



Written by on December 1, 2008

India Protests to Pakistan About Mumbai Attacks

A senior Indian foreign-ministry official told the *Times* of London: "There was a demarche in response to the incidents in Mumbai." The official was sure to note, however: "Our position has always been that we've never blamed the Pakistani government — we're blaming elements in Pakistan. The commitment we want Pakistan to follow is that it won't allow its soil to be used to attack India."



The *Times* observed of the attacks: "Many regional officials and analysts believe the Mumbai attacks were carried out by Lashkar-e-Taiba, with the help of al-Qaeda, in a deliberate attempt to provoke a ... crisis." The newspaper also noted: "Indian officials also say that Lashkar-e-Taiba has had close ties to Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence agency ever since it was founded as a deniable proxy to fight India in the disputed region of Kashmir."

The two nations have made contradictory claims about the attacks with Indian officials claiming that there is evidence the militants behind the attacks had Pakistani links, while the Pakistanis have denied involvement and cautioned against allowing forces they have termed "miscreants" to inflame tensions in the region.

The Indian Deputy Home Minister, Shakeel Ahmad, told the BBC that it was "very clearly established" that all of the attackers had been from Pakistan, and India's Minister of State of External Affairs Anand Sharma called the attacks a "grave setback" to the normalization of his nation's relations with Pakistan.

Reuters news reported the Indian government's statement: "It was conveyed to the Pakistan high commissioner that Pakistan's actions needed to match the sentiments expressed by its leadership that it wishes to have a qualitatively new relationship with India." It continued:

[Pakistan's high commissioner] was informed that the recent terrorist attack on Mumbai was carried out by elements from Pakistan. Government expects that strong action would be taken against those elements, whosoever they may be, responsible for this outrage.

In response, Pakistan's Prime Minister, Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani, stated that his country "would itself take action against the miscreants if there is any evidence against a Pakistani national."

White House spokeswoman Dana Perino expressed confidence in Pakistan's commitment to tracking down the attackers, stating: "We have been encouraged by the statements by the Pakistanis that they are committed to following this wherever it leads. We would expect nothing less of them in this instance."



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The White House also said that Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice would visit India on December 3 to discuss the attacks. Rice told reporters in London, where she is in the middle of an overseas trip: "I don't want to jump to any conclusions myself on this, but I do think that this is a time for complete, absolute, total transparency and cooperation and that is what we expect" from Pakistan.

Rice regarded the probability of conflict between the two Asian nations as less likely than it was during the tense relations that almost resulted in war in 2002, following an attack on India's parliament that India also 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," said Rice.

The Indian government has come under intense internal criticism for its handling of the attacks and what many Indians perceive as intelligence failures. The personal belongings of 15 men were found aboard an abandoned ship that had served as the terrorists' base of operations, but only 10 of them have been identified. The criticism has prompted several Indian political figures to resign, including the chief minister and deputy minister of Maharashtra state and India's former home minister, with more resignations expected.

Two men described as "senior Indian investigators" who spoke on condition of anonymity told Reuters that evidence from the interrogation of Azam Amir Kasav, the only gunman of the known 10 who was not killed by Indian security forces, indicated clearly that Pakistani militants played a role in the attack. Kasav told investigators that his team took orders from "their command in Pakistan."

The BBC's defense and security correspondent reported that unlike other countries that have been the victims of frequent terrorist attacks, India has no organized counterterrorism apparatus that analyzes terrorist threats and their prevention.

Reuters news agency quoted Damodar Tandel, the head of Maharashtra's largest fishermen's union, as saying he had warned the government about attempts to bring RDX explosives to Mumbai by sea but that no one had acted on the information.

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