

An analysis of the terrorist attacks in Mumbai based on publications in Jihadi online forums¹

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¹ See the initial report in the responses of the Jihadi online forums to the terrorist attack:
http://www.ict.org.il/Portals/0/Internet%20Monitoring%20Group/JWVG_Mumbai_Attacks_Jihadi_Forums.pdf

The "Sada Al-Jihad" Magazine

The "Sada Al-Jihad" (the Echo of Jihad) magazine, published every month on behalf of the Global Islamic Media Front² (GIMF), dedicated a significant portion of its 31st issue to the terrorist attack carried out in Mumbai, November 26th-29th 2008.

Abu Tah Al-Miqdad, one of the magazine's writers, analyzes the terrorist attack and its significance. In his article he emphasizes the element of surprise - according to him, speeches made by Jihad leaders which were published by the propaganda institutions of global jihad, referred to a blow to American and Western targets in Europe and the United States, so nobody thought that the blow would be struck in a country on the Asian continent.

Later on, the writer presents a list of conclusions he has reached from the analysis of the terrorist attack:

1. He explains why India was chosen as the attack destination, and claims that Mumbai was attacked because it is the financial capital of India and the fact that the West invests billions of dollars there, especially in view of the global financial crisis.
2. The attackers arrived from Pakistan, and none of them came from India so that the attack would not be given a different dimension than the one intended. He explains that the attacks were carried out not only because of the crimes carried out by the Indian government and the Hindus against the Muslims, but also for the interests of the Islamic nation.

² One of the veteran groups spreading radical Islamic ideology, preaching violence.

3. A distinction was made between the hostages - that is between the American, the British and the Israeli, and the others. This was in order that a clear message was sent that the Muslims can confront all the "criminals of the universe", no matter how powerful.
4. Expanding the arena of confrontation in the Afghan region, so that it includes countries which are part of the alliance with the crusaders against the Muslims.

The writer states that the terrorist attacks constitute a message for the elected President of the United States, Barack Obama, following the strategy he formulated for fighting Islam, based on a retreat from Iraq and handing over the reigns of government there to "Iraqi agents" acting on behalf of the American government and sending additional forces to Afghanistan and Pakistan. The writer explains that President Bush's strategy for fighting terrorism required peace between the neighboring countries, India and Pakistan. Therefore, he claims, that behind the terrorist attack there is a deep understanding of the strategy on the part of global jihad leaders, as the fact that the terrorists came from Pakistan has much weight in bringing back the tension between these two countries. First signs of this were seen in the massing of the forces of the two countries on both sides of the border, which brings, de facto, a weakening of the fight of these countries against the Mujahideen.



At the top of the page on the left: "26/11/2008, one battle out of Allah's battles";
At the bottom of the page: "The raid on Mumbai – just as you kill... you shall be killed!"; In the background: the American and Israeli flags and the "Taj Mahal" Hotel attacked in the event. "Sada Al-Jihad", December 2008

The "Qadaya Jihadiya" Magazine

The "Qadaya Jihadiya" Magazine (Discussions on Matters of Jihad), published on behalf of the "Al-Yaqin Media Center"³ every month, published in its January 2009 issue, a 24 page document dedicated to the analysis of the terrorist attack in Mumbai.

The document begins by stating that the terrorist attacks in Mumbai are "September 11th no. 2", as far as the precise execution, the multiple targets, the scope of casualties and more importantly, the changes that will occur in the

³ The Al-Yaqin Media Center is a media institution distributing radical propaganda materials of global Jihad organizations.

local, regional and international fields, are concerned. The document touches upon the following points: how the terrorist attack was carried out; an analysis of the modus operandi of the attack; the perpetrators of the attack; the objectives of the attack; and its ramifications.

An analysis of the modus operandi

According to the document, what aroused amazement and confusion amongst the intelligence services in the West and among the independent commentators is the modus operandi. Firstly, the wide-scale of the attack which was accompanied by a very high level of planning and execution. The attack was also characterised by a high standard of fighting skills. Secondly, the attack did not make use of car bombs and suicide bombers.

The document quotes commentators that have claimed that this pattern of action was not seen before, apart from in two cases: the first one, in the raid of the Indian Parliament in 2001 by the fighters of the Jaysh-e-Muhammad (JeM). The second, in the terrorist attack at the residential complex in Al-Khobar in Saudi Arabia, carried out by Al-Qaeda in May 2002.

The writer of the document explains that the tactic adopted in the attack isn't new, what was new was the use of several methods at the same time – attacking the police station, terrorizing the public, attacking population centers, attacking areas where foreigners stayed and taking hostages. He adds that there were two new elements, unique compared to previous terrorist attacks, and that were combined in this attack: entry via the sea; and the fact that a small group of fighters succeeded in terrorizing an entire city, killed a large group of people and

held hostages. However, he states that a similar pattern of action was taken in the past by Palestinian terrorists against Israeli targets. In this regard, he mentions the terrorist attack in Nahariya on April 22nd 1979, in which a group of terrorists entered Israel from the sea.

The attack's objectives

The writer mentions several objectives to the attack:

1. Landing a security-economic-public blow to the Indian government as punishment for the oppression of Muslims in India and Kashmir.
2. Landing a blow on the Western governments who band together against the Muslims around the world, especially "the United States, Britain and the Jews". According to him, this is expressed in the attacking of sites where foreigners would be found, and the focusing on hostages from the United States, Britain and Israel. He adds that taking hostages from these countries was meant to exert pressure on them so that they acquiesced to demands, such as the release of prisoners, ransom payments etc.
3. Demonstrating the power of the Mujahideen and their high level of ability in the fields of intelligence and combat.

The ramifications of the terrorist attack

The writer explains that the attack in Mumbai had strategic and geo-political ramifications on the situation in the region. He divides the ramifications of the attack to three arenas: local, regional and international:

The local arena (India)

1. A military-security blow – heavy losses to the Indian security forces; severe damage to the reputation of the local security forces and exposing their inferiority in the fields of armaments, training, technology and intelligence.
2. A political blow – damage to the governing political party in India.
3. A financial blow – damage to India's financial capital and to the tourism industry.
4. Encouragement – the terrorist attack inspires faith in the hearts of the Muslims, showing that severe injury can be inflicted on the Hindu population with a small number of warriors. The attacks spur them to join the global jihad process against the infidels by joining one of the jihad groups in the area or even founding new groups of young Muslims in India that would fight the Hindus. The writer adds that the attack may provide a tail wind to the Kashmiri Jihad against India.

The regional arena (Central and Southern Asia)

The writer claims that the terrorist attack has strategic ramifications on the bilateral relationships between all the countries in Central and Southern Asia, and between these countries and the United States.

The international arena

The writer states that following the terrorist attack, the international scene was incredibly busy: each side blamed one of its enemies for being responsible for the attack; we witnessed the heightened security activity of the world's intelligence services, particularly in South Asia; a wave of fear for similar actions was created etc.

The writer sums up that this was a strategic terrorist attack whose long-term ramifications may be more important than its immediate results. Also, he claims that if it turns out that Al-Qaeda was behind this attack, it would be a supreme model of strategic thinking on the part of the Al-Qaeda leadership and its strategic thinkers. Finally, he says that India's insertion into the target bank of global Jihad will increase the number of supporters of Jihad in the international arena.



"The Mumbai operation: research regarding the local, regional and international ramifications"; the American President Elect, Barack Obama on a background of the burning "Taj Mahal" Hotel. Qadaya Jihadiya, January 2009

Correspondence in Jihadi online forums

Alongside these unique publications, the Jihadi online forums themselves dealt extensively with the terrorist attack in Mumbai, especially in the first few days following the attack. As expected, most of the correspondence relied on the foreign media reports and were generally accompanied by photographs from the attack site, praise to the perpetrators of the attack and condemnation of the United States and Israel. With time, more in-depth discussions began to appear in the Jihadi online forums, regarding the ramifications of the attack.

The "Al-Faloja" forum, which is identified with global jihad, featured a posting by an online surfer a week after the attack which said that the attack constitutes a jump up the strategic ladder, as an attack of this magnitude had not been seen since September 11th⁴. He adds that this is an unprecedented attack on Mumbai in terms of quality, which may indicate Al-Qaeda's involvement in the planning of the attack from start to finish. However, several surfers claimed that the modus operandi of the attack is not similar to Al-Qaeda's. One of the surfers at the "Muslm" online forum explained that if Al-Qaeda was interested in carrying out an attack in India, it would have done so, probably by blowing up a truck bomb and sending suicide bombers⁵.

Another online surfer at the "Al-Faloja" forum wrote that this terrorist attack is a new kind of warfare which he calls "hotel warfare"⁶. He mentions a string of terrorist attacks carried out at hotels, such as the attack at the Marriott Hotel in Islamabad (September 2008), the attack at the Marriott in Jakarta (August 2003) and a list of attacks at hotels in Iraq such as the Al-Rasheed Hotel, the Sheraton

⁴ <http://al-faloja.info/vb/showthread.php?t=37368>

⁵ <http://www.muslm.net/vb/showthread.php?t=320069>

⁶ <http://al-faloja.info/vb/showthread.php?t=36785>

Hotel, the Palestine Hotel etc. He claims that the war is against hotels who challenge Allah's statutes and rules. The surfer expresses hope that additional un-named hotels should be added to the list of hotels mentioned previously. In this regard it should be emphasized that the "Qadaya Jihadiya" editor, Abu Azzam Al-Ansari, referred in the magazine's editorial column to the fact that in this terrorist attack the hotels were a central target. He wrote: "Cries of Allah Akbhar were heard from the hotel rooftops where intelligence personnel from all corners of the world were meeting in order to plan and devise ways to eliminate the ember of Islam burning in the hearts of the believers, setting fire to the flags of heresy".

One of the surfers uploaded correspondence to the forum which dealt with the legitimacy of the terrorist attack, as according to him, many had claimed that innocents were killed in the attack⁷. One of the surfers explained that none of the casualties of the attack were innocent, as India is essentially a heretic country, and therefore all of its inhabitants are also infidels. Another surfer said that this question comes up every time, since September 11th, and that the answer to this question is: the terrorist attack in Mumbai is legitimate just like the attack in Bali (October 2002) is legitimate, just as the attack in London (July 2005) is legitimate, just as the attack in Madrid (March 2004) is legitimate, and so forth.

⁷ <http://al-faloja.info/vb/showthread.php?t=37116>