

# India's 9/11. Who was Behind the Mumbai Attacks?

Washington is Fostering Political Divisions between India and Pakistan

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***Four Years ago the Mumbai terror attacks.** The following article was first published by Global Research on November 30, 2008 in the week following the attacks.*

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The Mumbai terror attacks were part of a carefully planned and coordinated operation involving several teams of experienced and trained gunmen.

The operation has the fingerprints of a paramilitary-intelligence operation. According to a Russian counter terrorist expert, the Mumbai terrorists "used the same tactics that Chechen field militants employed in the Northern Caucasus attacks where entire towns were terrorized, with homes and hospitals seized". (*Russia Today*, November 27, 2008).

The Mumbai attacks are described as " India's 9/11".

The attacks were carried out simultaneously in several locations, within minutes of each other.

The first target was in the main hall of **Mumbai's Chatrapati Shivaji Terminus railway station (CST)**, where the gunmen fired indiscriminately into the crowd of passengers. The gunmen " then ran out of the station and into neighboring buildings, including **Cama Hospital**"

Attacks by separate groups of gunmen took place at two of Mumbai's luxury hotels - the **Oberoi-Trident** and the **Taj Mahal Palace**, located at the heart of the tourist area, within proximity of the Gateway of India.



Taj Mahal Hotel

The gunmen also opened fire at **Café Leopold**, a stylish restaurant in the tourist area. The third target was **Nariman House**, a business center which houses Chabad Lubavitch, Mumbai's Jewish Center. Six hostages including the Rabbi and his wife were killed.

The domestic airport at Santa Cruz; the Metro Adlabs multiplex and the Mazgaon Dockyard were also targeted.

“The attacks occurred at the busiest places. Besides hotels and hospitals, terrorists struck at railway stations, Crawford Market, Wadi Bunder and on the Western Express Highway near the airport. Seven places have been attacked with automatic weapons and grenades. ([Times of India, 26 November 2008](#)),



Indian troops surrounded the hotels. Indian Special Forces commandos were sent into the two hotels to confront the terrorists. Witnesses at the hotels said that the gunmen were singling out people with US and British passports.



Members of the Indian security forces taking up firing positions between fire trucks and ambulances on the grounds of the Taj Hotel on Friday. (Ruth Fremson/ The New York Times )

Casualties, according to reports, are in excess of 150 killed. Most of those killed were Indian nationals, many of whom died in the attack on the Chhatrapati Shivaji railway Terminus.

At least 22 foreigners were killed in the attacks. Fourteen police officers, including the chief of the anti-terror squad, were killed in the attacks.

### **Who was Behind the Attacks?**

A virtually unknown group called “the Deccan Mujahideen”, has according to reports, claimed responsibility for attacks. The Deccan Plateau refers to a region of central-Southern India largely centered in the State of Andhra Pradesh. This unknown group has already been categorized, without supporting evidence, as belonging to the Al Qaeda network of terrorist organizations.

Police reports confirm that nine “suspected attackers” have been arrested and three of the attackers have, according to unconfirmed police sources, confessed to belonging to **Lashkar-e-Taiba** [Lashkar-e-Tayyiba], a Pakistani Kashmiri separatist organization, covertly supported by Pakistani military intelligence (ISI). At least one of the arrested, according to the reports, is a British citizen of Pakistani descent.

In chorus, both the Western and Indian media are pointing fingers at Pakistan and its alleged support of Islamic terrorist organizations:

“Strategic gurus and security analysts in the US and from across the world are examining Pakistan’s role in terrorism following yet another terror episode in India ending with fingers pointed at its widely-reviled neighbor.

While initial reports from India suggested the Mumbai carnage was a localized attack by militant malcontents in India because of the “Deccan Mujahideen” decoy that was used to claim responsibility, evidence cited by Indian army and security experts based on phone intercepts, nature of weaponry, mode of entry by sea etc., has quickly focused the attention on Pakistan.” (Times of India,

November 27, 2008)

The US media has centered its attention on the links between the Mumbai attacks and the “resurgent terrorist groups [which] enjoy havens in Pakistan’s tribal areas as well as alleged protection or support from elements of Pakistani intelligence.” (*Washington Post*, November 28, 2008).

### “Clash of Civilizations”

In Europe and North America, the Mumbai attacks by Islamic fundamentalists are perceived as part of the “Clash of Civilizations”. “Militant Islam is involved in a war against civilization”.

The dramatic loss of lives resulting from the attacks has indelibly contributed to reinforcing anti-Muslim sentiment throughout the Western World.

The outlines of the terrorist attacks in Mumbai, India, are becoming clear. The terrorists targeted India, the U.S. and Britain, and the Jewish people. ([Market Watch, November 28, 2008](#))

According to the media, the enemy is Al Qaeda, the illusory “outside enemy ” which has its operational bases in the tribal areas and North West Frontier Province of Pakistan. Washington’s self-proclaimed holy mandate under the “Global War on Terrorism” is to take out bin Laden and extirpate Islamic fundamentalism.

America’s right to intervene militarily inside Pakistan in violation of Pakistan’s sovereignty is therefore upheld. Bombing villages in the tribal areas of North West Pakistan is part of a “humanitarian endeavor”, in response to the loss of life resulting from the Mumbai attacks:

“Before these awful raids, news from South Asia had been encouraging. The central problem remains pacifying Afghanistan, where U.S. and other NATO forces struggle to stamp out Taliban and al-Qaeda elements.” (*Washington Post*, November 28, 2008)

“Washington, however, wants the Pakistani army’s cooperation in fighting terrorism. In recent weeks, U.S. officers in Afghanistan reported better results, crediting the Pakistanis with taking the offensive against the Taliban on Pakistani territory.”

### Media Disinformation

US network TV has extensively covered the dramatic events in Mumbai. The attacks have served to trigger an atmosphere of fear and intimidation across America.

The Mumbai attacks are said to be intimately related to 9/11. Official US statements and media reports have described the Mumbai attacks as part of a broader process, including the possibility of an Al Qaeda sponsored terrorist attack on US soil.

Vice President Elect Joe Biden during the election campaign had warned America with foresight that “**the people who... attacked us on 9/11**, — they’ve regrouped in the mountains between Afghanistan and Pakistan and are plotting new attacks”. (emphasis



added)

*These are the same people who were behind the terror attacks in Mumbai.*

These are also the same people who are planning to attack America.

Immediately following the Mumbai attacks, New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg put New York City's subway system "on high alert" based on **"an unsubstantiated report** of potential terrorism here in New York. This report led the New York Police Department to take precautionary steps to protect our transit system, and we will always do whatever is necessary to keep our city safe," Bloomberg said in a statement" (McClatchy-Tribune Business News, November 28, 2008, emphasis added).

It just so happens that one day before the Mumbai attacks, "the FBI and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) had warned that there is a **'possible but uncorroborated' Al - Qaeda threat** against the New York transportation system." (Ibid)

"As the attacks in Mumbai were carried out, U.S. authorities issued a warning that Al-Qaeda might have recently discussed making attacks on the New York subway system. A vague warning, to be sure. 'We have no specific details to confirm that this plot has developed beyond aspirational planning, but we are issuing this warning out of concern that such an attack could possibly be conducted during the forthcoming holiday season,' the FBI and Department of Homeland Security said." (Chicago Tribune, November 29, 2008)

### **Pakistan's Military Intelligence is America's Trojan Horse**

The media reports point, in chorus, to the involvement of Pakistan's Military Intelligence, the Inter Services Intelligence (ISI), without mentioning that the ISI invariably operates in close liaison with the CIA.

The US media indelibly serves the interests of the US intelligence apparatus. What is implied by these distorted media is that:

1. The terrorists are linked to Al Qaeda. The Mumbai attacks are a "State sponsored" operation involving Pakistan's ISI
2. The Mumbai gunmen have ties to terrorist groups in Pakistan's tribal areas and North West Frontier Province.
3. The continued bombing of the tribal areas by the US Air Force in violation of Pakistan's' sovereignty is consequently justified as part of the "Global War on Terrorism".

The ISI is America's Trojan Horse, a de facto proxy of the CIA. Pakistani Intelligence has, since the early 1980s, worked in close liaison with its US and British intelligence counterparts.

Were the ISI to have been involved in a major covert operation directed against India, the CIA would have prior knowledge regarding the precise nature and timing of the operation. The ISI does not act without the consent of its US intelligence counterpart.

Moreover, US intelligence is known to have supported Al Qaeda from the outset of the Soviet Afghan war and throughout the post-Cold War era. (For further details see Michel Chossudovsky, [Al Qaeda and the War on Terrorism](#), Global Research, January 20, 2008)

CIA sponsored guerilla training camps were established in Pakistan to train the Mujahideen. Historically, US intelligence has supported Al Qaeda, using Pakistan's ISI as a go-between.

“With CIA backing and the funneling of massive amounts of U.S. military aid, the Pakistani ISI had developed into a “parallel structure wielding enormous power over all aspects of government”. (Dipankar Banerjee, “Possible Connection of ISI With Drug Industry”, India Abroad, 2 December 1994).

In the wake of 9/11, Pakistan's ISI played a key role in the October 2001 invasion of Afghanistan, in close liaison with the US and NATO military high command. Ironically, in October 2001, both US and Indian press reports quoting FBI and intelligence sources, suggested that the ISI was providing support to the alleged 9/11 terrorists. (See Michel Chossudovsky, [Cover-up or Complicity of the Bush Administration, The Role of Pakistan's Military Intelligence \(ISI\) in the September 11 Attacks](#), Global Research, November 2, 2001)

### **Pakistan's Chief Spy Appointed by the CIA**

Historically, the CIA has played an unofficial role in the appointment of the director of Pakistan's Inter Services Intelligence (ISI).

In September, Washington pressured Islamabad, using the “war on terrorism” as a pretext to fire the ISI chief Lieutenant General Nadeem Taj.

“Washington is understood to be exerting intense pressure on Pakistan to remove ISI boss Nadeem Taj and two of his deputies because of the key agency's alleged “double-dealing” with the militants. ( [Daily Times](#), September 30, 2008

President Asif Ali Zardari had meetings in New York in late September with CIA Director Michael Hayden. ([The Australian](#), September 29, 2008), Barely a few days later, a new US approved ISI chief Lieutenant General Ahmed Shuja Pasha was appointed by the Chief of the Army, General Kayani, on behalf of Washington.



Lt. General Ahmed Shuja Pasha

In this regard, the pressures exerted by the Bush administration contributed to blocking a parliamentary initiative led by the PPP government to put the country's intelligence services (ISI) under civilian authority, namely under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Interior.

In other words, Washington exerts more control over the ISI than the duly elected civilian government of Pakistan.



Lt. Gen. Ahmed Shuja Pasha (right) next to Gen. Ashfaq Kayani on the USS Abraham Lincoln talking with Michael Mullen, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

### **The U.S. Violates Pakistan's Territorial Sovereignty**

The US is currently violating Pakistan territorial sovereignty through the routine bombing of villages in the tribal areas and the North West Frontier Province. These operations are carried out using the "war on terrorism" as a pretext. While the Pakistani government has "officially" accused the US of waging aerial bombardments on its territory, Pakistan's military (including the ISI) has "unofficially" endorsed the air strikes.

In this regard, the timely appointment of Lt. General Ahmed Shuja Pasha to the helm of the ISI was intended to ensure continuity in US "counter-terrorism" operations in Pakistan. Prior to his appointment as ISI chief, Lt. General Ahmed Shuja Pasha was responsible, in close consultation with the US and NATO, for carrying out targeted attacks allegedly against the Taliban and Al Qaeda by the Pakistani military in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP).



Upon his appointment, Lt Gen Ahmed Shuja Pasha implemented a major reshuffle within the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), replacing several of the ISI regional commanders. ([Daily Times](#), September 30, 2008). In late October, he was in Washington, at CIA headquarters at Langley and at the Pentagon, to meet his US military and intelligence counterparts:

“Pakistan is publicly complaining about U.S. air strikes. But the country’s new chief of intelligence, Lt. Gen. Ahmed Shuja Pasha, visited Washington last week for talks with America’s top military and spy chiefs, and **everyone seemed to come away smiling.**” ([David Ignatieff, A Quiet Deal With Pakistan, Washington Post, November 4, 2008](#), emphasis added).

## The Timing of the Mumbai Attacks

The US air strikes on the Tribal Areas resulting in countless civilians deaths have created a wave of anti-US sentiment throughout Pakistan. At the same token, this anti-American sentiment has also served, in the months preceding the Mumbai attacks, to promote a renewed atmosphere of cooperation between India and Pakistan.

While US-Pakistan relations are at an all time low, there were significant efforts, in recent months, by the Islamabad and Delhi governments to foster bilateral relations.

Barely a week prior to the attacks, Pakistan president Asif Ali Zardari “urged opening the Kashmir issue to public debate in India and Pakistan and letting the people decide the future of IHK.”

He also called for “taking bilateral relations to a new level” as well as forging an economic union between the two countries.

## Divide and Rule

What interests are served by these attacks?

Washington is intent on using the Mumbai attacks to:

- 1) Foster divisions between Pakistan and India and shunt the process of bilateral cooperation and trade between the two countries;
- 2) Promote internal social, ethnic and sectarian divisions in both India and Pakistan;
- 3) Justify US military actions inside Pakistan including the killing of civilians in violation of the country’s territorial sovereignty;
- 4) Provide a justification for extending the US led “war on terrorism” into the Indian sub-continent and South East Asia.

In 2006, the Pentagon had warned that “another [major 9/11 type terrorist] attack could create both a justification and an opportunity that is lacking today to retaliate against some known targets” (Statement by Pentagon official, leaked to the Washington Post, 23 April 2006). In the current context, the Mumbai attacks are considered “a justification” to go after “known targets” in the tribal areas of North Western Pakistan.

India’s Prime Minister Manmohan Singh has stated that “external forces” forces carried the



attacks, hinting to the possible role of Pakistan. The media reports also point in that direction, hinting that the Pakistani government is behind the attacks:

US officials and lawmakers refrained from naming Pakistan, but their condemnation of “Islamist terrorism” left little doubt where their anxieties lay.

....

What has added potency to the latest charges against Islamabad is the Bush administration’s own assessment – leaked to the US media – that Pakistan’s intelligence agency ISI was linked to the bombing of the Indian Embassy in Kabul some weeks back that killed nearly 60 people including a much-admired Indian diplomat and a respected senior defense official. (Times of India, November 27, 2008)

### **The Attacks have Triggered Anti-Pakistani Sentiment in India**

The attacks have served to foster anti-Pakistani sentiment within India as well as sectarian divisions between Hindus and Muslims.

[Time Magazine](#) has pointed in no uncertain terms to the insidious role of “the powerful Inter Services Intelligence organization — often accused of orchestrating terror attacks on India”, without acknowledging that the new head of the ISI was appointed at Washington’s behest. ([Time online](#)).

The Time report suggests, without evidence, that the most likely architects of the attacks are several Pakistani sponsored Islamic groups including **Lashkar-e-Taiba** (Army of the Pure), “which is part of the ‘al-Qaeda compact’”, **Jaish-e-Mohammed**, a Kashmiri separatist organization belonging to Al Qaeda which claimed responsibility in the December 2001 terrorist attacks on the Union parliament in Delhi and **The Students Islamic Movement of India, (SIMI)**. (*Ibid*)

Both Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Mohammed are known to be supported by the ISI.

### **Islamabad-Delhi Shuttle Diplomacy**

Pakistani president Asif Ali Zardari indicated that his government would fully collaborate with the Indian authorities.

Pakistan’s newly elected civilian government has been sidetracked by its own intelligence services, which remain under the jurisdiction of the military high command.

The Pakistan’s People’s Party government under the helm of Prime Minister Yousaf Raza Gilani has no control over the military and intelligence apparatus, which continues to maintain a close rapport with its US counterparts. The Pakistani civilian government, in many regards, is not in control of its foreign policy. The Pakistani Military and its powerful intelligence arm (ISI) call the shots.

In this context, president Asif Ali Zardari seems to be playing on both sides: collusion with the Military-Intelligence apparatus, dialogue with Washington and lip service to prime minister Gilani and the National Assembly.

On November 28, two days following the Mumbai attacks, Islamabad announced that the recently appointed ISI chief Lieutenant General Ahmed Shuja Pasha would be dispatched to Delhi for consultations with his Indian counterparts including National Security Advisor M K Narayanan and the heads of India's external intelligence agency, the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) and the Intelligence Bureau, responsible for internal intelligence. RAW and Pakistan's ISI are known to have been waging a covert war against one another for more than thirty years.<sup>1</sup>

On the following day (November 29), Islamabad cancelled the visit of ISI chief Lt Gen Shuja Pasha to India, following Indian foreign minister Pranab Mukherjee's "very aggressive tone with Pakistani officials [in a] telephone [conversation] after the Mumbai attacks". ([Press Trust of India, November 29, 2008](#) quoting Geo News Pakistan).

### **Tense Situation. Deterioration of India-Pakistan Relations**

The Mumbai attacks have already created an extremely tense situation, which largely serves US geopolitical interests in the region.

Islamabad is contemplating the relocation of some 100,000 military personnel from the Pakistani-Afghan border to the Indian border, "if there is an escalation in tension with India, which has hinted at the involvement of Pakistani elements in the Mumbai carnage." (Pakistan news source quoted by PTI, op cit).

"These sources have said NATO and the US command have been told that Pakistan would not be able to concentrate on the war on terror and against militants around the Afghanistan border as defending its borders with India was far more important," (Ibid, Geo News quoting senior Pakistani journalist Hamid Mir).

### **US Interference in the Conduct of the Indian Police Investigation**

Also of significance is Washington's outright interference in the conduct of the Indian police investigation. The Times of India points to an "unprecedented intelligence cooperation involving investigating agencies and spy outfits of India, United States, United Kingdom and Israel."

Both the FBI and Britain's Secret Service MI6 have liaison offices in Delhi. The FBI has dispatched police, counter-terrorism officials and forensic scientists to Mumbai "to investigate attacks that now include American victims..." Experts from the London's Metropolitan Police have also been dispatched to Mumbai:

"The U.S. government's "working assumption" that the Pakistani militant groups Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Mohammed are suspects in the attacks "has held up" as Indian authorities have begun their investigation, the official said. The two Kashmiri militant groups have ties to al Qaeda." (Wall Street Journal, November 28, 2008)

The role of the US-UK-Israeli counter terrorism and police officials, is essentially to manipulate the results of the Indian police investigation.

It is worth noting, however, that the Delhi government turned down Israel's request to send

a special forces military unit to assist the Indian commandos in freeing Jewish hostages held inside Mumbai's Chabad Jewish Center (PTI, November 28, 2008).

### **Bali 2002 versus Mumbai 2008**

The Mumbai terrorist attacks bear certain similarities to the 2002 Bali attacks. In both cases, Western tourists were targets. The tourist resort of Kuta on the island of Bali, Indonesia, was the object of two separate attacks, which targeted mainly Australian tourists. (Ibid)

The alleged terrorists in the Bali 2002 bombings were executed, following a lengthy trial period, barely a few weeks ago, on November 9, 2008. (Michel Chossudovsky, [Miscarriage of Justice: Who was behind the October 2002 Bali bombings?](#) Global Research, November 13, 2009). The political architects of the 2002 Bali attacks were never brought to trial.

A November 2002 report emanating from Indonesia's top brass, pointed to the involvement of both the head of Indonesian intelligence General A. M. Hendropriyono as well as the CIA. The links of Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) to the Indonesian intelligence agency (BIN) were never raised in the official Indonesian government investigation -which was guided behind the scenes by Australian intelligence and the CIA. Moreover, shortly after the bombing, Australian Prime Minister John Howard "admitted that Australian authorities were warned about possible attacks in Bali but chose not to issue a warning." (*Christchurch Press*, November 22, 2002).

With regard to the Bali 2002 bombings, the statements of two former presidents of Indonesia were casually dismissed in the trial procedures, both of which pointed to complicity of the Indonesian military and police. In 2002, president Megawati Sukarnoputri, accused the US of involvement in the attacks. In 2005, in an October 2005 interview with Australia's SBS TV, former president Wahid Abdurrahman stated that the Indonesian military and police played a complicit role in the 2002 Bali bombing. (quoted in [Miscarriage of Justice: Who was behind the October 2002 Bali bombings?](#), *op cit*)

### **Note**


1. In recent months, the head of India's external intelligence (RAW), Ashok Chaturvedi has become a political target. Prime Minister Manmohan Singh is intent upon firing him and replacing him with a more acceptable individual. It is unclear whether Chaturvedi will be involved in the intelligence and police investigation.

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**by Michel Chossudovsky**

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