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## **Indian Leader Says Pakistan Fails to Rein In Terror**

By SOMINI SENGUPTA

MUMBAI, July 14 — Prime Minister Manmohan Singh of India scolded Pakistan today for what he said was a failure to rein in terrorism and warned of the dangers that poses to the peace process, in his toughest remarks yet in the aftermath of the serial bombings on the Mumbai commuter trains.

“These terrorist modules are instigated, inspired and supported by elements across the border without which they cannot act with such devastating effect,” Mr. Singh said at a press briefing this afternoon in Mumbai, India’s commercial capital, three days after bombs tore through seven commuter trains within minutes of each other during the evening rush hour. “I have explained it to the government of Pakistan at the highest level that if the acts of terrorism are not controlled, it is exceedingly difficult for any government to carry forward what may be called as normalization and peace process.”

Indian authorities have not yet offered concrete evidence linking the bombings to any particular organization. But local police and senior government officials have repeatedly hinted at the involvement of Lashkar-e-Taiba, a banned Pakistan-based militant group active in the anti-Indian insurgency in disputed Kashmir and repeatedly blamed for attacks on Indian soil in recent years.

India and Pakistan, both nuclear powers, have been engaged in peace talks for four years, since the end of a military standoff over a terrorist attack on the Indian Parliament in December 2001; New Delhi blamed it on Lashkar-e-Taiba, and pointed its guns across the border.

Earlier this week, Pakistan rejected Indian finger-pointing over the Mumbai attacks, and late Thursday, the Pakistani president, Gen. Pervez Musharraf, offered his government’s cooperation in the investigation into the bombings, which left a death toll of 181 and 700 injured.

Pakistan’s Foreign Office this evening swiftly denounced Mr. Singh’s allusion to Pakistani links as “unsubstantiated” and said it welcomed the continuation of peace talks, according to wire reports from Islamabad. The next round of talks, between the foreign secretaries of both countries, is scheduled to begin next Friday.

Mr. Singh’s comments underscored the political pressures and opportunities that the bombings present to both his government and that of General Musharraf. On the one hand, Mr. Singh, who has been a stubborn proponent of engaging Islamabad, faces criticism from Indian political opposition, the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party, and on the other, from sections of the Indian public who feel he has been too lenient on Pakistan and on the militant groups it is accused of harboring.

Today, an editorial in Mumbai-based English daily, DNA, hectored the prime minister to bring more than consolation on his visit to the city. “Welcome, Prime Minister. Now let’s have some action,” read the headline. It concluded pointedly: “The time may have come to let terrorists and their backers know that India is a country with millennial patience, but angered and aroused, can play hardball. Will the Prime Minister oblige?”

At the same time, the Mumbai blasts present Mr. Singh’s government with a well of international sympathy on which to draw on, to exert pressure on its rival next door. “I think in the wake of the Bombay bombings especially if there is indeed some foreign link that emerges, Bombay will inevitably be seen as being a victim of Islamic terror as New York, Madrid or London,” said Sumit Ganguly, a professor of politics at Indiana University at Bloomington. “It cannot but help India’s cause in Kashmir.”

Across the fortified border, General Musharraf confronts domestic and international consequences of his own. From his supporters abroad, namely the United States, which has edged ever closer to New Delhi, he risks inheriting additional pressure to crack down on militant organizations like Lashkar-e-Taiba. Any such crackdown, observed Hasan Askari Rizvi, a political analyst based in Lahore, would in turn risk alienating the religious radicals whose lukewarm support the president still enjoys.

The Mumbai bombings complicate his ability to sell peace with India as well. “The Islamists will argue that they knew that the dialogue would not work,” Mr. Rizvi argued. “Others who favor the continuation of the dialogue will criticize him for letting the Islamic extremists undermine the dialogue.”

Talks between the two countries have yielded bus and train links across divided Kashmir, increased the volume of tourist visas issued to citizens of each country, and prompted the release of prisoners. They have not produced any concrete deals on disputed Kashmir, the Himalayan territory over which the two countries have remain deadlocked for nearly 60 years.

Pakistan has grown increasingly frustrated by what it regards as Indian reticence on the subject, a claim India rejects. Nevertheless mounting frustration, among his religious radical allies and the military, for which the struggle over Kashmir has always been central, has piled up on General Musharraf’s shoulders. The domestic pressure is particularly salient as Pakistan approaches elections next year, which General Musharraf is expected to contest.

India accuses Pakistan of providing training, arms and safe haven to guerilla groups fighting Indian rule in Kashmir since 1989. Pakistan says it offers only political and moral support. Since peace talks began, violence has inarguably declined. But recent weeks have witnessed a steady escalation in attacks on Indian military forces and civilians in Kashmir. Among the most brazen was a series of grenade explosions earlier this week, including one that hit a tourist bus, killing 8 and injuring 40, both visitors and locals.

Notwithstanding the obvious parallels of the Mumbai blasts to the bombings in London and Madrid, it is widely agreed that the roots of India's experience with terror are likely local, and not global.

"They were intended to undermine the peace process, not only between India and Pakistan but between India and alienated Kashmiris," argued Radha Kumar, a historian who studies the Kashmir conflict, "and they were vile and despicable even in the vile and despicable history of terrorism in South Asia."

Still, judging by the consolation and outrage that it has prompted worldwide, there is no question that the Mumbai blasts signal India's membership in the axis of the vulnerable. Whether that helps or hurts India, in the long run, is a matter of debate. Gen. Ashok Kumar Mehta, a retired Indian Army officer who writes about foreign policy, predicted that its diplomatic benefits would have to be balanced with the new dangers that the country would face.

"It will hurt India operationally - you will see more and greater sophistication in violence," he ventured. "But politically it will help India strengthen its case as victims despite having a transparent, secular and functioning democracy, being held to ransom by jihad originating in Pakistan."

Ms. Kumar, the historian, said she foresaw long-term risks. "At a superficial level it helps India's position because the international community grows more aware of the dimension of the problem in Pakistan," she said. "At a deeper level, however, it hurts India's position because it prevents India from making peace with alienated Kashmiri groups, and with Pakistan."

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