

Terrorist bombing in Mumbai. Pakistan versus the US: Moving on

By [Eric Walberg](#)

Global Research, July 22, 2011

22 July 2011

Region: [Asia](#)
Theme: [Terrorism](#)

The latest Mumbai bombings were not the work of Pakistani extremists, but reflect the unrest thanks to America's continued reckless policies of escalation in the region.

India has shown admirable restraint, refusing to accuse its Western neighbour following the triple bombing in India's financial capital Mumbai last week which killed 19 people and injured 129. The area targetted, with its gem and precious-metal traders, witnessed bombings in 1993, 2004 and 2006, culminating in the November 2008 siege of Mumbai, in which 166 people died.

No group has claimed responsibility for the attacks, and Home Minister Palaniappan Chidambaram said, "All groups hostile to India are on the radar." He has a point, as there are many Indian insurgents, including Maoist rebels, Kashmiri separatists and Islamic militants, fed up with the harsh neoliberal policies of successive governments and the aggressive Hindu nationalism of recent years.

India's own Mujahideen have claimed responsibility for a number of attacks in the country since 2007, relying on Pakistan's Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) for ideological and physical training. Pakistani militants increase tensions between India and Pakistan to divert attention from their activities in Kashmir and to divert resources from the war in Afghanistan. So there probably is some connection with Pakistan.

India remains committed to recently renewed peace talks, and Pakistani Prime Minister Yousaf Raza Gilani expressed satisfaction at the resolve of both Pakistan and India to continue their bilateral dialogue, and "not get deterred by terrorists' designs to derail the dialogue once again".

Attention immediately turned to other possible targets of terrorist bombings. The 225-metre high Bhakra Dam, located near the border between Punjab and Himachal Pradesh, India's first and biggest hydro-electric project, former prime minister Jawaharlal Nehru's "temple of resurgent India" completed in 1963, is high on the hit-list of LeT and the Jamaat-ud-Dawa (JuD). LeT/JuD allege that India has been hogging the water from rivers flowing into Pakistan through Jammu and Kashmir, Punjab and Himachal Pradesh by unilateral construction of dams.

So what is the US doing to calm the waters which it has stirred up over the past decade? After its own unilateral destruction of Osama bin Laden in May, US-Pakistani relations have plunged. The descent reached a new low last week, when the Obama administration announced it would withhold \$800 million in military aid to Pakistan, more than a third of Washington's annual gift horse. The final straw for the US was the refusal of Pakistani

officials — after a CIA tip-off — to attack Afghan Taliban bomb-making sites inside Pakistan, supposedly allowing the bomb-makers to escape. The IMF also decided to hold back the sixth tranche of an \$11 billion loan, but that, of course, had nothing to do with the US.

In retaliation for the cut in funding, Pakistan's defence minister threatened to withdraw some of his soldiers from the border areas, including over 1,100 border checkpoints. This follows marching orders Pakistan gave to 100 US Special Forces soldiers who were training the Frontier Corps.

Despite the obvious freeze in relations, in response to the Mumbai blasts US officials pressed Pakistan to let them help build its civilian law enforcement capacity, and the spy chiefs of Pakistan and the United States reported made progress in renewing ties. Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) Chief Ahmad Shuja Pasha went to Washington last week to meet with acting CIA Director Michael Morell. "This visit has put the intelligence component back on track completely," said Pasha. Referring to the assassination of bin Laden, he added, "We have had difficulties since May 2. Those difficulties are being addressed."

But few are convinced by these diplomatic niceties, especially in the US, which is already shifting its strategy to greater unilateral use of drones and covert activity to be coordinated by the new CIA director General David Petraeus. Drone attacks have been escalating since Obama took office. On 11 May four separate strikes killed over 50 people. Earlier this week 48 people were killed in two strikes. Petraeus will no doubt up the ante: even as lowly CIA chief, he will still command a robotic air force and a small army of US-Afghan paramilitaries.

The world is taking note. Campaigners against US drone strikes in Pakistan, led by Reprieve's Clive Stafford Smith and Pakistani lawyers, are seeking an international arrest warrant from an Islamabad judge for the CIA's former legal chief John Rizzo, accused of murder for approving attacks that killed hundreds of people. Opponents of drones say the unmanned aircraft are responsible for the deaths of 2,500 Pakistanis in 260 attacks since 2004. This prompted UN Special Rapporteur Philip Alston to demand that the US demonstrate that it was not simply running a programme killing innocent people with no accountability. And it's not just Pakistanis that are being murdered. Last week, a US drone strike in southern Yemen killed at least 50 people, almost all civilians.

Now retired, 63-year-old Rizzo is being pursued after admitting in an interview with Newsweek that starting in 2004 he approved one drone attack order a month on targets in Pakistan, even though the US is not at war with Pakistan. Rizzo, who also admits he was "up to my eyeballs" in approving CIA use of "enhanced interrogation techniques", said in the interview that the CIA operated "a hit list". He supervised civilian operators, effectively unlawful combatants, as they conducted drone strikes from their computer terminals at CIA headquarters in Virginia.

And while the Pakistani government has not yet managed to evict the US from its drone bases, it has already started to turn to China for military support. In the wake of the suspension of US military assistance, the Chinese government immediately offered to provide enhanced assistance. ISI chief Pasha visited China twice after the bin Laden episode and before his recent trip to Washington. "China will stand by Pakistan in every thick and thin [sic], but it must be watchful of the environment around it," Pasha was assured by his Chinese counterpart.

China has been supporting Pakistan's military since the days of Mao Zedong. During the past decade, Pakistan began jointly producing the JF-17 Thunder fighter plane with China, and the Pakistan Navy is planning to purchase up to six new submarines from Beijing. Chinese Foreign Affairs Ministry Asian Affairs Director Luo Zhao Hui recently called for promoting the "river civilisation", referring to Pakistan's Indus River, pointing to the Gwadar port, Karakorum Highway, and JF-17 as China's contribution.

No doubt Chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff Michael Mullen was briefed on all this before his own visit to China last week, during which Chinese General Chen Bingde, chief of the General Staff of the People's Liberation Army, boldly weighed in on Obama's ongoing tussle to rein in the deficit: "If the US could reduce its military spending a bit and spend more on improving the livelihood of the American people ... wouldn't that be a better scenario?" Chen's message was as much to its neighbours — that they shouldn't rely too much on US support, despite this week's US-Vietnamese naval exercises. Chen criticised the timing of US military exercises in the South China Sea as "inappropriate". Before the financial crisis, Chinese officials were much less outspoken.

The new Great Game playing field in Eurasia is taking shape before our eyes. It can be glimpsed by noting China's vigorous courting of key players in the region Pakistan and Russia. And by India's commitment to work with Pakistan, and its improved relations with China, exemplified by its regular presence at SCO gatherings and yearly RIC summits with China and Russia. Even more telling are the good relations of all of the above with key neighbour Iran, possibly morphing RIC into RIIC sometime in the future.

Look behind any major political trouble spot in Eurasia and you see US interference as the underlying cause, a sad fact corroborated by Zogby's latest opinion poll of the Arab world, even outstripping for most of them Israel's illegal occupation of Palestinian lands. But while Obama fiddles with drones in the wilderness, US officials are now being put on Interpol's list of terrorists, and the region's key players are moving on, preparing for the day when the helicopters ferry out the last US troops from Afghanistan, leaving the RICs with a nightmare, but at least a nightmare without the complications that US belligerence brings.

Eric Walberg writes for Al-Ahram Weekly <http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/> You can reach him at <http://ericwalberg.com/> His Postmodern Imperialism is available at <http://claritypress.com/Walberg.html>

The original source of this article is Global Research
Copyright © [Eric Walberg](#), Global Research, 2011

[Comment on Global Research Articles on our Facebook page](#)

[Become a Member of Global Research](#)

Articles by: [Eric Walberg](#)

About the author:

Canadian Eric Walberg is known worldwide as a journalist specializing in the Middle East, Central Asia

and Russia. A graduate of University of Toronto and Cambridge in economics, he has been writing on East-West relations since the 1980s. He has lived in both the Soviet Union and Russia, and then Uzbekistan, as a UN adviser, writer, translator and lecturer. Presently a writer for the foremost Cairo newspaper, Al Ahram, he is also a regular contributor to Counterpunch, Dissident Voice, Global Research, Al-Jazeera and Turkish Weekly, and is a commentator on Voice of the Cape radio. Eric Walberg was a moderator and speaker at the Leaders for Change Summit in Istanbul in 2011.

Disclaimer: The contents of this article are of sole responsibility of the author(s). The Centre for Research on Globalization will not be responsible for any inaccurate or incorrect statement in this article. The Centre of Research on Globalization grants permission to cross-post Global Research articles on community internet sites as long the source and copyright are acknowledged together with a hyperlink to the original Global Research article. For publication of Global Research articles in print or other forms including commercial internet sites, contact: publications@globalresearch.ca

www.globalresearch.ca contains copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available to our readers under the provisions of "fair use" in an effort to advance a better understanding of political, economic and social issues. The material on this site is distributed without profit to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving it for research and educational purposes. If you wish to use copyrighted material for purposes other than "fair use" you must request permission from the copyright owner.

For media inquiries: publications@globalresearch.ca