

FORT DIX PLOT

Situation: Islamic extremists plotted to attack US Service Members stationed at Fort Dix.

On 31 January 2006, a clerk from a New Jersey electronics store contacted the FBI to report a suspicious video recording brought in to be made into a DVD. This report led to a fifteen-month investigation that ended with the arrests of six individuals plotting to attack Fort Dix, New Jersey.



The six accused men were foreign-born Islamic extremists; four from the former Yugoslavia and the others from Turkey and Jordan. Four were in the country illegally. There does not appear to be an operational connection between the terrorist cell and Al Qaeda. However, the plotters gained inspiration from Al Qaeda's radical interpretation of Islam and a desire to harm the US and its citizens.

The plot against Fort Dix demonstrates that terrorist threats can develop anywhere, even within the US, and may not be formally linked to an organized terrorist organization.

[Always be vigilant. If you notice something suspicious, contact authorities immediately. Authorities will work with you to protect your identity.](#)



While copying a video to a DVD in January 2006, an employee at an electronics store in New Jersey noticed its disturbing content. The video included images of ten men in their early 20's firing weapons, calling for Jihad, and shouting "Allah Akbar," Arabic for "God is Great." The images resembled Al Qaeda training materials available on the Internet.

The store clerk contacted the FBI to give them the video. According to the US Attorney in New Jersey, since the FBI learned of the threat at an early stage,

investigators elected not to immediately arrest the plotters. Instead, the FBI teamed with the Joint Terrorism Task Force to monitor and gain as much information as possible about the plotters' plans, contacts, and organization.

Four of the plotters were ethnic Albanians from Macedonia and illegally residing in the US. Three of these four were brothers who operated a roofing company in New Jersey. The plotters also included a legal US resident from Turkey living in Philadelphia, and a naturalized US citizen from Jordan living in Cherry Hill, New Jersey and working as a taxicab driver in Philadelphia.

Law enforcement agencies and DOD authorities are best suited to investigate potential threats. Reporting suspicious behavior early allows them the best opportunity to mitigate a threat before an attack is conducted.

The FBI successfully infiltrated the terrorist cell with two informants who were able to record conversations with the plotters and observe their activities. For example, one plotter said, "My intent is to hit a heavy concentration of soldiers...This is exactly what we are looking for. You hit four, five, or six Humvees and light the whole place...and retreat completely without any losses."

The plotters considered alternative targets and conducted surveillance. These included the Lakehurst Naval Air Engineering Station and Fort Monmouth in New Jersey, Dover Air Force Base in Delaware, a US Coast Guard facility and the Army-Navy Football Game in Philadelphia. Ultimately, they chose Fort Dix because one of them had delivered pizzas there and was able to obtain a map of the installation from his father's pizza shop.

The plotters' other activities should have raised the suspicions of other vigilant people. For example, they frequented a firing range in Pennsylvania and practiced attack tactics at paintball facilities. They collected handguns, shot guns, and semiautomatic assault rifles and engaged in firearms training in the Pocono Mountains. However, no observers reported these suspicious activities.

Stay vigilant for suspicious activities, especially near DOD installations, government buildings, and other possible terrorist targets. Loitering, repeated visits, taking pictures, making notes, or drawing sketches of sensitive areas might be a sign of surveillance.



The group had a collection of jihadist videos, including the last will and testament of two of the September 11 hijackers and Osama bin Laden calling Muslims to jihad. They watched videos of attacks on US military personnel and reacted with laughter at a video of a US Marine being maimed in combat.

The terrorists planned to attack Fort Dix with automatic weapons, RPGs, and grenades and two of the plotters attempted to buy AK-47 and M-16 rifles from undercover FBI agents. Based on the evident intent to carry out the attack, FBI agents arrested the six members of the terrorist cell on 8 May 2007. Five of the suspects were charged with conspiracy to kill US military personnel. The sixth was charged with aiding illegal immigrants in obtaining weapons. All six plotters were convicted

on charges of conspiracy to harm US military personnel. Four of the plotters were sentenced to life in prison, one was sentenced to a 33 year term, and one to a five year prison sentence

The lack of other reports highlights the importance of the initiative of the store clerk in New Jersey. Without his tip to the FBI, the terrorist plot against Fort Dix might have been carried out. FBI agent J.P. Weiss referred to the New Jersey store clerk as an "unsung hero" and suggested the "reason we're here today...[is]...because of the courage and heroism of that individual."

Regardless of your rank, position, or status, you can be decisive in the security of your installation, unit, or family. Security is everyone's responsibility and widespread vigilance is a key component of antiterrorism.