The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Attack Could 'Easily' Happen in U.S.

January 26, 2011

Winnefeld responding to a question Tuesday at Peterson Air Force Base. **Ed Andrieski**

PETERSON AIR FORCE BASE, Colorado — The suicide bombing at Moscow's Domodedovo Airport is a tragedy that "could have just as easily happened" in the United States, a top U.S. defense official said, as New York dispatched a police detective to Moscow to gather information about the attack.

"People think of us and the Russians as adversaries, and we're not, and particularly in this area," said James Winnefeld, the commander of NORAD and the U.S. Northern Command, which is responsible for the military defense of U.S. soil and supporting civilian agencies in the event of natural or human-caused disasters.

"We feel very badly for what happened to them in Moscow because that could have just as easily happened here," Winnefeld said in an interview Tuesday.

Winnefeld declined to say what impact the Moscow bombing might have on U.S security measures. That's a matter for the Department of Homeland Security and the Transportation Safety Administration, he said.

But Winnefeld said regardless of why or where terrorists attack, they are relentless and fanatical and need only a single security weakness to stage a devastating strike.

"We call it shots on goal sometimes," Winnefeld said. "We have to be perfect goaltenders. All they have to do is get one shot through and they get to make an impact. And they certainly made an impact in Moscow [on Monday]. It was a real tragedy."

Meanwhile, a detective from the New York police department's intelligence division arrived in Moscow on Tuesday to collect details about the bombing, New York police spokesman Paul Browne said by e-mail.

The same detective, who is normally assigned to Tel Aviv, traveled to Moscow last year to learn about the twin metro bombings in March that killed 40 people, Browne said.

It is the fourth time that New York detectives have traveled to Moscow to learn about terrorist activity, Browne said. New York police first sent investigators to the Russian capital in 2002 following an attack on the Dubrovka theater that left 129 people dead, and also sent personnel in 2004 after a metro bombing that killed 42 people.

(AP, Bloomberg)

Winnefeld also said military-to-military relations between the United States and Russia were improving and it was possible that he would meet with Russian commanders in Russia if the two sides could work out the details.

"I would welcome the opportunity, candidly, and I would also welcome the opportunity to host a Russian counterpart here," he said.

Winnefeld said he has no direct counterpart in Russia but he is interested in meeting the commander of Russia's long-range aviation.

Original url: https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2011/01/26/attack-could-easily-happen-in-us-a4529