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US Sees NY Attack as Pakistani Taliban Retaliation for Drone Strikes

By Jason Ditz

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Recent [reports suggest that Times Square bombing suspect Faisal Shahzad met with Tehreek-e Taliban Pakistan \(TTP\) number three man Qari Hussain Mehsud](#) and that the attack was in all likelihood retaliation for the numerous US drone strikes against northwestern Pakistan.

When the [TTP claimed credit for the bombing on Sunday, in an audiotape made by Qari Hussain](#), officials scoffed, but now they say it is “very likely” that the group played a role in the attack.



Not only the TTP, but also the Jaish-e Mohammed and the Lashkar-e Taiba have been suggested as possible masterminds of the attack. [Still, there is no doubt that the drone strikes, occurring with increasing frequency throughout the Obama presidency, have led all these groups to look for ways to retaliate.](#)

[Pakistani Foreign Minister Qureshi also agreed with this assessment, terming the attack “blowback”](#) and saying it had been a predictable consequence of the US drone strikes. US drones killed at least 700 Pakistani civilians in 2009 alone.

Predictable, perhaps, but still unexpected, as US and Pakistani intelligence both seemed convinced that the TTP didn't have anywhere near the capability of orchestrating any attack, no matter how amateurish, so far from their home base.

It seems that was the case though and with Shahzad reportedly cooperating with officials it will likely become increasingly clear how they managed to do so in the coming days. The results of the investigation could provide interesting insight into the operations of a group whose existence on the margins of Pakistani tribal society has left it shrouded in mystery.