

# Revisiting The 2008 Mumbai Attacks

**Raagini Sharma**  
(RIEAS Senior Analyst)

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Ten Pakistani terrorist operatives conducted a coordinated fire and bombing attacks at several locations in Mumbai on the night of November 26, 2008, which showcased jihadist violence, killing more than 166 people, and injuring 300 individuals. Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus railway station, Cama Hospital, the business and residential complex at Nariman House, Leopold Café, Taj Hotel and Tower and the Oberoi Trident hotel were the key locations in the financial capital which were simultaneously attacked.

Pakistan's notion of 'bleeding of India by a thousand cuts' policy through manipulation of religious feelings and passions for communalism and sectarian ideas was witnessed to be implemented in this attack. Terror groups such as Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) and Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) had been the Pakistani establishment's preferred tools towards fighting India. Fedayeen attacks, involving heavily armed militants launching large-scale attacks, such as the ones on the Indian Parliament in 2001 and in Mumbai in 2008, are the group's signature tactic. (Kriti M. Shah, 2018)

In a stolen fishing trawler from Pakistan's port in Karachi, the LeT terrorists entered Mumbai. The terrorists seized vehicles, divided themselves into multiple attack groups, one of the groups got hold of a police car too. These highly orchestrated attacks were allegedly conducted by terrorist organization called Jamat-ud-Dawa (JeD) that was led by Hafiz Saeed. During the four-day operation, nine terrorists were killed by the armed

forces. The assaults eventually came to a close in the morning of 29 November after the National Security Guards (NSG) eliminated all terrorists except Ajmal Kasab who was arrested and later was sentenced to death after a long trial in year 2010.

In 2018, U.S. State Department announced that LeT founder and mastermind in 26/11 terrorist attacks in Mumbai, Hafiz Saeed was Washington's major worry. The UN declared LeT as a global terrorist organization. At the other side, Pakistan tried to demonstrate that there was no hand of Pakistan in the Mumbai attacks and that it was the act of Hindu Terror organizations within the state. Pakistan tried lamely to substantiate this theory by showing false identity cards (IDs), of the terrorists as members of "Hindu terror groups." Rakesh Maria, commissioner of Mumbai police said, - "let me say it now, that if everything went according to the plans of the Pakistan- based terror outfit, Kasab would have died as Chaudhri and the media would have blamed "Hindu terrorist" for the attack.

The trial against Ajmal Kasab began in April 2009. The state charged him with 11,280 pages. It was an open and shut case, but a controversial case for the media. M L Tahalyani, the Judge delivered the verdict on May 6, 2010, Kasab was convicted and was hanged for murder, killing and waging war.

The 12 highlights as mentioned of any terrorist attack by Alex Schmid, equally applies to the 26/11 attack. The terrorist attacked the Westerners and Jews by showing that India does not protect its foreigners. They had their agendas viz to unleash a reign of terror, instill fear and panic in people through violence, create confusion and display that the State is weak. Terrorism was employed as a tactic, and sheer violence as modus operandi. All of these are in alignment to the theory of Alex Schmid.

Though direct war was not the best case for Lashkar, to derail, India's ongoing peace process with Pakistan was the intended target. The night the attacks were launched, Pakistan's Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi was asked to leave the country immediately. A target at common places populated by foreigners was a key feature of the planning of attacks. Nariman House and the Taj and Oberoi hotels were selected to show that one of the goals of the attacks was to enhance the prestige of the party in the jihadi community through the killings of Westerners and

Jews. Fake IDs, the routes of ingress, remote controlling of the operation, all suggested that it was masterminded by Pakistan with terrorist organization as an executing tool, the perpetrators ready to plug all loopholes to deny their involvement. The motive was political in nature, to humiliate India and show it as weak state, and gain attention of global press.

26/11 not only sparked public anger, but also generated expectations that the government would eventually start addressing the country's deep-seated, structural and security deficiencies.