

Boston Suspects Planned July 4 Attack

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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People protesting late Thursday outside the Dyer-Lake Funeral Home, where they believe Tamerlan Tsarnaev's body was being held, in North Attleborough, Massachusetts. **Jessica Rinaldi**

BOSTON — The two Chechen brothers suspected of carrying out the deadly attacks on the Boston Marathon had originally planned to set off their bombs on July 4, a law enforcement official said.

The official said the suspects, Tamerlan and Dzhokhar Tsarnaev, advanced the date of their attack because they completed building bombs more quickly than they originally anticipated. The official declined to be identified and did not offer more details.

Police say the brothers detonated two bombs made with pressure cookers in the April 15 attack on the Boston Marathon that killed three people and wounded 264.

An attack on Boston's packed July 4 celebrations would have carried the extra symbolism of disrupting the city's widely followed Independence Day celebrations.

Citing unidentified officials, The Boston Globe reported on its website that Dzhokhar Tsarnaev, the younger brother who was captured by police four days after the bombing, told investigators the pair discussed detonating their explosives at the city's famed celebration on its Charles River Esplanade.

News of the July 4 attack plan and other details supplied by Tsarnaev to investigators was earlier reported by The New York Times and other media outlets.

NBC News, also citing unidentified officials, reported that Tsarnaev told investigators the bombs were made in the home of his brother Tamerlan, who was killed in a shootout with police early on April 19.

The Times reported that the ethnic Chechen brothers also considered suicide attacks and that they had viewed online sermons by Anwar al-Awlaki, a radical U.S.-born cleric who was killed by an American drone strike in Yemen in 2011. There is no indication the brothers communicated with Awlaki, however, the newspaper said.

What, if any, ties the two suspects had with foreign militants is a key question for investigators trying to determine how the pair became radicalized. How they selected their target would also shed light on their mindset.

Mitch Silber, executive managing director at K2 Intelligence and former head of intelligence analysis at the New York City Police Department, said a July 4 attack in Boston might have been more deadly given the fact that greater numbers of people gather for the city's annual celebration.

Former federal prosecutor Mark Rasch said a July 4 attack would have sent a stronger message.

"The essence of terrorism is all about symbolism," Rasch said. "The Boston Marathon just does not have as much of a symbolic feeling as the Fourth of July to the United States."

Meanwhile, Tamerlan Tsarnaev's remains were claimed on behalf of his family on Thursday. His body had been kept at a Boston facility for more than a week.

Terrel Harris, a spokesman for the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner of Massachusetts, said a funeral services company retained by the family had claimed the body. Harris declined to provide details including the cause of death or where the body had been taken.

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