

Terrorist atrocity in Mumbai

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In a nationally-televised address Thursday, Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh stated that “the group which carried out these attacks” was “based outside the country.”

The two countries have been pursuing a peace dialogue since January 2004. But New Delhi, conscious of India’s growing economic power and buoyed by a burgeoning strategic partnership with the US that has included the signing of a nuclear cooperation treaty and Washington’s strong support for India playing a major role in Afghanistan, has ceded no ground whatsoever to Islamabad on the vital issue of Kashmir.

The incoming Democratic administration of Barack Obama shares the same basic imperialist goals as its predecessor and has given every indication that it will employ much of the same rhetoric, first and foremost the claim that the US is locked in an open-ended war on terror. A spokesman for president-elect Obama, Brooke Anderson, said the “co-ordinated attacks on innocent civilians” in Mumbai “demonstrate the grave and urgent threat of terrorism”; then added, “the United States must continue to strengthen our partnerships with India and nations around the world to root out and destroy terrorist networks.”

Obama has been advocating a major intensification of the US-NATO war in Afghanistan, including extending it into the border regions of neighboring Pakistan, in the name of destroying al-Qaeda and the terrorist threat to America.

The BJP and its allies have been rocked by the recent exposure of a Hindu supremacist terror network, with connections to the Indian military. Police say this network was responsible for twin bombings on September 29 that killed 6 people and is suspected of carrying out other bombings, including possibly the 2006 attack on a train bound for Pakistan that killed 68

people, most of them Pakistanis. Several of the chief suspects have longstanding and close ties to the BJP and other prominent Hindu nationalist organizations. (See: “India: Hindu supremacist terror network had ties to military”)

So fearful are the BJP and its allies of the political fallout from the exposure of the Hindu terror conspiracy that they have been mounting a hysterical campaign against the special anti-terrorist police, whose activities they have hitherto praised to the sky, accusing them of mounting a vendetta against Hindus.

Exposure of the network was threatening to disrupt the BJP’s plans to place at the center of its campaign in the coming election the charge that the Congress Party, the dominant partner in India’s United Progressive Alliance coalition, is “soft” on terrorism. The BJP has long tied this fatuous claim to communal incitement—to claims that the Congress won’t take the stern measures needed to defeat “Islamic terrorism” because it is intent on “coddling Muslims.”

Speaking Thursday, BJP leader Advani called for “patriotic unity” and “communal harmony,” but then in the next breath served notice that the BJP sees the Mumbai atrocity as grist for its electioneering. Said Advani, “In the context of what has happened last night in Mumbai, there is no doubt that both the UPA Government at the Centre and the Congress-NCP coalition Government in Maharashtra have a lot to answer for.”

In declaring this week’s attack to be a “continuation of 13 March 1993,” Advani may, however, have said more than he wished. On March 13, 1993, a Muslim-led criminal gang carried out a series of bombings in Mumbai. The bombings were in retaliation for pogrom-style riots that had killed hundred of Muslims in Mumbai two months before as part of the communal bloodletting triggered by Advani’s campaign to build a Hindu temple on the ashes of the Babri Masjid mosque

in Ayodhya.

The rise of Islamacist terrorism in India is not principally due to forces outside the country. It is a consequence of the Indian elite's increasingly pronounced promotion of Hindu communalism, as exemplified by the rise of the Hindu supremacist BJP over the past quarter-century. Even a recent Indian government inquiry was forced to conclude that India's 140 million Muslims face systematic discrimination and police harassment and are at, or near the bottom, as measured by key socio-economic indicators, of India's overwhelmingly poor and grossly unequal society.



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