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## All Roads Lead To Pakistan

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Britain's Prime Minister was in Pakistan over the weekend, meeting with the country's president, Ali Asif Zardari, and delivering a very blunt message — it's time for action, not words.

"We must break the chain of terrorism that links the mountains of Afghanistan to the streets of Britain," Prime Minister Gordon Brown said.

That chain has a pretty direct link with Islamist camps in Pakistan, including those of Lashkar-e-Taiba, raided last week by Pakistani security forces following the implication of that group in the Mumbai attacks.

Most surprising is the calculation by Britain's domestic intelligence service, MI5, that three-quarters of the serious terror plots they are monitoring have Pakistani links. Britain's Telegraph newspaper does the math and concludes that more than **20 current plots have some connection to Pakistan**.

This is, of course, not the first time Pakistani elements have been implicated in British terror plots. (7/7 London bombings, 7/21 failed London train bombings, Operation Crevice, Liquid Airliner bomb plot ... the list goes on).

And there's a Pakistani link in the ongoing investigation in Belgium, following the arrest of **six suspected terrorists** last week. The federal prosecutor said three of those under arrest had recently returned from training camps in Pakistan, and probably, combat in Afghanistan. One of the three, Hicham Beyayo, returned to Belgium on Dec. 4, and on Dec. 7, was heard recording what police say is a martyrdom video in preparation for a suicide attack.



(AP Photo/Roshan Mughal)

Beyayo, Ali el-Ghanoufi and Y. Harrizi had been under surveillance since early 2008, when they left Belgium for Pakistan and Afghanistan. A Belgian-based security and terrorism think-tank, **European Strategic Intelligence and Security Center (ESISC)** reports that U.S. intelligence intercepted a message between Beyayo and an unidentified woman last week, in which Beyayo reportedly asked for her help in "exfiltrating" his family from Europe. (Read more about the Belgian investigation at **ESISC.org**).

Fearing that a suicide attack was imminent in Europe, perhaps targeting last week's European summit in Brussels, authorities made the decision to go ahead with the raids and arrests.

On to Mumbai, and again, another link to Islamists in Pakistan. The AP says it obtained a copy of the surviving gunman's confession — interesting reading but the details in the document don't quite jibe with evidence on the ground. Mohammed Ajmal Kasab is said to have told interrogators that he and his partner had intended to take hostages in the city's main train station, and planned a roof-top standoff.

Kasab and Ismail Khan killed dozens in the station and wounded many more, but there's no evidence they ever tried to take hostages there. Instead, the two gunmen traced a **very deliberate path from one end of the station** and out the other, before moving onto the Chama hospital using a bridge over a busy road. The confession says the gunmen mistook the hospital for an apartment building, but the hospital has gates, is clearly marked, and on Google maps, which Kasab admits studying, it is clearly shown as a medical center.

In the hospital, the gunmen did go to a high floor, heading for a large terrace, and did take at least two hospital employees hostage. Senior police officers arrived, and there was heavy fighting. But the gunmen managed to escape, and as they reached the lower floor, shot and killed the head of Mumbai's anti-terror squad.

Kasab and Khan hijacked the police vehicle, and drove out the gates, opening fire on people at a crowded intersection. When finally intercepted, the pair were on their way to a beach popular with families that was crowded even at that time of night.

Their path of destruction through Mumbai suggests that, rather than planning to hit one target (the train station), Kasab and his partner were to attack as many places as possible, sow as much confusion and fear as they could and keep going for as long as they were able.

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