

The Mumbai Attacks of November 26th 2008: Lessons and Implications for Europe

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Who carried it out?

- **Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT)**
- Founded 1989 in Kunar Province, Afghanistan
- Hafiz Muhammad Saeed and Zafar Iqbal
- Aim, to “free” the Muslim population in Indian administered Kashmir
- Banned terrorist group, as is its front group **Jamaat-Ud-Dawa**
- Indian Parliament attack December 2001 and others – a tactic with strategic consequences

What happened in Mumbai: Main aspects

- **Preparations**
 - Personnel and Training
 - Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR)
 - Weapons and equipment
- **Insertion**
- **Assault**
- **Support and facilitation**

Preparations – Personnel and Training

- Initial concept by September 2007, by April 2008 targets had grown in number and so had numbers of attackers needed
- Railway Station was initially an escape route, then became a target – training also adapted to include indoctrination on martyrdom
- Took place in Pakistan and Kashmir, phased selection process
- Covered all aspects of the attacks - physical, technical and mental

Preparations - ISR

- Three known individuals
- Fahim ANSARI, Sabauddin AHMED, Daood GIULANI (aka David HEADLEY, US citizen)
- ANSARI, rented premises near landing point, carried out ISR and produced detailed maps and local information
- AHMED assisted and provided target details and linked in to LeT
- HEADLEY took photographs and gathered on-site information from 2008 onwards

“David Headley”

- Born in Washington, became informant for the DEA after convictions for drug trafficking
- Travels to Pakistan leads to contact with LeT and from 2002, training camps
- Made 9 trips to India for ISR
 - Stayed at Taj Mahal Palace Hotel with wife
 - Videoed the CS railway station
 - Took boat trips off Mumbai over 5 days, April 2008
 - ISR on Café Leopold and Chabad Centre in July (last trip)
- Logged GPS coordinates of targets and landmarks on each trip

Preparations – Weapons and Equipment

- Operated in five teams, each of 2 paired attackers
- **Each individual carried:**
 - AK47 & 240 rounds, pistol & 14 rounds, hand grenades (8-10), knife
 - Nokia mobile and headphone
 - Dried fruit, cash, water, spare 9v battery, fake Indian ID
- **Each Team carried:**
 - IED (8kgs RDX and timer)
 - GPS

The Approach

- Pakistani boat **M.V. 'Al Husaini'**, 3 crew and 10 attackers leave Karachi
- Capture of Indian fishing trawler '**M.V.Kuber**' and five crew
 - 4 crew to 'Al Husaini', navigator left on board
 - Transfer of equipment, weapons and diesel
- Travelled 582 nautical miles until 4-5 miles off Mumbai
- Murder of crew, 4 on the 'Al Hussaini' first, then the navigator on the 'M.V.Kuber' was beheaded

The Insertion

- Rubber dinghy with all 10 terrorists, weapons and equipment launched
- Reached the shore at Bhai Bhandarkar Machimar Colony by 21.00 hours
- **Four** Teams landed immediately
 - 1 Team on foot towards Nariman House
 - 3 Teams hailed separate taxis
- **One** Team onward by dinghy, closer to the Hotel Oberoi before landing and proceeding on foot

The Assault

- Lasted over **60 hours**
- **170 killed** (including 5 fishermen)
 - 18 security forces
 - 152 civilians
 - 127 Indian nationals
 - 25 foreign nationals (6 Jewish/Israeli)
- At least 13 involved in the assault
 - 10 “Fedayeen” (9 were killed, 1 arrested)
 - 3 crew on insertion vessel
- Also “live” direction by phone throughout

Team 1

- Target – Chhatraparti Shivaji Railway Terminus (CST)
- Took a taxi from near landing point, primed **IED** left behind under drivers seat
- AK47 and grenade attack began in the Main Hall, carried on wherever they went
- Tried to take a car from car-park, walked to Cama Hospital and attacked Police & staff (7 killed)
- Continued walking, killed 6 police in a vehicle & then drove it into a nearby crowd
- Vehicle disabled and hijacked a car, stopped at a Police roadblock
- 1 captured, 1 killed in Police assault on vehicle
- Overall, **52 killed** (11 Police)

Team 2

- Target – Chabad-Lubavitch Nariman House
- Five storey building owned by an Orthodox Jewish organisation, Chabad of India Trust
- Walked the 500 metres from the landing point
- **IED** left at nearby petrol station and another **IED** near the staircase entering the building
- Opened fire on nearby buildings
- Took **hostages** and forced them to contact Israeli Embassy
- Initiated contact with the media and gave out **disinformation**
- Constant **mobile phone contact between Team and “handlers”** in Pakistan
- **9 killed**

Team 3

- Targets - Leopold Café and the Hotel Taj Mahal
- Well-known tourist spot for both Indians and foreigners
- Travelled from landing point to café by **taxi** cab, **IED** planted under drivers seat
- AK47 and grenade attack
- Walked to nearby Hotel Taj Mahal, planted **IED** near a restaurant en route (defused by Mumbai Bomb Disposal Squad - BDDS)
- Joined primary attackers (**Team 4**) at the hotel, used different entrance to Team 4
- **11 killed**

Team 4

- Target – Hotel Taj Mahal
- Arrived by **taxi** cab
- Before entry, planted an **IED outside the main (front) entrance**
- Commenced AK47 and grenade attack moving throughout the Hotel
- Worked in conjunction with **Team 3**
- **IED planted on 5th floor** below Hotel central dome, structural damage caused on explosion
- **Regular phone contact with “handlers”** in Pakistan
- Took military units **59 hours** to regain control of the Hotel
- **36 civilians killed**, plus one Commando and one police officer

Team 5

- Targets - Hotel Trident and Oberoi Hotel
- At landing point, **stayed in dinghy** and travelled by sea to the targets
- Planted **IED next to main entrance gate of Trident** (explosion minimised by BDDS action)
- Commenced AK47 and grenade attack in Hotel foyer and first restaurant
- Second **IED planted next to restaurant**, exploded
- **Hostages** taken from second restaurant and moved to upper floors
- Constant **contact with “handlers”**
- **Initiated contact with a TV station** (use of disinformation, same as Team 2)
- **42 hours** to regain control
- **35 killed**, guests and hotel security

The Taxi Cab IEDs

- Two, one each planted by **Team 1** (CST) and **Team 3** (Leopold Cafe)
- First detonation:
 - Near airport
 - Driver and passenger killed, 3 others injured
- Second detonation:
 - Some distance away, driver & 2 passengers killed, 19 others wounded

Support and facilitation

- Real time contact with “handlers” by phone (as well as between Teams) – **284** calls
 - Taj Mahal Hotel – 41 calls (2 hrs 45 mins)
 - Oberoi/Trident Hotels – 62 calls (4 hrs 36 mins)
 - Nariman House – 181 calls (over 9 hrs)
- Also used phones taken from victims
- Disinformation sent by emails to a number of news outlets

What type of incidents needed to be dealt with?

- **Indiscriminate armed attacks**
- **IEDs**
 - Timed detonation, random locations
 - As an ambush for pursuers
 - At specific locations to cause casualties
- **Hostage taking**
 - Hostage taking with demands for negotiation
- **Strongholds**

What were the key elements of Mumbai?

- **Sacrifice attacks** (keep killing until you can kill no more, more random than a person borne IED (PBIED) suicide attack and hence more difficult to stop)
- Multiple target **locations** and different target **types** over a wide geographic area in order to maximise civilian and other casualties
- External (Pakistan) **real-time operational support and guidance**

What was Innovative about Mumbai?

– Part 1

- Multiple attacks **designed** to be:
 - Simultaneous, consecutive, sequential and random (Time)
 - Both dispersed and concentrated (Space)
 - Sacrifice not suicide, swarming as a force multiplier
-and therefore overall, requiring a large-scale, sophisticated response to respond to and counter them

What was Innovative about Mumbai?

– Part 2

- **Deliberately intensifying the ‘fog of war’**
 - Countering the security force response by creating confusion through:
 - **Deception** (IED detonations at random locations, issuing demands for hostage negotiation)
 - **Disinformation** (false email claims and phone calls to media, Israeli Embassy)
 - **Engaging targets of opportunity** - civilian and security forces
 - **Movement and maneuver**
 - Taking the fight to the security forces:
 - When confronted or whenever able to do so
 - Laying of IEDs targeted to ‘ambush’ any pursuers

What are the Implications of Mumbai in a European context?

- **The Destructive Power of Automatic Weapons**
 - May 30th 1972, Lod Airport, Israel. Japanese Red Army x3. (27 killed, 69 injured)
 - November 5th 2009, Fort Hood, Texas. Major Nidal Malik Hasan (13 killed, 29 wounded)
 - July 22nd 2011, Anders Breivik, Utoya Island, Norway (69 killed)
- **“Swarming”** – Gives local superiority to the attackers. Even more effective where response is limited and/or slow **BUT**, potential problem:
 - May 8th 1987 IRA, Loughgall RUC Station, 8 IRA killed by the SAS in a prepared ambush

You Cannot Keep a Good Idea Down

- **Terrorist planning can be long term and evolve**
 - WTC 1993 + Op Bojinka 1995 = 9/11 in 2001
- **From Mumbai, India (2008) to Afghanistan (2011)**
 - Compare Mumbai with **Kabul, Marriot Hotel** building site on 13.9.11,
 - Swarming, sacrifice attack, IED booby-traps inside, VBIED outside, pre-attack support and facilitation, highly effective publicity
- **Selectivity (Most appropriate and most achievable)**
 - Multiple killing options during an attack are already here
 - **Norway 2011** - plant a VBIED, move and open fire elsewhere (Anders Breivik – Norway)
 - **Sweden** - plant a VBIED, carry an IED and wear a suicide vest IED (Taimour Abdulwahab al-Abdaly – Sweden)

What counter measures are required?

(Part 1)

- Timely and accurate prior intelligence
- The ability to turn intelligence into pre-emptive action
- Response capability – the right personnel, tactics and equipment and the means to get them where they are needed when they are needed
- Response capacity – *enough* of the right personnel tactics and equipment
- Command and control; Police, military, emergency response
- Accurate and timely situational awareness and response
- Resilience, recovery and the return to normality

What counter measures are required?

(Part 2)

- Ability to intercept telecoms in real time, interpret, analyse and disseminate to where needed
- Control attackers access to live media reporting
- Ability to quickly assess and discount/rebut disinformation activity