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THE THREAT TO THE U.S. HOMELAND EMANATING FROM PAKISTAN

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Lashkar-e-Taiba (the Army of the Pure or LeT) is one of Pakistan's oldest and most powerful militant groups. India has been its primary enemy since the early 1990s and the group has never considered itself to be an al-Qaeda affiliate, but LeT did begin contributing to al-Qaeda's global jihad against the United States and its allies after 9/11. The spectacular nature of the 2008 Mumbai attacks and target selection suggested LeT continued to prioritize jihad against India, but was moving deeper into al-Qaeda's orbit. Despite repeated calls by a chorus of U.S. officials on Pakistan to take actions against the group in the wake of Mumbai, LeT's position remains relatively secure. There are several reasons. First, Pakistan is facing a serious insurgency and LeT remains one of the few militant outfits whose policy is to refrain from launching attacks against the state. The security establishment has taken a triage approach, determining that to avoid additional instability it must not take any action that could draw LeT further into the insurgency. Second, the Pakistan army and its powerful Inter-Services Intelligence Directorate (ISI) have long considered LeT to be the country's most reliable proxy against India and the group still provides utility in this regard. LeT also provides potential leverage at the negotiating table and so it is therefore unrealistic to assume support for the group will cease without a political payoff from India in return. As a result, the consensus among the Pakistani security establishment appears to be that, at least in the short-term, taking steps to dismantle the group would chiefly benefit India, while Pakistan would be left to deal with the costs. Finally, LeT provides social services and relief aid via its above ground wing, Jamaat-ul-Dawa, and its activities in this sphere have led to a well of support among segments of the populace.

To understand LeT and how it grew so powerful, one must recognize the two dualities that define it. The first is that it is a missionary and a militant organization that for most of its history has placed an equivalent emphasis on reshaping society at home (through preaching and social welfare) and to waging violent jihad abroad. The second is that its military activities are informed both by its pan-Islamist rationale for jihad and its role as a proxy for the Pakistani state. LeT was able to grow into a powerful and protected organization in Pakistan as a result of its ability to reconcile these dualities. Jihad against India to liberate Muslim land under perceived Hindu occupation aligned with LeT's ideological priorities and also with state interests. This enabled the group to become Pakistan's most reliable proxy, which brought with it substantial benefits including the support needed to construct a robust social welfare apparatus used for missionary and reformist purposes. However, this approach also necessitated trade-offs and compromises after 9/11, since preserving its position vis-à-vis the state sometimes forced the group to sublimate its pan-Islamist impulses. As the decade wore on, internal tensions increased over who LeT should be fighting against.

India remains its primary enemy, but, as mentioned, the group became involved in the global jihad after 9/11. The Mumbai attacks marked an acceleration of this trend and one of their objectives was to generate momentum for LeT, which by 2008 was in danger of being eclipsed by other outfits deemed more committed to confronting America and its allies. The group's integration with these other outfits has deepened in the past three years and the scope of its jihad has expanded, but internal tensions remain. As a result, the threat comes both from the organization and from factions within it.

Overview: History and Ideology

Before turning to the issue of LeT's intent and capability to threaten the homeland or U.S. interests abroad it is useful to explore briefly its ideological outlook as well as to situate it within the militant environment in Pakistan. LeT's original parent organization, the Markaz al-Dawa-wal-Irshad (MDI), was formed in 1986 during the Afghan jihad against the Soviets.¹ MDI officially launched LeT as its military wing around 1990, after which the former was technically responsible for *dawa* and the latter for *jihad*.² MDI was dissolved in December 2001, several weeks prior to the government's official ban of LeT, and replaced by Jamaat-ul-Dawa (JuD). JuD remains legal in Pakistan, which means LeT continues to have a legitimate front organization through which to operate. The group claims that JuD and LeT have no connection, but in reality they remain two sides of the same coin. For purposes of clarity, I will refer to the group as LeT except in those instances where JuD's specific above-ground activities or infrastructure is in question.

From its inception LeT was committed to pan-Islamist *jihad*, which is to say it viewed itself as fighting on behalf of the entire *umma*.³ Al-Qaeda also has a pan-Islamist rationale for action, but its agenda is far more explicitly anti-American. Al-Qaeda's primary enemy is the U.S., whereas LeT historically prioritized *jihad* against India. Many jihadist outfits, including LeT, experienced a hybridization after 9/11, whereby they began including America and its allies among their list of adversaries to be fought even as they continued to prioritize other enemies. Unlike al-Qaeda, which also endorses the overthrow of what it considers to be apostate Muslims regimes, LeT does not support revolutionary *jihad* at home because the struggle in Pakistan "is not a struggle between Islam and disbelief."⁴ According to one of its tracts, "if we declare war against those who have professed Faith, we cannot do war with those who haven't."⁵ In other words, *jihad* against the infidels must come first. In lieu of *jihad* against the state, the group seeks gradual reform through *dawa*. The aim is to bring the people of Pakistan to LeT's interpretation of Ahl-e-Hadith Islam and, by doing so, to transform the society in which they live.⁶

In keeping with LeT's pan-Islamist ideology some of its militants joined the jihadi caravan after the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan in 1989 and fought on multiple open fronts during the 1990s, including in Tajikistan, Bosnia-Herzegovina and possibly Chechnya. Its militants have fought in Afghanistan during this decade, and a handful also ventured to Iraq.⁷ Most importantly for LeT, it has also been fighting in Indian-administered Kashmir since

¹ Author interview with Abdullah Muntazir, international spokesman for Jamaat-ul-Dawa, Dec. 2008 Pakistan.

² The year of its formation is given as both 1990 and 1993 by Lashkar's literature. One of the original MDI founders, who was a member of the Jamaat-ul-Dawa senior leadership at the time the author interviewed him, confirmed the date was 1990. A former Lashkar member, who belonged to the group in 1990, also confirmed that date. Author interview with member of Jamaat-ul-Dawa senior leadership, May 2009 in Pakistan. Author interview with former Lashkar-e-Taiba member, Jan. 2009 in Pakistan.

³ Hafiz Abdul Salam bin Muhammad, *Why We Do Jihad?* (Muridke: Markaz al-Dawa-wal-Irshad, May 1999).

⁴ Hafiz Abdul Salam bin Muhammad, "Jihad in the Present Time" Markaz al-Dawa-wal-Irshad Web site, undated. Author's collection.

⁵ Bin Muhammad, *Why We Do Jihad*.

⁶ Author interview with Abdullah Muntazir, Dec. 2008 in Pakistan.

⁷ Information regarding the presence of LeT militants in Iraq from: Author interview with Western intelligence official. U.S. Department of Treasury, "HP-996: Treasury Targets LET Leadership."; Richard Norton-Taylor, "Britain Aided Iraq Terror Renditions, Government Admits," *Guardian*, February 26, 2009. Ahmed Rashid, *Descent into Chaos*, (London: Penguin, 2008) p. 228.

1990. The ISI began providing support for the group not long after it entered the Kashmir front, and this assistance was escalating significantly by roughly 1995. Although state support contributed to the group's devotion to the Kashmir cause, LeT's leaders have historically viewed Kashmir as the most legitimate open front. They argued Indian-administered Kashmir was the closest occupied land, and observed that the ratio of occupying forces to the population there was one of the highest in the world, meaning this was among the most substantial occupations of Muslim land. Thus, LeT cadres could volunteer to fight on other fronts, but were obligated to fight in Indian-administered Kashmir.⁸ However, it would be a mistake to suggest the group's leaders viewed this simply as a territorial struggle. Rather, they asserted that Hindus were the worst of the polytheists and that the Kashmir conflict is the latest chapter in a Hindu-Muslim struggle that has existed for hundreds of years.⁹ Once Kashmir was liberated, they argued, it would serve as a base of operations to conquer India and restore Muslim rule to the Indian subcontinent.

LeT was only one of many groups the army and ISI were supporting during the 1990s. Most of these militant outfits adhered to the Deobandi school of thought, as do the Taliban. LeT is not Deobandi, but rather Salafi, and so it was historically somewhat separated from these other groups for sectarian reasons. It was also focused exclusively on Kashmir from the mid-1990s through to the end of the decade, unlike the Deobandi groups, which were active in Afghanistan where they fought alongside the Taliban as well as in Kashmir. Some were involved in sectarian violence in Pakistan too. Pakistan was supporting all of these outfits for nationalist, rather than Islamist purposes, but so long as this support remained extant, official policy aligned with jihadist objectives. When the government of President Pervez Musharraf allied with America against al-Qaeda and the Taliban after 9/11, it fractured this alignment. The Musharraf regime subsequently divided militant outfits into "good jihadis" and "bad jihadis" based on the perceived threats that a group posed to the state and utility it continued to offer. This was not a purely binomial division, and treatment existed on a spectrum. LeT was the most reliable in Islamabad's eyes and fared the best. Unlike the Deobandi outfits, it had no strong allegiance to the Taliban and therefore was viewed as less of a threat to the state. In addition, it had a robust social welfare infrastructure (described in the following section), which provided the state with leverage. Finally, LeT was the most India-centric of Pakistan's proxies, meaning its priorities aligned most closely with those of the Musharraf regime. All these reasons help to explain why the group reacted with more restraint than the Deobandi outfits after 9/11 and, hence, why it was treated better.

Pakistan's policy of playing a double game has proved to be an unsustainable model. By the end of the decade it was facing a jihadi-led insurgency, making it both a supporter and victim of jihadi violence. LeT's leaders also tried to have it both ways after 9/11. They continued to view liberating Kashmir as the most legitimate jihad and placed a premium on protecting the group's infrastructure in Pakistan. As a result, LeT remained focused primarily on the fight against India and on expanding the group's social welfare infrastructure in Pakistan. However, the global jihad was impossible to ignore, and LeT also began contributing to the fight against America and its allies almost immediately after 9/11. Examining the means

⁸ Author interview with high-ranking official in Jamaat-ul-Dawa, May 2009 in Pakistan. Author interview with Lashkar-e-Taiba member, May 2009 in Pakistan. Author interview with former Lashkar-e-Taiba member, Jan. 2009 in Pakistan.

⁹ Yoginder Sikand, "Islamist Militancy in Kashmir: The Case of the Lashkar-i Tayyeba," *South Asia Citizens Web*, Nov. 20, 2003.

through which it has done so sheds light on LeT's capabilities and the ways in which it threatens both the U.S. homeland as well as American interests abroad.

Capability to Threaten U.S. Interests: At Home and Abroad

LeT has transnational networks stretching across South Asia (and perhaps into East Asia via Thailand), the Persian Gulf and Europe, with a particularly strong connection to the United Kingdom. In the past, the group's connections also reached into the U.S., Canada and Australia, though from the open source it is unclear whether its networks in these countries remain active. In addition to these networks abroad, LeT militants and trainers in Pakistan are considered to be among the most tactically adept. The group also has a robust above-ground infrastructure that may be used as a first point of contact for would-be jihadists. Finally, it is among the wealthiest jihadist organizations and so can contribute financially to operations. As a result, it is able to threaten U.S. interests at home and abroad in the following ways:

Training Provider: The army and ISI trained many of LeT's trainers, and some of them are former soldiers who took early retirement to join the group. As a result, it boasts a stable of men who can provide instruction in small-unit commando tactics, reconnaissance, counter-intelligence and the construction and use of explosive devices. As LeT has deepened its collaboration with other outfits, cross-pollination among trainers and trainees has occurred. Training collaboration with other groups of concern to the U.S. takes place primarily in FATA as well as in certain areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. It appears less pronounced in Pakistan-administered Kashmir and the neighboring Mansehra District (also in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa), where the group's camps appear mainly used for operations against India. Cross-training takes three forms: LeT runs joint camps with other outfits, LeT trainers work in camps run by other outfits, and LeT camps provide training to militants from other outfits. Thus, significant concern rightly exists that LeT trainers or camps—either with or without the leadership's sanction—might be used to prepare militants for attacks against U.S. interests at home or abroad.

Gateway Organization: LeT has a robust above-ground presence in Pakistan, run via JuD. Its mosques, madrassas and offices provide an entry point for Western would-be jihadists looking to access militant organizations in Pakistan. Because this infrastructure remains legitimate, those seeking training can present themselves at a JuD facility to link up with the group. From there they could either make their way to an LeT training facility or take advantage of LeT's connections, at the organizational or grassroots level, to access other outfits. For example, in 2005 a would-be jihadist from Atlanta, Syed Haris Ahmed, sought to train with the group. He intended to enroll at a madrassa and then move on to train with LeT.¹⁰ Ahmed and his colleague Ehsanul Islam Sadequee earlier had taken video surveillance of possible targets for a terrorist attack in the U.S., which they sent to a suspected talent spotter for LeT with whom they were in contact.¹¹ Ahmed ultimately failed to access LeT's

¹⁰ Indictment in "United States of America *vs.* Syed Haris Ahmed and Ehsanul Islam Sadequee," United States District Court for the Northern District of Georgia, July 19, 2006.

¹¹ United States Attorney's Office Northern District of Georgia, "Terrorism Defendants Sentenced: Ehsanul Islam Sadequee Receives 17 Years in Prison; Co-defendant Syed Haris Ahmed Receives 13 Years," Dec. 14, 2009.

camps, which is possibly explained by the fact that he arrived in Pakistan ten days after the 7/7 attacks in London and thus at a time when the group was under an enormous amount of pressure. At least one of the 7/7 bombers (Shahzad Tanweer) is believed to have attended LeT training sessions focused primarily on indoctrination several years prior. In advance of his final trip to Pakistan during which time he trained with al-Qaeda for the 7/7 attacks, Tanweer reportedly placed an unknown number of phone calls from his home in Britain to Lashkar's compound at Muridke.¹² He and his colleague, Mohammad Sidiqqe Khan, are also believed to have availed themselves of LeT safe houses en route to al-Qaeda's camps in the Tribal Areas.¹³

Recruitment and Facilitation for Terrorist Attacks: LeT's transnational networks, particularly in Europe, mean it is capable of talent-spotting, recruiting and vetting radicalized Westerners. It must be noted that LeT is a historically selfish organization and generally sought to use Western operatives to support its own operations in South Asia. Nevertheless, it could recruit for other outfits or decide to use Western operatives for terrorist attacks abroad. Those same networks that can recruit Western operatives may also be used to support terrorist attacks against the West, and there is evidence LeT has employed them to this effect. For example, activists in Paris associated with the group are suspected of providing some logistical support to the "shoebomber" Richard Reid. French investigators suspected, though they could not prove, that LeT's representative provided logistical and financial support to Reid in Paris as well as facilitating contact for him with a person or persons in Pakistan.¹⁴ LeT operatives in the U.K. are also suspected of providing money to those involved in the 2006 attempt to bomb transatlantic flights from the United Kingdom using liquid explosives.¹⁵ Notably, several of those involved may have used a LeT relief camp as a jumping off point to access training camps in FATA as well.¹⁶

A Unilateral Attack: It is conceivable that rather than contributing to some portion of an attack on the homeland or U.S. interests abroad (either via training, as a gateway organization, as a recruiting agent or through the provision of logistical support) that LeT could execute an operation unilaterally. There is precedent for this. From late 2001 through early 2002 a French convert to Islam named Willie Brigitte trained with the group. Sajid Mir (a.k.a. Sajid Majid), a commander responsible for managing LeT's overseas operatives who was recently indicted for his role in the 2008 Mumbai attacks, became Brigitte's handler and directed him to return to Paris to act as a point of contact for any LeT operative transiting through France.¹⁷ Roughly a year later, Sajid ordered Brigitte to travel to Australia and arranged for members of the group's network in Paris to provide him with money for the

¹² Ewen MacAskill and Luke Harding, 'Ambassador denies Pakistan linked to bombs,' *The Guardian*, July 18, 2005. Andrew Gilligan, 'On the conveyor belt of terror,' *The Evening Standard*, Aug. 24, 2006.

¹³ Author interview with first Western intelligence official. Author interview with second Western intelligence official.

¹⁴ Judgment in *Republic of France vs. Rama et. al.*, Magistrates' Court of Paris, June 16, 2005.

¹⁵ Dexter Filkins and Souad Mekhennet, "Pakistani Charity Under Scrutiny In Financing of Airline Bomb Plot," *New York Times*, Aug. 13, 2006. Joshua Partlow and Kamran Khan, "Charity Funds Said to Provide Clues to Alleged Terrorist Plot," *Washington Post*, Aug. 15, 2006. Henry Chu and Sebastian Rotella, "Three Britons convicted of plot to blow up planes," *Los Angeles Times*, Sept. 8, 2009. John Burns, "3 Sentenced in London for Airline Plot," *New York Times*, July 12, 2010.

¹⁶ Praveen Swami, "Evidence mounts of Pakistan links," *The Hindu*, Aug. 12, 2006.

¹⁷ Jean-Louise Bruguière, *Ce que je n'ai pas pu dire* (Paris: Robert Laffont, 2009), pp. 469-472.

trip.¹⁸ Brigitte was dispatched to assist Faheem Khalid Lodhi, who had trained with the group on multiple occasions.¹⁹ Both men remained in contact with Sajid, who an Australian court later found was endeavoring to coordinate a liaison between them so that “the prospect of terrorist actions in Australia could be explored.”²⁰ Australian security officials said the two men intended to select a suitable target and purchase the chemicals necessary to build a large bomb, but that they were planning to bring in a foreign explosives expert to assemble it. There were reports that this explosives expert worked in LeT’s camps, but whether he was a member of the group or a freelancer who contracted out his services is unknown.²¹ It is unclear from the open source whether Lodhi was directed to execute the attack in Australia by LeT leaders or if he germinated the idea and reached out to the organization for assistance. In either case, this was an instance in which LeT appears to have been acting unilaterally and is evidence of its capability to do so.

Gauging Intent

Debates took place within LeT immediately after 9/11 (and President Pervez Musharraf’s decision to ally with America) about whether to attack the U.S. and/or Pakistan.²² The leadership decided not to turn on the state, though as explained earlier, it did begin contributing to attacks against America. Tensions over how involved to be in the global jihad were exacerbated during the middle of the decade when state support for the Kashmir jihad declined at roughly the same time the Taliban-led insurgency in Afghanistan gained strength. LeT became more involved on the Afghan front, which necessitated an increased presence in Pakistan’s Federally Administered Tribal Areas and greater integration with the militants based there, many of whom were fighting not only in Afghanistan but also against Pakistan. This further increased internal tensions about where the group should focus its energies and how close it should remain to the state. Indeed, while some LeT members were working with militants from other outfits launching attacks in Pakistan, the ISI allegedly was using other LeT members to eliminate militants from those same outfits.²³ Thus, different cliques co-existed within LeT, which in turn existed in a space where various actors with overlapping and competing agendas were present. The exploding array of opportunities for collaboration meant the group’s members could shop around for like-minded allies.

As a result of escalating tensions within LeT and increasing access to other outfits, factionalization within the organization and freelancing by its members grew from roughly 2006-2007 onwards. According to David Headley, the Pakistani-American operative originally named Daood Gilani who conducted surveillance for the 2008 Mumbai attacks, these internal dynamics contributed to the LeT leadership’s decision to expand the scope of

¹⁸ Judgment in "Republic of France vs. Rama, *et. al.*" Appeal Judgement in "Fahim Khalid Lodhi vs. Regina," New South Wales Court of Criminal Appeal, Dec. 20, 2007. "Frenchman Played ‘Major’ Role in Australia Terror Plot, Court Hears," *Agence France-Presse*, Feb. 8, 2007.

¹⁹ "Committal Hearing of Faheem Khalid Lodhi," Downing Centre Local Court, Sydney, Australia, Dec. 17, 2004. Natasha Wallace, "Court Battle Over Secret Evidence," *Sydney Morning Herald*, Dec. 18, 2004.

²⁰ Appeal Judgement in "Fahim Khalid Lodhi vs. Regina."

²¹ Author interview with former member of the Australian security services. Martin Chulov, *Australian Jihad: The Battle Against Terrorism from Within and Without*, (Sydney: Pan Macmillan, 2006), p. 143. Liz Jackson, "Program Transcript: Willie Brigitte," *ABC*, Feb. 9, 2004.

²² Author interview with high-ranking official in Jamaat-ul-Dawa, May 2009 in Pakistan.

²³ Author interview with Jamaat-ul-Dawa member, Jan. 2009 in Pakistan. Author interview with senior officer in Pakistan security services, May 2009 in Pakistan.

the Mumbai attacks. What began as a modest 1-2 person operation against the Taj Mahal Hotel became the 10 person terrorist spectacular that captured the world's attention. Several targets, including the Chabad House and the Leopold Café, were added only months before the operation was meant to take place.²⁴ Both guaranteed foreigners would be killed, in particular American and Israeli Jews at the Chabad House, which would bring LeT credibility within the jihadist community. It is important to recognize that the leadership appears to have felt compelled to expand its target set as a result of pressure—internally and from other jihadist outfits—to show greater results vis-à-vis the global jihad. Equally important is that, although the Mumbai attacks were operationally successful and secured LeT significant notoriety, they failed to quell the tensions within the organization over how involved it should be in the global jihad.

At the organizational level, regional dynamics continue to exert considerable and direct influence on LeT. The leadership retains an element of nationalism that is distinctly at odds with al-Qaeda and still finds common ground, as it has since the 1990s, with elements in the army and ISI. LeT and its backers remain co-dependent: each afraid of the repercussions that might stem from splitting with the other, and bound together by their belief that India is a mortal enemy. Furthermore, unlike al-Qaeda Central, which confronts a challenging security environment, LeT controls a robust social welfare infrastructure and its leaders value the influence that comes with it. In the 1990s the group needed the state to build up its infrastructure, whereas now it is reliant on the army and ISI not to tear it down. It is worth highlighting the leadership's devotion to *dawa* through the delivering of social services and the fact that protecting its domestic infrastructure has at times limited its military adventurism. This leadership operates out of Lahore and Pakistan-administered Kashmir, not from a hidden redoubt somewhere along the Afghanistan-Pakistan border, even though the group has increased its presence there significantly. This freedom of movement carries with it a number of benefits, but also serves as another leverage point that can be used to constrain LeT's activity. As a result, significant elements within the group are still "tamed by the ISI" as one former member observed.²⁵

It is questionable whether Osama bin Laden's death will significantly impact LeT's behavior as an organization in the short-term, particularly as the group never considered itself to be an al-Qaeda affiliate. Because LeT does remain influenced by regional dynamics, it is worth considering how bin Laden's death might reshape the environment in which the group operates. The Kashmir conflict remains torpid and it would be difficult for LeT to regenerate the insurgency there. LeT will not disappear from the Kashmiri scene in the near-term, but a return to its glory days on that front is unlikely. This leaves the group with four areas on which to focus: fighting in Afghanistan; launching terrorist attacks against India; participating in the global jihad via terrorism against the U.S. and its allies; and non-violent activism in Pakistan, primarily through the provision of social services.

LeT members continue to integrate into the Afghan insurgency, but the group remains a secondary player there. The U.S. was already moving toward a phased withdrawal and pursuing the possibility of a political reconciliation with the Taliban, a condition of which would be the Taliban's willingness to break with al-Qaeda. Bin Laden's death could make such a separation more viable and create space for a political solution. Of the main players

²⁴ "Testimony of David Coleman Headley to the Indian National Investigative Agency," June 3-9, 2010. Author in possession of hard copy.

²⁵ Author interview with former Lashkar-e-Taiba member, Jan. 2009 in Pakistan.

supported by the army and ISI in Pakistan—the Afghan Taliban, the Haqqani Network and LeT—LeT is the only one without a major constituency in Afghanistan. In other words, should a settlement emerge, LeT may find itself without an active open front for the first time in two decades. This will impact its behavior and group cohesion. On the one hand, a reduction in hostilities in Afghanistan might remove pressure from the rank-and-file to engage more vigorously in the global jihad. On the other hand, it could lead those unwilling to lay down arms and robbed of an open front to seek other opportunities, particularly terrorist attacks against India, Pakistan or the U.S. and its Western allies.

According to interlocutors in Pakistan, the ISI continues to put pressure on the group to refrain from launching either another terrorist spectacular in India, which could trigger a war, or an attack against America or its allies. Yet, as should be evident, there is cause for concern that in the case of attacks against the U.S. or its allies, this presumes a level of influence by the ISI and by LeT leaders that is at odds with the ground reality. The current threat to Western interests comes from a conglomeration of actors in Pakistan who are working in concert. Thus, LeT need not take the lead role in an attack in order for its capabilities to be used against the U.S. homeland or its interests abroad. Notably, working as part of a consortium enables LeT to earn credit from its fellow militants while also providing it cover, since shared responsibility makes it easier for the group to conceal its fingerprints from the U.S. or other possible targets. Furthermore, the threat comes not only from LeT as a stand-alone organization or from its collaboration with other actors. Rather, individuals or factions within LeT can utilize its domestic infrastructure as well as transnational capabilities to pursue their own operations. Enhanced organizational integration with other outfits heightens the opportunities for freelancing, thus increasing the chances that some of the group's capabilities might be used for attacks without the leadership's consent. Because members who leave do not necessarily cut ties with the group, or may bring elements within it with them, the threat also comes from LeT's alumni network. Thus, when assessing the dangers of LeT's expansion in terms of its intent in the medium-term as well as how it might respond in the near-term following bin Laden's death, one must consider the capability of current and former members both to steer the organization in an increasingly internationalist direction as well as to leverage its infrastructure for these purposes whether or not the leadership approves.

Recommendations

Dismantling LeT must be a gradual process in order to avoid provoking a major backlash that could destabilize Pakistan or cause the group's transnational operatives to be unleashed. All of the recommendations that follow are LeT-specific and intended to spur debate about how to move this process forward. They do not focus on the need for or mechanisms by which the U.S. should continue to support Pakistani efforts to achieve reforms in areas including education, the economy, or the judiciary, all of which could benefit the process of action vis-à-vis LeT.

First, accelerate actions necessary for a global takedown of LeT:

- Continue to pursue counter-terrorism cooperation with, and support to, India and Bangladesh. Doing so is necessary for tracking, degrading and dismantling LeT's networks in Pakistan's near abroad, which is where they are strongest. Providing

- counter-terrorism assistance to India, particularly in areas that contribute to a more robust homeland security capability, also decreases the utility LeT offers to Pakistan.
- Pursue greater counter-terrorism cooperation with Nepal, Sri Lanka and the Maldives, where LeT networks are currently expanding. Arresting this tide now, before these operatives secure too strong a foothold, is important for containing the short-term threat and for reducing the chances of an escalation in the future.
 - Continue to pursue counter-terrorism cooperation and intelligence sharing vis-à-vis LeT with allies in Europe and the Gulf (especially Saudi Arabia, Dubai and the United Arab Emirates). This should include not only interdicting financial support, but also monitoring and perhaps infiltrating networks that could be used to recruit operatives or provide logistical support for terrorist attacks.

Second, consider the following when it comes to action by Pakistan against LeT:

- In the near-term, continue to signal to the Pakistan army and ISI the severe repercussions that would result were LeT *or elements within it* to be involved in an attack on the homeland or American interests abroad. The U.S. must also continue to signal the need for Pakistan to restrain LeT from launching another major terrorist attack against India. Moreover, the U.S. should continue to press Pakistan to provide intelligence regarding LeT's international networks, to interdict Westerners attempting to access the organization's above-ground infrastructure and to begin taking steps to dismantle LeT's training apparatus. While the most pressing need may be to degrade LeT's operations in FATA, where it is most closely integrated with other outfits that threaten the homeland, all of its camps are capable of training militants who threaten U.S. interests.
- In the medium-term, increase the focus on building up Pakistan's counter-terrorism capacity via civilian law enforcement and civilian intelligence agencies. These entities will be on the front end of any effort to combat a possible backlash from LeT and have utility against other militant outfits currently threatening the state. The U.S. should also consider contributing to alternative relief mechanisms in Pakistan to reduce the above-ground JuD's influence and fundraising capability.
- At present, there is no significant effort underway to disarm, demobilize or reintegrate (DDR) any of the militant outfits or networks present in Pakistan, either those allied with or attacking the state. With a view toward the longer-term, the U.S. should explore the feasibility, costs and benefits of prevailing on a third party, such as Saudi Arabia, to begin working with Pakistan to build a program for DDR. Such a program would have utility for LeT as well as for other militants, though obviously it would take time to construct and would be of limited utility without political shifts vis-à-vis India and Afghanistan. Jamaat-ud-Dawa (JuD) has acted as a repository for decommissioned militants in the past, suggesting some members are willing to forsake militancy in favor a social welfare or proselytizing mission. Thus, it provides a possible means for shifting the organization fully toward non-violent activism over the long-term. The leadership's commitment to dawa and hence to protecting its social welfare infrastructure suggests this path deserves exploration. However, several caveats are in order. First, this must be accompanied by a real and sustained crackdown on LeT's militant apparatus. Otherwise, this approach risks legitimizing the above-ground wing of a terrorist organization. Second, this approach could have serious political and social repercussions within Pakistan given JuD's Islamist agenda.

Third, while some militants might accept a glide path from LeT to JuD, others almost certainly would fight on and would likely do so either against Pakistan or in pursuit of a wider global jihadi agenda. Despite these very real dangers, various interlocutors in the Pakistani security establishment have mooted this approach and thus the U.S. should explore its possible costs and benefits. Intrinsic to this will be developing the metrics necessary to confirm JuD is being used as a means of demobilizing LeT, and no longer as a front for it.

Demobilizing LeT militants and dismantling its military apparatus is unlikely absent a fundamental shift in India-Pakistan relations or, at this stage, some resolution to the conflict in Afghanistan. Yet this is no reason not to consider the aforementioned actions in order to lay the groundwork in the event such a breakthrough is reached. As the world witnessed with elimination of Osama bin Laden, persistence and preparation do pay off.