

GJ2002_10_17

The bombing of Bali, a resort city in Indonesia, where 180 tourists died, is the topics of international news for this week. Who is responsible for the attack? What did the Bush Administration say about the bombing? Global Journalist talks to two reporters, Karen DeYoung in Washington and Jerry Norton in Jakarta.

Host: Stuart Loory

Guests:

[Jerry Norton](#)

[Karen DeYoung](#)

Producer: Sarah Andrea Fajardo

Director: [Pat Akers](#)

Keywords

Indonesia, Bush administration, Terrorism, Bali, CIA, Bali bombing, Jakarta, Iraq,

Stuart Loory 00:08

Welcome to Global Journalist on KBIA. This is the program that says mid-Missourians; indeed many Americans, are interested in international news. I'm Stuart Loory of the Missouri School of Journalism. The fabled Bali and Indonesia has been known as the island of the gods. Last weekend, the anti-gods struck a blow there that rocked the world. A huge bombing in a resort city at a time when it was teeming with pleasure-seeking tourists. More than 180 revelers from around the world were killed. The bombing was carefully planned, well executed. No group has taken responsibility. Was this the work of Al Qaeda, which was responsible, we think, for the 9/11 killings in the United States? There was another big bombing today in the Philippines. Might we be seeing an outbreak of serial terrorism similar to the serial sniping that has killed nine innocent civilians in Washington in the past two weeks? Did the United States intelligence services have advanced warning that Indonesia and Australia ignored? Is there any relationship between this terrorist act and the Bush administration's determination to go to war in Iraq? To help us understand all this today we have in Washington, Karen DeYoung, associate editor of The Washington Post, and in Jakarta, Jerry Norton, Indonesia bureau chief for Reuters. Let's start in Indonesia. Jerry Norton, can you please bring us up to date on the investigation there and how it's going as far as the Bali bombing is concerned?

Jerry Norton 01:49

Well, the latest thing that is out of Bali is that they're questioning four people intensively. They say that they have not actually declared these people official suspects, or said that they're detaining them officially, which is the way the Indonesian system goes here. And they have, at this point not said that

they have identified a specific group. The chief security minister was in Bali today and said, it could be foreigners, it could be Indonesians or it could be a combination of the two.

Stuart Loory 02:23

Is there, are the, is the Indonesian government placing any blame on Muslim terrorist groups?

Jerry Norton 02:30

Not at this point in terms of specific responsibility or the government officially saying that you haven't had one government, senior government official, the defense minister who has said he believes it's linked with al Qaeda. But the government as a whole has not said that and again, the chief security minister, who is a more powerful figure in the cabinet, today said that they have not determined who specifically is responsible or whether it's foreign mistake or both?

Stuart Loory 03:01

We had a situation earlier today in the Philippines where I think five or six people were killed in a bombing. Might there be any relationship between the two?

Jerry Norton 03:13

Well, certainly, although as I said the government hasn't officially said it is Al Qaeda linked here, that is the the popular theory, the most popular theory and that was also said about the incident in the Philippines.

Stuart Loory 03:27

Yeah. Karen do...

Jerry Norton 03:28

Specifically, in both cases, it's not simply Al Qaeda but a regional group that's believed to have a tie to Al Qaeda that does concentrated activities in Southeast Asia.

Stuart Loory 03:40

Karen DeYoung, the Washington Post had a story yesterday saying that the United States government had warned Indonesia that there was the danger of terrorist attacks there. That story I think has now been denied. What did happen?

Karen DeYoung 04:04

I think what they've said is there have been a series of general warnings, sort of similar to what happened before 9/11. The intelligence and security services here have said that they were on a heightened state of alert, they had some reason to believe something was going to happen. But nothing specific enough to give specific warnings about I think that's what they're saying, in the case of Indonesia, that they had fairly specific warning that something was going to happen. And this was quite within, I think, a week or several days even before the bombing occurred, but nothing definite enough to say watch this place, or here's where we think these people are.

Stuart Loory 04:53

There was history also overnight from Australia, saying the Prime Minister John Howard has admitted that US intelligence identified Bali as a possible target of a terrorist attack. And the story quotes Howard is saying that Australia listened to the warning and then decided to disregard it and not warn Australians against going to Bali.

Karen DeYoung 05:23

Well, I think I haven't seen that particular story. But I think this is this is one of the issues that's debated in Washington all the time. If you don't have a specific thread about a specific place, how do you do you tell people not to go to an entire country do you, do you upset the you know, the lives of tens of thousands of people for something that you're not totally sure of? And I think those are always things that are weighed here and I'm sure in Australia too.

Stuart Loory 05:55

Yeah, there's even a little similarity isn't there, between these kinds of acts from what's going on in suburban Washington these days were a couple of weeks ago after these serial killings started. It was decided not to try to change the way of life in suburban Washington.

Karen Deyoung 06:17

Well, I must say there have been some changes, you know,

Stuart Loory 06:21

Yes,

Karen DeYoung 06:21

Schools, my own children schools, children are not allowed outside. There's no outside recess. All sporting events have been cancelled all the soccer leagues and the baseball leagues and everything or have just been called off for the rest of the season. I think people are are leery they've changed their habits a lot in terms of where they go and how much they expose themselves.

Stuart Loory 06:47

Right. The government is — are the governments, I should say, the local governments taking any steps to try to get change lifestyles in the area, or is this all being done by people themselves?

Karen DeYoung 07:04

I don't think they've advised people in particular to do anything. One of the difficulties obviously about this, he said it's random, or apparently random, both in terms of the people who have been shot, but also in terms of where they've been shot. It's, you know, there are many counties and jurisdictions surrounding the actual city of Washington, it's one big metropolitan area of about 4 million people. And this shooter or shooters have touched on almost all of them at this point at one time or another, and so people who live in one area and thought that they were safe now don't feel so safe. I don't think anyone anywhere feel safe around here.

Stuart Loory 07:49

Jerry Norton, what about Indonesia? Have people change the way they go about living their lives throughout Indonesia as a result of the Balibo bombings.

Jerry Norton 08:01

While there's certainly been some things in Jakarta that have changed, you have luxury hotels now that have security guards checking under cars as they come in with mirrors, opening the trunks looking inside and looking for ID, which they didn't do before. You have a lot of the office buildings where foreigners work, especially now have security guards with metal detectors. So, certainly has been some enhancement of security in that sense. Of course the US Embassy here underwent a major enhancement of its security around September 11, when they had some of these are first warnings of possible violence. In terms of how much people have changed their everyday lives, I don't know I would say in Jakarta per se, I don't think there's a huge change so far but a lot of people are considering as these warnings are issued by governments whether they should leave as they are foreigners, and most of the threats are seen as directed at foreigners.

Stuart Loory 09:05

Jerry, have you been to Bali since the bombings?

Jerry Norton 09:11

I have not. We've had two text reporters went down there immediately after the bombings. One of them just came back today we saw one text person down there and several other art TV and picture people.

Stuart Loory 09:23

How do they describe the situation to you?

Jerry Norton 09:27

Well, you still have — a lot of tourists did leave immediately after they could get on planes. Others stayed, but they did change their habits. A lot of them kept a pretty low profile after the incident. And the ironic thing here is — not ironic, but Bali was — Indonesia, per se has had a lot of economic problems. Tourism has lagged. There have been incidents of violence over other issues over the last few years, but Bali has always been the exception, the peaceful area of the country and the one that was popular with tourists. Under all the political troubles of the last few years it was like a haven of stability and calm, which suggests that actually, this was a well-chosen target, to really hit Indonesia in one of its few economic areas of strength.

Stuart Loory 10:16

When you look at the pictures of Bali where the bombing occurred, the devastation is just overwhelming. It indicates that there had to be a very large bomb there. How did the bombers get all of this equipment to that island without being spotted?

Jerry Norton 10:42

I'm not sure I don't think it required a huge amount of equipment. The basic basically they seem to according to the latest theories and evidence use a car bomb and one that was actually on top of the vehicle rather than under or inside. That's what they say from the way the explosion went off and so

forth: it was a smaller bomb first and it may have been aimed at distracting people or getting them out to where the bigger bomb could have a maximum effect. And using C-4, which is a form of plastic explosive relatively undetectable by the military is said here is said I don't think it's something that could have come from them. But I would think they have C-4 and I don't think it would be impossible to get from them. And there could be other sources and and Indonesia is a huge country that sprawls across several thousand kilometers that was big from one end to the other as the US. So it's, like 17,000 islands, so it's not exactly a country that is easy to police as far as borders are concerned.

Stuart Loory 11:44

Um-hmm, when you say C-4, can you describe for our listeners, just what you're talking about?

Jerry Norton 11:52

Sorry, I didn't hear that.

Stuart Loory 11:53

I say when you say the explosive was C-4. Can you give our listeners some indication of just what it is that you're talking about.

Jerry Norton 12:04

I think C-4 is kind of a standard plastic explosive, which means you can kind of shape and mold it which makes it popular for this kind of thing.

Karen DeYoung 12:14

And also you don't need of huge quantity, I think, to have large effects.

Stuart Loory 12:19

So, just a small amount can I can do the damage of some other kind of explosive fertilizer based explosive, for example,

Karen DeYoung 12:28

Right.

Jerry Norton 12:30

I should note this...

Stuart Loory 12:32

Okay, go ahead. Go ahead.

Jerry Norton 12:34

I was just going to say they do say that the evidence is that the that was a very sophisticated attack, which is one of the reasons for speculating it was Al Qaeda, some people who really knew what they were doing, and did a lot of planning.

Stuart Loory 12:46

Ahhmm. Okay, we have to take a break right now. This is Global Journalist on KBIA. I'm Stuart Loory and we'll be right back. Welcome back to Global Journalist, you may listen to this program again, ask questions, make comments by going to [www dot global journalists.org](http://www.globaljournalists.org) or hear in mid Missouri by calling us at 573-882-9641. Karen DeYoung, do you see any relationship between what happened in Bali last weekend and the Bush administration's apparent determination to go to war against Iraq?

Karen DeYoung 13:35

I think there have been two basic reactions here in Washington within the administration. Some people and I must say these are largely people who don't think it's a good idea to have a unilateral strategy in Iraq. I think it's becoming a little too much to handle all at once. I think that they worry that the administration is not going to be able to be as effective as it should be in trying to deal with the global terrorist threat and deal with the war in Iraq at the same time and continue to operate in Afghanistan. Now, other people who I think are prevailing at the moment within the administration say all the more reason, their basic case against Iraq is that Iraq is a possibility Iraq will transfer its weapons of mass destruction to terrorist groups. And the same kind of groups that it believes is responsible for these for these attacks, and therefore, it's become even more urgent to move against Iraq.

Stuart Loory 14:44

Part of some people in the administration believe that there is a connection between Saddam Hussein and Al Qaeda, right. I want what is the general thinking in Washington on that point?

Karen DeYoung 15:01

The CIA has has given its intelligence reporting, obviously to the administration into members of Congress, certain members of Congress and said that, based on past reporting about people's movements over the past decade, information that they've gotten from defectors and people that they have captured from Al Qaeda, that there's some reason to believe that there are ties in some way, although they have a different — you can draw whatever conclusions you want from this from this analysis. Now, some people need administration in particular Defense Secretary Rumsfeld and the President also have decided that these intelligence reports are enough to prove a connection. Other people are not so sure. I'd say the administration really hasn't made its case yet.

Stuart Loory 16:03

Karen, the Washington Post has always been very strong on covering the intelligence community in Washington and around the world. After September 11, last year, the feeling was that the intelligence community had let the country down in a big way. How much improvement has there been in the past year particularly, in the CIA's ability to know what is going on in the Arab speaking world?

Karen DeYoung 16:33

The complaint largely was that there were lots of bits of information that if you put them all together, you would have been in a much better position to predict what was going to happen. Their response to that is that there was no particular reason to put them all together and yes, there were some failures and communication, but overall, they were doing the best they could and that no reasonable person could have expected them to put to put it together, as you've seen in the congressional hearings over the past month or so. I think the members of Congress have been very critical. And their investigators have

been very critical of the failure to put these things together and also of the failure, which I think is largely ongoing of the various intelligence and security agencies to communicate with each other. The CIA and the FBI historically, don't talk to each other very much. There's not a lot of sharing of information. There's a there have been a lot of turf battles. And while the senior officials in these agencies argue that they have become, unfortunately aware of the level of these difficulties and have moved to address them, I think there's not a lot of evidence that they've overcome these difficulties, yet.

Stuart Loory 18:00

Yeah, the other thing though was, if I recall correctly, a debate over whether or not we had enough human intelligence?.

Karen DeYoung 18:10

Right, I think that they, you know, the CIA has argued, I think was some reason that these are the most difficult groups to infiltrate that, we don't have a lot of Arabic speakers. And one of the problems they've had is that they, they will not even be able, although we have a lot of listening devices, and there are agencies here that do nothing else but but run tapes of intercepted communications all day and all night, that these things were backing up because there weren't enough people to translate them. There weren't enough analysts that understood how these groups operated. And that would be able actually to catch something important even even if they had managed to capture the information. They've made a big effort to recruit more people. There's a big effort to recruit Native Arabic speakers in this country, but that's been undermined to some degree to the fact that that native Arabic speakers are not feeling particularly friendly, a lot of them towards the intelligence agencies in this country at the moment.

Stuart Loory 19:16

Yeah. Jerry Norton, can you tell us a little bit about the American military presence in Indonesia? And whether or not it has been involved in the investigation?

Jerry Norton 19:29

Well, there really isn't a military presence here in any significant way beyond the sort of military attache at the US Embassy. There has been — There is involvement in the investigation from the FBI and in fact, a number of other countries besides the US have sent teams to help in the investigation of this particular incident. A lot of the intelligence that came out before is and I think that was the root of the reports mentioned earlier that were warnings about dangers here actually came from an Arab who is a confessed member of Al Qaeda who'd been operating here and was captured by Indonesian authorities and then turned over to US intelligence for questioning.

Stuart Loory 20:20

Ahum, is this source, is he still in Indonesia? Or is he been moved out of the country?

Jerry Norton 20:27

Now he was captured here, but pretty much immediately sent to the United States or turned over the United States. Mm hmm.

Stuart Loory 20:34

Ahummm, but there has been talk of sending American troops to Indonesia. I guess from what you say that has not yet happened in any big way?

Jerry Norton 20:47

That hasn't happened. In Indonesia, I don't think there's much enthusiasm for that. They would like more American aid to the military here in cooperation, but the government, although generally quite friendly to the US, I think is not inclined at all to ask for that or want it and it would not be particularly well received.

Karen Deyoung 21:10

Well, I think that the if I could just say, you know, the military assistance, US military assistance in Indonesia was was cut off a number of years ago because of human rights and other concerns. The administration, the Bush administration

Jerry Norton 21:27

The US has... sorry,

Karen Deyoung 21:29

right has been has been eager to re establish that relationship on some level and when Secretary of State Colin Powell...

Jerry Norton 21:38

Yes, they very much for the aide to come back but not a...

Karen Deyoung 21:40

Yeah, was he was there

Jerry Norton 21:42

Great presence with troops

Karen Deyoung 21:44

Yeah in August, I guess they did make a preliminary agreement to start a very, very minor training program restart with the Indonesian military.

Stuart Loory 21:54

Yeah. And that has not yet started. I thought there had been some training missions there but I guess not.

Michael Sullenberger 22:03

I think the training is more, not missions here. It's sending Indonesians to the United States actually for training.

Stuart Loory 22:08

Mm hmm., how is the new Indonesian President Mrs. Megawati Sukarno, bearing up under all of this,

Michael Sullenberger 22:21

Well, she seems to be bearing up, she is not the most, what's the word here, she's fairly reticent — does not say a great deal or make all that many public comments about things. And this has been another example. She did go down to Bali immediately after the incident. That did not say much. Kind of a sharp contrast to when Bush went to New York, and has not said too much. He did make some comments today and about an anti terror decree that the President is about to put into effect. Still in a lot of pressure in the past for Indonesia, to take some stiff action against terrorist elements here and this seems to have sort of galvanized and anti terrorism decree is one thing.

Stuart Loory 23:09

Yeah, the people who are believed to be leaders of terrorist groups in Indonesia operate pretty much in the open don't pay. I mean as...

Jerry Norton 23:19

One person — one person in particular who has been connected, does operate in the open. Intelligence agencies and other countries have linked him to terrorism. He consistently denies it. The US in this report from the CIA that related to this person who had been turned over to them and captured here also also made that link but so far he has not been arrested and is at large.

Stuart Loory 23:49

Karen, is there anything you want to say or can say about increased in surveillance in Indonesia?

Karen Deyoung 23:59

No, I think Jerry's in a much much better position to know about that than I am. I think it you know, it's been a sort of touchy

Stuart Loory 24:08

I am sorry Karen go ahead...

Karen DeYoung 24:10

and sort of touchy situation in terms of, of the US presence there in for intelligence and the military. I think that there was a widespread feeling here that since 9/11, that Indonesia was one of the least cooperative countries in the region. And yet had, probably had, in the view of many people here, the largest presence. As Jerry was saying, it's an enormously difficult country to get a handle on because it's very dispersed over a huge area. It's a huge, huge country. And I think that there are political pressures on the government there that that have made it difficult to crack down and look deeply into certain people at the same time.

Jerry Norton 24:29

Yeah, what you have here is a very large Muslim population, most of whom are moderates, but that doesn't mean that they necessarily agree with the war on terrorism. I'm not worried that it's really a cover for an attack on Islam in general, and they disagree with a lot of policies of the US in areas like the Middle East. So, I think there is fear of a backlash from a crackdown on the more militant groups.

Stuart Loory 25:31

If I may change the subject, Karen, we have two minutes left. The other big story coming from the Far East today is the North Korean admission that it has been involved in trying to build nuclear weapons. What is likely to be the American reaction to that?

Karen DeYoung 25:53

Well, I think they don't quite know how to react at the moment they had in a visit early this month by a senior State Department official that was supposed to initiate a resume dialogue between the two, they brought intelligence information that they believe demonstrated that the North Koreans were up to something that they shouldn't be up to in the North Koreans originally, initially denied it and then came back the next day and said, Yep, it's true. We have that and more and here's what we have. And so the Americans at this point, I think, are not quite sure whether how to react to this, whether this is kind of heightens the tension and means that the relationship between the two are going to slip again into an ultimate Deep Freeze, or if this is part of a new opening by North Korea to kind of lay everything on the table. They've sent this senior official back to the region. I think he got there probably this morning. For consultations with China and Japan and South Korea who are partners in this issue, and I think they're still trying to figure out how to react to it.

Stuart Loory 27:08

Okay, Karen, that is a good way to end this program. We are out of time. I would like to thank both our guests Karen DeYoung associate editor of The Washington Post, and Jerry Norton, Indonesian bureau chief of Reuters in Jakarta. Our director is Pat Akers, and our producer Sarah Andrea Fajardo. For all I'm Stuart Lorry, Global Journalist will be back next week.