

# Why *didn't* Faisal run?

*Is there more to the Times Square attack on May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2010, than meets the eye? In February, 2010, Dennis Blair, then Director of National Intelligence, asserted that it was “certain” a terrorist attack would occur in U.S.A. within six months. A lucky guess (but not so lucky)? A bizarre coincidence? Or ... what?*

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Like many others, I've been reading and thinking about the probability of further attacks, by al-Qaeda and its associates, within U.S.A. and other countries. For some background about my perspectives, opinions and predictions, please read my previous thoughts [here](#).

For a long time, and along with many other news watchers, I've been convinced that Osama bin Laden and Ayman al-Zawahiri have 'franchised out' the continuance of attacks to other groups from Yemen, Somalia, Saudi Arabia, Algeria and, of course, Pakistan. Almost every week, it seems, another group emerges as al-Qaeda-in-This-Country or That-Country. And, as most know, attacks are continuing globally, as predicted by many. Nothing new there.

Concerning the U.S.A., however, I continue to maintain it's enough for al-Qaeda corporate to keep talking about it, while encouraging other groups to just keep sending inept, ill-prepared and expendable operatives to U.S.A. It's an inexpensive - but effective - way to keep the pressure on security agencies, all over the world. Moreover, it allows al-Qaeda to keep testing the waters, so to speak: there's nothing like real-life battle conditions to show up holes in the enemies' (that's us) defenses. If an attack is successful, so much the better from al-Qaeda's perspective. Significantly, however, those that have been attempted in the last twelve months have failed from one key perspective: they have all failed to cause massive destruction and death in U.S.A.

So, what's *really* going on?

That question, and others, occurred to me when I read [about testimony at a Senate intelligence committee inquiry](#) in February this year. What caught my eye was the headline: **'Intelligence officials say al-Qaeda will try to attack US in next 6 months'**.

I read the text of the article, quite amazed at the candor of the intelligence officials. Here's the nub of the story and the crucial prediction made by Dennis Blair (previous Director of National Intelligence; he resigned on May 21st): when asked by Senator Feinstein about the probability of attack in U.S.A. within the next six months, Director Blair stated that it is “certain”. Directors Panetta of CIA and Mueller of the FBI, flanking Director Blair, both agreed.

*Excuse me?*

As anybody who knows anything about probability theory, **a certainty means the elimination of all chance**. For example, for the foreseeable future, we can say it's 100% probable that the sun will rise in the east tomorrow; or that we will all die at some future time; or that earthquakes on this planet will continue, and so on. In other words, there is no chance at all that none of those events will *not* occur.

Hence, unless Mistery Blair, Panetta and Mueller are simply indulging in unwarranted hyperbole for theatrical effect, how can it be they are categorically *certain* another attack *will* occur in six months? At that time of reading, I wondered, what do they know that they're *not* telling everybody? If it's only their best estimate, that's what they should have said. However, seeing as how they all said it was a certainty an attack would occur within six months, there is, logically, only one way they could possibly maintain that position: **they know about preparations already under way, somewhere, by a single extremist or an extremist group**.

Now, to be fair, it's often the case that law enforcement officers know about preparations for the commission of a crime, sometimes long before it occurs. Informants, wire taps, money tracking, and such like can all point to who might be preparing to do a bad thing. It's part of how security agencies operate – a staple of covert operations. Some may recall, for example, prior news reports of FBI and other agencies infiltrating suspected groups around U.S.A. – in New York, Chicago, Miami – with the view to arresting the perps in the act, or just before a crime is committed.

Crucially, however, the timing of the commission of a crime is often *the last thing* for agencies to know, for sure; after all, most professional criminals are not stupid. Yet, six months ahead of time, the three most important directors of intelligence in U.S.A. apparently knew that an attack *would* occur. Significantly however, at that Senate hearing, Senator Feinstein failed to ask the next obvious question: ***So - exactly when, Director Blair, will that attack occur?***

Quite obviously, the three directors revealed much less than they could have. That's always true, however. The following case, however, substantiates the thrust of their statements: an attack *did* occur within six months – in fact, barely three months after that hearing was reported in the *The Washington Post* of February 3<sup>rd</sup>.

So, fast forward to the first week of May, 2010: **Faisal Shahzad is arrested within two days** after attempting to explode an ineptly prepared car-bomb in Times Square, on May 1st. He left a paper and electronic trail that any player of Cluedo could have solved easily. He'd been preparing the device for a few months, using supplies and equipment from local sources. After leaving the crime scene, he took two – *two* – days to get on to a plane. Why would any terrorist stick around for more than two hours after initiating his attack? And, most damning for security watchers, he was *already* on a terrorist watch list.

The *piece de resistance* of revealed information, however, is contained in the text of the article. There, you'll find a verbatim conversation between Shazad and the two Customs Officers who arrested him. After being hand-cuffed, a totally compliant Shahzad is reported to have said: ***"I was expecting you. I wondered what took so long."*** Yes, read that again, and think about it – particularly in relation to Director

Blair's statement at the Senate Intelligence Committee Hearing in the first week of February, three months, almost to the day, before Shahzad tried to do his damndest.

Simple coincidence? Always possible, of course. But, how likely? From Shahzad's words, it's quite apparent he knew he was going to be arrested; moreover, he wasn't too worried about it; and he sure took his time to finally get on board an aircraft. Or, maybe Shahzad was simply bragging? Perhaps so – but to what end? What could he possibly gain by doing so? He's looking at a probable life sentence, anyway, and without parole. Based upon the reports, his behavior just doesn't add up.

So, it's one thing for security agencies to know, ahead of time, that a crime will be committed within a certain period. It's much, *much* more, however, when the perp is arrested, he calmly says: "What took you so long?" It's reminiscent of scenes I recall from an old movie called **The Killers**: two hit men arrive in a small town to waste some guy. Instead of running, the guy waits for them to kill him. Later, one of the hit men asks the obvious question: why? Why does a guy just wait to get hit? Why didn't he run when he had the chance? (I thoroughly recommend the movie or the 1946 version; both are well done.)

**So, why didn't Faisal run, when he had the chance?** Was he even *running*; or was he simply going through the motions? Those, and other pertinent questions, need answers. In my opinion, though, we'll never know: because Faisal pleaded guilty to all ten charges on June 21<sup>st</sup> thus avoiding a trial and hence further media attention. **Effectively, he's been silenced.** He's now awaiting sentencing in October.

Finally, considering the bizarre circumstances of his attack, his delayed escape, his apparent serenity when arrested and his inexplicable comments, you would think that other news pundits, editors and writers might have raised more questions. Not so....

A search of all relevant online news reports between May and August, 2010, showed that Shahzad's words (at the time of his arrest) have appeared in only *one* other publication, **The Boston Globe**, under the headline of Quotes of Note, May 7<sup>th</sup>, 2010. So: only a quote of note for that week? Well, now, then, there....

It's as though people, somewhere, want everybody to simply forget *all* about Faisal, almost as though he's an embarrassment. Or a man who knows too much.

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