

Lee Acheampong

Cyber Terrorism

12/1/2023

**How does the experience of a terror attack impact the sense of security and trust within a community?**

The Mumbai terror attacks, also known as 26/11 were a series of coordinated terrorist actions that took place in Mumbai, India, over four days from November 26 to November 29, 2008. The attacks were carried out by ten members of the Lashkar-e-Taiba, an Islamic militant organization based in Pakistan. The terrorists targeted multiple locations in Mumbai, including popular landmarks such as the Taj Mahal Palace Hotel, Oberoi Trident Hotel, Nariman House (a Jewish community center), Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus (a major railway station), and a café called Leopold Café (*Mumbai Terror Attacks Fast Facts*, 2013). The attackers used firearms, grenades, and improvised explosive devices to carry out their assault. They targeted civilians in crowded places, as well as specific high-profile targets. The attacks had a profound impact on India's approach to counter-terrorism and security. There were significant reforms in intelligence, coordination, and response mechanisms to prevent and respond to such incidents in the future.

In a shaken state following the aftermath of a terror event, medical teams responded to the needs of those physically affected by the tragedy. This type of medical response is usually coordinated by several medical teams to assist citizens. In the case of the terror attacks in Mumbai, the utilization of triage was vital, to get attention and help to those in critical conditions. “These pauses enabled the hospitals' medical response teams to treat patients effectively. Another factor in the effective response was the rapid pace of prehospital transport, which was quicker than usual...”(Roy et al., 2011, Page 1). There was no field triage, which is usually the availability for medical staff to attend to those with exceptional medical need first,

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but they were only able to “scoop and run,” at all venues of the 2008 Mumbai terror attacks. Ambulances attached to six public hospitals and one private hospital transported the victims. Due to the lack of a formal EMS service, bystanders were the “first responders” to the public shootouts (e.g., the Chhatrapati Shivaji railway terminus station)” (Roy et al., 2011). This quote perfectly enhances the already stated point of how vital medical response is in the aftermath of these terroristic events. Medical response in the wake of an event like this needs to be efficient in helping the wounded, which is exactly what was happening during and after the terror attack.

The social response following the occurrence of a terroristic event reflects the psychological state of the people affected by the tragedy. In the aftermath of terrorist attacks, people may react differently depending on a wide variety of factors. For instance, some may want to seek revenge while others look to correct the trauma by seeking help from outside sources. In contrast, others might take a different approach to mentally escaping by creating denial mechanisms or even being in extreme shock and distress from the event. “ After the presentation of the story depicting the 2008 Mumbai attacks, the Indian students also demonstrated greater levels of terrorism-related distress, a greater desire for revenge, while also demonstrating significantly more denial of terrorism than their British counterparts” (Kamble 2012). Many individuals in the United States after 9/11 adopted and perpetuated Islamophobic rhetoric, as a way to cope, while others tried to move on after the event occurred. Grieving takes different forms for different people, especially after an event that causes so much devastation.

The response of the Government after an attack, as devastating as the Mumbai attack, was quite prevalent. ”Following 26/11, however, police modernization accelerated rapidly, albeit

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temporarily. Less than a month after the attacks, a new budget totaling Rs 126 crore (USD approx. 23.3 million) had been sanctioned by the Maharashtra legislative assembly (Agarwal 2008). This budget authorized a range of new purchases including imported weaponry, a fleet of new armored vehicles, speedboats, amphibious vehicles, and other security gadgets” (Narayan 2014; Machold, 2017, Page 1). This excerpt from the article shows how adamant the government was about securing its citizens after this attack. Usually after terror events, there is a prominent political response that seeks to soothe and secure the nation as a whole. These responses are usually in the form of policy changes and sometimes security implementation. A prevalent security change that occurred as a result of a terrorist attack, 9/11, was the creation of The Department of Homeland Security.

Whenever terrorist attacks occur, we are shaken and divided as a people. We look for any way to cope with the tragedy that has befallen us but rarely do we find any adequate solutions in the aftermath of these occurrences. Although these events leave us scarred and broken, it also becomes our biggest motivator to help ourselves rebuild. We come together as a people receiving support from our neighbors, our medical centers, and even our government. Although our spirits break in the aftermath of these events, we are also at our most able to rebuild.

Something that is still swirling around in my mind after learning about the aftermath of terrorist attacks is how long the effects of these attacks stay with the people who lived through them first-hand. For individuals like me who didn't live through devastating events like these firsthand, I am affected a bit differently. Especially with regards to terrorist events like 9/11, I was born in 2002, which was a year after it happened, and even then I was way too young to

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comprehend what this terrorist event was. Throughout my research, most of my sources touched on the aftermath of these events quite recently after they happened. I would also like to see how terrorist events have a lasting and profound effect on people. I think that my upbringing and background shaped my thinking on the topic, especially in the aspect of knowing about prior terrorist attacks. Although I didn't live through 9/11, I was still very much aware of what happened during the event and the subsequent effects that occurred as a result. Growing up in the United States post 9/11 introduced me to what terrorism was and how it can deeply scar a nation. Since I was not born in the United States and immigrated to the United States after 9/11, I got to experience the changes implemented after 9/11 as it pertains to international traveling. I remember traveling to America and having to wait in long queues to have my documentation thoroughly checked. I also remember the tedious process of providing several documents to the American Embassy in Accra Ghana that seemed to never end. All these aspects of vetting were a direct result of the 9/11 attack that the United States Government implemented. From my research, I was also able to find out that post-9/11 security policies involved heavy vetting of people from overseas traveling into the country. This is quite a specific security policy implemented after the 9/11 attack that still affects many to this day and even affected me when I was moving abroad. Another notable security implementation was the creation of Homeland Security following 9/11. This was a momentous decision because it took into account what happened during the attacks and completely revitalized what security meant to the nation. All these changes that I experienced through my background impacted why security is the way it is now. It has shaped my view on the aftermath of terror events because I see the changes that are

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implemented as a result to keep us safe and to limit these occurrences from happening again. It has also shown me how these events follow us long after they have occurred, even for those who did not live through them firsthand. Something I noticed throughout my research as well as an observation I had was the effect that this event could have further down the road for individuals. Earlier in my essay, I analyzed how some people could feel the need for revenge as a way to respond to terror events like these. Having this in mind, I started pondering how likely a person is to become radicalized and even go as far as perpetuating another event in the name of revenge. With regards to the United States after 9/11 there was a subsequent rise in Islamophobia and just overall hate of persons of Middle Eastern descent. Although these hate crimes that occurred were never at the scale of terroristic attacks, one should ponder the question, how likely is it to have individuals who experienced terror attacks firsthand become extremely hateful to those who attacked their countries and even try to cause a terror event on par with what they experienced to those who wronged them initially. Related to the readings done in class on the topic of radicalization, especially *Far Right Online Radicalization: A Review of Literature*, authors Marwick, Clancy, and Furl explain that radicalization happens in a multitude of ways. For instance, scholars argue that adapting violence as a political tactic is a process involving social, cultural, as well as psychological elements (Marwick et al., 2022). This quote demonstrates that there is no single way of radicalization and therefore radicalization efforts, and so far as even becoming a violent extremist can happen to virtually anyone.

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