

3 DIFFERENT INSPECTORS GENERAL SAY THERE IS MORE, SECRET, INFORMATION ON THE TSARNAEV BROTHERS' MOTHER

The Senate Homeland Security Committee is having a hearing on the joint IG Report on the Boston Marathon attack.

Most of the questions will be in closed session, including one Tom Coburn plans to ask about whether the government tracks travel of people who have received asylum from places, they then travel back to those places. (See after 25:00)

At least as interesting a question – another that was largely deferred for closed session – came from Tom Carper. (after 36:25) He asked if there was more information on Zubeidat Tsarnaev that might have led the government to find the attack – and the FBI, IC, and CIA Inspectors General confirmed there was.

Senator Tom Carper: I want to be sensitive to what you can say in a public setting and what you can't. But I have a couple of questions that relate to Mrs. Tsarnaev, and to the extent that you discuss her that you can share with us in a public setting. I have a couple of specific questions but is there any more general comments that you would like to make about how you address her role in all this that you can share in a public setting?

[Watch David Buckley, CIA's IG, immediately consulting with his aide in response to this question.]

DOJ IG Michael Horowitz: The one thing

that I can say from the standpoint that we looked at, the lead information included information about her, not just Tamerlan. The judgement was made to only look at – to only open on Tamerlan. But we found there was certainly sufficient information if the FBI had wanted to open on her as well that they could have done so. They made the judgment not to. And that was a decision made right at the outset, in March of 2011.

Carper: Others, please.

Intelligence Community IG Charles McCullough: I would agree there was information that we found when we examined the post-bombing information that was collected. I think probably that would have to be discussed in the classified session. But there was information that we found post-bombing that would relate to that Senator.

Carper: Mr. Buckley?

CIA IG David Buckley: Mr. Chairman, I too have information that I'll impart in the closed session regarding this.

Apparently, the Russian notice describing Tamerlan's deepening commitment to extremism also included details on Zubeidat.

And three of the four IGs (I believe, but need to review this, FBI, IC (NCTC), and DHS) admitted that had the investigation been focused on Zubeidat, the government might have found more information.

Remember, it was in a conversation between Zubeidat and a friend or relative where discussion of Tamerlan's aspirations for jihad had come up in Russian collections. If, for example, NSA had collected that conversation but not found it, they might have found it had they searched on her name rather than Tamerlan.

Update: Some interesting quotes on second view.

@11:50, McCullough describes reviewing “anything that was within the US government’s reach before the bombing, but had not been obtained, accessed, or reviewed until after the bombing” (and whether the USG could have known it existed before the bombing). This probably refers to NSA materials.

@46:00 Carper asks whether we might have found Tamerlan without the Russian tip. McCullough responds that we might have through “forensics.”

Carper: If the Russians had not shared their initial tip, would we have had any way to detect Tamerlan’s radicalization?

[McCullough looks lost.]

Carper: If they had not shared their original tip to us, would we have had any way to have detected Tamerlan’s radicalization? What I’m getting at here is just homegrown terrorists and our ability to ferret them out, to understand what’s going on if someone’s being radicalized and what its implications might be for us.

McCullough: Well, the Bureau’s actions stemmed from the memo from the FSB, so that led to everything else in this chain of events here. You’re saying if that memo didn’t exist, would he have turned up some other way? I don’t know. I think, in the classified session, we can talk about some of the post-bombing forensics. What was found, and that sort of thing. And you can see when that radicalization was happening. So I would think that this would have come up, yes, at some point, it would have presented itself to law enforcement and the intelligence community. Possibly not as early as the FSB memo. It didn’t. But I think it would have come up at some point noting what we found post-bombing.

