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**Najibullah Zazi Pleads Guilty to Conspiracy to Use Explosives Against Persons or Property in U.S.,
Conspiracy to Murder Abroad and Providing Material Support to Al-Qaeda**

The Justice Department announced that Najibullah Zazi pleaded guilty today in the Eastern District of New York to a three-count superseding information charging him with conspiracy to use weapons of mass destruction (explosive bombs) against persons or property in the United States, conspiracy to commit murder in a foreign country and providing material support to al-Qaeda. Among other things, Zazi admitted that he brought TATP [Triacetone Triperoxide] explosives to New York on Sept. 10, 2009, as part of plan to attack the New York subway system.

Zazi, 25, a resident of Aurora, Colo., and legal permanent resident of the United States from Afghanistan, entered his guilty plea today before Chief U.S. District Judge Raymond J. Dearie. Zazi faces a maximum statutory sentence of life in prison for the first two counts of the superseding information and an additional 15 years in prison for the third count of the superseding information.

FBI agents in Colorado first arrested Zazi on Sept. 19, 2009, on a criminal complaint charging him with knowingly and willfully making false statements to the FBI in a matter involving international and domestic terrorism. On Sept. 23, 2009, a federal grand jury in the Eastern District of New York returned a one-count indictment alleging that Zazi knowingly and intentionally conspired with others to use one or more weapons of mass destruction, specifically explosive bombs and other similar explosive devices, against persons or property within the United States.

As Zazi admitted during today's guilty plea allocution and as reflected in previous government filings, he and others agreed to travel to Afghanistan to join the Taliban and fight against United States and allied forces. In furtherance of their plans, they flew from Newark Liberty International Airport in Newark, N.J., to Peshawar, Pakistan at the end of August 2008. Although Zazi and others initially intended to fight on behalf of the Taliban, they were recruited by al-Qaeda shortly after arriving in Peshawar. Al-Qaeda personnel transported Zazi and others to the Waziristan region of Pakistan and trained them on several different kinds of weapons. During the training, al-Qaeda leaders asked Zazi and others to return to the United States and conduct suicide operations. They agreed.

Zazi later received additional training from al-Qaeda on constructing the explosives for the planned attacks in the United States. Zazi had discussions with al-Qaeda leaders about target locations, including subway trains in New York City. Zazi took detailed notes during the training, and later emailed a summary of the notes to himself so that he could access them when he returned to the United States. Zazi also provided money and computers to al-Qaeda before he left Pakistan.

Zazi returned to the United States in January 2009 and moved to Denver. Beginning in June 2009, he began reviewing the bomb-making notes from his training and conducting research on where to buy the ingredients for the explosives. Zazi then traveled to New York and met with others to discuss the plan, including the timing of the attack and where to make the explosives.

Zazi returned to Denver and used the bomb-making notes to construct the explosives for the detonator components of the bombs. As set forth in the government's detention memorandum filed earlier in the case, in July and August 2009, Zazi purchased large quantities of components necessary to produce TATP and twice checked into a hotel room near Denver, where bomb making residue was later found.

On Sept. 8, 2009, Zazi rented a car and drove from Denver to New York, taking with him the explosives and other materials necessary to build the bombs. Zazi arrived in New York City on Thursday, Sept. 10, 2009. Zazi and others intended to obtain and assemble the remaining components of the bombs over the weekend and conduct the attack on Manhattan subway lines on Sept. 14, Sept. 15, or Sept. 16, 2009. However, shortly after arriving in New York, Zazi realized that law enforcement was investigating his activities. Zazi and others discarded the explosives and other bomb-making materials, and Zazi traveled back to Denver. He was arrested on Sept. 19, 2009.

"This was one of the most serious terrorist threats to our nation since September 11th, 2001, and were it not for the combined efforts of the law enforcement and intelligence communities, it could have been devastating," said Attorney General Eric Holder. "This attempted attack on our homeland was real, it was in motion, and it would have been deadly. We were able to thwart this plot because of careful analysis by our intelligence agents and prompt actions by law enforcement. They deserve our thanks and praise."

"Today's plea is an important development in this complex and ongoing criminal investigation and intelligence operation that in many ways illustrates the evolving nature of the terrorist threat today," said FBI Deputy Director John S. Pistole. "The plea is the result of the dedication and hard work by agents and officers assigned to Joint Terrorism Task Forces in both New York and Colorado working closely with federal prosecutors."

This case is being prosecuted by the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of New York, with assistance from the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Colorado and the Counterterrorism Section of the Justice Department's National Security Division. The investigation is being conducted by the New York and Denver FBI Joint Terrorism Task Forces, which combined have investigators from more than fifty federal, state and local law enforcement agencies.

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Attorney General