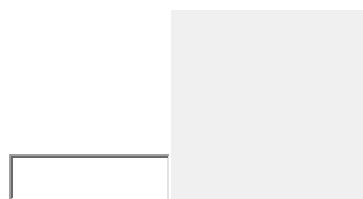


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David Headley's Guru Ilyas Kashmiri Says, Mumbai Attacks Nothing Compared To What We're Planning

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Now read what the terror mastermind [David Headley](#)'s guru in Pakistan, [Mohammed Ilyas Kashmiri](#) had said in an interview last month to a Pakistani journalist in Waziristan.

Ilyas Kashmiri, the elusive [Al Qaeda leader](#) who escaped a US Drone attack in North Waziristan, has in an interview given to a Pakistani journalist, warned of a major terror attack against India.

Asked whether the world should expect more Mumbai-type attacks, Ilyas Kashmiri said: "That was nothing compared to what has already been planned for the future."

The interview given to Pakistani journalist Syed Saleem Shahzad, who works for Asian Times online, took place in a secluded location in South Waziristan. The reporter says that United States, Europe, Israel and India remain Al-Qaeda's targets.

Excerpts from the interview on Asian Times online:

Q : Do you believe that the upcoming South Waziristan operation will be the 'mother of all operations' in the region, as some analysts say?

A : I don't know how to play with words during an interview.. I have always been a field commander and I know the language of battlefields. I will try to answer your questions in the language I am familiar with. (Ilyas spoke mostly in Urdu, mixed with some Punjabi.)
Saleem, I will draw your attention to the basics of the present war theater and use that to explain the whole strategy of the upcoming battles. Those who planned this battle actually

aimed to bring the world's biggest Satan [US] and its allies into this trap and swamp [Afghanistan]. Afghanistan is a unique place in the world where the hunter has all sorts of traps to choose from.Â

It might be deserts, rivers, mountains and the urban centers as well. This was the thinking of the planners of this war who were sick and tired of the great Satan's global intrigues and they aim for its demise to make this world a place of peace and justice. However, the great Satan was full of arrogance of its superiority and thought of Afghans as helpless statues who would be hit from all four sides by its war machines, and they would not have the power and capacity to retaliate.Â

This was the illusion on which a great alliance of world powers came to Afghanistan, but due to their misplaced conceptions they gradually became trapped in Afghanistan. Today, NATO does not have any significance or relevance. They have lost the war in Afghanistan. Now, when they realized their defeat, they developed an emphasis that this entire battle is being fought from outside of Afghanistan, that is, the two Waziristans. To me, this military thesis is a mirage which has created a complex situation in the region and created reactions and counter-reactions. I would not like to go into the details, to me that was nothing but deviation. As a military commander, the reality is that the trap of Afghanistan is successful and the basic military targets on the ground have been achieved.Â

Q : The relocation of 313 Brigade from Kashmir was itself proof that foreign hands were involved in Afghanistan.Â

A : The entire basis of your argument is wrong, that this war is being fought from outside of Afghanistan. This is just an out-of-context understanding of the whole situation. If you discuss myself and 313 Brigade, I decided to join the Afghan resistance as an individual and I had quite a reason for that. Everybody knows that only a decade ago I was fighting a war of liberation for my homeland Kashmir.Â

However, I realized that decades of armed and political struggles could not help to inch forward a resolution of this issue. Nevertheless, East Timor's issue was resolved without losing much time. Why? Because the entire game was in the hands of the great Satan, the USA. Organs like the UN and countries like India and Israel were simply the extension of its resources and that's why there was a failure to resolve the Palestinian issue, the Kashmir issue and the plight of Afghanistan.Â

So I and many people all across the world realized that analyzing the situation in any narrow regional political perspective was an incorrect approach. This is a different ball game altogether for which a unified strategy is compulsory. The defeat of American global hegemony is a must if I want the liberation of my homeland Kashmir, and therefore it provided the reasoning for my presence in this war theater.Â

When I came here I found my step justified; how the world regional powers operate under the umbrella of the great Satan and how they are supportive of its great plans. This can be seen here in Afghanistan." He added that al-Qaeda's regional war strategy, in which they have hit Indian targets, is actually to chop off American strength.Â

The RAW [India's Research and Analysis Wing] has detachment command centers in the Afghan provinces of Kunar, Jalalabad, Khost, Argun, Helmand and Kandahar. The cover

operations are road construction companies. For instance, the road construction contract from Khost city to the Tanai tribe area is handled by a contractor who is actually a current Indian army colonel. In Gardez, telecommunication companies are the cover for Indian intelligence operations. Mostly, their men operate with Muslim names, but actually the employees are Hindus.Â

Q : So should the world expect more Mumbai-like attacks?Â

A : That was nothing compared to what has already been planned for the future.Â Â

Q : Even against Israel and the USA?Â

A : Saleem, I am not a traditional jihadi cleric who is involved in sloganeering. As a military commander, I would say every target has a specific time and reasons, and the responses will be forthcoming accordingly.Â Â

Q : What impressed you to join al-Qaeda?Â

A : We were both victims of the same tyrant. Today, the entire Muslim world is sick of Americans and that's why they are agreeing with Sheikh Osama. If all of the Muslim world is asked to elect their leader, their choice would be either [Taliban leader] Mullah Omar or Sheikh Osama.Â Â

Q : If it is so, why are a section of militants bent on war on Muslim states like Pakistan? Do you think this is correct?Â

A : Our battle cannot be against Muslims and believers. As I have mentioned earlier, what is happening at the moment in the Muslim world is a complexity due to American power games which have resulted into reactions and counter-reactions. This is a totally different debate and might deviate me from the real topic. The real game is the fight against the great Satan and its adherents.Â

Q : What turned you from the most-beloved friend to the most-hated foe in the eyes of the Pakistani military establishment?Â

A : Pakistan is my beloved country and the people who live there are our brothers, sisters and relatives. I cannot even think of going against its interests. It was never the Pakistan army that was against me, but certain elements who branded me as an enemy to cover up their weaknesses and to appease their masters.Â

Q : What is 313 Brigade?Â

A : I cannot tell you, except war is all tactics and this is all 313 Brigade is about; reading the enemy's mind and reacting accordingly. The world thought that Prophet Mohammad only left women behind. They forgot there were real men also who did not know what defeat was all about. The world is only familiar with those so-called Muslims who only follow the direction of the air and who don't have their own will. They do not have their own minds or dimensions of their own. The world has yet to see real Muslims. They have so far only seen Osama and Mullah Omar, while there are thousands of others. Wolves only respect a lion's iron slap; lions do not impress with the logic of a sheep.Â Â

The Pakistani journalist writes : “ As I noted Kashmiri’s answers, I thought of how several years back he was the darling of the Pakistani armed forces, their pride. The highest military officers were proud to meet him at his base in Kashmir, they spent time with him and listened to the legends of his war games. Today, I had a different person in front of me – a man condemned as a terrorist by the Pakistani military establishment and their biggest wish is his death.”

Ilyas Kashmiri, according to American intelligence is al-Qaeda’s head of military operations and US had claimed his death in a recent US Predator drone attack in North Waziristan which later proved wrong. He invited the Pakistani reporter to a secret hideout in the South Waziristan-Afghanistan border area, where US Drones regularly fly overhead. This was his first media interaction since he joined al-Qaeda in 2005.

The contact began with a call from militants on October 6, inviting the reporter to the town of Mir Ali in North Waziristan. The next day, the reporter traveled to Mir Ali. After seven hours of continuous travel, he was received by a group of armed men who put him up in the house of a local tribesman.

“The commander (Kashmiri) is alive. You know that the commander has never spoken to the media before, but since everybody is sure of his death as a result of a drone attack [in September], al-Qaeda’s shura [council] decided to make a denial of this news through an interview by him to an independent newspaper, and therefore the shura agreed on you,” Kashmiri’s aide told the reporter. The 313 brigade, a collection of jihadi groups, fought for many years in Kashmir valley.

The next day, the reporter was sent to another house at an unknown location, about three hours away. Finally, on October 9 morning, a few armed men arrived in a white car. The reporter was asked to leave all his electronic gadgets here. “No cell phone, no camera, nothing. We will provide you pen and paper to write the interview,” he was instructed. After several hours of crossing through muddy tracks and through mountain passes, they reached a room.

After a couple of hours, a powerful vehicle drove up. The reporter’s escort and the men already present in the room rapidly took up positions. They all wore bullet pouches and carried AK-47s.

Ilyas, six feet tall, made his entrance. He was wearing a cream-colored turban and white kameez salwar, carrying an AK-47 on his shoulder and a wooden stick in one hand, and flanked by commandos of his 313 Brigade. He sported a long white beard dyed with henna. At the age of 45 he remains strongly built, he has lost an eye and an index figure.

The host immediately served lunch, and everybody sat on the floor to eat.

“So, you have survived a third drone strike ... why is the Central Intelligence Agency [CIA] sniffing around you so much?” The reporter asked.

“They are right in their pursuit. They know their enemy well. They know what I am really up to,” Ilyas proudly replied.

Ilyas Kashmiri has a Pakistani bounty of Rs 5 crore (US\$600,000) on his head. Some say he is commander-in-chief of al-Qaeda's global operations, while others say he is chief of al-Qaeda's military wing.

His bases and activities have always remained shrouded in secrecy. However, the arrest of five of his men in Pakistan earlier this year and their subsequent grilling helped lift the veil. Their information resulted in CIA drone strikes against him, the first in May and then again on September 7, when he was pronounced dead by Pakistani intelligence, and finally on September 14, after which the CIA said he was dead and called it a great success in the "war on terror".

"They are right in their pursuit. They know their enemy well. They know what I am really up to," Ilyas proudly replied.

Who is Ilyas Kashmiri?

Born in Bimbur (old Mirpur) in the Samhani Valley of Pak Occupied Kashmir on February 10, 1964, Ilyas passed the first year of a mass communication degree at Allama Iqbal Open University, Islamabad. He did not continue due to his heavy involvement in jihadi activities.

Ilyas joined the Harkatul Jihadi Islami and became commander of HUJI in Kashmir. He worked under Amin Rabbani during the Afghan resistance against the Soviet forces. Later, his 313 Brigade grew into the most powerful group in South Asia and its network is strongly knitted in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Kashmir, India, Nepal and Bangladesh. According to some CIA dispatches, the footprints of 313 Brigade are now in Europe and capable of the type of attack that saw a handful of militants terrorize the Indian city of Mumbai last November.

Little is documented of Ilyas' life, and what has been reported is often contradictory. However, he is invariably described, certainly by world intelligence agencies, as the most effective, dangerous and successful guerrilla leader in the world.

He left the Kashmir region and was captured by Pakistani ISI in October 2005 after which he headed for North Waziristan. He had previously been arrested by Indian forces, but he broke out of jail and escaped. He was then detained by the ISI as the suspected mastermind of an attack on then-president Pervez Musharraf, in 2003, but was cleared and released. The ISI then picked Ilyas up again in 2005 after he refused to close down his operations in Kashmir.

His relocation to the troubled border areas sent a chill down spines in Washington as they realized that with his vast experience, he could turn unsophisticated battle patterns in Afghanistan into audacious modern guerrilla warfare.

Ilyas' track record spoke for itself. In 1994, he launched the al-Hadid operation in the Indian capital, New Delhi, to get some of his comrades released. His group of 25 people included Sheikh Omar Saeed (the abductor of US reporter Daniel Pearl in Karachi in 2002) as his deputy. The group abducted several foreigners, including American, Israeli and British tourists and took them to Ghaziabad near Delhi. They then demanded that the Indian authorities release their colleagues, but instead police attacked the hideout. Sheikh Omar was

injured and arrested. (He was later released in a swap for the passengers of IC-184 Indian Airlines aircraft in Kandahar). Ilyas escaped unhurt.Â Â

Ilyas claims he was never a part of Pakistan Army's special forces, though Indian officials say he was always part of it. Nearly 30 years ago when he joined the Afghan jihad against the Soviets from the platform of the HUJI, he developed expertise in guerrilla warfare and explosives.Â

Within just months of arriving in the Afghan war theater in 2005, Kashmiri redefined the Taliban-led insurgency based on legendary Vietnamese General Vo Nguyen Giap's three-pronged guerrilla warfare strategy. For the Taliban, the main emphasis was to be placed on cutting NATO's supply lines from all four sides of Afghanistan, and carrying out special operations similar to the Mumbai attack in Afghanistan.Â

Over the years, Ilyas has deliberately adopted a low key presence in the militants' hierarchy. His attacks are just the opposite, although he never issues statements or claims responsibility for any operation.Â

His 313 Brigade is believed to be the main catalyst of high-profile operations such as the one in Mumbai and others in Afghanistan, as well as al-Qaeda's operations in Somalia and to some extent in Iraq, his associates claim.

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