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Mumbai taught us to expect the unexpected: LAPD

Oinam Sunil,TNN | Jan 21, 2014, 03.44 PM IST

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LOS ANGELES: The terror attack [Ajmal Kasab](#) and his accomplices had carried out in Mumbai killing over 150 innocent people in November 2008 has taught [the Los Angeles police officers](#) to "expect the unexpected".Based on [the Mumbai experience](#), the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) has evolved the Multi-Assault Counter Terrorism Action Capability (MACTAC) to thwart such type of terror attacks if it happened on the US soil.

Deputy chief Michael P Downing, who is commanding officer of LAPD's Counter Terrorism and Special Operations Bureau, told a team of visiting South Asian journalists that he had taken a police team from US to Mumbai after [the Taj Hotel attack](#) and studied the situation."Mumbai police had to learn a hard lesson. When we met Mumbai police officers, we told them that because of your experience, we built the capability, which the US didn't have," Downing said.

From this attack, he said, "We evolved the MACTAC". Downing said a

presentation on the new strategy and training module was shown in 64 cities of US. He said they are closely working with the [FBI](#) in counter terrorism where FBI took the leading role.

A special agent of [LAPD](#) said that the Mumbai attack has taught them to keep reserves as one attack in a corner could be a diversionary tactic of the terrorists for doing something bigger. Initially we concentrate on one corner where the incident occurs, he said, but after the Mumbai attack, "we see left, right, and all sides". "We need to see an incident from all angles. Mumbai has made us change our training and strategy, we need to monitor our logistics and resources."

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Dwelling on lessons learnt from Mumbai, the LAPD agent says security at port was another area they had taken care of.

More security agencies like [Homeland Security Investigations](#), Coast Guards, Port Police, FBI and police are working closely on providing better security at the ports.Scholars at the University of Southern California (USC) too have been helping [the LAPD](#) with their research.

Milind Tambe, a professor at Viterbi School of Engineering in USC, has studied the Mumbai 26/11 and worked out a possible solution.

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"We have trained police officers here for Mumbai type of attack. We work closely with the law enforcing agencies in Los Angeles to identify possible terrorist targets and ways to prevent such attacks," Tambe said.

He has also presented his findings about the 26/11 attack to Mumbai police.

Tambe, who was born and brought up in Mumbai, said they, however, could not have a detailed study with Mumbai police and suggested that IIT Bombay could take up the task. "We need to work closely with the people on the ground to get the desired result. As police data are secret, the transfer of data is problematic. So, we prefer that IIT Bombay work with Mumbai police's data," said Tambe.

(The writer was recently in the US at the invitation of the US Foreign Press Center)

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