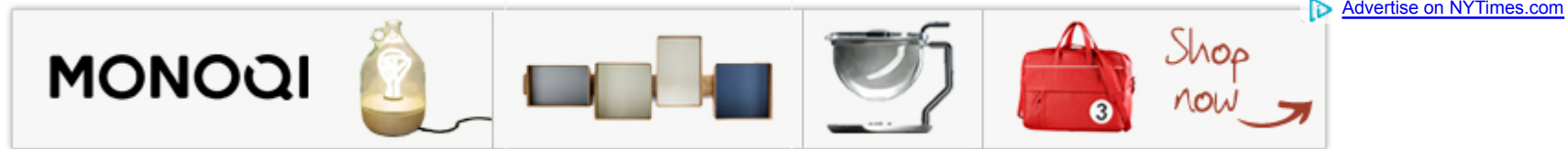


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The Lede

Bloggng the News With Robert Mackey



November 27, 2008, 11:38 pm

Eyewitness Updates: Nariman House

By [KEITH BRADSHER](#)

Keith Bradsher, a Times correspondent, sent The Lede updates from his BlackBerry as he watched a commando operation taking place at the Nariman House, home to the Orthodox Jewish group Chabad Lubavitch, and around Mumbai. The time stamps are London time (GMT). Mumbai is five and a half hours ahead of his timestamps. The most recent posts are at the top of this post.

Date: Fri, 28 Nov 2008 12:55

After watching events all day at Nariman House and giving regular updates on the seige there, Keith Bradsher is now moving on across the city. He has gone first to the military compound, seeking any new information on the status of the assaults on the hotels and Nariman House. There is still great uncertainty about who was responsible for the attacks and why it has taken so long for the Indian Army to overcome the attackers. But he sends this:

The military has just refused to let me into their compound at all and has no comment here.

After covering the events for several hours, Keith is signing off for now but will give us an audio update later.

Date: Fri, 28 Nov 2008 12:42

The most powerful explosion so far shook Nariman House, prompting a small stampede in the streets by gawkers who suddenly sought to distance themselves from the building.

Date: Fri, 28 Nov 2008 12:00

The Indians are sending a fresh set of commandos in black uniforms and heavy body armor into the buildings around Nariman House and withdrawing commandos in blue or black uniforms who have been in action all day.

For the first time today, a van with six medics in surgical gowns and masks has just driven up close to Nariman House in a possible sign of casualties.

Three heavy blasts have just been heard in as many minutes.

Date: Fri, 28 Nov 2008 11:42

At least eight shots have been fired by what sound like assault rifles at Nariman House as the attackers seem to continue to repulse the Indian army's best efforts to defeat them.

Date: Fri, 28 Nov 2008 11:38

Another heavy explosion has shaken Nariman House.

Date: Fri, 28 Nov 2008 11:30

Two more heavy blasts have echoed from Nariman House, with no accompanying sounds of gunfire.

Date: Fri, 28 Nov 2008 11:26

Another heavy blast has just erupted at Nariman House.

Date: Fri, 28 Nov 2008 11:22

The police are now trying to push the crowds back another block around Nariman House.

Date: Fri, 28 Nov 2008 11:18

A heavy blast at Nariman House has just startled a large flock of pigeons into the air. It was followed by a trio of smaller, almost simultaneous blasts, like three grenades. After a pause of a brief moment, another heavy blast sounded, then heavy gunfire for a few seconds, then a heavy blast followed by a lighter blast. Sporadic shooting continues.

Date: Fri, 28 Nov 2008 11:11

Two fairly powerful explosions have just shaken Nariman House. The military is still providing no information on their siege of the building.

Date: Fri, 28 Nov 2008 11:10

The Indian army has not tried to clear residents from more than a radius of a block or two around combat sites. That radius might be adequate to protect spectators from grenade blasts, but it won't save them from bullets fired by high-powered rifles, which can be deadly over distance of a couple miles.

The roads, rooftops and balconies around Nariman House are now crowded with over a thousand local gawkers. It is not clear if any have been injured.

During my time today near Nariman House, I have mostly been about 75 yards away on the roof of an apartment building of similar height to Nariman House. This rooftop has an 8-inch-thick, 10-foot-tall concrete wall on the side toward Nariman House, to protect against burglars climbing over from the next building. The building's freshwater tanks, made of black plastic and about six feet high and five feet wide and fairly full of water, are just inside the wall, together forming a sturdy barrier against stray bullets. It is easy to look around the edge of the wall at Nariman House and then draw back to thumb-type on my BlackBerry.

But most here have no such protection.

Date: Fri, 28 Nov 2008 10:45

A flurry of shots has just sounded from inside Nariman House, to which I have just returned. A team of Israelis who specialize in searching and securing sites after terrorist attacks just arrived here from Israel and said that they had been told that they might be allowed to go into the building soon. There has still been no official word on the fate of the rabbi and his wife who were living at Nariman House at the time of the assault.

Date: Fri, 28 Nov 2008 10:33

The large red sign over the double-width entrance to the Leopold Café, a popular tourist spot, still boasts that the restaurant had been in business "since 1871." But the steel shutters were pulled down over the entrance on Friday afternoon, sealing the site of one of the first deadly assaults on Wednesday night. The attackers stood at the entrance and raked the diners with heavy fire from assault rifles.

The power of the rounds is still visible from three that missed the diners. They struck the thick concrete pillars on either side of the entrance and penetrated more than an inch deep, leaving red stains.

Through a gap at the top of the shutters, the darkened restaurant can still be seen. Half-eaten meals still sit on tables and napkins lie on tables and chairs, as though the diners had disappeared suddenly into thin air instead of falling before a hail of bullets.

No sign of the fallen remains visible, and no official tally of casualties from this attack has been released.

Date: Fri, 28 Nov 2008 10:06

The loud thud of an explosion just echoed out of the Taj, followed by what sounded like two gun shots.

Date: Fri, 28 Nov 2008 09:35

The neighborhood around the stock exchange, usually bustling but only a few blocks from the Taj, was uncommonly quiet on Friday. So few cars were circulating that people walked in the streets even more than usual.

The area's many restaurants are shuttered with the exception of the Fountain, located several blocks beyond the stock market. With an alert guard at the door, the restaurant's half dozen waiters served lunch to even fewer customers. The chicken supreme includes a roasted chicken breast smothered in a creamy mushroom sauce, garlic bread, french fries that were clearly frozen a few minutes before and a few green beans, carrots and a couple pieces of cauliflower, steamed until completely limp. But the plate of food cost just \$6 — still more than most Mumbai residents can afford.

Date: Fri, 28 Nov 2008 09:15

Friday's fighting brought several square miles of downtown Mumbai to a standstill. Block after block of stores, restaurants, banks and other businesses were closed, steel shutters rolled down tightly over their windows. Small crowds of local residents moved through the streets and clustered curiously around the many military, police and fire vehicles in the streets.

Date: Fri, 28 Nov 2008 08:24

Two more large gray helicopters have come and gone from near Nariman House, but it is unclear if they are bringing in or taking out people or materials or even removing any wounded. One commando on the roof of Nariman House was limping earlier, his left leg apparently injured. Commandos continue to move around the roof of Nariman House and adjacent buildings.

Date: Fri, 28 Nov 2008 08:15

Still a lot of helicopters in area here, so we might see more activity. I think I will stay in the area.

Date: Fri, 28 Nov 2008 07:57

Further large thuds have come from the direction of the Taj hotel, arguably India's most famous hotel for a century as the home in Mumbai of majorajahs and government leaders alike. Puffs of smoke keep rising from the hotel. Here at Nariman House, yet another large gray helicopter has come and gone, and there was a single shot a few minutes ago, possibly from a handgun. There are also reports from local media of fresh fighting in the last hour at the city's train station.

Date: Fri, 28 Nov 2008 07:47

The military appears to be using an area about two blocks south of Nariman House as a staging area, with a large green helicopter taking off a couple minutes ago, and then a large gray helicopter landing and taking off a minute later.

Date: Fri, 28 Nov 2008 07:40

A tall gray cloud of smoke has started rising steadily the southwest, seaward corner of the Taj hotel about 10 blocks from Nariman House. The smoke was preceded by a couple of distant thuds that might have been explosions.

Date: Fri, 28 Nov 2008 06:53

Dozens of heavy-sounding shots have resounded through the neighborhood as smoke begins to leak from the windows of Nariman House after the recent blasts.

Date: Fri, 28 Nov 2008 06:48

Over the past few minutes the gunfire has become much heavier, at times a steady ripple of shots punctuated by a several of the loudest blasts so far in the gun battle.

Date: Fri, 28 Nov 2008 06:02

The walls and windows of the alleys here have just reverberated with the thudding sound of four shots of what may have been assault rifles.

Date: Fri, 28 Nov 2008 05:55

I am still down the block from Nariman House, where another half dozen shots have just been fired from what sounds like handguns. The police are still keeping people away from the building.

Date: Fri, 28 Nov 2008 05:32

There has been no further shooting for an hour, but the police show no signs of releasing their cordon nor are any ambulances leaving. I am heading to the Taj.

Date: Fri, 28 Nov 2008 05:16:27

There has now been no shooting for more than half an hour. The street below my rooftop has six school-bus-sized buses parked where none were before. All appear to have carried more commandos to the fight. Only one bus is still full of commandos, apparently held in reserve, while the rest are nearly empty.

Date: Fri, 28 Nov 2008 04:56:03

After 15 minutes of silence, five commandos in black with heavy-duty body armor have approached the building. Four are carrying assault rifles, and the fifth, possibly their officer, has a radio in his right hand.

Date: Fri, 28 Nov 2008 04:39:03

Another large puff of gray smoke is visible from the top of the Taj hotel but is already starting to dissipate.

Date: Fri, 28 Nov 2008 04:37

At least four dozen shots have been fired, a mixture of handguns and assault rifles and what sounded like at least one grenade.

Date: Fri, 28 Nov 2008 04:35:05

A senior military commander with a chestful of medals and service ribbons has just strode down the street with a dozen soldiers past my building and toward Nariman House in a possible sign that the fighting may have come to a close. No further shots have been audible since my last note. Soldiers and police in olive fatigues continue to cordon off the block where Nariman House is located.

Date: Fri, 28 Nov 2008 04:24:

Several more light-caliber rounds have just been fired in or near Nariman House. The gun battle has now lasted well over an hour. The usual rule in hostage situations is for security forces to try to overwhelm the hostage takers in considerably less than a minute, before the hostages can be harmed. There has been no sign of ambulances leaving the scene yet and no word on the fate of anyone in the building.

Date: Fri, 28 Nov 2008 04:16:14

Light-caliber weapons, perhaps handguns, have just fired about three dozen shots, starting with a dozen followed by a pause of nearly half a minute and then two dozen more.

Date: Fri, 28 Nov 2008 04:10:31

From my rooftop about 75 meters from Nariman House and 10 blocks from the posh Taj hotel, I just saw another puff of gray smoke billow from the Taj, but no combat was audible from here. The puff of smoke, larger than would typically be associated with small-arms fire but not as large as a sustained fire, is now dissipating.

Date: Fri, 28 Nov 2008 04:04:31

Another eight shots have just been fired, mostly from what sound like assault rifles, and all fired individually.

Date: Fri, 28 Nov 2008 03:53:42

Dense clouds of black smoke have began rising from the top of the Taj again for about two minutes, about 10 blocks northeast of here. The smoke then stopped suddenly. No shots have been audible from here.

Date: Fri, 28 Nov 2008 03:47:57

Another two dozen shots have just been fired along with two heavier booms that may have been grenades.

Date: Fri, 28 Nov 2008 03:42:11

We have had a two-minute lull with no shooting. The marksmen are still on the rooftop across the alley from Nariman House, but all of the commandos on the roof have gone into the building.

Date: Fri, 28 Nov 2008 03:32:15

At least five commandos are on the rooftop balcony of Nariman House, trying to look over the row of small red flowerpots at the side of the building. The police marksmen atop an aging, yellow building across the street are also trying to look down. The walls of the Nariman House were once white but are now stained light gray by years of smog.

Date: Fri, 28 Nov 2008 03:24:08

About two dozen further shots. The police marksmen on the roof across the street from Nariman House are not firing but continue to look at the lower floors of Nariman House where the fighting continues.

Date: Fri, 28 Nov 2008 03:22:05

Yet another dozen shots, all from assault rifles, mostly pairs of shots apparently squeezed off individually instead of with automatic fire.

Date: Fri, 28 Nov 2008 03:20:25

Another dozen shots, most of which sound like assault rifles but a couple sound like heavier weapons.

Date: Fri, 28 Nov 2008 03:19:16

A half dozen further shots can be heard after a quiet of two minutes, followed by less than a minute of silence and then more than a dozen shots fired individually. All of these shots sound as though they have been fired by assault rifles.

Date: Fri, 28 Nov 2008 03:09:47

Several dozen more shots in and around the building, including several bursts of automatic weapons fire. Police on top of adjacent rooftop are not firing, making it likely that the shooting is indoors.

Date: Fri, 28 Nov 2008 03:07:45

Six shots fired.

Date: Fri, 28 Nov 2008 02:58:48

I am on top of an apartment building facing Chabad house over two rooftops. A half dozen police marksmen in blue uniforms and helmets with their face shields down are watching the lower floors carefully, a couple of them with rifles at their shoulders. A small helicopter in military colors is flying tight circles overhead, apparently for observation, as it has no visible guns. There was scattered shooting audible to the crowd a few minutes ago but now Chabad house is silent.

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1. 1. November 28, 2008 12:38 am [Link](#)

Keith, please don't leave the scene. Over 3000 Rabbis are waiting to read your updates (Chabad Lubavitch is a huge international organization).

— *Zvi*

2. 2. November 28, 2008 12:42 am [Link](#)

this kind of reporting, is really interesting in the “what if?” sense.

— *bruno babashay*

3. 3. November 28, 2008 12:43 am [Link](#)

please convey the message to Keith not to leave the Chabad house location and keep updating as much as possible... thousands of ppl are following his updates closeley

— *le*

4. 4. November 28, 2008 12:44 am [Link](#)

I know the family and friends of the couple still unaccounted for in the Nariman house and I am worried sick. I cannot sleep.

I please hope for some news or something soon. This is awful.

— *slc*

5. 5. November 28, 2008 1:07 am [Link](#)

Thank you for your courageous reporting.

— *A.S.N.*

6. 6. November 28, 2008 1:09 am [Link](#)

I wish you'd stop with the updates! Reporting on the commandos and publishing pictures will only make it harder for the Indian Army to do its job! You're just sending information to the terrorists.

— *josie*

7. 7. November 28, 2008 1:34 am [Link](#)

The militants penetration to the sites of attack shows the failure of india's intelligence department and the recent militancy itself should be viewed with greatest concern by the international society. apart from other attacks, the recent attack has proved that terrorism in the region has changed seriously , as of now it is dangerously open against civilians.

— *sandeep*

8. 8. November 28, 2008 1:48 am [Link](#)

Usually, bursts are fired in threes. This probably means that those four thuds were the aftereffect of sniper rifles being fired.

— *balabanto*

9. 9. November 28, 2008 2:28 am [Link](#)

Please keep the updates coming...we are following closely from Ukraine, where it is hard to find solid updates. I'm very concerned about the welfare of Rabbi Holtzberg and his wife—he was a wonderful host to my friend and I when we backpacked through India a few years ago. Let's all pray for the safety of all the hostages.

— *Sol*

10. 10. November 28, 2008 2:46 am [Link](#)

Keith what is going on now at the Chabad Jewish center?

— *le*

11. 11. November 28, 2008 2:58 am [Link](#)

To simplify the time calculations:

Subtract 5 hours from GMT to get the time of the post as EST.

Add 5.5 hours to GMT to get local Mumbai time

— *C. Reaves*

12. 12. November 28, 2008 3:21 am [Link](#)

thank you so much for these updates. stay safe.

hopefully this will end soon, with a miracle.

— *Dian*

13. 13. November 28, 2008 3:35 am [Link](#)

Can we ask WHY such details are being published at a time of ongoing “security actions?” Placing the rescue forces as being “about two blocks south of Nariman House as a staging area” is an invitation for these “terrorists” to attack and counterattack. While it's interesting to have “live reporting” I'd caution the reporter to not “aid and abet” the “enemy” whilst the sweep is in progress.

One of my largest regrets in the past few decades as a former journalist is this need for “instant news” as practiced by cable, blogs and other outlets. Responsible journalists shouldn’t be required to provide “breaking news” which could jeopardize an operation in progress. There’s plenty of time to properly write up a story when it’s over, or at least not provide “sensitive details” while the story is in progress. :(

– *Kevin*

14. 14. November 28, 2008 4:35 am [Link](#)

Re: 7:57 report, I have been following Twitter stream and locals say reports of new central train station fighting have been debunked/retracted. People are skittish and rumors spreading fast.

– *gregflynn*

15. 15. November 28, 2008 5:45 am [Link](#)

what is wrong with you, NY Times? why are you broadcasting live what the commandos are doing? don’t you think the terrorist are monitoring your feed and getting invaluable information as to what is happening outside. if the surprise does not go as planned, you will have blood on your hands.

utterly horrible judgement on your part

– *greg tribbe*

16. 16. November 28, 2008 5:53 am [Link](#)

Um, is it really such a good idea to be posting this data in real time? How do you know it won’t be used by the attackers?

– *Alex*

17. 17. November 28, 2008 6:27 am [Link](#)

I would like to thank Keith Bradsheron his reports. Those of us sitting here at a certain health care facility in Jerusalem who have a long and intimate relationship with the Rabbi and his wife in the Nariman House and the grandparents who this morning reached Moishe Holtzberg, are glued to the NY Times website waiting for your reports. The impact of these events on us here in israel at our center is profound. Thank you for giving whatever updates you are able.

– *Akiva*

18. 18. November 28, 2008 6:57 am [Link](#)

Mumbai is a city with a population in excess of 12 million (approx.) people. The areas around Nariman House are thickly populated with several

old structures some of them dating back to nearly 100 years...!!

Evacuating all the residents from this area would pose a herculean job for the police and the civic authorities.

Even though the risks and the dangers of having this population around are very obvious, the civic authorities feel that the time and the effort involved in organising such a mass evacuation , could be better directed towards finding a speedy resolution to the crisis.

– *Jacob*

19. 19. November 28, 2008 7:08 am [Link](#)

prayers- on the wind- for all who suffer
special prayers for those caught in the crossfire, while holy wars rage in the name of peace-

– *phyllis fischer*

20. 20. November 28, 2008 7:22 am [Link](#)

Great reporting (blackberrying) Keith. But please take care of yourself though I know from your reports that you are in a “safe” place. Suprised to learn, watch that Indian spectators are not beyond the bullet range. A couple of kilometers around the epicenter should be closed to general public until the last militant is flushed out and all the hostages are evacuated. Down with terrorism. Best wishes from Stockholm

– *Samir Saha*

21. 21. November 28, 2008 7:32 am [Link](#)

with all due respect, why the heck are you posting london time messages. he is in india after all! come on, i expect more from you....very frustrating to have to keep subtracting five hours.

– *johnny*

22. 22. November 28, 2008 7:34 am [Link](#)

I hope, wish and pray that your reporter Mr Bradsher is fine.

– *Ninja*

23. 23. November 28, 2008 8:03 am [Link](#)

Its finally over.

– *Berges*

24. 24. November 28, 2008 8:05 am [Link](#)

So, when does the american media plan to start using the term ‘terrorist’ to refer to these ‘gunmen/assailants/attackers’? Are you waiting for the count of american casualties?

– *TD*

25. 25. November 28, 2008 8:17 am [Link](#)

what is going on there now? survivors? Casualties? what is the latest at Chabad?

– *Barry*

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