



IS CROSS-BORDER TERRORISM A STUMBLING BLOCK FOR INDO-PAK PEACE PROCESS? — A BIRD'S EYEVUEW ON THE MUMBAI ATTACKS

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Abstract

Peace is essential for the socio-economic growth of the neighbouring nations which are divided by international borders. India and Pakistan have been divided by such borders after independence. However, the division has immediately cropped up differences on account of the issue of Kashmir. This issue has given rise to cross-border terrorism with some organizations sympathetic to Kashmiri Muslims. The terror attacks causing threat to the security of India has become a common place. The Mumbai attacks have brought forth one big security breach where the terrorist could reach the metro city of Mumbai and cause havoc in the prestigious chain of Hotels and the main railway terminal, a Jewish cultural centre etc. In the light of this, an attempt has been made in this paper to study the causes of terrorism and the role of the government in curbing such terrorist activities to improve the bilateral relations between the two neighbouring countries of India and Pakistan.

Key Words: *Terrorism, Violence, Attacks, Bilateral, Religious, Organizations.*

Introduction

Terrorism is practiced as an ideology by the terrorist groups to achieve their goals. These goals often lie in the political and religious backgrounds. Terrorists always resort to deliberate violence to achieve their goal. Terrorist attacks have become a common place in India particularly in the regions where there are border tensions. Although there are some terrorist attacks of local origin, the threat to national security always arises from the attacks sponsored by other countries.

Indo-Pak relations have never been smooth and the role of cross-border terrorism cannot be ignored in shaping the relations between these two countries from time to time. This paper aims to discuss the role of cross-border terrorism in India in the light of Mumbai attacks and tries to find out the ways for peaceful bilateral approach between India and Pakistan.

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Review of Literature:

Ganguly (2002)¹ in his book *Conflict Unending India-Pakistan Relations Since 1947*, has discussed many points of Indo-Pak relations in a detailed manner. The Indo-Pak conflict has been explained in the light of anti-colonial movements of both the countries. Dogra (2007)² in his book *Threat to Security*, stated that the North-Eastern India has seen a number of festering insurgencies. The main reason for terrorist activities in this region is that the smaller groups residing in these regions are struggling for their own identity in terms of their cultural heritage which is causing a lot of problems both between the tribal groups as also between as one of them and the larger Indian national identity. Sengupta and Singh(2004),³ in their book “Terrorism in South Asia”, opined, terrorism has become one of the most important cause evoking serious and real threat to the security of countries, their inhabitants, property, democratic system and natural development of human society and civilization. Sharda Jain(1995)⁴, “Politics of Terrorism in India”, has thrown light on the tragic course of events in Punjab in 1980, which marked a watershed in the Hindu-Sikh relations putting the common man in both the communities in a dilemma.

Objectives:

- To analyse the role of cross-border terrorism in drawing the political goals in the light of Indo-Pak relations.
- To analyse the Mumbai attacks to understand the role terrorism as a stumbling block in the peace processes.
- To analyse the role of the administration is curbing the cross-border terrorism – particularlyPak sponsored terrorism in India.

Conflict in Kashmir and the Terrorist Organizations Involved

Terrorism has become a way of life in South Asia, inflicting destruction on the civilian population and property, and bringing about unprecedented misery. India since the 1980s has been fighting a proxy war in the Indian part of Kashmir with Islamic militants and groups committed to the cause of liberating Kashmir. Conflict is promoted in Kashmir by the active support given by Pakistan to various terrorist organisations such as the Lashkar-e-Taiba, (LeT), Jaish-e-Muhammad (JeM) and others. These organisations have their bases in Pakistan where they are trained, financed and equipped to carry out terror strikes not only in Kashmir but in other parts of the country as well. The violence which started in Kashmir in the late Eighties, and which continues even now, as also terror strikes across various parts of India are a result of such support. Besides the LeT, other formidable jihadi organisations, which

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receive support from Pakistan's ISI, are the Jaish-e-Muhammad (JeM) and the Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan (SSP), which also functions as the Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ) and AhleSunnatWalJamaat (ASWJ). The focus of the LeT and JeM is on India, especially on annexing Kashmir, while the SSP/LeJ/ ASWJ conglomerate aims to eliminate Shiism by systematically killing Shiites. The leadership of all these organisations is based in Pakistan's Punjab province, but they have an all Pakistan presence.⁵ It is, thus, self-evident that a variety of jihadi organisations based in Pakistan and supported by the state have a specific anti-India agenda. India's Northern Army Commander, responsible for counterinsurgency operations in the entire state of Kashmir, has estimated that there are about 3,000-4,000 backed insurgents operating in Kashmir.⁶

Groups like the Lashkar-e-Taiba are known for the attack on the Indian Parliament in December 2001, the 2006 Mumbai train bombings, the February 2007 blast of a train between India and Pakistan, and the orchestration of the November 26, 2008 Mumbai attacks.

Mumbai Terror Attacks

An audacious, days-long November terrorist attack on India's most populous city, Mumbai, has deeply affected the Indian people and their government. Because the attackers appear to have come from, and received training and equipment in, neighbouring Pakistan, the episode has led to renewed tensions between two nuclear-armed South Asian states with a history of war and mutual animosity. Seemingly incompatible national identities contributed both to several wars and to the nuclearization of the Asian Subcontinent, with the nuclear weapons capabilities of both countries becoming overt in 1998. In 2004, New Delhi and Islamabad launched a comprehensive effort to reduce tensions and resolve outstanding disputes, an effort that has resulted in a modest, but still meaningful successes. New Delhi acknowledges that a stable Pakistan is in India's interests. At the same time, however, Indian leaders are convinced that Pakistan has long been and remains the main source India's significant domestic terrorism problems. They continue to blame Islamabad for maintaining an "infrastructure of terror" that launches attacks inside India.

At approximately 9:30 p.m. local time on the evening of November 26, 2008, a number of well-trained militants came ashore from the Arabian Sea on small boats and attacked numerous high-profile targets in Mumbai, with automatic weapons and explosives. By the time the episode ended some 62 hours later, about 174 people, including nine terrorists, had been killed and hundreds more injured. Among the multiple sites attacked in the peninsular city known as India's business and entertainment capital were two luxury

hotels – the Taj Mahal Palace and the Oberoi-Trident – along with the main railway terminal, a Jewish cultural centre, a café frequented by foreigners, a cinema house, and two hospitals.⁷ Six American citizens were among the 26 foreigners reported dead. Indian officials have concluded that the attackers numbered only ten, one of whom was captured. Some reports indicate that several other gunmen escaped.⁸

According to reports, the militants arrived in Mumbai from sea on dinghies launched from a larger ship offshore, then fanned out in southern Mumbai in groups of two or three.⁹ Each was carrying an assault rifle with 10-12 extra magazines of ammunition, a pistol, several hand grenades, and about 18 pounds of military-grade explosives. They also employed sophisticated technology including global positioning system handsets, satellite phones, Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) phone service, and high-resolution satellite photos of the targets. The attackers were said to have demonstrated a keen familiarity with the Taj hotel's layout in particular, suggesting that careful advanced planning had been undertaken.

Home Minister ShivrajPatil (who resigned in the wake of the attacks) reportedly ordered India's elite National Security Guard commandos deployed 90 minutes after the attacks began, but the mobilized units did not arrive on the scene until the next morning, some ten hours after the initial shooting. The delay likely handed a tactical advantage to the militants.¹⁰ According to a high-ranking Mumbai police official, the militants made no demands and had killed most of their hostages before being engaged by commandos on the morning of November 27.¹¹ Two full days passed between the time of that engagement and the episode's conclusion when the two hotels were declared cleared of the several remaining gunmen.

Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh apologized to the Indian people on behalf of his government for being unable to prevent the attacks. He said his government will pursue a three-level response to include (1) seeking to galvanize the international community to deal sternly with what Singh labelled the "epicentre of terrorism, which is located in Pakistan;" (2) taking a strong posture toward the Islamabad government in pressing it to end the use of Pakistani territory for staging terrorist attacks, and (3) recognizing that self-help measures to improve India's own domestic security are required.¹²

On December 11, the country's new home minister, P. Chidambaram, announced major reform efforts for the country's security infrastructure to include the establishment of a new national investigative agency, a new Coastal Command, 20 new counterterrorism

schools, and new regional commando bases.¹³ The Indian Parliament passed a series of stringent new anti-terrorism laws on December 17.

Suspected/Accused Culprits

Lashkar-e-Taiba

On December 9, Indian officials released the names or aliases of the nine suspected gunmen killed during the Mumbai siege, saying all were Pakistani nationals.¹⁴ U.S. and Indian officials reportedly have used forensic evidence, including phone records, to establish solid links between the gunmen and elements inside Pakistan. Early indications pointed to the Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT or "Army of the Pure"), which was outlawed by the Islamabad government in 2002, as being complicit.¹⁵ The LeT denies involvement in the attack. Designated as a Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO) under U.S. law in late 2001, the LeT is based in Muzaffarabad (in Pakistani Kashmir) and Muridke (near Lahore). The group seeks not only Islamic rule in all of Kashmir, but is also a proponent of broader anti-India and anti-Western struggles, and is the armed wing of a Pakistan-based, anti-U.S. Sunni religious organization formed in 1989. Its key leader is Hafiz Mohammad Saeed. The LeT is believed to have close links with both Al Qaeda and the Taliban, and over the years it appears to have taken a more expansive, global jihadi perspective.¹⁶ The group even has some successes in efforts to recruit Westerners, especially Britons and Americans.¹⁷ Under aliases and through front organizations, the LeT has operated more or less openly in Pakistan despite the 2002 ban, fuelling pervasive doubts that Pakistan's security agencies will honor the promises of cooperation being made by Islamabad's civilian leaders.¹⁸

The LeT has been implicated in past, multiple-target attacks involving coordinated movements by well-armed gunmen who took hostages. The level of sophistication and training required to undertake the recent Mumbai attacks spurred many Indian and American analysts to name the LeT as a likely suspect.¹⁹ Such suspicions appeared validated when Indian government officials announced that the sole attacker captured alive had confessed to being a Pakistani national trained in LeT camps. The 21-year-old militant, named as Azam Amir Kasab and said to be a native of Faisalabad in Pakistan's Punjab province, reportedly admitted that the Mumbai operation was launched from Pakistan's Karachi port.²⁰

Jamaat-ud-Dawa (JuD), nominally a charitable organization established in 2005 (it provides education, health care, and emergency relief services in Punjab and Pakistani Kashmir) is identified as a continuation of the LeT with a new name. The Indian government claims the JuD operates 2,500 offices and 11 religious seminaries in Pakistan.²¹ The JuD is

viewed favourably by many Pakistanis for its charitable efforts. On December 10, at the request of the Indian government and with Washington's blessing, the U.N. Security Council took several actions related to LeT, including listing four of its members for targeted sanctions, adding JuD as an LeT alias, and adding aliases for the two Islamic trusts that have raised funds for LeT. Hafiz Saeed and Zaki-ur-Lakhvi were among those named, along with two men said to be key LeT financiers, one of them a Saudi national. The U.S. Treasury Department had in May 2008 designated these same four LeT "leaders."²² One of the key "masterminds" of the Mumbai attacks is said to have been Yusuf Muzammil, a top LeT commander. Lakhvi, his lieutenant, reportedly took telephone calls from the Mumbai terrorists as the attack was underway. Both men, named by the captured gunman under interrogation, reportedly stage-managed the attacks in real time.²³

Suspected Links with Pakistan's State Apparatus

Reports link the LeT to Pakistan's main Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) agency, which is likely to have facilitated its creation and early activities. Indian analysts emphasize evidence of a direct link between Pakistan-sponsored militancy in Kashmir and the wider assortment of radical Islamic groups active in Pakistan after 2001, with one going so far as to call the LeT a "wholly owned subsidiary" of the ISI.²⁴ In a 2005 book on the relationships between Pakistani Islamists and the Pakistani military, it was mentioned that, earlier in the decade, the ISI provided significant "severance pay" to jihadi leaders in return for their promise to "remain dormant for an unspecified duration." Among the alleged recipients of this ISI largesse were the LeT's Saeed, and Masood Azhar, chief of the Pakistan-based, FTO-designated Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM).²⁵ The JeM, another Kashmir-focused militant group, was implicated by New Delhi (along with the LeT) for orchestrating a December 2001 attack on India's Parliament complex, an event that spurred a ten-month-long international crisis.²⁶

On December 5, an unnamed, but ostensibly high-ranking Indian official claimed that his government has "clear and incontrovertible proof" the November Mumbai attack was planned by the LeT with training and other support from the ISI. U.S. officials have to date been more circumspect in their interpretation of evidence, but many are reported to believe that the LeT's recent growth in strength and reach has come only with active assistance from ISI elements, either active or "retired."²⁷ In mid-2008, U.S. intelligence officials apparently concluded that ISI elements were involved in a July car bombing of India's Embassy in Kabul, Afghanistan.²⁸

New Delhi's Response

On November 27, while multiple battles between militants and security forces still raged in Mumbai, Prime Minister Singh addressed the nation to denounce the "well-planned and well-orchestrated attacks, probably with external linkages," and noted evidence that the culprits were members of a group "based outside the country," an unmistakable reference to Pakistan. A day later, India's foreign minister said that preliminary evidence implicated "elements with links to Pakistan." On December 1, with bilateral tensions mounting, Pakistan's envoy in New Delhi was summoned and told the Indian government expected strong action to be taken against those Pakistani elements found to be responsible for the Mumbai attacks. Indian officials are not known to have presented any evidence, but suggested that such elements are still at large on Pakistani territory.²⁹ They submitted to Pakistan a list of 42 wanted fugitives believed to be on Pakistani territory.³⁰

The Indian government is coming under ever-greater domestic pressure to ramp up bilateral and multilateral pressure on Pakistan as the alleged epicentre of global terrorism. Some in India call for military strikes against terrorist targets on Pakistani territory.³¹ In claiming New Delhi has "strong evidence" that the attackers were trained in and came from Pakistan, India's deputy foreign minister said Islamabad must deliver on its 2004 commitment to end the activities of terrorist groups on Pakistani soil. External Affairs Minister Mukherjee has voiced New Delhi's insistence that Pakistan's actions against militant groups operating on Pakistani soil be taken to their "logical conclusion." This would include a total dismantling of the "terrorist infrastructure" inside Pakistan and the permanent outlawing of militant groups under whatever aliases. These steps were not, according to Mukherjee, taken following past episodes of Pakistani government assurances, and New Delhi has not been impressed with the efficacy of existing bilateral mechanisms designed to facilitate joint intelligence sharing and investigative cooperation in which "nothing has been produced."

While New Delhi is believed to have ruled out direct military action for the time being, Indian officials immediately began considering a suspension of the ongoing bilateral dialogue with Pakistan.³² On December 16, India's top-ranking diplomat announced what was already widely suspected: that the bilateral composite dialogue process was in "a pause" due to the Mumbai attacks. While senior India officials continue to press Islamabad to act more robustly against the Pakistani "elements" suspected of being behind the attacks, making this a requirement for "normal" relations, Defence Minister A.K. Antony stated that his country was "not planning any military action" at present.³³ Yet, on December 18, in the first concrete

sign of deteriorating diplomatic relations, New Delhi cancelled a planned January tour of Pakistan by India's national cricket team.

Islamabad's Response

The Islamabad government offered condolences and strongly condemned the terrorist acts in Mumbai. Pakistani leaders insisted that India's fight against terrorism is their fight, as well, and they promised swift action against any Pakistani elements shown to be involved, expressing a willingness to deepen bilateral engagement while warning against the "blame game and knee-jerk reactions."³⁴ All of Pakistan's major political parties were unified in their condemnation of the attacks, but they also issued a joint resolution rejecting any "hasty allegations" against their country.³⁵ Pakistan at first offered to send its top intelligence official to India to assist in the investigation, then later reversed itself, offering to send a lower-ranking official. The episode was yet another embarrassment for civilian leaders in Islamabad who have sought to demonstrate their authority over Pakistan's security establishment with little success, and it may have further damaged the confidence of Indian leaders.³⁶ On December 2, Pakistan's foreign minister offered to establish a joint inquiry into the attacks and reiterated Islamabad's intention to cooperate fully.³⁷ Islamabad has repeatedly and emphatically condemned the attacks, promised "utmost cooperation and assistance" in bringing the perpetrators to justice, and offered to establish a joint investigative commission co-chaired by Pakistan's and India's national security advisors.³⁸

Under pressure from foreign capitals and cognizant of the threat posed to domestic security, the Islamabad government launched a crackdown on Pakistan's indigenous religious militant groups on December 7. Security forces raided a main LeT complex in Pakistani Kashmir, taking control of several buildings and arresting at least six men.

Conclusion

Decades of militarized tensions and territorial disputes between India and Pakistan arguably have restricted economic and social development in both countries while also impeding establishment of effective regional economic or security institutions. New Delhi acknowledges that a stable Pakistan is in India's interests. At the same time, however, many top Indian leaders are convinced that Pakistan has long been and remains the main source of India's significant domestic terrorism problems. They continue to blame Islamabad for maintaining an "infrastructure of terror" and for actively supporting terrorist groups that are held responsible for attacks inside India.

Although India suffers from several militant regional separatist movements, the Kashmir issue has proven the most lethal and intractable. India blames Pakistan for supporting "cross-border terrorism" and for fueling a separatist rebellion in the Muslim-majority Kashmir Valley with arms, training, and militants. Islamabad, for its part, claims to provide only diplomatic and moral support to what it calls "freedom fighters" who resist Indian rule. India on the other hand insists that the dispute should not be "internationalized" through involvement by third-party mediators and India is widely believed to be content with the territorial status quo.

India wants from Pakistan-dismantling of terrorist camps, taking action against these involved in terror attacks and handling over of fugitives of Indian laws like the chief of the banned Jaishe-e-Mohammed (JEM) MasoodAzhar. As far as the Mumbai attacks are concerned the Indian authorities have claimed that they have the intercepts of telephone conversations between the terrorist operating in Mumbai during the attack and their handlers in Pakistan. Pakistan is in a position to investigate them and they do not need any evidence from outside if they are honest in their intention. Unless they receive support from Pakistani government, it would be impossible for them to work from there.

It is certain that India has to carry out many internal reforms and address many political and administrative shortcomings to avert such terrorist attacks. There is a requirement of a will to win the war over terrorism backed up by strict enforcement of existing laws at national and international level. Any system as it marches ahead reveals certain lacunae and loopholes, which in the instant case efforts the terrorists and advantage and ultimately in getting away rather mildly. There should be parity in the norms to be adopted by different countries at the international level when it comes to protect the national interest. Such measures should be undertaken which include special patterns of cooperation between like-minded governments, sanctions against states that sponsor or support terrorism in other nations territory, and intervene with its peace and harmony and there should be a fuller application of international legal norms. With regard to international law, greater respect must be accorded to the principle of "extradite or prosecute". States must respect the definition of aggression approved by the general assembly in 1974 and terrorists must come to be regarded by all states as common Enemies of humanity. Taken together such measures could severely limit the likelihood of cross border terrorism.

Without peaceful borders with its neighbours, India can hardly play its legitimate role in global affairs. Since borders are with neighbours and neighbours are people, we have to

take into consideration the people and the state when we talk about borders and management. To integrate border with the mainland, economic and infrastructure development of the border areas must be done. It is also equally important to ensure political satisfaction of the border people, provision of adequate security, closing the cultural and communication gaps between the border people and the national mainstream and developing friendly relations with their border people. Above all people should be informed about the security issues in order to mobilize their support to defence preparations and government policies.

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