



54 Attacks in 20 Countries Thwarted By NSA Collection

Under FISA Section 702 and PATRIOT Act Section 215

13 plots in the U.S., 25 in Europe, 11 in Asia, 5 in Africa

Four Declassified Examples From the NSA



New York City Subway Attack Plot 2009

In September of 2009, using authorized collection under section 702 to monitor al-Qa'ida terrorists overseas, NSA discovered that one of the al-Qa'ida associated terrorists was in contact with an unknown person located in the U.S. about efforts to procure explosive material. NSA immediately tipped this information to the FBI, which investigated further, and identified the al-Qa'ida contact as Colorado-based extremist Najibulla Zazi. NSA and FBI worked together to determine the extent of Zazi's relationship with al-Qa'ida and to identify any other foreign or domestic terrorist links.

NSA received Zazi's telephone number from FBI and ran it against the section 215 business records data, identifying and passing additional leads back to the FBI for investigation. One of these leads revealed a previously unknown number for co-conspirator Adis Medunjanin and corroborated his connection to Zazi as well as to other U.S.-based extremists. While the FBI was aware of Medunjanin, these connections further highlighted the importance of Medunjanin as a person of interest in this plot. The FBI investigated these leads, tracking Zazi as he traveled to meet up with his co-conspirators in New York, where they were planning to conduct a terrorist attack. Zazi and his co-conspirators were subsequently arrested, and the attack thwarted. Upon indictment, Zazi pled guilty to conspiring to bomb the New York City subway system. In November, 2012 Medunjanin was sentenced to life in prison.



Chicago Terror Investigation 2009

In October 2009, David Coleman Headley, a Chicago businessman and dual US and Pakistani citizen, was arrested by the FBI as he tried to depart from Chicago O'Hare airport on a trip to Europe. Headley was charged with support to terrorism based on his involvement in the planning and reconnaissance of the hotel attack in Mumbai 2008.

At the time of his arrest, Headley and his colleagues were plotting to attack the Danish newspaper that published the unflattering cartoons of the Prophet Mohammed, at the behest of Al Qaeda.

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Compelled collection (authorized under FISA Section 702) against foreign terrorists and metadata analysis (authorized under the business records provision of FISA) were utilized in complement with the FBI law enforcement authorities to investigate Healey's overseas associates and their involvement in Headley's activities.



BASAALY MOALIN, October 2007

In October 2007, NSA provided the FBI with information obtained from querying the metadata obtained under PATRIOT Act Section 215. This information established a connection between a phone known to be used by an extremist overseas with ties to Al Qaeda's East Africa network, and an unknown San Diego-based number. That tip ultimately led to the FBI's opening of a full investigation that resulted in a February 2013 conviction of Basaaly Moalin and three others for conspiring to provide material support to al Shabaab, a State Department-designated terrorist group in Somalia that engages in suicide bombings, targets civilians for assassination, and uses improvised explosive devices.



OPERATION WI-FI, APRIL 2009

In January 2009, using authorized collection under Section 702 to monitor the communications of a foreign extremist overseas with ties to Al Qaeda, NSA discovered a connection with an individual based in Kansas City. NSA tipped the information to the FBI, which during the course of its investigation uncovered a plot to attack the New York Stock Exchange. NSA queried metadata obtained under Section 215 to ensure that we identified all potential connections to the plot, assisting the FBI in running down leads.

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