



Department of Justice

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VIRGINIA MAN SENTENCED TO 23 YEARS IN PRISON FOR PLOTING ATTACKS ON D.C.-AREA METRO STATIONS WITH PEOPLE HE BELIEVED TO BE AL-QAEDA MEMBERS

WASHINGTON – Farooque Ahmed, 35, of Ashburn, Va., was sentenced today to 23 years in prison, followed by 50 years of supervised release, after pleading guilty to charges stemming from his attempts to assist others whom he believed to be members of al-Qaeda in planning bombings at Metrorail stations in the Washington, D.C., area.

Neil H. MacBride, U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia; Todd Hinnen, Acting Assistant Attorney General for National Security; and James W. McJunkin, Assistant Director in Charge of the FBI's Washington Field Office, made the announcement after Ahmed entered his guilty plea and was sentenced by U.S. District Court Judge Bruce Lee.

Ahmed, a naturalized U.S. citizen born in Pakistan, pleaded guilty to the charges of attempting to provide material support to a designated terrorist organization and collecting information to assist in planning a terrorist attack on a transit facility. In a plea agreement, the defense and government jointly recommended a prison sentence of 23 years in prison. Following the acceptance of the guilty plea, Judge Lee immediately sentenced Ahmed to the agreed-upon term of imprisonment and imposed a 50-year term of supervised release.

In announcing the plea, officials emphasized that at no time was the public in danger during this investigation and that the FBI was aware of Ahmed's activities from before the alleged attempt began and closely monitored his activities until his arrest.

"Mr. Ahmed today admitted he was determined to kill as many people as possible through multiple bombings at the heart of our nation's capital," said U.S. Attorney Neil H. MacBride. "It's chilling that a man from Ashburn could admit to planning these acts of terrorism, and a 23-year sentence is a just punishment. We are grateful for the outstanding work of the FBI in detecting and disrupting this plot."

"From his home in Ashburn, Virginia, believing that he was working for Al-Qaeda, Farooque Ahmed plotted to carry out the simultaneous bombing of multiple Metro trains in the D.C. area," said Todd Hinnen, Acting Assistant Attorney General for National Security. "Today's plea provides a powerful example of how law enforcement and intelligence officials working together continue to use the criminal justice system to protect America from attack, obtain intelligence from terrorists, and secure their lawful, long-term detention."

“This individual followed a twisted, radical ideology outside that of the mainstream Muslim community which led him to break the law. He now faces the consequences of his actions,” said James W. McJunkin, Assistant Director in Charge of the FBI’s Washington Field Office. “The FBI remains committed to disrupting possible terrorist plots and individuals who seek to assist terrorist organizations.”

Ahmed was arrested by the FBI on Oct. 27, 2010. According to court records, from April 2010 through Oct. 25, 2010, Ahmed attempted to assist others whom he believed to be members of al-Qaeda in planning multiple bombings to cause mass casualties at Metrorail stations. On April 18, 2010, he drove to a hotel in Dulles, Va., and met with a courier he believed to be affiliated with a terrorist organization who provided Ahmed with a document that provided potential locations at which future meetings could be arranged. On or about May 15, 2010, at a hotel in Herndon, Va., Ahmed agreed to watch and photograph another hotel in Washington, D.C., and a Metrorail station in Arlington, Va., to obtain information about their security and busiest periods.

Ahmed participated in surveillance and recorded video images of Metrorail stations in Arlington, Va., on four occasions. On or about July 19, 2010, in a hotel room in Sterling, Va., Ahmed handed a memory stick containing video images of a Metrorail station in Arlington to an individual whom Ahmed believed to be affiliated with al-Qaeda. On that same day, Ahmed allegedly agreed to assess the security of two other Metrorail stations in Arlington as locations of terrorist attacks.

On or about Sept. 28, 2010, in a hotel room in Herndon, Ahmed handed a USB drive containing images of two Metrorail stations in Arlington to an individual whom Ahmed believed to be affiliated with al-Qaeda. On or about Sept. 28, 2010, he also provided to an individual whom he believed to be affiliated with al-Qaeda diagrams that Ahmed drew of three Metrorail stations in Arlington and provided suggestions as to where explosives should be placed on trains in Metrorail stations in Arlington to kill the most people in simultaneous attacks planned for 2011.

This case was investigated by the FBI’s Washington Field Office Joint Terrorism Task Force, which includes 35 agencies in the Northern Virginia and Washington, D.C., metropolitan area. Assistant U.S. Attorney Gordon Kromberg and Trial Attorneys Joseph Moreno and Paul Casey of the Counterterrorism Section in the Justice Department’s National Security Division are prosecuting the case on behalf of the United States.

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