

## Terror Attack in Mumbai – A major Intelligence Failure

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We still don't have all the details about the identity of the terrorists who conducted the attack in Mumbai. But we do have the following information: the attackers identified themselves as Mujahidin, and the characteristics of the attack are similar to those of those perpetrated by known radical Islamist terror organizations. In all cases, these attacks involved military-style coordination, massive amounts of ammunition and explosives, and most importantly the targeting of Westerners, especially Americans, British, Jewish Chabad house, and tourists.

For the moment it is important to understand that this Mega Terror attack was part of a global radical Islamic campaign to change the worlds' order (so far we hear that the Pakistani Government moves troops from the tribal area to its border with India: the actual name of the group responsible is of secondary importance. The terrorists so far are looking to achieve the following goals:

- The release of Muslim prisoners from Indian prisons
- Destruction of Indian tourism and the weakening of the economy
- Raise global awareness for their demands for Islamic domination in Kashmir
- The targeting of western interests – especially of “front-line” countries like India which are closely allied with the US.
- The targeting of Jewish interests (the Mumbai Chabad House). It is important to note that this aspect of the attack had nothing whatsoever to do with local (read Kashmiri) concerns, and more than ever emphasizes the ties between this outrage and global Islamists.

An attack on this scale that involves more than a traditional number of a terror cell (3-4) and associated massive amount of weapons and explosives, sophisticated communication including a command center, necessitated intensive logistic preparations. These activities are susceptible to discovery and disruption by competent counter-intelligence operations. These activities include the gathering, purchasing and smuggling of weapons, explosives and ammunition, surveillance, training, and of course human smuggling. One of the latest news from the Indian media is that the attackers arrived with speed boats. Assaults such as this require inside help that includes transportation from the beach to the targets, including the use of guides/drivers that are needed to transport them from the landing point to the targets.

This attack caught Mumbai totally unawares and not prepared. What is the reason for this major failure of Indian intelligence? In a complicated and well orchestrated terror attack of this magnitude, there are multiple elements inside India that were involved in the preparations. These elements, such as the control room that had been found in the Taj hotel, are believed to be part of the radical Islamic movement that must be operating from within extreme elements of the Muslim community in India (Jaysh Muhammad = the Army of Muhammad?).

The Muslim community in India is relatively small when compared to the Hindu population (15% Muslims and 80% Hindu) but because of the large population on the subcontinent this number is huge: there are 150 million Muslims in India. This makes it easy for radical Muslim elements to assimilate with the Muslim community, and to operate and conduct their terror activities without discovery or interruption. Some Indian intelligence officials claim that it took months to prepare this terror operation. If this is true, it appears that Indian intelligence is entirely out of touch with the hostile elements within the Muslim community. Another problem that appears is the lack of coordination or even the lack of a central intelligence command within the Indian law enforcement agencies. In India, in ways reminiscent of pre-9/11 America, federal coordination is minimal at best or incompetent at worst. Exacerbating the situation is the fact that in India each state handles its own counter terrorism efforts and there is no federal coordination. The Houston Chronicle recently reported an incident where the Indian navy

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was involved in sinking of a Thai Ship on November 18, 2008

<http://www.chron.com/disp/story.mpl/ap/world/6134159.html> , it was mistakenly suspected of being a pirate ship. In fact, it now appears that the so-called mother ship was in fact an innocent Thai vessel that had been boarded by pirates. Had the Indian navy been privy to centralized intelligence assessments, a tragic error may have been avoided and loss of life (not to mention political fallout and professional embarrassment) may have been avoided. That this even occurred only days before the Mumbai outrage goes to emphasize the complete lack of coordinated and actionable intelligence within the Indian hierarchy.

There is no doubt that this attack is the Indian 9/11. This is true not only in its psychological and political impact, but also in the manner by which the Global Islamic terror managed to prepare, launch and conduct a well coordinated mega terror attack under the radar of the local intelligence. It is horrible to state; the terrorists did not make not even one mistake while conducting this attack, they prepared the attack without being revealed, they arrived to the Indian shore without being exploited they navigated to their targets strait ahead with no mistakes and they confronted with the Indian military for four days not even thinking once to give up. They came to kill and to be killed and they achieved both goals.

But this is not the first time this has happened. Western governments keep repeating the same mistake: it also happened in Spain on 3/11/2004, and then in London on 7/7/2005. Again and again, Mega terror attacks involving dozens of terrorist over months of time have escaped the attention of local intelligence apparatus.

The way to defeat terror networks is though better coordination and information exchange between local intelligence and law enforcement agencies creating a law enforcement network, nationwide and international network. As for my understanding local law enforcement are still stragglng to be on the loop of the intelligence sharing with other agencies, here in the US.

Equally important is the implementation of a strategy called "*Fighting Terrorism by Engaging the Muslim Community*". Since Radical Islamists take advantage of the hospitality of Muslim communities around the globe, it is essential that these communities be penetrated and monitored, all the while respecting the civil rights of the law abiding members of the Muslim community. It is clear in my mind that successful and lawful monitoring of these communities will reveal the pre-attack indicators that can help prevent the loss of life that has already occurred through numerous mega-attacks.

Moderate Muslims yearn for the same type of normality in life that we all do, but they must be made to understand that radical Muslim elements take advantage of them and use them to help promote their radical agenda. Members of the Muslim community must make the decision pulled into the turmoil of Global Islamic Terror. Westerners must also decide to do their share: to reach out to the Muslim community; to hug and adopt them onto our side in the war on terror.