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AL QAEDA, THE TALIBAN, AND OTHER EXTREMISTS GROUPS IN AFGHANISTAN AND PAKISTAN

HEARING

BEFORE THE

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS
UNITED STATES SENATE

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TUESDAY, MAY 24, 2011

U.S. SENATE,
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS,
Washington, DC.

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 9:06 a.m., in room SD–419, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. John F. Kerry (chairman of the committee) presiding.

Present: Senators Kerry, Menendez, Cardin, Shaheen, Udall, and Lugar.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. JOHN F. KERRY, U.S. SENATOR FROM MASSACHUSETTS

The CHAIRMAN. This hearing will come to order. Good morning. I appreciate everybody being here. This is the fifth in a series of hearings on Afghanistan and Pakistan, and today we will examine perhaps one of the most important aspects of the war, which is the enemy: Who are they? What do they think? What are the possibilities of either dividing them or working with some components of them? Many, many questions surrounding the various forces that are at large in the western part of Pakistan and in Afghanistan itself.

We're a little bit under the gun today because we have the joint session with Prime Minister Netanyahu of Israel. We will have to end this hearing punctually in order to get over to the Senate and begin that session. So I ask each of the witnesses if you would summarize your testimony. Your complete statements will be placed in the record as if read in full, and that'll give us more time to ask questions.

In order to disrupt, dismantle, and defeat al-Qaeda and prevent Afghanistan from becoming a terrorist sanctuary, we clearly need to understand exactly who we're fighting, what motivates them, what binds them together, and, most importantly, what could drive them apart. Today we'll attempt to gain a deeper understanding of insurgent and extremists groups that inhabit the region and better understand the nature of this conflict.

Osama bin Laden may have been at the center of it all, but his death does not signal the end of terrorism. Al-Qaeda still exists, motivated by the same vitriol and warped ideology that has always been the organization's trademark. The Abbottabad raid, however, did send an unmistakable message: The United States is

committed, capable, and unrelenting in its pursuit of those who seek to do us harm.

The extent of bin Laden's operational significance will become clear when we finish analyzing the material that was removed from his compound. But one aspect of his legacy is already apparent. Even after 9/11, he played a central role in motivating disparate groups to unite against the United States and other western nations.

Nowhere is this phenomenon more apparent than in Afghanistan and Pakistan, where strong connections among extremists groups exist at both the organizational and individual levels. Terrorists and insurgents work together against coalition forces and to indiscriminately murder innocent civilians, aid workers, civil servants, and children. Their motivation, which should offend all faiths, is to destabilize the region and to establish a safe haven where they can, and plot attacks against the United States and our allies. People ask why we are still in Afghanistan. This is the reason.

Al-Qaeda and the Taliban are names well known to Americans. But other groups are actively plotting, actively killing, every day. The Haqqani network has expanded its reach beyond North Waziristan in Pakistan and provides sanctuary to al-Qaeda and the Afghan Taliban. The Tehrik-i-Taliban, otherwise known as the Pakistani Taliban, and Lashkar-e-Jhangvi systematically work to undermine the Government of Pakistan. Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Mohammed continue to launch attacks that risk sparking war between nuclear-armed India and Pakistan.

So I'd like to take 1 minute, if I can, to highlight the threat posed by Lashkar-e-Taiba. This group, responsible for the vicious Mumbai attacks of 2008, is capable of not only destabilizing the region with another attack against India, but through its extensive alumni organization and network of training camps throughout Pakistan it could threaten the United States homeland.

We also face threats from individuals seeking to fulfill their own personal objectives. Najibullah Zazi, a legal United States resident born in Afghanistan, conspired to bomb New York City's subway system in 2009 after he received training in Pakistan. Faisal Shahzad, who attempted to detonate a car bomb last year in Time Square, was linked to the Pakistan Taliban.

Unfortunately, these are just two examples of a new generation of would-be terrorists who have grown up in the shadow of extremist militancy. These lone wolves are as potentially dangerous as any one organization.

Even though these groups and individuals have overlapping interests, fissures do exist among them. They're separated by ideologies, nationalities, and tribal or sectarian backgrounds. Our focus now ought to be less on who will succeed bin Laden and more on how to exploit those fissures and dismantle the networks that he spawned.

So this is a critical moment in the war in Afghanistan. Our security gains in the south—and they are real—coupled with bin Laden's death, have, at least in my judgment and certainly in the judgment of the people I talked with in Afghanistan last weekend, have created some political space. So it's important that we seize that opportunity.

Middle- and low-level Taliban fighters, many of them want to come in from the battlefield. We need to work with the Afghan Government in order to make sure that those who wish to lay down their arms can in fact do so, and as reconcilable elements of the insurgency enter into the peace process—and I think it's possible for some of them to do that—we need to ensure that Afghans are able to avert both Taliban rule and a return to civil war. That is a delicate balancing act.

Of course, we can't forget the impact that Pakistan has on the future of Afghanistan. I've many times said that Pakistan is the key to diminishing the insurgency in Afghanistan itself. What happens in Pakistan may do more to determine the rate at which American troops can withdraw, the rate at which the Afghan troops can stand up, and the degree to which governance can be improved in Afghanistan.

We also need to remember that terrorists and insurgents are continuing to exploit the 1,200-mile porous border that separates the two countries. And we will have to work very closely with Pakistan in order to deal with the problem of the sanctuaries as purveyors of violence in both nations.

The good news here is that there is common ground between the vital national interests of Pakistan and the United States, even at the same time as there are some divergent interests. It will take adroit and persistent diplomacy to convince the Pakistani military leaders that the real threat to their sovereignty comes not from its eastern border and not from across the Atlantic, but from violent extremists in their own country.

We obviously have a lot to discuss here today, and to help us do this we have Peter Bergen, currently the director of the National Security Studies Program at the New America Foundation and an expert on al-Qaeda and bin Laden; Dr. Paul Pillar, a 28-year veteran of the CIA and director of graduate studies and faculty member at Georgetown University; and Dr. Christine Fair, also a professor at Georgetown University's Center for Peace and Security Studies and an expert on extremist groups in South Asia. I thank each of you for coming in this morning.

Senator Lugar.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. RICHARD G. LUGAR, U.S. SENATOR FROM INDIANA

Senator LUGAR. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, for calling this hearing. I note that it is the fifth in a series of hearings that we have had on Afghanistan and Pakistan. I join you in welcoming our distinguished witnesses.

Like the chairman, I remain hopeful that we will soon hear from the Defense Department and the State Department in public session about their plans in the region going forward. At this hearing we are attempting to define the nature of the terrorist threats that confront us in Afghanistan and Pakistan. This is important because we are devoting enormous resources to these two countries, with the primary goal of fighting terrorism.

Both Afghanistan and Pakistan affect clear United States national security interests. In previous hearings, however, I have contended that the resources being spent in Afghanistan are far

greater than the current threat warrants. The United States has almost 100,000 troops in Afghanistan, with another 32,000 deployed in the region to support the mission. According to the Congressional Research Service, there were an estimated 87,000 military contract personnel in Afghanistan at the beginning of this year. More than 1,000 civilian personnel are assigned to the United States Embassy.

The United States effort in Afghanistan is costing approximately $120 billion a year. The question before us is whether Afghanistan is strategically important enough to justify the lives and massive resources that we are spending there, especially given that few terrorists in Afghanistan have global designs or reach. To the extent that our purpose is to confront the global terrorist threat, we should be refocusing resources on Pakistan, Yemen, Somalia, parts of North Africa, and other locations.

Our government should be working on an approach that allows us to achieve the most important national security goals in Afghanistan—especially preventing the Taliban from taking over the government and preventing Afghan territory from being used as a terrorist safe haven—at far less expense.

The Pakistan side of the border has a fundamentally different dynamic. Despite the death of Osama bin Laden, al-Qaeda and other terrorist groups maintain a strong presence. There is no question that the threat of these groups, combined with worries about state collapse, a Pakistani war with India, the safety of the Pakistani nuclear arsenal, and Pakistan's intersection with other states in the region make it a strategically vital country worth the cost of engagement. The question is how the United States navigates the contradictions inherent in dealing with the Pakistani Government and Pakistani society to ensure that our resources and diplomacy advance our objectives efficiently.

The importance of getting this right is reinforced by the utterances of Osama bin Laden, who called the terrorist acquisition of nuclear and chemical weapons "a religious duty." This effort has not died with bin Laden. Al-Qaeda and its affiliates have so far been unsuccessful in obtaining nuclear material or a nuclear device, experts believe. But many of our top military and intelligence officials continue to regard the terrorist acquisition of a nuclear weapon as the biggest threat to the United States national security.

Pakistan's military leaders have given repeated assurances that the country's rapidly expanding nuclear arsenal is well-secured. But we also know that the A.Q. Khan network was enabled by members of Pakistan's nuclear establishment. Further, if Pakistan succumbs to violent extremism or economic collapse, confidence in the security of Pakistan's nuclear arsenal and technology could erode rapidly.

This underscores the importance to United States national security of a stable Pakistan and of continued engagement on terrorism and nuclear security issues.

I look forward with you, Mr. Chairman, to the recommendations of our expert witnesses today. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thanks, Senator Lugar. I appreciate it very much.

We will start with Mr. Bergen, then Mr. Pillar, and Ms. Fair. Thank you.

Mr. Bergen.

STATEMENT OF PETER BERGEN, DIRECTOR, NATIONAL SECURITY STUDIES PROGRAM, NEW AMERICA FOUNDATION, WASHINGTON, DC

Mr. BERGEN. Thank you, Senator Kerry. Thank you, Senator Lugar.

In my 5 minutes I wanted to focus on the issue of Taliban reconciliation. Senator Kerry talked about the political space that has opened up for the possibility of reconciliation. Obviously, the death of Osama bin Laden provides an enormous opportunity for the Taliban, one which I think if they don't take suggests that they are unlikely to take such an opportunity again.

As you know, Osama bin Laden swore an oath of allegiance to Mullah Omar, a religious oath, calling him "the commander of the faithful." Now, Mullah Omar is now in the position to say: That was a personal arrangement; I don't really need an oath of allegiance from al-Qaeda any more. And let's see if he takes this opportunity, because I see several problems with the idea of reconciliation and some opportunities.

The problems, briefly, are: The moderate Taliban has already reconciled. You know their names: Mullah Zaeef, Mullah Muttawakil, the Foreign Minister. They've had 10 years to reconcile. The people who aren't reconciled are pretty hard core.

Second, they've had 10 years to reject——

The CHAIRMAN. How many hard core do you think there are?

Mr. BERGEN. How many hard-core Taliban?

The CHAIRMAN. When you say "hard-core," what are you talking about?

Mr. BERGEN. Well, I mean people who generally believe in the idea that Mullah Omar is the leader of all Muslims, that al-Qaeda is a good thing. I mean, they've had 10 years to reject al-Qaeda. As you know, al-Qaeda's embedded with the Haqqani Network right now.

We've also the problem the Taliban is not the Taliban; it's the Talibans. So any negotiation will be several groups. We've seen that peace deals with the Taliban on the other side of the border in Pakistan—a border, by the way, that they don't recognize—they've reneged on every peace agreement they've been involved in. They had a peace agreement in Waziristan in 2005 and in 2006 and in Swat in 2009. They took those peace agreements as opportunities to essentially regroup and take over more territory.

We've run a controlled experiment on what life under the Taliban looks like very recently in Pakistan. In Swat they beheaded policemen, they burned down the girls' schools, and they imposed a reign of terror, and that's the Taliban that I think is the hard core, that hasn't really changed their spots.

We also saw, with the arrest of Mullah Baradar last year in Pakistan, effectively arguably the No. 2 of the Taliban, that the Pakistanis have a veto over these negotiations. So any negotiation involves them. And that's not the end of the world, but it is a factor that we need to consider going forward.

The Northern Alliance also has an effective veto. I mean, Dr. Abdullah, who is well known to both the chairman and the ranking member, isn't going to give up everything he's fought for if there are significant territorial concessions or concessions of principle to the Taliban. And of course, he is likely to be the next President of Afghanistan in 2014. So the Northern Alliance have a veto as well as the Pakistanis over these negotiations.

Hitherto the negotiations that have gone on in Mecca and the Maldives have amounted to nothing. I mean, one Afghan official joked to me that the reason that people went to the Maldives for the negotiations was simply they wanted a vacation. But there was nothing really serious coming out of this.

In the case of Mullah Mansour, the supposed No. 2 in the Taliban who turned out to be a Quetta shopkeeper posing as a leader of the Taliban, indicates that we know really very little of what's going on inside this movement. So lack of knowledge is not helpful when you're negotiating.

Finally and most importantly in terms of the problems with negotiating with the Taliban, what do the Taliban really want? Have they described what the future of Afghanistan they want, a future that involves democracy, that involves elections, that involves women going to work, that involves girls being educated, that involves rights for ethnic minorities? I don't think so.

These are all very, very big problems. Then let me now turn to opportunities, now that I've described the problems. The opportunities, of course, are any kinds of negotiations help gather information about the opposition. We can create splits in the movement. Hezb-e-Islami, Gulbuddin Hekmatyar's group, may do a deal. They're the sort of lowest hanging fruit. And once you do a deal with one aspect of the insurgency, you create the possibility of further splits.

Americans are tired of the war. As the chairman alluded to and as Senator Lugar alluded to, the Taliban have taken a lot of hits in southern Afghanistan. In any negotiation, the recognition of a mutually hurting stalemate is sort of a sine qua non.

The founding of the High Peace Council, yes, it has problems, but it's brought into the tent a number of spoilers from the Northern Alliance so that they're involved in a potential deal is a good thing. Recent reports in the Washington Post and Der Spiegel that negotiations are proceeding in Germany, third party sponsors of negotiations might include Turkey and Qatar, these are good things.

Finally, most importantly on the opportunities, three-quarters of Afghans favor a political solution, and this is very important. So the political context is there. That number goes up to 94 percent in Kandahar, so an overwhelming number of Afghans want negotiations.

Finally on a personal note, I've been visiting Afghanistan since the civil war in 1993 and I spent a fair amount of time under the Taliban and have a pretty good sense of what life was actually like there. I think it's going to be quite hard for this group. I think there's a classic problem in intelligence circles called mirror imaging, which you're both familiar with, which is the idea that other people will behave like us. In fact, the hard core of the Taliban are religious fanatics. When Mullah Omar awarded himself the title of

"commander of the faithful," he's not just the commander of the Taliban; he's the commander of all Muslims. And the history of negotiations with religious fanatics, particularly ones with delusions of grandeur, is not encouraging.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Bergen follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF PETER BERGEN

Senator Kerry, Senator Lugar, and other members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

My testimony will attempt to answer nine questions:

1. Why should the United States continue to fight against the Taliban in Afghanistan almost a decade after 9/11 and now that Osama bin Laden is dead?
2. Is progress being made in Afghanistan, both generally and against the Taliban?
3. What effect might the killing of bin Laden have on near- and long-term U.S. global security interests, and on core al-Qaeda's goals and capabilities?
4. What is the relationship between the Taliban and al-Qaeda?
5. How might that relationship be changed by the death of bin Laden?
6. What are the impediments to "reconciliation" with the Taliban leadership?
7. Given those impediments, why try and negotiate with the Taliban and are there reasons to think those negotiations might eventually work?
8. Might the Haqqani or Hezb-e-Islami (Gulbuddin Hekmatyar) factions of the Taliban be willing to consider a settlement?
9. There is an agglomeration of extremist groups operating in the lawless region near the Afghanistan-Pakistan border, including the Pakistani Taliban, al-Qaeda, and other affiliated and sectarian groups. How should policymakers prioritize which of these to work against?

* * * * * * *

1. Why should the United States continue to fight against the Taliban in Afghanistan almost a decade after 9/11 and now that Osama bin Laden is dead?

President Obama has publicly defined the task in Afghanistan rather narrowly, as preventing the return of al-Qaeda to the country; in short, a countersanctuary strategy.[1] Part of the reason for this relatively narrow public description of the Afghan strategy is, of course, political: there aren't many Americans who would countenance the return of al-Qaeda in Afghanistan.

But there are other reasons the United States remains in Afghanistan even if they don't have the political heft that invoking the threat from al-Qaeda does. First, conceding the return of the Taliban to power in part or the whole of Afghanistan would be a foreign policy reversal for the United States. Second, when the United States overthrows a government it has a moral obligation not to exit without setting the conditions for a slightly more stable and prosperous country. Third, when the Taliban were in power in Afghanistan they played host not just to al-Qaeda, but also to many other Islamist terrorist and insurgent groups from around the globe. Fourth, some kind of regional settlement in South Asia that encompasses Afghanistan will likely lower the risks of war between the nuclear-armed states of Pakistan and India. Fifth, and this is hard for many foreign policy "realists" to grasp: the Taliban are the Taliban. When they were in power in Afghanistan, their regime was characterized by its large-scale massacres of the Shia,[2] its incarceration of half the population in their homes, and a country that became the world capital of jihadist terrorism.

Evidence for what the Taliban are likely to do should they return to power in Afghanistan in some shape or form is provided by a controlled experiment on this question that has gone on over the past several years in Pakistan. In the onetime Pakistani tourist destination of Swat between 2008 and 2009 the Taliban imposed a reign of terror, beheading policemen whose bodies were left to rot in public, burning down girls' schools, and administering public lashings to women for supposed infractions such as adultery.[3] It was a formula that they had already followed for several years in the tribal areas of Pakistan, the home base of the Pakistani branch of the Taliban.

And the Taliban haven't changed their spots in Afghanistan either. According to a United Nation report released in March, of the some 2,800 civilian casualties of the war in 2010, three-quarters were caused by the Taliban.[4] The massacre at the Kabul Bank branch in the eastern city of Jalalabad earlier this year was emblematic of this trend. Footage of the February 19 attack was captured by the bank's security cameras and shows a Taliban fighter ordering Afghan civilians to enter a room and then firing on them. At least 40 people, mostly civilians, were killed in

the assault.[5] And for those who think that the Taliban have lightened up on one of their signature policies—preventing girls from being educated—consider that a concerted campaign of chemical weapon attacks has taken place against around a dozen girls schools across Afghanistan since the spring of 2009. Afghan girls have been poisoned with organophosphates, a nerve agent used in insecticides, in schools in Balkh and Kunduz in the north, and in Kabul, Ghazni, Kapisa, and Parwan in central Afghanistan. Those attacks have sickened and hospitalized hundreds.[6]

The recent evidence from Pakistan and Afghanistan shows that the notion that should the Taliban come back to power in parts of Afghanistan that they will suddenly morph into some kind of Pashtun version of the Rotary Club is a delusion. Despite this, earlier this year, George W. Bush's Ambassador to India, Robert Blackwill, writing in Foreign Affairs, made the argument that a modus vivendi could and should be reached with the Taliban: "Washington should accept that the Taliban will inevitably control most of the Pashtun south and east" and therefore the United States should accept that the de facto partition of Afghanistan is "the best alternative to strategic defeat."[7] It's strange that a diplomat who had spent years in South Asia was advocating partition in a part of the world where it is well known that the 1947 partition of India and Pakistan caused 1 million civilian deaths.[8] And not even the Taliban are calling for the partition of Afghanistan, which is an older nation than the United States. (The first Afghan state was founded in 1747).

The Blackwill plan was the most extreme expression of a now-common sentiment amongst the American foreign policy establishment: Let's just get it over with in Afghanistan, which is predicated on the belief (hope, really) that the Taliban are jus' sum' plain' ol' country folks who may not have the best manners in Central Asia, but nonetheless are men we can and should do business with because they represent our best exit strategy from the Afghan morass.

American liberals, who were vocal in their opposition to Taliban when they imposed a theocratic reign of terror on Afghanistan before 9/11, have been strikingly silent on the issue of what a return to power of the Taliban in some shape or form in Afghanistan would mean for the rights of women and ethnic minorities.

For those who say that Afghanistan is a conservative Islamic country and that therefore the Taliban's social policies just aren't that unusual, it's helpful to note that when the Taliban were in power there were 1 million kids in school and almost none of them were girls, while today there are 7 million kids in school and 37 percent are females.[9]

2. Is progress being made in Afghanistan, both generally and against the Taliban?

In addition to the sevenfold increase in the number of kids in school, positive developments in Afghanistan over the past several years have included the following: GDP growth was a robust 22 percent between 2009 and 2010;[10] access to some form of basic health care was available to around 9 percent of the population a decade ago and is now accessible to 85 percent;[11] the phone system barely existed before the U.S. occupation of Afghanistan, now one in three Afghans has a cell phone;[12] the Taliban had banned almost all forms of media other than their own "Voice of Sharia" radio network, while there are now "scores of radio stations, dozens of TV stations and some 100 active press titles," according to the BBC;[13] around 6 million Afghan refugees have returned home since the fall of the Taliban; and so crowded with cars and people has Kabul become that the city's epic pollution is now killing more Afghans than are dying in the war.[14]

Because of all the tangible ways that their lives are getting better 59 percent of Afghans say their country is going in the right direction.[15] By comparison, that metric is exactly reversed in the United States. In a New York Times poll released in April, 70 percent of Americans said their country is going in the wrong direction.[16] The positive feelings a majority of Afghans have about the way things are going help account for the surprisingly high marks that they continue to give the U.S. military after nearly a decade of occupation, which scored a 68-percent favorable rating among Afghans in a BBC/ABC poll released in December.[17] (In Iraq at the height of the war in 2007 BBC/ABC found that only 22 percent of Iraqis voiced support for the U.S. military presence in their country.)[18]

Afghans' faith in their future can be explained by the fact that they know that, despite all the problems that they face today—the corruption of the central government and the police and the resurgence of the Taliban—their lives are far better now than during the brutal Soviet occupation of the 1980s, the devastating civil war of the early 1990s, and the theocratic rule of the Taliban that followed.

This past fall U.S. military officials publicly asserted that many Taliban safe havens in Helmand and in Kandahar had been eliminated.[19] This is not only the assessment of the Pentagon, but the judgment of the International Council on Security and Development (ICOS), a think tank that has done field work in southern

Afghanistan for many years and has long been critical of Western policies there. ICOS issued a report in February observing, "NATO and Afghan forces now control a greater number of districts in Helmand and Kandahar than before," including key Taliban strongholds such as Marjah in Helmand and Arghandab in Kandahar.[20]

General David Petraeus told the Senate Armed Services Committee in March that in one recent 3-month period 360 insurgent leaders were killed or captured.[21] According to a wide range of observers, as a result the average age of Taliban commanders has dropped from 35 to 25 in the past year.[22] Some U.S. military officials believe this is a good thing, as the younger commanders are "less ideological," while Thomas Ruttig, one of the world's leading authorities on the Taliban, says that the reverse is the case: the younger Taliban are more rigid ideologically.[23]

The sharply stepped up military campaign against the Taliban has caused some hand-wringing that Petraeus isn't following counterinsurgency precepts, which have been grossly caricatured as winning "hearts and minds" (see "Three Cups of Tea"), as if counterinsurgency is some kind of advertising campaign to win loyalties. In reality, counterinsurgency is a set of commonsense precepts about how to avoid the kind of ham-handed tactics and repressive measures that will turn the bulk of the population against you, while simultaneously also applying well-calibrated doses of violence to defeat insurgents.

Another common critique of the stepped-up campaign against Taliban commanders is that the United States should not be killing those commanders at the same time it is saying that we should talk with them. This critique bears little relation to the history of the last two decades of Afghan warfare, in which all sides have constantly fought and talked with each other simultaneously. Indeed, the Karzai government has had substantive contacts with elements of the Taliban since as early as 2003, according to a former Afghan national security official familiar with those discussions.

An additional approach putting pressure on the Taliban are what the U.S. military terms Village Stability Operations, in which small teams of American Special Forces live permanently "among the population" in remote areas of provinces such as Uruzgan and Zabul where the insurgents once had unfettered freedom of movement. There the U.S. Special Forces are helping to train local community militiamen known as Afghan Local Police (ALP). The Government of Afghanistan has technically authorized 10,000 of them, but American officers believe that the numbers will rise to something more like 24,000.[24] One says, "ALP is the development that the Taliban most fear, we see it in the intelligence."

When Petraeus first arrived as the commander in Afghanistan last summer setting up the ALP was his first big fight with Karzai, who was concerned quite reasonably that arming tribal militias might replicate some of the warlordism that has plagued Afghanistan since the early 1990s. Karzai agreed to the program in July, and there are a number of measures in place that make it avoid some of the obvious pitfalls of setting up even more armed Afghan groups.[25] The program is not administered by the U.S. military but the Afghan Ministry of Interior, which keeps tabs on it through district police chiefs who are responsible for issuing guns to the community policemen. Candidates for the local police are selected by the local village shura (council), while everyone admitted to the program has to submit to biometric scans.

3. What effect will the killing of Osama bin Laden have on near- and long-term U.S. global security interests, and on core al-Qaeda's goals and capabilities?

After the fall of the Taliban, bin Laden didn't, of course, continue to exert day-to-day control over al-Qaeda, but statements from him have always been the most reliable guide to the future actions of jihadist movements around the world, and this remained the case even while he was on the run. In the past decade bin Laden issued more than 30 video- and audiotapes.[26] Those messages reached untold millions worldwide via television, the Internet, and newspapers. The tapes not only instructed al-Qaeda's followers to continue to kill Westerners and Jews; some also carried specific instructions that militant cells then acted on. In 2003, bin Laden called for attacks against members of the coalition in Iraq; subsequently terrorists bombed commuters on their way to work in Madrid and London. Bin Laden also called for attacks on the Pakistani state in 2007, which is one of the reasons that Pakistan had more than 50 suicide attacks that year. [27] In March 2008 bin Laden denounced the publication of cartoons of the Prophet Mohammed in a Danish newspaper, which he said would soon be avenged. Three months later, an al-Qaeda suicide attacker bombed the Danish Embassy in Islamabad, killing six.

Materials recovered from the Abbottabad compound in northern Pakistan where bin Laden was killed paint a picture of a leader deeply involved in tactical, operational, and strategic planning for al-Qaeda, and in communication with other leaders of the group and even the organization's affiliates overseas.[28]

Bin Laden exercised near-total control over al-Qaeda, whose members had to swear a religious oath personally to bin Laden, so ensuring blind loyalty to him. Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, the operational commander of the 9/11 attacks, outlined the dictatorial powers that bin Laden exercised over his organization: "If the Shura council at al-Qaeda, the highest authority in the organization, had a majority of 98 percent on a resolution and it is opposed by bin Laden, he has the right to cancel the resolution."[29] Bin Laden's son Omar recalls that the men who worked for al-Qaeda had a habit of requesting permission before they spoke with their leader, saying, "Dear prince: May I speak?"[30]

The death of bin Laden eliminates the founder of al-Qaeda, which has only enjoyed one leader since its founding in 1988, and it also eliminates the one man who provided broad, unquestioned strategic goals to the wider jihadist movement. Around the world, those who joined al-Qaeda in the past two decades have sworn baya, a religious oath of allegiance to bin Laden, rather than to the organization itself, in the same way that Nazi party members swore an oath of fealty to Hitler, rather than to Nazism. That baya must now be transferred to whoever the new leader of al-Qaeda is going to be.

Of course, even as the al-Qaeda organization withers there are pretenders to bin Laden's throne. The first is the dour Egyptian surgeon, Ayman al-Zawahiri, who is the deputy leader of al-Qaeda, and therefore technically bin Laden's successor. But Zawahiri is not regarded as a natural leader. and even among his fellow Egyptian militants Zawahiri is seen as a divisive force and so he is unlikely to be able to step into the role of the paramount leader of al-Qaeda and of the global jihadist movement that was occupied by bin Laden.[31] There is scant evidence that Zawahiri has the charisma of bin Laden, nor that he commands the respect bordering on love that was accorded to bin Laden by members of al-Qaeda.

Another possible leader of al-Qaeda is Saif al-Adel, also an Egyptian, who has played a role as a military commander of the terrorist group, and since 9/11 has spent many years living in Iran under some form of house arrest. Adel has been appointed the "caretaker" leader of the terrorist organization, according to Noman Benotman, a former leader of the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group, a militant organization that was once aligned with al-Qaeda, but in recent years has renounced al-Qaeda's ideology.[32]

Benotman, who has known the leaders of al-Qaeda for more than two decades and has long been a reliable source of information about the inner workings of the terrorist group, says that based on his personal communications with militants and discussions on jihadist forums, Adel has emerged as the interim leader of al-Qaeda as it reels from the death of its founder and eventually transitions, presumably, to the uncharismatic Zawahiri.

A wild card is that one of bin Laden's dozen or so sons—endowed with an iconic family name—could eventually rise to take over the terrorist group. Already Saad bin Laden, one of the oldest sons, has played a middle management role in al-Qaeda.[33]

One of the key issues that any future leader of al-Qaeda has to reckon with now is dealing with the fallout from the large quantities of sensitive information that were recovered by U.S. forces at the compound in Abbottabad where bin Laden was killed. That information is likely to prove damaging to al-Qaeda operations.

Jihadist terrorism will not, of course, disappear because of the death of bin Laden. Indeed, the Pakistan Taliban have already mounted attacks in Pakistan that they said were revenge for bin Laden's death,[34] but it is hard to imagine two more final endings to the "War on Terror" than the popular revolts against the authoritarian regimes in the Middle East and the death of bin Laden. No one in the streets of Cairo or Benghazi carried placards of bin Laden's face, and very few demanded the imposition of Taliban-like rule, al-Qaeda's preferred end state for the countries in the region.

If the Arab Spring was a large nail in the coffin of al-Qaeda's ideology, the death of bin Laden was an equally large nail in the coffin of al-Qaeda the organization.

4. What is the relationship between the Taliban and al-Qaeda?

There is plenty of evidence for the continuing cozy relationship between al-Qaeda and important factions of the Taliban: For much of the past decade al-Qaeda has been harbored largely by the Haqqani network, the ferocious Taliban militia based in Pakistan's tribal regions. According to a July 2009 WikiLeaks cable from the U.S. consulate in Peshawar, which abuts the Pakistani tribal regions, Jalaluddin Haqqani, the veteran jihadi commander who has been the longtime head of the Haqqani network, is "considered to have a close relationship" with Mullah Omar. Haqqani's relationship with bin Laden stretches back to the mid-1980s, according to the Palestinian journalist Jamal Ismail who worked with bin Laden doing this time period. Another Palestinian journalist, Abdel Bari Atwan, who spent days

interviewing bin Laden in 1996, points out that bin Laden did Mullah Omar a big favor when he introduced the Taliban leader to his old buddy Jalaluddin Haqqani, who later rose to become arguably the Taliban's most feared military commander.[35]

Cooperation between the Taliban and al-Qaeda can be seen in the suicide bombing that killed seven CIA officers and contractors in the American base at Khost in eastern Afghanistan on December 30, 2009. The suicide bomber, Humam Khalil Abu-Mulal al-Balawi, was a Jordanian doctor recruited by al-Qaeda.[36] Two months after Balawi's suicide attack al-Qaeda's video production arm released an interview with him videotaped some time before he died in which he laid out how he planned to attack the group of Agency officials using a bomb made from C–4.[37] In another prerecorded video, the chief of the Pakistani Taliban, Hakimullah Mehsud, appeared alongside Balawi saying the attack was revenge for U.S. drone strikes directed at the Taliban.[38]

The Taliban began to reemerge as a serious threat in Afghanistan in 2006, launching a serious campaign of suicide bombers and IED attacks. Sami Yousafzai, a leading reporter on the Taliban, has documented that they were taught these techniques by Arab jihadists. That same year Taliban commander Mullah Dadullah explained his links to al-Qaeda. "Osama bin Laden, thank God, is alive and in good health," he told CBS. "We are in contact with his top aides and sharing plans and operations with each other."[39] Three years later, Mustafa Abu Al-Yazid, one of al-Qaeda's founders, described his group's rapport with the Taliban during an interview, "We are on a good and strong relationship with them," he said, "and we frequently meet them."

U.S. officials such as CIA director Leon Panetta have publicly said that there are only a few dozen members of al-Qaeda in Afghanistan.[40] In addition, U.S. officials point to other "foreign fighters" operating in Afghanistan in particular in the east and to some degree in the north of the county; for instance, Uzbeks affiliated with the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, which is deemed a terrorist group by the U.S. Government.[41]

A briefing slide prepared by the U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA), which leaked out in January 2010, showed a map of insurgent groups operating in Afghanistan in which the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan was shown to have a presence in five provinces in northern and southern Afghanistan. The leaked DIA briefing asserts that al-Qaeda "provides facilitation, training, and some funding" to the Taliban in Afghanistan, while the Taliban also maintain a "mutually supportive relationship" with Chechen and Central Asian fighters.[42]

On April 26 NATO officials announced that the Saudi al-Qaeda leader, Abu Hafs al-Najdi, had been killed in an airstrike in Kunar province in northeastern Afghanistan. The NATO announcement noted that Najdi was one of 25 al-Qaeda leaders and fighters who had been killed in the past month.[43] This suggests that there are still a small but not insignificant number of al-Qaeda militants as well as other foreign fighters who continue to operate in Afghanistan.

A nuanced account of the Taliban-al-Qaeda relationship is provided by Anne Stenersen, a research fellow at the Norwegian Defense Research Establishment. In a paper for the New America Foundation last year she pointed out that al-Qaeda functions mostly in the east of Afghanistan because of its longstanding ties to the Taliban Haqqani Network that is prevalent in this region, while al-Qaeda and the Quetta Shura in southern Afghanistan have diverged strategically in the past decade.[44] Some of this is an accident of geography; when al-Qaeda leaders fled Tora Bora in eastern Afghanistan after the fall from power of the Taliban during the winter of 2001 they moved into the adjoining tribal regions of Pakistan, many hundreds of miles from the Quetta Shura's base in southwestern Pakistan, and into the welcoming arms of the Haqqani network. In short, al-Qaeda is embedded with the Haqqani Taliban, but not with the Mullah Omar Taliban.

5. How might the relationship between the Taliban and al-Qaeda be changed by the death of bin Laden?

Now that bin Laden is dead, there is a real opportunity for the Taliban to disassociate itself from al-Qaeda, as it was bin Laden who, sometime before the 9/11 attacks, swore an oath of allegiance to Taliban leader Mullah Omar as the Amīr al-Mu'minīn, "The Commander of the Faithful," a rarely invoked religious title that dates from around the time of the Prophet Mohammed.

Mullah Omar could now communicate to his followers that the new leader of al-Qaeda does not need to swear an oath of allegiance to him as "The Commander of the Faithful." This would be an important step for the Taliban to satisfy a key condition of peace talks with the U.S. and Afghan Governments; that they reject al-Qaeda, something that hitherto the Taliban has not done. If Mullah Omar does not take advantage of this opening in the near future, it is hard to imagine that he ever will.

6. What are the impediments to "reconciliation" with the Taliban's leadership?

There are nine significant problems.

First, who is there exactly to negotiate with in the Taliban? It's been a decade since their fall from power and the "moderate" Taliban who wanted to reconcile with the Afghan Government have already done so. They are the same group of Taliban who are constantly trotted out in any discussion of a putative Taliban deal: Mullah Zaeef, their former Ambassador to Pakistan; Wakil Ahmed Muttawakil, their Foreign Minister; and Abdul Hakim Mujahid, who was the Taliban representative in the United States before 9/11. This group was generally opposed to bin Laden well before he attacked the United States. Bin Laden told intimates that his biggest enemies in the world were the United States and the Taliban Foreign Ministry, which was trying to put the kibosh on his anti-Western antics in Afghanistan. And today the "moderate" already-reconciled Taliban don't represent the Taliban on the battlefield because they haven't been part of the movement for the past decade.

The key Taliban figure is still their leader, Mullah Omar, a.k.a., "The Commander of the Faithful." The title indicates that Mullah Omar is not just the leader of the Taliban, but also of all Muslims, suggesting that Mullah Omar is not only a religious fanatic, but also a fanatic with significant delusions of grandeur.[45] Negotiations with religious fanatics who have delusions of grandeur generally do not go well. Almost every country in the world—including the Taliban leader's quasi-patron, Pakistan—pleaded with Mullah Omar in the spring of 2001 not to blow up the giant Buddhas of Bamiyan, Afghanistan's greatest cultural patrimony. But he did so anyway. After 9/11, Mullah Omar was prepared to lose his entire regime on the point of principle that he would not give up bin Laden to the United States following the attacks on Manhattan and the Pentagon. And he did.

Since his regime fell, Mullah Omar has also shown no appetite for negotiation or compromise. He is joined in this attitude by some senior members of his movement, such as Maulavi Abdul Kabir, a Taliban leader in eastern Afghanistan, who said in January, "neither has there been any peace talk nor has any of the Islamic Emirate (the Taliban) shown any inclination toward it."[46]

Second, the Taliban has had 10 years to reject bin Laden and all his works, and they haven't done so. For this reason, Saudi Arabia, which has hosted "talks about talks" in Mecca between Afghan Government officials and some Taliban representatives,[47] has soured on the process. For the Saudi Government, which is squarely in al-Qaeda's gun sights, a public repudiation of al-Qaeda by the Taliban is a nonnegotiable demand. And it hasn't happened.

Third, "the Taliban" is really many Talibans, and so a deal with one insurgent group doesn't mean the end of the insurgency writ large. It's not clear that even Mullah Omar can deliver all of the Taliban that he nominally controls in southern Afghanistan, because they are often fissured into purely local groups, many of whom are a long way from Taliban headquarters across the border in Quetta, Pakistan. As Ambassador Richard Holbrooke commented 3 months before he died, "There's no Ho Chi Minh. There's no Slobodan Milosevic. There's no Palestinian Authority."[48] Instead, there are several leaders of the various wings of the insurgency, from the Quetta Shura in southern Afghanistan, to the Haqqani Network in the east, as well as smaller insurgent groups, such as Gulbuddin Hekmatyar's Hezb-e-Islami in the northeast.

Fourth, the history of "peace" deals with the Taliban in Pakistan shows that the groups can't be trusted. Deals between the Pakistani Government and the Taliban in Waziristan in 2005 and 2006 and in Swat in 2009 were merely preludes to the Taliban establishing their brutal "emirates," regrouping and then moving into adjoining areas to seize more territory.[49]

Fifth, the arrest in Pakistan last year of Mullah Baradar, the Taliban No. 2 who had been negotiating directly with Karzai, shows that the Pakistani military and government wants to retain a veto over any significant negotiations going forward.[50] That isn't necessarily a bad thing, as certainly Pakistan's legitimate interests in the post-American Afghanistan must be recognized, but it also demonstrates that negotiations with the Taliban will not be as straightforward as just having the Afghan Government and the insurgents at the negotiating table.

Sixth, another key player in any negotiations with the Taliban are the former leaders of the largely Tajik and Uzbek Northern Alliance who fought a bitter several-years war with the Taliban and who now occupy prominent positions in Afghanistan, for instance, the Minister of the Interior, Bismullah Khan, and Dr. Abdullah, Karzai's main rival for the Presidency in 2009, who is—at least for now—the most likely candidate to succeed Karzai in the 2014 Presidential elections. These leaders are not going to allow all they fought for to be reversed by a deal with the Taliban that gives them significant concessions on territory or principle. Dr. Abdullah is withering in his assessment of Karzai's olive branches to the Taliban

who Karzai has described as his "brothers," saying to me that this simply confuses "our own soldiers which are fighting" the Taliban.

Seventh, the several meetings over the past 3 years between Afghan officials and Taliban representatives to discuss "reconciliation" in Mecca and in the Maldives have hitherto produced a big zero. A senior U.S. military officer dismissed these talks as "reconciliation tourism," while an Afghan official joked with me that in landlocked Afghanistan, "Everybody wanted to go to the Maldives for a meeting."

Eighth, the debacle involving Mullah Akhtar Muhammad Mansour last year shows how much of a fog surrounds the whole reconciliation process.[51] Mullah Mansour was portrayed as one of the most senior of the Taliban leaders who was allegedly in direct negotiations with the Karzai government in the fall of 2010. Except it then turned out he wasn't Mullah Mansour at all, but a Quetta shopkeeper who had spun a good yarn about his Taliban credentials so he could pick up what a British Government report characterizes as "significant sums."[52]

Finally, and most importantly: what do the Taliban really want? It's relatively easy to discern what they don't want: international forces in Afghanistan. But other than their blanket demand for the rule of sharia law, the Taliban have not articulated their vision for the future of Afghanistan. Do they envision a democratic state with elections? Do they see a role for women outside the home? What about education for girls? What about ethnic minorities?

Richard Barrett, a British diplomat who heads the United Nations' group that monitors al-Qaeda and the Taliban, pointed out at a conference at the New America Foundation last year that "it's difficult to deal with an insurgent group, which doesn't actually put forward any real policy." A similar point was made by Mohammad Stanikhzai, the point person in the Afghan Government dealing with the Taliban, when I met with him in December, who explained, "For the governance, I don't think they [the Taliban] have a clear plan."

7. Given these problems, why try and negotiate with the Taliban, and are there reasons to think those negotiations might eventually work?

Reaching an accommodation with the Taliban is going to be quite difficult, but that doesn't, of course, mean that it isn't worth trying. Even if peace talks are not successful immediately, they can have other helpful effects, such as splitting the facade of Taliban unity. Even simple discussions about the future shape of negotiations can help sow dissension in the Taliban ranks, while if such discussions do move forward in even incremental steps more intelligence can be garnered about what exactly is going on inside the shadowy Taliban movement. Also, getting the Taliban to enter into any negotiations means that they will no longer get to occupy the moral high ground of fighting a supposed holy war, but are instead getting their hands dirty in more conventional political back-room deals.

Audrey Cronin of the National Defense University has systematically examined how and why terrorist/insurgent groups come to some kind of peace deal and has laid out some general principles about what that usually takes, which are worth considering in the context of Afghanistan.[53] First, there must be recognition on both sides that a military stalemate has been reached. (In the early 1980s the American academic William Zartman coined the term a "mutually hurting stalemate" to describe the moment when combatants will start considering a peace settlement.)[54] That recognition may now exist to some degree, given that over the past 6 months or so the Taliban have taken heavy losses in their heartlands of Kandahar, while the U.S. public has increasingly turned against what is already America's longest war. In March, 64 percent of Americans said the war was "not worth fighting," up from 41 percent in 2007.[55]

An important shift in the Obama administration's stance on Taliban negotiations was recently signaled by Secretary of State Hillary Clinton. While giving the Richard Holbrooke memorial lecture at the Asia Society in New York on February 18, Clinton said that previous American conditions for talks with the Taliban—that they lay down their arms, reject al-Qaeda, and embrace the Afghan Constitution—were no longer preconditions that the Taliban had to meet before negotiations could begin, but were "necessary outcomes" of the final peace process.[56] Judging by the lack of media attention in the States at the time to this shift, this subtle but important distinction was probably also not well grasped by the Taliban, but it does represent a somewhat more flexible American position about dealing with the Taliban. Indeed, U.S. officials are already in some kind of talks with Taliban representatives, according to reports in the New Yorker and Washington Post.[57]

Similarly the Afghan Government has now adopted "reconciliation" as its official policy, setting up a "High Peace Council" in the fall to help facilitate those negotiations, a body that is made up, in part, of a number of leaders from the former Northern Alliance who are less likely to act as spoilers of a peace process if they feel they are a part of it.

Successful negotiations often require a capable and trusted third-party sponsor. This condition seems also to be lacking right now: the Saudis are, at best, lukewarm about facilitating talks with the Taliban; the Pakistanis are not really trusted by any of the parties in the conflict, even by much of the Taliban, and while the United Nations may have some role to play in negotiations, Taliban attacks on U.N. personnel in Afghanistan last year don't suggest this avenue has much immediate promise. (Murmurings about a role for Turkey in facilitating a deal may have some potential given that Turkey has an Islamist government and is also a key member of NATO.)

A peace deal also generally requires strong leadership on both the government and insurgent sides to force a settlement. Neither Hamid Karzai nor Mullah Omar fit this particular bill. Finally, Cronin explains that the overall political context must be favorable to negotiations for a deal to succeed. Here there is some real hope: While fewer then one in ten Afghans have a favorable view of the Taliban, a large majority is in favor of negotiating with them. Nationally, around three-quarters of Afghans favor talks, while in Kandahar the number goes up to a stratospheric 94 percent.[58]

All that said, the bottom line on the Taliban reconciliation process is that nothing of any real note is currently happening. According to a Western official familiar with the record of discussions with the Taliban, the chances of a deal with the Taliban similar to the Dayton Accords that ended the Balkans war in the mid-1990s or the Good Friday Agreement that ended the IRA campaign against the British Government are "negligible" for the foreseeable future. The official says that Mullah Omar needs his council of ulema (religious scholars) to sign off on a peace deal and there is "no sign of this right now." Senior U.S. military officials tell me that it is their view that Mullah Omar is living at least some of the time in the southern Pakistani megacity of Karachi.

8. Might the Haqqani or Hezb-e-Islami (Gulbuddin Hekmatyar) factions of the Taliban be willing to consider a settlement?

This is relatively plausible given that Hezb-e-Islami (Party of Islam) has long shown a far greater inclination to engage in conventional politics than the other insurgent groups. Hezb-e-Islami has a more nuanced take than other insurgent groups about what its preconditions are for talks with the Afghan Government; while much of the Taliban want foreign forces out before real talks can begin, Hezb-e-Islami has indicated that talks can begin in parallel with a timetable for withdrawal being agreed upon. For the moment, the Haqqanis are probably irreconcilable as they are too close to al-Qaeda.

9. There is an agglomeration of extremist groups operating in the lawless region near the Afghanistan-Pakistan border, including the Pakistani Taliban, al-Qaeda, and other affiliated and other sectarian groups. How should policymakers prioritize which of these to work against?

Policymakers should prioritize those South Asian groups that now threaten the West. One of bin Laden's most toxic legacies is that even terrorist groups that don't call themselves "al-Qaeda" have adopted his ideology. According to Spanish prosecutors, the late leader of the Pakistani Taliban, Baitullah Mehsud, sent a team of would-be suicide bombers to Barcelona to attack the subway system there in January 2008. A Pakistani Taliban spokesman confirmed this in a videotaped interview in which he said that those suicide bombers "were under pledge to Baitullah Mehsud" and were sent because of the Spanish military presence in Afghanistan.

In 2009 the Pakistani Taliban trained an American recruit for an attack in New York. Faisal Shahzad, who had once worked as a financial analyst in the accounting department at the Elizabeth Arden cosmetics company in Stamford, CT, travelled to Pakistan where he received 5 days of bombmaking training from the Taliban in the tribal region of Waziristan. Armed with this training and $12,000 in cash, Shahzad returned to Connecticut where he purchased a Nissan Pathfinder. He placed a bomb in the SUV and detonated it in Times Square on May 1, 2010, around 6 p.m., when the sidewalks were thick with tourists and theatergoers. The bomb, which was designed to act as a fuel-air explosive, luckily was a dud and Shahzad was arrested 2 days later as he tried to leave JFK airport for Dubai.[59]

Also based in the Pakistani tribal regions are a number of other jihadist groups allied to both the Taliban and al-Qaeda, such as the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan and the Islamic Jihad Union that have trained dozens of Germans for attacks in Europe. Two Germans and a Turkish resident in Germany, for instance, trained in the tribal regions and then planned to bomb the massive U.S. Ramstein Airbase in Germany in 2007. Before their arrests, the men had obtained 1,600 pounds of industrial strength hydrogen peroxide, enough to make a number of large bombs.[60]

The Mumbai attacks of 2008 showed that bin Laden's ideas about attacking Western and Jewish targets had also spread to Pakistani militant groups such as Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), which had previously focused only on Indian targets. Over a 3-day period in late November 2008 LeT carried out multiple attacks in Mumbai targeting five-star hotels housing Westerners and a Jewish-American community center. The Pakistani- American David Headley played a key role in LeT's massacre in Mumbai, traveling to the Indian financial capital on five extended trips in the 2 years before the attacks. There Headley made videotapes of the key locations later attacked by the 10 LeT gunmen.[61]

Sometime in 2008, Headley hatched a plan to attack the Danish newspaper Jyllands-Posten, which 3 years earlier had published cartoons of the Prophet Mohammed that were deemed to be offensive by many Muslims. In January 2009 Headley traveled to Copenhagen, where he reconnoitered the Jyllands-Posten newspaper on the pretext that he ran an immigration business that was looking to place some advertising in the paper. Following his trip to Denmark, Headley met with Ilyas Kashmiri in the Pakistani tribal regions to brief him on his findings. Kashmiri ran a terrorist organization, Harakat-ul-Jihad Islami, closely tied to al-Qaeda. Headley returned to Chicago in mid-June 2009 and was arrested there 3 months later as he was preparing to leave for Pakistan again. He told investigators that he was planning to kill the Jyllands-Posten's cultural editor who had first commissioned the cartoons, as well as the cartoonist Kurt Westergaard who had drawn the cartoon he found most offensive; the Prophet Mohammed with a bomb concealed in his turban.[62]

One of the more predictable foreign policy challenges of the next years is a "Mumbai II": a large-scale attack on a major Indian city by a Pakistani militant group that kills hundreds. The Indian Government showed considerable restraint in its reaction to the provocation of the Mumbai attacks in 2008. Another such attack, however, would likely produce considerable political pressure on the Indian Government to "do something." That something would likely involve incursions over the border to eliminate the training camps of Pakistani militant groups with histories of attacking India. That could lead in turn to a full-blown war for the fourth time since 1947 between India and Pakistan. Such a war would involve the possibility of a nuclear exchange and the certainty that Pakistan would move substantial resources to its eastern border and away from fighting the Taliban on its western border, relieving pressure on all the militant groups based there, including al-Qaeda.

The Pakistani Taliban, Lashkar-e-Taiba, Harakat-ul-Jihad Islami, the Islamic Jihad Union and the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan are all based or have a significant presence in Pakistan's tribal regions and have track records of trying to attack Western and/or American targets and should therefore all be considered threats to American interests.

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The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much.

Mr. Pillar.

STATEMENT OF PAUL PILLAR, PH.D., DIRECTOR OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND FACULTY MEMBER, CENTER FOR PEACE AND SECURITY STUDIES, GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY, WASHINGTON, DC

Dr. PILLAR. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Afghanistan-Pakistan region has understandably been linked in American minds with extremism and terrorism for quite some time, but this link is not based on the inherent qualities of the region or the conflicts that bedevil it. There is no intrinsic connection between Afghanistan and international terrorism. In fact, Afghan nationals have been conspicuously rare in the ranks of international terrorists. Najibullah Zazi, whom you mentioned in your opening statement, Mr. Chairman, is a rare exception, but even he left Afghanistan at age 7 and lived in the United States since he was 14.

What we know today as the Afghan Taliban constitute a highly insular, inward-looking group that is concerned overwhelmingly with the political and social order of Afghanistan; the leadership, that is, is so concerned. It concerns itself with the United States insofar as the United States interferes with its plans for that political and social order. The motives of the rank and file who have taken up arms under the Taliban label are at least as locally

focused as those of the leadership, and probably hardly any of them have any perspectives that reach beyond Afghanistan's borders.

The key point, in other words, is that the Afghan Taliban are not an international terrorist group. The connection between Afghan Taliban and al-Qaeda is an aspect largely of 1990s-era history. Back then, before 9/11, bin Laden provided material and manpower assistance to the Taliban as it waged a civil war against the Northern Alliance, and of course the Taliban provided hospitality to bin Laden in return. It was largely a marriage of convenience, even though they both had radical, although by no means identical, ideologies.

As for any prospect of the Taliban and al-Qaeda reestablishing anything like that marriage that they had back in the 1990s, Taliban leaders are acutely aware that the biggest setback their movement ever suffered, their being swept from power in the opening weeks of Operation Enduring Freedom, was a direct result of an operation conducted by al-Qaeda. They have no incentive to do anything to facilitate a repeat of that experience.

Besides, both the Taliban and al-Qaeda are well aware of the fact that the standards for the use of military force, United States military force, in Afghanistan have changed drastically since pre-9/11 days. Unlike back then, the establishment of anything remotely resembling al-Qaeda's earlier presence in Afghanistan would become a target for unrestricted use of United States air power, and that would be true whether or not the United States was conducting a counterinsurgency on the ground.

I agree with Peter that bin Laden's death does affect the calculations of the Taliban's leadership, mainly for the reasons that Peter mentioned: that the previous gratitude of Mullah Omar and the Taliban leadership was more to bin Laden personally than to the al-Qaeda group. I would just add that probably also entering the Taliban leaders' calculations are the implication of the raid against bin Laden for what the United States is able and willing to do to hit targets important to it, even targets nestled deep inside Pakistan. And it can't have escaped the Taliban leaders' notice with regard to what that means for what we might do in Quetta or elsewhere.

Finally, a word about what the successful U.S. operation against bin Laden indicates regarding the role of U.S. military forces in counterterrorism, including what this means for collecting the necessary intelligence. The raid at Abbottabad deep inside Pakistan illustrated that United States military boots on the ground are not necessary for even the precise type of intelligence required for such an operation. The same point's been, of course, repeatedly demonstrated by the drone strikes in the Northwest.

Collection of intelligence is certainly an important part of counterinsurgency, but it is almost all intelligence pertinent to the counterinsurgency itself, rather than intelligence relating to terrorism that would hit the United States elsewhere. The intelligence work that reportedly underlay the successful operation was typical of the work aimed at terrorist targets. It involved piecing together fragments of information from a variety of technical and human sources and following up leads through intelligence and law enforcement resources.

Interrogation of captured detainees is often part of that mix, but the most important detainees, such as 9/11 mastermind Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, have been captured, not on a battlefield in the course of an insurgency, but instead as the result of themselves having been the targets of this kind of painstaking multisource intelligence work.

Clearly, the raid demonstrated the usefulness of nearby military assets, but those are not the large forces involved in a counter-insurgency. Rather, they involve drone bases, bases for launching the kind of raid that took place at Abbottabad, and that is something far different.

Thank you and I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Dr. Pillar follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF PAUL R. PILLAR

South Asia, and more particularly the portion of it encompassing Afghanistan and Pakistan, has come to be associated strongly with extremism and terrorism. That association is understandable, given the connection of the area with one of the most traumatic events in U.S. history. The lines of contention in the region are complex, however. Different dimensions of conflict there, such as between moderation and extremism, or what may pose a terrorist threat to the United States and what does not, do not coincide with each other.

THE AFPAK REGION AND TERRORISM

The connection of this region with militant Islamist terrorism is rooted in the insurgency against the Soviets in Afghanistan in the 1980s. That insurgency became the biggest and most prominent jihad, attracting militant Muslims from many different countries. Although the anti-U.S. terrorist group we came to know as al-Qaeda did not develop as such until the late 1990s, its connection with Afghanistan and South Asia is based on the earlier effort against the Soviets. When Osama bin Laden left Sudan to take up residence in Afghanistan in 1996, he was returning to the scene of his earlier contribution, which was chiefly logistical, in helping the Afghan insurgents to defeat the Red Army.

There is no intrinsic connection between Afghanistan and international terrorism. In fact, Afghan nationals are conspicuously absent from the ranks of international terrorists. A rare exception was Najibullah Zazi, who was arrested in 2009 for allegedly plotting to bomb the New York City transit system. But even Zazi had left Afghanistan with his family for Pakistan when he was 7 years old, and he had lived in the United States since he was 14.

Pakistan has developed its own connections with international terrorism. This has included groups, most notably Lashkar-e-Taiba, with some capability to operate far afield. But the primary focus is still within South Asia, and specifically on the Kashmir dispute and other aspects of confrontation with India.

In short, the link between this region and international terrorism is not based on inherent qualities of the region or of the conflicts that bedevil it. Instead it is more of a historical accident related to an attempt by the Soviet Union to quell an insurgency in a bordering state, with the link greatly enhanced in American minds by the residence in Afghanistan—10 years and more ago—of people associated with the 9/11 terrorist attack.

Current violence in Afghanistan is a continuation of an Afghan civil war that began after a coup by Marxist-Leninists in 1978 and, although the lineup of protagonists has changed from time to time, has never really stopped. After the departure of the Soviets in 1989, the fall of the pro-Soviet Najibullah regime in 1992, and internecine fighting among the warlords who had pursued the insurgency, a new movement known as the Taliban—benefiting from Pakistani backing and the support of an Afghan public disgusted by the warlords' violent squabble—asserted control by the mid-1990s over all but the northern tier of the country. The civil war continued as a fight between the Taliban and a mostly non-Pashtun collection of militias known as the Northern Alliance. The intervention in late 2001 of a U.S.-led coalition, in what we call Operation Enduring Freedom, was a tipping of the balance in this civil war. It was enough of a tip for the Northern Alliance to overrun Kabul and to drive the Taliban from power.

The current phase of the Afghan civil war, although commonly seen as a fight between the internationally backed government of Hamid Karzai and a terrorist-

associated Afghan Taliban, is a far more complicated affair with multiple dimensions. The ethnic element is a large part of the conflict, with the Taliban largely Pashtun and other ethnic groups having a major role in the government forces. Other relevant divides are between Sunni and Shia and between rural interests and the urban elite.

THE AFGHAN TALIBAN

The Afghan Taliban constitute a highly insular, inward-looking movement whose leadership is concerned overwhelmingly with the political and social order of Afghanistan. It concerns itself with the United States only insofar as the United States interferes with its plans for that political and social order. It is a loosely organized movement in which the leadership group known as the Quetta Shura, led by Mullah Omar, is the most important but not the sole point of decisionmaking.

The motives of the rank and file who have taken up arms under the Taliban label are diverse and at least as locally focused as those of the leadership. Those motives include assorted grievances such as ones associated with collateral damage from military operations and resentment over what is seen as foreign military occupation. Probably few of the rank and file are driven primarily by a religiously based desire to remake the Afghan political order, and hardly any of them have perspectives that reach beyond Afghanistan's borders.

The Afghan Taliban are not an international terrorist group. They have not conducted terrorist operations outside Afghanistan. There is nothing in their record or their objectives that suggests that they will.

THE TALIBAN AND AL-QAEDA

The connection between the Afghan Taliban and al-Qaeda is an aspect of 1990s-era history. As the Taliban leaders were in the midst of their war against the Northern Alliance, and bin Laden was establishing a new home for himself and his followers after leaving Sudan, each side had something to offer the other. Bin Laden provided resources and manpower to the Taliban's prosecution of the civil war. The Taliban provided bin Laden hospitality. Although the two sides both had radical (though hardly identical) Islamist ideologies, the relationship was largely a marriage of convenience, and not without frictions.

The basis for the marriage is largely gone. The Taliban cannot provide the hospitality they did when they were the government of three-fourths of Afghanistan. Bin Laden (before his death) and what is left of his organization within the region can provide little material support. As U.S. officials have repeatedly observed, there is minimal al-Qaeda presence in Afghanistan, with personnel numbering only in the scores.

Any prospect for the Taliban and al-Qaeda to reestablish anything like the relationship they had in the years prior to 9/11 is severely constrained by the changes (some of them irreversible) that have since taken place in all of the parties concerned: the Taliban, al-Qaeda, and the United States. Taliban leaders are acutely aware that the biggest setback their movement has ever suffered—their being swept from power in the opening weeks of Operation Enduring Freedom—was a direct response to an al-Qaeda operation. They have no incentive to do anything that would facilitate a repeat of that experience. Al-Qaeda leaders are also unlikely to perceive an advantage in having more of a presence on the northwest side of the Durand Line than they already do on the southeast side of it. This is especially so because the Taliban and al-Qaeda alike know that the standards for use of U.S. military force in Afghanistan have changed drastically since pre-9/11 days. Unlike back then, the reestablishment of anything remotely resembling al-Qaeda's earlier presence in Afghanistan would become a target for unrestricted use of U.S. air power. This would be true whether or not the United States was still waging a counterinsurgency on the ground in Afghanistan. And such use of force would be far greater than the still major restrictions on anything the United States can do militarily in Pakistan.

THE AFPAK THEATER AND TERRORIST THREATS TO THE UNITED STATES

Bin Laden never intended whatever organization he controlled to be the entire story as far as jihadist terrorism is concerned. The very name of his group—al-Qaeda, or "The Base"—implies that it would instead be a foundation or starting point from which bigger things would grow. This in fact is what happened. The overall violent jihadist movement to which the name "al-Qaeda" is customarily but loosely applied now goes well beyond anything bin Laden controlled or that his surviving associates in South Asia have been directing. Bin Laden's role in recent years was far more as a source of inspiration, ideology, and ideas (including operational

ideas) than command and control. This role was confirmed by what has so far become publicly known about the material seized in the raid at Abbottabad.

Most of the initiative, planning, and preparations for terrorist operations under the al-Qaeda label in recent years has come from outside South Asia. Some of it has come from formally named affiliates—most notably, though not exclusively, from the Yemen-based group calling itself Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula. Some has come from less formally affiliated groups and individuals, including during the past few years several individuals in the United States. Even though "links" are sometimes traced back to South Asia, the initiative is largely coming from the periphery.

This pattern implies that the situation on the ground in the AfPak region is not one of the more important factors determining the degree of terrorist threat to Americans. To the extent that control of a piece of real estate matters, whether that real estate is in Afghanistan is hardly critical. Other places, such as Yemen, are available. This is in addition to the question of how much the control of any piece of real estate affects terrorist threats. A lesson from terrorist operations in recent years—including 9/11, most of the preparations for which took place well away from South Asia, including in Western cities—is that the effect is less than that of many other factors shaping terrorist threats, and that virtual space is more important than physical space in planning and coordinating terrorist operations. The point is not that terrorist groups will not use physical space when they have it—they do—but that it is not one of the more important determinants of how capable they are and how much of a threat they pose.

IMPACT OF BIN LADEN'S DEATH

The demise of bin Laden ends a period of well over a decade in which this most wanted of men was able in effect to thumb his nose at the United States and the West merely by staying at large and alive for so long. As such, his removal has dealt a psychological blow to his followers. Revelation of some of the circumstances in which he had been living and operating (or not operating) may also help to lower somewhat his standing even in death. For reasons mentioned earlier, the overall impact of bin Laden's death on the terrorist threat facing the United States is not as great as the enormous reaction to this event would suggest. The national catharsis that the killing of bin Laden involved is understandable, however, and undoubtedly affects the political environment in which further decisions within the United States about the AfPak theater will be taken.

Bin Laden's departure will affect decisions within South Asia as well, and particularly the Taliban leadership's calculations regarding al-Qaeda and negotiations to resolve the conflict in Afghanistan. Any sense of debt among Mullah Omar and the Taliban leaders, dating back to the assistance that bin Laden gave them in the 1990s, was more to bin Laden personally than to his group. With bin Laden gone, the Afghan Taliban probably feel freer than before to renounce any prospect of future ties with what is left of al-Qaeda. For the Taliban leaders, al-Qaeda now means to them less a former ally in past phases of the civil war and more a source of potential trouble, with shades of the enormous trouble that al-Qaeda caused the Taliban in 2001.

Probably also entering the Taliban leaders' calculations are the implications of the raid against bin Laden for what the United States is able and willing to do to hit targets important to it, even targets nestled deep inside Pakistan. What the United States did at Abbottabad could be done as well at Quetta or elsewhere. This fact may also incline the Taliban leaders more toward negotiations because of reduced confidence in their own security during an indefinite continuation of the conflict. Factoring in the Pakistani military's likely thinking—following the embarrassment of Abbottabad, any reduced leverage of Pakistan against the United States, and what this may mean regarding future hospitality in Pakistan—would make the Taliban leaders even less sure of being able to wage their insurgency indefinitely from havens beyond the Durand Line. In brief, the net effect of bin Laen's death has probably been to improve the opportunities for negotiations to wind down the war in Afghanistan.

MILITARY FORCES AND COUNTERTERRORISM

The successful U.S. operation against bin Laden sheds additional light on the role of U.S. military forces in counterterrorism, including with regard to the collection of necessary intelligence. Military force is one of several tools that can be used for counterterrorism, intelligence being another one. It can be used in several specific ways for counterterrorist purposes, ranging from the elimination of a terrorist leader, as was the case with the bin Laden operation, to striking back at a state

that has perpetrated a terrorist act. And of course, the United States maintains and uses military forces for many other functions besides counterterrorism. Today in Afghanistan—although Operation Enduring Freedom began as a direct and justified response to a terrorist act—U.S. military forces and their coalition partners are performing some of those other functions, which involve trying to stabilize the Afghan state and waging a counterinsurgency that is part of the current phase of the Afghan civil war.

The raid at Abbottabad, deep inside Pakistan, illustrated that U.S. military boots on the ground are not necessary for even the precise type of intelligence required for such an operation. The same point has been repeatedly demonstrated by the strikes against other terrorist targets with missiles launched from unmanned aircraft over northwest Pakistan. There is no reason to suppose that the forces involved in waging a counterinsurgency, which are large in number and focused on securing territory and defeating insurgents, will be a significant factor in collecting intelligence on international terrorism. It is not as if insurgents who are observed or captured on the battlefield are, when they are not waging a guerrilla war, involved in hatching international terrorist plots or even have access to those who do. Collection of intelligence is certainly an important part of counterinsurgency, but it is almost all intelligence pertinent to the counterinsurgency itself, not intelligence having to do with the sort of terrorism that might otherwise threaten Americans.

The intelligence work that reportedly underlay the successful operation against bin Laden was typical of the work aimed at terrorist targets, although obviously the very high priority of this particular target meant that disproportionate time, effort, and resources were devoted to it. The work entails the exploitation of fragmentary reporting from a variety of technical and human sources. It also entails painstaking following up of leads through intelligence and law enforcement resources. Interrogation of detainees sometimes contributes to the mix, although the most important detainees, such as 9/11 mastermind Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, have been captured not on a battlefield in the midst of an insurgency but instead as the result of themselves having been the targets of the same kind of painstaking, multisource intelligence work.

The raid at Abbottabad points to the value of nearby military assets, but they are assets of a very specialized sort. They include staging areas or bases for the operation of drones or the launching of raids. They include highly skilled forces specially trained to accomplish the sort of task the SEALs did at bin Laden's compound. These are assets far different in size from a counterinsurgency force charged with securing large amounts of territory.

A final consideration to remember in any discussion of the use of military force in counterterrorism is how such use may affect broader perceptions and emotions that in turn affect the propensity of some individuals to resort to terrorism, including anti-U.S. terrorism. The effects include resentment and anger in the areas immediately affected, particularly over unavoidable collateral damage to civilians and their property. We have seen much of this in the war in Afghanistan, and it has been reflected in the increased numbers of those willing to take up arms under the banner of the Taliban. The effects also include lending credibility to the fraudulent, but unfortunately influential, extremist narrative according to which the United States is determined to kill Muslims, occupy their lands, and plunder their resources.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much, Dr. Pillar.

Dr. Fair.

STATEMENT OF C. CHRISTINE FAIR, PH.D., ASSISTANT PROFESSOR, CENTER FOR PEACE AND SECURITY STUDIES, GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY, WASHINGTON, DC

Dr. FAIR. Thank you, Senator Kerry, Senator Lugar, and esteemed colleagues, for the opportunity to discuss Pakistan's militant landscape, with particular focus upon Lashkar-e-Taiba as I was requested to do.

As you know, Pakistan has raised and nurtured a number of militant groups, Lashkar-e-Taiba being just one, to operate in India and in Afghanistan. These are distinct from the Pakistani Taliban, which has been ravaging the state, although part of the Pakistan Taliban does draw personnel from rebel erstwhile proxies. Rather

than speaking of militants generally, I have focused upon the differences across these groups, to understand why Pakistan will not abandon Lashkar-e-Taiba in particular.

To state at the outset, none of the groups that I will discuss will be significantly and adversely affected by Osama bin Laden's demise. When we disaggregate this complex militant market, we see that these Islamist militant groups differ significantly in their theological orientations and this, as I'm going to argue, is important.

Al-Qaeda in Pakistan and elsewhere is Wahhabi. The Afghan Taliban are Deobandi. The Kashmiri groups actually draw from a number of traditions, including Hizb-ul-Mujahideen, which is Jamaat-e-Islami; a number of Deobandi groups, such as Jaish-e-Mohammed, Hargatho Jihad Islami and so forth, and Lashkar-e-Taiba, which is Ahl-e-Hadith in its orientation. In addition, there are sectarian groups. This is almost exclusively Deobandi—who are targeting Shia in Pakistan. They include the Besa Bey Pakistan and Lashkar-e-Jhungvi.

In addition, these groups kill other Sunni Muslims, such as Sufis or Barelvis. They also attack Ahmediyyas and non-Muslims. Then finally, there is the Tehreek-e-Taliban-e-Pakistan, or the Pakistani Taliban. They are also Deobandi. The Pakistan-based Deobandi groups, such as Lashkar-e-Jhungvi, are important components of this organization. It's important to note that they are not the same as the Afghan Taliban, although at the level of specific commanders there is some overlap.

There are a number of refinements to this gross aggregation, which I provide in my written statement, and I have a table summarizing the same.

To understand LeT's utility to Pakistan, we need to understand how it differs from these other groups. First, all of the groups that have split and rebeled under the banner of the Pakistan Taliban are Deobandi. These groups are the closest to al-Qaeda. Lashkar-e-Taiba is not Deobandi. It has remained loyal to the state. It has never attacked Pakistani targets or any international entities within the state. It exclusively operates outside of Pakistan.

Finally, whereas the state has taken on some militant groups in Pakistan, that is to say part of the Pakistani Taliban and al-Qaeda, it has only marginally and cosmetically acted against Lashkar-e-Taiba. And I have detailed the various ways in which the state continues to support Lashkar-e-Taiba in my written statement.

In contrast to the Lashkar-e-Taiba, these Deobandi groups will kill anyone that they deem to be at odds with them and their interpretation of Islam. As I explain in my written statement, there is a specific theological term for this and these individuals are called munafiqin. It sounds technical, but it's important.

Understanding this antimunafiqin violence perpetrated by the Deobandi groups is critical to understanding why Pakistan will not abandon Lashkar-e-Taiba. Per the group's manifesto, which I have analyzed and translated from the Urdu, Lashkar-e-Taiba is nonsectarian and it is committed to Pakistan's integrity. It denounces killing Pakistanis of different confessions and it argues that jihadis should focus on the external enemies, or kafirs; i.e., us, India, and so forth.

Lashkar-e-Taiba draws most of its recruits from Deobandis and other sectarian groups. This allows them to indoctrinate them into this world view, and since it deploys relatively few people to Kashmir this is an important part of its domestic outreach mission. Plus, Lashkar-e-Taiba will become more important to the Pakistani state as its internal security continues to degrade at the hands of these Deobandi groups.

What then are the options for the United States? Containing Pakistan is not feasible and attempting to do so isn't desirable. Pakistan simply has too many asymmetric retaliatory options. The United States instead should work to contain the threats of these Pakistani groups, and I lay out a number of proposals in my written statement. Mostly they focus on Immigration, Treasury, working with the U.N. and other partners on intelligence operations, law enforcement, and drawing across the different combatant commands where LeT operates, such as EUCOM, CENTCOM, and PACOM.

The goals of this should be to deny these groups freedom of operation in the United States and elsewhere. Admittedly, this will be difficult to do as long as the United States retains a large COIN footprint in Afghanistan. It will be nearly impossible to do if the United States pulls out of Pakistan.

Finally, because the Pakistani and other diaspora communities as well as converts to Islam remain an important source of financial support to LeT and other groups, as well as recruits for international operations, the United States and others must forge sensitive policies that consider the diaspora as an important source of insecurity while ensuring that innocent persons are not singled out without cause.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Dr. Fair follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF C. CHRISTINE FAIR

INTRODUCTION

Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) is the most lethal terrorist group operating in and from South Asia. LeT was founded in 1989 in Afghanistan with help from Pakistan's external intelligence agency, the Inter-services Intelligence Directorate (ISI). Since 1990 it began operations in India. Until Thanksgiving weekend in November 2008, U.S. policymakers tended to dismiss LeT as India's problem—hardly that of the United States. However, on that weekend, LeT made its debut as an international terrorist organization when it launched a multisite siege of India's port city of Mumbai that lasted some 4 days. The attack, which claimed 166 lives—including several Americans and Israelis—was reported without halt on global media. It was the first time LeT had targeted non-Indian civilians. However, the group had been attacking U.S. troops and its international and Afghan allies in Afghanistan since 2004.[1] Revelations that David Headley Coleman (nee Daood Gilani), an American citizen of Pakistani origin, facilitated the attack has galvanized renewed fears about American homegrown terrorism and the ability of LeT to attack the American homeland.[2] Headley's ties to an al-Qaeda leader, Ilyas Kashmiri, have furthered speculation about LeT's ties to al-Qaeda.[3] Rightly or wrongly, some American officials believe it is only a matter of when LeT will strike a devastating attack on U.S. soil, rather than if.[4]

Scholars of South Asian security and media analysts explain Pakistan's reliance upon LeT—and a raft of other groups—as a response to its enduring rivalry with India over the disputed territory of Kashmir specifically and deep neuralgic fears about Indian intentions toward Pakistan more generally.[5] Lacking military, diplomatic, or political options to resolve its security competition with India, Pakistan has developed a series of proxies that operate in India and Afghanistan, with presumably plausible deniability. Pakistan's activities and use of militants in Afghani-

stan stems directly from Pakistan's fears about India and a desire to prevent it from developing influence and deepening its capabilities of fomenting insurgency along the border I Pakistan (e.g., in Balochistan, the Federally Administered Tribal Areas, and Khyber Pakhtunkha).

This widely held explanation for Pakistan's reliance upon LeT among other Islamist militants results in policy recommendations that stress resolution of the enduring rivalry between India and Pakistan as a necessary if insufficient condition for Pakistan to strategically abandon its Islamist proxies. Inevitably, calls are made for international intervention to encourage both sides to reach some accommodation.[6] Moreover, this has led to specific arguments that Afghanistan will be stabilized only when the status of Kashmir is resolved as this alone will permit Pakistan to relax its aggressive efforts to manage efforts there with Islamist proxies, including the Afghan Taliban, the Jalaluddin Haqqani and Gulbuddin Hekmatyar networks, LeT among others.[7]

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

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

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

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

DISAGREGRATING PAKISTAN'S MILITANT MARKET[9]

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

- Al-Qaeda (in Pakistan): Al-Qaeda operatives who are based in Pakistan are largely non-Pakistani. However, they work with and through networks of supportive Pakistani militant groups. The strongest ties are with the Deobandi groups such as the Pakistani Taliban, JM, Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ), etc. From sanctuaries in the tribal areas and from key Pakistani cities, al-Qaeda has facilitated attacks within Pakistan and has planned international attacks.[11]

- Afghan Taliban: While the Afghan Taliban operate in Afghanistan, they enjoy sanctuary in Pakistan's Baluchistan province, parts of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK, formerly known as the Northwest Frontier Province), and key cities in the Pakistani heartland (e.g., Karachi, Peshawar, Quetta). The Afghan Taliban emerged from Deobandi madaris (p. madrassah) in Pakistan and retain their nearly exclusive ethnic Pasthun and Deobandi sectarian orientation.[12]
- "Kashmiri groups": Several groups proclaim to focus upon Kashmir. These include the Jamaat-e-Islami-based HM and related splinter groups; several Deobandi groups (JM, JUJI, LeJ, etc.); and the Ahl-e-Hadith group LeT, which was renamed Jamaat ud Dawa (JuD) in December 2001. With the notable exception of HM, most of these groups claim few ethnic Kashmiris among their cadres and most came into being as surrogates of Pakistan's intelligence agency, the Inter-services Intelligence Directory (ISO. Ironically, while they are called "Kashmir groups," many of these groups now operate well beyond Kashmir when possible.
- "Sectarian groups": While in the past, notable anti-Sunni Shia groups existed with support from Iran, sectarian groups today are mostly Sunni who violently target Shia. Those Sunni groups targeting Shia are almost always Deobandi (Sipah-e-Sahaba-ePakistan (SSP), Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ)). In addition, there is considerable intra-Sunni violence with Deobandis targeting Barelvis (a heterodox Sufi order) as well Ahmediyyas, who are considered non-Muslim in Pakistan and elsewhere.[13]
- The Tehreek-e-Taliban-e-Pakistan (TTP, Pakistan Taliban). Groups self-nominating as the "Pakistani Taliban" appeared in Waziristan as early as 2004 under the leadership of Waziristan-based, Deobandi militants who fought with the Afghan Taliban in Afghanistan and earlier in the anti-Soviet jihad. By late 2007, several militant commanders organized under the leadership of South Waziristan-based Baitullah Mehsood under the moniker "Tehreek-e-Taliban-e-Pakistan." Baitullah Mehsood was killed in a U.S. drone strike in August 2009. After considerable speculation about the TTP's fate, it reemerged under the vehemently sectarian Hakirnullah Mehsood. After a brief interlude from violence, the TTP has sustained a bloody campaign of suicide bombings that precipitated Pakistani military activities against their redoubt in South Waziristan. The TTP sustained retaliatory suicide bombings to punish the state for launching that campaign.[14] While the TTP is widely seen largely as a Pashtun insurgency, the Punjab-based groups like SSP/LeJ and other Deobandi groups are important components of this organization.

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

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

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

Pakistan has been a victim of sectarian violence by anti-Shia and previously by anti-Sunni militias since the late 1970s. However, the current insurgency confronted by Pakistan is different from those older internal security threats. As is well-known, then President and General Pervez Musharraf joined the U.S.-led global war by sup-

porting Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF)[17] in September of 2001.[18] In December 2001, JM attacked the Indian Parliament. India held Pakistan directly responsible for the actions of its proxies and commenced the largest military buildup since the 1971 war. After intense diplomatic intervention by Washington, war was averted but the military buildup remained on both sides of the border until October 2002. Tensions again flared when LeT attacked the wives and children of Indian army personnel in Kaluchak in May 2002. The United States again intervened to prevent war. The compound crisis that spanned December 2001 through October 2002 imposed severe costs upon U.S. military operations in Afghanistan as Pakistan moved its forces from the west to the east. Taliban and al-Qaeda operatives easily fled into Pakistan's tribal areas with Pakistani forces redeployed to the east.[19]

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

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

Thus the LeT differs from the other militant groups in several important ways. First, the LeT has never targeted the Pakistani state or any target (international or otherwise) within Pakistan. It exclusively operates outside of Pakistan. This is further evidence of the tight linkages between LeT and the Pakistani security establishment. Arguably, further evidence yet of LeT's ongoing ties to Pakistan's intelligence agency is the simple fact that while several LeT cells and operatives have been based in the United States, the organization has never conspired to attack the U.S. homeland. This is true despite operating against Americans in Afghanistan as well as in the 2008 Mumbai attack. The ISI likely understands that this would be a serious redline which would provoke unrelenting retaliation. Indeed, U.S. legislation such as the "Pakistan Enduring Assistance and Cooperation Enhancement (PEACE) Act of 2009" (generally known as Kerry-Lugar-Berman) specifically focuses upon LeT by name. While the U.S. homeland has been vulnerable to LeT attacks, such an attack would be unlikely without an explicit nod from the ISI.[24]

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

Finally, whereas the state has taken on several of the Deobandi groups and al-Qaeda through inept and not always efficacious military operations, it has taken only marginal and cosmetic steps in the wake of the Mumbai 2008 attacks.[25] The Pakistan Government has refused to ban JuD. After several groups were banned in

2002 (including LeT), all of them regrouped under other names with their financial assets largely intact.[26] After the U.S. Ambassador complained that the bans had no consequence upon these groups, the Pakistan Government banned the reformed groups in 2003. As before, the groups reformed without loss of operational capabilities. JuD was the only group that was not banned at that time. This enabled JuD to continue to expand its overt as well as covert actions with preferential state treatment.[27] In the wake of Mumbai, Pakistan promised to ban JuD after the U.N. Security Council proscribed the organization and identified its leadership as terrorist in early 2009.[28] However, Pakistan never honored this commitment. While some of its leadership is in jail to appease Washington after Mumbai, they continue to meet their associates and plan operations. JuD convenes high-profile demonstrations including recent mobilization around Pakistan's abrogated sovereignty with the bin Laden raid and assignation, the fate of Raymond Davis (the CIA contractor who killed two ISI operatives during an altercation)[29] and to show support for Pakistan's blasphemy law and even to demonstrate support for the killer of the Punjab Governor, Salmon Tasseer, who wanted to reform the blasphemy law. The LeT/JuD continues its domestic social work and relief activities increasingly within the eyes of the Pakistani public. Frighteningly, JuD—and other Islamist organizations—have taken the lead in shaping public opinion about these events which necessarily center on loathing of the United States and calls for the government and military to sever ties across the board. This is an easy sell to Pakistan's increasingly anti-American public.[30]

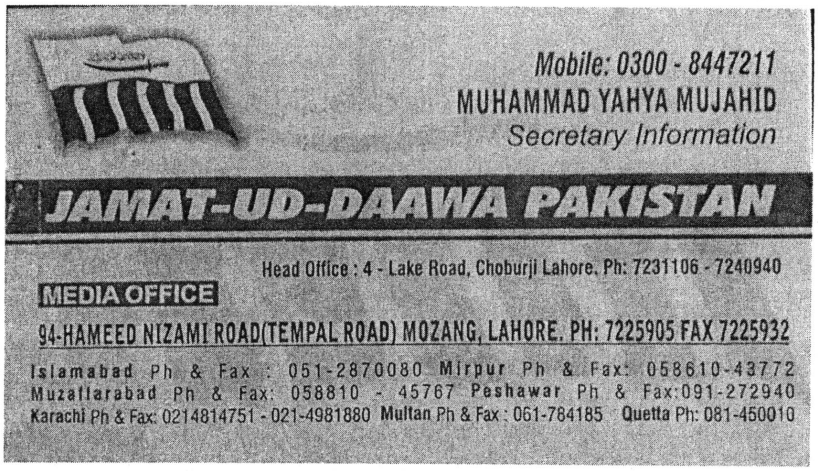
LASHKAR-E-TAIBA AND JAMAAT UD DAWA: A BRIEF HISTORY[31]

The LeT originally emerged as the military wing of the Markaz Daawat ul Irshad (MDI), headquartered in Muridke near the Punjabi city of Lahore. MDI was founded in 1986 by two Pakistani Engineering professors, Hafiz Muhammad Saeed and Zafar Iqbal with the assistance of the ISI.[32] Abdullah Azzam, a close of associate of bin Laden who was affiliated with the Islamic University of Islamabad and the Maktab ul Khadamat (Bureau of Services for Arab mujahedeen, which was the precursor to al-Qaeda), also provided assistance. He was killed in Peshawar 2 years after the MDI was founded. MDI, along with numerous other militant groups, was involved in supporting the mujahidin in Afghanistan from 1986 onward, and established militant training camps for this purpose. One camp was known as Muaskar-e-Taiba in Paktia and a second known as Muaskar-e-Aqsa in the Kunar province of Afghanistan.[33] (Kunar is known to be home to numerous Ahl-e-Hadith adherents in Afghanistan, which overall has few followers in that country. For this reason, Kunar has been an attractive safe haven for Arabs in Afghanistan.) Pakistan-based analysts note that MDI/LeT's training camps were always separate from those of the Taliban, which hosted Deobandi militant groups such as HUJI and HuM. This has led some analysts to contend that LeT has not had the sustained and organic connections to al-Qaeda as enjoyed by the Deobandi groups, many of which became "out sourcers" for al-Qaeda operations in Pakistan.[34]

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

LeT's 200-acre headquarters is in Muridke (Punjab) located some 30 kilometers from Lahore.[35] However, the organization maintains offices in most of the major cities throughout Pakistan. (See Figure 2, which shows a business card of Yayha Mujahid, LeT's spokesperson, with office locations throughout Pakistan.) These offices undertake recruitment as well as funds collection. In addition to overt offices open to the public, JuD/LeT maintains covert training camps throughout Pakistan.[36] Hafez Saeed is the Amir (supreme commander) of the organization.[37] As noted above, since December 2001, the organization essentially exists as JuD within Pakistan while LeT is nominally the organization that operates outside of Pakistan although this distinction is insignificant. In this essay, I use JuD and LeT interchangeably because this was reorganization by the organization itself rather than a split.[38] Operations tend to be conducted with a relatively small unit of few than a dozen.[39]

Figure 2. Business Card of Mr. Yayha Mujahid (c. 2004)



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

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

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

Consonant with the rigor of a typical LeT mission, LeT recruits do not predominantly draw from Pakistan's madaris (pl. of madrassah) as is commonly asserted. Rather, LeT recruits are generally in their late teens or early twenties and tend to be better educated than Pakistanis on average, or even than other militant groups such as the Deobandi SSP or JM. A majority of LeT recruits have completed secondary school with good grades and some have even attended college. This reflects both the background of LeT's founding fathers who were engineering professors and MDI commitment to technical and other education. This stands in sharp contrast to the madrassah-based networks of many of the Deobandi groups including the Afghan Taliban.[45] The fraction of madrassah-educated LeT operatives is believed to be as low as 10 percent.[46] LeT also actively targets women both to expand their recruitment base of males, and reportedly, to recruit women for militant operations.[47]

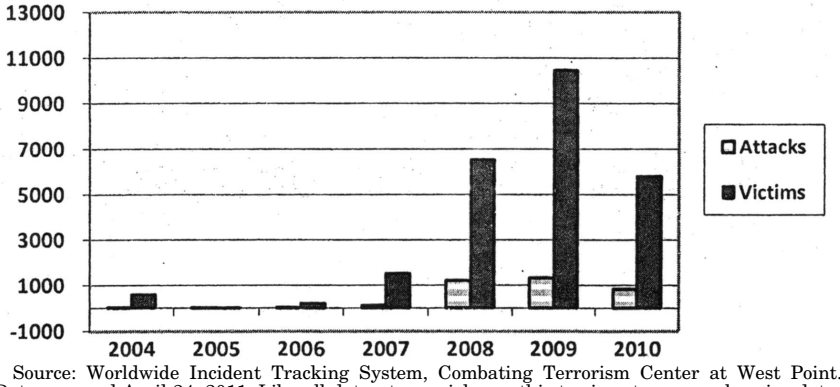
Since the late 1990's, LeT has continued to develop its operational reach into India. This has involved recruiting Indian citizens and increasingly entails developing an indigenous Indian franchise, the Indian Mujahedeen.[48]

As noted above, the groups that have reorganized and begun targeting the state are all Deobandi. LeT is not Deobandi. This theological distinction is exceedingly important if underappreciated. First, these Deobandi groups are intimately sectarian. They have long supported the targeting of Pakistan's Shia and Ahmediyyas. (Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto declared the Ahmediyyas to be non-Muslim in 1974 to placate Islamist opposition groups who demanded this.) These Deobandi groups also began attacking Sufi shrines in Pakistan in recent years. The most recent such attack occurred in April 2011 when suicide bombers assaulted a shrine dedicated to a saint, Sakhi Sarvar, in Dera Ghazi Khan.[49] Previously, they attacked extremely important a shrine in Lahore, Data Darbar, on July 1, 2010.[50] These Sufi shrines follow the Barelvi school of Islam in Pakistan. Barelvi adherents believe in mysticism, revere saints and shrines, and frequent shrines where the saint's descendent spiritual guide may intercede on behalf of these worshipers. Many, if not most, Pakistanis are believed to be Barelvi although there are no data on this question. Pakistanis generally hold these shrines in high esteem as these Sufi saints brought Islam to South Asia. However, Deobandi loath and denounce these mystical practices and beliefs as un-Islamic accretions derived from Hinduism. Deobandis also encourage attacks against Pakistan's non-Muslim minorities, such as Christians.

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

The results of this Deobandi campaign have been lethal. Using data that are available from the Combating Terrorism Center at West Point, between January 1, 2004 (when the database begins) and December 31, 2010 (the last date available), there have been over 3,517 attacks by Islamist militant groups the vast majority of which are Deobandi. These attacks have claimed more than 25,116 victims among whom 24,796 were injured but survived. These attacks expanded precipitously after 2006 when the Pakistani state began engaging in vigorous antiterrorism efforts against these groups. (Yearly breakdowns of incidents and victims are available in Figure 3.)

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



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

Understanding this anti-Munafiqin violence perpetrated by these Deobandi groups is critical to understanding the domestic utility of LeT. (A photo of Pakistan Taliban

graffiti denouncing munafiqit in a TTP redoubt in South Waziristan is available in Figure 4.)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Pakistan has sustained serious criticism for refusing to crack down on the organization and indeed permit it to sustain an extremely public profile. (Evidence of the organization's intent to inflame the United States and other international observers is manifested in its various banners in (often broken) English. Few Pakistanis can read English and thus is likely intended to ensure that American and others can see understand their claims.) However, when one appreciates the domestic importance of LeT in dampening internal insecurity, the state has an enormous incentive to encourage and facilitate this expansion of JuD throughout Pakistan. By bolstering the organization's domestic legitimacy, JuD becomes an ever-more effective organization in countering the competitive dangerous beliefs of the Deobandi groups. Pakistan's support of the organization has taken unusual turns. After the Mumbai attack of 2008, the Punjab provincial government began managing the organization's substantial assets in the Punjab and has even placed many LeT/JuD workers employed in various purported charitable activities on its official payroll. In addition, the Punjab government has even made substantial grants to the organization.[60]

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

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE UNITED STATES

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

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

Can Pakistan Abandon Militancy as a Strategic Tool? Not Likely

Similarly, prospects are slim that Pakistan will be able to reverse course with its proxies who have turned against the state with devastating violence. This is in part

because part of the Pakistan Taliban have important overlaps with groups which Pakistan still considers to be assets: namely, groups like JM who retain an interest in targeting India rather than Pakistan. Moreover, as the army's various attempted peace deals demonstrate, there remains a latent hope that these groups can be rehabilitated and realign with Pakistan's foreign interests. Pakistan's likely inability to counter the domestic threat comprehensively is also due in part due to Pakistan's shortcomings in countering those groups and individual commanders that they have taken on as enemies of the state. These shortcomings are evidenced in the armed forces, intelligence agencies, police and other law enforcement entities, Pakistan's legal statutes, and other entities within Pakistan's rule of law system such as the judiciary.

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

Mitigating the Threats? Limited But Important to Keep Trying

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

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

Because the Pakistani diaspora communities and converts to Islam remain important sources of financial support to LeT/JuD and recruits for operations,[62] the United States and other governments will have to forge sensitive policies that consider the diaspora as an important source of insecurity while ensuring that innocent persons are not singled out without cause. This has been and will remain a delicate and fraught public policy issue.[63] How can governments forthrightly concede these threats without alienating Muslims at home, who are important sources of information that have helped deter potential attacks and catch those who have successfully executed attacks? However, Pakistan's refusal to shut down militant training camps in Pakistan leave few options to states seeking to protect their citizenry and their allies from attacks by Pakistan-based groups or by individuals who have trained with such groups in Pakistan.

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

Finally, while I understand that the United States is facing a severe budgetary crisis and while I understand that there is a long-simmering interest in "cutting off"

Pakistan, these urges must be tempered. While it is true that financial and military assistance is not ever going to be adequate to alter Pakistan's threat perceptions and that Pakistan's military and intelligence agencies will seek to circumscribe U.S. engagement, the United States should make every effort to intensify and expand engagement after the demise of bin Laden. U.S. interests endure well beyond his death whether securing resupply of U.S. and allied troops in Afghanistan, securing maximal visibility into and influence in Pakistan's oversight of its nuclear weapons, and of course the myriad militant groups operating in and from Pakistan.

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

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

Staying the Course and Seeking New Opportunities

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

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

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

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

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

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The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much, Dr. Fair. I have to tell you, I read your testimony and my head is spinning.

Dr. FAIR. Sorry about that.

The CHAIRMAN. No. It's really fascinating, and it's incredibly important to understand what our options are. And I was particularly struck by your conclusion, that: "The implications of my argument is that a resolution of the Indo-Pakistan dispute, however improbable in the first instance, will not be sufficient to motivate Pakistan to strategically abandon LeT."

Where does that leave us? I mean, my instinct as I listened to your explanation was: of these groups let's not get in the middle of that, there's not a lot we can do about it.

So are we chasing ghosts in this negotiating process, or are there individuals with enough command and control over these various groups with whom we could negotiate a political settlement that would allow American forces to begin to withdraw from Afghanistan?

Can each of you tackle that question? And I'd like your reactions to Dr. Fair's description of the multiplicity of the different beliefs and components of these groups. Can they be brought together by a common interest or are we—and the Pakistanis—just going to have to struggle with this to resolve it?

Mr. BERGEN. Senator Kerry, if we'd had this conversation 4 years ago, there are some things that have happened in Pakistan that would have been pretty unpredictable. I mean, a major operation in southern Waziristan in 2009 going after the Taliban, involving 30,000 men, several months of air operations, a really serious military operation; also a serious military operation in Swat. They weren't done to American counterinsurgency standards, but they were done.

So the point is the Pakistani state is willing to do certain things and, as Chris pointed out, they're particularly willing to do things against organizations that are damaging them.

I think it's going to be very, very, very difficult for the Pakistanis to abandon the Haqqani Network, although perhaps not impossible. At the end of the day——

The CHAIRMAN. Is it possible for them to reach some kind of understanding with the Haqqani Network if they bring them into the reconciliation process?

Mr. BERGEN. To me that would be a very rational thing for them to do at the end of the day, and they are capable of doing that. And that would be an enormous way forward because, while Dr. Pillar is correct that the Afghan Taliban doesn't have much of a relationship with al-Qaeda in the sense that Mullah Omar Taliban, as you know, al-Qaeda is being protected by the Haqqani Network. So the biggest key to moving forward is getting the Haqqani Network to basically change sides, and I don't think that's out of the question.

But if I'm General Kayani, my main concern remains India, and as long as he sees India—Afghanistan as a source of Indian strength, he may not want to take the Haqqani card off the table.

It's not a very good answer to the question, but that's my answer.

The CHAIRMAN. Dr. Pillar, would you respond also?

Dr. PILLAR. Pakistan's basic interests as they see them are fairly constant. But the strategy and tactics—and we're really talking more about strategy and tactics here when we talk about relationships with the groups—are quite changeable. And I think they're changeable under circumstances short of what we'd all like to see, which is some kind of resolution of the Kashmir problem and the conflict between India and Pakistan.

If Pakistan can be part of a process in Afghanistan in which they see their interests vis-a-vis India and all their concerns about Afghanistan being their so-called strategic back yard sufficiently satisfied, then I think there is more changeability with regard to

their relationships with any of these groups, be it the Haqqani group or LT or anyone else.

The CHAIRMAN. Do you agree with Dr. Fair's conclusion that even if there were an India-Pakistan rapprochement, resolution of that east border issue, that Lashkar-e-Taiba would continue to be present in Pakistan?

Dr. PILLAR. I am somewhat more optimistic than Dr. Fair about what the implications would be if we could see substantial progress in the Indo-Pakistani equation. Unfortunately, it's a bit of an endless vicious circle in that groups like LT and other groups have their own incentives to disrupt a peace process and a rapprochement between India and Pakistan, and I think that's the main danger we face as the two sides have tentatively tried to get that process back on track.

The CHAIRMAN. Dr. Fair, I didn't give you a chance to answer the question I originally asked you. You've heard Dr. Pillar suggest that perhaps improvements in the India-Pakistan relationship would have an impact on Lashkar-e-Taiba. Why do you feel it wouldn't?

Dr. FAIR. Well, for a number of reasons. One, I've really spent a lot of time investigating their literature. I also have at the Combating Terrorism Center an 810-size database of Lashkar-e-Taiba activists, and I've been following this group since 1995. I speak Urdu. I spend a lot of time in the region.

So my assessment—I concede that if Lashkar-e-Taiba only had external utility then resolving the Indo-Pakistani security competition would be necessary, probably insufficient, to put that group down. But when you understand the domestic politics of the organization, when you understand that Lashkar-e-Taiba is a buffer and a bulwark to the Deobandi groups ravaging the state, you realize that it also has domestic utility.

I believe I'm the first analyst to have gone through their materials in this way to discern this domestic utility. So I mean, that's what I bring to the understanding of Lashkar-e-Taiba.

If you'd like to know some of my thoughts about where that leaves us and what the options are, I'm happy to elaborate upon that.

The CHAIRMAN. I would indeed.

Dr. FAIR. Well, the first thing is, not only are the groups themselves a spoiler, but the Pakistan Army is itself a spoiler. If it didn't have the security competition with India, it wouldn't justify its enormous claim to the resources in Pakistan and its central claim to being the only institution to protect the place would be substantially diminished. So the Pakistan Army is a huge spoiler and we have to keep that in mind.

But we are incredibly constrained. There are potentially opportunities to work with the Pakistanis where we have joint threats—al-Qaeda, the Pakistan Taliban—but for a number of reasons over the last year they want us out, and so our space to operate with them is very, very low.

In particular, they want us out because their assets—Haqqani, Lashkar-e-Taiba—are our enemies, and they know that partly we're there to deal with those threats and they want us out. So we're very constrained.

I would say even——

The CHAIRMAN. When you say they want us out, is that because they perceive us as contributing to their problem?

Dr. FAIR. There are multiple answers to that. First, they know we're there because we want to take out their assets. Would we not like to take out Haqqani with a drone? Would we not like to have cells going after Lashkar-e-Taiba? They know that's what we're up to and they don't want that to happen.

That being said, their interpretation of why they're having an insurgency is not proxies gone bad or blowback. They see that they have this internal militancy because we have forced them to turn against these groups in a moderated jihad strategy, making them rebel against the state. So no matter what Kayani says—I've spent a lot of time with Pakistani military officers, particularly below the rank of lieutenant colonel, so you have a different optic—they want us out of Afghanistan because when this happens they will see in their view that the alignment between the military, the mullah, and the militant groups will come back into alignment and those groups will go back to business fighting in India and Afghanistan.

The CHAIRMAN. But if you accept that—and I'm not arguing with you; I think that there are clearly divergent interests to some degree. But that actually provides a rationale for why they should want to contain Haqqani and bring him into the peace process: it would get the United States out of Afghanistan faster.

Dr. FAIR. So I'm not—I wasn't asked to speak on the impact of reconciliation on Pakistan.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, what about the reality of that?

Dr. FAIR. But I think—here's the thing about Pakistan. We talk about the Taliban with some kind of historical continuity. That's not a proper approach. We've been eliminating a lot of the mid-level commanders and they're replacing them.

The Pakistanis know that many of these commanders that have come in to fill those empty slots are not only much more international focused—they're no longer simply focused on Afghanistan. They're much more ideological, and they also hate the ISI. They rightly understand that the ISI is trying to use them to project Pakistan's interests.

So Pakistan actually has a much more sophisticated approach to these groups than we perhaps appreciate or we do ourselves. They're trying to deal with the Quetta Shura. They're putting pressure on their families to get them to tow the line. But they're really trying to find a way of dealing with these commanders that are no longer within their ambit.

So Pakistan has a multipronged strategy of dealing with the splintering that's taken place in the Taliban. And they have the advantage of geography. They have the advantage of language skills and longstanding ISI assets that have been working with these guys.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, there's more to follow up on that. But I don't disagree with you that they have a better sense of their own interests and strategy than we sometimes give them credit for, and that is a reality in both Pakistan and Afghanistan.

Senator Lugar.

Senator LUGAR. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Dr. Pillar, I don't want to oversimplify your analysis, but I just want to mention that I made notes that you suggested the Taliban will persist in Afghanistan in one form or another, and that the Taliban will continue to not want al-Qaeda in Afghanistan because their presence induced the United States to come in and remove the Taliban from power after the September 11 terrorist attacks. But in any event, I believe it is important to note the assertion that if the Taliban keep al-Qaeda out and continue to make their way in the Government of Afghanistan, they would not constitute a strategic threat to the United States. While they may have a miserable existence in Afghanistan, this would not present an external threat to us.

Now, next door, however, with regard to Pakistan, I was just simply making notes of the panel's assertion that it is unlikely the United States is going to be able to help reorganize Pakistan into a situation that we believe is good for the Pakistanis and good for us. All of you, including Dr. Fair, have gone through the cross-currents of actors that are currently there and are likely to remain.

We touched briefly on the fact that, as miserable as the situation in Pakistan may be for Pakistan itself, India, and maybe its other neighbors, the strategic threat this poses to the United States still is not always apparent. Now, the exception to this is the point made from time to time of the threat this state of affairs poses to Pakistan's nuclear weapons complex. Specifically, should instability enable terrorists to gain access, whatever be their nationality, to fissile material or other sensitive nuclear assets, this could pose a strategic threat to the United States, as their proliferation through the Khan network has before.

Again, I don't want to oversimplify the problem, but it seems to me that I started with the thought that a lot of the debate outside of this committee revolves around why we have 100,000 troops in Afghanistan, whether or not such a presence should be sustained, and why some predict that our presence will continue for a long time.

Is this debate continuing because of humanitarian impulses on our part? How do you respond to those in the United States who ask: "What goes on here and why does it continue?"

Dr. PILLAR. Senator Lugar, I agree very much with the perspective that you offered in terms of Pakistan versus Afghanistan. In direct response to your question, I think it partly is the humanitarian consideration. There are a lot of questions raised about the status of women, about human rights issues. And I think it's partly just because we haven't found an appropriate off-ramp.

In my judgment, Operation Enduring Freedom in late 2001 was a just and appropriate response to the terrorist outrage of 9/11. It was a military action aimed directly at the group that did that and the movement that at the time was hosting it. We accomplished the objective in the opening weeks and months of Operation Enduring Freedom of ousting the Taliban from its position of power over three-fourths of Afghanistan and rousting Taliban from its then-safe haven. And then we just had a hard time finding the off-ramp.

I think in these discussions of Afghanistan versus Pakistan and much of the discourse in this country we've tended to lose sight of what is the end and what is the means. I agree with everything

you said, sir, about the vulnerabilities and concerns in Pakistan, particularly with regard to nuclear weapons. But if we were to zero-base this problem we would not address it by conducting a counterinsurgency in Afghanistan.

Senator LUGAR. All right, let's say we were to perceive a proliferation threat posed by an unstable Pakistan and move to address this threat. Is there a way of handling this without tens of thousands of boots on the ground? In other words, some have suggested what we ought to be doing is a much more concentrated intelligence operation that would touch not only upon Pakistan, but also a good number of other situations in the Middle East and Africa. Do any of you have a response as to why we should be involved in Pakistan?

Dr. Fair.

Dr. FAIR. Well, frankly, if it weren't for those nuclear weapons Pakistan would have been sorted out, with far less complexity. It's under their nuclear umbrella that they use their militant groups safely. So this is the crux of the problem.

I do fear that we misframe the nuclear scenario. So for example, if their nuclear establishment could be infiltrated undesirably by Islamist elements, others could presumably do so, the Indians, us, Mossad. So when it comes to undesirable infiltration, our incentives are quite aligned.

There are periods when those weapons become much more vulnerable. So during their peacetime deployments the warheads aren't assembled and they're not mated to the delivery systems, but as a conflict with India begins to escalate they begin mating the warheads and they begin mating them and forward-deploying them with their delivery assets, and that's when command and control becomes really murky.

So if I were a terrorist and I understand how the Pakistani security establishment deals with nuclear weapons, that's when I would try to do something nefarious.

The other issue that I am worried about is, just as Aslam Beg in the 1980s deliberately chose to proliferate to Iran to undermine our security interests, we cannot rule out the possibility that the Pakistani state would deliberately do that. Now, I'm not saying it's immensely probable, but things are pretty tough, and Aslam Beg certainly did that to undermine us strategically.

So I would suggest that we think about the nuclear problem in a much more wider capacity, and this requires different kinds of intelligence. So for example, if there were to be a state transfer that again would be another opportunity where nefarious elements could interdict them. So this does require us to be on the ground, which is why when I hear people talking about pulling out of Pakistan I'm very apprehensive, because we can't monitor the situation without assets in Pakistan.

Senator LUGAR. Do any of you have any comment on the Pakistanis working with the Chinese recently and the thought of a naval base for the Chinese in Pakistan? Is this simply a reaction against Osama bin Laden's killing or do the Pakistanis see this as fulfilling their broader interests?

Yes, Dr. Fair.

Dr. FAIR. Well, actually the base at Gwadar has been built with Chinese assistance, as is well known, and there's not a lot of speculation about the nature of that port. It's a deepwater port.

We also have to understand the context of what China wants. China wants to have access to move its "dangerous goods" in and out of and through Pakistan. But it also should be seen in context of India's security competition with Pakistan. I'm not sure if you're aware of the Indian port that's being built in Iran in Chabahar, which is just a few hundred kilometers along the Makran coast of Gwadar. So there is an element of this which cues off of the Indo-Pakistan security competition.

Senator LUGAR. Thank you very much.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much.

Senator Cardin.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, and I thank our three witnesses.

Clearly the United States has a great interest in Pakistan. Dr. Fair, I don't think any of us are suggesting that we ignore Pakistan, but there are mixed signals here that are very, very troubling, and that the United States needs to be able to have alternatives for carrying out its foreign policy in that region. I know that that's part of our strategies.

Let me sort of underscore this. Pakistan's critically important for many reasons, not the least of which its nuclear capacity and the current safe haven for terrorist organizations and the importance of staging for us in Afghanistan. But it's also clear that LT is a terrorist organization. The United States should have a pretty clear position as to how we deal with terrorist organizations and we should leave no ambiguity. Pakistan has to choose sides on what side it is on the war against terror. And they're giving mixed signals today, not just the bin Laden circumstances.

But yesterday in Chicago, at the David Headley trial a confessed Pakistan-American terrorist testified that ISI and LT coordinated with each other and ISI provided assistance to Lashkar, financial, military, and moral support. Now, I don't know how the United States can just ignore this. It seems to me that we need to be able to confront Pakistan's support for terrorist organizations. And United States taxpayers are providing support to Pakistan today, and that's an issue that will come to the attention of the United States Congress.

So it's going to hit a crisis point if we cannot get Pakistan to support the war against terror, including terrorist organizations which are in their own state. So what are our choices? What do we do about that?

Dr. Fair.

Dr. FAIR. First of all, we need to take some responsibility. Pakistan has never given us anything but these signals. We dismissed Lashkar-e-Taiba for years as India's threat. Pakistan never turned its back on Lashkar-e-Taiba. Pakistan did a u-turn on its u-turn with the Taliban very early in the conflict and there were no consequences because we had other preoccupations that did not allow us to have the fortitude that we should have had to be more forthright with Pakistan.

I'll point out that, to my utter astonishment—I wasn't astonished; I was disappointed—the Secretary of State certified that Pakistan was in compliance with the conditionalities on security assistance vis-a-vis Kerry-Lugar-Berman. This was done on March 18, despite full knowledge that we were engaging in an operation to get bin Laden, despite full knowledge that the Pakistani state has continued to harbor and assist Lashkar-e-Taiba, among other elements.

So we have to, I think, be honest and self-reflective. Why is it that we have been unable to actually enforce what already is in our own legislation? The reality is, however, we don't have a lot of options with Lashkar-e-Taiba. We know from the Raymond Davis affair it's very difficult to operate in that terrain. The ISI knows what we're up to and they're seeking to undermine it.

I do think we have options to contain it. Let me put something somewhat obnoxious on the table. Lashkar-e-Taiba's largest theater of operations for its support is in Pacific Command, where we actually have a lot of assets and we have a lot of partners. We should be aggressively targeting Lashkar-e-Taiba's assets in the Pacific Command, in Europe, in North America. They can't do what they do without outside support.

So while it may sound somewhat disappointing that we don't have more aggressive options, I think we have more options than we believe. I think we should also think about targeting specific individuals for which we have evidence that are directly supporting Lashkar-e-Taiba, as opposed to taking a broad stroke brush and going after the entire organization. I think this requires us to be more collaborative with our allies.

And Pakistan, if we were to go after Lashkar-e-Taiba and their network of support in Thailand, what could Pakistan credibly say? Shame on you for going after our network in Thailand?

Senator CARDIN. I want to go against terrorist organizations, don't get me wrong. My question is Pakistan's complicity here——

Dr. FAIR. Well, what are our——

Senator CARDIN [continuing]. And the United States, and we're providing aid to Pakistan. We have a pretty strict rule about not providing aid that can be filtered off to support terrorist organizations. If ISI and LT really have a close relationship, then there's a real concern as to whether U.S. funds are being used to support terrorist organizations.

Dr. FAIR. But if we didn't have that engagement, sir, we would——

Senator CARDIN. I understand we always need to have strategic partners. But we have a clear rule on terrorism.

Dr. FAIR [continuing]. We wouldn't have been able to have our CIA assets in place in Pakistan to, for example, kill Osama bin Laden. So there's no other country like Pakistan, that represents such a convergence of severe national security threats that we're really operating in a trade space. I would argue that we are limited in Lashkar-e-Taiba——

The CHAIRMAN. A trade space?

Dr. FAIR. In other words, we're constantly making tradeoffs——

The CHAIRMAN. Trading space.

Dr. FAIR [continuing]. With Pakistan. It's a unique country. There's no other country—I will add, Iran might be one in the future—that operates with militant groups under its Islamic—under its nuclear umbrella.

But we are constantly having to make tradeoffs with Pakistan. Our only long-term hope, quite frankly, is that we can continue to provide investments that will allow the civilians over the secular time period to take control of security governance. We need to be at every opportunity helping Pakistan's parliamentarians, their various committees in the Parliament on defense and intelligence, to do their job. Our only hope, howsoever slim, that Pakistan will reverse course is if the civilians can exert control over security governance, and that means staying in there.

Senator CARDIN. Is ISI in your view supporting and coordinating its activities with LT?

Dr. FAIR. It certainly is. Pakistan is the arsonist and it's the fireman. It will help us on groups that it shares the sense that it is a threat, but yes, it is my assessment it is continuing to work with LeT in a very close way.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Cardin.

Senator Udall.

Senator UDALL. Thank you, Chairman Kerry, and thank you for holding this hearing. I think it's been a very, very good discussion so far.

Let me focus in a little bit on a little bit different tack, but the trial in Chicago that's going on. That hasn't been mentioned yet, and obviously the testimony as it comes out I think is going to show the ties with the ISI and I think has the potential to once again erupt into a problematic situation for United States and Pakistani relations. Could you all talk a little bit about that and where you think that's going? Obviously, you may not know all of the trial testimony, but I think a lot of that is out there right now. Any of you that want to jump in is fine.

Dr. PILLAR. Well, obviously when you have a trial with public testimony some things are forced into the open that might otherwise have been dealt with behind closed doors. But in response to your question, sir, and also Senator Cardin's issues, I think after the raid at Abbottabad the United States has some additional leverage over Pakistan. It was a huge embarrassment to the Pakistani military. I think the administration, our administration, played it about right in not publicly rubbing the Pakistanis' nose in that bit of dirt.

I would hope and assume that behind closed doors there are conversations going on that do take the form of confrontation, as Senator Cardin mentioned. So that would be the main point I would add, that behind closed doors, out of the public, we take a rather tough line and don't shy away from confrontation. But to publicly make an issue of it is not going to advance our cause.

Senator UDALL. Just to stop you there, I think that's a lot of what Senator Kerry was doing in the last couple of weeks over there, my understanding. Go ahead, please.

Dr. FAIR. One thing about the trial with David Coleman Headley taking the stand, we have to also remember that what he says,

howsoever inflammatory, may not be true. So I've been concerned about the injudicious reporting of what he said. Obviously, he's a terrorist. He's unreliable. The basis of the plea bargain was that he was going to make these claims.

That being said, I also believe that the fundamental lineaments of his claims are true. But I believe it's a marginal revelation. We already knew the ISI was behind this.

But I'm going to basically take the point that Senator Kerry made, that Lashkar-e-Taiba is so close to the Pakistan ISI and to the army that this is a very serious redline for them, and meaningful steps to go after that group along with Haqqani, as long as we have this large counterinsurgency footprint that has to be resupplied—I think it's going to be very difficult to make consensus across the interagency process to do something where the Pakistanis would try to inhibit our resupply of those troops. The Northern Distribution Route's not a viable options.

So this is one of the numerous reasons why I was a proponent of counterterrorism plus, if for no other reason than to diminish our dependence on Pakistan, where we have a greater space to be much more forceful on this particular issue. But when we are trying to deal with our troops and keep them safe in Afghanistan, I think it's going to be very difficult to stomach the kinds of things that we would have to do to get Pakistan to be aggressive on Lashkar-e-Taiba.

Senator UDALL. Peter, do you have any thoughts on this?

Mr. BERGEN. No.

Senator UDALL. Thank you, Senator Kerry. I appreciate it.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Udall.

This is really a very complicated set of choices and interactions. Dr. Pillar, from your experience within the agency tell us how we ought to be looking at the ISI. People sometimes refer to the "three governments" in Pakistan, in the following order: the army, the ISI, and the civilian government. Would you say the ISI has that much independence, and does it have the autonomy and capacity to affect things on its own? Or can the army control what the ISI does and, if so, what are the options with respect to the ISI and these splinter groups that serve their purposes?

Dr. PILLAR. I don't think we should talk about the ISI and the army as if they were two entities. The ISI is part of the military establishment and there has been a fair amount of cross-assignment, if you will, at the top, including chiefs of the general staff who have been themselves directors of ISI.

With regard to the first part of your question, Mr. Chairman, the relationship with ISI is perhaps a particularly outstanding example of one that we do see elsewhere around the world, of an intelligence and security service that—and this is generally true of the more authoritarian governments that we have to deal with—has enormous clout. So the service-to-service relationship is not just a mundane, let's exchange information every Tuesday kind of thing, but rather one in which we realize and they realize this is an important channel for intergovernmental relations. From our standpoint we are talking to people who really matter.

So I agree with Christine Fair that having the presence, having the relationship, is important for our purposes. It's always a

matter, and it's certainly a matter between us and the ISI, of both shared interests and conflicting interests. It is a game, if I may use that word, not to trivialize it, in which both sides are trying to get as much as they can from the other, realizing that it is partly on matters in which our interests are shared, but also on which they conflict.

You can never trust entirely the other side, but you can't fail to do business with them, either. We are highly dependent on liaison services in general, particularly on counterterrorism, even though there is not a single one that we can say we trust totally.

The CHAIRMAN. Can the Pakistanis take the actions they need to take in order to deal with the Pakistani Taliban, without upsetting their relationships with Lashkar-e-Taiba, with Haqqani, and the other groups?

Dr. PILLAR. That's an example of where our interests do run parallel. Neither we nor the Pakistani establishment wants to see those forces become more of a problem than they already are. I think the way you handle it is the way in effect we and the Pakistanis have handled it with some of the drone strikes, where we have this charade in which we have used some of that capability against Pakistani Taliban targets. That's in our interest, that's in the Pakistani military's interest as well. But part of the charade is they protest and pretend that it was all our business and they don't like it. I'm afraid that's the kind of game we'll have to continue to play.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, let me perhaps differ with you slightly on that, having conversations with them recently. I think they're more perturbed about those drone strikes than you think, and I think it goes beyond being a game, as you call it. I think they are paying a high political price for the strikes. I think that, depending on the targets, they're not that thrilled. And I think there's a lot more serious pushback to the drones now than we've seen in any recent time.

Dr. PILLAR. I did not mean to minimize the genuine resentment that certainly is felt among parts of the population, and that then gets transmitted as well through the government. I was only trying to make the point that this is another area where the interests are partly conflicting and partly shared.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, I agree with that.

Mr. Bergen, what about the capacity for them to move against the indigenous insurgency and work hand in hand with us as a consequence? To what degree do these splinter groups pull them away from that on a constant basis?

Mr. BERGEN. As you know, sir, the Pakistani Taliban mounted a 20-hour attack on the equivalent of their Pentagon in October 2009. That was all carried live on Pakistani television. Imagine if there was a 20-hour attack by a group of terrorists on the Pentagon here carried live on CNN. That really got the attention of the military.

There have been also four, by the way, attacks on ISI buildings by these militants. So the ISI itself is a target of some of these militants.

So I think that has been an opportunity. As you know, more Pakistani soldiers have died fighting these militants than United

States and NATO soldiers combined. So everything that we said today is true——

The CHAIRMAN. I think that's an important thing to put on the table here.

Mr. BERGEN. Yes.

The CHAIRMAN. Some 30,000 Pakistani civilians have died at the hands of their insurgency and over 5,000 troops have died in the Swat Valley and in Waziristan fighting the insurgency. People don't either know about these losses or they discount them as they think about the relationship.

Mr. BERGEN. I couldn't agree with you more, sir. And as a result of which, the Taliban had a sort of religious Robin Hood image until several years ago, but support for the Taliban's suicide bombing and al-Qaeda has cratered. So that's what makes this a very complex picture.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Lugar. I know we only have about 10 minutes before we need to go to the floor.

Senator LUGAR. I defer to Senator Menendez.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Menendez.

Senator MENENDEZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you all. I'd been catching snippets from my office while meeting with constituents, and heard some incredibly thoughtful answers.

Despite our incredible military presence in Afghanistan, there are supposedly only between 50 and 100 or some odd al-Qaeda fighters in the country. Nevertheless, General Petraeus has warned that if the United States abandons the counterinsurgency approach and significantly draws down forces, various international terrorist organizations would exploit that opening and flood into Afghanistan.

Do you believe that to be the case? What is the nature of the threat of the Afghan Taliban? Is it a terrorist threat to the United States? Is it a threat limited to the potential destabilization of a weak Afghan Government? What's your view of that?

Mr. BERGEN. I think getting focused on the numbers of al-Qaeda is kind of a red herring. On 9/11 there were 200 members of al-Qaeda and they inflicted the most devastating terrorist attack in history on the United States.

It's not just about al-Qaeda. The President, for very obvious political reasons, has defined it thusly, but there are a lot of other reasons we're there. When the Taliban ran Afghanistan, every Muslim insurgent and terrorist group in the world was either headquartered or based there, and that alphabet soup has just migrated across a border that they don't recognize into Pakistan.

So the idea that somehow the Pakistani Taliban is very different from the Afghan Taliban doesn't make a great deal of sense to me. After all, Mullah Omar, the leader of the Afghan Taliban, lives in Pakistan. Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, the leader of another Taliban group, lives in Pakistan. The Haqqani Network, which is the Afghan Taliban, so-called, is in Pakistan.

So I think that General Petraeus and others who have made the point are not saying it's just about the al-Qaeda—it's about preventing a return to the pre-9/11 Afghanistan, where it was basically a sort of Woodstock for every jihadist group from around the globe. And that is a reasonable concern.

I think that there are just two or three quick other points that I want to make. We also have a sort of moral obligation when we overthrow somebody else's government to kind of not leave the place, to kind of pick up the pieces. And we've already done this twice in Afghanistan. We closed our Embassy there in 1989. Into the vacuum came the Taliban allied with al-Qaeda. We did it again in 2002 because of an ideological opposition to nation-building by the Bush administration. There were only 6,000 American soldiers in Afghanistan in 2003. That's the size of the police department in Houston, in a country the size of Texas, with a population 10 times larger.

So we've run the counterterrorism do-it-light approach. We've done that already. And it's not just about al-Qaeda or other groups we need to be concerned about. An unstable Afghanistan makes an unstable Pakistan. We've already discussed why that's important.

Finally, the Taliban are the Taliban. You know, these are not a bunch of Henry Kissingers in waiting who are going to preside over some sort of wonderful settlement in Afghanistan. These are people who incarcerated half the population in their houses, who continue to poison girls going to school in Pakistan and Afghanistan, who have massacred Shias and others, and who imposed a theocratic reign of terror on a population. So it's not just about 65 members of al-Qaeda in Afghanistan.

Dr. FAIR. I would like to offer a dissenting view. I get very frustrated when people say, well, we did counterterrorism early on and therefore it didn't work and therefore it won't work now. It's a disingenuous argument, because all of the material conditions between then and now have changed. So if you're going to evaluate counterterrorism in 2002 and counterterrorism today, you need to consider all these intervening variables.

Moreover, we're not talking about 2,000 people in Afghanistan with a counterterrorism-plus footprint. We're talking about remaining in a position to continue training the Afghan National Security Forces. There are 300,000 Afghan National Security Forces, of varying degrees of capacity, mostly not that terribly impressive. But the idea that the Taliban are going to roll back into Kabul under the current conditions I think is somewhat ridiculous.

I think President Karzai would like us to stay there for the training. I think he'd be happy to let us have access to bases to continue gathering intelligence on al-Qaeda. He doesn't want al-Qaeda there, either.

I also think that the contemporary argument that says that if we don't have a 130,000-person footprint in Afghanistan that our intelligence will decrease—there is no evidence to believe that that's correct. In fact, we could argue equally that when we're no longer engaging in operations that Afghans despise because it hasn't brought them a personal security dividend, maybe our intelligence will actually improve.

So I think that we really need to put into the public debate questions: How tied are they to al-Qaeda? As Dr. Pillar said, we can't rely upon the historical narratives of the 1990s to assume this relationship persists. Things have changed; so have they. Our analysis has to change. We have to ask, what is the nature of our intelligence? Is it so great today? Probably not. Might it improve if we

weren't alienating the Afghans with this counterinsurgency footprint? Possibly.

So I'd like to put on the table a very strong dissent from the picture outlined by Mr. Bergen.

Dr. PILLAR. The Afghan Taliban, as I mentioned before, is not an international terrorist group. It's concerned about events inside Afghanistan. It has no support for the whole transnational terrorist idea as represented by bin Laden.

The one other point I want to emphasize follows on Christine's comments about how things have changed and how the 1990s is not today. When I was working on counterterrorism in the 1990s and we were worried about bin Laden in Afghanistan—and this goes back before 9/11, before even the Embassy bombings in 1998; we're talking about the 1997 era—and the Clinton administration was wrestling with this, well, we still had the gloves on then. And we knew where bin Laden was, but there wasn't the public support for using military force.

When we had our Embassies bombed in 1998 and President Clinton responded with a cruise missile strike—which seems like a pinprick now, doesn't it—he was criticized for using excessive military force, for trying to divert attention away from domestic political matters. Now, clearly, ever since 9/11 the gloves have really come off.

So if there was anything even remotely resembling the kind of foreign terrorist presence in Afghanistan that we saw in the 1990s, we'd do a lot more than just one cruise missile strike, even if we weren't waging a counterinsurgency on the ground. We would basically bomb the heck out of it, and everyone knows that and the Taliban knows that.

Senator MENENDEZ. These are very thoughtful answers. Listening to Mr. Bergen, I ask, do we have a real partner in Afghanistan to meet our goals as you describe them? And at what cost and for how long, seems to me to be a really significant question to decide where we go at the end of the day.

Mr. BERGEN. Since our time is short, let me just give you a very quick answer to that. Our partner is the Afghan people, not the Afghan Government as represented by President Karzai. The most common——

Senator MENENDEZ. But we don't get to work directly with the Afghan people. We get to work with their elected representatives.

Mr. BERGEN. Well, Karzai, his time is limited. He's going to be out of office in 2014, and there are people already forming, very effective politicians, to challenge him. So the most common polling question you can ask is: Is your life getting better? In America only 30 percent of Americans think their country's going in the right direction. Fifty-nine percent of Afghans think their country's going in the right direction, because they know life is better than it was under the Taliban during the civil war, during the Soviet occupation.

So our partnership is with the Afghan people, who know that their lives are getting better, can see the advantages of not living under the Taliban. And they want us to stay. They were very concerned about us leaving in July of this year and the fact that we

put December 2014 on the clock is something that they're very happy about.

Senator MENENDEZ. One last question if I may, Mr. Chairman.

Now that bin Laden is dead, is al-Zawahiri or anyone else able to bring al-Qaeda together?

Mr. BERGEN. When you joined the Nazi Party, you swore a personal oath of allegiance to Adolf Hitler, not to Naziism. When Adolf Hitler died, Naziism basically died with it. It's not an exact analogy, but when you joined al-Qaeda you swore a personal oath of allegiance to bin Laden. No one else can fit into his shoes.

Ayman al-Zawahiri, if he took over, would be great because he would drive what remains of the organization into the ground.

Senator MENENDEZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much.

Thank you, all of you. I've been trying to fit this image: Given the Taliban attitude about music, I'm trying to work out this Woodstock analogy. [Laughter.]

But it's an interesting challenge.

That said, this is fascinating and tough and complicated, and we need to talk more. What I want to do is what we did with another panel, which is to ask you if you would make yourselves available so we could have some sessions just with the committee to quietly dig into these issues.

But it's been enormously helpful and I thank all of you. The dissent on the panel is equally helpful. We want you here because you do have different points of view about it, and it tests our thinking. So we're very appreciative to all three of you.

As I said, your full testimonies really are exemplary, each of you. Thank you for putting the time into them, and they're important and are now part of the record. And we look forward to following up with you in other venues as we go forward in these next weeks and months thinking about this.

It's a critical issue to the country and it's not going to go away quickly, either. So we've got a lot of thinking to do and a lot of work to do.

Thank you very much for being here today. We stand adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 10:23 a.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

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