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## Attacks, 'blessing in disguise': Hinduja

Aziz Haniffa in Washington, DC | December 16, 2008 10:34 IST

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Billionaire Srichand P Hinduja, chairman of the Hinduja Group, believes the Mumbai terror attacks [Images] are "a blessing in disguise" because the "whole world has awakened to this evil of terrorism."

Speaking to this correspondent from Mumbai, Hinduja, who spoke emotionally how his father came to Mumbai in 1914 at the age of 14 from Shikarpur, Sindh, which is now in Pakistan, and made Mumbai "our adopted home for people like us who were Stateless," and from there launched his vision to trade with Iran, Iraq, and other Gulf countries, said he was especially glad that the terror attacks "have mobilised our youth like never before."

"For the first time I see in Mumbai, and also all over India, they (*the youth*) have come together collectively and with a unified voice have challenged the top -- the ineffective politicians," he said. "Politicians are to blame for creating all this evil," which, he argued, had its beginnings during the Cold War.

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"These things have been deeply rooted from the time of the Cold War," Hinduja said, "and these are the by-products of the old battle between capitalism and socialism. During the Cold War the politicians were responsible for creating these evils because both sides were in a race to use any means necessary to train this kind of evil for their ends and they split the world in two."

However, he said, now "for the first time, the whole world has been concerned," because it has hit close to home to everybody and implied that perhaps it was so because in this attack several nationalities who were killed and injured, including those from the West.

"After the first [bomb blasts](#) (on March 12, 1993) in Mumbai, no one even bothered. The Western world did not react, did not feel it, but now, all over the world, they know how deep and painful it is and how much a global threat this evil of terrorism is."

Thus, Hinduja said, "Now is the time that the developed world has the opportunity to put their collective strength and where the United States of America can again lead along with the UK, Russia [[Images](#)], Europe, Russia, China and India."

And, he said, all these countries had to work together to eradicate this evil and it involved not just combating the scourge of terrorism, but also alleviating poverty, resurrecting the failed institutions that had led to the spawning of radical and fanatical ideologies "because one cannot blame any one individual or community or religion."

"This is a collective global problem and this global evil has spread all over the world and the problems have accumulated over the decades and so we have to find global solutions," he added.

While it is imperative to apprehend the perpetrators of this attack and those who were behind this conspiracy and bring them to justice, Hinduja said at a more broader and long-term level, the strategy should be to wean these disaffected and radicalised youth "and handle them very skillfully while at the same time solve their social and community problems that made them fodder for these evil activities in the first place."

He acknowledged that "it cannot happen overnight," because debriefing these radicalised youth from the brainwashing they have received was not going to be easy and has to be done through a series of anti-poverty and educational programmes, "and this is why all the countries that I mentioned have to work together, otherwise we will continue to keep facing these problems over and over again and these kinds of attacks will not be a surprise."

Hinduja also blamed the contemporary entertainment culture as being inimical "and not constructive and good for the human race," and said it was from these entertainment programmes that these terrorists had "learnt how to do these kinds of attacks -- where you saw 10 people or five people or two people can create this kind

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of havoc."

"So all of this has to be reversed and they have to be brought back to the original track," he said.

He felt the crass materialism that has run rampant "where everything has been about the short-term strategy to make money, spend money, throw money, waste money, instead of using that money for the social infrastructure and the basic social programmes like health and education -- which is the basic right of every human being -- has led to a kind of indifference and apathy about those less fortunate."

This is why, he reiterated, the Mumbai attacks "is a blessing in disguise because now everyone is aware, especially the youth that all these systems have to change and be brought to a credible position and they have come out with a loud voice to challenge those at the top, whether it is the political leaders, whether it is those with this high net-worth, interested only in making money, and whether it is the strategists, who have all been responsible for this evil which has grown -- and has no doubt come from the top."

"We have to change this lifestyle, which has been spoilt by quick bucks -- finding short cuts to make money and the wrong kind of entertainment," he said.

Hinduja argued India's political structure had to be overhauled and said if only "economist and technocrats like (*Prime Minister*) Dr Manmohan Singh [\[Images\]](#) -- these type of people who are above board could come together and keep the politicians aside," India could have the kind of leadership whose first priority would be the people of the country and their well-being and not their own vested, narrow political interests.

"It is the politicians who are to blame for creating all this evil and now it has to be set right," he said, and hoped that the awakening in the aftermath of the horrific Mumbai attacks would not be in vain, especially where the youth of the country are concerned.

Hinduja, in re-emphasising how important it was the United States to take the lead in this global awakening, said, President-elect "Barack Obama [\[Images\]](#) mentioned that he would like to bring about change and whatever he said in his campaign, we request him that India is a good model for him and along with India he should induct all these other big countries who have been the victim of this kind of evil, but are democracies, to bring about this change."

Asked if the terror attacks would have negative financial implications for Mumbai, Hinduja shrugged off any such concerns. "Investments are not going to be impacted. This is going to be a short-term memory," where investments are concerned.

"You saw during 9/11, people thought that the United States once and for all is gone from the road map, but people have forgotten 9/11, and they have become stronger and firmer to face much more challenges," he asserted. "Similarly, India has shown in the past, whether it is about bomb blasts, or whether in our history, where there have been a lot of invasions -- India has been invaded by terror and all kinds of monsters and savages -- but you have seen how India's culture and traditions, which are so deep-rooted, have survived and

the democratic system has survived."

"So, these things are short memory," Hinduja added, "and they are forgotten after a few weeks, months and people get back to their normal life."

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