

# Historical Security Council (2001)

Addressing the Indian parliament attack



<b>Forum</b>	Historical Security Council (2001)
<b>Issue:</b>	Addressing the Indian parliament attack
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## Introduction

“The ghastly attack on Parliament House on 13th December, 2001 has shocked the entire nation. This terrorist assault on the very bastion of [Indian] democracy was clearly aimed at wiping out the country’s top political leadership”. These were the words of the Minister of Home Affairs, Shri L. K. Advani, on 18 December 2001, 5 days after the attack. The attack was executed by 5 Pakistani terrorists who were associated with two particular extremist, anti-Indian terror organizations that are Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Mohammad. Disguised terrorists entered the complex when there were over 200 MPs and some ministers inside the buildings, however failed to enter the buildings. Still, due to the fire exchange outside the buildings 9 people were killed. In addition, due to the explosion of a suicide vest on one of the terrorists, some financial damage was also done. As there are strong and based speculations about the connection between Pakistan’s national intelligence agency, Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), and two associated terrorist organizations, and none of them are banned in Pakistan, their condemnation did not prevent the rise of tension among the two countries. Some other past actions of these organizations were also tied up to this event as they were all aiming for the same purpose: complete occupation of Jammu and Kashmir by Pakistan, or region’s declaration of independence from India. Therefore, on a larger scale, the attack on the Indian parliament is merely a single piece of a much larger disagreement between nations.

During the investigation on the aftermath of the attack, some Indian scholars and western media speculated that ISI was behind the attack because no organization directly claimed the responsibility. Soon after that, some clues gained from interrogations lead to the arrest of a Jaish-e-Mohammed militant, proving organizations association with the attack. As the tension continue to rise between India and Pakistan, further militarization of borders might give the Osama Bin Laden, founder of Al-Qaida, to get out of Pakistan.





## Definition of Key Terms

### Jammu & Kashmir

Jammu & Kashmir region is a region that is located and splitted between India and Pakistan. While the majority of the population is Muslim, constitutionally, India is the owner of the land. Pakistan, though, keeps its claims on the land and allegedly uses proxies (such as Jaish-e-Mohammed) to attack India. The terrorist attacks and violence are more common in that region than the rest of the India.

### Militant

Militants are people who are supporters of military actions and violence in order to achieve their causes. The main difference between militants and soldiers is the fact that soldiers are official members who are members of a formal army whereas militants are members of unofficial and non-formal groups that are most of the time organizing terrorist attacks such as the Indian parliament attack. Therefore, the proper name of the followers of Jaish-e-Mohammed and Lashkar-e-Taiba is militant and not soldier.

### Proxy

Proxies are non-state actors that are being supported by one or multiple (usually only one) countries and are being used as puppets in activities that the official state should not get involved in. In the case of India and Pakistan, there are two main proxies: Jaish-e-Mohammed and Lashkar-e-Taiba. Both of them are allegedly supported by Pakistan and are receiving military aid from Pakistani intelligence service which qualify them for being proxies of Pakistan.

### Military Standoff

The situation in the Jammu & Kashmir region is a perfect example of a military standoff. In a military standoff, two parties militarize their shared border in a way that they are ready for any possible incoming offense from the opposite side. These standoffs either evolve into full scale wars or fade away. For the present case, even though it has yet to evolve into a war, there are some offenses between the two countries that can easily turn into a war. Especially around the Line of Control in Jammu & Kashmir, the tensions have been high since the attack and are rapidly increasing by every action.



## Nuclear State

Both Pakistan and India have been developing their own nuclear weapons since the 1970s and are fully equipped for a nuclear war, making them nuclear states. A possible nuclear war between these two nations would result in a massive humanitarian crisis that will reach out of their borders and affect the whole Middle East, Central Asia and possibly even East Asia.

## General Overview

### Perpetrators

The attack on the parliament was conducted by 5 Pakistani citizens who are members of two Pak-based jihadist terror organizations: Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) and Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM). Both of these organizations are strongly connected to other extremist terror organizations operating in the same region and serving the same cause, namely Al-Qaida and the Taliban. The parliament attack was merely a step towards their main goal of uniting Jammu & Kashmir and Pakistan, which is one of the greatest topics of discussion in the region, causing tensions to rise among the two states since the beginning of the conflict. The perpetrators disguised themselves as Indian police officers, wearing fake uniforms and using a fake car sticker for the necessary clearance, to enter the parliament. They used AK-47s as their primary weapon while also carrying grenade launchers, pistols, and hand grenades.

The two terror organizations behind the attack have been conducting similar offenses against India since their inception. Even though most of these are located in the region of Jammu & Kashmir, they are not limited by the boundaries of that region. Another major attack of Jaish-e-Mohammad was the suicide car bombing against the Jammu and Kashmir legislative assembly which happened approximately one month prior to the parliament attack and caused the death of 38 people. The general opinion of Indian officials and Western analysts is that the national intelligence agency of Pakistan, Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), supports and protects Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Mohammad. In



Map of the attack site and nearby streets



fact, some scholars claim that ISI was the main responsible for the creation of these groups in the first place. The fact that Pakistan is yet to ban these organizations supports these claims.

### Course of Events

On 13 December 2001, at around 11.40 AM, 5 terrorists disguised as police officers passed the security through Gate 12 around the parliament complex via a fake identity sticker. Soon after their entrance, due to the suspicion of a Parliament House Watch & Ward Staff member, it was forced to turn backward. When the car hit the Vice President's car, all terrorists went out and started to fire. Immediately, the surrounding security forces responded and closed all gates. As the terrorists try to move into the building, one of them was shot by the policemen, causing the explosives wrapped around his torso to explode. Both houses in the parliament were adjourned approximately 40 minutes before the attack, but some ministers, approximately 200 MPs, media personnel, and visitors were still inside. After the fighting that took 30 minutes, all five terrorists were killed. In total, except for the terrorist themselves, 9 people were killed and 18 was injured during the attack.

### Aftermath

In the aftermath of the attack, several individuals are found to be in contact with the perpetrators and, thus, got arrested. One of them was a lecturer at the Delhi University named Syed Abdul Rehman Gilani, whose interrogation revealed more associates. Two of those people were Mohammad Afzal and Shaukat Hussain. "In fact, during investigation the officials found out that Mohammad Afzal was the main coordinator of Jaish-e-Mohammad in Delhi, and a member of the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF)", which is a militant group aiming for the detachment of Kashmir region from India. Later on, it was found out that Afzal is a militant who was trained in a camp that was located in the area of Kashmir that is occupied by Pakistan. Another information what was revealed by the Jammu & Kashmir police was that one of the parliament attackers was also one of the responsible behind the hijacking of Indian Airlines Kathmandu-New Delhi Flight IC-814 in 1999.



*Arrested Mohammed Afzal, center, Syed Abdul Rehman Gilani, left, and Shaukat Hussain, right, standing with police officers*



On a macro scale, in terms of international relations, the attack was the unofficial beginning of a military standoff between India and Pakistan. In the aftermath, both sides started to militarize their shared borders and mass troops that were ready for any offenses. According to CNN, the transportation of ballistic missiles to Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu & Kashmir further worsened the situation by increasing tensions. As a result, in January of 2022, a military confrontation happened between two countries. Artillery attacks caused the death of around 40 Pakistani soldiers. The diplomatic offenses were also being conducted by India, such as the cancellation of civilian flights from Pakistan to India. Further on the issue, on 14 May 2022, three Pakistani suicide bombers attacked an army camp at Kaluchak in the region of Jammu & Kashmir and caused the death of 34 people (mostly children, women, and army personnel) and injured 50 more. Former Indian Prime Minister, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, described the situation as the “most inhuman and brutal carnage”.

Coming back to the specific attack on the parliament, even though the attack failed, the question of “Who benefited from this?” was yet to be answered. It’s clear that the tension between Pakistan and India will rise again. A war between two nuclear nations might not be far away. Presence of Osama Bin Laden in Pakistan makes things difficult as a vacuum in the security forces will allow him to flee from the country, which is against the interests of USA.

## Major Parties Involved

### India

As the country whose parliament was targeted, India perceived this attack as an offense from Pakistan. The Prime Minister of India Atal Behari Vajpayee expressed the nation’s view on the attack with these words he said shortly after the events: “This was not just an attack on the building, it was a warning to the entire nation, [...] We accept the challenge”. Certainly, India and the rest of the international community expects some solid actions from the Pakistani government about the prevention of such attacks. Also in February of 2022, Farooq Abdullah, former chief minister of Jammu and Kashmir state, called on the Indian government to launch a war against militant training camps across the border in Pakistan. During the standoff between India and Pakistan, India was the one who first launched an offense against Pakistan, killing tens of soldiers. In addition, India has canceled all civilian flights from Pakistan to India, as a diplomatic offense.



## Pakistan

Even though there is no solid evidence that proves the direct involvement of ISI or any other official Pakistani government agency in the attack, the Indian government is convinced about the indirect involvement of the Pakistani government. Western media is also against Pakistan on this issue. In fact, some claim that the two terrorist organizations are not just supported by ISI but even created by ISI itself as proxies in the first place with the purpose of conducting violent attacks inside the borders of India and the region designated as Jammu & Kashmir. It is notable that Pakistan, even though expressed its condemnation, still did not ban these terrorist organizations inside its borders.

### Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) and Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT)

Jaish-e-Mohammad and Lashkar-e-Taiba are the terrorist groups that jointly organized and executed the attack on the Indian parliament. They are both working for the goal of uniting Pakistan and Jammu & Kashmir. Indian and Western sources suggest that these groups receive support from the ISI, indirectly making ISI the responsible of the parliament attack. Such organizations have coordinated other attacks inside India as well, such as the Jammu and Kashmir legislative assembly attack. Furthermore, it is undisputed that both of these groups are linked with other terrorist groups such as the Taliban and Al-Qaida.

## Timeline of Key Events

Date	Description of event
December, 2001	Pakistani militants arrive in Delhi, bringing ammunition with them which will later on be used during the attack.
December 13 <sup>th</sup> , 2001	5 Pakistani militants attack the Indian parliament, killing 9 people and injuring 18.
December 15 <sup>th</sup> , 2001	Syed Abdul Rehman Gilani, a Delhi University lecturer, is arrested and interrogated; revealing more responsible individuals.
December, 2001	Mohammad Afzal and Shaukat Hussain are arrested Maj-Gen Rashid Qureshi, Pakistan's defense spokesman, made a public statement
December 16 <sup>th</sup> , 2001	informing that Pakistan is willing to join the investigation and operate it jointly with India



January, 2002	Both Pakistan and India started to mass troops on their shared borders in Jammu & Kashmir region. Escalation of tensions resulted in the death of tens of Pakistani soldiers as well as the cancellation of civilian flights from Pakistan to India.
May 14 <sup>th</sup> , 2002	The Kaluchak massacre happened in Kaluchak which is a town located in Jammu & Kashmir.

## Possible Solutions

It is certain that some fundamental changes are required in terms of border security and travel policies between India and Pakistan. Recognizing that similar attacks have been conducted in the past by the same groups, both parties have to be more cautious and careful about unwanted entries. Another issue that needs to be addressed is that the United Nations did not take any actions regarding deescalating the tensions between India and Pakistan. Seeing that India starts to consider these actions as direct offenses of Pakistan against India's democracy, perhaps, a neutral 3rd party involvement in the region would be helpful. Delegates should always consider that an action against the terrorist organizations might cause a riot in the Jammu & Kashmir region and thus keep safety and security of human lives as their first priorities. It is needless to say, merely strengthening the border policies is not enough for preventing foreign terrorist fighters to cross borders, a protected demilitarized zone might be very useful while both making sure there are no belligerent border crossings and keeping the tensions low. While taking decisions, delegates always have to make sure the rights of the people living in Jammu & Kashmir are guaranteed and safe because, in the past, there have been disputes regarding access to water, food, and health services. As both states do possess nuclear weapons, it is urgent for the UN to ensure that a possible nuclear war is prevented at all costs for the safety of thousands if not millions of lives. Usually, a bilateral agreement or a joint commission results in the most effective solutions for such occasions. Also, as the militarization of Line of Control in Jammu & Kashmir increases the tensions, a controlled demilitarization of the area is one of the utmost urgency in the region. Delegates should be aware of the fact that an uncontrolled demilitarization can result in a power vacuum and can easily turn into a haven for insurgencies who want to gain more power and organize more frequent attacks.





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