

Why Didn't Tsarnaev Attack Dagestan?

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Life just didn't seem to be working out for Tamerlan Tsarnaev, the older brother suspected of leading the Boston terrorist attack and who was killed in a police chase on Thursday. He wanted to become an engineer but couldn't finish community college. He wanted to be a member of the U.S. boxing squad but couldn't make the team.

But although he was a failure in life, he excelled at convincing those close to him to do his bidding. His younger brother, Dzhokar, obeyed his every wish, and Tamerlan's wife, an ordinary, all-American suburban woman who was raised Christian, donned a head scarf and accepted Islam, quit her studies at age 21 and bore him a child. She then worked 80-hour

weeks to support him. Even Tamerlan's mother, a masseuse, fell under her son's influence. She also began wearing a shawl and told her massage clients that the 9/11 terrorist attack had been staged by the FBI. Now, she claims that the FBI framed her son for the Boston bombing.

Islamist terrorists never take responsibility for their attacks. They always claim that their opponents, who were U.S. secret agents posing as terrorists, blew themselves up to tarnish the reputation of peace-loving Islam.

Tamerlan had a friend named Brendan Mess. In the fall of 2011, Mess and two other men were found with their throats cut, \$5,000 lying about and marijuana scattered on their bodies. Again, the naive FBI did not suspect a thing. But Tamerlan probably suspected that he was being trailed, so he went to visit relatives in Makhachkala for six months just to be on the safe side.

In a normal country, violence is an ineffective means for achieving your goals. The Tsarnaev brothers are a perfect example. Yes, they had the freedom to visit extremist websites to their hearts' content, force their women to wear head scarves and to fill people's minds with a lot of dangerous ideas. But soon after they set off bombs in Boston, they became pariahs and fugitives. Within several days, they were named the primary suspects in the case after acquaintances saw the brothers' photos on television and called the FBI. The moment a man discovered the wounded Dzhokar hiding in a boat in his yard, he dialed 911.

Things work differently in a failed state like those in the North Caucasus. In those societies, violence actually works. If the Tsarnaev brothers had become terrorists in Dagestan, where they lived for a year in 2001, the police might have been looking for them, but not a single citizen would have risked his neck to inform on them. In Dagestan, the people know that the terrorists and mafia members are more powerful than the authorities.

In that sense, the Tsarnaev brothers could have gotten away with their crime in Makhachkala and escaped into the surrounding mountains. Sure, they wouldn't have become celebrities on CNN and Fox News, but they would have been able to drive from village to village in a big, expensive black jeep, tie up and gag the son of the republic's deputy treasurer and throw him into the trunk of their car and receive millions of dollars in ransom for him. Then, they could have fitted out their bunker like a five-star hotel and eventually become prominent and respected thugs.

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