

## **`If Pakistan can't try 26/11 culprits, turn them over to ICC`**

Washington: Disappointed over Pakistan's slow pace of trial in Mumbai (/tags/mumbai.html) terror attack case, a top US lawmaker has demanded that the seven suspects, including LeT operational commander Zakiur Rehman Lakhvi, be handed over to the International Criminal Court (/tags/international-criminal-court.html) to bring them to justice.

"There are seven individuals that need to be brought to justice (for their role in the 26/11 attack case)," said Congressman Ed Royce, the chairman of the powerful House Foreign Relations Committee.

"If Pakistan cannot try them, turn them over to international criminal court for crimes against humanity, for what they did in their collusion, in their culpability for what happened," he said yesterday.

The seven Pakistani suspects have been charged with planning, financing and executing the attacks that killed 166 people in Mumbai in November 2008. A Rawalpindi-based anti-terrorism court had been handling the case since 2009 though the judge has been changed five times.

Addressing a select group of Indian-Americans at a Congressional reception at the Capitol Hill organised by the American India Public Affairs Committee, Royce said both India and the United States are facing challenges from terrorism.

Royce said some USD 100 million has been traced going from the Gulf States to Pakistan's 600 Deobandi schools; which, according to him, are factories of radicalism.

"Ethnic cleansing is going on in Pakistan today those who are speaking against it," he said, alleging that the population of Hindus in Pakistan has now dropped to 1.5 percent, against 25 percent at the time of independence.

Jagdish Sewhani, the president of the American India Public Affairs Committee, said that the issue of pulling out USA and its allied forces from Afghanistan by the end of 2013 has created a sort of anxiety in the region.

"There is a fear in the region that Taliban, supported by radicalized Pakistani army may make a forceful bid to take over Afghanistan and establish Sharia. This could trigger tension in the region," he said.

Royce said there are rouge elements in the ISI, who would use the opportunity of any instability in Afghanistan to go back to the Taliban era.

Indian-American Congressman Ami Bera reiterated his commitment to strengthen ties between India and

the US.

Congressman Joe Crowley, Co-Chair of the House Congressional Caucus on India and Indian Americans, noted that while the two countries have come a long way in building their relationship, they have miles to go. "This is the most important relationship I believe of this century," he said.

Noting that the Indian-Americans have the highest per capita income in the US, Congressman Joe Wilson said this is a real tribute to the hard work and recognition that free market capitalism is what works and gives people the opportunity.

Grace Meng, first Asian American Congresswoman to be elected from New York, said since Bill Clinton was in the White House, the relationship between India and the US has improved. "There are many areas where the US and India have to work on - energy, environment, terrorism, cyber security, trade and education," she said.

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