

# THE TERRORIST ATTACK ON MUMBAI

## Introduction

### Focus

This *News in Review* story focuses on the terrorist attack on the Indian city of Mumbai in late November 2008. We examine this dramatic event in the context of the strained relations between India and Pakistan, religious tension between Indian Hindus and Muslims, and implications for peace and stability in a troubled part of the world.

### Further Research

To stay informed about the views of India and Pakistan on this issue, consider a visit to their official government Web sites at [goidirectory.nic.in](http://goidirectory.nic.in) (Government of India directory) and [www.pak.gov.pk](http://www.pak.gov.pk) (Government of Pakistan).

On Wednesday, November 28, 2008, a small group of heavily armed terrorists staged a remarkably well-co-ordinated series of attack on various locations in Mumbai, India's largest city and main cultural and commercial centre. The gunmen had carefully selected their prime targets: two luxury hotels, the main train station, a popular downtown café, and a local Jewish community centre. They killed as many innocent people as they could with high-powered AK-47 assault rifles and grenades. Many of the victims were foreigners, including two Canadians who were visiting Mumbai (once known as Bombay), one of India's most popular tourist destinations. After over 60 hours of close-quarter fighting between elite Indian Army commando units and the determined terrorists holed up in hotel rooms and other locations, much of downtown Mumbai resembled a war zone. The century-old Taj Mahal Palace Hotel, one of the city's most famous landmarks, was badly damaged by fire. At least 173 people were dead, with hundreds more wounded. All but one of the terrorist gunmen had also been killed. The surviving member of the group lay wounded and under heavy guard at a Mumbai hospital.

The sheer scope and violence of this terrorist attack brought back memories of the September 11, 2001, events in New York City and Washington; many Indians referred to the incident as their country's version of 9/11. But this was not the first time Mumbai had been the scene of terrorist violence. A series of bombings on the city's subway system in 2006 and an even more serious wave of attacks in 1993 had also resulted in the loss of hundreds of lives. In the 2006 attack,

the group responsible for the carnage had links to Islamic militants fighting against Indian control of the disputed northern border region of Kashmir. And in every instance, these acts of violence had served to inflame the sometimes tense and hostile relationship between the majority Hindu and minority Muslim population of Mumbai.

Ever since India and its neighbour Pakistan gained independence from the United Kingdom in 1947 and underwent a painful process of partition, Kashmir has been a major bone of contention between the two countries. The group initially held responsible for the most recent Mumbai attack was a previously unknown organization called the Deccan Mujahideen, or holy warriors of the Deccan region of southern India. But it soon became apparent that the faction that had masterminded the whole operation and trained those responsible for carrying it out was none other than Lashkar-e-Taiba (LET), an Islamic fundamentalist guerrilla group dedicated to ousting Indian forces from Kashmir. Although officially banned in Pakistan, where it maintains its base of operations, LET has been one of the *jihadi* groups of extremist Muslim holy warriors that various elements in Pakistan's government and military have covertly encouraged in their operations against India in Kashmir since the late 1980s.

In the immediate aftermath of the carnage in Mumbai, many in India called on their government to account for its failure to respond quickly and effectively to the attack. The navy had not been able to foresee or prevent the terrorists from attacking the city from the sea, and the military units called in from New Delhi, the country's capital, had been very slow

**Did you know . . .**

Asif Ali Zardari is the widower of the recently assassinated Benazir Bhutto.

to arrive and take up their positions. For the Indian government of Prime Minister Mahmoan Singh, dedicated to pursuing more peaceful relations with Pakistan, the attack could not have come at a worse time. Singh called on his Pakistani counterpart, Prime Minister Asif Ali Zardari, to mount a full investigation to determine who was responsible for ordering the attack and hand the culprits over to Indian authorities. For his part, Zardari claimed that his government was doing all it could to control groups such as LET, which were allied to the Taliban insurgents operating in Afghanistan against NATO forces, including Canadian troops.

Both India and Pakistan are nuclear powers that, over the past decades, have found themselves on the brink of war on numerous occasions. The Mumbai

attack, and the mutual finger-pointing of blame resulting from it, signified just the latest in a series of crises that have brought the two countries to all-out war on three occasions since independence. With Pakistan facing serious internal problems, and the ongoing war in Afghanistan becoming a major foreign-policy issue for U.S. President Barack Obama, the fallout from the Mumbai bombings could result in a deterioration of the already precarious and unstable situation in this troubled region of the world. For Canada, which faces the very real possibility of U.S. pressure to extend its troop mission in Afghanistan, and as the new homeland of many people of South Asian origin, both Indians and Pakistanis alike, the Mumbai tragedy and its possibly dangerous consequences are matters of considerable concern.

**To Consider**

1. Why was the terrorist attack on Mumbai so terrifying and unexpected?
2. In what ways was this attack similar to the events of September 11, 2001, in the United States?
3. What terrorist group was believed to be responsible for the attack? What is its main objective?
4. How did the Indian and Pakistani governments respond to the attack?
5. What are some of the possible consequences of the Mumbai attack for relations between India and Pakistan, and for the war in Afghanistan?
6. Why did the Mumbai attack resonate so strongly with South Asian Canadians?

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## *Video Review*

### Further Research

To learn more about India, visit CBC News In Depth: India at [www.cbc.ca/news/background/india/economic-miracle.html](http://www.cbc.ca/news/background/india/economic-miracle.html).

Watch the video and answer the following questions.

1. Why is Mumbai such an important and popular city in India?

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2. What were the main targets of the terrorist attack on the city on November 26, 2008?

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3. How were Canadians visiting Mumbai and their friends and relatives in Canada affected by the attack?

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4. What was the reaction of Prime Minister Stephen Harper to the attack?

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5. How many Canadians were in Mumbai at the time of the attack? How many were killed? \_\_\_\_\_

6. How long did it take the Indian army to crush the terrorists responsible for the attack? \_\_\_\_\_

7. What is the name of the group believed to be responsible for the attack? What is its main objective? Where is its base of operations located? With what other terrorist groups does it have connections?

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8. What demand has the U.S. government made to Pakistan in order to deal with the group believed responsible for the attack on Mumbai?

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9. Why will the investigation into the attack be difficult, given the state of relations between India and Pakistan?

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# THE TERRORIST ATTACK ON MUMBAI

## *The Attack*

Mumbai, once known as Bombay, is India's largest city, main commercial centre, and home to the world-renowned "Bollywood" film industry. It is a cosmopolitan, sophisticated city with many famous landmarks, including the Gate of India and the Taj Mahal Palace Hotel. The city attracts visitors from all over the world. In addition, many Indians from poorer parts of the country move to Mumbai to seek a better life. Its

population is around 18 million, making it one of the most populous cities in the world. It is a city with glaring income disparities between the super-rich Indian upper class that has benefited from the country's recent economic boom and the millions of impoverished slum residents who can barely eke out a living in the city's crowded streets and back alleys. The fast pace of life, occasional violence, and sheer excitement of Mumbai has been the subject of many Bollywood movies, along with international film hits such as *Salaam Bombay* and *Slumdog Millionaire*.

The terrorist attack that struck Mumbai in late November 2008 was only the most recent in a series of violent events that have occurred in the city over the past few decades. In 1993, a series of bombs were detonated around the city by an extremist Muslim group angry over the destruction of an ancient mosque by Hindu radicals. Similar incidents took place in 2002 and 2003, when tensions between India and Pakistan were at the breaking point over the disputed region of Kashmir. The most serious attack prior to 2008 occurred in July 2006 when 209 people were killed after the city's suburban railway network was the target of bombs. In every case, Indian police attributed the various attacks to two groups: the Students Islamic Movement of India (SIMI), an Islamic fundamentalist organization, and Lashkar-e-Taiba (LET), a movement based in Pakistan and dedicated to ending Indian control in Kashmir.

The attack that began on the evening of November 26, 2008, was quite different from the previous bombing incidents that had struck the city in the past. This time, the attackers arrived by sea from Pakistan. Then they boarded



India and Pakistan are nuclear-armed neighbours that have had several conflicts in the past. The region of Kashmir is one major source of dispute. Both governments have attempted to reduce tension; however, extremist elements, particularly in Pakistan continue to incite violence.

**Did you know . . .**

There were about 60 railway police in the Chhatrapati Shiva station, but most were equipped with batons or First World War-era weapons. They were no match for the heavily armed terrorists.

speed boats to enter the harbour in Colaba, one of Mumbai's most populated districts in the southern part of the city. Local fishermen told police that 10 Urdu-speaking men landed around 8 p.m., told them to "mind their own business," and then separated into two groups, heading for various points in the city.

Two of the terrorists, including the sole surviving member of the group, Ajmal Amir Kasab, struck the Chhatrapati Shiva Terminus, once known as Victoria Terminus, the city's main railway station, at 9:30 p.m. Armed with AK-47 assault weapons, they entered the main hall and opened fire, throwing grenades. At least 10 people were killed instantly. Meanwhile, two of Mumbai's most luxurious hotels, the Taj Mahal Palace and Tower and the Oberoi Trident were also struck. Two terrorists seized 15 hostages, including seven foreign tourists in the Taj Mahal. At the Oberoi, 40 people were held as hostages. The terrorists specifically targeted Americans and Britons as potential hostages by demanding to see their passports. Meanwhile, people eating dinner at the hotels' upscale restaurants were shot dead, as were others attempting to flee the scene. Grenade blasts started a serious fire in both hotels, severely damaging the century-old Taj. Indian Rapid Action Force commandos totaling 200 in number were dispatched from New Delhi to take control of the situation and free the hostages. Many prominent people, including a delegation of representatives from the European Parliament, were staying at the two hotels when they came under attack. Some of them were wounded, but none were killed.

Another target of the terrorists was the Nariman House, a Chabad Lubavitch ([www.chabad.org](http://www.chabad.org)) Orthodox Jewish community centre not far from the hotels. According to some accounts,

this was the prime target of the group, despite the fact that Jews compose a tiny fraction of Mumbai's mostly Hindu and Muslim population. It is believed that the terrorists wanted to strike at this centre to show their opposition to Israel's actions against the Palestinians in the Middle East. Before the siege at Nariman House was over, the rabbi and his pregnant wife were both dead, along with other hostages.

Another pair of terrorists moved into the Café Leopold, a bar popular with locals and foreigners alike, and began shooting randomly at waiters and customers. They killed at least eight people. By the morning of November 27, Indian military units and police had secured most of the locations the terrorists had targeted, but fighting was still raging inside the Taj Mahal Hotel, where a fire was burning out of control on the first floor. It was not until two days later that the last three terrorists holed up inside the Taj had been killed and the remaining hostages freed. In all, Indian security forces had rescued 250 people from the Oberoi, 300 from the Taj, and 60 of various nationalities from Nariman House. In total, 173 people had been killed in the attack—including nine of the 10 terrorists—and 308 had been wounded. The dead included a number of foreign tourists, including two Canadians. However, the vast majority of the victims were Indians, many of them poor people who lost their lives in the indiscriminate shooting at the railway station and other locations in the city. Some of the bodies that the Indian military retrieved from the scene revealed signs of torture and disfigurement.

The brazen and brutal strikes on so many locations in the busy downtown area of Mumbai showed all the hallmarks of a well-planned operation. Operating openly in crowded locations, the

terrorists knew the city well enough to vanish and then reappear after security forces had left the scene. It was reported that members of the group were receiving live television feeds inside the hotels where they had set up their bases, indicating to them what the security forces outside were planning to do to remove them. Eyewitnesses reported that the attackers were young men who

appeared to be enjoying the mayhem and slaughter they were perpetrating. Autopsies on the bodies of the dead terrorists indicated they had consumed quantities of LSD and cocaine prior to the attack in order to stay awake and maintain their energy for the operation.

Source: "2008 Mumbai attack," [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mumbai\\_attack](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mumbai_attack)

## Analysis

1. In what ways did the terrorist attack on Mumbai in November 2009 resemble and differ from previous violent incidents occurring in the city in the past?

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2. What evidence is there that the attack was an extremely well-planned, coordinated operation?

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3. Why were foreigners visiting Mumbai and the Jewish community centre viewed as prime targets?

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4. Why did it take so long for Indian security forces to eliminate the terrorists and end the violence?

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## *Eyewitness Accounts of the Attack*

### Further Research

The Taj Hotel is part of a luxury chain of hotels. To view the Taj Hotel before the attack, visit [www.tajhotels.com/cities/Mumbai/](http://www.tajhotels.com/cities/Mumbai/) and take a virtual tour of this sumptuous location.

Here is a summary of eyewitness accounts of the attacks from survivors who witnessed the horrific events at close range and lived to tell about them. Why do you think eyewitness reports are considered important in understanding a story? What drawbacks do eyewitness comments present in understanding events?

Fahrang Farzad Jehani is the owner of the Café Leopold, a popular 130-year-old bar and restaurant that is a Mumbai institution with a large foreign clientele. The café employs 60 people and is open seven days a week, from breakfast time to the wee hours of the morning. Like many Indians, Jehani is an avid cricket fan, and on the night of the attack, he was engrossed in a match he was watching on television in the upstairs bar. Suddenly he heard a loud blast from the street below, which sounded to him like grenades exploding. Looking down, he saw two young men outside the café, firing automatic weapons at random.

The firing continued for a few moments, while Jehani dove for cover on the floor. At that time, he thought that a gang war had broken out. Mumbai has frequently been the scene of such eruptions of localized violence between rival gangs of Hindus and Muslims competing for the city's lucrative drug trade. He then saw two of the shooters heading off in the direction of the nearby Taj Mahal Palace Hotel. By the time the shooting stopped and he thought it was safe he descended to the restaurant level of the café. There he was shocked to discover the dead bodies of two of his employees and six customers, including three foreigners. When he looked outside on to the street, he saw more bodies lying there. After about 20 minutes, the police arrived and left after briefly surveying the scene of carnage. In his view, they seemed to be clueless.

Jehani is determined to reopen the Café Leopold as soon as possible. He is proud of his establishment and wants his customers, both locals and foreign visitors alike, to feel at home there once again, despite the tragedy that occurred in late November 2008. However, he will have to reopen without extra security, since he cannot afford it. The way he sees it, "life has to go on."

Shi Xi Lin is a chef in the Golden Dragon Chinese Restaurant, one of the eating places located in the Taj Mahal Palace Hotel in Mumbai. Shi was born in Beijing, China, and has worked at the hotel for 11 years. His daughter, Shi Jingwei, lives with him in the hotel and attends a local college nearby.

Shi and his daughter were in their room when the shooting started. When the electricity went off he lit a candle for some light. Looking outside into the hallway, he heard shots ring out and realized that something terrible was taking place. He quickly shut the door. Soon after that the telephone rang. Someone shouted over the phone, telling him and his daughter to take cover under the bed. However, the space between the bed and the floor was too small for them to hide in. Instead, they took refuge in the bathroom, where they clung to each other for an excruciatingly long hour and a half, not knowing what would happen to them next. After what seemed like an eternity Shi heard someone knocking on the door, shouting to Shi and his daughter to follow him. As they left—in a hurry—they noticed bullet cartridges and shattered glass on the floor. They were taken down to the main lobby of the hotel where they were evacuated.

Shi has lived in Mumbai through some other violent episodes in the city's recent history, and has seen car bombs explode on the street outside the Taj Mahal Hotel.

**Did you know . . .**

Hundreds of lives were spared by the actions of waiters, chefs, and kitchen staff in the hotels that were attacked. They risked their lives to protect their guests and guide them to safety.

But this was the most frightening, up-close experience of terrorism he has yet lived through, one he hopes never to have to face again.

Madhu Kapoor was enjoying a quiet dinner with her husband, Ashok, and another couple in the Kandahar Restaurant, which specializes in Afghan food, in the luxurious Oberoi Trident Hotel the night the attacks began. In the middle of their meal, they heard shots that they took for fireworks. In India, many religious holidays, birthdays, and other celebrations are marked by the lighting of fireworks, so this sound is not unusual in Mumbai. The restaurant was crowded at the time, with over 100 people having dinner. Suddenly the staff asked everyone to leave. As Kapoor was exiting the dining room toward the lobby, she heard a voice call out “wait!”

Looking back, she saw a young man with a gun firing at an old man who had just left the restaurant. When she saw the victim fall down, she ran for her life. In the ensuing panic, she lost track of her husband, who she assumed had been left behind. When she reached the hotel lobby she found it in flames. She waited for hours after escaping for news of her husband, only to find out the next day that he had been killed in the attack on the hotel.

Pappu Mishra owns and operates one of busiest and most popular fast-food eateries in Mumbai’s ornate, Victorian-style train station, built by the British in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Once known as Victoria Terminus, its name was changed by the Hindu nationalist city government in the 1990s to Chhatrapati Shivaji station, in honour of a 17<sup>th</sup>-century Maratha warlord who fought against the Islamic Mughal rulers dominating India at that time. Viewers of the recent film *Slumdog Millionaire* will recognize the station as one of its most important locations.

The evening of the attacks, Mishra was on the upstairs level serving his customers when he noticed two well-dressed young men enter the waiting hall in front of the restaurant. They placed two knapsacks on the floor. One of them took out a gun, and the other proceeded to load a magazine with bullets. They then started shooting indiscriminately into the crowded area. One of the shooters wheeled around and began shooting in another direction. Bullets hit the glass windows of Mishra’s restaurant, hitting one of his employees, who is now on life-support in a Mumbai hospital.

Mishra saw one shooter walk up to the railway platform, firing all the while. People were falling left and right, while the shooters calmly picked them off at random. To him, they seemed to have no fear of any resistance from the unarmed, horrified victims all around them. Hiding in fear with his customers, Mishra realized he could not turn out the lights or lock the glass doors to keep the shooters out. He realized that they were “sitting ducks,” but somehow they survived. Instead of entering the restaurant, the gunmen continued walking down the platform, shooting anyone they spotted.

After about 10 terrifying minutes, the floor of the waiting hall was strewn with bodies and covered with blood. Mishra and others helped carry those who were still living to ambulances and cars outside so that they could be rushed to hospital. After about an hour and a half, the police finally arrived on the scene, made perfunctory inquiries, and then left. To Mishra, the police’s tardy response is typical of how violence is dealt with in Mumbai. In his opinion, there is no security or value placed on human life in his country.

Source: “Eyewitness: Mumbai survivors,” BBC News Online, [http://newsvote.bbc.co.uk/mpapps/pagetools/print/news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south\\_asia/775661](http://newsvote.bbc.co.uk/mpapps/pagetools/print/news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/775661)



# THE TERRORIST ATTACK ON MUMBAI

## *Three Perspectives on the Attack*

### Quote

"There were bodies everywhere. I felt like I was in a movie."  
— Andreina Varagona at the Oberoi Hotel (*Toronto Star*, November 30, 2008)

### 1. "Celebrity Terrorism" and Mumbai

Paul Cornish is the Chairman of Chatham House's International Security Program ([www.chathamhouse.org.uk](http://www.chathamhouse.org.uk)) in London, England, a leading counter-terrorism think tank. In his view, the main motive of the group of young terrorists who staged the daring and bloody attack on Mumbai was to achieve an exaggerated reaction to their deed from governments, the media, and public opinion. In his view the intensive world-wide television and online coverage that the Mumbai atrocities attracted was exactly what the terrorists were looking for, and is in some respects more significant than the event itself. As he notes, "how the attack is carried out, and what is done to whom, matters no more—and often rather less—than the way the attack is received, and the impact accorded to it."

Cornish states that the group initially held responsible for the carnage in Mumbai—the Deccan Mujahideen—was previously unknown even to respected terrorism experts like him. He thinks that this may be because it never actually existed at all. Responding to those who regarded the attack as a well-planned and thoroughly executed operation, he counters that such an undertaking may not be that difficult to mount, if those determined to cause so much mayhem are prepared to lose their lives while carrying it out. In his words, "small arms and grenades are not hard to find, boats are scarcely specialized equipment, and Mumbai is a vast, open city with more than enough soft targets."

Cornish has few doubts about the fact that the Mumbai terrorists were an extremist Islamic *jihadi* group with probable links to Pakistan's ISI

(Interservice Intelligence), the country's military intelligence unit notorious for its sponsorship of such organizations in Kashmir and Afghanistan. But he also thinks that the young men who so eagerly made themselves into killers and martyrs before the eyes of the world's media may have been motivated by more than religious or political fanaticism. Like lone killers such as the individuals responsible for mass shootings at Columbine High School in 1999 or Virginia Tech in 2007, these terrorists likely craved a brief moment of fame, which they instantly achieved in late November 2008. As Cornish concludes: "Welcome to the age of celebrity terrorism. The invitation to the world's D-list of malcontents reads as follows: No matter how corrupt your moral sense, how contorted your view of the world, how vapid and inarticulate your ideas, how talentless you are, and how exaggerated your grievances, an obsessive audience will watch your every move and turn you into what you most want to be, just before your death."

Source: "The age of celebrity terrorism," BBC News Online, [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south\\_asia/775568](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/775568)

### 2. Why do they hate Mumbai?

Suketu Mehta is a professor of journalism at New York University and an award-winning author. His book *Maximum City: Bombay Lost and Found* is a fascinating, in-depth look at the city where he spent his childhood and later returned to live with his family in the 1990s. In his view, Mumbai's sophisticated, cosmopolitan, business-like, and secular character is guaranteed to enrage and frustrate religious and political extremists of all stripes. To Mehta, the average

Mumbaiker, or Mumbai resident, is driven by *dhandha*, or the desire to succeed in business transactions. From the wealthy business executive or Bollywood movie star to the very poor street-vendor, people are drawn to Mumbai in order to get ahead and make money, in much the same way that Americans feel the attraction of New York City. Mehta once asked a poor Muslim man living in a shack without indoor plumbing why he chose to stay in the city. He answered, “Mumbai is a golden songbird.”

India leads the world in the production of feature films, and “Bollywood” is the nickname for the huge cinematic industry based in Mumbai. Many of the most popular films actually use familiar Mumbai landmarks—such as the opulent Taj Mahal Palace Hotel and the Gate of India, built on the harbour in Colaba to commemorate the visit of King George V to India—as background settings. To Mehta, the fact that the terrorists chose to stage their operation on such well-known sites indicates that they were copying the decision of Al Qaeda to drive hijacked airplanes into the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center in New York on September 11, 2001. In both cases, the terrorists were deliberately targeting symbols of a world they hated and wanted to destroy.

When Mehta was a young boy growing up in Mumbai, or Bombay, as he still prefers to call it, one’s religious affiliation was not that important. But since the 1990s, the city has been torn by religious tension between the majority Hindu and minority Muslim population. An extremist Hindu political party has held power at the municipal and state levels and has occasionally fanned the flames of hatred against Muslim Mumbaikers. In response, extremist Islamic groups have set off bombs in the city, killing many innocent people. For example, Hindu mobs rampaged through the streets of Mumbai

in 1993, burning alive many innocent Muslims. Now the terrorists attacking the city kill foreigners for the “crime” of visiting the city. Whether it is a wealthy businessman enjoying dinner with his wife at an upscale restaurant in the Taj Mahal Palace, or a young backpacker sipping a beer with his friends at the Café Leopold, such people are the sworn enemies of the terrorists. The message they want to send to the world is, “Stay away from Mumbai if you value your life.”

But Mehta hopes that visitors will not be frightened away from this beautiful and fascinating, if at times exasperating, city. He writes, “If the rest of the world wants to help, it should fly to Mumbai and spend money.” As for him, “I’m booking a flight to Mumbai. I’m going to get a beer at the Leopold, stroll over to the Taj for samosas at the Sea Lounge, and watch a Bollywood movie at the Metro. Stimulus doesn’t have to be just economic.”

Source: “What they hate about Mumbai,” *New York Times*, [www.nytimes.com/2008/opinion/29mehta.html](http://www.nytimes.com/2008/opinion/29mehta.html)

### 3. Mumbai and Kashmir

William Dalrymple is the Scottish-born author of many books about Indian history and culture, the most recent of which is *The Last Mughal: The Fall of a Dynasty*. Now living in New Delhi, he is a frequent commentator on Indian and Pakistani political issues. On a recent visit to the disputed border region of Kashmir he talked to a young Muslim surgeon who told him a horrific story of how Indian army units had stormed the hospital where he was trying to save the lives of unarmed protestors who had clashed with police earlier that day. Despite the fact that this doctor had no hatred of Hindus, the experience had embittered him against India and made him support the cause of Kashmiri independence.

Dalrymple recalled this conversation

after the Mumbai attacks, where a fanatical, extremist Islamic group had also attacked the city's hospitals in addition to the hotels, train station, and Jewish centre. In his view, the terrorism that struck Mumbai has to be viewed within the broader context of the ongoing dispute between India and Pakistan over Kashmir. But at an even broader level, Dalrymple feels that what happened in Mumbai is a direct response to what he regards as the total failure of Western and particularly United States foreign policy in the region since September 11, 2001. He believes that the actions of former U.S. president George W. Bush after the terrorist attack of that day have driven thousands of disaffected young Muslims into the waiting arms of terrorist groups eager to recruit them into the cause of "global *jihad*" against the West.

Dalrymple points to some alarming developments, such as the resurgence of the Taliban resistance to occupying NATO forces, including Canadians, in Afghanistan, and the collapse of the Pakistan government's control over the rebellious Northwest Frontier Province (NWFP) bordering Afghanistan. This lawless and troublesome region is believed to harbour many of the terrorist groups responsible for violence in both Afghanistan and Kashmir, and may be where Osama bin Laden, the leader of Al Qaeda, has found sanctuary. What has happened is that these *jihadi* groups, once armed, trained, and encouraged by the mysterious Interservice Intelligence (ISI)—the Pakistani security service—have taken on a life of their own and can no longer be controlled.

The *jihadis* who staged the attack on Mumbai were apparently not poor, uneducated Pakistani youths from the country brainwashed in Islamic schools, but relatively well-educated, middle-class adolescents from the cities. They have a

real hatred of the United States, Britain, Israel, and India for what is happening in Iraq, Afghanistan, Palestine, and Kashmir. Many South Asian Muslims, whether or not they support the violent deeds of the terrorists, see a direct parallel between the brutal Israeli occupation of Palestinian territory and the mistreatment of Muslims by the Indian army in Kashmir. Although Kashmir by rights should have been part of Pakistan at the time of partition in 1947, given that it had a majority Muslim population, the pro-Hindu maharajah handed it over to India instead. At first, Kashmiri Muslims staged a peaceful movement to regain their autonomy, but this was stymied by the rigged elections of 1987. Since then, the anti-Indian protests have turned more violent, with radical groups conducting military actions against occupying Indian forces, who in turn have responded with heavy-handed repression. India and Pakistan have fought three wars over Kashmir and nearly came to a full-scale nuclear conflict over the region in 1999. In the meantime, over 70 000 Kashmiris have lost their lives.

Dalrymple holds the governments of both India and Pakistan responsible for the crisis and the terrorist violence it has triggered. He believes that Pakistan must do much more to rein in the *jihadis*, but that India must show more restraint against Muslims in Kashmir. In the long term, he believes that peace between the two rivals and greater stability in the whole region of South Asia will not come until the issue of Kashmir is finally resolved to the satisfaction of all parties. Until then, he fears that there may be even more atrocities like the Mumbai attack.

Source: "Mumbai atrocities highlight need for solution in Kashmir," *The Guardian*, [www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2008/nov/30/mumbai-terror-attack-india1/print](http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2008/nov/30/mumbai-terror-attack-india1/print)



