

The Mumbai Massacre

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Last week the world was stunned by the bloody scenes of carnage in the aftermath of the terrorist onslaught across Mumbai (formerly Bombay). The attack, which began late Wednesday night extended over ten different sites in India's financial capital. It struck Mumbai's two best-known luxury hotels and other landmarks in the city of 18 million. It was carried out by a small group of gunmen, who had apparently arrived by sea, split into groups to attack multiple targets across the city, including the main railway station and a hospital. TV channels described the attacks as "India's 9/11."

The massacre was not brought to a close until Saturday morning. Finally, two and a half days, the final standoff at the Taj Mahal hotel was over, as Indian commandos took the building by force. The Taj, filled with terrified civilians, was a grim sight. "Bodies were strewn all over the place, and there was blood everywhere," a commando said. "Terrorists are far more advanced today. We didn't realize that they had satellite phones for communication or that they would be so advanced and use incendiary bombs," one commando said. The siege was particularly troubling because "they didn't spare women or children." To date, 188 people have been killed and nearly 300 injured.

Azam Amir Kasab, 21, the only terrorist to survive, told authorities that he was ordered to kill "until the last breath," and that the attacks involved just 10 terrorists, who hoped to kill 5,000 people, targeting mostly "whites, preferably Americans and British," according to a report in The Mail on Sunday. It seems the operation was carefully planned six months ago. The terrorists reportedly posed as students during a visit to Mumbai a month ago to familiarize themselves with the city's roads and to film the "strike locations."

Indian investigators said today the terrorists underwent months of commando training in Pakistan. The latest report from Reuters this morning underlined the hypothesis of a Pakistan connection, which is universally accepted in India. Two senior investigators told Reuters on condition of anonymity that evidence from the interrogation of Azam Amir Kasab clearly showed that Pakistani extremists had a hand in the attack. The clean-shaven, 21-year-old with fluent English was photographed during the attack wearing a black t-shirt emblazoned with the Versace logo. He has said his team took orders from "their command in Pakistan," police officials said.

According to a police officer close to the interrogation, who spoke to Reuters on condition of anonymity, the terrorists were trained by the Lashkar-e-Taiba group, under the direction of a former member of the Pakistani army. Another senior Indian officer told Reuters: "They underwent training in several phases, which included training in handling weapons, bomb making, survival strategies, survival in a marine environment and even dietary habits".

U.S. and Indian officials are investigating the possibility that the attackers arrived off the

coast of Mumbai in a large ship and then boarded smaller boats before initiating their attack, the paper said. A US counterterrorism official said there was strong evidence that Lashkar-e-Taiba had a "maritime capability" and would have been able to mount the sophisticated operation in Mumbai.

Indian security officers believe many of the gunmen may have reached the city using a rubber dinghy found near the site of the attacks. On Saturday the Indian navy said it was investigating whether a trawler found drifting off the coast of Mumbai, with a bound corpse on board, was used in the attack. Navy spokesman Capt. Manohar Nambiar said the trawler, named Kuber, had been found Thursday and was brought to Mumbai. Officials said they believe the boat had sailed from a port in the neighbouring state of Gujarat. Indian authorities stopped a cargo ship off the western coast of Gujarat that had sailed from Saudi Arabia and handed it over to police for investigation.

A reactionary provocation

The authorship of these atrocities has still not been established, although a little-known group calling itself Deccan Mujahideen claimed responsibility early on. There are many theories but few hard facts. But one thing is quite clear: This was a completely reactionary provocation, which benefits only the most counterrevolutionary forces in Indian and Pakistan society.

The massacre has struck a heavy blow against the moves towards improving relations between India and Pakistan. In the last few days the streets of Mumbai and other Indian cities have witnessed angry demonstrations with some people demanding war with Pakistan. Whoever was behind the attack must have anticipated and desired this response.

Inevitably the Indian authorities and some other Indian security analysts are pointing an accusing finger at Pakistan. Pakistan has denied that its government had anything to do with the attacks. These denials are almost certainly true, although they do not preclude Pakistani involvement. However, the possibility that the Mumbai atrocities were planned and orchestrated within India itself cannot be discounted. India is no stranger to terrorist violence. It has been shaken repeatedly by terror attacks in recent years. Mumbai itself has been hit by terror attacks before.

In March 1993, Muslim underworld figures linked to Pakistani terrorists allegedly carried out a series of bombings on Mumbai's stock exchange. Those attacks killed 257 people and wounded more than 1,100. On the evening of 11 July 2006 there was a series of eight bomb explosions at seven locations on local trains and stations in Mumbai during peak traveling hours. 52 people were killed in those bombings. In July 2007 a series of seven blasts ripped through railway trains and commuter rail stations, killing about 190 commuters.

India has witnessed a series of terror attacks in recent months. In May, at least 80 people were killed by a series of blasts in the tourist city of Jaipur. In July, about 50 were killed by a series of explosions in the western city of Ahmedabad. Last month, about 60 people died in Assam, in India's north-east, in similar circumstances. These attacks are usually blamed on Muslim militants, but Hindu fanatics have also been involved in bloody terrorist acts. In recent weeks, police have rounded up 10 members of what they say is its first Hindu terror cell. Among those arrested are a serving army officer and a Hindu priest.

The arrest of an Indian army officer adds a new element into the equation. There are

elements in both the Pakistan and Indian army who have never been reconciled to the peace process and fear being sold out by America. The Islamic extremists get most publicity, but there are plenty of Hindu, Jewish and Christian extremists too. The opposition Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is based on Hindu chauvinism and there are many more sinister elements to the right of the BJP: the RSS, VHP and the Shiv Sena (Army of Shiva). They have links with the armed forces and intelligence services in India that mirror the links of the jihadi groups with the Pakistan armed forces and the ISI.

The conditions of the masses in both India and Pakistan are increasingly desperate. Unemployment, poverty, rising food and energy prices – all this makes life for millions of people unbearable. In India the election of the Congress government gave rise to hopes that were soon dashed. In Pakistan, too, the election of the PPP government has solved nothing for the masses. Both Manmohan Singh and Zardari are in trouble and the right wing opposition in both countries wish to take full advantage of the situation.

In the aftermath of the Mumbai attacks there has been sharp criticism of India's alleged lack of preparedness and the conduct of its intelligence services. The sharpest attacks came from the domestic press. This noisy campaign is directed against the ruling Congress government. The growing fury of the masses is also directed against Congress, which is blamed for the intelligence lapses many Indians believe let these gunmen kill 188 people and besiege India's financial capital for three days.

Already two top politicians from the ruling party have resigned, and Congress faces defeat in a series of state elections. The bomb attacks on Indian cities this year – with threats that more would follow – benefit the right wing opposition Bharatiya Janata Party. They have given the chauvinist a stick to beat the ruling party in the run-up to elections due by May. All this is undermining Congress' grip on power, which was already shaky. The latest issue of The Economist writes:

"India's friends and neighbours can hope for a measured reaction, but they should not assume it. After an attack on its national parliament in 2001, India mobilized hundreds of thousands of troops on the border with Pakistan. The Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), then in power, routinely accuses its successor, the Congress party, of being soft on terrorism. The desperate spectacle in Mumbai could damage Congress's prospects in pending state polls and even cost it the next general election, which must be held by May. The BJP is now choosing its words carefully but a front-page newspaper advert, presumably commissioned before the Mumbai attacks, accused Congress of being 'incapable and unwilling' to fight terror; a sentiment illustrated with a large splatter of blood."

Is it possible that this latest provocation was organized and planned on Indian soil in order to sabotage the thaw between India and Pakistan and create a wave of chauvinism and war hysteria that would benefit the Indian reactionaries and undermine the Congress government? Such a hypothesis cannot be ruled out. However, the pattern of Hindu extremist violence is very different to what we saw last week. These elements specialize in whipping up mobs for pogroms against the Moslems in India's cities and villages.

This attack – a combination of grenades and automatic weapons – was quite different. The choice of targets underlines the possibility that this was a group connected with Islamic fundamentalism. The fact that they singled out a Jewish centre and killed Israeli hostages (including a US-based rabbi and his wife) is significant. The targeting of Jews lends support to the view that the attack was organized by Islamic fanatics. There is no history of

animosity towards Jews on the part of Hindu extremists.

Similarly, the fact that they singled out British and American people links this attack to Islamic fundamentalism. Witnesses said the attackers had specifically rounded up people with US and British passports. The way in which the massacre was carried out is in line with the well-known methods of al-Qaeda. There was no warning message and the gunmen killed men, women and children without mercy. They intended to kill as many people as possible, as in the 9/11 attacks, the London bombings and the atrocity in Madrid.

The other significant point is that the gunmen were well-prepared and well armed. Their detailed knowledge of the targets suggests that they had reconnoitred at least some targets ahead of time. They were also carrying large bags of almonds to keep up their energy. This was no bunch of amateur fanatics but a professionally-trained, well-organized group. "It's obvious they were trained somewhere. ... Not everyone can handle the AK series of weapons or throw grenades like that," an unidentified member of India's Marine Commando unit told reporters. He said the men were "very determined and remorseless" and ready for a long siege. One backpack they found had 400 rounds of ammunition inside. The question is: who trained them and where?

In the past, U.S. and Indian intelligence services have used communications intercepts to tie Kashmiri militants to terrorist strikes. According to one Indian intelligence official, during the siege the militants have been using non-Indian cell phones and receiving calls from outside the country. The implication is that these calls were made to Pakistan.

Indignation in Pakistan

Lashkar-e-Taiba has denied any involvement in the Mumbai killings and condemned the attacks. The chief of the United Jihad Council, an umbrella group for over a dozen Kashmiri militant groups, also denied any role in the Mumbai attack. "We very strongly condemn the attacks on innocent civilians in Mumbai and say it categorically that none of the Kashmiri freedom fighting groups has anything to do with it," group leader Syed Salahuddin said. Pakistan has asked for evidence of the involvement of anyone in Pakistan, but India, it seems, has so far not supplied any. Pakistan denies the allegations and says it only ever gave moral and diplomatic support for Kashmiri freedom fighters. But the Indians will greet this claim with scepticism.

The Pakistani media immediately protested that Islamabad should not be held responsible for the carnage in India's financial hub and the peace process should not be derailed. Pakistan's leading dailies have warned against the "blame-game", arguing that it would hamper the ongoing efforts to normalize relations between the two countries. "India gives Pakistan a dirty look," said a headline in the Daily News, while another paper said Indian intelligence was under fire and seeking to lay the blame elsewhere. The Dawn argued that the two countries "without apportioning blame on each other should cooperate in the investigation to make them productive."

"Although one can understand the anger and concern which is widely felt, one would still advice the exercise of restraint in this hour of crisis," the paper said. "There is need for confidence-building between the two countries." The same tone of sweetness and light was adopted by the Pakistan Daily Times, which said that both India and Pakistan faced the same threat of terrorism and needed to work out a "cooperative strategy". This is very

much in line with the views of Washington, which wishes to avoid a confrontation between Islamabad and New Delhi at all costs. Unfortunately, the tensions between the two countries have a logic of their own that may be difficult to control.

The condemnation of the atrocity in Pakistan's official circles has been swift and unusually outspoken. Pakistan President Asif Ali Zardari promised that he would take immediate and strong measures if proof was provided of Pakistani involvement. He warned India on Saturday against any "over-reaction" after the militant attacks in Mumbai and vowed the "strictest" action if Pakistani involvement was proved.

"Whoever is responsible for the brutal and crude act against the Indian people and India are looking for reaction," Zardari said in an interview with Indian CNN-IBN television. "We have to rise above them and make sure ourselves, yourself and world community guard against over-reaction." These are strong words and go far further than any concessions made to India by the leaders of Pakistan in the past.

The reason for this is twofold: firstly, Zardari mortally fears a war with India that would certainly lead to his downfall in the near future. Secondly, he and his government are entirely subordinate to the interests of Washington, which he hopes will pay his bills and keep his bankrupt country afloat. "This is a world threat and all the more reason we have to stand up against this threat together," he said, echoing Mr. Bush's mantra of the global war on terror.

The involvement of the official rulers of Pakistan in this affair may therefore be safely discounted. There remain, however, the unofficial rulers of Pakistan, who in reality hold much more power in their hands than the elected government and President. We refer to the ISI, Pakistan's sinister Intelligence Services that constitute a state within the state, has close contacts with the Taliban and al-Qaeda and is constantly involved in all kinds of shady activities beyond the control of the government, the foreign office and judiciary.

It is quite clear that elements in the ISI were behind the assassination of Benazir Bhutto. They would like to destabilize the Zardari government, which they see as too close to the Americans. They would like to halt the actions of the Pakistan army against the Taliban in the tribal areas. The ISI hates India, and is opposed to the peace negotiations. They therefore had every motive to launch a secret operation aimed at provoking India and simultaneously destabilizing the PPP government. A war with India would be ideal from their point of view, as it would bring the war against the Taliban to an abrupt halt, stir up anti-Indian feeling in the population and create the conditions for a coup that would bring to power the army, the ISI and the Islamic fundamentalists. There are also powerful economic interests involved here. The real motivation of the so-called fundamentalists is not the Koran but the lucrative trade in drugs that has flourished thanks to the war in Afghanistan.

In order to deflect the blame from Islamabad, some Pakistan commentators have advanced the theory that this was the work of Hindu extremists. "Ongoing investigations into some [past] terrorist attacks that were alternately blamed on Indian Muslims and Pakistan have shown that they were actually carried out by a Hindu terrorist network," the Daily Times said. That is perfectly true, but on this occasion the facts do not fit the hypothesis of an attack by Hindu fundamentalists. Every aspect of this massacre points to the jihadis and the ISI that manipulates the fanatics for their own interests.

State within a state

The Pakistani government on Saturday first said it would send Lieutenant-General Arshad Shujaa, the powerful chief of the Inter Services Intelligence (ISI), to New Delhi to “help with enquiries”. This had apparently been the request of Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh. Then the Pakistani government changed its tune, saying only that it would send “a member of the military’s Inter-Services Intelligence agency”. Finally, in an abrupt (and unexplained) somersault, Islamabad said that it was unlikely that any Pakistani intelligence officer would be going to India in the near future.

This clearly indicated a crisis. Why was this mission aborted? Government sources said the change came after “reservations in top military circles” over the unprecedented move. “The military leadership was not consulted before an announcement was made to the media regarding the decision to send the ISI chief to India,” a senior government official said. “Reservations” is code for a blazing row in which the Pakistan military refused to obey the order of the government to go to India. This little detail is significant and can be explained by the tensions between the government and the ISI.

For many years the army, and particularly ISI, was notorious for making and unmaking politicians, political parties and governments. The ISI political wing was originally established by PPP founder Zulfikar Ali Bhutto while he was in power to keep an eye on his political enemies. It later turned against him and participated in his overthrow and judicial murder. The ISI would later turn against his daughter Benazir, first by setting up a political party – the Islamic Jhamoori Ittehad led by Nawaz Sharif – against her in the 1988 elections, and later by plotting to overthrow her government. The ISI was also named in the reported rigging of the 2002 elections.

The creation of the pro-Musharraf Pakistan Muslim League (Q) was also the handiwork of the ISI. It systematically worked on politicians in the Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz) and in the PPP to break away and join the new party that was created especially to provide political backing and legitimacy to General (retired) Musharraf. It was undoubtedly implicated in the assassination of Benazir Bhutto.

The ISI had the support of the CIA, which conspired with it to further the cause of the anti-Soviet Mujahadin in Afghanistan. But when Washington came into conflict with the Taliban and invaded Afghanistan, a rift opened up with the ISI, many of whose leaders have personal interests in Afghanistan and are heavily involved in the drug trade and remain committed to the cause of the Taliban.

Musharraf played a double game, maintaining an uneasy balance between the Americans and the fundamentalists and the ISI. The election of the PPP-led government gave Washington the possibility of strengthening its hold on Islamabad. Under pressure from the Americans, Zardari tried to take over the ISI some months ago but had to back off hastily when the Army showed its teeth. More recently there were reports that the ISI political wing has “either been disbanded or made inactive”. Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi told journalists that the political wing had been shut down. He called it a “positive development.” However, in the same breath, he described the ISI as “a precious national institution” and said it wanted to focus fully on counter-terrorism activities.

These words show how terrified Pakistan’s politicians are of the ISI and indicate the limitations of their scope for action in relation to it. Later reports seemed to have confirmed that the “political wing” of the ISI was to be closed down. Not only was the political wing to be disbanded, but the officials working there were said to have been given “other

assignments". These "assignments" were linked to counter-intelligence, which was supposed to be the agency's original role. But to place the same officials who have spent years engaged in political intrigue once more in counter-intelligence is merely to shuffle the cards in the same pack. What is to stop these gentlemen engaging in the same murky game of intrigue in their new positions? The answer to this question is fairly straightforward.

The Dawn newspaper commented the ISI should be able to concentrate more on intelligence about terrorist activity not distracted by its political duties. This was naïve in the extreme. In all countries, including the most "democratic", the secret services act like a state within the state. They meddle in politics and spy even on Cabinet Ministers and other political leaders. In a state like Pakistan, where democracy exists only on condition that it accepts an army boot on its neck, to demand that the ISI should not meddle in politics is plain stupid.

The army rules

Ever since Pakistan was established as a state, the army has staged a coup every seven years or so. Military dictatorships alternate with weak democratic regimes in a perpetual game of musical chairs. And even when the generals graciously hand over the trappings of government to the civilians, they still expect to exercise a determining influence over policy, monitoring and managing political activities inside and outside the government. The idea that henceforth the agency would refrain from meddling in politics flies in the face of all experience.

One can imagine the anger in the upper echelons of the ISI at this attempt to trim their claws. It may well have been this that sparked off the recent action in Mumbai. In order to embarrass the Zardari government, and to strengthen the hand of the military in general and the intelligence services in particular, what better than to stir up trouble with India, and this take the heat off the ISI and their Taliban allies? The motive was certainly present, as was their ability to carry it out. The ISI secretly sponsors, arms, trains and finances jihadi groups, which it can manipulate for its own sinister purposes, like the assassination of Benazir Bhutto. It would have been a simple matter to dispatch a small suicide mission to Mumbai. The lives of young fanatics are just small change for these gentlemen, and the political and military dividends of provoking a clash with India represent a handsome return on such a modest investment. As the atmosphere of mutual distrust and suspicion grows, so does the risk of an armed clash between the two states. This would mean many more people killed and wounded than those in Mumbai. But war also would mean that the military (and the ISI) would be back in the saddle. And what are a few tens or hundreds of thousands of lives compared to that?

With every day that passes, recriminations are mounting in India and this is generating an increasingly ugly and dangerous anti-Pakistan mood, raising tensions between the nuclear-armed states. New Delhi has not accused the Pakistan government of involvement but has expressed its frustration that Islamabad has been unable or unwilling to prevent militants using its soil to stage terrorist attacks in India.

This situation suits the right wing extremists, religious fanatics and chauvinists on both sides. It also suits the army generals of both countries. There are others too who would like to see another war between India and Pakistan: the arms traders, gangsters and drug barons. There is a link between the fundamentalists, terrorists and criminal gangs involved in gun-smuggling. Above all, a war would serve as a means of diverting the attention of the mass of poor people who are suffering terribly as a result of the crisis. It would undermine

the PPP government in Islamabad and the Congress government in New Delhi, preparing the way for more right wing regimes in both countries.

The interests of imperialism

Although Washington is very interested in India, especially from an economic point of view, in the short term it cannot dispense with Pakistan, whose army is fighting a war against the Taliban in the tribal areas that lie on the frontier with Afghanistan. Therefore the warnings from Islamabad will alarm the United States and other governments with troops in Afghanistan. Pakistan currently has around 100,000 troops in the border areas, and the army is fighting Islamist militants in several tribal regions. The country's support is therefore crucial to efforts to defeat the insurgency in Afghanistan.

Washington must therefore strive to keep both India and Pakistan happy. It does not want a war. The FBI rushed to send a team of agents to India to help investigate, and a second group is on alert if needed. President Bush issued a statement on Friday, saying the wounded were "in his thoughts and prayers": "My administration has been working with the Indian government and the international community as Indian authorities work to ensure the safety of those still under threat. We will continue to cooperate against these extremists who offer nothing but violence and hopelessness." In reality, it is US imperialism - the most counterrevolutionary force on the planet - that offers nothing but violence and hopelessness and is spreading wars and terror throughout the world in defence of its own predatory interests.

President-elect Barack Obama also expressed condolences about what he called "outrageous terrorist attacks in Mumbai," and said he fully supported the Bush administration's efforts to protect US citizens in India:

"The United States must stand with India and all nations and people who are committed to destroying terrorist networks, and defeating their hate-filled ideology," he said in a statement. Senior Bush administration officials met on Friday afternoon for more discussions about the attacks, said White House spokeswoman Dana Perino. She said they were focused on "ensuring everything possible is being done to help American citizens affected by these horrible attacks."

In reality, the tears shed in Washington are of the crocodile variety, and crocodiles are very dangerous animals. It was the USA that originally created and nurtured the monster of Islamic fundamentalism as part of its Cold War against the USSR. It was the USA that created Bin Laden and his terrorist gang in their war to expel Russia from Afghanistan. It was the USA that encouraged and armed the Taliban for the same purpose. And it was the USA that created and sustained the criminal dictatorship in Pakistan and worked hand in glove with his Intelligence Agency, the ISI. Now the dog has bit the hand of its master and the master wishes to have the dog put down. But this is easier to say than to do!

Now they are waging a "war on terror" everywhere, which provides them with a convenient excuse to intervene in the internal affairs of any country in the world, to bully, to bomb and to invade with impunity. At present they are waging a bloody war in Afghanistan against their former friends and allies the Taliban and al-Qaeda. This war is killing large numbers of innocent men, women and children every day. But George W. Bush, who is the biggest terrorist in the world, reserves his tears for such cases of terrorism that do not serve his interests.

Barack Obama has not yet taken possession of the Oval Office but is already coming out in his true colours. He has already said that he intends to pull US troops out of Iraq – and send them to fight in Afghanistan. For this purpose he needs the support of the government of Pakistan, and therefore a war between Pakistan and India is the last thing he needs. Pakistan would divert troops to its border with India and away from fighting militants on the Afghan frontier, if tensions erupt in the wake of the attacks on Mumbai, a senior Pakistani security official said on Saturday. “If something happens on that front, the war on terror won’t be our priority,” the senior security officer told journalists at a briefing. “We’ll take out everything from the western border. We won’t leave anything there.”

This is no idle threat. Pakistan and India have fought three wars since gaining independence from Britain in 1947. Since both sides now possess nuclear weapons, the danger is very clear. New Delhi said on Sunday it was raising security to a “war level” and had no doubt of a Pakistani link to the terrorist attacks in Mumbai. But a war would definitely not suit the interests of US imperialism, whose main concern in the area is the energetic prosecution of the war in Afghanistan. Pakistan cannot fight a war on two fronts! If it is fighting India it cannot fight the Taliban. This is the real motivation for Bush’s tears and Obama’s earnest pleas for Peace.

America’s real concern

What worries U.S. officials is the possibility of a flare-up in animosity similar to one that occurred after Pakistani militants attacked the Indian parliament in December 2001. Prompted by these fears, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice has called the foreign minister of India twice, along with Pakistani President Asif Ali Zardari, since the crisis began. “There were very worrying tensions in the region,” said Gordon Duguid, a State Department spokesman. “She was calling the president of Pakistan to get his read on how those tensions might be affected.”

The Secretary of State downplayed the threat of conflict between two countries, which almost came to war in 2002 after an earlier attack on India’s parliament which also was blamed on Pakistani militants: “This is a different relationship than it was a number of years ago. Obviously they share a common enemy because extremists in any form are a threat to the Pakistanis as well as the Indians,” Rice said.

The allies of the USA are also trying to calm the Indians down. In its Asian edition, the Financial Times said Indian leaders should not rush to point the finger of blame at foreign powers. “It is far from clear who is behind the 10-pronged assault, the most devastating in a series of attacks over a miserable year for India,” the paper said in an editorial.

Pakistan President Asif Ali Zardari is clearly terrified that this incident could precipitate a war. He has appealed to India not to punish his country for last week’s attacks. He told the Financial Times on Monday. “Even if the militants are linked to Lashkar-e-Taiba, who do you think we are fighting?” Officials in Islamabad have warned any escalation would force it to divert troops to the Indian border and away from a U.S.-led campaign on the Afghan frontier. This, and not any humanitarian considerations, is what Washington is worried about.

The only solution – socialist revolution!

The British government was at one stage said to be investigating whether some of the attackers could be British citizens with links to Pakistan or Kashmir. India and Pakistan have

fought two of their three wars over Kashmir and there are many Kashmiris living in Britain. Some British newspapers even published articles saying that some of the terrorists came from Bradford. These scandalous statements were made without a single shred of evidence, and were clearly calculated to inflame racist and anti-Moslem sentiments in the population. Later official statements denied that any of the terrorists were from the United Kingdom. This shows how terrorist acts serve the aims of the reactionaries and imperialists of all countries.

The other theory is that this is the latest incident in a sustained covert war against India in which Pakistan has created and exploited a number of Islamist terrorist groups over more than a decade and a half. The principal focus of this war remains at present the state of Jammu & Kashmir, which India has held captive for over half a century. The people of occupied Kashmir have suffered terrible oppression at the hands of the Indian army. This has engendered a deep feeling of bitterness and desire for revenge among a section of the Kashmiri youth, who are open to be manipulated by sinister forces. This strategy has failed entirely to secure a mass base among India's Muslims, but a handful of recruits – sufficient to sustain a sporadic and, given contemporary technologies, fairly devastating, terrorist campaign – has been made available. This is a bloody blind alley for the people of Kashmir and the youth.

After over half a century, the rival bourgeoisies of India and Pakistan have shown that they are totally incapable of solving the problems of the masses. The people of India, Pakistan, Kashmir, Bangladesh and Nepal are all suffering from the same misery, disease, poverty, illiteracy and homelessness. To the horrors of national and caste oppression, the brutal subjugation of women, slavery and child labour are added the nightmare of pogroms, terrorism and wars.

To the cynical army generals, chauvinist madmen and religious fanatics on both sides war and mutual slaughter are the only solution. But terrorism and wars have not provided any way out for the last 50 years and they will not provide it now. The prospect of an all-out war between two nuclear powers like India and Pakistan present a horrific perspective for the future.

The only way to free Kashmir and solve the problems of the masses is by revolutionary means: through the victory of the socialist revolution in India and Pakistan and the establishment of a Socialist federation of the whole Subcontinent. This revolutionary idea is advancing slowly but surely. The [marvellous JKNSF convention on November 29](#), which united thousands of Kashmiri class fighters under the banner of revolutionary socialism, shows that the best elements of the youth are open to the ideas of Marxism, which is gaining ground against the nationalists and fundamentalists. This is the real way forward for the revolutionary workers and youth of Kashmir, India and Pakistan: the road of socialist revolution that leads to the Socialist Federation of the Subcontinent.

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