



REFLECTING ON THE MUMBAI ATTACKS

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By

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CDMA salutes and honors all of those who died in the senseless and wanton terrorist attacks in Mumbai last week. We also express our deepest sympathies to the family members and friends of the victims. CDMA has deep ties with the city of Mumbai (formerly Bombay). I was born and grew up in South Mumbai and my home was not too far away from some of my favorite haunts, such as sipping endless cups of coffee in the Taj's fabled Sea Lounge overlooking the Gateway of India, drinking beer at Leopold Café or shopping at the Oberoi hotel. We have several clients in Mumbai, or who have subsidiaries there, and also have a Mumbai-based correspondent attorney, Poorvi Chothani. In January 2008, we organized a round table seminar for Mumbai-based companies at the Oberoi hotel.

The attacks on all these iconic landmarks in Bombay, which I have been associated with, make me especially sad, and come full circle after 9/11, when I saw the Twin Towers collapsing before my eyes. It was only nine months earlier that my wife and I got married in a restaurant within the WTC complex.

A few days after 9/11, we at CDMA strongly advocated that immigration, be it for temporary business or permanent residence, should be separated from terrorism. We strongly critiqued policies that targeted immigrants, such as Special Registration, based solely on their religion or nationality. The same holds true after the Mumbai attacks, and we hope that politicians in an effort to cast blame do not create suspect classes of people without regard to individualized suspicion or guilt. On another note, we also urge that the world supports Mumbai, just as it supported New York, by continuing to do business with this vibrant city and travel there. We are confident that Mumbai will be as

resilient as New York in the aftermath of 9/11. Indeed, Café Leopold opened again for business on Sunday morning.

I also believe that the key to peace and harmony is to encourage exchange, trade, and travel between countries, and the ensuing movement of peaceful people. While France and Germany were historic enemies, they will never be under the umbrella of the EU. The 9/11 Commission recognized that intelligence gathering, and sharing of information between agencies, was more effective in preventing terrorism than restricting immigration. This most unfortunate and tragic incident in Mumbai may give India and Pakistan an historic opportunity to work jointly in fiercely rooting out terrorism while continuing towards a rapprochement on all its conflicts, including Kashmir, and at the same time, promote trade and the movement of people across the two countries as well as the parts of Kashmir that are under their control.

We must continue to emphasize the importance of the global economy, in building prosperity and in rooting out terrorism and war. Gary Endelman, an immigration attorney and scholar noted, as we were meditating on the tragedy over Thanksgiving, "If one believes, as I do, and I think you do as well, that a global economy requires a global immigration strategy, that you cannot have international movement of capital without international movement of people, the idea of having an international regime, subject, of course, to the ability of any nation to decide who comes within its borders, makes tremendous economic sense."

While the causes of terrorism are difficult to pin down and are extremely complex, we can only hope that the fostering of more trade between countries and regions in conflict, with the concomitant movement of people, can help alleviate deep seated resentments as people become more prosperous, educated and free. The time has come to further develop this idea.

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