

The Pakistani Connection: The London Bombers and “Al Qaeda’s Webmaster”

Where are the Maps of the London Underground?

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British investigators have uncovered that the “London bombers” had connections to a mysterious Pakistani engineer named Mohammed Naeem Noor Khan, also known as Abu Talha, who was allegedly behind last year’s planned terror attack on Wall Street, the World Bank and the IMF.

Recent press reports suggest that the attacks on the London subway were part of a coordinated plan, which also targeted financial buildings in the United States:

“All roads [in the London bombing investigation] seem to lead to Pakistan and an apparent al Qaeda summit meetings in April of last year, where it appears both the London subways and US financial buildings were approved as targets.” (ABC News, July 18,2005)

Described by Newsweek as “Al Qaeda’s Webmaster”, Naeem Noor Khan allegedly played a central role in these preparations. According to official UK statements:

“The laptop computer of Naeem Noor Khan, a captured al Qaeda leader [July 2004], contained plans for a coordinated series of attacks on the London subway system, as well as on financial buildings in both New York and Washington.” (quoted by ABC News, 14 July 2005)

Al Qaeda operative Noor Khan had been arrested in Pakistan in July of last year by Pakistan’s military intelligence (ISI).

According to (former) US Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge, Noor Khan had top secret information on his laptop computer pointing to an imminent terror attack –involving multiple targets– on US-based financial institutions including the New York Stock Exchange, the Washington based Bretton Woods institutions, Citigroup’s complex in Manhattan and The Prudential building in Newark, New Jersey.

According to recent reports, Mohammed Naeem Noor Khan had not only stored maps of the London underground on his computer hard disk, “he had been in contact with British suspects... Two of the Leeds bombers, Shehzad Tanweer and Hasib Hussain, are known to have visited Pakistan. At least one of them could have met another unnamed man police believe is the al-Qaeda mastermind behind the London bombings...” (The Scotsman. 17 July 2005)

According to UK investigators, Noor Khan's laptop computer constitutes one of the "missing links" in the investigation of the 7/7 London attacks.

"There's absolutely no doubt he [Noor Khan] was part of an al Qaeda operation aimed at not only the United States but Great Britain," explained Alexis Debat, a former official in the French Defense Ministry who is now a senior terrorism consultant for ABC News." (ABC News, 14 July 2005).

Background

At the time of his arrest in July 2004, Naeem Noor Khan was described as a key Al-Qaeda communications operative. Newsweek confirmed that he had indirect contacts with Osama bin Laden. The London Times said that "he was sending messages for Osama bin Laden."

America was on high terror alert. An orange code high terror alert was announced on August 1st, 2004 in New York City, Northern New Jersey and Washington DC at the height of the US presidential election campaign.

According to Sec. Tom Ridge, the August 1st 2004 terror alert was based on "solid intelligence":

"Compared to previous threat reporting, these intelligence reports [based on information from Noor Khan's laptop] have provided a level of detail that is very specific." (For full text of transcript: <http://globalresearch.ca/articles/CRG408A.html>)

Yet barely two days later, US officials were obliged to admit that the intelligence transmitted out of Pakistan was not so precise after all. In an ABC interview, Deputy National Security Adviser Fran Townsend acknowledged that the August 1st 2004 terror alert was based on "outdated intelligence" going back to 2000/2001, in other words prior to 9/11:

"What we have learned about the 9/11 attacks, is that they do them (plan for attacks), years in advance and then update them before they launch the attacks," (ABC Good Morning America, 3 August 2004).

Meanwhile, the information on the files extracted from Mohammed Naeem Noor Khan's laptop, had also been dismissed by the FBI. Federal officials confirmed that the information was largely outdated and did not point to an impending terror threat:

"One federal law enforcement source said his understanding from reviewing the reports was that the material predated Sept. 11 and included photos that can be obtained from brochures and some actual snapshots. There also were some interior diagrams that appear to be publicly available." (WP, 3 August 2004) (For further details see <http://www.globalresearch.ca/articles/CHO408A.html>).

Moreover, a spokesperson for the World Bank confirmed that the information regarding the Bretton Woods buildings on H Street NW in Washington DC was "largely out of date. (...) 'There was no information to suggest that they entered the building at all or got information

from someone who was inside the building.’ (...) ‘[A] lot of it was actually public information that anyone from outside the building could have gotten.’” (Associated Press, 3 August 2004)

According to the New York Times (August 3, 2004):

“the information, which officials said was indicative of preparations for a possible truck- or car-bomb attack, left significant gaps. It did not clearly describe the suspected plot, indicate when an attack was to take place nor did it describe the identities of people involved.”

Maps of the London Underground

Information regarding Britain, extracted from Noor Khan’s computer, pertained to outdated maps of Heathrow airport. There was also reference to an alleged Al Qaeda “sleeper cell”: “Names on his computer helped British police bust a suspected al-Qaeda sleeper cell in London that was targeting transport networks including Heathrow airport.” (Guardian, 17 July 2005)

However, in none of these August 2004 reports, was there reference to the existence of maps of the London underground or “plans for a coordinated series of attacks on the London subway system” as suggested by ABC News in its July 14 and July 18 2005 report. Compare the later report to the coverage by the same source, namely ABC’s August 3, 2004 news report, which tends to downplay the relevance of the Noor Khan laptop connection.

British press reports following Noor Khan’s arrest last year, also confirmed the existence of the outdated maps of Heathrow Airport, but there was no mention of the London underground:

Photographs and maps of the airport, along with underpasses running beneath key buildings in London, were found on the laptop computer of Mohammad Naeem Noor Khan when he was arrested in Pakistan last month [July 2004], although the computer file was four years old and created before 9/11. (Sunday Herald, 8 August 2004).

Moreover, according to a spokesman of Pakistan’s military-intelligence:

The computers and the other information obtained from Mohammad Naeem Noor Khan revealed that there were certain maps [of Heathrow airport] and some other plans. But let me clarify that none of these were new; they were the old maps and old plans. (Statement of Pakistan’s Inter-Service Public Relations (ISPR) Director-General Maj-Gen Shaukat Sultan, PTV World, Islamabad, 13.00 GMT 16 August 2004)

In other words, it was only in the wake of the July 2005 attacks, that the maps of the London underground allegedly on Noor Khan’s laptop all of sudden surfaced in the British and American press. They had never been reported on previously.

Moreover, when Noor Khan was arrested, he was not charged or accused of masterminding a terror attack on Wall Street and the IMF. In fact quite the opposite: he was immediately

recruited by Pakistan's military intelligence (ISI). Two weeks later, when the news regarding his alleged role in planning the attacks on America's financial institutions had hit the news chain in early August 2004, Noor Khan was duly employed by Pakistan's secret service on behalf of the CIA:

Khan had been arrested in Lahore on July 13, and subsequently "turned" by Pakistan's Inter Services Intelligence Agency. When his name appeared in print [in early August 2004], he was working for a combined ISI/CIA task force sending encrypted e-mails to key al Qaeda figures in the hope of pinpointing their locations and intentions. (The Herald, 9 August 2005)

Concluding Remarks

The FBI confirmed in August 2004 that the information extracted from Noor Khan's computer was not indicative of a terrorist threat to America's financial institutions, nor was it indicative of a threat to London's underground. While recent press reports point to a coordinated attack on US financial institutions and the London subway, they fail to mention that the July-August 2004 alleged terror threat on US financial institutions was based on dubious and unsupported intelligence.

The World Bank had dismissed the intelligence. After examination, it confirmed that the information on Noor Khan's laptop was not in any way indicative of a threat to the Washington based financial institutions.

The August 2004 reports refer to outdated maps of Heathrow Airport and underpasses under buildings. These reports did not indicate the existence of maps of London's underground extracted from Noor Khan's laptop. The files on Noor Khan's laptop were available to US, Pakistani and British investigators.

The first time the maps of the London underground were mentioned was one year later, in the wake of the 7/7 London bomb attack.

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