

# Jackson: Blacks not exempt from global terror

By Hazel Trice Edney  
Special to Sentinel-Voice

LONDON (NNPA) — In the wake of last week's terrorist killings of nearly 200 people at the Taj Mahal Hotel in Mumbai, India's largest city, Black leaders are pressing for more information and cautioning African-Americans to be clear that they are not exempt as targets at home or abroad.

"Terrorism must not be seen in Black-White terms. There is no safe haven for Blacks when terror strikes," said Rev. Jesse Jackson during an NNPA interview as he toured London, Birmingham and Liverpool this week.

"For example, Al-Qaida struck Kenya before it struck New York... When the terror attacks hit New York, there were no reserve spots for Blacks. It's deeply ideological."

Early news reports said the attackers were trained in Pakistan and appeared to be seeking to kill Americans, British and Israelis.

Outgoing Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, also in London on Monday, called on full Pakistani cooperation with the investigation. Headed to India, she urged its government to focus on the investigation of the attacks, and to avoid troop maneuvers or other actions that could cause "unintended consequences," according to the news website Guardian.co.uk.

The greatest danger of conflict between Pakistan and India is that they both have nuclear weapons, Jackson said in the interview. "One motive of the terrorists is to turn those governments against each other, which would be indescribable loss of life. We must



Jesse Jackson cautioned Blacks that they, too, can be targets of international terrorists.

not allow the terror attacks to be successful in turning Pakistan and India into overt enemies because it makes the whole world less secure."

Jackson is in the UK on a whirlwind tour of Black churches, community centers and universities, lecturing and sermonizing on his economic justice program, called "Equanomics." Blacks in the United Kingdom, which include Black people as well as Indians, are often victims of unequal justice economically and socially. Just as Jackson has worked to inspire African-Americans to rise up and fight for equality through his Chicago-based Rainbow/PUSH Coalition in America, his Equanomics program in the UK

is spreading hope among thousands. But, terrorism has added another level of injustice regardless of race.

Among his UK meetings on Sunday, Jackson conferred privately with Shiv Mukherjee, the Indian High Commissioner to the United Kingdom.

Speaking briefly to reporters, including the NNPA News Service, which was covering Jackson on the tour, Mukherjee referred to the Mumbai attack as the "most savage and the most viscous we've seen in India so far. And we've been subject to terrorism quite frequently over the past few years, more frequently than perhaps any other part of the world."

No one should jump to conclusions, Mukherjee said.

"It is really for the investigation to show exactly the details of this operation, who planned it, who executed it, where they got the support from, the weaponry, the planning, the execution," Mukherjee said.

After a private briefing with Mukherjee, Jackson said it would be wise for the governments of Pakistan and India to quickly assure that it was independent regimes — not the governments themselves — which are responsible for the activities.

Meanwhile, in the U.S., Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton, D-D.C., a member of the Homeland Security Committee, released a statement warning the U.S. that it must learn lessons from the Mumbai attack.

"The attacks in Mumbai, India on multiple soft targets aimed at Americans and people of British and Jewish origin call for a

re-evaluation of security precautions at home and abroad," she said.

In January this year, Norton stayed at the Taj Mahal Hotel as part of the Congressional delegation, led by House Speaker Nancy Pelosi on a mission to discuss climate change strategies the peaceful use of nuclear power.

Last week's attacks harken to the horror of Sept. 11, 2001, but the ground-style attacks on individuals opens a whole new area of security needs.

"We have focused on Al-Qaida, which has a pronounced and well-known modus operandi that is known for big bang targets, such as airlines in flight and sites with official or symbolic standing, such as the World Trade Center," Norton said. "[This] group traveled to its destination over water by boat, and used guns and explosives to go after people shooting point blank in restaurants, railway stations, and even hospitals."

Norton said when Congress reconvened this week for the last of a lame-duck session, she would seek information on American intelligence concerning the emergence of new groups in new areas that might focus on American targets.

"The attacks in India are more genuinely terrorist and more frightening than what we have seen because they appear to be focused even more indiscriminately on simply spreading fear and confusion wherever people tend to gather without regard to the targets," she said. "Beyond seeking Americans and people of particular nationalities, and Jews, it is difficult to know the messages these terrorists meant to so send."

## Holder

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other sentencing disparities, voting rights and redistricting reviews.

Obama made the Holder nomination official on Monday.

Holder, who would be the first African-American to serve as attorney general, comes one year after New York activist Al Sharpton led a march of thousands around the Justice Department, decrying policies that have failed to fairly deal with police misconduct and hate crimes.

Holder, whose pending appointment must first be confirmed by the U.S. Senate, would not only be the first African-American to serve as attorney general, but is viewed as a fair-minded former judge whose civil rights record reputedly bespeaks balance, fairness and equity.

Legal experts who deal in racial justice say these are the qualities that have been missing in the Bush Justice Department, largely characterized by decisions made by Republican political appointees viewed as cold to civil rights laws. A widely held complaint has been that Bush administrative appointees

have often undermined opinions and legal advice of lawyers — especially in the civil rights division.

"The last eight years have probably been the most disastrous for the Department of Justice in its history. They have been catastrophic for the Civil Rights Division," says John Payton, president and director-counsel of the NAACP Legal Defense and Education Fund. "The mission of the Civil Rights Division has been literally abandoned; its career attorneys forced out or demoralized, its leadership compromised by political considerations. In many important ways, we have not really had a Civil Rights Division for the past eight years."

Holder could help fix that, said Payton.

"The mission of the next attorney general will be to restore — not just the integrity of the Department of Justice but its very soul," said Payton. "Eric Holder is a spectacular pick."

Among those issues of greatest concern is affirmative action, which the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights defines as "a contemporary term that encompasses any measure, beyond simple ter-

mination of a discriminatory practice, which permits the consideration of race, national origin, sex and disability, along with other criteria, and which is adopted to provide opportunities to a class of qualified individuals who have either historically or actually been denied those opportunities, and to prevent the reoccurrence of discrimination in the future."

In other words, public agencies and institutions are allowed to consider race, national origin, gender and disability — among other factors — when seeking qualified candidates for admissions and contracts. However the obscurity of recent Supreme Court rulings have caused some universities and public contracting agencies to fear executing programs to bring racial inclusion, a hesitation called a "chilling effect."

Holder has a history of judicial posts, in which he revealed his bend toward civil rights. In 1988, then-President Ronald Reagan appointed him to serve on the Superior Court of the District of Columbia. He stepped down in 1993 to accept an appointment from President Bill Clinton as U.S. attorney

for the District of Columbia. He was the first African-American U.S. attorney in that office. Then, in 1997, Clinton appointed Holder as deputy attorney general to then-Attorney General Janet Reno. He was also the first African-American to hold that office.

In 2001, after the election of President George Bush, Holder joined the private law firm of Covington and Burling, where he has largely handled civil and criminal cases as well as internal corporate investigations.

According to website TheHistoryMakers.com, Holder's civil rights record includes early clerkships for the NAACP LDF and the Department of Justice's Criminal Division as a student at Columbia law school in 1974 and 1975. During his four-year tenure as U.S. attorney in D.C., he created a domestic violence unit, implemented a community prosecution project, and developed Operation Cease-Fire, a program aimed at gun ownership by criminals, according to the website, which documents the lives of African-American heroes. As deputy attorney general — in addition to supervising the

litigating, enforcement, and administrative components in both civil and criminal matters of the DOJ, he created a program called Lawyers for One America, which aimed to diversify the legal profession and provide free legal work to those in need across the nation.

With strong Democratic majorities in both the House and the Senate, it is expected that the Congress will work closely with Holder to remove barriers to Black progress. Democratic members of Congress have largely received straight A's and B's on NAACP Legislative Report Cards, including former Sen. Obama.

U.S. Rep. Jim Clyburn, D-S.C., who serves as the highest-ranking African-

American in Congress as House Majority Whip, says he anticipates the removal of long-held barriers as the Congress works with Holder — if his pending nomination is confirmed by the Senate.

"We want somebody who will protect the rights and privileges... of being Americans that African-Americans have. And the current administration, time and time again, trampled upon those rights," Clyburn said. "So, if you've got an Eric Holder over there that says, 'I'm going to protect everybody's rights. I'm not going to be out here politicizing the Justice Department. We aren't going to let people go out here and just trample upon your rights,' that's all African-Americans want."

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