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Lashkar-e Taiba and the Threat to the United States of a Mumbai-Style Attack

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RAND Office of External Affairs

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Testimony presented before the House Homeland Security Committee, Subcommittee on Counterterrorism and Intelligence on June 12, 2013

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The RAND Corporation

Lashkar-e Taiba and the Threat to the United States of a Mumbai-Style Attack²

**Before the Committee on Homeland Security
Subcommittee on Counterterrorism and Intelligence
House of Representatives**

June 12, 2013

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Ranking Member, Members of the Committee, it is an honor to appear before you today. This hearing addresses two significant threats to America's security and vital interests: Lashkar-e Taiba, and the potential for a Mumbai-style attack here in the United States. Both threats are timely, and receive far less attention than they warrant-- but they are not necessarily related. Lashkar-e Taiba (LeT) poses a grave danger to US interests and citizens in South Asia, but is less of an immediate risk to the American homeland. A Mumbai-style attack-- that is, an attack dramatic and shocking enough to inspire widespread terror even without the use of weapons of mass destruction or a casualty-count in the thousands-- remains a realistic near-term threat to the homeland. Such an attack might be termed, "Boston Squared"-- that is, an attack similar to the Boston Marathon bombing in April, but much larger in effect-- and wouldn't require the resources of Lashkar-e Taiba or Al Qaeda in order to achieve its aims.

Before turning to lessons that the Mumbai attack of 2008 might hold for homeland security here (a topic on which my colleague Brian Jenkins has provided expert analysis), I'll spend a few minutes outlining why I regard Lashkar-e Taiba as a very significant threat to American interests and citizens abroad-- and less of a threat here at home.

Lashkar-e Taiba is one of the most capable, experienced, resourced, and politically-protected terrorist groups in the world. For more than two decades it has carried out acts of terrorism, as well as more traditional guerrilla warfare, in both India and Afghanistan. LeT enjoyed virtually open support from the Pakistani state throughout the 1990s, and has received at least tacit protection (in my view, also active facilitation and guidance) from Pakistan's Inter-Services

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Intelligence Directorate (ISI) since the group was officially banned by Islamabad in 2002.³ In addition to whatever support it still receives from ISI, Lashkar has a global network of fundraising and recruitment that frees it from complete reliance on its traditional patron.

The bulk of LeT's terrorist actions have been carried out in India. Most of these have targeted Kashmir, but at least five major attacks on civilian targets have been credibly attributed to Lashkar elsewhere in India: three in New Delhi, one in Varanasi, and two in Mumbai.⁴ Given this focus, why does LeT pose a threat to the United States?

First, Lashkar-e Taiba is a *de facto* affiliate of Al Qaeda, and is believed to have joined Usama bin Laden's International Islamic Front for Jihad sometime after the umbrella group's famous fatwa in 1998.⁵ When Al Qaeda's Chief Operating Officer Abu Zubaydah was captured in Faisalabad, Pakistan in 2002, the site where he was located was an LeT safe-house.⁶ In rhetoric, at least, LeT has openly declared itself to be a committed threat to America.⁷

Second, LeT has killed American citizens in South Asia, and remains a threat to Americans in that region. In the 2008 attack on Mumbai, for example, four Americans were killed and two were seriously injured. In Afghanistan, LeT militants have fought in conventional and unconventional actions alongside cadres of the Taliban, the Haqqani Network, and Al Qaeda; for example, in July

³ For studies outlining ISI support to Lashkar-e Taiba, as well as some of the other basic facts about LeT, see South Asian Terrorism Portal:

http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/india/states/jandk/terrorist_outfits/lashkar_e_toiba.htm; Ashley J. Tellis, "The Menace That Is Lashkar-e-Taiba," Carnegie Endowment for International Peace (Washington, DC: March, 2012): http://carnegieendowment.org/files/LeT_menace.pdf; and Anirban Ghosh, Arif Jamal, Christine Fair, Don Rassler, Nadia Shoeb, "The Fighters of Lashkar-e-Taiba: Recruitment, Training, Deployment and Death" (West Point, NY: Combating Terrorism Center at West Point, April 4, 2013):

<http://www.ctc.usma.edu/posts/the-fighters-of-lashkar-e-taiba-recruitment-training-deployment-and-death>

⁴ The five highest-profile Indian attacks credibly linked to LeT outside of Kashmir are: Delhi, Red Fort, 2000 (LeT operative Ashfaq Arif was convicted and executed; <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-south-asia-14471793> P); New Delhi, Parliament House, 2001 (LeT is believed to have cooperated with Jaish-e Muhammad for this attack: http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2010/11/us_treasury_sanction_1.php); New Delhi, Diwali market bombings, 2005 (60 dead, 527 maimed. LeT denied responsibility, but is widely assumed to have orchestrated the attacks: <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2005-11-01/diwali-begins-as-delhi-mourns-bomb-victims/2136636>; http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/4395346.stm); Varanasi, 2006 (more than 20 dead, responsibility claimed by previously and subsequently unknown group Lashkar-e Qahab, believed to be LeT front: http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2006-03-09/india/27822334_1_varanasi-blasts-twin-blasts-outfit); Mumbai, July 11 2006 railway blasts (Sometimes called the "7/11" attacks, for the date on which they occurred; 211 dead, about 400 maimed, over 768 injured less severely; Lashkar-e Qahhar, also believed to be a front for LeT, claimed responsibility:

http://www.idsa.in/idsastrategiccomments/MumbaiSerialBlastsPortendDangerousTrends_AKamboj_190706); Mumbai, November 2008 attacks: LeT operative David Headley outlined the group's role in U.S. court testimony (<http://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/2013/January/13-nsd-104.html>), and Pakistan's own investigation implicated LeT (<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/pakistan/9672494/Pakistan-details-how-Lashkar-e-Taiba-2008-Mumbai-attack-gunmen-were-trained.html>).

⁵ <http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/usa/IIF.htm>. Also http://carnegieendowment.org/files/LeT_menace.pdf

⁶ <http://www.cfr.org/pakistan/lashkar-e-taiba-army-pure-aka-lashkar-e-tayyiba-lashkar-e-toiba-lashkar--taiba/p17882>

⁷ <http://www.worldaffairsjournal.org/article/next-al-qaeda-lashkar-e-taiba-and-future-terrorism-south-asia>

2008, LeT fighters are believed to have been among a 400-strong insurgent force that nearly overran a Coalition outpost near Wanat in Nuristan, killing 9 US troops and wounding 15 others.⁸

Third, Lashkar-e Taiba has always been, and is likely to remain, a factory churning out violent extremists. Even if the group itself continues to limit its attacks to South Asia, its alumni network and splinter cells show no such restraint. Several terrorist plots in Europe-- fortunately, most foiled well before completion-- have had LeT linkages. One such plot was a proposed attack on a Danish newspaper and other sites in Copenhagen, in which American LeT operative David Headley conspired in 2009 with the high-level Al Qaeda commander Ilyas Kashmiri.⁹

LeT has contributed to terrorist recruitment in Europe through what British counterterrorism authorities refer to as Lashkar's "jihadi escalator": Recruits are drawn to one of the training camps run by LeT, whether near its headquarters in Muridke (for purely ideological instruction) or in Pakistan's Azad Kashmir and Federally Administered Tribal Areas (for instruction involving weaponry and advanced combat skills). Many recruits get off at lower levels, but the most committed ride the escalator up to the top floor: membership in LeT, Al Qaeda or any of at least a dozen terrorist groups that draw from Lashkar's training and enlistment machine.

Fourth, LeT has a unique potential to precipitate a major war between India and Pakistan. Due to its traditional sponsorship by Pakistan's military, an attack by LeT is regarded by India as nearly synonymous with an attack by the state of Pakistan. At least twice in the recent past-- after the 2008 Mumbai attack, and after the 2001 attack on India's Parliament-- New Delhi came very close to launching a military strike across the border in response to an attack attributed to LeT. As the 1999 Indo-Pakistani combat at Kargil demonstrated, any serious military engagement between these two rivals runs the risk of nuclear escalation: During the Kargil episode, the Pakistani military began mobilizing the nation's nuclear assets without the knowledge of the civilian prime minister.¹⁰ Apart from the risk to tens of thousands of American citizens in India and Pakistan, the threat of a nuclear exchange anywhere in the world would obviously have a monumental impact on US strategic and economic interests.

⁸ http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2013/04/isaf_captures_lashka.php

⁹ <http://news.outlookindia.com/items.aspx?artid=700541>. Ilyas Kashmiri had close ties to ISI during the 1990s, and his intelligence liaisons are said to have unsuccessfully tried to steer him towards joining Jaish-e Muhammad, a Pakistan-based terrorist group that has operated in concert with LeT in the past. He was killed in a drone strike on June 4, 2011.

http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2009/10/kashmiri_lashkaretai.php

¹⁰ Bruce Riedel, *American Diplomacy and the 1999 Kargil Summit at Blair House*, Policy paper series, Center for Advanced Studies of India, 2002. p .11. The prime minister during that crisis, Nawaz Sharif, was sworn into office for a third term on June 5, 2013.

http://media.sas.upenn.edu/casi/docs/research/papers/Riedel_2002.pdf

So why is Lashkar-e Taiba NOT an immediate threat to the U.S. homeland? For the very same reason that it is such a uniquely problematic threat in South Asia: Its sponsorship by Pakistan's military. According to former Directors of ISI and other retired Pakistani generals I have interviewed, the nation's military interlocutors have drawn a red-line prohibiting Lashkar from undertaking any attacks in the US or Europe. Thus far, this ban has been respected by LeT's leadership: relatively few plots outside of South Asia have been detected, and all have been the work of disaffected splinter cells.

Based on interviews I have conducted in Pakistan, in Britain, and in India, there is widespread sentiment among counterterrorism professionals that LeT's top leadership-- including the group's leader Hafez Saeed and his close associates-- is likely to respect whatever restrictions are laid out by ISI. For Lashkar, the stakes for crossing ISI are too great to take the risk; for ISI, the risks of crossing the United States are too great to take the risk.

This line of analysis was challenged by the revelation-- on May 2, 2011-- that Usama bin Laden had been hiding in a safehouse next door to the Pakistan Military Academy in Abbotabad.¹¹ If Pakistan's top generals could have sheltered America's most wanted terrorist (the counter-argument goes), why would they hesitate to unleash LeT on America? The fact remains, however, that Lashkar's commanders have never authorized an attack in the United States, despite having operatives here. For example, in 2006 nine Virginia residents (Muhammed Aatique, Hammad Abdur-Raheem, Ibrahim Ahmed Al-Hamdi, Seifullah Chapman, Khwaja Hasan, Masoud Khan, Yong Kwon, Randall Todd Royer and Donald Surratt) were convicted of conspiring to provide material support to LeT: the group played paintball and travelled to Pakistan shortly after 9/11 to attend LeT training camps, but only with the intention (according to the Department of Justice) of waging war *outside* the United States.¹²

LeT operations outside of India and Afghanistan have generally been focused not on attacks, but

¹¹There is no direct proof linking implicating General Pervez Musharraf (who was Chief of Army Staff when Bin Laden is believed to have taken up residence at Abbotabad) or General Ashfaq Kiyani (who was Director of ISI at the time, and is now Chief of Army Staff). But former ISI chief Gen. Ziauddin Khwaja is quoted by former National Security Council Senior Director Bruce Riedel as saying that Musharraf "knew Bin Laden was in Abbottabad." (Bruce Riedel, "Pakistan's Musharraf Has Been Accused of Knowing Bin Laden's Hideout," The Daily Beast, Feb. 14, 2012: <http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2012/02/13/pakistan-s-musharraf-has-been-accused-of-knowing-osama-bin-laden-s-hideout.html>). Moreover, it seems hard to imagine that Bin Laden would choose to hide right next to a Pakistani military establishment-- leaving behind the safety and protection of his heavily-armed tribal hosts in Waziristan-- without being convinced that he'd be sheltered by the very highest levels of the Army's leadership

¹² According to the Justice Department's statement, Al Hamdi was convicted of obtaining training "for the purpose of enhancing his ability to train for violent jihad in Chechnya, Kashmir or other places outside of the United States;" Three others, "Yong Kwon, Muhammed Aatique, and Khwaja Hasan - all of whom pled guilty - stated that they went to the Lashkar-e-Taiba camp to obtain combat training for the purpose engaging in violent jihad in Afghanistan"
http://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/2004/April/04_crm_225.htm

on fundraising, recruitment and aid for operations back in South Asia. For example, in April 2012, an electrician named Jubair Ahmad, was sentenced in Alexandria, Virginia, to twelve years in prison after pleading guilty to providing material support to LeT by producing an Internet recruitment video.¹³ This pattern shows no immediate sign of changing-- but I'll offer the same disclaimer that mutual funds give to investors: Past performance is no guarantee of future results.

If Lashkar-e Taiba is not an immediate threat to the US homeland, do we have to worry about a Mumbai-style attack in America? Not much-- if we define "Mumbai-style attack" as "an attack executed much like that of LeT's 2008 operation in Mumbai." My colleague Brian Jenkins has outlined many of the reasons that such an attack would be unlikely to succeed in the US, and witnesses from law enforcement are likely to reinforce this point. The tactical capabilities of most American counterterrorism responders is well above that of their Mumbai counterparts in 2008 (indeed, the capabilities of India's *own* responders, in Mumbai and elsewhere, is now well above the 2008 level). But the next Mumbai-style attack won't necessarily look like the last one.

If we define "Mumbai-style attack" by its *impact* rather than its methods, however, such an action becomes far more plausible-- and it wouldn't require a group as capable as Lashkar-e Taiba to achieve its aims. What made Mumbai so shocking was not its body-count, or even the fact that the perpetrator was a state-sponsored terrorist group. Mumbai has suffered at least seven bombings since March 12, 1993, when 257 people were killed and 700 were injured in a series of 13 coordinated explosives; these attacks were attributed to Dawood Ibrahim, a self-exiled Mumbai crime-lord with longstanding ties to ISI (since 1993, he is believed to have moved freely between Dubai and the Pakistani city of Karachi).¹⁴ Just two and a half years before the 2008 attack, there was another coordinated set of bombings, this one targeting Mumbai's railways: Like the Dawood action, this one killed a lot more people than the 2008 attacks-- 209 compared with 166-- and injured over twice as many (more than 700, compared with about 308). The suspected perpetrator was identified by Mumbai police as affiliated with LeT, perhaps working in concert with an Indian extremist group.¹⁵

So why has the 2008 attack become so iconic, both in India and around the world? A key difference was duration: The seven railway blasts on July 11, 2006, lasted a total of eleven minutes. The 2008 shootings kept the entire population of Mumbai-- at that time, 14 million

¹³ Ahmad lived in Woodbridge, VA. He reportedly also tried to recruit LeT operatives, received LeT training himself, and sought donations for the group. He was born in Sialkot, arrived in the US in 2007, and became a permanent resident. <http://www.wjla.com/articles/2012/04/jubair-ahmad-sentenced-to-12-years-behind-bars-74909.html>

¹⁴ <http://www.hindustantimes.com/India-news/NewDelhi/Dawood-Mumbai-blasts-mastermind-eludes-justice/Article1-1030228.aspx>

¹⁵ <http://www.theepochtimes.com/news/6-7-13/43897.html>

people, if suburbs are included-- in a state of constant fear from Wednesday night to Saturday morning.

During that period, the terrorists had succeeded in throwing India's largest city into chaos. They humiliated the municipal, state and national governments, and showed that the police and military were unable to maintain control even over the country's financial and cultural center. Mumbai is sometimes referred to as the "New York" of India-- and Lashkar-e Taiba executed the equivalent of capturing and holding the Empire State Building, the Statue of Liberty, and Grand Central Station all at once.

In terms of iconic impact (that is, impact that is *itself* so dramatic as to create a new expression of terrorism-- attacks targeting cultural icons), actions not too far short of Mumbai already *have* occurred here. Less than two months ago, the Boston Marathon blasts had a similarly dramatic effect, and kept both a city and a nation in a state of uneasy tension until the perpetrators were brought down four days later. In October 2002, Washington DC and the surrounding areas were paralyzed for three weeks by the Beltway Sniper. Both of these attacks caused fewer deaths than other post-9/11 mass killings in the U.S. homeland: the Boston toll was 3 dead, while the Beltway snipers killed 10. By contrast, mass shootings at Sandy Hook Elementary School in December 2012 and Virginia Tech in November 2007 killed 26 and 32 respectively. The Tech shooting spree alone was more than ten times as deadly as the Marathon bombing-- but the Boston attack spread wider terror. The shootings in Virginia were part of a long, tragic pattern of largely apolitical gun violence: Jonesboro, Columbine, Paducah, Aurora-- the list goes on. But bombing a marathon was something new: It struck not only at Boston, and runners, at amateur athletes, at everyone who's come out to compete or cheer a loved one across the finish line.

What might a Mumbai-style attack look like in America? Perhaps like "Boston Squared":

- *It might, like the Mumbai attack of 2008, rely on small-arms and simple explosives rather than chemical, biological, or other more advanced weapons.* The firearms used in Mumbai were primarily AK-47s-- perhaps the most widely-available firearm in the world.¹⁶ Semi-automatic rifles are far more easily available in America than in India, and can be modified to fire fully-automatically without advanced training; one YouTube video

¹⁶ According to a World Bank report, assault rifles in the Kalashnikov family (AK-47s, AKM, AK-74, etc.) represent one-fifth of the 500 million small arms in the world, with AK-47's representing approximately three-quarters of the Kalashnikov total: Phillip Killicoat, "Weaponomics: The Global Market for Assault Rifles." *World Bank Policy Research Working Paper 4202* (Post-Conflict Transitions Working Paper No. 10: April 2007), p. 3. http://www-wds.worldbank.org/servlet/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2007/04/13/000016406_20070413145045/Rendered/PDF/wps4202.pdf

demonstrates the conversion technique in just over 2 minutes.¹⁷

- *It might, like the Mumbai railway attacks of 2006, rely on simple improvised explosive devices, requiring no special training to construct.* The bombs for these attacks were made from widely available pressure cookers-- just like the bombs in Boston. The surviving suspect in the Boston attack, Dzhokhar Tsarnaev, allegedly told police that he and his brother learned how to construct their devices from an Internet site set up by Al Qaeda's Yemeni affiliate.¹⁸ Before banning pressure cookers, we should remember the exceptional range of materials used to construct IEDs deployed against our troops in Afghanistan and Iraq.¹⁹
- *It might, like Mumbai, rely on a small team hitting several soft targets simultaneously.* While LeT engaged in considerable reconnaissance and logistical effort prior to the Mumbai attack (much of it by US citizen David Headley), little of this was strictly necessary. Site-selection required scant on-the-ground expertise: the Taj Hotel is the city's most identifiable landmark, the Oberoi is Mumbai's second-most prominent hotel, and Chhatrapati Shivaji Rail Station has been the city's transit hub ever since it was constructed in 1887 as Victoria Terminus.²⁰ None required any particular tradecraft or surveillance to locate or breach. Soft targets abound in Mumbai-- as they do in every American city.
- *It might require little sophisticated training. This is a difference from Mumbai's plan as executed-- but didn't have to be.* LeT probably provided its ten operatives with more instruction than they needed. They are said to have received both the group's basic course (*Daura Aam*) and its advanced combat course (*Daura Khaas*), as well as instruction for maritime operations and specialized commando drills.²¹ This may well have been necessary to strengthen the operatives' resolve: the psychological ability to execute mass-killings is not part of most individuals' make-up.²² From a purely technical

¹⁷ Link is not provided in the interest of public safety, but this witness was able to find the site with less than half a minute of Internet research.

¹⁸ <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2313782/Dzhokhar-Tsarnaev-Boston-Marathon-bomber-admits-learned-build-bomb-Inspire-magazine.html>

¹⁹ <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/intro/ied.htm>

²⁰ The other targets were more peripheral: the Leopold Cafe, an establishment catering to budget-minded foreign tourists and C-list Bollywood hangers-on, may have been thrown in (like Metro Cinema) at the behest of local facilitators; the Chabad House was added as a target after the major sites at the insistence of LeT organizers seeking the global symbolism of a synagogue or Jewish cultural center; St. Xavier's College may have served a similar function for its Christian symbolism; Cama Hospital appears to have been a target of opportunity, accidentally embroiled when gunmen tried to flee the nearby rail terminal.

²¹ Praveen Swami, "A Journey Into the Laskar," *The Hindu*, Chennai, December 2, 2008.

<http://www.hindu.com/2008/12/02/stories/2008120259961000.htm>

²² One of the most widely-cited data-points in discussions of the psychology of combat is S.L.A Marshall's 1947 classic *Men Against Fire* (current edition: University of Oklahoma Press, 2000), which reported that only one-quarter of US infantrymen who engaged in active combat during World War Two actually fired their weapons. Marshall's methodology and statistical conclusion have been criticized since his death in 1977 (see <http://strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pubs/parameters/Articles/03autumn/chambers.pdf>). The underlying premise, however-- that most untrained individuals do not easily kill, even when societal norms

perspective, however, the basic skill-set necessary to complete the mission was far more modest: Ability to fire small arms, toss grenades, and read a map.

- *It might, like Boston, require little sophisticated infiltration, and no exfiltration.* There was no infiltration requirement for the suspected Boston bombers: One was an American citizen, the other a legal resident. LeT opted for a logistically-challenging infiltration method in Mumbai: By sea, at night, employing GPS navigation, with a landing-point not far from a major Navy and Army cantonment. But this may not have been necessary: India has porous borders with Bangladesh and Nepal (countries in which LeT has been active in the past), and Lashkar had nearly two decades of experience infiltrating its operatives by land into Kashmir. Once inside India, the attack team could have reached Mumbai in the same way that thousands of migrants, both internal and external, reach the megalopolis every week: bus, train, or car. As for exfiltration: LeT (and possibly the Boston attackers) never intended their journey to require an exit.

What does this tell us about the possibility of a similar attack in America?

First, that such an action is not beyond the capabilities of even a group far more modestly equipped, funded, and politically protected than Lashkar-e Taiba: such an attack does not require a state sponsor, does not require a major international terrorist organization, and may not (if one defines "Mumbai-style" by impact rather than by method used) require sophisticated planning, training or execution. It could be accomplished by a particularly competent team of "lone wolves": if the Tsarnaev brothers had happened to befriend the Washington Sniper duo, those four men could have achieved "Boston Squared." Two of these killers were US citizens, one a legal resident, and the last was recruited after he'd already reached America; not one of them was linked to a foreign terrorist group, and the only one with real training in lethal arts (John Allen Muhammad) received his instruction in the United States Army.

Second, that the key complicating factors for the terrorist team in Mumbai were largely of their own making, and may have stemmed from the planners' unwillingness to trust the operators.²³ As Brian Jenkins correctly notes in his testimony, the challenge of assembling a 10-man team all

and the laws of self-preservation give them sanction to do so-- is the basis for much of the basic training in U.S. and other militaries.

²³ LeT operators stayed in contact with the attack team throughout the operation, via cell phone and Voice Over Internet Protocol (VoIP). This does not seem, however, to have been an operational necessity: the controllers do not appear to have relayed any vital tactical information, merely to have urged the operators to maintain their pre-arranged targeting. Likewise, the risky infiltration method could have been avoided by sending the operatives in by land, whether in Kashmir or through Bangladesh or Nepal. Why did Lashkar choose to complicate its mission unnecessarily? One possible answer is that LeT did not have sufficient confidence in its operatives to permit them to carry out their mission unsupervised. Had the attack team been given its mission before a simple land infiltration and left to execute the orders without further contact, there may never have been proof of LeT (let alone ISI) involvement.

fully committed to a professionally-run terrorist suicide operation is quite daunting. But if one defines "Mumbai-style" by impact rather than prior example, it wouldn't require a 10-man professional team. Even the actual Mumbai operation didn't rely on complete team compliance: If a few of the two-man teams had deserted at the last minute, the impact on the overall mission would have been arithmetic rather than geometric-- that is, the attack would have been somewhat less devastating, but the terrible mission might well have proceeded largely intact. Mumbai reminded us how easy it is for a small band of killers to create widespread-- but transitory-- terror.

So what can we do? On the issue of Lashkar-e Taiba, we could try to work with the government of Pakistan to construct a glide-path to decommission the organization. This would have to be done with the full cooperation of the Pakistani military, because any attempt to do so without the partnership of Pakistan's army and ISI has no realistic chance of success. Would the Pakistani military agree to such a plan? At present, no. But there is a growing sentiment within the ranks of general officers I have interviewed that Lashkar and similar groups now represent a real danger to Pakistan's own interests-- and, equally importantly, to the institutional interests of the military itself.²⁴ From a US perspective, it's simply unacceptable that for a Major Non-NATO Ally to shelter and support a terrorist group officially committed to the killing of Americans.

On the issue of dealing with a Mumbai-style attack, one thing we can do is take a lesson from the citizens of both Mumbai and Boston. The reason the attacks in these cities were so jarring was that they stripped away the illusion of safety. A few weeks ago, however, the citizens of Boston confronted an unspeakable evil-- not with panic but with quiet, rock-solid resolve. That's what the citizens of Mumbai did in 2008-- indeed, at least half a dozen times in recent years. Unfortunately, that is what other citizens, in the U.S. as well as elsewhere, will be called on to do in the future.

The Mumbai attack had special meaning for me: I used to live in Mumbai, just a few blocks from the site of most of the attacks. I used to buy American newspapers from the Taj bookshop, stop by the Leopold Cafe for a cold beer, watch a movie at the Metro Cinema, take trains from the terminal that locals still call by its colonial-era initials of "VT."

One of the victims of the Mumbai attack was a friend of mine. He was man without whom I wouldn't have been able to conduct my ethnographic fieldwork. He was an elderly Muslim cleric, easily identifiable as such by his white beard and skullcap-- but the gunmen still shot him at close

²⁴ I have spoken with several retired top-level Pakistani generals who expressed these sentiments, and said that their concerns are shared among a growing minority of their brother-officers. As the US withdrawal from Afghanistan proceeds, and as issues like supply lines through Torkum Gate and Spin Boldak recede in importance, we may be able to raise Lashkar-e Taiba much higher on our priority list. Three years from now, it is possible that the number of US troops killed by the Haqqani network will drop permanently to zero-- but Lashkar-e Taiba will present a serious threat to America for as long as it remains in operation.

range.

My friend survived the attack with relatively minor wounds, but nearly 200 others weren't as lucky. I wish I could say, "It can't happen here," but it can.

We can do everything in our power to lessen the likelihood, but we also have to steel ourselves for the fact that we will not always succeed.

Thank you, and I look forward to your questions.