

COUNTERTERRORISM BLOG

Counterterrorism Blog Panel:

The 2008 Mumbai Attacks

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PANEL INTRODUCTIONS BY ANDREW COCHRAN

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Andrew Cochran: Good afternoon and welcome to this panel on the Mumbai attacks. I am Andrew Cochran, Co-Chairman of the Counterterrorism Foundation and Founder & Site Editor of the Counterterrorism Blog, and I am the moderator for today's panel. I want to thank Jonathan Obee of the House Financial Services Committee, chaired by Rep. Barney Frank, for enabling our use of this room today. I also want to thank my colleagues at GAGE International, the consulting firm where I make my living representing and assisting clients with homeland security, high-tech, and counterterrorism interests.

Now, the standard disclaimer: None of the presentations here today represent the official views of the organizations represented; they are purely the personal views of the individuals making the presentations. So if you don't like what you hear, blame the speaker, not the group.

Nearly 200 people were killed, including 6 Americans and other foreign nationals, and around 300 wounded in the three-day siege in Mumbai that began on November 26th 2008, with ten gunmen attacking numerous locations in an attack which the terrorists reportedly wanted to be an "Indian 9/11." The terrorists took hundreds of hostages at the hotels and Jewish center, who were eventually freed on November 28th and 29th by Indian Army and police commandos. Here to discuss the attack and its impacts are Dr. Walid Phares, Farhana Ali, and Dr. David Kilcullen.

Walid Phares is Director of the Future of Terrorism Project of the Foundation for the Defense of Democracies, and a Contributing Expert to the Counterterrorism Blog. He is the author of ten books on terrorism and the Middle East. He also serves as a Fox News Channel Middle East Contributor and is a frequent guest on numerous other TV and radio networks around the world. He writes frequently for academic publications and newspapers, has been called upon by the U.S. Congress, the European Parliament and legislatures throughout Europe to testify about these issues.

Farhana Ali worked for the U.S. Government as a CT analyst, then moved to RAND as a policy analyst. She recently returned from Pakistan, India and most importantly, Kashmir (both sides of the border).

She lectures and publishes widely on Muslim world, especially on the growing phenomenon of female Muslim suicide bombers.

We're very pleased that Dr. David Kilcullen could join us today. He is now Senior Non-Resident Fellow at the Center for a New American Security, is also serving part-time as Special Advisor for Counterinsurgency to the U.S. Secretary of State, and starting this month, is a partner at the Crumpton Group, the Washington D.C.-based strategic advisory firm founded by Hank Crumpton after he left State. In 2007 he was senior counter-insurgency advisor to General Petraeus, and was part of the small team that designed the "Surge", then spent several months in the field directing counter-insurgency programs and providing hands-on advice to Iraqi and coalition military, diplomatic, aid and intelligence agencies. In 2005-6 he was chief counterterrorism strategist at the U.S. State Department, working in the Middle East, South Asia, Europe, Africa and Southeast Asia, including operational activities in Afghanistan, Iraq and Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Agencies. He designed and implemented the Regional Strategic Initiative, the policy that drives United States counter-terrorism diplomacy worldwide. He is speaking today in a private capacity as a former (not current) US official, and the relevant part of his background here is his work with the Pakistani government and military in 2005-6 as Chief CT Strategist at State.

He previously served in Australia's Office of National Assessments, worked in the Pentagon where he wrote the counterterrorism strategy for the 2006 Quadrennial Defense Review, and served on the writing team for Australia's 2004 Terrorism White Paper. He is a former Australian infantry officer with 22 years' service. The other details of his bio are posted on The Counterterrorism Blog.

Each will have up to 15 minutes to discuss a particular angle, I will follow with 5 or so minutes on several topics, and then we'll go to questions. Brett Wallace, Assistant Newslinks Editor for us, is preparing the transcript, which we will post after the panelists review and edit the draft.

Walid Phares: Thank you very much Andy for organizing this event and thank you for coming. My remarks will be the most general, shortest and I will probably add more remarks after the panel has ended its lecture and I would be more than happy to answer any questions.

I have five remarks, four I will make at the beginning and the last one after my two colleagues. We sort of discussed the points and my co-panelists are covering in depth some of those issues so I will keep my last one to the end.

My 4 points are going to be about:

1. Notes regarding the decision-making process leading to the Mumbai operation. These are thoughts that I am advancing for debate and discussion, of which I will be writing about this week.
2. What I define as the "strategic war room." That is, what level of command is behind this and other operations? There is a discussion about the identity of those in the operation, a very wild discussion in the media but also a discussion in the agencies and governments in the region.

3. The goal of the operation, as designed by the higher levels above the elements involved in the execution of the operation. If the team was 10 plus, it is very possible that the full numbers of those involved in the entire operation may have not been determined yet. I am surmising that the team may have been inserted to trigger actions that only the higher level may know about.
4. What are the long range goals for this operation, meaning strategically in the region. I will make a couple of suggestions.

Let me begin with what I call the architecture of the operation. Two points, first there was an insistence on behalf of the perpetrators, to draw an Indian participation to the operation, based on the name Deccan Mujahedeen, referring the previous attacks by the Indian Mujahedeen (IM). Back in October there were significant arrests of IM, and there were statements indicating that there are a large number of IM still on the loose and there is a fear that they will strike back. Those that designed the press release are trying to say that we are the Deccan province chapter of the IM. If in the future there is activity in Assam or other parts of India, they will take the name of that region. This reminds us of Al Qaeda's actions in the Levant; Al Qaeda in Iraq, Al Qaeda in Arabia. The insistence is on looking credible in terms of a press release and an identity. Now you compare this with something contradictory, the perpetrators, designers of the operation left so many indicators that are so obvious. If you come by sea and use dinghies, and make cell phone calls, you are forcing every investigator to blame Pakistan. I am inviting the reflection that on the one hand there is an effort to show this is a local jihadi operation in India, and I would like to throw in that there should be some assessment of why was it designed like that.

Point two: the strategic war room. If we do an analysis of the names that are involved, analyzed via the ISU of India, all the way up to LeT, if you look at the chain and then look at my third and fourth points, then what we are dealing with here is a decision made at the level of regional jihadists. It has the flavor, has the mark of the whole operation chronologically speaking, it comes at the heel of previous incidents on one hand but if you project the operation it may lead you on the other hand to the logic that a decision had been made on a much higher level. It is probably all the way up to a war room between Al Qaeda and the Taliban, with the LeT being "subcontracted" for the operation and information supply by infiltration within the Pakistani security apparatus. If you look at the scheme, the structure, you will see the interests of the Taliban, Al Qaeda, the execution by LeT and security provided by an intelligence apparatus in Pakistan.

Third is the long-range goal. Most analysis, in any investigation path you take, is that it will affect the relations between India and Pakistan. There are two points developing in this direction, the immediate reaction by the jihadi websites, and then comments by the various "Al"s like Al Jazeera, where you can see commentary that the root cause is Kashmir. You saw a lot of stories in the international media, and you will see that the promoters of the stories come back to the same web of releases claiming that it is about Kashmir, and forcing the debate to be about Kashmir and not the jihadist movement.

The most interesting thing was 48 hours ago, when a press release from the Taliban stated, "we will defend Pakistan from an attack by India." Step one was to attack India, and to provoke India to attack

Pakistan. Then the second step was to defend Pakistan. This is only a logical construction of course but it is based on statements made that are out now.

Fourth is long term. The operation has been accepted in the media as a way to put pressure on the Indian government and generate a counter pressure by the Pakistani government. But ultimately those that will benefit strategically in Pakistan are those with less pressure. I invite you to read the press release by Zawahiri, a couple weeks ago: He said to the incoming administration, 'if you increase the U.S. presence in Afghanistan, there will be escalation on the battlefield.' Two weeks later there are strikes in Bombay, aimed at creating tensions between India and Pakistan. This will give jihadists room to operate. It will be very difficult for the U.S. government to continue an all out offensive with the build up coming in Afghanistan to squeeze the Taliban, while there are tensions with India. I will leave number five to later.

Farhana Ali: Good morning and thank you Andy for the introduction and thank you Walid for your arguments which I would like to build on.

I want to focus on the Pakistan angle and LeT. As Andy noted earlier I worked for the U.S. Government, and on my first day on the job, I witnessed a tragic event. It was October 12, 2000 when al-Qaeda operatives conducted a maritime attack against the U.S. Navy destroy, the USS Cole in the Aden harbor of Yemen. I worked hand and hand with experts on Osama Bin Laden and understood why and how terrorists strike and how they stay alive. The Mumbai attacks are another example of an organization that wasn't on the international radar and then forced the community to pay attention. LeT was able to inflict mass casualty damage and damage Pakistan's credibility.

I remember shortly after 9/11, we regrouped and established a more focused Afghanistan-Pakistan team. Even then, LeT was on the radar, but it was still considered a local jihadi organization with local ties fighting for a local cause. The liberation of India-occupied Kashmir was the primary motive. I think looking back it was a great mistake to view LeT how we did then. A bold assumption I would like to make is that LeT is the main perpetrator, I say assumption of course because we must wait for a full investigation before we can make it conclusive.

A few days after the attacks, I received an email from a source in Pakistan who meets with Hafiz Saeed, the leader of Jamaat-ud-Dawa, the political wing for LeT, and who has family that are hard-core loyalists to Lashkar. He sent me an email on November 30th in which he wrote,

"According to two senior sources within jihadi outfits and as many in the intelligence agencies, the recent terror attacks in different parts of Mumbai...were masterminded by Pakistani intelligence agency ISI using the defunct Lashkar-e-Taiba [LT] which is presently working under the guise of a relief/charity agency – Jamatud Dawa – all over Pakistan... Deccan Mujahideen is a pseudo name of Lashkar-e-Taiba. The latter cannot assume the responsibility of the attacks - like past - due to the fact that Pakistan and its jihadi outfit are being watched by the US and its allies."

He goes on to say that "The Lashkar leaders are not accepting the responsibility at official level but they are taking pride in claiming it among their trusted people. There is a strong sense of jubilation among the

ranks and files of Lashkar-e-Taiba. They have offered nawafil of shukrana (special prayers to thank God) for successfully carrying out the attacks. They have distributed boxes of sweet meats among their workers to celebrate the victory. They believe that it will pave the way for the freedom of Kashmir."

You know this is not the first time they have perpetrated attacks, but it is the first time the world has paid such attention. CIA veteran Bruce Riedel said yesterday that LeT is "tactically opportunistic." Its ability to carry out attacks in India has made it one of the most deadly organizations.

Recall the attack on New Delhi's Red Fort (laal Qila) on December 22, 2000 which the group took credit for in their al-Dawa magazine; two attacks in 2001--the Indian Parliament attack in December 2001, and the attack on Srinagar Airport in Indian-held Kashmir on January 5, 2001. Having gone through Srinagar airport a number of times this year, including my last visit two weeks ago, I can tell you this is probably one of the most difficult targets to strike. After this attack, LeT issued a statement that I want to share with you:

"Prior to September 11, we were in a position to liberate Kashmir any time, but our target is the whole of India and Israel's turn after that. We only want the destruction of India...we are the ones fighting for the liberation of Kashmir and the future of Pakistan."

I think it is very clear that if you look at the LeT's strategy it is to weaken India and to help establish the caliphate which is part of their ideological program. Their main center outside of Lahore, and many of their teachers or dawa leaders are encouraged to participate in jihad.

Two main points:

1. The internationalization or the transnationalization of LeT, has made it a potent force, capable as seen with its capabilities but also in its membership. In this way LeT is far greater in power than Al Qaeda. Yes it has been influenced by Al Qaeda but it has independent leadership even though it has ties to ISI and rouge elements in the Army. This wider reach that LeT has and its influence with India is critical. The other aspect not being mentioned is Saudi support. LeT has salafi wahabi links, and in order to propagate the faith it receives Saudi financial backing. This gives LeT a transnational flavor. I want to quote a seasoned journalist. "The LeT is the new Al Qaeda."
2. The second point I want to talk about is the legitimacy of Al Qaeda, which makes LeT a much more deadly force. It is seen as legitimate in terms of its services, it has a media department, a finance department, it has welfare activities, all of that combined allows it to sustain its membership and recruitment and encourage jihad against India. It has become the largest jihadi outfit in Pakistan. Even when the group was banned in 2002 by Musharraf, in its yearly annual meetings you had anywhere from 2,000 to 4,000 members. That is phenomenal, when I speak to Pakistani army officials they point to maybe 100 Al Qaeda operatives in the region so in terms of membership LeT is far stronger.

Back to my first point, there is something about its name. Deccan Mujahidin, what is it? Deccan is a place in Hyderabad, India and LeT has a foothold there. It has great influence in this area in terms of its

schools, mosques and how it spreads its influence. If you see Deccan Mujahedeen, it provides perfect cover for LeT. There are other networks, Diaspora networks besides Saudi Arabia that they seek support from. You have pockets of communities across the U.S. and the Gulf region; we don't know how many militants they have however.

Finally, I would like to say in terms of what the LeT has adopted is gangsterism in the name of jihad. There have been reports of ties to Dawood Ibrahim who heads the organized crime syndicate D-Company in Mumbai and who is a well known asset of the ISI.

I would like to conclude with a central question that is being asked by several analysis, which is what role can the U.S. government play in deescalating a crisis between India and Pakistan? Bringing it back to the tactical, in my days in the government there were at that time several attacks being conducted on Saudi soil. It was through cooperation with Saudi intelligence that led to a number of attacks being thwarted. Given the intelligence failures in Pakistan today and lax law enforcement authority, we have an opportunity to create a model of intelligence sharing and cooperation. But what would cooperation between Pakistan and the U.S. entail? There would be great resistance from the Pakistan side, especially if you asked Pakistan to turn over Hafiz Saeed for example.

There is the issue also of decreased trust. I had dinner last night with a Pakistani official. Until trust is established Pakistan will always remain on guard and will demand security guarantees from the U.S. until it can justify intelligence sharing. Until access is granted which is key in any CT investigation, until the CIA and the FBI on the ground get access normalizing relations will be very difficult.

David Kilcullen: I will talk about two things. First, what we know so far, and then what it seems to mean. Bottom Line Up Front, this was a lot more like a Special Forces raid than any terrorist attack we've seen to date. These boys had professional help: the question is from whom? Initial reports about terrorist attacks are almost always inaccurate. I'm only relying on media reporting and unclassified analysis. We need to be extremely cautious about coming to any firm conclusions until we know more. We can draw some intuitive insights from the tactics, the modus operandi, and then from certain statements by Mohammed Ajmal Kasab, the sole survivor currently in Indian custody.

What do we know? There were 10 to 15 attackers. At least 10, coming from the sea, attacked from 10:00 pm to 1:00 in the morning against several targets in Mumbai. It seems several more were pre-positioned in the city before the attacks started. They trained for three months plus, in Pakistan under the direction of retired Pakistani military personnel. When they landed they were clean shaven and dressed in western clothing, they carried backpacks with magazines of ammunition, explosives, grenades, water, food to last several days, satellite and cell phone communications, cash, credit cards, and false identification documents. This was a pretty well prepared bunch of guys.

From what we know of the attack profile they launched out of Karachi and hijacked a Pakistani flagged fishing vessel, killed the crew and took it within very close striking distance of Mumbai and then transferred to inflatable boats and landed along the waterfront. They then split into groups of 2 to 4 and moved to attack their targets. The first stage was a series of diversionary attacks. They attacked a café, a railway station, and a hospital, which drew in first responders. They captured a police car, which they

used to attack people in the streets and then planted bombs and IEDS in the streets. As I said, this first stage was a diversionary attack to draw the first responders away from their real targets, the public locations of the Taj Majal hotel, Oberoi hotel, and the Mumbai Jewish Center, among others.

They then moved in on the main targets, which they did a lot of close reconnaissance on before the attack, using Google Earth, and using the reception party in the city from a couple of days beforehand who gave them a detailed layout. In at least one of the hotels they knew the security layout and where the hotel security was watching, and avoided those locations to appear by surprise in the hotel. Once they got in they captured the buildings and established defensive locations, they set fires to hold the buildings for a long time. Once they secured the building they went from room to room shooting people and taking hostages. They kept mobile during the attacks so security forces could not pin down their location. They were able to hold these buildings for 72 hours before being killed by security forces. With 193 killed, over 300 injured, it was the largest attack since the Bali bombing and the second largest since 9/11.

This was not some Islamic charity or some group working alone from the Deccan Mujahedeen: this has all the hallmarks of a Special Forces raid, closer to a commando or SBS raiding activity than a traditional Al Qaeda style terrorist attack. Al Qaeda has never attacked a land target from the sea, though they have attacked maritime targets from the sea, such as the Cole, the Limburg and attacks on Saudi oil installations. There has never been anything close to this level of sophistication of a seaborne attack: this was a high professional bar. We can deduce they had some professional help though I think it is much too early to state who that support came from. It has been set up to look like a Pakistani government operation. We should be careful until we know more. As a side bar, European CT forces captured an Al Qaeda CD that highlighted Al Qaeda urban warfare tactics, and these matched those used in Mumbai to the letter. The sea part was new but the land parts followed Al Qaeda tactics pretty closely.

It may have been a provocation attack to set India against Pakistan. It may be building on previous attacks on India, there of course was also the 2006 Mumbai train bombing, an earlier attack in 1993 and other significant militant attacks. The indicators at this point are that we have a very sophisticated attack beyond any home grown or Al Qaeda attack we have seen before.

The Pakistani response is also instructive: President Zardari offered general Pasha, the head of the ISI, to help out with the investigation and 24 hours later, General Kiyani, the Pakistan Chief of Army Staff, said no and recalled him. The other question, then, is who is actually in charge in Pakistan and to what extent is their national security state operating outside civilian government control? I think it is way too early to hold anyone inside Pakistan responsible.

Walid Phares: A brief follow-up. I would invite everyone here to look at the extension of LeT outside the Indian subcontinent and that will have implications on our homeland security. A group in the late 90's, the so called paintball jihad network based in Virginia was dismantled, there were trials and some of them are serving time, I would invite the CT community to go back to the archives and look at their system and targets they established in the trial proceedings. Before 9/11, the target was Kashmir and

national liberation and so on, now that we see that LeT is hitting way south of Kashmir and as Farhana says they have a Diaspora presence. I will project that LeT groups may be tasked to also attack liberal democracies. That is a serious invitation to look back at LeT here in America.

Andrew Cochran:

We covered the Virginia jihad cases on the Counterterrorism Blog, I have been trying to get time to republish those posts along with a summary post in the next couple of days. With us today in the audience is Jeffery Brienholt, who was with us on the blog during a year of leave from the Department of Justice and was former Deputy Chief of the Counterterrorism section at the Department of Justice, and he might have additional comments about those cases.

Two other points I want to mention, one on the funding. There have been some mentions of stolen credit cards found, that has been a tactic before, back in Madrid. One story that caught my eye was a story about SIM cards and cell phones, because there have been increasing concern about terrorists using stored value cards and SIM cards in cell phones. I was discussing this with Matt Squire of Fortent Moneytlaundering.com and whether there is any precedent for that. SOCOM (NOTE: The Pentagon's Special Operations Command) has met with a number of representatives of financial institutions, telecom companies and builders of those systems to learn more about mobile banking techniques. My concern is not with American telecom companies – they have been working with the CT and intel community for decades – but once you cross borders and platforms, there are countries in which there were no land lines, just wireless, and no attention to these issues. So the Mumbai attack presents the possibility – we won't know until the investigation is completed – that this was the first large-scale terrorist attack involving stored value card and mobile banking technologies.

Second, the previous Indian attacks back to 2003 – I count 13 - were all bombings, which makes this attack unique, since none of those attacks were with commandos.

Another note, with the Americans that were killed, it would be great if the American families could seek civil litigation against LeT and their supporters, including their funding sources. The problem with that, however, arises from a decision in August by the Second Circuit in the Burnett case, the civil suit against Saudi princes and others over the 9-11 bombings. The court affirmed the dismissal of the lawsuit by the lower court (NOTE: *"In re Terrorist Attacks on September 11, 2001,"* decided August 14, 2008). For the purposes of disclosure I should mention that I represent the Motley Rice law firm that represents terrorist victims in litigation.

I want to read the part of that opinion that raises serious questions about the victims' ability to sue the foreign supporters in federal court, which I hope will spark a legislative change in the next Congress.

Quote:

"Even if the Four Princes were reckless in monitoring how their donations were spent, or could and did foresee that recipients of their donations would attack targets in the United States, that would be insufficient to ground the exercise of personal jurisdiction. Rather, the plaintiffs have the burden of

showing that the Four Princes engaged in “intentional, and allegedly tortuous, actions...expressly aimed” at residents of the United States. That burden is not satisfied by the allegation that the Four Princes intended to fund al Qaeda through their donations to Muslim charities. Even assuming that the Four Princes were aware of Osama bin Laden’s public announcements of jihad against the United States and al Qaeda’s attacks on the African embassies and U.S.S. Cole, their contacts with the United States would remain far too attenuated to establish personal jurisdiction in American courts. It may be the case that acts of violence committed against residents of the United States were a foreseeable consequence of the prince’s alleged indirect funding of al Qaeda, but foreseeability is not the standard for recognizing personal jurisdiction. Rather, the plaintiffs must establish that the Four Princes “expressly aimed” intentional tortuous acts at residents of the United States. Providing indirect funding to an organization that was openly hostile to the United States does not constitute this type of intentional conduct. In the absence of such a showing, American courts lacked personal jurisdiction over the Four Princes.” (NOTE: Pages 61 and 62 of the opinion.)

That's where we are from the Second Circuit, and re-establishing personal jurisdiction, based on a “foreseeability” standard, is key to providing an outlet in the civil courts for terrorism victims. I've come to believe in the last seven years, back to before I represented the Motley Rice firm, that civil litigation is a necessary and important complement to official and non-official CT activities. It is through the civil litigation process that we have seen much of the discovery of ties between Muslim charities, such as the Holy Land Foundation, and HAMAS, or the flow of money overseas from the Arab Bank in New York City. It was civil litigants, working with other groups overseas, who uncovered that evidence that led to the OCC’s fine against the Arab Bank, after the OCC had given it clean reports all through the 1990s.

Farhana Ali: I want to go back to David’s question, who is in charge in Pakistan? From my conversations with colonels and generals, it is very clear that the military is in charge but that they have taken a behind the scenes role, these civil-military tensions will affect investigations and cooperation. That causes us to ask, how much pressure can the U.S. put on Pakistan? Pakistan knows that the U.S. needs Pakistan, the supply and fuel routes to Afghanistan are in Pakistan. Can the U.S. really push Pakistan to cooperate fully?

Andrew Cochran: With that we will open the floor to questions.

Jeffery Breinholt: I have more of a comment than a question, and Walid actually stole my thunder. You’ll have to forgive me for looking at this whole incident from the admittedly parochial perspective of U.S. law enforcement, and how this will play out in our courts. Walid is absolutely right about American prosecutors having experience with LeT. I would venture to guess that perhaps the most unlucky people in the world right now are Sheikh Ali Al Timimi and the lawyer representing him in his appeal. Timimi was convicted of soliciting his religious adherents to go overseas and join LeT, and the Supreme Court’s imminence standard was fulfilled by the proof that his adherents actually followed his advice and went over. The legal strategy in his appeal, as I understand it, is based partly on the argument that perhaps LeT is really not that bad, that they’ve never targeted Americans or American interests – almost like the one-bite rule in tort law. As a result of recent events in Bombay, if LeT is truly responsible, I don’t think that claim about the “non-bad” LeT can be advanced now with a straight face.

Andrew Cochran: Evan Kohlmann was a material witness in the al Timimi case, as was pointed out on the Counterterrorism Blog.

Question: We have been using coalition support funds to have Pakistan redeploy to be able to engage in the west. How far are we from the tipping point where either the Pakistan army pulls out of its ongoing operations to get ready for redeployment or redeploys to the east?

David Kilcullen: We provide Pakistan 100 million dollars a month in coalition support funds, we also train the SSG; Mohammed Ajmal Kasab said he was trained by retired Pakistani officials, so did our money go to elements of the Pakistani Army or intelligence that helped plan this attack?

We are well past the point where we should be holding all of that money conditional upon Pakistani progress against Al Qaeda in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas. But also if Pakistan pulled out of the FATA it might improve the situation. A lot of the people, like those in Balochistan, are not allied with Al Qaeda, so pulling the Pakistani army out of some of those areas may not be the end of the world. Working with the tribes to regain control of their environment, it could be a good thing on the western frontier.

Like everything else, people associated with the Pakistan government have been involved with terrorism, but how far up does it go?

Walid Phares: With regards to Pakistan, the option of withdrawing some of those forces out of these areas could be evaluated differently, but even if the regular forces were withdrawn the intelligence would still be there. Would they like to have the army, or only the intelligence services? The second point which worries me is that for those who engineered this operation in Mumbai, this is not the end of the process. This is not the final conclusion, if this is a strike against India to force it to strike Pakistan, we may suspect that they may engineer a strike inside Pakistan and make it seem like it is by India. We would have to look at what would inflame the Pakistani people and army, it could be an assassination or anything, but we have to look at the bigger picture.

Farhana Ali: But Walid the Pakistani army is already inflamed, a very serious Pakistani official I know consistently pointed to the fact that RAW is providing ammunition to groups that are anti Pakistan, but you are of course talking about domestic public support.

Question: I have a question about LeT and the notion that they provide social services. I wanted to get your assessment of the degree of public support. Is this going to the Muslim Brotherhood or the Hezbollah model, where they integrate themselves in a broader social base where they have a legitimate political influence at the same time as running jihad operations, and if they are providing services is this in Punjab or tribal areas.

Farhana Ali: LeT is all over the country where they have offices, since 2002 they have portrayed themselves more of as a social services organization. The Pakistani earthquake in 2005, it was very difficult for Pakistan to shut them down even though there was pressure from the United States. I think they do have an extended reach but Khawar Rizvi, maybe you have numbers.

Khawar Rizvi: There are 200,000 to 400,000 people that use their social services, until 2003 they had at least 2,200 positions around the country and Kashmir. LeT is just one section of a militant section of a bigger outfit. Even Al Qaeda doesn't have this setup. It is a modern form of Al Qaeda that has a following, a legitimate following. It is a very different organization, and there are few people that have penetration to this organization. I would quote Arif Jamal, who is a visiting scholar at NYU.

Farhana Ali: And he has his book coming out, Shadow Wars.

Khawar Rizvi: This organization, some of it is based in Iraq and even Bosnia, and thus it is Muslim Brotherhood-like, so it will be very difficult to clamp down on this operation.

Farhana Ali: If you look at LeT it has an 8 point plan, which is to attack infidels, fight the real jihad in India where it will then spread. They have a very clear program

Andrew Cochran: I have a simple question for the panelists but want to get it on the record. Aren't the Pakistani and Indian officials aware of where the LeT training camps are?

David Kilcullen: Since the Pakistanis have been involved in training the LeT, then yes.

Andrew Cochran: What about the Indian officials? Do they know?

David Kilcullen: No.

Question: Can I ask you what is known about the two leaders that reports say now were masterminding this. Where are they now?

Farhana Ali: It's suspected they are probably in Pakistan. The whole disguise and denial by the organization has makes it a brilliant cover. This is a win-win situation, for LeT and Al Qaeda. For jihadists to align with the Pakistani army is the shift they would like to see.

Question: Where would they being going now?

David Kilcullen: The answer to your question is we don't know. Certainly there have been instances where people have gone quiet in safe houses close to the target but we can't say definitively. The Indians said there were 10 attackers. But that is based on killing 9 and capturing 1.

Farhana Ali: My sources say at least 23.

Question: U.S. intelligence has said they see no involvement with Al Qaeda. Is there something you can point to that would suggest or counter the idea of Al Qaeda involvement?

Andrew Cochran: I would go back to David citing the Al Qaeda CD.

David Kilcullen: That wouldn't necessarily indicate a direct link with Al Qaeda, a lot of people have access to Al Qaeda training materials, they used to have an online magazine, al Battar, where they put out materials. So the answer to your question is that there is nothing firm yet.

Walid Phares: If I may add one bit of analysis: Al Qaeda's structure does not always involve the execution of all operations. They execute central operations, they are the praetorian guards, but they also "subcontract" operations. In the sub Indian continent, I would assume that in the decision-making there must be some sort of Al Qaeda participation in the back and forth talking, but in the execution once a group is tasked there is no need for Al Qaeda assets. In this case they didn't even use operatives from India. Just because Al Qaeda's model was applied doesn't mean their infantry was there.

Andrew Cochran: Can you date that CD?

David Kilcullen: I'm sure it has been dated, but I don't know what the date was. Much of the reason for operatives coming from the sea is that much of Mumbai's defenses are land oriented. It's easier to get in from the sea. Even a SEAL team would have trouble mounting this operation, given the multiple stages of clandestine and covert action involved.

Question: You talk about the strengths of LeT and its support and funding, is there any major vulnerabilities that they have?

Farhana Ali: That is an excellent question. There have been tensions with other jihadi organizations, that is probably one of the best ways the U.S. could do something, to pit it against other organizations on basic issues. Other organizations don't share their basic concepts; there have been a lot of criticism of sending their operatives outside of Kashmir. Some of these outfits are in a weaker position because they have lost Kashmir as a central focus and now they have a much more global focus. It is going to be very difficult for the U.S. government to press Pakistan to shut down their networks; they are so entrenched and legitimate. The services they have are the untouchable area. It is not something we can do it is something that if Pakistan wants to it can play these organizations off each other, which it does all of the time anyways. It is very tricky on how we work this.

David Kilcullen: One key vulnerability of LeT is that it relies on support from the Pakistani security services. If you could strengthen civil government and break up the hierarchy of Pakistani national security agencies, assist the Pakistani civilian politicians in exerting civil control over their own national security state, then you are attacking the sponsor of a lot of what LeT is doing. You have to support the Pakistani civilian government and increase its sovereignty over its people.

Andrew Cochran: I want to ask the panelists if India would mount a retaliatory attack against just the training camps and then what would be the Pakistani response?

David Kilcullen: I think it is unlikely because it would be tantamount to an act of war. That doesn't mean it isn't going to happen, but it seems unlikely.

Farhana Ali: I think the U.S. would intervene as it did in 2001. It is not in our interest for war to be a possibility. The source I spoke with said we are ready to fight and I asked, "Why are you not fighting for Kashmir?" And he said we have been pushed to fight on the western front by the Americans but if they had the resources they would deploy in the east as well.

Question: Has there been evidence that LeT has used the video of the attacks for recruitment or funding or talk on the internet and do you mind mentioning more about the Saudi link?

Farhana Ali: The Saudi link is ideological, the salafi wahabi link. As for recruiting, they don't want to make any public announcements. I believe the sources I have on the ground. They are celebrating these attacks but want to keep it unofficial. It doesn't benefit them at all for them to come out and admit the attacks then you get the ISI involved.

Walid Phares: It is most likely that seizing parts of the city, this urban jihad, was aimed at creating the footage for the future. It doesn't have to be LeT, what they have created, you may see videos or websites on behalf of that even if it is a phantom.

Khawar Rizvi: LeT did maintain their official records and it is published. They had these weeklies coming out as newsletters and they put the names of individuals involved in their operations and they used it for purposes of recruitment. There was a pattern of all jihadi organizations with regular weekly, ideological releases; Hizbul-mujahidin has the same publications, all the time. They use it as their achievements.

Question: You mentioned how LeT has a presence in Afghanistan, could you address strategies that could confront this organization on a financial front, seems like they have a lot bigger role in that area.

Farhana Ali: The pattern is that when it cracks down, they regroup rename and create splinter groups. That splinter effect could be more potent if you push the Pakistanis to clamp down. If there is evidence, let's presume there is evidence that there were certain LeT members involved. Zardari said he would arrest them. He might put Hafiz Sayeed under house arrest. Groups go underground; there are many militants underground right now in Kashmir. They will continue to thrive and exist because there is no concerted effort by the civilian and military leadership in Pakistan to put them out of business.

Question: As an after action report, if you were on the LeT side, what would their lessons learned be to improve upon their next attack?

David Kilcullen: Assuming it is LeT I think they would feel they did pretty well. The way they were set up, with fake IDs, clean shaven with western clothes indicated they might have intended to survive the attack. The fact that they lost 9 out of 10 does not indicate that they intended to have those 9 people die. They would have some after-action discussion, I think, about what you do when the hotel you just captured gets assaulted by the Indian security forces. They managed very fortuitously to kill the head of the Mumbai CT police, they would be very happy with that; they would be very happy with the way the diversion worked.

Farhana Ali: Also they created a sense of ambiguity, usually terrorists make demands as we have seen gunmen do in the 1970s and 1980s during hostage-taking situations. In this case, there were no demands made by the perpetrators. They asked for nothing which makes one believe that there could be follow-on attacks. At any rate, the fact that demands were not made leaves us wondering what their actual motive is. Along with ambiguity created by the terrorists, there is a lot of chaos.

David Kilcullen: It is a standard tactic to carry out an attack like this to cause the security force to crack down on the entire Muslim population. We call that provocation. They may have also intended to inspire an uprising among local Muslims against the state – we call that Focoism, and we see that approach a lot in Pakistan-supported terrorist and insurgent campaigns in Kashmir and Afghanistan. But the buildings are still smoking in Mumbai – it's far too early to say definitively.

Andrew Cochran: The finding of unexploded bombs at the train station causes us to ask if there are other unexploded bombs, duds or timed to go off in days or weeks.

Walid Phares: They have reversed the previous logic: you are not going to achieve one specific goal you are fighting for the bigger goal. Second, if you look at the numbers involved in the operation the scenarios are becoming wider and wider. Maybe the next operation won't be a copy cat but a copy cat plus. The next might be against hotels and schools. The invitation is open to improve upon it.

Farhana Ali: One thing is consistent, which is the targets. The strategy might change but in terms of the patterns of targets it has been the same. Terrorists typically hit Western targets or allies of the West. In this case, the two hotels represented Western icons in India.

Andrew Cochran: Like big hotels that attract Westerners, from Jordan to Indonesia. One other thing on the funding: There is no international regime over stored value cards, especially issued by non-financial institutions, so our standard financial institutions mechanisms – the Bank Secrecy Act and the Patriot Act - don't work there. Whether that will ever be discussed through the UN or some other international mechanism, is a good question. I would hope there will be a Bank Secrecy Act reform action that looks at broader reforms and the changes in terrorist funding in the past seven years. I know the financial institutions reform package that Congress will pass will be focused on "safety and soundness" issues, but somewhere in the process there should be an update.

Question: Between the operational connection though and the planning, how do you bridge that gap? The funding of these things is really nickel and dime but the money spent to train and plan these is where the real money is involved.

Walid Phares: The spy ring operation, the rings of training, and what will happen after that is high finance and I think there is a disconnect. I don't think there are connections between the high finance and low finance operations.

David Kilcullen: They hijacked the ship and killed the crew, which is what we call a cutout, a fairly standard clandestine technique (not necessarily the killing of the crew, but the switching of transport to a hijacked local ship, which was a means to keep the raiders separate from the planners, and the planners separate from the sponsors of the attack). All of which indicates a professional clandestine operation.

Question: About the killing of the crew, should we be going negative with how many Muslims have been killed by this operation? A very high percentage of the victims were Muslim. Should there be a counter propaganda campaign?

Valid Phares: Who should do it is the most important element. Should the U.S. government do it? No, but we can enlist our allies in the region to do it. Second, let's keep in mind that the police commissioner in Mumbai is Muslim and the Vice President of India is also Muslim. They could play the good Muslim card against the jihadists if they want.

David Kilcullen: We aren't the world government and while we may try to prevent conflicts like this there are limits to what the U.S. can do, and these countries are our allies so we can help them work it out themselves. But we should maintain a very sober understanding of the limits of our own ability to influence this situation – we have limited leverage here.