Backgrounder

After Mumbai: Time to Strengthen U.S.–India Counterterrorism Cooperation

Lisa Curtis

As the United States and India seek to build a stronger partnership and take full advantage of the diplomatic opening created by the U.S.–India civil nuclear deal, one of the areas with the greatest potential benefit to both sides is counterterrorism cooperation. The multiple terrorist attacks in Mumbai between November 26 and November 29, 2008, that killed about 170 people, including six Americans, have highlighted the urgent need for these two countries to work together more closely to counter regional and global terrorist threats.

Despite general convergence of American and Indian views on the need to contain terrorism, the two countries have failed in the past to work together as closely as they could to minimize terrorist threats, largely because of differing geostrategic perceptions, Indian reluctance to deepen the intelligence relationship, and U.S. bureaucratic resistance to elevating counterterrorism cooperation beyond a certain level. New Delhi and Washington both stand to gain considerably from improving counterterrorism cooperation and therefore should seek to overcome their trust deficit. Indian suspicions revolve mainly around the issue of Kashmir and U.S. policy toward Pakistan, which has provided training, financing and military and logistical support to militants fighting in Kashmir. Washington, for its part, remains concerned about Indian ties to Iran, despite Iranian sponsorship of international terrorism and pursuit of a nuclear weapons capability.

Talking Points

- The November terrorist attacks in Mumbai highlight the urgent need for U.S.–Indian cooperation to counter regional and global terrorist threats.

- Both New Delhi and Washington stand to gain considerably from improving counterterrorism cooperation and must overcome lingering distrust that stems largely from U.S. reluctance to pursue Pakistani terrorist groups with the same zeal that it shows in pursuing al-Qaeda.

- The U.S. and India should expand cooperation on sharing intelligence and promoting democracy and religious pluralism to disrupt terrorist recruitment. They should improve cooperation on maritime security, cyber security, energy security, and nuclear nonproliferation to increase both countries' defenses against new terrorist threats.

- The U.S. should avoid high-profile attempts to mediate the Indo–Pakistani dispute over Kashmir, which could fuel unrealistic expectations in Pakistan and support for al-Qaeda–connected groups in an attempt to push for a final settlement in Islamabad's favor.

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Terrorism Trends in India

India is one of the most terrorism-afflicted countries in the world. The U.S. State Department's 2007 *Country Report on Terrorism*, released in April 2008, states that terrorists, separatists, and extremists killed more than 2,300 people in India in 2007.[1] As one of the world's most ethnically, linguistically, and religiously diverse countries, India has dealt with numerous separatist and insurgent movements over the past 30 years, including a Sikh uprising in the state of Punjab in the 1980s, a Muslim separatist movement in the state of Jammu and Kashmir from 1989 to the present, and various ethnic separatist movements in the northeastern states. Another challenge facing the Indian government is a leftist extremist movement (Maoist and Naxalite) that is spreading in the rural areas of eastern and central India.[2]

The late November attacks in Mumbai follow the 1993 bombings of the Mumbai stock exchange, which killed more than 250, and the July 2006 attacks on Mumbai commuter trains and railway stations that left 180 dead. These most recent attacks differed from previous assaults in that they lasted over a period of three days, with the attackers holing up inside hotels and a Jewish center where they fought Indian commandos to the death with assault rifles and grenades. Indian authorities say that one of the surviving November attackers is a member of a Pakistan-based group, Lashkar-e-Tayyiba (LET). The LET was listed as a Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO) by the U.S. State Department in 2001 following its involvement in an attack on the Indian parliament that led to a six-month Indo–Pakistani military standoff.

Although Islamabad officially banned it in 2002, the LET continues to operate in Pakistan unimpeded. Its leaders move about the country freely, raising funds and recruiting young Pakistani men for jihad. Its headquarters are located in a town outside of Lahore, and the group played a major role in providing humanitarian assistance to victims of the 2005 Pakistan earthquake.

Although focused primarily on waging jihad in Kashmir, the LET has married its objectives with al-Qaeda's virulent pan-Islamic, anti-West agenda and signed Osama bin Laden's 1998 edict calling for attacks on Americans and Israelis. The LET has included in its objectives the institution of Islamic rule over all parts of India. Under pressure from the U.S., Pakistan over the weekend raided an LET camp in Pakistani Kashmir and detained several of the group's leaders.

There is increasing concern in India about the threat posed by homegrown Islamist extremists who are linking domestic grievances to pan-Islamic agendas.[3] Since May, India has suffered at least eight major attacks inside the country with a death toll of more than 400. A group identifying itself as the Indian Mujahideen (IM) has claimed responsibility for some of the most recent attacks, usually through e-mail messages sent just before or after the attacks.

Indian terrorism experts have not yet determined whether IM is a single organization or a united front of several autonomous groups.[4] The IM claimed credit for the May 13, 2008, bomb blasts that exploded at crowded markets in the city of Jaipur and for similar attacks in Ahmedabad in July, in New Delhi in September, and in the cities of Var-

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1. U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports on Terrorism 2007*, April 2008, p. 132, at *http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/105904.pdf* (December 2, 2008).

2. Naxalites are revolutionary communists named after the town of Naxalbari, where their movement began in 1967. Members of the Naxalite movement are waging a low-intensity insurgency that claims hundreds of Indian lives every year, particularly in the states of Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal, Jharkhand, and Orissa.

3. Dr. Subash Kapila, "India's Counter-Terrorism Strategy 2004–2008: Flawed Political Approaches," South Asia Analysis Group *Paper* No. 2847, September 16, 2008, at *http://www.southasiaanalysis.org/%5Cpapers29%5Cpaper2847.html* (December 2, 2008).

4. Bahukutumbi Raman, "There Is No MacCounter-Terrorism," November 16, 2008, at *http://ramansterrorismanalysis.blogspot.com* (December 2, 2008).

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Definitions of Terrorism and Insurgency

There is no internationally accepted definition of terrorism. United Nations Security Council Resolution 1566, adopted on October 8, 2004, defines terrorism as:

criminal acts, including against civilians, committed with the intent to cause death or serious bodily injury, or taking of hostages, with the purpose to provoke a state of terror in the general public or in a group of persons or particular persons, intimidate a population or compel a government or an international organization to do or to abstain from doing any act.

The U.S. National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC) describes terrorism as "premeditated; perpetrated by a sub-national or clandestine agent; politically motivated, potentially including religious, philosophical, or culturally symbolic motivations; violent; and perpetrated against a noncombatant target."

The U.S. Department of Defense defines insurgency as "an organized movement aimed at the overthrow of a constituted government through use of subversion and armed conflict."

Bahukutumbi Raman, a prominent Indian terrorism analyst and former official in India's external intelligence service, the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW), described the differences between insurgents and terrorists as follows:

Insurgents seek territorial control and try to establish the paraphernalia of a State such as an Army with professional ranks, an administrative set-up in the territory controlled by them, etc. They fight like a conventional army in classical set-piece formation as well as like a guerilla army….

Terrorists, on the other hand, avoid territorial control and the paraphernalia of a State. They use unconventional methods of struggle. The avoidance of territorial control and State paraphernalia enables them to spread death and destruction with a small cadre strength organized into penetration-proof cells….[1]

1. Bahukutumbi Raman, "There Is No MacCounter-Terrorism," November 16, 2008, at *http://ramansterrorismanalysis.blogspot.com* (December 2, 2008).

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nasi, Faizabad, and Lucknow in the state of Uttar Pradesh on November 23, 2007. A group identifying itself as ISF-IM claimed responsibility for the October 30, 2008, serial blasts in Assam in northeast India that left 75 dead. Local police believe the initials may stand for Indian Security Force–Indian Mujahideen.
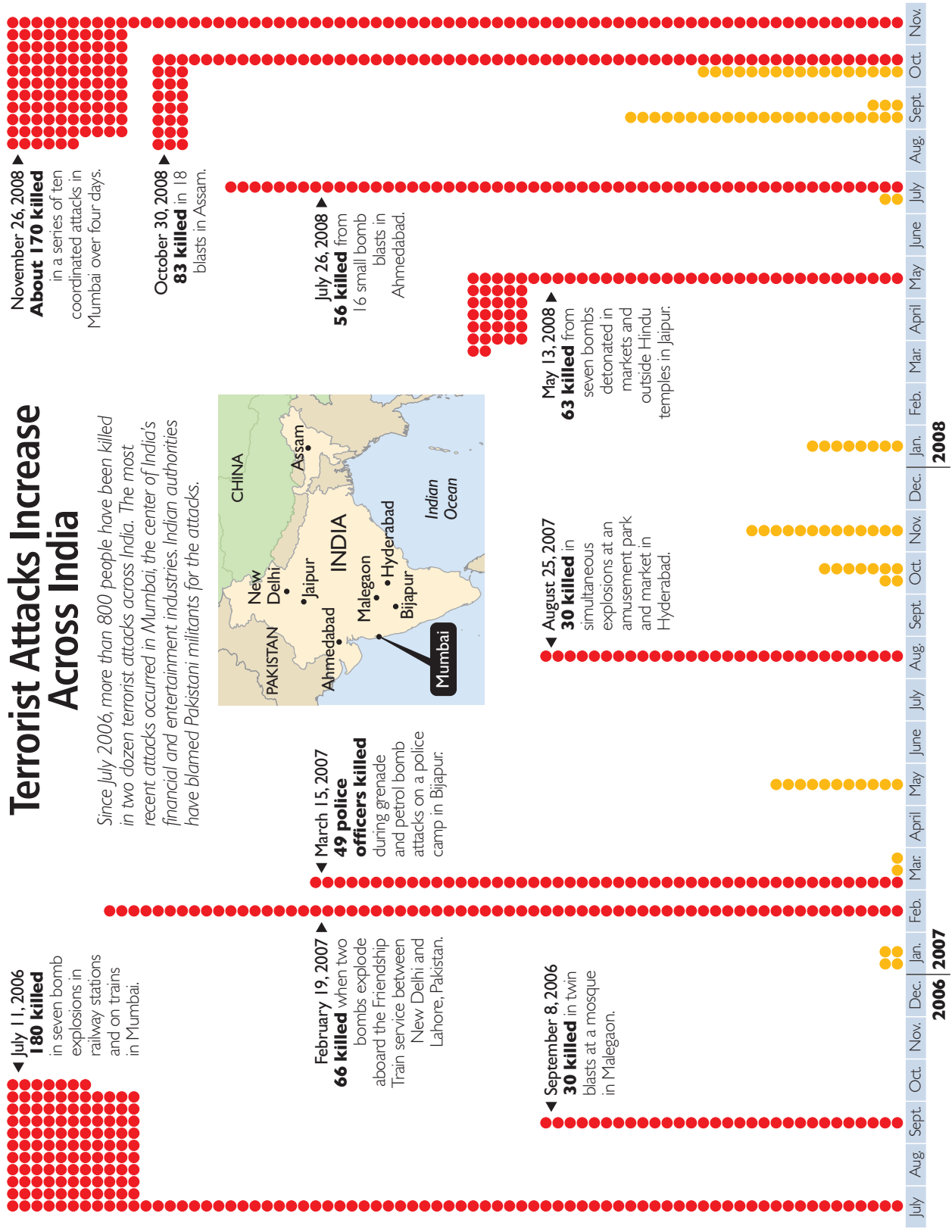
Another group that has often been associated with the recent attacks is the Students Islamic Movement of India (SIMI). SIMI was formed in April 1977 at the Aligarh University in Uttar Pradesh with a mission to revive Islam in India and transform the country into an Islamic state.[5] It built its organization from networks of the Jamaat-e-Islami's student wing. One year after the destruction of the Babri Mosque by Hindu zealots in December 1992, SIMI-linked operatives carried out terrorist strikes across India. In a 1996 statement, a SIMI leader declared that since democracy and secularism had failed to protect Muslims in India, the sole option was to struggle for the Caliphate. After 9/11, SIMI members held demonstrations in support of Osama bin Laden, prompting the Indian government to ban the organization.[6] Analysts believe that SIMI may have about 400 full-

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5. Animesh Roul, "Students Islamic Movement of India: A Profile," *Terrorism Monitor*, Vol. 4, Issue 7 (April 6, 2006), at *http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews%5Bswords%5D=8fd5893941d69d0be3f378576261ae3e&tx_ ttnews%5Bany_of_the_words%5D=animesh%20roul&tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=728&tx_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=7&cHash= d680405c0c* (December 2, 2008).

Terrorist Attacks Increase Across India

Since July 2006, more than 800 people have been killed in two dozen terrorist attacks across India. The most recent attacks occurred in Mumbai, the center of India's financial and entertainment industries. Indian authorities have blamed Pakistani militants for the attacks.

November 26, 2008 ▶
About 170 killed in a series of ten coordinated attacks in Mumbai over four days.

October 30, 2008 ▶
83 killed in 18 blasts in Assam.

July 26, 2008 ▶
56 killed from 16 small bomb blasts in Ahmedabad.

May 13, 2008 ▶
63 killed from seven bombs detonated in markets and outside Hindu temples in Jaipur.

◀ August 25, 2007
30 killed in simultaneous explosions at an amusement park and market in Hyderabad.

◀ March 15, 2007
49 police officers killed during grenade and petrol bomb attacks on a police camp in Bijapur.

February 19, 2007 ▶
66 killed when two bombs explode aboard the Friendship Train service between New Delhi and Lahore, Pakistan.

◀ September 8, 2006
30 killed in twin blasts at a mosque in Malegaon.

◀ July 11, 2006
180 killed in seven bomb explosions in railway stations and on trains in Mumbai.

Map labels: CHINA, PAKISTAN, INDIA, Assam, New Delhi, Jaipur, Ahmedabad, Malegaon, Hyderabad, Bijapur, Mumbai, Indian Ocean

Timeline months: 2006 — July, Aug., Sept., Oct., Nov., Dec. | 2007 — Jan., Feb., Mar., April, May, June, July, Aug., Sept., Oct., Nov., Dec. | 2008 — Jan., Feb., Mar., April, May, June, July, Aug., Sept., Oct., Nov.

● *Each dot represents a fatality in an attack that killed at least 30 people.*

● *Fatalities in attacks that killed 29 people or fewer.*

Sources: Data from *The New York Times,* Reuters, *The Times of India, The Washington Post, The Hindu,* CNN, Zeenews, Press Trust of India, *The Guardian,* and *India Today.*

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time activists and 20,000 regular members and that its operatives cooperate with the LET and the Harakat ul-Jihad Islami (HUJ/I), based in both Pakistan and Bangladesh.[7]

What has been most surprising to the Indian authorities and public is that many of the individuals arrested for involvement in the recent attacks are young men (under the age of 35) with good educations and lucrative, prestigious occupations, such as Web designers, doctors, and engineers. The IM's top leader, Mohammed Subhan Qureshi, is a highly trained computer specialist. The Indian authorities have found that these men are often motivated through the Internet or through terrorist groups based in Pakistan.

The new homegrown terrorists are apparently inspired by al-Qaeda's jihadi ideology and by local grievances. The groups formed to carry out the attacks are loose conglomerations, and it is still unclear whether there is an overarching commanding element directing the different cells. Raman says that there has been a "mushroom-like growth of jihadi terrorist organizations throughout India—self-radicalized, self-motivated, motivated by local grievances but having invisible connectivity with a single source orchestrating them."[8]

India's Response

The increasing number of terrorist incidents in the country is forcing India to re-examine the government's approach to terrorism prevention. Following strong public criticism of the government's handling of the Mumbai attacks, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh vowed to overhaul India's counterterrorism efforts.

The Indian government had also announced new security measures in September following Prime Minister Singh's admission that there were gaps in intelligence related to the recent spate of bombings. The Indian cabinet approved proposals to hire 7,000 additional policemen in New Delhi; install closed circuit televisions in busy areas; and create a research wing to investigate terrorist threats in the country's internal intelligence service, the Intelligence Bureau (IB). Singh was quoted as saying that the "issue is really one of examining the efficacy of the totality of the systems and the mechanisms that we have to deal with terrorist incidents."[9] He went on to note that "the role of Pakistan-based terrorists cannot be minimized but the involvement of local elements in recent blasts adds a new dimension to the terrorist threat."[10]

Indian terrorism analysts have made several suggestions for improving India's ability to prevent further attacks, such as increasing police levels and improving their effectiveness and streamlining the criminal justice system. There are currently 1.2 million police officers in India and 1 million paramilitary officers, which amounts to about 126 security personnel for every 100,000 people. In Western countries, the number of security personnel per 100,000 people ranges from 250 to 500.[11] The Indian government may also decide to take a page from the British book by focusing more on improving relations between the local police and Muslim communities to prevent further radicalization of youth.

Many observers have raised the issue of lack of coordination among the various Indian investigative and intelligence organizations operating across the country as a major impediment to improving ter-

6. Praveen Swami, "A Bend in the Road," Outlook India.com, March 18, 2008.

7. Wilson John, "India's Intelligence Services Struggle with War on Terrorism," *Terrorism Monitor*, Vol. 6, Issue 6 (March 24, 2008), at *http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=4805&tx_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=7&cHash=6c0e698a42* (December 2, 2008).

8. Bahukutumbi Raman, "The Indian Jihadi Net," South Asia Analysis Group *Paper* No. 2909, November 1, 2008, at *http://www.southasiaanalysis.org/%5Cpapers30%5Cpaper2909.html* (December 2, 2008).

9. Vinay Kumar, "Manmohan: We Need to Strengthen Anti-Terror Laws," *The Hindu*, September 18, 2008, at *http://www.thehindu.com/2008/09/18/stories/2008091858210100.htm* (December 2, 2008).

10. *Ibid.*

11. Nandini Lakshman and Mehul Srivastava, "India's Terrorism Dilemma," *Business Week*, August 8, 2008, at *http://www.businessweek.com/globalbiz/content/aug2008/gb2008088_409587.htm* (December 2, 2008).

rorism prevention. They note a reluctance, even refusal, to share information among the intelligence and security agencies.[12] One renowned Indian terrorism analyst has cited the Indian government's failure to develop a national database on crime and terrorism despite a mandate to do so in 2001 as an indicator of government inaction to rectify shortcomings in the system.[13]

Several Indian government organizations currently conduct intelligence activities related to countering terrorism:

- The Intelligence Bureau (IB) handles domestic intelligence operations and reports to the Home Ministry, which oversees all national police, paramilitaries, and domestic intelligence gathering.

- The IB oversees an interagency counterterrorism center similar to the CIA's National Counterterrorism Center that analyzes intelligence flowing in from different organizations and coordinates follow-up actions. Observers say that its work is inhibited by lack of staffing and resources.[14]

- The Research and Analysis Wing handles external intelligence and reports to India's national security adviser. The National Technical Research Organization, which focuses on collecting technical intelligence, is part of RAW.

- Paramilitary organizations like the Central Reserve Police Force and Border Security Forces maintain their own intelligence wings to deal with counterinsurgency efforts in Jammu and Kashmir and elsewhere. The Director General of Military Intelligence (DGMI) also has a network of field offices and posts in border areas that collect intelligence on terrorist activities. India created a Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) in 2002 to increase coordination of the various intelligence activities of the different military services.

- The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) is responsible for a variety of criminal and national security investigative matters. The CBI's powers and functions are limited to specific crimes based on the Delhi Special Police Establishment Act of 1946, and the organization is prohibited from initiating investigations until it is given consent from the state government.

Another controversial issue has been whether to revive more stringent anti-terrorism legislation. The political opposition, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), has criticized India's government, led by the Congress Party, for its 2004 decision to repeal the Prevention of Terrorism Act (POTA). POTA, passed in 2002, expanded the government's powers to combat terrorism through measures like the ability to keep suspected terrorists in custody indefinitely without bringing them to trial. Leaders of the Congress Party argued that the legislation was misused to settle political scores and to harass Muslims.

Muslim Grievances

Indian terrorism experts and government officials increasingly acknowledge that alienation among Indian Muslim communities is contributing to the problem of homegrown terrorism. (Virtually all reports about the November 2008 attacks in Mumbai indicated that they were not generated in the Indian Muslim community.) They have further noted that increased prosperity in the country has not necessarily led to increased integration among various religious communities. Indian Finance Minister Palaniappan Chidambaram recently said that "the divide between Hindus and Muslims is taking new and dangerous forms" and noted a growing sense of alienation among India's Muslims.[15]

Perpetrators of some of the recent terrorist attacks were apparently motivated by speeches that focused on perceived wrongs against the Muslim community in India, such as the demolition of the Babri Mosque by Hindu zealots in 1992 and communal riots in Gujarat in 2002 that led to the killing

12. John, "India's Intelligence Services Struggle with War on Terrorism."

13. Ajai Sahni, "India After Ahmedabad's Bombs," *Open Democracy News Analysis*, July 29, 2008, at *http://www.opendemocracy.net/article/india-after-ahmedabads-bombs* (December 2, 2008).

14. John, "India's Intelligence Services Struggle with War on Terrorism."

15. Agence France-Presse, "India Tightens Security, PM Admits Intelligence Failings," September 18, 2008, at *http://afp.google.com/article/ALeqM5j5kunFx9WEECct3hSqM6k02wKedA* (December 2, 2008).

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of at least 1,000 Muslims.[16] Muslims account for nearly 150 million of India's 1.1 billion people. While a minority in India, the Muslim community is the world's third largest, after those in Indonesia and Pakistan.

To explore the level of disaffection in the Muslim community and seek ways to address the issue, Prime Minister Singh established a high-level committee in 2005 to prepare a report on the social, economic, and educational status of Muslims in India. The report, named the Sachar Committee Report after the chairman of the Committee, Justice Rajindar Sachar, was released in November 2006. It found that India's Muslims lag behind the rest of the Indian population in literacy, employment rates, and income and that there has been a general decline in the socioeconomic conditions of Muslims in India. The report offered recommendations to ensure equity and equality of opportunity for Muslims, especially in employment and education. One of the follow-up actions the government has initiated includes establishment of the National Minorities Development and Finance Corporation (NMDFC) by Finance Minister Chidambaram. There have been numerous complaints that the government is moving too slowly in following up on the report's other proposals, however.

Muslim Clerics Take Action

In a gesture that could have long-term ramifications in slowing recruitment for terrorism, the influential Islamic seminary Darul Uloom Deoband—seat of the Sunni Islamic revivalist Deobandi movement—in India issued a fatwa against terrorism in May of this year. Although it did not receive much attention from the Western media, several Indian analysts view the fatwa as a significant first step in breaking the terrorist recruitment cycle. They acknowledge, however, that the fatwa is unlikely to have an immediate impact in terms of stemming attacks.

The fatwa stated that "Islam is a religion of peace and security. In its eyes, on any part over the surface of the earth spreading mischief, rioting, breach of peace, bloodshed, killing of innocent persons and plundering are the most inhuman crimes." The fatwa goes on to say that the purpose of Islam is "to wipe out all kinds of terrorism and spread the message of global peace…. [T]errorism is the gravest crime as held by the Koran and Islam. We are not prepared to tolerate terrorism in any form and we are ready to cooperate with all responsible people."[17]

Located in the town of Deoband in the Indian state of Uttar Pradesh, the Darul Uloom ("house of knowledge") school advocates an austere version of Islam but has distanced itself from religious militancy. It is one of the most important Islamic schools in the world but has become notorious in recent years because many of the Pakistan-based extremist groups as well as the Taliban claim to be Deobandi adherents. Scholars of Islam have pointed out that there is a significant divide between Deobandi scholars and clerics and militant groups like the Taliban.[18] Observers say the Taliban has oversimplified the original Deobandi teachings and note that Deobandis living in India support the secular government, while many of the Pakistan-based groups support a violent anti-state Islamist agenda.

Building U.S.–Indian Counterterrorism Ties

U.S.–Indian counterterrorism cooperation has expanded considerably in recent years, particularly since 9/11. The U.S. and India had already launched a formal Counterterrorism Joint Working Group (CTJWG) in 2000 that meets one or two times a year, although the two countries cooperated informally before 2000. India's success in combating Sikh terrorism in the 1980s and 1990s stemmed in part from intelligence shared by the U.S. and other countries as well as a U.S. law signed in 1996 that barred fundraising in the U.S. by the Indian

16. Sandeep Unnithan, "Homemade and Deadly," *India Today*, October 2, 2008, at *http://indiatoday.digitaltoday.in/index.php?issueid=81&id=16681&option=com_content&task=view&sectionid=3* (December 2, 2008).

17. "Deoband: A Fatwa Against Terror," *The Times of India*, June 1, 2008, at *http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/India/Deobands_first_A_fatwa_against_terror/articleshow/3089161.cms*.

18. Muhammad Qasim Zaman, *The Ulama in Contemporary Islam: Custodians of Change* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2002), pp. 139–140.

Sikh separatist groups Babbar Khalsa and Khalistani Liberation Front.[19]

Through the CTJWG mechanism, India and the U.S. have exchanged information, training material, and methods related to interrupting terrorist financial networks, institutional and law enforcement steps to strengthen homeland security, border management and surveillance techniques, aviation security, and disaster management in the event of a terrorist incident involving weapons of mass destruction.[20] The two sides also launched a Joint Initiative on Cyberterrorism in 2001, held joint counterterrorism exercises, and discussed counterterrorism equipment issues within the Defense Policy Working Group.

Despite this wide-ranging anti-terrorism cooperation, a lingering trust deficit pervades the relationship and prevents deeper cooperation on specific regional threats. In the past, India has been frustrated by what it views as inconsistencies and backsliding in U.S. public statements concerning the Pakistan-based terrorist threat to India.[21] Indian officials also believe the U.S. has withheld information on terrorist operatives suspected of having ties to Kashmiri militants.[22] Indian analysts believe the U.S. has been reluctant to assist the Indian government in investigations related to terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir to spare embarrassment to Pakistan, which has assisted Kashmiri militant groups, many of which are also connected to al-Qaeda.

The convergence of U.S. and Indian interests in Afghanistan could help to build confidence between Washington and New Delhi in terms of intelligence sharing, since both U.S. forces and Indian interests have been targeted by the same terrorists. Though the U.S. will have to take Pakistani geostrategic interests into account as it seeks to bring security and stability to Afghanistan, Washington will not tolerate use of terrorist proxies by Islamabad and will not hesitate to alert other countries about terrorist threats, including those linked to Pakistan.

India has developed a significant political presence and substantial assistance programs inside Afghanistan, which have fueled concern within the Pakistani security establishment that it is losing influence in the region and is being encircled by hostile regimes in both New Delhi and Kabul. Credible U.S. media reports have linked Pakistani intelligence to the bombing of India's embassy in Kabul on July 7, 2008. Indian media reports reveal that the U.S. possessed intelligence information related to the attack that it shared with the Indian government weeks before it occurred.[23] U.S.–Indian intelligence sharing and cooperation could not prevent this dastardly attack, but there may be future opportunities for the U.S. and India to assist each other in preventing Taliban and al-Qaeda attacks against both coalition forces and Indian interests in the country.

Clandestine U.S. attempts to penetrate Indian intelligence agencies have also dampened U.S.–Indian intelligence ties. The defection of a senior Indian intelligence official to the U.S. in 2004 and revelations of unauthorized meetings between a senior Indian intelligence official and an American intelligence official in New Delhi in 1997 have raised red flags in India about U.S. intentions regarding increased U.S.–Indian intelligence exchanges and concern that the U.S. will exploit these links for its own purposes.[24] Directly following news of the 2004 scandal, one Indian newspaper hinted that the incident risked damaging the "post–11 September

19. Polly Nayak, "Prospects for US–India Counterterrorism Cooperation: An American View," in *US–Indian Strategic Cooperation into the 21st Century: More than Words*, ed. Sumit Ganguly, Brian Shoup, and Andrew Scobell (London and New York: Routledge, 2006), p. 133.

20. U.S. Department of State, "India–U.S. 'Joint Working Group on Counter-Terrorism,'" January 24, 2002, at *http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2002/7440.htm* (December 2, 2008).

21. Nayak, "Prospects for US–India Counterterrorism Cooperation: An American View," p. 135.

22. *Ibid.*, p. 144.

23. Praveen Swami, "ISI Engineered Kabul Embassy bombing: NYT," *The Hindu*, August 2, 2008, at *http://www.hindu.com/2008/08/02/stories/2008080255181200.htm* (December 2, 2008).

24. Nayak, "Prospects for US–India Counterterrorism Cooperation: An American View," p. 145.

2001 strategic alliance with the U.S. and an earlier one with Israel" and would likely result in "New Delhi placing limitations on intelligence sharing with both the U.S. and Israel."[25]

Another irritant in U.S.–Indian relations that could potentially affect counterterrorism cooperation is Iran. U.S. concern about Iran's pursuit of a nuclear weapons capability and its support for terrorism drives Washington's policy toward Tehran. India, on the other hand, has a multifaceted relationship with Iran that is characterized by long-standing regional, historical, and cultural ties. India opposes Iran's pursuit of a nuclear weapons program and voted against Iran on that issue at International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) meetings in September 2005 and again in February 2006. New Delhi, however, views its ties to Tehran through its own regional context and believes that it must maintain cordial ties with Iran to prevent Islamabad and Tehran from drawing closer.

India worked closely with Iran (and Russia) to support the Afghan Northern Alliance forces against the Pakistan-supported Taliban during the late 1990s and has held regular military exchanges with Iran, although it has not made any significant military transfers to the country. India also views Iran as a potential source for its growing energy needs and currently ships goods to Afghanistan through the Iranian port at Chabahar, since Pakistan does not allow Indian goods destined for Afghanistan to transit its territory. In recent years, during negotiations over the U.S.–India civil nuclear deal, New Delhi pulled back from major energy projects with Tehran, such as the $7.5 billion Iran–Pakistan–India (IPI) pipeline project. India will be watching the incoming Obama Administration's policies on Iran closely to determine whether there will be increased U.S. flexibility toward Iran, particularly regarding the situation in Afghanistan.

What Needs to Be Done

The best course for the United States to follow in order to minimize regional and global terrorist threats to both U.S. and Indian interests would be to:

- **Increase intelligence sharing through established U.S. procedures for intelligence-liaison relationships.** There are opportunities for the U.S. and India to increase their cooperation for mutual benefit against terrorist threats. Since 90 percent of counterterrorism concerns intelligence, Washington and New Delhi should focus on breaking down barriers to sharing intelligence.

  Specifically, the U.S. should follow formal guidelines with regard to intelligence cooperation with Indian authorities much as it does with intelligence-liaison relationships with other key allies. Given the recent dust-ups in the U.S.–Indian intelligence relationship, Washington will need to be particularly careful to follow established intelligence-sharing procedures. Washington should also take care to avoid public misunderstandings like the one that occurred in 2004 when U.S. Ambassador to India David Mulford offered FBI assistance directly to the state of Assam's chief minister following a series of bomb blasts there instead of working through the central government. The Indians felt that the U.S. acted inappropriately by going directly to the state government on an intelligence matter.

- **Increase official diplomatic and non-governmental exchanges on improving counterterrorism cooperation.** The level and frequency of the U.S.–Indian Counterterrorism Joint Working Group (CTJWG) meetings should be raised. These meetings should include talks on ways to organize and streamline operations of various intelligence-gathering and investigative institutions as well as a free exchange of ideas on how to address the ideological foundations of terrorism.

  India's experience in addressing new terrorism threats that involve both homegrown and international elements should be a focal point of these discussions. The CTJWG talks should also incorporate private-sector entities and think tanks dealing with counterterrorism to bring in new ideas on the latest counterterrorism technology and research.

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25. "India's CIA Spy Scandal," *Jane's Security News*, July 1, 2004, at *http://www.janes.com/security/international_security/news/jid/jid040701_1_n.shtml* (December 2, 2008).

- **Enhance U.S.–Indian cooperation in promoting democracy and religious pluralism as a way to disrupt recruitment and support for Islamist-inspired terrorism, particularly in Afghanistan.** India, being a functioning multi-faith, multi-ethnic democracy, provides a powerful example to Afghan leaders who are struggling to develop democratic institutions in their own country. The U.S. should encourage Indian technical assistance to democratic development in Afghanistan, including in the upcoming 2009 Afghan elections.

- **Expand cooperative efforts on maritime security.** One area in which to increase U.S.–Indian counterterrorism cooperation lies in maritime coordination. Given the increasing number of piracy incidents over the past few months, there is growing concern about the possibility that terrorists, potentially acting in concert with pirates, will seize supertankers and blow them up near important ports or at maritime choke points. India and the U.S. have already expanded maritime cooperation in Southeast Asia.[26] India and Japan also have initiated measures in this regard, leaving open opportunities for closer U.S.–India–Japan trilateral cooperation to address maritime threats.

- **Review coordination of cyber security, energy security, and nuclear nonproliferation efforts to increase both countries' security against new terrorist threats.** With the passage of the U.S.–India civil nuclear deal, U.S. and Indian officials need to re-examine opportunities for enhancing joint nuclear terrorism risk-reduction measures, including further improvement of export controls and security at civilian nuclear facilities in India. A gun attack on the Indian Institute of Science in Bangalore on December 28, 2005, led to an investigation that revealed the Kaigan nuclear power plant in India to be a critical infrastructure terrorist target.[27]

There has been some cooperation between India and the U.S. in enforcing provisions of the Container Security Initiative, but India has been reluctant to cooperate through the multilateral Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI). India has, however, demonstrated a willingness to cooperate with individual U.S. efforts to stem nuclear proliferation. It agreed, for example, to a recent request from the U.S. to deny overflight of Indian territory to a North Korean aircraft suspected of carrying sophisticated weapons technology to Iran.[28]

- **Avoid high-profile attempts to mediate the Indo–Pakistani dispute over Kashmir.** A recent assertion by President-elect Barack Obama that the U.S. should try to help resolve the Kashmir imbroglio so that Pakistan can focus on reining in militancy on its Afghan border is misguided. Raising the specter of an international role in the dispute could fuel unrealistic expectations in Pakistan for a final settlement in its favor and therefore encourage Islamabad to increase support for al-Qaeda–connected Kashmiri militants to push an agenda that it believed was now within reach. Former Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf initiated the Kargil incursion into Indian-administered Kashmir in 1999 to raise the profile of the Kashmir issue and encourage international mediation.

- **Take a wide view of challenges in the region and focus on broad-based regional diplomatic efforts.** This could include establishment of a high-profile regional envoy who can play a productive role in simultaneously easing both Afghan–Pakistani and Indo–Pakistani tensions by prodding the countries to move forward with confidence-building measures like the recent opening of a road between Indian-administered and Pakistani-administered Kashmir. The Indians would be unreceptive to direct U.S. mediation on Kashmir, and any such move in this

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26. Raman, "There Is No MacCounter-Terrorism."

27. Robert Wesley, "LeT Threat to Indian Nuclear Facilities Remains a Serious Concern," *Terrorism Focus*, Vol. 3, Issue 35 (September 12, 2006).

28. Agence France-Presse, "US Persuaded India to Deny Clearance to NKorean Flight: Report," November 4, 2008, at *http://afp.google.com/article/ALeqM5ho-GTBZPcWcn4aClDoTDx5O9Wwag* (December 2, 2008).

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direction would raise suspicions in New Delhi that Washington is reverting to policies that view India only through the South Asia lens rather than as the emerging global power it has become. New Delhi would, however, likely accept the notion of a senior regional envoy that took a wider view of the region's challenges and sought to promote cooperation among Indians, Pakistanis, and Afghans to defuse tensions and stabilize the region.

Conclusion

Washington and New Delhi will benefit from pooling their counterterrorism expertise and stepping up joint activities to address regional and global terrorist threats. As U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said in New Delhi on December 3, 2008, "India and the United States have been cooperating…but we're going to do it in a more intensive and urgent manner."[29]

But to take full advantage of the opportunities to enhance Indo–U.S. counterterrorism coordination, both sides will have to work on enhancing trust and confidence in their respective counterterrorism strategies. The U.S. and India will have to increase their mutual understanding of the core national security interests that drive their counterterrorism objectives and demonstrate that pre-9/11 regional narratives on the issue are no longer relevant.

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29. U.S. Department of State, "Remarks With Indian Minister of External Affairs Pranab Mukherjee," New Delhi, December 3, 2008, at *http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2008/12/112622.htm*.