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NSA SURVEILLANCE PROGRAM AND THE NAJIBULLAH ZAZI TERRORIST THREAT

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P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. RIEDEL: Why don't we get started, ladies and gentlemen? Welcome to the Brookings Institution. Good morning on a rainy Washington day. Those of you who are furloughed government employees, we are very glad to give you something to do. (Laughter)

This is the fourth in a series of talks and discussions sponsored by the Brookings Intelligence Project. The Brookings Intelligence Project likes to focus on intelligence successes and try to explain why intelligence can be successful, and I'm glad to say today that we are looking at one of the most important terrorists plots planned against the United States in the last decade, perhaps the single-most important Al-Qaeda plot planned against the United States in the last decade involving the use of American citizens.

It was intended to take place on the 8th anniversary of September 11th in September 2009, and in many ways the plot was a success. It was only at the last minute that the United States authorities were able to detect it and then foil it. It is a classic example of intelligence and counter-terrorism success in the post 9/11 world.

I'm very glad to have today as our guest Matt Apuzzo who is the co-author of a book about the plot entitled *Enemies Within: Inside the NYPD's Secret Spy Unit and bin Laden's Final Plot Against America*. This is not technically a book event. We don't do those at Brookings, but we are going to talk about the book.

I highly recommend it, not just because it really gets you inside this plot but because it is superbly well written. Matt and his co-author Adam Goldman have taken a real-life story and turned it into a heart-stopping fictional account in some ways. It's not fiction, of course, but it comes across like a Tom Clancy novel in some places,

and we'll talk about that and particularly the chase scene, literally, across the United States.

It is an important event in another sense as well because as we'll soon see, a key piece of information that uncovered the plot came from the National Security Agency, and we'll talk about the NSA surveillance systems and their role in this plot.

You have in front of you a piece of paper with Matt's biography, his background. He's a Pulitzer winning journalist. He and Adam have uncovered many, many significant stories over the years, and as I say, they are both very, very good writers. He's a graduate of Colby College in Maine, and I'm very pleased to have him here today to talk about the book. I'd like to start with the plot.

MR. APUZZO: Yes.

MR. RIEDEL: Could you tell us who Najibullah Zazi was, who his confederates were, and what they had in mind?

MR. APUZZO: Sure, Najibullah Zazi was a 24-year-old guy when this all unfolded. He was born in Afghanistan and spent a lot of time in his very early years in a Pakistan refugee camp. His father ultimately got a visa to come to the United States, and was working 20-hour days as a cab driver, was able to bring his family over to the United States. They were living in Queens. It was really an immigrant story.

They were very pro-America, even after 9/11. Even Zazi was very supportive of the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan. He didn't do so hot in high school. Dropped out of high school, kind of became disenchanted with the system. He was a coffee-cart vendor down on Wall Street, but was something of a conflicted soul at that moment. He still had an "I love USA" sticker on his coffee cart and was very chatty, very friendly with all of his regulars. He knew what their daily orders were, and he chatted them up. Around 2008 he started to get convinced that the United States was -- they

were an occupying force in Afghanistan and became kind of persuaded that they were no better than the Soviets, and there were too many civilian casualties, and that we were going to be there forever.

He started going online and this was not a particularly religious guy, but he started listening to people like Anwar al-Awlaki, a lot of these radical sermons online that were sort of less about sort of religion at that point and more about politics. Became, I would say, more fringe, more radical in his religious belief, but frankly he was never that religious to begin with.

And he and two friends decided that they were going to go and fight with the Taliban, and they were going to go out to Afghanistan, and they were going to join up with the Taliban Brigade and one of these guys decides -- he's Adis Medunjanin who's of Bosnian descent. He says, "I'm going to be a Taliban general." And these delusions of grandeur, right? So, I'm going to be a Taliban general.

So, how do you get with the Taliban? You get on an airplane. His dad drove -- their dad drove them to the airport, and they flew to Pakistan, and they went to visit Zazi's family in Peshawar, and they kind of just made their way out into the frontier, kind of these accidental tourists. Kind of being, like, hey, do you know how I could get with the Taliban? Does anybody know how I can get with the Taliban?

And at this moment, the United States was just getting the idea that you didn't need some -- there wasn't some super-special pipeline that terrorists groups had to get you in. They were just coming to grips with the idea that you could actually do this. You could just sort of end up in the frontier and finagle your way into a terrorist group. And as it happened, Zazi and his buddies fell into Al-Qaeda. Literally, they fell into Al-Qaeda, and Al-Qaeda said: you don't want to go with the Taliban. I mean, come on, we've got plenty of guys who can go take artillery shells for our cause.

You guys have American passports, right? I mean, you have stamps to get into the United States. You're not on any lists. You got here somehow. And they took them out to a terrorist camp, and we have these scenes in the book of how you get to a terrorist camp where they sort of drive you around, you don't know where you're going, and they move you to another car, and they leave you at a house, and you think that you're sort of left for dead. And then another car shows up, and they move you somewhere else.

He ends up out near Miramshaw in an Al-Qaeda sort of walled training camp. I mean it's literally one of those training camps. You see the B-roll videos. The guy's doing the monkey bars. And they end up getting trained by some of Al-Qaeda's top guys. The most important is the head of external operations, Saleh al-Somali, basically the job Khalid Sheikh Mohammed had at one point. Bin Laden's one of his most trusted guys. Ends up training these guys on how to make bombs and how to do small weapons and there's a long period of time there where these guys still want to go and fight. They do not want to go off and carry off a mission.

This idea that they're going to become suicide bombers, they're like we didn't sign up for this, and there's like a lot of back and forth. And they're like can we even say no? Can you say no to Al-Qaeda? Thanks, but no thanks? We appreciate your time here. Thank you for the tea, but, you know, we've decided against your cause.

But ultimately they are persuaded to become suicide bombers, which is a really -- I mean, that in and of itself is just an incredible thing; that three guys who did not want to do that were persuaded to do it, and the moment for Zazi (and this is literally just a confluence of events)—he happens to be out in Miramshaw in the tribal areas at a time when literally the United States drone policy is changing, and we're pushing deeper into Pakistan, and we've made a decision to step up strikes. And it was a turning point in the

drone war, and it literally just so happened that's the month that Zazi was there and became convinced this is a fight I need to take. This is a fight I need to take up.

So, it's this sort of -- the backdrop to this is how did these guys -- how do you become an Al-Qaeda suicide bomber when a week earlier you were in a coffee cart in Queens thinking that you didn't want to be a suicide bomber?

MR. RIEDEL: There's another Al-Qaeda figure in addition to Somali who you highlighted in the book: Rashid Rauf.

MR. APUZZO: Right.

MR. RIEDEL: Could you give us a little bit of his CV?

MR. APUZZO: I mean, Rashid Rauf, I mean, he's dead now. Something fell out of the sky. But Rashid Rauf and Al Somali have these sort of walk-on roles in this caper. And they are the influencers. They are his teachers, his mentors. They sit around the floor in Miramshaw, this camp, and they just, hey, okay, yeah, I get it. You don't want to be a suicide bomber. That's cool, but, like, if you were a suicide bomber, like, let's say you were a suicide bomber, where would be a good place to hit? You know, tell us about America? Where would be an important place to hit? And they say, well, you know, Wal-Mart would be a good place to hit. And they say, yeah, okay, yeah, Wal-Mart. All right. Good, good, good. What else have you got? What else would be a good place to hit? And it just sort of got them into this sort of kibitzing almost about, you know, I know you don't want to be a suicide bomber, but let's just say hypothetically you guys were suicide bombers.

So, they have this like incredibly influential mentor role here, and I'm certainly not an expert of Rauf's long history with Al-Qaeda, but we get into it in the book, but what's so great about this case is that it really provides you a glimpse into -- not just how people are radicalized online because I think we've seen a lot of that, and there is a

consistent story there. But to be able to see how bin Laden's people, the people who he trusted, core guys who can track their pedigree back to the origins of Al-Qaeda, how they see the recruitment process go, how they see the indoctrination process go. So, we spend a lot of time on that.

MR. RIEDEL: So, under this recruiting technique they agree, and what is in the end the plot that they've come up with?

MR. APUZZO: So, Al-Qaeda says you guys pick, and I think that's significant because you can think from a counterterrorism standpoint if you were to catch one of these guys who's in the room, you wouldn't know, right? I mean, these guys wouldn't know what the plot was. I mean, they said you guys pick what the plot is. You guys pick your own target. And they also were all using fake names, so from a counterintelligence sort of -- from an operational security standpoint you can see it was only after they came home that they realized they were talking to Rashid Rauf, and that they were talking to al-Somali, so I mean -- and those guys maybe didn't even know their real names because the three guys from New York were using -- were told from the very beginning, here are your fake names.

So, they're told, "Go home and pick a plot," and so they go back to Queens, and they're playing basketball out at the park near their homes in Flushing, and they're just on the basketball court talking about places they might want to blow up, and they decide that they will make a TATP backpack bomb, three of them, and that the three of them will get on three separate New York City subway trains at rush hour and blow them up in the underground tunnels. So, three guys, three backpack bombs, three separate trains, rush hour, New York City.

MR. RIEDEL: You describe in the book -- I'll just read a short excerpt. "What would have happened? The initial blast from a backpack bomb would kill anyone

standing nearby, but the worst damage would come milliseconds later. The train would be permeated by speeding shrapnel; ball bearings, shards of metal from the subway car, plastic from shredded seats. Survivors would have to grope towards safety through billows of toxic smoke past mangled bodies and jagged debris in darkened tunnels."

Pretty horrific image, and, of course, that's exactly what Al-Qaeda had done in London and had done in Madrid before, so it was a plot that had it worked would have probably changed the course of American history. These three guys go to Pakistan. Somehow they find Al-Qaeda. It's good to know that there isn't a kiosk at the airport that says, "If you're looking for Al-Qaeda, sign up for the tour here." It's a little more complicated than that.

MR. APUZZO: But only a little bit, right? I mean, you can just sort of be like, "I'm looking for Al-Qaeda."

MR. RIEDEL: And there's no reason to believe -- it's humorous, but there's also another angle. There seems to be no reason to believe that the Pakistani authorities, Pakistani state, Pakistani inter-service intelligence directorate sees anything unusual going on here, or if they do, they never told anybody in the United States.

MR. APUZZO: No, in fact, there's no evidence of that, and we saw shortly before this plot -- we saw the Bryant Neal Vinas plot where -- not a plot, but where this guy from New York also does basically the same thing; just goes out and ends up getting recruited, and ends up becoming part of an inner circle out there. And that ended up being some good work/collaboration with the Pakistani authorities and the CIA and NSA. So, I mean, we didn't see anything in our research that suggested that there was any knowledge that these guys were out there, you know, knowledge by ISI or anybody out there.

MR. RIEDEL: And nobody in the American intelligence community or the FBI or the New York City police department or anyone seems to notice that these three guys have gone off to North Waziristan, the heart of darkness, a kind of strange place to go for your tourist expedition.

MR. APUZZO: I mean, they had family out there. And they had cover stories that one of them was going to go and was going to marry -- they were going to introduce Zarein Ahmedzay, one of the guys, to Zazi's cousin, and they were going to try to get them married. So, I mean, there was a whole -- they had a cover story, and they were asked. I mean, they were asked at the airport why are you here, why are you going, what's the purpose of your trip, and they were asked on the way back. But their stories held up. I mean, think about the number of people in this country who have relatives and family in places that we might say is the heart of darkness, right? I mean, for them it's going home to visit family, and the vast majority of those trips are innocent.

MR. RIEDEL: So, they come back and NSA intercepts something?

MR. APUZZO: Sure, so what happens is they're on the basketball court and Zazi decides, so I need a place I can go and make these bombs, and kind of get off the radar, get off the grid and blow things up and figure out how everything's going to go.

And he moves. At that time his uncle and his aunt lived in Aurora, Colorado just outside Denver. And so, he went out there and was working as a shuttle-bus driver at the airport, and was working on these recipes; these TATP recipes that they had given him out in Mirimshaw.

What Zazi had done is he had written up in his notebook how to build these bombs, and then he'd gone and taken pictures of his notebook, and from an Internet café in Pakistan had e-mailed himself -- just created a Hotmail account and e-

mailed himself the images so that he didn't have to carry the notebook back in the United States.

So, as he's doing this, he gets the primary explosive, the TATP, he makes that. He's successful in making that. We have a whole scene about the process in which he goes through to avoid detection in making that. So, he gets that primary explosive made, but he's unclear about how to take the next step and get them in the backpack and, like, what's going to be the secondary explosion? And he's sort of it's a combination of flour and this clarified butter called ghee. And so, he's confused and he can't read his own writing, and so he e-mails this - he has the e-mail address for a go-between out in Pakistan. And he says, "Hey, the marriage is ready, but I need to understand the numbers, flour and ghee. Please get back to me as fast as you can. The marriage is ready."

As it turns out, months earlier, completely unrelated to this there was an FBI MI5/MI6 operation going on in England called "Operation Pathway" in which they took down a bunch of guys there who were interacting with Al-Qaeda. They took them down pre-plot.

Operation Pathway is infamous or famous for one of the cabinet secretaries in London is photographed walking into a cabinet briefing, and it says Operation Pathway on the documents, like, as he's walking in, and it has the names of everybody that's going to get arrested, and it's on the photo as he's walking in, so they had to take down the plot early.

But what happened is in the course of conducting the searches on that computer, the Brits were actually able to identify this address sanapectani@yahoo.com which is the same go-between, the same intermediary that Zazi was e-mailing. So, for the past five months GCHQ, NSA, at this point one and the same, are up on this Yahoo

e-mail address. It's in Pakistan, and then when Zazi sent his e-mail saying the marriage is ready, I mean, come on, 9/11 was the big wedding, right? I mean, so it didn't take -- this was not a gigantic analytical leap.

And at that point it was, wait a minute. IP address in Colorado? There was this whole, you know, NSA gave it to CIA, and CIA gave it to FBI, and FBI sort of passed it out through the Joint Terrorist Task Force, but there was a lot of confusion. I mean, when you get into this book, like, wait a minute. Like, are you sure that this isn't, like, routed through somewhere? I mean, IP addresses can get routed. This doesn't make any sense. Aurora, Colorado? This guy's not on anybody's radar screen. And so, that's the moment. I mean, at that point that's the moment of when they realize, I think, there's a guy in the United States making contact with Al-Qaeda.

MR. RIEDEL: So, we have suspect number one in Colorado, and the other two are back in New York. One of the very best parts of the book is the chase. Any really good crime novel has the chase scene. And some parts of the chase it's a little bit Keystone Cops, too.

MR. APUZZO: Yeah, I mean, what I love about this story is -- and what attracted us to write the book, right, is it isn't the sort of, like, "and it all worked out perfectly." Right? I mean, there's all sorts of human moments in this.

So, it begins when Zazi rents a car one night, and the FBI is watching him at this point in Colorado, but they have no idea what they're looking at. Right? And there's this guy. All they know is that he sent this e-mail to an Al-Qaeda middle-man. Don't know really what his deal is. And then, so he wakes up in the morning. He rents the car at night, wakes up in the morning, gets in the car at like 5:00 in the morning, and then hops on the highway literally 90 to 100 miles an hour heading east. And at this point, this is like a Colorado issue.

They're talking to the guys at FBI headquarters in Washington, but they still don't really know who else is involved, what else is going on, but they're like, ok, well, he's moving now. And we don't want to just stop him because if we stop him and arrest him for sending an e-mail or pull him in for questioning, then whoever else -- and we know at this point that he's gone to Pakistan and, like, really quickly they're able to tell who he's sitting next to on the plane. Okay, he went through secondary with those two guys. I can look through his phone records and decide it looks like he's talking to them.

And so, they think there are other people so they don't want to stop him, so they have a Colorado State trooper pull him over for speeding, but they don't tell the Colorado State trooper, like, what's going on. Obviously, they just say, you know, hey, should you have cause to stop this guy for speeding, that would be a wonderful thing. We'd really love to know where he's going.

And so, this corporal stops this guy for speeding in this tiny little frontier town called Limon, Colorado, and they're standing there by the highway and the corporal says, "Where you headed in such a rush?" And he's like, "Well, I'm going to New York City."

And so once that happens, I mean, it's like they've flipped a switch, and the entire machinery goes into full swing. And they then have to chase him across -- he's driving to New York City from Colorado at 100 miles an hour, and so they are now following him, and we talk about how you do the following and the hand-off, and they've got airplanes following him. So, it is a mad dash across the country at 100 miles an hour with the goal of, like, we've got to unravel this plot before he can get here, but under no circumstances are we to allow -- we assume he has a bomb, which he did. Under no circumstances are we going to allow this to get into New York City.

MR. RIEDEL: And then is the -- of course, anyone who's driven from Colorado at 100 miles an hour non-stop to New York then has to confront the classic question, which bridge or tunnel are you going to use to enter the city?

MR. APUZZO: So, you can imagine the Joint Terrorism Task Force, these NYPD and FBI guys sitting around, and they know this guy's coming, and they can see it, and they're sitting around, and they're saying, "Okay, freshman algebra. A car leaves Aurora, Colorado at 100 miles an hour. Right. (Laughter) Assuming two hours of sleep at a rest stop outside Dayton, Ohio, at what point does he enter -- and it's, well, he'll be in traffic at this point. And we need to be -- and so it's literally that. Like, it's that moment going on. It's literally, come on guys, calculators, calculators.

So, yeah, so they decide, and I'm not -- this is a wonderful scene, so I'm not going to give too much away. But they decide they need to be ready at every bridge and tunnel because they assume he's going to Queens. He told the trooper he was going to Queens, and for other reasons they think he's going to Queens.

So, they are literally ready at every tunnel to make sure that they can do a car search and make it look random, and make it look like a random drug stop. It does not work that way. It looks anything but random, and he gets the bomb into the city. So, I will leave that to the -- but it was not the finest moment in counterterrorism.

MR. RIEDEL: You can imagine the American counterterrorism community, which is enormous, which encompasses the national intelligence community, the CIA and everything, the FBI, New York Police Department, Colorado Police Department. The departments of everyone along the way are all screaming at each other that we've got to stop this thing. We've got to stop this thing. And just one more aside, back in Denver what's going on?

MR. APUZZO: Well, in Denver, once it comes back that, all right, he did have a bomb, right? And so he's going -- they become convinced, okay, that he's not running to something. He's running from something. So, whatever is happening is now happening in Denver.

And as it happened, the Ambassador to the United States from Pakistan, Ambassador Haqqani, just happens to be speaking in Denver with Governor Ritter at the time -- at a time, and again, putting this in 2009, this is a time when the government of Pakistan has stepped up its efforts and is dealing with a lot of internal push-back, if you will, from whether it's Taliban or whether it's other militant groups, and there are threats on the President's life.

So, this idea that, oh, my God, the Pakistani Ambassador's in town, and we just had a guy just get the hell out of here, maybe the plot is here. So, they basically bring out the entire SWAT team, the Colorado State Patrol, the FBI, Denver Police, but they don't want to tip off anybody. So, it's all these guys, like snipers on rooftops, and they're all kind of just waiting for like something to happen expecting that, well, maybe the Denver Art Museum, which is where they're speaking, maybe that's what's going to blow up.

MR. RIEDEL: So, as you can see, it's a great story, has many complex moving parts, but there's another very important part of this whole story, which is what happens after the fact, which is once Edward Snowden reveals the existence of NSA surveillance of American citizens, the National Security Agency, the Director of National Intelligence, and the Obama administration begins looking around for cases to prove the argument that NSA surveillance works.

And if you'll remember the testimony that General Alexander gave, he said there were something like 50 cases or so of which it worked, but when pressed to

give a single case where it worked, the NSA has repeatedly come back to the Zazi case and made the argument that this is the role model for why electronic surveillance works.

And in the book you give NSA the credit for being the ones who uncovered the plot, but I know that in subsequent publications that you've qualified that and said probably not these surveillance systems.

MR. APUZZO: Yeah, I mean, you can't crack this case without being up on the e-mail address. If you're not up on the sanapectani@yahoo.com e-mail address you don't catch Najibullah Zazi, and I believe, and I believe this based on however many hundreds of interviews we did, and obviously Zazi believed that had they not found that e-mail, they would have blown up the subway. So, right, that's my - give them their due.

The flip side to that is they're not really being totally honest with us when they sort of hold this up as evidence that we need what I guess they call PRISM, and is, I mean, is really just the way -- and I don't want to get too geeky here, but I mean, PRISM is really just the way that they execute their 702 authorities. And like anything else in America, we don't pay attention until it has a logo and a trademark name. Right? I mean, nobody knew what the hell 702 was, and then suddenly it was like, but we call it PRISM, and here's the logo. And everybody's like now I'm paying attention.

So, in the end, yes, PRISM -- the idea that because this company, Yahoo, is based in the United States, we are up on these Yahoo e-mail addresses using PRISM. Yes, that's true.

The flip side to that is they got that e-mail address out of a case in the U.K. where they knew they were communicating with bad guys, and at that point the standard for getting pre-PRISM, pre-702, pre-any of this stuff, pre-FISA amendments, they would have been up on that e-mail address anyway because it was an Al-Qaeda address.

You didn't even need to go to the judge. You could have flipped a switch, been up on the FISA, and then gone back to the judge later and said, oh, by the way, here's the reason we've been up on this e-mail address. This would have been an instantaneous thing even pre-PRISM. So, yes, it is a great example that PRISM caught this guy, but it in no way says this is why we need PRISM because this isn't why -- PRISM isn't built for -- I mean, 702 doesn't solve -- let me take that back. This is not the case that 702 and PRISM are necessary. There may be a case for that where I'm listening just like the public is listening to hear what Alexander and others have to say, but it is stretch to say that if not for 702 these guys would have blown up the subways.

MR. RIEDEL: But at the same time, you do -- just to repeat what you said at the beginning --

MR. APUZZO: Yeah.

MR. RIEDEL: -- you do give NSA the credit, and when you think about it, the whole post 9/11 homeland security system starting overseas in Pakistan, starting with our liaison relationships, and then particularly the City of New York with its own police department, none of those things had seen these three coming.

NYPD has been described by some as the best intelligence service in the United States today. It is definitely a police department which has devoted more attention to the problem for understandable reasons. The good citizens of the great city of New York have an understandable reason to believe that their federal government hasn't done a particularly good job of protecting them over the last decade and a half, and NYPD has come up with a lot of programs to try to find exactly this kind of terrorist in the making. Can you give us the nutshell of what NYPD does?

MR. APUZZO: Sure. The Cliff Notes of the post-9/11 intelligence division is Ray Kelly comes back to New York to be police commissioner and decides

that I'm not going to sit around and wait for the FBI or CIA or whoever to tell me where the next plot is. I need my own intelligence, and I think we all agree. I think everybody agrees. We get that.

So, what he does is something unusual. He goes and he goes and he hires someone by the name of Dave Cohen, and David Cohen was the former -- he was retired at the time, deputy director of operations; basically, the head of the clandestine service at the CIA, to come in and build an intelligence service at the NYPD. And what David did was he called down to Langley and asked George Tenet and said, "Look, I need somebody active duty with a blue CIA badge who basically can be my right-hand man." And Tenet sends a guy named Larry Sanchez who again, active duty from the analytical ranks, up to New York, and so he's got the blue CIA badge. He can start at the station in the morning, read everything, and then he goes to the NYPD and is directing domestic police department surveillance and collection.

And so, Dave and Larry came up with this idea. They looked at all of the dossiers and all the files that both intelligence had and media reporters had come up with about the 9/11 hijackers, and they found that Mohammed Atta was their signature case, and they went through everything and they said, God, there were a lot of moments. I mean, Mohammed Atta was not raised in an extremely religious household. There were moments along the spectrum, the transitions that he went through where people noticed, that reporters could then go and talk to people and say, yeah, you know, I did notice that he grew a beard. Or I did notice that he shaved his beard. I did notice he became more strict in how he was going to live his life about, you know, no drinking. You know, there were all these moments, and they just said if we, the NYPD, could become surrogates for all these people who saw little things and we could line them up and connect the dots, maybe we'll catch the next Mohammed Atta if he's in New York.

So, they created this unit, and this is one of many they created. They created this unit called the Demographics Unit, and they basically took a bunch of South Asian and Arab officers, and they worked -- you'd say undercover. The NYPD says they're not undercover. They're plain clothes, because they don't have like a fake name and a fake identity, so they're not undercover, and they just go and hang out all day. And they go and hang out in coffee shops or hookah bars or reading rooms, or they'll go join cricket leagues, halal butchers, and they'll just hang out and talk. And they go through these steps where they say -- you go in you find out who's there, and you gauge their sentiment. What do they think about America? What do they think about American foreign policy?

And you're putting that in files, so in some of these reports you can read it will say this is a Syrian sweet shop, seats 11 people, clientele is typically dressed in devout Muslim attire. The man at the counter, his name is Mohammed. We strike up a conversation. He's upset. He doesn't like drone strikes. They're playing Al Jazeera. Or they were watching the State of the Union -- one of the ones we saw -- two Pakistani men were watching the State of the Union address, and they were speaking about the State of the Union address in Urdu, and they were discussing American foreign policy, and that ends up in a police file.

So, the idea is that if we have everything, then we'll know where these hot spots are, and these plain-clothes detectives became known as rakers because the idea was if you rake the coals, you'll find the hot spots. And I won't get too far into it, but they built a lot of programs like this, and they were in Zazi's mosque. They'd infiltrated Zazi's mosque. They had turned his imam into a cooperative. They had an undercover working there. They were in all the restaurants in his neighborhood. They had been to the YMCA because they thought, well, maybe he would work out because people had

worked, you know, done body-building before carrying out an attack. They had been in the travel agency where Zazi bought his tickets. They were in the Muslim Student Association where one of the co-conspirators had studied.

And at every turn they built all these files on people but they had nothing on the actual terrorists. So, when we look at counterterrorism programs, we want to take a critical eye just like how did the bomb get past the guy on the bridge. How did the bombers get past the NYPD's programs if this is when it mattered most? This is the case study for what these things were built to do.

MR. RIEDEL: Well, I should be clear as I told you beforehand. My sympathies are very strongly with NYPD (laughter).

MR. APUZZO: And while we have, you know, I think we've taken some shots at New York as being anti-NYPD, far from the case. I mean, the vast majority of the people who spoke to us about the NYPD were for the NYPD, and we have these wonderful relationships with these men and women.

And there's a character in the book who's a war hero who was running this demographics unit and believed this was the absolute best way to keep America safe, and then he starts to get his expense report from his team and he's, like, why are you guys going to like this pastry shop at 4:30 p.m. and buying $40 worth of pastry like right before you check out? Or like, hey, you keep going back to this one kabob house. Is there a problem there I should know? And they're like, well, it's just good food. So, like, if you serve good food in Queens, you may end up more likely to be in a police file (laughter), so we are not in any way anti-NYPD. We're pro-successful counterterrorism. We're pro-doing it in a way that works and that protects everybody, and we're for transparency.

MR. RIEDEL: I'm going to open it up to the audience in a minute. In the end, they confess. They break down. They're all in prison. Would the bomb have worked? Do we have reason to believe that they had put together a working device?

MR. APUZZO: They had put together something that would blow up. This thing came down before they could finish the bomb. I mean, they had gone -- Zazi had come to New York, and his plan was to buy the backpacks and then assemble it there. They had a glass container of TATP. Now, I don't have any idea how you drive across the country at 90 miles an hour with that thing in your trunk. I mean, testimony at trial came out that when they ultimately dumped it down the toilet that one of the guys lit -- to try to get the residue off the bowl of the toilet and (POP noise). So, I mean, something was there that was going to blow up, and he had made it several times. He'd done several test batches. I don't have any -- the government says it was going to blow up. Zazi says it was going to blow up. Rashid Rauf thought it was going to blow up. I mean, I'm inclined to give them the benefit of the doubt on that one.

MR. RIEDEL: I just ask you to all pause for a minute and think about it. It's September 2009. President Obama's been in office a little over half a year. He's abolished torture. He's trying to close Guantanamo. We now know secretly he's stepping up the drone missions, but it would have been an extraordinary moment had three American citizens blown themselves up on the 9/11 anniversary in New York City. I think you can safely say the course of American history and certainly the course of President Obama's presidency would have been changed dramatically for the worse that morning, and there would have been a lot of calls by those on the other extreme to put more people in Guantanamo, do more domestic surveillance, spy on more people. So, we are very fortunate, indeed, that this plot didn't succeed.

Time to open up for questions from the audience. Please identify yourself. Put your hand up. When we call on you, a microphone is coming, and please identify who you are briefly before asking your question.

QUESTIONER: Carter (inaudible). I'm just amused that you said that the intelligence actually broke this thing, and, of course, the New York police have always taken credit for it. And they say our unit is so effective that we did this. So, this is the good sign that we found out there's more to it than the NYPD.

MR. APUZZO: There's always more to it. I mean, look. Let's remember, the Joint Terrorism Task Force, which is sort of the clearing house for counterterrorism domestically in the United States, and the one in New York is 125 NYPD detectives that are working hand-in-glove with the FBI, so in that regard, I mean, to the extent that there was really good law enforcement work done in New York City, which I think is objectively true, NYPD does get the credit.

And when we hear that there's like turf wars between FBI and NYPD, it's not at the Joint Terrorist Task Force. It's the sort of intel guys that, you know, their stated goal and this is not like -- you know, I think the FBI has this belief that these guys are just jerks who want to do their own thing. They are by design -- this belief that, like, if we just fall in line with you, then we don't even need to exist. We don't need to have our own intelligence. If we all share information, and we all sort of collaborate, that's just group-think, and we need to do our own thing.

And so, when you hear about conflict, it's not with the Joint Terrorist Task Force NYPD. It's with the other NYPD. So, the great news is if intel is successful, they can say we, NYPD, was successful. And if the Joint Terrorist Task Force was successful, they can say NYPD was successful. So, as far as we're concerned, I don't really care who takes the credit. I just want to know, like, what worked.

QUESTIONER: Hi. Thanks. Rachel (inaudible) with the Brennan Center. And I have two questions that are both (inaudible). One is I'd love to know more about how you did the reporting, especially overseas, but generally kind of how you found your way into all the details of this story.

And the second was following up on something you said before about the interaction between the discovery of the e-mail address and PRISM. It hasn't sounded like there was really any connection between the two, but you said maybe it contributed but it wasn't imperative, so I was just curious to hear more.

MR. APUZZO: So, I mean, from what we know of -- we knew how the intercepted e-mail ended up in American hands pretty clearly. And we were in final drafts of the book when the Snowden stuff came out, and so we were like, okay, pause. Does this change what we know? And in the end, it didn't change what we knew. All it did was give it a name. So, all we had to do was say "comma called PRISM comma" and that was it.

The NSA has the authority through the Justice Department to go up on e-mail addresses that bounce through the United States without specific warrants. Right? I mean, you know this. And PRISM is the mechanism by which the information that lives in these e-mail addresses is transferred to the United States government. So, that is the mechanism by which the e-mail ended up in the United States government's hands.

Had it not been that pipeline, it just would have been the traditional FISA pipeline where the FBI says, hey, the Brits pulled a known terrorist's e-mail off of a hard drive. In this case, we're going to go up on it immediately, and it would just be that pipeline.

In the end, I'm not a systems architect. It might be the exact same -- there's probably somebody in the room who knows that. It may actually be the exact same wires, but the legal framework for it, all it is is just a name. So, you give the NSA credit because they are vested with this authority, and it worked.

Our point is just you can't say that if not for this -- if you can say this program was successful here, but you cannot say that is why we need this program. I mean, if it hadn't been, there would have just been something else. It would have been the predecessor, and that would have accomplished the same thing.

MR. RIEDEL: Do you want to say a few words about sourcing?

MR. APUZZO: Oh, yeah. I mean, we stumbled onto this story, the NYPD side of the story through the CIA connection, and we're reporting on that for the AP, but to us it was nobody wants to read a polemic. Nobody wants to read sort of a -- some people want to read a policy book. You probably want to read a policy book, but we wanted to write a real-like narrative, and the Zazi case, which my colleague, Adam Goldman, and I both covered provided us the opportunity to tell both stories and to take a look at policies like when -- the ticking time bomb theory. The question of if there's a ticking time bomb in the city and you have a terrorist in custody, what are you willing to do? Right? There is that moment in this book, and I think we can ask ourselves questions now 12 years out in a more thoughtful and more academic way than we could have when, as a country, I think we were much more traumatized in 2002.

QUESTIONER: Let me tell you it's the only George Washington. I want to go back to this point about the difference between the legal authority and the wires, as you call them. As you implied, they're not the same, so the fact that you could have the legal authority to get there anyhow doesn't mean you would have the mechanism.

MR. APUZZO: Well, they did have the mechanism. Pre-PRISM, pre-FISA amendments, the wires existed because the Justice Department and the FBI were getting FISA e-mails; e-mails under the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act. They were getting those e-mails anyways.

This was not an e-mail in a class where there was ever any doubt that this was a bad-guy e-mail, so in this case the wire and the legal -- both the technological capability and the legal authority existed well before 702 to get this e-mail. Does that mean that's true for every e-mail? Does that mean the NSA has no case to make? Does that mean -- no. It just says that this case is an imperfect vehicle to say 702 and PRISM are necessary.

QUESTIONER: How much grief did you get from your liberal colleagues for in the book the (inaudible) side of NSA and (inaudible)?

MR. APUZZO: I haven't gotten any grief from my colleagues. My colleagues have been really supportive of this book. We don't come down one way or the other on this sort of like the political spectrum of the appropriateness of these programs. We come down on, well, what works? Here's the most -- this was the next big thing. What worked? And we tried to take an academic approach to it.

MR. RIEDEL: Well, just to clarify, if I can find my notes -- the end of the book, they're clear: "Zazi's plot failed because of good partnerships, good intelligence, and good luck. NSA officials intercepted "the marriage is ready" e-mail and passed it to the CIA which shared it with the FBI. Before 9/11 there was no guarantee that would have happened." Again, as we said at the beginning, this is a success story. Intelligence actually worked, but I would say it worked by millimeters. It could have been disaster. More questions -- in the back.

MS. ZALMANSCHWARTZ: Hi, my name is Hannah Zalmanschwartz and I'm a Ph.D. student at George Washington, and my question is sort of picking up where we were a minute ago that on the one hand the system worked, and on the other hand we were maybe a hair's breath away from disaster. And I think in hearing your story and other stories that we've heard, there are two narratives about the successes of intelligence community and then also just how close we are to bad things. And my question for both of you is to think about both from the narrative perspective but also from the policy perspective how to move a little bit farther away from the brink of disaster and to strengthen some of the successes that you saw in your narrative.

MR. APUZZO: The good news is I had this -- and this has shaped my thinking on all of this. It's been a long time in the reporting on this book with a woman who's an intelligence analyst in New York City -- Washington, then New York City. And I had that question. Does it matter that it came close, or does it not matter that it came close? And she said, "You know what? There were a lot of problems with this case and it was imperfect." Right? I mean, very rarely does it all work perfectly. She said, "But you know what? I see the most sensitive intelligence in real time every single day, and I can tell you that on any single day the spectrum of badness that's out there is very real, the actual threat, the actual threat to New York or to Washington on any given day is infinitesimally small. That does not actually mean that there's not people out there wanting to do bad things, but that on any given day the actual threat that you're going to be attacked in this country by Al-Qaeda is infinitesimally small." And her point was that the way we view terrorism in the United States does not yet reflect that truth. So, while this one came close, that is not necessarily a reflection of the daily threat, and I'm using threat in the specific, not in the general; threat as opposed to danger.

MR. RIEDEL: I would add just one thing to Hannah's question. One of the things that's striking to me about this case and Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab and the Fort Hood killer, in all these cases basically the bad guys offered themselves to Al-Qaeda. Al-Qaeda didn't go out and do a survey of Afghan-Americans looking for people who were disgruntled. They waited patiently for somebody to come to them, and then they invested a very small amount of effort in the project; taught them how to build a bomb. In the case of Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab, didn't even teach him how to build a bomb, just taught him how to detonate a bomb.

So, from the standpoint of Al-Qaeda, it's fundamentally different than 9/11. 9/11 they invested years of effort, recruited people, sent them to the United States, kept them under cover with an elaborate plot. In these cases, basically they had walk-ins as we call them in the intelligence community, who volunteered their services. And another striking fact, in both the case of Abdulmutallab, in this case Al-Qaeda basically said to him, you pick the target. We're not going to tell you what to do. You know what to do. You know where to blow yourself up. Abdulmutallab picked Northwest 253 to Detroit on Christmas Day because it was the cheapest flight he could find out of Europe, which I'm sure I'm going to get bad feedback from Detroit over that, but it was the cheapest flight, and he could afford it.

From a counterterrorism standpoint, this is a nightmare. The difference between the moment in which the terrorist determines his target to when he carries it out can be a few hours. In the case of these guys, it was a few days. Trying to foil a plot like that is a lot more difficult than foiling a plot like 9/11 which has a lot of moving parts and where there's a pretty good chance someone will make a mistake along the way. In this case, if he hadn't sent the message, he might have done it.

MR. APUZZO: You know, I guess I view it a little bit differently, and I think one of the things we as a country still don't have a total handle on is the whole, like, what we're at war with. I mean, in the end terrorism is a tactic.

MR. RIEDEL: Right.

MR. APUZZO: So, if this is the equivalent of being, like, we're at war with fist-fighting. Right? Like it's a very hard thing to be at war with, so when you think about intelligence, and you think about domestic intelligence, I guess I wonder, like, what the response would be if Newtown had been carried out by a guy who had been watching Anwar Al Awlaki videos as opposed to somebody who, you know -- and I'm curious your thoughts on this.

I don't buy the, like, well, it's different because he's just crazy. A lot of these guys are crazy. Right? I mean, you have to be a little bit crazy to do any of this stuff, so I think the question of well, it comes so close why isn't -- you know, we don't have any indication that, you know, the guys who go up and shoot up movie theaters or go shoot up classrooms go through this long, drawn out planning, so it's just as hard to spot those but we respond very differently. Right? I mean, if you walk in and you kill three people at a 7/11 in Boston and drive away with the money, they'll look for you. If you shoot up three people and scream "Allahu Akbar," they might shut down the city. Right?

I mean, so we still don't know what we're really at war with. And these struggles of terrorism with a capital "T", terrorism with a lower-case "t", domestic terrorism, international terrorism, crazy people with guns. It's blurry and I think the more we talk about that the better off we all are.

MR. RIEDEL: I couldn't agree more. We have a remarkable tolerance in this country for what we call "gun violence." The minute you make it political, our tolerance drops down to zero. Let's take some more questions. Right here, sir.

MR. TAYLOR: Hi. I'm Stewart Taylor with Brookings. I have a question for Bruce. Given all we've heard from Matt about the extent to which the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of 702, not to mention the phone-logs programs, figured in the Zazi success, could you look at both that and what you know about all the other evidence that's flying around and give your assessment of how effective these programs are in saving American lives?

MR. RIEDEL: Well, I'd love to, and a big reason why we invited Matt here is that the case hasn't been made. The argument that it worked is made more effectively in this book than it's ever been made by the American government in any of its testimony on the Hill. In fact, one of my critiques of the Administration is its argument on the Hill involving this case has often not gotten the facts right.

For example, they said they found knapsacks with bombs. Well, they didn't. That kind of attention to detail is very, very important if you're trying to convince the American people and the American Congress that a program like this works. And I hope one of the things -- my modest hope of this event and others like it will be that we will see a more robust effort by the administration and the intelligence community to make their case now, particularly on that day which we're all hoping comes sooner or later when the government goes back to work and they can start having testimony on what we should do about the future of NSA surveillance operations. Let's hear the case made. I can't judge it right now. If you say there were 50 cases where it worked --

MR. APUZZO: While they changed that number now --

MR. RIEDEL: They change it all the time. So, give me, as a citizen, I think we need more transparency about how this program has worked in the past. And since I don't think we're really telling Al-Qaeda a big secret that we're monitoring their e-mails, I don't think that we're really giving away a lot of delicate sources and methods.

MR. APUZZO: And the one thing I guess I wanted to add -- government as a social contract. We decide that we're going to give the government the authority to tax us, to put us under surveillance, to wiretap us, to search our homes, to arrest us. We give them these authorities. When we pass laws, you know, we have a constitution that gives the government these authorities. And then in exchange we know that we get safe streets, whatever. Right? We get services for our taxes. It's a social contract. It goes both ways. We have some semblance of what we get back, and we know what we give up. And when it feels like you know what, taxes are too high, or you know what, the police in our city are going too far, or we don't feel like we're getting enough back in return, we can change -- you know, we can renegotiate the social contract as we go.

The reason that I think, you know, what we write about with the NYPD and what's happening with the NSA right now is not necessarily that people really disagree with what's being done, although certainly some do, the bigger problem is the social contract doesn't work. If I don't know what you do, the government is taking, and I have no idea what I'm getting back, and that's the problem when you talk about domestic surveillance. We still have to have the social contract. You can't just throw that away in the name of, well, I'm keeping you safe. Trust me. That's not what we're built on, so we have to find a way to get the social contract right on the issue of surveillance and security.

MR. RIEDEL: More questions? All the way in the back.

MR. SHERMAN: Thanks. Mike Sherman with the ACLU. I'm a little concerned about the idea of presenting this as an intelligence success when despite the fact that the NSA got the e-mail, they got a bomb into New York City, and --

MR. APUZZO: That's not an intelligence failure. That's a counterterrorism failure, and I do think it's important to make a distinction.

MR. SHERMAN: Okay, but we're leaving out one key fact which is what stopped them was that they chickened out and flushed the bomb down the toilet rather than detonating it.

MR. APUZZO: Well, I mean, I don't know if you had a chance to read the book yet. I mean, what stopped them was the fact that they knew they were being followed in New York City by the FBI, and the reason they were being followed by the FBI is because they had the e-mail. So, they only chickened out because they were being followed, and the FBI was onto them. I'm certainly not giving anybody a pass for how they got the bomb into New York City, but that's not intelligence.

MR. SHERMAN: But would you acknowledge that they could have detonated the bomb in the apartment building, in the car on the way?

MR. APUZZO: Absolutely, but I think that's not an intelligence failure. I want to make a distinction. That wasn't a failure that they didn't know this guy was a bad guy. That's a counterterrorism failure, and I do think that's different, and I don't necessarily want to conflate those.

MR. SHERMAN: Okay, --

MR. APUZZO: A guy gets a bomb past a checkpoint is not an intelligence failure. It's just not. I mean, am I wrong on that?

MR. RIEDEL: The underwear bomber is an example of an intelligence failure and a counterterrorism failure. We didn't know anything about this guy, and all the

elaborate electronic sniffing devices in the world, he was moving from airport to airport with it. We can speculate that maybe he spent so much time on him that it degraded itself during the way, but that's the case I would say intelligence failure and counterterrorism failure, and I agree with Matt. In this case the intelligence system worked. It not only told us the bomb was coming. It gave us the identity of the bomber. The failure to keep it from getting into the borough of Manhattan --

MR. APUZZO: And it was a failure. I mean, let's be --

MR. RIEDEL: It was a failure.

MR. APUZZO: They said the only thing we care about is the bomb doesn't get near New York City and it did. Failure. I mean, I'm not in any -- in fact, I'm not getting into it because I think it's such an interesting moment. I want everybody to go buy the book and experience how they got the bomb in the city. But I'm not giving them a pass, but I also just don't want to confuse the issue, two important issues.

MR. RIEDEL: More questions -- in the back.

QUESTIONER: Hi, Norma (inaudible) from Wake Forest University. I wondered a question to both of you. What do you think of the way in which Edward Snowden made his revelations, and how it affects you, Matt, as an investigative journalist and you, Bruce, as a director of intelligence?

MR. APUZZO: I mean, it affects me as an investigative journalist is that I have a lot more information about the NSA. It hasn't affected me in terms of my ability to do my job. I mean, there's a lot going on right now with the Administration and their issue of going after people who are not authorized. You know, there are sort of two tiers of people who can talk to reporters. There are three tiers. There are the people who are paid to talk to reporters, the people who are told to talk to reporters, and the people who have not gotten approval to talk to reporters. We're totally fine with people giving out

classified information, you know, in that second tier. We are less cool with it on that third tier. So, I do think that makes it harder.

The President has said Snowden has started a conversation that, I think, is an important one for us to have. Smarter people than I can debate and people with arrest authority and extradition authority can debate the legality of the charging and all that stuff.

From an information-gathering standpoint, certainly we have a lot more information about what our government does objectively.

MR. RIEDEL: As a former intelligence officer, my feeling is pretty simple. He violated the oath that he swore to his country. He was given access to classified information. When you do that you sign a little piece of paper that says I will never, ever, ever give classified information away under penalty of prison and penalty of fine. And he knowingly and wittingly has done that, so in that sense I don't see him as a hero of any kind. He violated the law. He violated the agreement he signed.

What amazes me about Mr. Snowden is the access that he seems to have had. For a contractor, he seemed to have been given access to the mother lode of intelligence documents in the United States. I spent 30 years in the CIA. I never saw the budget. I can recall being shown one page of the budget once. This guy had the whole budget.

In addition to investigating his background, I think we need a thorough and complete investigation of how a contractor was able to get access to so much information and then spirit it out of top-secret facilities. There is something profoundly wrong in the contracting world and the intelligence community today that somebody of this stature could get access to this much material, and I'm much more concerned about that. Mr. Snowden can spend the rest of his life in Russia. I'm sure he's going to find it's

a lovely place. (Laughter) I want to make sure that the intelligence community does a much better job of making sure that future leakers are not in a position to just download the mother lode any time they feel like it.

MR. APUZZO: The first is yes, everybody signs this thing saying they won't give out classified information. But there appears to be a difference in the city from when, you know, on the books CIA guys get driven to Bob Woodward's house to give an interview for the latest book. That's still classified information. Right? But we make a difference in that city, and that's what I was getting at.

The second thing is people say somebody of that stature. Oh, he's a 28-year-old guy. The truth is who else do think is going to be able to figure out the computer systems but the 28-year-old guy? I mean, look, it's not like we were like, oh, man, and Mike Hayden was the one who figured out how to hack into all the systems. I mean, of course, it was a 28-year-old guy.

And the last thing on this idea of, like, how was he able to do this? The reason we should care is not just because this -- I mean, and frankly, not even mostly because it has our nation's secrets in it because these protections that he was able to get around are the ones that are telling you this is why you don't need to worry about the fact that we have all your stuff because we've got all these protections. But yet he's able to walk out with all the stuff they're protecting just as much.

So, if they can't protect the budget and they can't protect the FISA orders and they can't protect these PowerPoints, we should be asking questions about, well, how do I know my e-mails and my phone records are in a good way? We have a contractor here who clearly either saw that he thought surveillance had gone too far. What about a contractor who thinks adultery or pornography has gone too far? Right? I mean, how secure is your stuff? How secure are your e-mails, you know, with the person

you're dating? Right? I mean, with your viewing habits online? How secure is that if this stuff isn't secure? And those are the questions I want answered.

MR. RIEDEL: We have 10 more minutes left. Let's take a bunch of questions, and then wrap it all up with those. In the back with the folder in the air.

QUESTIONER: Thank you, sir. I am Sulay. I'm from the embassy of Pakistan. Just a comment first, and then go ahead with the question. The comment is that I think the book also needs to be seen in the perspective of 2008 and '09 when they landed in Pakistan. A person who had lived in Pakistan as an (inaudible) refugee had his wife there and was going and meeting his parents, so his family. So, when he was traveling and he must have been checked out at a thousand places because I was there at that time, and we were checked at every place. There were bombings going on even at the capital city with bombs going off in the Marriott even. So, definitely having a kiosk for Al-Qaeda at the airport is not a good idea. (Laughter) A bomber then would not be popular in Pakistan. Since then the army had moved in and now we're about 158,000 troops in the (inaudible) army. We have lost more 50,000 Pakistani people and more than 5,000 troops in this battle, but I'm sure it's not that easy to move on (inaudible).

MR. APUZZO: No, and I think -- or at least I tried to make it clear. Their stories checked out. There was no indication that there was anything suspicious about these guys going to Pakistan. Of course, they had family there, and there have been other people -- there are other people we write about in the book who have been turned away at the airport in Pakistan. Shahada is a good example, who were turned away in collaboration between, you know -- the ISI and CIA and FBI have been able to turn people back. So, yeah, I certainly want to make that clear. There's nothing suggesting that these guys had, you know, an "in." And frankly, that, to me, was what was most interesting about it. Right?

QUESTIONER: Thank you, sir. The question was, you mentioned also, why did Zazi -- he moved from here thinking he would be fighting the troops on the ground, but he, in the end, changed his mind to come back to the U.S. and go for the suicide bombing. What changed the mind that you mentioned was the drone attacks that took place at that time? Why the drone attacks, so to say, have been, you know, also to pick up the -- to hit the primary target over there has been very effective. So to same in killing the people, but you show yourself and you say that he was at that time affected by the drone attacks at that moment. Do you still think that it does have a counterproductive role in changing the mind of the people?

MR. APUZZO: I think there's a difference between saying it's counterproductive, which I didn't say. Did not say drones are counterproductive. I just said there are unforeseen consequences to any -- I mean, there are consequences to any policy. You clearly have people who -- and we've seen -- Zazi's not the only one who has taken up this issue of drone strikes as their banner.

A very good friend and a very smart long-time counterterrorism analyst -- and I don't take this as fact, but I take this as good insights. You know, I've looked at every single terrorist plot against the United States that has been uncovered, and the only consistent on the radicalization, the only consistent is at some point they become convinced that the United States is at war with Islam. And I think that that is important. And I don't know if that's true across the board. He said it was, but I do think it's important that we understand what some of these triggers are.

I'm not saying drones are counterproductive, but clearly there are instances of people like Zazi who are influenced by drones to take up arms against the United States.

MR. RIEDEL: More questions?

QUESTIONER: Hi. My name is Ashwara. I'm a sophomore at Wake Forest University, and this is kind of a general overview question, but do you see potential in the NSA surveillance programs to uncover incidences of, like, human trafficking, drug trafficking, or is it limited just to terrorism? And a kind of second part question to that would be has the NSA done anything about when they, if at all, uncovered incidences of sexual abuse or domestic violence while tailing an incident of terrorism or something like that?

MR. APUZZO: That's a great question, and I -- feel free to jump in. My observation is these programs are tailored by statute for national security and terrorism, so you're not supposed to use your 702 authority or your 215 authority to build files on people for non-terrorism, non-national-security purposes.

One of the big things -- I was just talking about this with another reporter the other day. One of the big things is going to be as the global sort of Islamic terrorism threat -- when that ebbs -- at some point every threat ebbs -- right? When that ebbs, are they going to shut the machinery off? When that stops being the kind of, you know, the existential threat that we see it as, will they shut the machinery off? Or will they just be like, well, let's use it for something different, and a very important thing we should watch for as a citizenry is we've given them authority to have these programs for one reason. You do start to see -- and we write about it in the book -- you know, fusion centers that are there to build intelligence for terrorism, but by statute they sort of broaden, and they were like, end all other law enforcement purposes. So, I do think that's something we should be concerned about and paying attention to both as journalists and as citizens.

MR. RIEDEL: Two more questions to wrap it up. All the way in the back?

MR. AHMED: Thank you. My name is Mohammed Ahmed. I work for Council for American-Islamic Relations. And I want to pick from your question is about the trust that the contractor -- you feel that the government contractor is violate by leaking certain information out. And my question for you, how far that contractor or that individual or the government employee shall continue not leaking certain information when he feels that it's been compromised. And for example, like, we saw in Abu Ghraib, for example, we saw torture. We saw so many things in (inaudible), in so many places with intelligence committee and even in the United States. So, within our country here we saw these massive violations. As an individual who working for the government or you a part of the system, how far you have to be quiet?

MR. RIEDEL: Good. Let's take one more question. Surely there's one other person with a question. Right here in front?

QUESTIONER: I was wondering if Zazi's family expressed any kind of concerns prior to him as he was developing his plot and plan? It seems like going from New York to Denver, patterns of behavior that may have caused his family maybe some concern. I was wondering --

MR. APUZZO: Sure. So, his uncle and aunt lived in Aurora already, so it wasn't like a huge stretch to be, like, I'm going to go out there and live. And it was pitched sort of inside the family as go see how Aurora is, and if you can get a job there and if you can do -- and then maybe his parents, and his, you know, siblings would follow, and they ultimately did follow, you know, a few months behind because they were able -- he was able to get work as a limo driver.

When he was living with his aunt and uncle there was a moment when he was in the garage futzing around with these chemicals, and his uncle walked in and was like what the hell is this? And Zazi had some cockamamie story and uncle wasn't

buying it, but wasn't sure, like, what the heck was going on. And they told him ultimately you've got to just get rid of all this stuff. Flush it. I mean, it was like bleach. It wasn't like, you know, you walk in and it's like dynamite in there. It was household stuff.

Should he have turned in Zazi at that point? I don't know. I mean, he didn't -- the uncle didn't even tell the father, and just said we don't want this stuff in the house. I don't know what you're doing, but I don't want it in the house.

So, there were signs, but again, it wasn't necessarily -- there weren't necessarily a ton of signs that he was going to launch an attack. And a lot of people who knew him described him as a pretty nice kid. It wasn't somebody who was out railing against the government or -- so.

MR. RIEDEL: I'll just make a very brief comment. There are all kinds of gray areas here. There's no evidence in Snowden's case that at any point he ever went to his management style and said I have problems with what's going on here. I think we should -- or that he went to his Senator or his Congressman. He pretty much made a decision all on his own. I think that is a violation of the oath he had. It's a violation of his commitments to his partners.

That doesn't mean though, as Matt has wisely told us, that President Obama isn't right. It has started a national conversation about this. I think the President has also this year tried to start a national conversation about how we put the counterterrorism war on a long-term footing. My own view is there's no end in sight. I've argued in other places we're actually facing the third generation of Al-Qaeda, and it may be a long, long haul ahead of us.

I think one of the virtues of this book and looking into the Snowden case and others is we're going to this in for a long haul. Let's make sure we understand what our government is doing. Let's look at what works. Let's look at what doesn't work, and

let's try to deal with the problem we're going to face for the foreseeable future, not in a sense of panic but in a sense of understanding the enemy, understanding what works, and hopefully coming up with systems that, as you say, the social contract with the American people is reinforced rather than undermined.

MR. APUZZO: And the Snowden thing, on the issue of, like, going to your Congressman, I will say one of the more revelatory moments for me and watching the Snowden stuff play out is, you know, people in Congress saying this was never what we intended. You know, we didn't know this. We didn't know this. At the same time the executive is saying these guys are totally briefed, so you can see why Snowden would think why am I going to go to Congress on this? Right? I mean, so, you know, again, people can debate the idea of whistle-blower versus criminal. You can be both, but I do think, as Bruce says, there are gray areas here. I mean, this is not black and white.

MR. RIEDEL: Thank you for coming. Thank you for giving us your insights into your book. (Applause) You can buy the book in the back of the room, but this is not a book event.

MR. APUZZO: Right.

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CERTIFICATE OF NOTARY PUBLIC

I, Carleton J. Anderson, III do hereby certify that the forgoing electronic file when originally transmitted was reduced to text at my direction; that said transcript is a true record of the proceedings therein referenced; that I am neither counsel for, related to, nor employed by any of the parties to the action in which these proceedings were taken; and, furthermore, that I am neither a relative or employee of any attorney or counsel employed by the parties hereto, nor financially or otherwise interested in the outcome of this action.

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