



*Summary:*  
**Mumbai Terrorist Attack**  
**November 26, 2008**



Overseas Security Advisory Council

# Overview

- **11/26/08, 9:15pm (local)** – A series of terrorist attacks occurred in Mumbai, India. Up to ten locations were targeted including: hotels, train station, police headquarters, restaurant, hospital, and cinema.
  - Small arms, grenades and explosives used in attacks
  - Reports of IED blasts in hotels and taxi
- Approximately 25-30 attackers; seven attackers killed, nine captured, some still holed up at a hotel.
- Major hostage taking operations in at least three locations: Oberoi Hotel, Taj Hotel and Chabad House.
  - Demands made, number of hostages executed
- Current casualty estimate: 151 dead, 327 injured.
  - 5 Americans among dead, undisclosed number of other foreigners also killed.
  - 17 members of security forces killed, including head of city CT squad.
- Previously unknown group Deccan Mujahideen claimed responsibility in email.



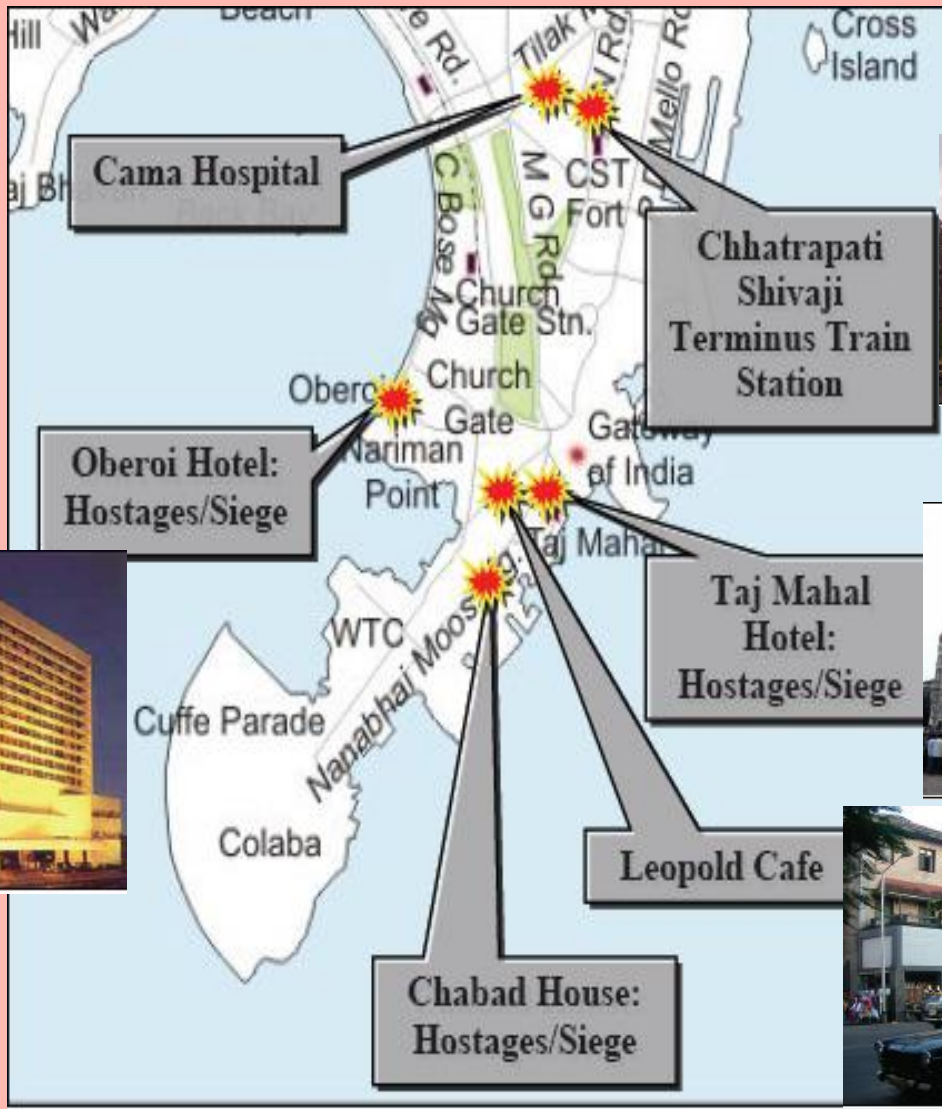
# Details of Attack

- South Mumbai, where most attacks took place, is considered most secure part of city, a very upscale area with major hotels; commercial/financial locations.
- Police station and hospital were initially attacked, disrupting police and emergency services.
  - Police vehicle hijacked, attackers drove around firing randomly.
- Major hostage-taking operations in at least three locations: Oberoi Hotel, Taj Hotel and Chabad House.
  - Blasts at hotels indicate use of IEDs and/or grenades.
  - Attackers singled out foreigners; asked for passports.
- Boat possibly found with explosives; vessels may have been used to insert terrorists and transport equipment.
- Reports that attackers stayed in local hotel rooms for a period of months and conducted extensive reconnaissance.

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# Locations Targeted



# Tactics

## Entering City

- At least one large ship entered Mumbai waters
- Inflatable rafts carried teams to India Gateway and/or Badhwar Park at 9 p.m. local
- 2-, 3-, and 4- man teams split off
- Why amphibious entry?
  - Infamous Mumbai traffic could cause delays
  - Indian train stations heavily monitored
  - Could have possibly come directly from abroad

Badhwar Park



India Gateway (note Taj in background)



# Tactics – Continued

## Tactic 1: Hit and run

- Terrorists quickly attacked with AK-47s, grenades
- Aimed at large groups
- Retreated from security, moved on to other targets
- Used at Cama hospital, CST, and Café Leopold



- Indiscriminate firing and grenade lobbing
  - Main hall of the CST terminal targeted (pictured)
- Terrorist team at CST retreated from security response
  - Continued on to hit Cama Hospital as a “drive-by” as police pursued

# ***Tactics – Continued***

## **Tactic 2: Seize and hold**

- Terrorists gained entry and immediately started indiscriminate firing
- Hostages taken
- Used knowledge of facility layout to advantage
- Established strong-points to defend against security
- Used at Oberoi/Trident, Taj, Nariman House



- Attackers entered lobby and shot indiscriminately
  - AK47's, grenades, reports of presence of RDX
- Rounded up hostages to take to defensible locations
- Some roamed halls, looking for victims
- Room-to-room battles with security forces
- Police: Attackers very familiar with layout

# *Government Response*



- Police blocked all roads and prevented travelers from leaving airports
- Surrounded the Taj Hotel, the Oberoi/Trident, and the Nariman house
- Army brought in to clear the hotels/houses room-by-room, floor-by-floor
- Cautious approach taken due to fear of injuring hostages, many people hiding in rooms.
- Security elevated nationwide, including at tourist sites, transportation hubs, beaches, etc.
- U.S. Government: “Americans should defer travel to Mumbai for at least 48-72 hours”



# Various Scenes of Attack



Inside of train station after attack



Security forces on roof of Chabad House



Two of the attackers



Police inspect site of vehicle blast



People seeking cover from shots in front of hotel



# *Analysis - Tactics*



- This style of frontal attack and assault combined with hostage taking is not new
  - See Munich Olympics attack 1973
- Soft targeting not new
- Innovative amphibious infiltration
- Substantial knowledge of locations suggests detailed preparation and familiarity



## Implications for New York City

- Terrorists continue to strike at soft targets to inflict mass casualty attacks.
- Operations were well organized and timed, utilizing various small groups of attackers to strike multiple targets.
- Police and Counterterrorism units may have been specifically targeted to impede response of security forces and create additional chaos.
  - Use of police vehicle in drive-by shootings demonstrates threat of emergency vehicles being used in terrorist attacks (RMPs, Ambulances, etc.)
- Indiscriminate fire, targeting of hospital and police station caused further panic and in streets likely delaying first responders.
- Attackers took hostages in hotel siege and gathered information on hotel guests, specifically target Westerners (Americans and British).
  - Though some demands were said to have been made by attackers, it appears many hostages were executed with little time for negotiations.
- Jewish location targeted, indicating continued threat to Jewish/Israeli related locations.

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# NYPD SHIELD



## Implications for New York City

- Use of small boats to transport/infiltrate operatives highlights maritime threat.
- Jihadists continue to attack vital economic centers; current economic downturn worldwide adds incentive to strike at financial hubs.
  - Though not specifically targeted, Mumbai's Stock Exchange shut down, demonstrating collateral effects of these type of attacks.
  - Mumbai is financial/commercial and entertainment capital of country; the New York and Hollywood of India.
  - South Mumbai is similar to Manhattan, a heavily developed urban area almost entirely surrounded by water.
- Attack combines various targets of jihadist interest: Westerners, Jews/Israelis, Indians/Hindus, tourist industry, financial center, etc.
- It demonstrates the ability of low tech attacks (small arms and grenades) to inflict mass casualties and engage security services over a number of days.
- Leading suspect in attack, Lashkar-e-Tayyiba (LeT), has been tied to various cases in the US, UK, Australia and other Western countries.

## *Up-date: Feb, 2011*

- al Kasab, the only attacker who was captured alive, disclosed that the attackers were members of Lashkar-e-Taiba, the Pakistan-based militant organization, considered a terrorist organization by India, Pakistan, the United States, the United Kingdom, and the United Nations, among others. The Indian government said that the attackers came from Pakistan, and their controllers were in Pakistan. On 7 January 2009, Pakistan's Information Minister Sherry Rehman officially accepted Ajmal Kasab's nationality as Pakistani. On 12 February 2009, Pakistan's Interior Minister Rehman Malik asserted that parts of the attack had been planned in Pakistan. A trial court on 6 May 2010 sentenced Ajmal Kasab to death on five counts.