

or emergency center. As the attackers fled from the CST, they ran across a pedestrian bridge that exits directly in front of the hospital. Seizing this opportunity, they opened fire, but few casualties resulted.

Another attack site, the Chabad (formerly Nariman) House, was specially selected as a target due to the intense hatred of all things Jewish or Israeli by the Lashkar-e-Taiba, which is ideologically aligned with Osama bin Laden and al Qaeda.

There were other nontargeted locations of violence during this particular series of terrorist attacks. The attackers fired randomly as they fled from location to location, from the CST and from the Leopold Café to the Taj Mahal. More importantly, at least two of the attack teams left backpacks containing improvised explosive devices (IEDs) in taxis as they disembarked at their particular attack site. As the taxis drove off, the IEDs, set to detonate by mechanical timers, exploded at different parts of the city. An unprecedented 1,365 calls were received to the Mumbai Central Police Operations between 9:30 p.m. and 2:00 a.m.⁴ The wide dispersion of the violence caused by the taxi explosions, six separate targets, and the carnage caused by the moving gunmen caused police officials to believe that the city was under attack by a much larger terrorist group. In fact, it was just 10 young men with a bold plan.

Figure 1. Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus railway station



Figure 2. Cama Hospital

Lessons Learned

- The tourism destinations and the hospitality industry continue to be attractive and vulnerable targets to terrorists.
- Venues with a high human density are especially attractive targets, as they allow terrorists to be economical and efficient by maximizing the number of casualties with a limited amount of ammunition.
- Easily available, light weaponry can cause more casualties than explosives that are difficult to obtain or manufacture for the right target under the right circumstances.
- Choosing landmark and iconic targets will guarantee media coverage—an objective of all terrorist groups. As terrorism and transportation security expert Brian Michael Jenkins has frequently remarked, "Terrorists want a lot of people watching, not a lot of people dead."⁵

Preoperational Terrorist Activities

Prior to 9/11, the U.S. state and local law enforcement had little understanding of what activities terrorists engaged in while planning a terrorist attack. Law enforcement professionals knew a lot about how burglars, thieves, and robbers "cased" a location and how violent predators identified and selected their victims. But their only understanding of how terrorists operated came from Hollywood. In the years following 9/11, state and local law enforcement has learned a lot about terrorism—the information gained from interrogations and other documentary evidence passed from the intelligence community to the cops on the street. The very comprehensive investigation conducted by the Indian law enforcement authorities assisted by the FBI provides some important facts relevant to state and local law enforcement.

The attackers had never been to Mumbai, yet they were able to confidently move about on foot and by stolen car as if they knew the area well. This is possible, but only with significant preoperational planning. The FBI investigation and prosecution revealed that David Headley, a U.S. citizen, engaged in extensive surveillance of the potential targets in Mumbai.⁶

The Chabad (formerly Nariman) house is so obscure that Mumbai cab drivers have difficulty finding the place. Yet the foreign terrorists found their way from the seaside landing area to the Chabad house on foot. Because of the compactness of the area and the poor signage that is indistinguishable in the dark, the route planning may have been accomplished by counting paces as Headley or one of his associates walked the route (see figure 3).

The need for extensive preoperational planning by terrorists provides state and local law enforcement with a rare opportunity to detect them each time they engage in surveillance or reconnaissance. This way, they are exposed to observation and detection by observant citizens or police officers on the beat. If this information is reported to those who can analyze patterns of suspicious behavior, prevention and interdiction activities can result.

Lessons Learned

- State and local law enforcement can learn much from the U.S. intelligence community as it relates to the modus operandi and preoperational activities of terrorists, just as we have by studying traditional criminal activities for decades.
- Unlike traditional criminals, the terrorists engaging in the preoperational surveillance and reconnaissance will probably not be the ones who actually conduct the attack.
- In the twenty-first century, Internet video streaming and live camera feeds eliminate the need to have operatives on-site to conduct surveillance and reconnaissance. Faisal Shahzad, the Pakistani American who attempted the May 1, 2010, Times Square car bombing in New York City, claimed to have conducted surveillance of Times Square over the Internet from his home in Connecticut. Areas in any jurisdiction could be exposed to viewers, including would-be terrorists via the Internet.



Figure 3. Chabad house

Taking Hostages

If a goal of all terrorists groups is to gain worldwide attention to their efforts—after all "terrorism is theatre"⁷—the surest way to accomplish this is to take hostages. If one is an Islamic terrorist, the hostages are generally either Israeli or Jewish. If these terrorists want to guarantee 24-hour media coverage, they take children as their hostages. The Mumbai attackers took Jewish children as hostages with their parents and demanded to speak with the media in exchange for the release of the hostages. By doing so, they achieved exactly what every terrorist wants: nonstop global news coverage.

In the post-Columbine United States, once an active shooter makes contact with authorities and begins the negotiation process, nearly all American law enforcement agencies will cease the active shooter tactical engagement and fall back to the contain and negotiate strategy. In Mumbai, this served to further delay the government's counterattack, while allowing the terrorists to continue with their media strategy. Taking foreign citizens as hostages adds to the complexity and the delicacy of the situation by involving diplomats and other foreign services. Negotiating with terrorists is particularly troublesome. The cornerstone of successful hostage negotiation is the compelling desire on the part of the hostage taker to live. If the hostage taker is committed to dying rather than surrendering alive, the negotiator is distinctly disadvantaged.

A corollary benefit to the terrorists of the nonstop news media coverage is the use of the media as intelligence sources. In the 2008 Mumbai attacks, the terrorists inside of the Chabad house were receiving information from their handlers in real time as they watched television coverage of Indian commandos rappelling onto the roof, allowing them to prepare for the counterassault.

Lessons Learned

- Taking hostages allowed the Mumbai attackers to delay the police counterattack while fortifying their position in the Chabad house.
- Taking hostages provided the motivation for media outlets to show continuous coverage of the event, helping to achieve the greatest audience while simultaneously offering the terrorists a rich source of intelligence.
- State and local law enforcement leaders will be faced with relentless pressure from the worldwide news media, coupled with the difficulties of negotiating with hostage takers committed to dying.

Fire as a Weapon, High Ground for Tactical Advantage

The most provocative and enduring image of the Mumbai attacks is one of smoke and flames pouring out of the historic and iconic Taj Mahal hotel with the Gate of India in the foreground. These striking images, as well as the video footage, were used by the press to fuel the nonstop media coverage of the event. Knowing that persons were trapped inside of the burning building while public safety stood helplessly outside amplified the tragedy and contributed to the perception that the Indian government was failing to protect those inside. Since one of the strategic goals of all terrorists is to garner as large an audience as possible, law enforcement should assume that terrorists will continue to employ the use of fire as a means of achieving this strategic goal.

The Taj is a dominating structure: 11 stories tall with 570 rooms. The interior of the original section is architecturally open and the room doors lead to walkways around an enclosed inner courtyard. The center dome contains a floating circular staircase. For the attackers, this layout allowed them to retreat upwards from security forces that were moving to engage them and easily fire automatic weapons and throw grenades down upon them.

Each time the security forces were able to gain ground, the attackers merely retreated up, setting fires in their wake. This tactic created distance and separation from the pursuing security forces. American firefighters and emergency medical personnel are not equipped or trained to fight fires in combat conditions. The Mumbai Fire Brigade did the best they could from the exterior, but, ultimately, lives were lost as the result. Since as many lives were lost due to fire and fire-related injuries in the Taj Mahal hotel as from firearms (the manager of the Taj Mahal lost his entire family due to fire and smoke inhalation), the terrorists could possibly conclude that fire is an effective and efficient weapon.

Lessons Learned

- Fire is an efficient, easily portable, and cost-effective weapon for causing multiple casualties.
- Most fire and emergency medical services are ill prepared to fight fires and deliver medical aid in active combat environments, providing a strategic and tactical advantage to terrorists.
- Cross-training and properly equipping local police, fire, and emergency medical personnel is the only way to neutralize this advantage.

More Questions than Answers

The intent of the LAPD/LVMPD contingent was not to reexamine the attack on Mumbai from an investigative/prosecutorial viewpoint or an intelligence collection perspective, fully recognizing the primary role of the FBI and the U.S. intelligence community in this regard. The objective was to look at the event from a uniquely local perspective and ask questions of their Indian counterparts as these American officers seek to better prepare U.S. communities for the possibility of a similar type of attack. Members of the contingent asked questions that a state or local cop would. They talked to firefighters before they left so they could ask questions that were relevant to firefighters. They spoke to representatives of the private sector, particularly the hospitality industry: the one sector most frequently targeted by terrorists. As they sought to find answers, what they found were more questions. To effectively learn from the lessons of Mumbai, police leaders must ask themselves these questions:

- How effectively can your agency's personnel observe, record, collect, process, interpret, and share suspicious preoperational terrorist activity?
- How efficiently could your communications (9-1-1) center process the volume of phone calls, and what is the realistic communication and interaction between police, fire, and emergency medical services (EMS) under these circumstances?
- How does your communications center relay real-time tactical information to your intelligence/fusion center?
- How will your intelligence/fusion center relay actionable intelligence to the field commanders from police, fire, and EMS?
- What response capability do you have from a regional perspective? Does your current response protocol involve only SWAT/tactical teams? Does your multiagency response protocol involve multiple venues in a coordinated attack?
- How will the fire and emergency medical services react when facing an armed threat as well as active fires and wounded victims?

In the years following 1999, law enforcement leaders were forced to reevaluate the prevailing doctrine of "contain and call SWAT." Subsequent to the tragedy at Columbine High School,⁸ police have responded to several similar "active shooter" events and applied the new doctrine of immediate engagement and neutralization of the attacker.

Presently, public safety leaders are challenged with a new, more complex dynamic. The typical active shooter is a lone offender or part of a small group, poorly trained and poorly disciplined. The enemy that state and local law enforcement must prepare for now is militarily trained, highly disciplined, and unyieldingly determined. While communities seek to remediate weaknesses, terrorists are plotting to replicate their successes. As terrorists seek to assemble small teams of well-armed attackers and prepare to conduct coordinated attacks against communities, law enforcement officers must ask themselves: Are they prepared to transition from crime fighters to war fighters?⁹

Notes:

¹ "Mumbai Bombers 'Will Never Win,'" *BBC News*, July 12, 2006.

² Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority, <http://www.mmrdmumbai.org> (accessed December 27, 2010).

³ For more information about the Mumbai terrorist attacks in 2008, see "Wave of Terror Attacks Strikes India's Mumbai, Killing at Least 82," *FoxNews.com*, Wednesday, November 26, 2008, <http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,457885,00.html> (accessed December 20, 2010).

⁴ V. Balachandran, "Dealing with the Aftermath of Attacks" (paper presented at the Pluscarden Programme Conference on "The Future of International Cooperation in Countering Violent Extremism" at Oxford University in October 2010), n. 10, reprinted in *The Sunday Guardian*, December 16, 2010, <http://sunday-guardian.com/a/1368> (accessed December 20, 2010).

⁵ Gavin Cameron, "Nuclear Terrorism: Weapons for Sale or Theft?" *eJournal USA* (March 2005), <http://www.america.gov/st/peacesec-english/2005/March/20080815122156XJyrePO.8970606.html> (accessed December 20, 2010).

⁶ Carrie Johnson, "U.S. Citizen David Coleman Headley Admits Role in Mumbai Attacks," *Washington Post*, March 19, 2010, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/03/18/AR2010031805407.html> (accessed December 20, 2010).

⁷ Brian Michael Jenkins, "International Terrorism: A New Mode of Conflict," in *International Terrorism and World Security*, ed. David Carlton and Carlo Schaerf (London: Croom Helm, 1975), 16.

⁸ For more information about the shootings at Columbine High School, see Tom Kenworthy and Joel Achenbach, "Terror and Tears: Inside Columbine High," *Washington Post*, April 21, 1999, A1, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/national/daily/april99/scene21.htm> (accessed December 20, 2010).



Photographs by members of the Las Vegas, Nevada, Police Department and the Los Angeles, California, Police Department

Please cite as:

Tom Monahan and Mark Stainbrook, "Learning from the Lessons of the 2008 Mumbai Terrorist Attacks," *The Police Chief* 78 (February 2011): 24–32.

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From *The Police Chief*, vol. LXXVIII, no. 2, February 2011. Copyright held by the International Association of Chiefs of Police, 515 North Washington Street, Alexandria, VA 22314 USA.



The official publication of the International Association of Chiefs of Police.
The online version of the *Police Chief Magazine* is possible through a grant from the IACP Foundation. To learn more about the IACP Foundation, [click here](#).
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