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Chechen ties interest terror, bomb experts

By [Kristina Davis \(/staff/kristina-davis/\)](#) 1:24 P.M. APR 19, 2013

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FILE- In this Sept. 9, 1999 file photo fire and smoke rise from a destroyed apartment building in Moscow, an attack blamed on Chechen militants, as Russian Emergency Situations Ministry officers and firefighters try to save people. Two suspects in the Boston Marathon bombing have been identified to The Associated Press as coming from a Russian region near Chechnya. In the past, insurgents from Chechnya and neighboring restive provinces in the Caucasus have been involved in terror attacks in M — AP

COMMENTS

SAN DIEGO — A UC San Diego explosives expert who wrote a novel about jihad in Chechnya is taking special interest in the news unfolding in Boston, where law enforcement officers are following leads on two Chechen brothers identified as suspects in the Boston Marathon bombings.

Marc Meyers, a professor at the university's Jacobs School of Engineering who has researched explosives for some 40 years,



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worked projects in the former Soviet Union several times. He developed characters for his novel, "Chechnya Jihad," based on people he met there during his travels.

Marc Meyers, USCD professor and explosives expert

The plot surrounds a professor at Harvard University who must go to Chechnya and fight terrorists to rescue his kidnapped wife and son.

The book explores the brutality of Russian forces during the Chechens' fight for independence, leading to the birth of extremist violence among Chechens and their partnerships with the Taliban in Afghanistan.

"The movement for independence became radicalized by the horrible way in which Soviets handled it, and the thousands of people they killed, and created a breeding ground of radicalization of the movement.

"The people who survived these ordeals, this brutalization, became monsters," Meyers said Friday by phone from Berkeley.

Law enforcement officials in Boston have not provided a motive for the marathon attack, or if it was related to the brothers' nationality or religion. The FBI has not publicly made any links between the brothers and terrorist organizations or affiliates. The suspects, Dzhokhar and Tamerlan Tsarnaev, had lived in Dagestan, which neighbors Chechnya in southern Russia.

Tamerlan, 26, was killed overnight during a chase, and Dzhokhar, 19, escaped after the shooting.

University of San Diego lecturer Pete Nunez said Friday that it is doubtful the brothers' Chechen ties were a factor in the attacks, considering the U.S. was not heavily involved in the conflicts in Chechnya.

"It's just so off the wall. I think their nationality is going to be secondary or not even a relevant issue," said Nunez, who has taught a class on transnational crime and terrorism for several years.

The pressure cooker bombs filled with nails and shells that the brothers are accused of detonating at the marathon are familiar to Meyers.

"It is a standard, cheap homemade bomb," he said. "It doesn't do anything else but kill, maim people."

Meyers was actually hired as an expert in a San Diego lawsuit involving the same brand of pressure cooker, Fagor, "the Cadillac of pressure cookers," as he described it. The suit involved a man who suffered burn injuries when the device exploded while cooking ribs.



Kristina Davis

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Charles White · Top Commenter

"The people who survived these ordeals became monsters." So there are now a million-plus "monsters" in Chechnya? Glad to see our professor turned book flack isn't making any sweeping generalizations.

Reply · Like · April 20 at 8:05am



Ken Platt · Top Commenter · Works at Dept of The Navy

Maybe the Sleeper Cells have finally been awoken...

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