



After Mumbai

Waiting for the second shoe to drop.

by David Aikman

INDIANS AS WELL AS FOREIGN OBSERVERS of all kinds were quick to call the November 26–29 massacres in Mumbai “India’s 9/11.” Mercifully for India, the 10 terrorists who took part in the attacks on 10 targets in Mumbai, including two luxury hotels, a train station, and a Jewish guest house, failed to murder the number of people they originally had in mind: 5,000. The September 11 attacks on New York and the Pentagon killed some 2,975 people.

But the Mumbai attacks were indeed India’s 9/11 in a different sense. Suddenly, Indians of all political parties realized their country was heart breakingly vulnerable to a squad of determined and well-trained terrorist thugs. Moreover, India was forced to consider what its foreign policy should be after unmistakable evidence emerged that it was in Pakistan that the plots against it had been hatched, planned, and guided. India was now a central target in al Qaeda’s overall jihad against the U.S. in particular and the West in general. Mumbai was not just India’s 9/11, but the world’s.

India’s vulnerability was evident at every stage of the attack. Even before the terrorists made landfall on Mumbai’s Indian Ocean coast, U.S. intelligence operatives had made clear to their Indian counterparts, the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) responsible for foreign intelligence and counter-espionage, that NSA intercepts indicated a likely terrorist attack on Mumbai, originating in Karachi. Intelligence specifically identified the attackers as connected to Lashkar-e-Taiba, the Kashmiri terrorist group founded in the early 1990s. The Indian government acknowledged receipt of this information but neither its navy nor its coast guard was able to identify the terrorist vessel

that was sailing from Pakistani waters towards India. When the terrorists transferred from the Indian fishing boat they had hijacked to Zodiac high-speed dinghies for the final stage, they easily avoided Mumbai port security.

But it was when the attack was well under way in the Taj Mahal and Oberoi hotels that Indian unpreparedness revealed itself most fully. Once it was obvious that local police couldn’t handle the siege, India’s National Security Guard commandoes were summoned from their base outside Delhi. They deployed quickly enough to Delhi airport, but found no plane waiting to take them to Mumbai. It took another two and a half hours to locate a military transport. But once they arrived in Mumbai, their problems were not over; there were no trucks or buses waiting to get them into town and they had no maps of the hotels or adjacent areas. They had to wait another hour until Mumbai municipal transport buses could be rounded up to take them into the city. It was altogether nine hours before NSG commandoes got into action.

Once in action, the commandoes certainly fought bravely, but without any training or experience in hostage rescue. On hearing that a Jewish hostelry in Mumbai, the Chabad House, had been attacked, Israel immediately dispatched a group of its own commandoes to the city. While they waited in safe houses, Israeli defense minister Ehud Barak pleaded with his Indian counterpart to allow them at least to rescue the Chabad House hostages, all of whom were Jewish. The Indians refused. “It was purely a matter of pride,” explained a senior Indian journalist. Eventually, the NSG commandos rappelled from a helicopter onto the Chabad House roof

and made their way down the stairs. By the time they had shot the two terrorists in control of the residence, all the hostages had been executed, most after torture so appalling that even Indian medical examiners were horrified by what had been done to the bodies.

INDIAN DOMESTIC POLITICAL UPROAR over the terrorist attacks was immediate. Home Minister Shivraj Patil immediately offered his resignation. The Indian government then announced it would establish a federal agency to co-ordinate a national response to the terrorist threat. It also said it would immediately establish 20 counter-terrorism police academies and beef up patrol boat equipment for India's cash-strapped coast guard, which has to defend 4,650 miles of national coastline.

If it all seemed a case of closing the barn door after the horses had bolted, there were plenty of Indians ready to point that out. In fact, since 2004 an estimated 7,000 Indians have died in terrorist attacks. Not all of these attacks were Islamist in origin: India's history of fratricidal Hindu-Muslim tensions certainly accounted for many of the victims. Yet India's suffering at the hands of Lashkar-e-Taiba and other Kashmir-based groups goes back at least to December 2001, when terrorists later identified with this group attacked the Indian parliament. One prominent Pakistani-based terrorist, Maulana Masood Azhar, founder of the Kashmir-based Islamist group called Jaishe-e-Mohammed, was actually released from jail by India in 1999 as part of a deal to free hostages from an Indian Airlines plane hijacked in Kandahar, Afghanistan. Azhar made his way from Afghanistan back to Pakistan, where he was held under house arrest for a year, then released in December 2002.

Pakistan at first denied it was in any way connected to the Mumbai massacre. One Pakistani TV station even attributed the Mumbai incident to "Hindu Zionists." But as pressure for an armed response mounted from the outraged Indian public, Pakistani and Indian officials alike were quick to tamp down any war talk. With both countries in possession of nuclear weaponry, there would be no room at all for miscalculation if hostilities were to break out. Yet an Indian government official said that if before scheduled national elections in 2009 there were another attack on Indian civilians that could be traced to Pakistan, war between the two countries would be "inevitable."



Indian prime minister Manmohan Singh, an Oxford-trained PhD in economics, has conducted a pragmatic and broader foreign policy since taking office in 2004. He has particularly expanded relations with Israel, to the point that Israel is now India's second-largest defense contractor after Russia. Despite tense relations with Pakistan over terrorism—culminating with the Mumbai massacre—Singh has sought overall to continue talks aimed at reducing bilateral tensions over Kashmir, whose control by India since 1947 has spawned most of Pakistan's Islamist groups targeting India. But he now faces a major dilemma. Unless Pakistan seriously curtails the activities of its anti-Indian domestic groups, public pressure for India not to show itself "weak" could explode in a grass roots demand to "punish" Pakistan.

Nowhere are officials more alarmed by this than in Washington. Even since Mumbai, the U.S. has prodded Pakistan repeatedly to clamp down on the Islamist terrorist camps in its territory. In December, Washington successfully persuaded the UN Security Council to impose sanctions on Lashkar-e-Taiba's successor organization, Jamaat-ud-Dawa, its chief, Hafiz Saeed, the notorious terrorist Zakiur Lakhvi, JuD's chief finance officer Haji Muhammad Ashraf, and an Indian-born Saudi national and fundraiser in Saudi Arabia, Mahmoud Ahmed Bahaziq. Those UN moves nudged Pakistani security forces to raid the JuD camp in Muzaffarabad, detain Lakhvi and others, and place Saeed under house arrest for three months. For the Indians, though, this was insufficient; they felt the U.S. was not doing enough to pressure Pakistan into suppressing its terrorist groups.

The trouble is that the U.S. is hardly better placed to pressure Pakistan than India is. Pakistan's main problem is that it has been under military rule for the vast majority of the time since it became independent from Britain in 1947. Its army and its powerful Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) organization have had close relations with both the Taliban and various anti-Indian terrorist groups since at least the 1980s, when the U.S. relied upon Pakistan to funnel military aid and equipment to the Afghan *mujahideen* to fight the Soviets. The U.S. has tried repeatedly, so far without success, to place Hamid Gul, a former ISI chief who has been stridently critical of the U.S., on a UN

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embargo list. Ironically, before she was killed, Benazir Bhutto had written a letter to then Pakistani president Pervez Musharraf warning that, if she died by murder, Hamid Gul should be among the first people investigated. Gul has described U.S. attempts to nab him as "hilarious." As for Pakistan's current democratically elected president, Asif Ali Zardari, Bhutto's widower, he is not considered strong enough to assert firm civilian control over Pakistan's cowboy military and intelligence apparatus.

He may not have to. There has been a sign of common sense finally emerging within the military establishment in Pakistan. Defense Minister Chaudhry Ahmed Mukhtar in December made an unusual admission. "If the whole world is on one side," he said, "Pakistan does not have the strength to face the whole world. We can fight against our enemies, but we can't fight an economic war against the whole world."

Will the tangled political establishment of Pakistan come to the same realization before even

more damage is done by its home-grown terrorists? Lashkar-e-Taiba's goals are brazenly ambitious: to bring down the regimes of India, the U.S., Israel, Russia, and China in the cause of global Islamic jihad. Its reach in the past has extended not only to successful fund-raising in Saudi Arabia, but also to sending jihadist agents into Iraq to fight the Americans and to training terrorists from Egypt, Afghanistan, Yemen, and Bangladesh. It is also very plugged in to the global al Qaeda network. The head of the Kashmiri terrorist group Harakat-ul-Mujahideen, Farooq Kashmiri, signed Osama bin Laden's 1998 fatwa calling on the world's Muslims to murder Americans.

For better or for worse, India has now emerged as a central element in the aspirations of global jihadists. Though al Qaeda no longer has direct control over all the various national Islamist groups waging jihad, what seems to have happened is that several well-run "franchises" of global Islamist terror are acting on their own initiative, with or without Osama bin Laden's or Ayman al-Zawahiri's approval. As EU leaders were preparing to gather in Brussels in mid-December for discussions about the EU economy, for example, Belgian police conducted 16 separate raids on suspected Islamist targets around Belgium. Among the police discoveries: a video tape in which one Islamist appears to be saying goodbye to his friends and family prior to a planned suicide operation.

It's significant that India, whose closest ally for many years was the Soviet Union, has drawn increasingly closer to the U.S. in the past decade. It remains an open question, however, whether the U.S. can "protect" India and exert sustained pressure on Pakistan, whether bilaterally or through the UN, to set its own house in order. Sooner or later, Pakistan's rulers, whether civilian or military, will have to decide whose side they are on—al Qaeda's or civilization's. ❁

David Aikman is the author, most recently, of *The Delusion of Disbelief* (Tyndale House).

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Jerusalem (I)

Whose city - whose "holy city" - is it?

It's been over forty years since Israel's victory in the Six-Day War in 1967 that the city of Jerusalem, which had been divided for nineteen years, has been reunited under Israeli rule. But there is still much talk that the "Middle East problem" cannot be solved unless the city, or at the very least its eastern part, be "returned to its rightful owners," the Muslim Arabs. In fact, this claim for Jerusalem, together with the "return" of the 1948 refugees, whose descendants have miraculously swollen to 5 million, are posited as "non-negotiable demands" in discussions with the Arabs.

What are the facts?

A city of many nationalities. Before the end of the 1967 Six-Day War, during which the Israeli Defense Forces reconquered Jerusalem from the Jordanians, claims to Jerusalem being a Muslim holy city were rarely, if ever, asserted. Jerusalem had always been a city in which many religions and nationalities lived side by side. It was only after the old city was back in Jewish hands that the Muslim Arabs declared their desire to wage "jihad" (holy war) to bring the city back into Arab possession.

The notion to call Jerusalem an Islamic holy city has only come about in modern times, especially after the Arabs lost the city to Israel in the Six-Day War. It now has gained currency by dint of constant repetition. The basis for the claim is that Jerusalem does indeed contain an Islamic holy site, namely the Temple Mount (sacred to both Muslims and Jews) with its two mosques, El Aksa and the Dome of the Rock. It is the place from which Mohammed, who had never set foot in the city, is believed to have ascended to heaven. But aware that it was the holy city of Christians and Jews, and wishing to convert them to his new religion, he commanded his followers to build a mosque in Jerusalem. But never in Muslim history did this mosque or this city compare in significance to the holy cities of Mecca and Medina - cities that no "infidel" may visit.

A tenuous Muslim claim. It is on the basis of this religious tradition that the Muslims designated the entire Jewish Temple Mount to be their holy site. The Israeli government, in its constant spirit of accommodation to Muslim sensibilities, has

Jews are not the usurpers in Jerusalem. They have been living there since the Biblical era and have been the majority population since the 19th century. Jews have synagogues and other holy sites in most cities of the world. But do they claim sovereignty over those cities because of it? Of course not! It would be preposterous and people wouldn't accept it. And the Muslim Arab claim to Jerusalem, based on the mosques on the Temple Mount, is just as untenable. Jerusalem has been the center of Jewish life, of Jewish yearning and of Jewish thinking for over 3,000 years. That is the reason that the State of Israel has rededicated the Jewish holy city to be its indivisible capital.

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Gerardo Joffe, President

largely acceded to this tradition and has put the area in and around the two mosques entirely under Muslim control. But how would Christians feel if, instead of from the Temple Mount, Muslim tradition had Mohammed ascend from the

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Church of the Holy Sepulchre and if the Muslim Arabs were to claim that site as their property? The Christian world, often ready to consent to Muslim claims against Jews and Israelis, would be greatly astonished and would certainly resist such claim. But Muslim Arab assertiveness doesn't end there. On the tenuous claim of their right to the Temple Mount, they have

construed a claim to the entire city of Jerusalem (or at the very least to its eastern part), which they have declared to be their "third holiest city." And, it would be an insult to all Muslims and all Arabs to leave the city in the hands of the "infidel Jews."

Jerusalem: Never an Arab capital. But the city of Jerusalem - in contrast to Baghdad, Cairo, and Damascus - has never played any major role in the political and religious lives of the Muslim Arabs. It was never a political center, never a national or even a provincial or sub-provincial capital of any country, since Biblical times. It was the site of one Muslim holy place, but otherwise a backwater to the Arabs. The passion for Jerusalem was not discovered by the Muslim Arabs until most recent history.

At the center of Jewish life. But Jerusalem has stood at the center of the Jewish people's national life since King David made it his capital in 1003 BCE. After the return from Babylonian exile, Jerusalem again served as the capital of the Jewish people for the next five-and-a-half centuries.

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Special Thanks to Spot

by Jonathan Black

YOU MAY THINK SCANNING THE Acknowledgments page first is like reading the weddings in the *New York Times* Sunday Styles section before hitting the news. I beg to differ. The Acknowledgments page cannot make a bad book better, but it can ruin a good one.

Did I say “page”? Section is more like it. Names upon names. Artists’ colonies. Intrepid editors. Copy editors. Mentors. Foundations. Librarians. The upstairs neighbor. Research assistants. Personal assistants. People who read drafts. The mom who sparked the great endeavor. The dad who would have been proud. The agent, brilliant and prescient, as well as the best friend any writer could have. Speaking of friends...who are all these people? How many drafts did the author circulate? Isn’t writing supposed to be a grim and lonely pursuit?

And finally—drum roll, please—the spouse. Long-suffering, dreams of medical school up in smoke. These husbands and wives are saints! In a writer’s darkest hour, when the black dog descends, they’re toting laundry and hunting for typos. Never will they cry, “Harold, for God’s sake, another year? What about the landscaping? What about Maudie’s tuition?”

Not all spouses, it need be noted, survive the second or third printing, let alone the paperback version. The dedication to “my fantastic wife and children” morphs into “For my family.” The soul mates and life companions move on, optimistically to other writers, to be crowned again with syrupy praise. “Writing this book has been wonderful,” goes one plaudit, “but building a life with you is a greater joy and accomplishment by far.”

Wince not. Acknowledgments are relentlessly upbeat, though occasionally an elbow nudge slips in. Here’s a nod to the editor of Jonathan Lopez’s just-published book on the Vermeer forger. “Indeed, I believe I have learned more about writing from Andrea than I learned at Harvard—about anything.”

A sly dig at Harvard, even as the author name-drops his alma mater? But don’t count on catching Lopez at *Crimson* reunions, especially after that “about anything” dangler. Where was the editor?

But the A-page is immune to editing. Anything short of outright libel rarely sees the blue pencil. Writers who might shun the larded list of Facebook friends have no hesitation flaunting a phone book of helpers. An author friend—I’ll never divulge his name, not if I expect to be acknowledged in his next book—ran five pages of Acknowledgments. James Frey, humorously perhaps, compacted his most recent Acknowledgments to a single page—but crammed in 163 names. Emily Giffin, author of *Love the One You’re With*, named 23 people at her publisher, St. Martin’s, presumably the backroom team that landed her books on bestseller lists.

“It used to be a writer spent 20 years alone in a room,” says Sara Nelson, editor of *Publishers Weekly*, “and came out with an ink-stained manuscript and made a deal with Bennett Cerf. Now it’s publishing by committee. Everything’s sales and marketing and publicity.”

Count the author rare who shuns the mechanics of marketing. Nelson, whose own book, *So Many Books, So Little Time*, included a wry chapter on Acknowledgments, herself penned two busy pages. “There are writers and reviewers and critics,” she says philosophically. “You’ve got to head them off at the pass.”

Both Frey’s and Giffin’s books are fiction (or so says Frey), but novelists need friends, too, or at least a nice setting in which to plant their laptop. Susan Minot set a new standard for working the houseguest circuit, infamously noting every chair and table at which she composed *Evenings*, from the “Balinese bed in Nairobi” to “the couch at Fair Oaks Farm.”

For fellow writers suffering from *Schadenfreude*, this catalogue of gratitude can be especially galling.