strong societal roots and enjoys the protection of the institutions of a state.

LeT is determined to use violent means to inflict damage on American and Western interests internationally. Despite its transnational views that envision the emergence of a caliphate across the Islamic world, the organization champions militant Pakistani nationalism and thrives on its association with domestic charitable activities.

LeT was originally the offspring of a group called Markaz-al- Dawa-wal-Irshad, which was founded in the early 1980s by a Palestinian, who was for a time at least an ideological mentor to Osama bin Laden. This parent organization created a militant wing, which was the LeT, in 1990. LeT was principally designed to provide Pakistan's military with a proxy force of recruited fighters to augment the Islamic insurgency in Indian Kashmir. But by the late 1990s, LeT was engaged as well in training Islamic militants in Afghanistan and Pakistan, militants coming from countries ranging from Egypt to the Philippines. In 2001, when its parent organization changed its name to Jamaat-ud-Dawa and LeT, the following year, was banned by the Pakistan government, it simply folded itself into the charity organization.

The organization directs a wide network of social services and institutions, including madrassas, secondary schools, and major medical mission. It receives funding from mosque collections, expatriate Pakistanis in the Gulf and Britain, Islamic NGOs, and Pakistani and Kashmiri businessmen. Like other extremist and militant organizations it also draws money from drugs and smuggling. There are suspicions that it gets direct financial assistance from Pakistan military's Inter-Services Intelligence agency as well.

When Pakistani, in 2002, curtailed its assistance to Pakistani insurgents after a U.S. brokered cease-fire that year in Kashmir, the organization, with the knowledge of the ISI, shifted most of its training camps and militant operations to the western border with Afghanistan. Despite the government's ban of LeT, Pakistan's ISI continues to consider the organization an asset. The ISI is believed to share intelligence and provide protection for LeT.

We could talk about if we have time Muhammad Saeed and his virtual impunity and what that demonstrates. Let me say that there has been reciprocation on the part of LeT and that is refrain from involvement in attacks against the Pakistan army and against Pakistan civilians. In fact, although it is very definitely part of the terrorist network, which includes the Tehriq-e-Taliban, the Pakistani Taliban and al Qaeda and the Haqqani Network, it is viewed by some of the jihadi groups as being too soft on the state of Pakistan. And other extremist groups are skeptical of its linkages with ISI.

The current leadership in Pakistan may recognize, as it turns out better than any previous government, the dangers that LeT and these groups pose to the state. But the organization's deep penetration of the country's social fabric makes any attempts to rein it in by the

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beleaguered Peoples Party impossible without the military's full commitment. Moreover, party and provincial politics in Pakistan adds a further obstacle. The major opposition, Nawaz Sharif's Muslim League, resists a challenge to the feared LeT that could put at risk the party's ascendant position in the Punjab.

I assume my time has just about run out unfortunately.

REP. ACKERMAN: Thank you very much. Ms. Curtis. Everybody's full statement will be part of the record. Ms. Curtis?

LISA CURTIS: Thank you very much, Chairman Ackerman, Ranking Member Burton, and thank you very much for holding this very important hearing.

The Lashkar-e-Taiba was not a widely known group before the 2008 attack on Mumbai, but its links to al Qaeda go back over a decade and it has long posed a threat to vital U.S. national security interests including promoting stability in South Asia and degrading the overall threat from terrorism emanating from the region.

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

The arrest of Pakistani American David Coleman Headley at Chicago's O'Hare Airport on October 3rd, 2009, may mark one of the most significant counterterrorism breakthroughs since 9/11. Headley was arrested for conspiring with the LeT in Pakistan to conduct attacks in India and for plotting an attack on a Danish newspaper that first published, controversial cartoons of the Prophet Mohammed in 2005.

Headley travelled frequently to Pakistan, where he trained with the LeT. He also went to India, where he scouted sites for the Mumbai attacks, as well as sites for future attacks, including on India's National Defense College in New Delhi and two well-known boarding schools. The findings from the Headley investigations have awakened U.S. officials to the gravity of the international threat posed by Pakistan's failure to crack down on terrorist groups, including those that primarily -- (audio break) -- Counterterrorism Coordinator Daniel Benjamin, for instance, recently said that the Headley investigations show the LeT has global ambitions and is willing to undertake bold, mass-casualty operations.

But what is most troubling about the Headley case is what it has revealed about the proximity of the Pakistani military to the LeT. The U.S. Department of Justice indictment that was unsealed on January 14th, 2009 names a retired Pakistani army major, as Headley's handler. While the allegations do not point to any serving Pakistani army or intelligence officials as being involved in the Mumbai attacks, they do reveal that the Pakistan Army's past support and continued toleration of the LeT contributed to the group's ability to conduct those attacks.

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It took several months for Islamabad to admit publicly that Pakistanis have been involved in the Mumbai tragedy. Islamabad did eventually arrest seven LeT operatives, including those that India fingered as being the masterminds of the attacks. However, there are indications that the LeT, as an organization, continues to operate relatively freely in the country.

On February 5th, for example, Hafiz Muhammad Saeed, one of the co-founders of the LeT addressed a crowd of thousands in Lahore, Pakistan, where he called for additional attacks on India. Eight days later, terrorists bombed a German bakery in Pune, India, killing at least 15.

Saeed, released from jail and ability to hold public rallies sends a strong signal that terrorism will be tolerated in Pakistan.

Now, the degree of control that the Pakistani intelligence service retain over LeT's operations remains an open question. Some Pakistani officials claim al Qaeda has infiltrated the LeT and that elements of the LeT were freelancing. Regardless of whether the Pakistani authorities did or did not have control of the group that carried out the Mumbai attacks, they're now responsible for taking actions that close down the group. Therefore, the U.S. must develop policies that approach the LeT with the same urgency as that which the U.S. deals with the threat from al Qaeda.

The Mumbai attacks and the Headley investigations revealed that the LeT has the international capabilities and the ideological inclination to attack western targets, whether they are located in South Asia or elsewhere. The U.S. must convince Islamabad to take decisive action to neutralize the LeT before it can conduct additional attacks that could well involve western targets and possibly precipitate an Indo-Pakistani military conflict.

Steps moving forward. The U.S. needs to closely monitor Pakistani actions to dismantle the LeT. Merely banning the organization has done little to degrade its capabilities.

The U.S. should also avoid conveying a message that the U.S. is more interested in some terrorist groups than others, which only encourages the Pakistani leadership to avoid confronting the LeT.

Washington also should repeat messages like that of Defense Secretary Robert Gates, when he wrote in a recent op-ed about the futility of trying to distinguish between terrorist groups that share more commonalities than they do differences.

Lastly, the U.S. should assure Pakistani leaders that the U.S. will monitor closely India's military posture toward Pakistan as it ceased to dismantle dangerous groups like the LeT.

Thank you.

REP. ACKERMAN: Thank you. Dr. Tellis.

ASHLEY TELLIS: Mr. Chairman, Mr. Ranking Member, thank you for inviting me this afternoon. Last year, I had the opportunity to testify before the Senate Committee on

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Homeland Security on the LeT as an organization and its ideology. I won't go over the substance of that testimony again here, but I wanted to focus on the issue that I was asked to do, which is the impact of LeT on India-Pakistan relations.

Let me summarize my testimony today in the form of eight propositions.

First, let me affirm what others have said before me that the LeT today, after al Qaeda remains the most important terrorist group that operates in South Asia. But what is important to recognize is that it has become the spearhead of the Pakistani military's campaign against India. This campaign no longer consists of fomenting insurgencies within India, as was the case in the 1990s.

In the early 1990s, the Pakistan military sought to exploit domestic discontent within India and exploited it for its own purposes. After 1993, the strategy changed. It moved from exploiting domestic discontent to unleashing terrorism, which is aiding groups whose only purpose of existence is to engage in indiscriminate attacks against civilians throughout the length and breadth of the Indian landmarks.

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

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

Fourth. It is important that the United States recognize Pakistan's deep enmeshments in the LeT and cease to refer to LeT as if it were an independent actor, whose actions are intended to embarrass the Pakistani state. Rather, LeT remains to this day an instrument of the Pakistani intelligence services.

The investigations that have occurred in the context of the Headley case demonstrate clearly ISI's links with the attacks that took place in Mumbai.

Fifth. It is to President Obama's credit that he has made it an important objective that Pakistan target LeT is a new U.S.-Pakistan strategic relationship is to be sustained. I believe a U.S.-Pakistan strategic relationship is in the interest of both countries, but thus far, the Pakistani state has been unresponsive to the presidents and treaties to suppress LeT.

Sixth. The most immediate challenge that LeT poses for the United States is the risk that its operations in India provoke a crisis in India-Pakistan's relations that end up with the threat of war. If we have been lucky to escape that problem so far, it has been largely because

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Prime Minister Manmohan Singh has been (forbidding ?) in terms of his response to Pakistan.

Seventh.

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

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

Thank you very much for your attention.

REP. ACKERMAN: Thank you. Mr. Nawaz.

SHUJA NAWAZ: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Congressman Burton, and members of the committee. I am honored to speak before you today.

Today's topic is at the heart of the dangers that confront Pakistan today. The Lashkar-e-Taiba represents -- a word that's been used often -- a Frankenstein's monster created for the purpose of assisting the Kashmiri freedom movement but that ended up becoming a powerful Sunni Punjabi movement with an independent agenda that appears to have taken on a broader regional role. It was born out of the U.S.-backed Afghan Jihad against the Soviets, and built on the training provided by that war to Punjabi fighters who could then inculcate Kashmiri fighters in their ways. Successive civil and military leaders of Pakistan supported the movement as a strategic asset to counter a powerful India to the East and to force it to negotiate for a settlement of the disputed territory by waging a war of, quote, "a thousand cuts."

Over time, however, the sponsored organization took a life of its own, finding the economically disadvantaged area of Central and Southern Punjab to be a fertile territory for recruitment of Jihadi warriors.

In a country, Mr. Chairman, where the median age is estimated to be 18 years, and hence half the population of 175 million is below that age, the recruitment pool of unemployed and impressionable youth is large.

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

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

Over time, the Inter-Services Intelligence began losing its control as the LeT became self sufficient. But the realization that the LeT had become autonomous was slow in being understood or accepted in the ISI and by the military leadership of Pakistan under General Pervez Musharraf.

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

What should we do? I believe that it may not be too late to assist Pakistan in crafting a plan to reach out to the fighters of the LeT and other Punjabi militant organizations and by involving their extended families in the process, provide training and stipends to wean them away from their militant path. The extended family unit can play a role in ensuring against recidivism on the part of the fighters. Simultaneously it is critical to focus on drastically changing the Islamist curriculum of public schools, a vestige of the period of General Zia-ul-Haq's rule, and invest in South and Central Punjab to create job opportunities that would lift up the relatively backward population of this area.

Mr. Chairman, enough evidence exists now to link the Sunni militant groups Sipah-e-Sahaba and Jaish-e-Mohammed with al Qaeda and the Taliban. And the LeT's emerging role as a trans-regional force that has broadened its aim to include India and perhaps even Afghanistan, by linking with the Students Islamic Movement of India and the Harkat-ul-Jihad-al-Islami of Bangladesh poses a serious threat to regional stability.

As it's been said before, another Mumbai-type attack involving the LeT might bring Pakistan into conflict, a prospect that should keep us awake at night.

It appears that the army's recent actions has dislocated the Tehrik-e-Taliban of Pakistan. Yet, it faces a huge and, to my mind, greater threat in the hinterland, in the form of the LeT.

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

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Mr. Chairman, I am grateful that this committee is focusing on this issue and thank you for allowing me to share some of my ideas. I shall be glad to take questions.

REP. ACKERMAN: Thank you and thank all of you.

Well, it seems we have a unanimity in the panel that everybody's an alarmist. (Laughter.) Now, where do we go?

I think there's also general agreement that the ISI/Pakistani military has been complicit in creating the Frankenstein monster, seems not to be able to control the Frankenstein monster. It's still able to influence it and that -- if I'm not mistaken -- I think everybody made deference to a belief or suspicion that the Frankenstein monster can live independently even were it not receiving substantial support from the Pakistan military. I would surmise if that's accurate that the Pakistan military could make it a little bit difficult than uncomfortable.

The threat that is posed in the creation of this terrorist group that everybody considers an international terrorist group at this point -- everybody on the panel -- the question is whose responsibility is it? The answer to that is everybody's because it's international.

My question is, in addition to how big is this Frankenstein monster, can anybody quantify the number of people or the rate of growth that it might have, but what strategy might be employed and what expectation might there be that we get Pakistan, its military, and the intelligence services to determine that LeT is no longer useful, is counterproductive, and to concur in the fact that it must be done away with.

That's a big question. Let's start with Dr. Weinbaum.

MR. WEINBAUM: With regard to your question, Congressman, I think something else has to happen, and that is the attitude of the people of Pakistan. It's more than simply a decision here on the part of the government, which is would be very difficult without a different view of particularly the charity work in which the LeT is associated with, although not the name LeT.

We have to got to -- we've got a larger task here and that is to -- it's part of this larger problem that we see here about the poisonous atmosphere that exists and the willingness of people to accept conspiracy theories as facts. So this is a formidable task, of course, but it's more than simply convincing the elites in Pakistan what to do. I don't believe that they have any -- there's any likelihood that they're going to move without a change of attitude by the people of Pakistan. And what that means is that they have to be addressing the people themselves and pointing out what counterproductive ways in which LeT is operating for the security of Pakistan.

REP. ACKERMAN: I think -- before going down the rest of the line -- I think the dilemma the world is facing is that all of these groups, whether it'd be Hamas or Hezbollah or LeT, or Robin Hood and his merry men, have captured the imagination of the general population by providing social services that governments have not provided to a rather

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desperate people and societies. And without being accused of being a wild-eyed liberal and saying I think we have to just redistribute the wealth in the world, certainly you have to give poor people and disadvantaged people a stake in their own societies in those countries that we're talking about, where there is none. That's a huge undertaking. In the meantime somebody has to provide law and order and get rid of bad guys.

It'll be generations before you can build up the economy of any of these places to Scandinavia.

Anybody just want to comment on that -- my -- yes, my time is over by now.

Ranking Member's concurring in my generosity to myself.

Mr. Nawaz?

MR. NAWAZ: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Since I spent a substantial portion of my life at the IMF and the World Bank, I believe that economics is at the heart of it and you've quite rightly identified that. But I believe that it is possible to accelerate the process of change and it has to be an internal process of change. It's not something that'll come from outside.

First of all, a recognition by Pakistan that it faces an existential threat from within and not from outside. Secondly, the possibility of opening those areas where the terrorist groups and the extremists are recruiting heavily. And my research on this indicates as well as juxtaposed against the recruitment of the Pakistan military it is Central and Southern Punjab. It's a vast area, very heavily populated. The military cannot take military action, given the fact that it's now fighting on the western frontier.

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

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

Secondly, with respect to dealing with the challenge, LeT certainly has two streams, that is a civilian stream that is focused on its charities, but there is a very distinct military stream that is involved in its operations. And there is no reason why in principal the Pakistani state cannot make a distinction between these two streams. These are two different categories of

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people. The people who go out to do charitable work are not the people who do the gun running and who do the killings.

If the Pakistani state decided that it wanted to go after the military components, while leaving the civilian or the charitable components aside, it could. The reason it won't is because it does not really accept the fundamental analogy of the Frankenstein's monster.

MS. CURTIS: Mr. Chairman, if I might just emphasize Dr. Tellis' point that we may be missing the forest through the trees here. There are steps that the Pakistan government, namely the Pakistan military and intelligence services can take. Number one, they can prevent Hafiz Muhammad Saeed from making provocative statements, calling for attacks on India. That has nothing to do with charity work. They can disrupt the ability of this group to train on Pakistani territory, to finance itself. And I also want to point out. I don't see the LeT as having this broad support base in Pakistan. In fact, I'd like to quote Pakistan's former information minister, Sherry Rehman, who said shortly Hafiz Muhammad Saeed made this very provocative statement, what she said is -- she said this in parliament -- "what is the point of our innocent civilians and soldiers dying in a borderless war against such terrorists, when armed, banned outfits can hold a whole nation hostage in the heart of Punjab's provincial capital."

So the point is here this group is not least supported in Pakistan, particularly by the civilian leadership. And if we want something done, we need to prevail particularly on the Pakistan military to take steps to prevent this group from being able to operate militarily.

REP. ACKERMAN: Mr. Burton?

REP. BURTON: I've been involved, along with the Chairman, probably for 15 or 20 years on the Kashmiri and Punjab issue. And I believe, after all the years I've talked to people from Kashmir and Punjab and Pakistan and India, that until you solve the problems up in Punjab and Kashmir, you're never going to solve the problems that you're talking about today. It just is not going to happen.

It's just not going to happen. Now, you got a nuclear power in Pakistan and you got a nuclear power in India. And if all hell breaks loose, it's going to be a mess there. Everybody knows that. It could disrupt the whole region. And then you've got, of course, Iran over there, trying to develop a nuclear capability. It just could be -- it could be a horrible situation.

But the thing that bothers me is that for 20 years now -- and Chairman and I had our differences over this -- there has been no resolution of the Kashmir Province since 1947, when they had the partition. The UN resolution that dealt with Kashmir has never been carried out. There's never been a plebiscite on that up there.

India has claimed it and it's been a lot of reasons why. Some royal leaders up there have ceded some of the territory to India, which I'm not sure they had the ability to do, but nevertheless it's continued to be a problem. And the people in Kashmir, where a lot of this has started, they are not going to start. And they are going to get support from people who're sympathetic to them from military or religious standpoint.

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And so I don't know why our learning experts here and I know you are right knowledgeable, and the people in the military in India and in Pakistan don't realize that everybody's walking around with a fuse in their hand that could blow up at almost any time.

The Mumbai attack could have precipitated something, but cooler heads did prevail. But I've seen -- they brought me pictures time and time again of people who had been disemboweled and sewed up and thrown in rivers up there in Kashmir and the people who'd been tortured and killed in Punjab by the military. And I'm sure there's atrocities coming the other way as well. But it is not going to go away. And when we -- I don't know how many hearings we've had on these subjects, but there've been a lot of them -- and everybody talks about today it sounds like predominantly that Pakistan and their connection with the LeT and other things are mainly responsible. And I'm sure there is a lot of blame there. But there's blame on the other side too. And I wish all of the experts and the people in the governments involved, as well as the United States would make as their number one goal resolving the issues that have been prevailing for a long, long time. And that is resolving the issue of Kashmir. And I think the only way to do that is to get the Pakistani government and the India government and the people in Kashmir together and resolve some way for them to solve that problem in Kashmir that's been existing since 1948. And until you get that done, you're not going to solve this problem. And India can't attack Pakistan because if they do, Pakistan's got the ability to retaliate with a nuclear weapon and vice versa. And so the killing's going to go on and the festering that's created from this impasse is just going to grow.

And I just ask my staff how many people live up there and there's at least 10 million people, so there's a reservoir of people to become terrorists.

A lot of these young people, they hear their parents and they see the things that's happened with the Indian troops occupying that area and they've seen the atrocities on both sides. And they say, "to hell with it. Let's just fight them. We'll kill them." And it just gets worse and worse. So that's why I went over there and I talked to Prime Minister Singh personally. And I talked to President Musharraf personally. And they had opened a small opening in the border so that there could be some communication and travelling back and forth. But as far as moving troops back from Kashmir, even 50 miles or 25 miles, so that they could feel a little autonomy there and actually start discussions on how to solve the problem, I just don't think it's going to be resolved.

And I think as the President or as the Chairman said -- you're not going to run for president, right? I think as the Chairman said, this is kind of like the Gordian knot and the Gordian know by Alexander was not untied; he just chopped it in two. And I think the way to chop this in two is to get the parties together.

And the United States has been working in the Middle East between the Palestinian and the Israelis for years and the Egyptians and the Lebanese and all of the countries -- Jordan -- to try to resolve their problem.

REP. ACKERMAN: Gentleman is yielded an additional five minutes.

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REP. BURTON: Well, I'm not going to take the rest of the time, Mr. Chairman. I'm just feeling exasperated because -- and I know you feel that way too because we've talked about this on the floor.

This has been going on forever and it's an issue that could blow up at any time and it's something much larger than what we've seen in Mumbai or any other attacks over there. And all we do is we keep talking about who's at fault, who's doing this, who's doing that. We ought to look at the UN resolutions of the late '40s, which are still in effect and we ought to try to live up to those. And there's got to be some way to do that and to cut through this Gordian knot.

And I really appreciate the expertise of the people here, but I get so frustrated because I see the killing and I see this thing festering and getting into a bigger and bigger problem because there's no way to exhaust the kind of weapons these people can get and there're going to be more and more sophisticated and you got nuclear weapons. We keep talking about it and thinking around, but nothing gets done and then we run the risk of a major conflagration which could erupt, if not now, two years in the future, five years in the future because we aren't realistically looking at how to solve the problem. And the way to solve the problem is to do like we're trying to do between Palestine and Israel and get these people together and find out what they can all live with. And then if you do that, you start to say -- do as I said earlier in my remarks -- defang the terrorist groups because the reason they were originated is not just because of poverty. It's because they hate the Indians and they want their autonomy and they want the plebiscite around this and all that other stuff.

So it's a combination of things. You can respond if you want to. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

REP. ACKERMAN: Any takers? Dr. Weinbaum.

MR. WEINBAUM: If I could just add to the problem because without discounting the importance of LeT in terms of the reconciliation between India and Pakistan and the spoiler role that it can play, I don't think we've given enough attention this afternoon to LeT as global organization.

I believe that it has demonstrated that in the past. Its members, for example, took part in the Balkans. They were involved in the war in Tajikistan. What we see here is a capacity on the part of the -- (audio break) -- think there is no doubt that the LeT would become, along with the Taliban a force here, which has implications that go beyond just this are.

I might mention that we know of at least 17 countries where the LeT has chapters. So my point here is that as much of a concern as the LeT poses to Pakistan and to India-Pakistan relations, LeT is evolving into something which is far greater, an organization which has by its own statements global ambitions. And what I'm also saying, it is also developing global capacity.

MS. CURTIS: Just quickly. You've talked about the problem and a possible resolution as being a plebiscite. But frankly, in my visits to the region, I haven't heard support for the idea of a plebiscite. And in fact, I think one of the most significant things that has happened

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there over the last decade was President Musharraf actually dropped Pakistani insistence on having a plebiscite. In fact, he made a very important statement in December of 2006, where he said Pakistan would be willing to give up its claim on Kashmir if four things happen. He said, if the line of control that divides Kashmir was made irrelevant, which means people could freely pass back and forth, could pass back and forth. Two, if Kashmir was given greater autonomy. Three, if both sides could figure out a joint mechanism to interact, to have the two sides of Kashmir, Pakistani Kashmir and Indian Kashmir interact. So he made a very forward looking proposal. And as we know by Steve Coll, who wrote about this in the New Yorker Magazine not too long ago, they were very close to coming to some kind of agreement or understanding on Kashmir.

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

REP. BURTON: Yes, I just want to make a couple of comments. The plebiscite was promised in 1948. I know what you said and then I think that's great. That's a great step in the right direction because I talked to President Musharraf just about that.

And the other thing I'd like to say is that this is a breeding ground for the expansion of the LeT in my opinion. And I think that if we could figure out a way to solve this problem, as President Musharraf laid out, I think it would be a step in the right direction, which could possibly lead -- maybe not -- could possibly lead to helping reduce the aggressiveness of that organization because an awful lot of that stems from what has been going on for 20 years in Kashmir and that whole region.

REP. ACKERMAN: We'll try to comeback. Mr. Connolly?

REP. GERALD CONNOLLY (D-VA): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would ask unanimous consent that my opening statement be entered into the record.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And welcome to all of our panelists.

I'm going to try to squeeze in four questions, so if we could all be precise, that'd be great.

First question, what in your opinion is in fact the current nature of the relationship between LeT and ISI, the Pakistani intelligence service?

Who wants to begin, Mr. Nawaz?

MR. NAWAZ: Yes, Congressman, I'd be happy to address that. As I stated in my opening remarks, I think that relationship has changed over time and that after President Musharraf made a decision to distance themselves from the groups that were operating in Kashmir that there was a kind of a hands off approach. And I think it was not a part of a comprehensive plan and it's backfired, as a result of which, the group has basically become completely

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independent. But I did mention that the former trainers and associates from the ISI perhaps now have an opportunity of independently working with the LeT.

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

MR. NAWAZ: I don't believe the ISI acts independently of the government or the power centers in Pakistan. And I use my words very carefully. I think at the operational level, and particularly when you refer to FATA, the border region, because of the nature of the recruitment pool of the operatives in the field, there's a tremendous amount of ambivalence because you have to go into the tribal system and recruit people there. So you cannot have 100 percent control over people in the field.

REP. CONNOLLY: Anyone else on this, Dr. Tellis?

MR. TELLIS: Let me answer as specifically as I can. The relationship between LeT and ISI is still extremely tight. And there are four specific dimensions of that relationship. The ISI protects the LeT leadership. It gives safe haven to the cadres and it provides protection for the leadership. That's number one.

Two, it provides the organization with intelligence on specific threats to the organization and of specific targets that may be of interest to the organization.

Three, it provides campaign guidance when required. LeT does quite well on its own and can do scouting of its own targets independently today. But there have been instances where ISI's continued to provide campaign guidance.

And four, ISI continues to provide infiltration assistance, particularly when LeT operatives have to go to third countries, using the assistance of ISI stations.

So there are four distinct ways in which LeT and ISI operations continue to be coordinated.

MS. CURTIS: I would just reiterate -- yes, I don't think ISI is a rogue operation. And they do have tight links with Lashkar-e-Taiba. But I would say what's most dangerous seems to be when you have these retired officials. In my opening statement, I talked about the Headley investigations and how the U.S. affidavit names a former Pakistani army major as being the actual handler for Headley.

And so the question is did he leave on his own volition? Is he retired because that provides more deniability? So these are a lot of the questions that I think need to be asked.

MR. WEINBAUM: I just have one comment and that is to repeat something I said earlier. That as far as Pakistan is concerned, the LeT does not present the same kind of threat that

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many of the other organizations, Lashkar Jhangvi particularly, are threats to the state of Pakistan. So that there is an opportunity here for a modus vivendi, so that they share common objectives. Therefore to the degree in which LeT continues to do so, and it's a question about whether it will continue to do so, there is no reason for the ISI as such to turn against it.

REP. CONNOLLY: Thank you. My time is up, Mr. Chairman.

REP. ACKERMAN: Thank you.

REP. CONNOLLY: I got one question in. Thank you.

REP. ACKERMAN: Let's take a round. Mr. Royce?

REP. ROYCE: Thank you, Chairman. I was going to ask Dr. Tellis of the amalgam of jihadists that operate in Pakistan. Is it safe to say that the LeT receives the least amount of scrutiny from the Pakistani government?

MR. TELLIS: That is correct.

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

MR. TELLIS: That is correct. And they have an annual meeting, which is often attended by important political personalities in Pakistan. And the annual meeting is essentially a jamboree for jihadists that takes place in Muridke. And it's an open event.

REP. ROYCE: But some of the officials that attend are they parliamentarians?

MR. TELLIS: There are both elected officials and there are officials from more shadowy parts of the Pakistani government. That is in these meetings.

REP. ROYCE: And if I could ask, Dr. Weinbaum, you note in your testimony that LeT's chief Hafiz Saeed, because of his work with young people during his time at an engineering university became, in your words -- you said, "he's believed to have many sympathizers within Pakistan scientific community, especially in the nuclear and missile fields." People often ask how many al Qaeda sympathizers are in Pakistani security establishment. Your question strikes us that maybe we're asking the wrong question. Maybe the real question we should have been asking ourselves is what about LeT elements in the nuclear field. And have you given some thought to that?

MR. WEINBAUM: Well, I believe what we have here is obviously just circumstantial evidence. We do know -- we do know and obviously we are concerned about --

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

MR. WEINBAUM: -- well, again, how you separate Jamaat ud Dawa and the charity wing from the political military wing that LeT constitutes, that's very blurred. And it's really the base -- the strength of the organization is the fact that it has this charity persona --

REP. ROYCE: No, I understand that. Well, so let me ask Lisa a question here. British Pakistanis have been known to use the Kashmir escalator after getting introduced to LeT or others in Kashmir, they then connect with al Qaeda operatives. And last year, a British official estimated that 4,000 people were trained in this way since 9/11 and it counted for three out of four of the serious terrorist plots faced by the U.K. Now, of course, many of these people also could get into the United States without a visa, right, because they're British citizens. How deep are the LeT ties within the British and French Pakistani communities in your view and how are we working with the British on this?

MS. CURTIS: Well, there was information that one of the subways -- London subway plotters was actually trained at an LeT camp. So I think there are some connections there. But in terms of the U.S. and whether or not we're working with the U.K., I think I raised in my testimony, I don't think the U.S. government has given the LeT the attention --

REP. ROYCE: And that goes to another point I was going to ask you about, Ms. Curtis. Have we gotten to that point, where we approach the LeT as we approach al Qaeda -- you say no? But we've got the Headley case, as you point out, born in the U.S. to a Pakistani diplomat and a Philadelphia socialite, who was charged in December with providing material support to the LeT for scouting locations for the Mumbai terror attack. He made multiple trips to India, taking videos of the hotels and restaurants in advance in order to carry out these attacks.

What would you tell U.S. policymakers on this about the need to change our view of the LeT?

MS. CURTIS: Well, I think we need to focus on the masterminds of the attacks. Yes, Headley was a facilitator. He scouted sites. But what is important is his handler, who was directing him, who was really the one on the line -- on the other line of the cell phone, telling the killers who to kill, who to murder. So that's why it goes back to Pakistan and focusing on taking down the LeT in Pakistan. Because yes, they do have an international network and we need to work with allies focusing on that international network, but if you don't have the mastermind directing the other arms of this operation, then you will go a long way to decimating it.

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

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

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REP. ACKERMAN: Mr. Bilirakis.

REP. BILIRAKIS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate very much. I have a couple of questions.

And I know you've touched on this, but maybe you can elaborate a little more, the panel can. Is the Pakistan government as a host seriously interested in combating religious extremism, or are there divisions within the country and government that prevent the government as a whole from being able to take immediate steps to address these threats?

MR. TELLIS: Maybe, I can attempt to reply to that, Congressman. I think in the last couple of years particularly, the people of Pakistan have put pressure on the government and the military. And the military particularly now recognizes the growing threat from within. I think this is being reflected in the support that was given to the Pakistan army and its operations in Swat and in the renewed operations in FATA. And this is something that we should perhaps capitalize on, which is to strengthen this movement and also to build up on an earlier point, to recognize that if you change the landscape and affect it, particularly in the recruitment area of the LeT, which is the Punjab, not just the economic landscape, but return Islam to the predominant Sufi Islam that dominates Pakistan as a religious entity, that is really where the strength is going to lie because you will yank the carpet from under the feet of these groups.

And then finally, I think on the external front, as the Ranking Member has said a number of times, if you could just go back to the road map that had already been achieved in the composite dialogue between India and Pakistan, it exists on paper and I can confirm that President Musharraf has personally confirmed to me the outlying of that agreement. It's the question of going back and picking it up from there, for which the current reopening of the dialogue is a very good sign.

This has to be a multifaceted effort. I don't think there's any silver bullet solution to it.

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

MR. TELLIS: If I may take a crack of that. I think in principal Pakistan as a country has come to the point where they recognize that they cannot avoid dealing with the challenges of religious extremism. But it breaks down, once you start looking at different groups within Pakistan. The body politics, the public are clearly sick and tired of the deterioration that has taken place in Pakistani politics. You get poll after poll that shows people having absolutely no appetite for sustaining these groups anymore. The civilian regime, the regime of President Zardari I think very much shares that conviction as well. Where uncertainties arise are the Pakistani military and intelligence services. And there it's not that they don't recognize the nature of the problem. It's that they are deeply conflicted about the utility of some of these players to their own interests. And so you get a truly schizophrenic attitude, where the Pakistani military and intelligence services want to confront the problem, but they want to confront it selectively. And they want to pick and choose. And there are some terrorist groups that affect their own interests adversely of whom they are content to go after. And

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there are other terrorist groups, who they think they can live with because they are assets in the military's campaign against India and Afghanistan.

Now, as long as this schizophrenia exists in the national security establishments, the kinds of problems that you are alluding to will continue to persist.

REP. BILIRAKIS: Thank you.

MS. CURTIS: Yes, I just want to also highlight that. I think that there is thinking within the Pakistani security establishment that believes you can support some terrorists or tolerate some terrorists and fight others. I think this is counterproductive. I think the reality is that these terrorists -- they get stronger and stronger. They have such a virulent ideology. And the LeT is a case to point. That they will eventually go off on their own and start attacking the state. Now, the LeT has not started attacking the state yet, but they are extending their sites internationally. More westerners are becoming involved in their attacks, more pan-Islamist ideology.

So I think it's almost -- there is a lack of strategic thinking within the Pakistan military establishment that doesn't understand that by supporting some of these groups, you're actually undermining your overall ability to get a handle on the terrorism problem in your own country. Secretary Gates tried to explain this in an op-ed that he wrote, which ran in a Pakistani daily a few weeks ago. But I think we need to keep hammering home that point that it's bad policy for themselves to try to support some terrorists and fight others.

REP. BILIRAKIS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate it.

REP. ACKERMAN: We've about reached that time, but what I think I'd like to do, rather than let you all go right now, because as soon as you're half way down the hall, you're each going to say, "I wish I had another half of minute. I would have said X." You each have 45 seconds to fill in the blank if you'd like.

MR. WEINBAUM: I think that to sum up what I said in my statement, LeT's reputation for charity and piety and patriotism, together with its closed ties to the senior offices of the Pakistan military and intelligence establishment make it -- give it the potential, I believe, to transform Pakistan's society into a Shari'a state, similar to that of Afghanistan in the 1990s. I don't see that as imminent, but I think that that potential exists.

The U.S. therefore would be faced in Pakistan with a jihadi dominated state that it has most to fear and a global threat that I believe dwarfs al Qaeda.

REP. ACKERMAN: Thank you. Ms. Curtis?

MS. CURTIS: I guess I would just like to reiterate what Congressman Royce quoted out of my testimony, that if just keep allowing this group to exist, we're sitting next to a ticking time bomb. I think it does pose a threat to U.S. interests. It's a very short step to go from the attacks in Mumbai, which of course six Americans were killed in those, very short step for

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them to then target a strictly western target. And I think that we need to take this problem more seriously and read it to the top of our agenda with Pakistan.

REP. ACKERMAN: Dr. Tellis?

MR. TELLIS: I would just like to end by responding to the remarks that the Ranking Member made because I think they're very important. There is no doubt in my mind that we have to find ways to resolve the issues relating to Kashmir. But I think resolving Kashmir is not going to solve the problems relating to LeT.

I always find it interesting that the people conducting the murder and mayhem -- (inaudible) -- today are not Kashmiri. The people who actually are deprived of all their political rights, they are not conducting the murder and mayhem. The murder and mayhem is being conducted by groups that have absolutely no connections to Kashmir. And to my mind that is story, the fact that this is a group that has operations in 21 countries, that has an ideology that is completely anti-western, that is opposed to modernity and secularism and all the kinds of values that we take for granted. This group is not going to be satisfied by dealing with the issue of Kashmir.

So we have to deal with Kashmir, but it's not going to solve this problem.

REP. ACKERMAN: Mr. Nawaz.

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

Secondly, I think we need to support the ideas of the people of India and Pakistan for peace. A recent simultaneous poll conducted by the Times of India and the Jang Newspaper Group in Pakistan indicates that 70 percent of the people told want peace between India and Pakistan. I think that's the kind of movement that needs to be supported from within and from outside because once you achieve that, you create economic openings. And those openings will allow the people of Pakistan and India to prosper and remove these terrorist groups from their nests.

REP. ACKERMAN: Thank you. I thank the entire panel. You've been very, very helpful, very informative and very persuasive. Committee stands adjourned.

END.