

US- Australia Coverup: Was Al Qaeda Behind the 2002 Bali Bombing?

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Ten years ago, the Bali Bombing, October 12, 2002. Survivors and families of the victims gathered in Bali to commemorate this tragic event. "The ceremony was held under the watch of 2,000 police and military personnel, including snipers, after Indonesia issued its top alert due to a "credible" terror threat in Bali. However, authorities on Thursday tried to ease fears of an attack." Australia's Prime Minister Julia Gillard was in attendance.

The Bali Bombing in the Kuta seaside resort resulted in more than 200 deaths, mainly Australian tourists. The bomb attack was allegedly perpetrated by an Al Qaeda affiliated organization Jemaah Islamiah.

To this date: the official story prevails: "Al Qaeda in south East Asia" was behind the attacks. [According to the BBC latest report \(October 12, 2012\)](#):

"...the seeds of the October 2002 Bali bombing plot are thought to have been sown in a hotel room in Thailand 10 months earlier.

At a secret meeting, a man known as Hambali - later dubbed "South East Asia's Bin Laden" - is believed to have ordered a new strategy of hitting soft targets, such as nightclubs and bars rather than high-profile sites such as foreign embassies. But it was not until August 2002 that the target was chosen.

Who was Behind Jemaah Islamiah?

Both the US and Australian police and intelligence authorities involved in the 2002 Bali investigation turned a blind eye on the links between Indonesian Intelligence (BIN) and Jemaah Islamiah (JI), which allegedly was behind the bombings.

BIN was in fact involved in the October 2002 investigation together with its US and Australian counterparts.

The bomb attack was allegedly perpetrated by Jemaah Islamiah, a group, which operates in several countries in South East Asia. Press reports and official statements at the time pointed to close ties between Jemaah Islamiah (JI) and Al Qaeda. The JI's "operational leader" was Riduan Isamuddin, alias Hambali, a veteran of the Soviet-Afghan war, who was trained in Afghanistan and Pakistan. According to a report by UPI:

"The [Soviet-Afghan] war provided opportunities for key figures of these groups, who went to Afghanistan, to experience first hand the glory of jihad. Many of the radicals detained in Singapore and

Malaysia derived their ideological inspiration from the activities of the Mujahideen in Afghanistan and Pakistan”

The training of the Mujahideen in Afghanistan and Pakistan was a CIA sponsored initiative launched in 1979, using Pakistan’s military intelligence (ISI). as a go-between. Jemaah Islamiah (JI), an alleged affiliate of Al Qaeda was a product of this CIA sponsored project.

JI’s links to Indonesia’s Military Intelligence

There were indications, that in addition to its alleged links to Al Qaeda, Jemaah Islamiah had links to Indonesia’s military intelligence, which in turn has ties to the CIA and Australian intelligence.

The links between JI and Indonesia’s Intelligence Agency (BIN) were acknowledged in a 2003 report by the International Crisis Group (ICG):

“This link [of JI to the BIN] needs to be explored more fully: it does not necessarily mean that military intelligence was working with JI, but it does raise a question about the extent to which it knew or could have found out more about JI than it has acknowledged.”
1 ([International Crisis Group](#), 2003)

It should be emphasized that Indonesia’s intelligence apparatus (BIN) during a period of more than 30 years was controlled by the CIA.

In the wake of the October 2002 Bali bombing, a contradictory 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 agency and its director, Gen. A. M. Hendropriyono, are well regarded by the United States and other governments. But there are still senior intelligence officers here who believe that the C.I.A. was behind the bombing.”²

In response to these statements, the Bush Administration demanded that President Megawati Sukarnoputri, publicly refute the involvement of the U.S in the attacks. No official retraction was issued. Not only did President Megawati (the daughter of Sukarno) remain silent on this matter, she also accused the US of being:

“a superpower that forced the rest of the world to go along with it... We see how ambition to conquer other nations has led to a situation where there is no more peace unless the whole world is complying with the will of the one with the power and strength.”³

Meanwhile, the Bush Administration used the Bali attacks to prop up its fear campaign:

“President Bush said Monday that he assumes al-Qaeda was responsible for the deadly bombing in Indonesia and that he is worried about fresh attacks on the United States.”⁴

The news [regarding the Bali attack] came as US intelligence officials warned that more attacks like the Indonesian bombing can be expected in the next few months, in Europe, the Far East or the US.”⁵

Foreknowledge of the Bombings?

The links of JI to the Indonesian intelligence agency 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 the Australian authorities had been warned about possible attacks in Bali but chose not to issue a warning.”⁶ Also In the wake of the bombings, the Australian government chose to work with Indonesia’s Special Forces the Kopassus, in the so-called “war on terrorism”.

Australia: “Useful Wave of Indignation”

Reminiscent of Operation Northwoods, the Bali attack served to trigger “a useful wave of indignation.”⁷ It contributed to swaying Australian public opinion in favor of the US invasion of Iraq, while weakening the anti-war protest movement. In the wake of the Bali attack, the Australian government “officially” joined the US-led “war on terrorism.” The Bali bombings were used by the Australian government as a pretext to fully integrate the US-UK military axis as well adopt drastic police measures including “ethnic profiling” directed against its own citizens:

Prime Minister John Howard made the extraordinary declaration recently [2002] that he is prepared to make pre-emptive military strikes against terrorists in neighbouring Asian countries planning to attack Australia. Australian intelligence agencies also are very worried about the likelihood of an al-Qaeda attack using nuclear weapons.⁸

Former President Abdurrahman Wahid: Possible Involvement of Indonesian Military and Police

In 2005, another important development emerged, which casts doubt on the official Indonesian- US-Australian police narrative.

In an interview with Australia’s SBS Public TV network, the former President of Indonesia Abdurrahman Wahid, pointed to the possible involvement of the Indonesian Military and Police.⁹ ([SBS DATELINE Archive](#) – October 12, 2005)

The statements of the former head of State of Indonesia, based on inside knowledge and factual information, were never acknowledged by the Western and Australian media, nor were they taken into account by the police investigators.

Aired on SBS TV in October 2005. the transcript of the interview was immediately removed from the website of Australia’s Special Broadcasting Services TV.

Global Research received a copy of the [complete transcript](#) a couple of days prior to its removal.

Below we provide relevant excerpts of President Wahid's statements, which cast doubt on the official story. According to President Wahid, the second bomb could have been planted by the police or the military:

[Inside Indonesia's War on Terror Today, SBS Dateline, Australia, October 12, 2005](#)
(Excerpts)

"Inside Indonesia's War on Terror Today - as you would almost certainly know - is the third anniversary of the first Bali bombing and our major report tonight provides an alarming twist to the ongoing terror campaign being waged in Indonesia. David O'Shea, a long-time "Indonesia-watcher", reports that where terrorism is concerned in that country - with its culture of corruption within the military, the police, the intelligence services and politics itself - all is never quite what it seems.

REPORTER: David O'Shea

When the second Bali bomb exploded, Australia once again found itself on the front line in the war on terror. But for Indonesians, this was simply the latest in a long line of atrocities. They have born the brunt of hundreds of attacks over the years, most of them unreported in the West. Once again Australia and Indonesia joined forces in the hunt for the Bali killers.

..... For seven years I've reported from every corner of this vast nation and seen first hand the havoc that terrorists wreak. Tonight I want to tell you a very different story about Indonesia's war on terror. It contains many disturbing allegations even from a former president.

....

In Indonesia's parliament earlier this year, I found the police chief boasting about how he gets the star treatment when he visits Washington.

POLICE CHIEF (Translation): I went to Washington, to the White House, to the West Wing. I spoke to Colin Powell in his office. I went to the Pentagon, I met the director of the CIA, the director of the FBI, I met them all.

Indonesia's police are in charge of the war on terror. Years of human rights abuse by the Indonesian military, or TNI, mean it's now out of favour in Washington, but it seems the police can do no wrong.

POLICE CHIEF (Translation): I asked Powell. "You say the TNI has to reform, don't the police have to as well?" Building trust takes time.

Many Indonesians would find the idea of trusting the police laughable. It has long been regarded as one of the most corrupt and incompetent institutions in the country. Former president, Abdurrahman Wahid sums up what many people here believe.

ABDURRAHMAN WAHID: All of them are liars.

REPORTER: Just to be clear, you have your doubts about the police ability to investigate properly all of this?

ABDURRAHMAN WAHID: Oh, yes.

But none of this seems to worry Indonesia's allies in the war on terror.

POLICE (Translation): Have you just got back?

DAI-BACHTIAR, POLICE CHIEF (Translation): I see this man a lot.

POLICE (Translation): Were you in America? Did you get any more money?

DAI-BACHTIAR (Translation): 10 million. We get big bucks. We got 50 million all up. Sure. They keep asking about 88.

That's Detachment 88, the police counter-terror unit which receives a great deal of the international aid, including substantial assistance from Australia. Like the military, Detachment 88 is controversial. Its members stand accused of repeatedly using torture in interrogation of suspects. But these allegations don't seem to even raise an eyebrow.

The money is flowing like water but outside the chamber, unrelated to the anti-terror funding, is a scene that should make donors think twice. A man from the Religious Affairs Commission sitting next door counts cash to be distributed amongst voting politicians. Call it corruption or even the trickle down effect, but it's this kind of informal funds distribution which keeps the wheels turning in the Indonesian economy.

Two weeks after the second Bali attack and despite plenty of help from the Australian Federal Police, Indonesian authorities are still pursuing the culprits. *But a familiar pattern has emerged. Asia's most wanted men, the so-called masters of disguise, Dr Azahari and Noordin Top have been named as the masterminds. And once again everyone is insinuating Jemaah Islamiah is behind the bombs. That may eventually be proved correct, but so far no evidence has been produced, at least publicly, to back that claim. As we've shown tonight, after enduring years of state-sponsored terror, it's no wonder many Indonesians question what they're being told about this latest atrocity.*

GEORGE ADITJONDRO: You hear again the sources - the statements that it was carried out by Azahari and Noordin Mohammed Top and a radical Muslim groups behind it. Although what I heard is this actually shows a rivalry, internal rivalry within the armed forces.

George Aditjondro didn't provide any evidence to back his allegation, but theories like this are hard to write off just yet. Former president Abdurrahman Wahid tried in vain to rein the military and it cost him the presidency. In 2003 just after the Marriott Hotel blast, he was clearly frustrated by foreign intelligence claims that JI were to blame.

ABDURRAHMAN WAHID: They can say whatever they want but we are here, we live here, we know them. But I won't say who.

REPORTER: But you know who it is, you think?

ABDURRAHMAN WAHID: No, no, I don't know. When I said that I meant we cannot know - we cannot know the truth about that. That is the problem always.

REPORTER: But that bomb has been blamed also on Jemaah Islamiah.

ABDURRAHMAN WAHID: Yeah, I know but you don't have any kind of proof. The proof is that the bomb is similar to that belonging to the police. It's a problem for us then. Every bomb there until now it belongs to the government.

Today is the third anniversary of the first Bali attack that saw 202 people killed, including 88 Australians. Abdurrahman Wahid now has questions about that attack as well. While some regard him as an Eccentric, he is the former president and is often described as the conscience of the nation, revered by tens of millions of moderate Muslims. As such, he's one of only a few people publicly prepared to canvass the unthinkable – that Indonesian authorities may have had a hand in the Bali atrocity. He believes that the plan for the second, massive at the Sari Club, which caused the majority of casualties, was hatched way above the head of uneducated villagers like Amrozi.

ABDURRAHMAN WAHID: *Amrozi was involved in the lighter bomb. That's a problem always. Even though I agree that he should be given a stiff punishment, but it doesn't mean that he is involved. No, no, no.*

REPORTER: *So you believe that the Bali bombers had no idea that there was a second bomb?*

ABDURRAHMAN WAHID: *Yeah, precisely.*

REPORTER: *And who would you suggest planted the second bomb?*

ABDURRAHMAN WAHID: *Well, it looks like the police.*

REPORTER: *The police?*

ABDURRAHMAN WAHID: *Or the armed forces, I don't know.*

[\(\(Global Research published the complete archive of this historic interview on October 14, 2005\): emphasis added\)](#)

Notes

1. International Crisis Group, *Indonesia Backgrounder: How The Jemaah Islamiyah Terrorist Network Operates*, <http://www.crisisweb.org/projects/showreport.cfm?reportid=845> , 2003
- 2, Raymond Bonner and Jane Perlez, *More Attacks on Westerners Are Expected in Indonesia*, *New York Times*, 25 November 2002
3. Quoted in Raymond Bonner and Jane Perlez, *op cit*.
4. *USA Today*, 15 October 2002.
5. *Business AM*, 15 October 2002.
6. *Christchurch Press*, 22 November 2002), (Similar warnings were made by the CIA).
7. *Operation Northwoods*, *op cit*.
8. *Insight on the News*, 3 February 2003.

Author's note: This article largely draws upon my earlier writings on the Bali bombings published in 2003 and 2005.

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