30 Terrorist Plots Against the U.S. Foiled Since 9/11

Sheer luck and civilian bravery played roles in thwarting some of these attacks. Additionally, U.S. efforts in the war on terrorism, including operations in Afghanistan, have helped to weed out terrorist sanctuaries before they can organize attacks. Finally, domestic counterterrorism tools put in place since 9/11 have helped stop terrorists from operating on U.S. soil.

Individuals directly involved in plot

#1. Richard Reid attempts to detonate explosives hidden inside his shoes on a flight from Paris to Miami (December 2001).

#2. Jose Padilla is arrested and charged with planning a “dirty bomb” attack on the U.S. (May 2002).

#3. Six U.S. citizens of Yemeni descent (the “Lackawanna Six”) are arrested for conspiring with terrorist groups after attending an al-Qaeda training camp (September 2002).

#4. Iyman Faris is arrested for conspiring to use blowtorches to blow up the Brooklyn Bridge (May 2003).

#5. Thirteen members of the Virginia Jihad Network are arrested on weapons charges. Seven are also charged with conspiring to support terrorist organizations including al-Qaeda, the Taliban, and Lashkar-i-Taiba (June 2003).

#6. Nuradin M. Abdi is arrested and charged for plotting to bomb a shopping mall in Columbus, Ohio (November 2003).


#8. James Elshafay and Shahawar Martin Siraj are arrested for plotting to bomb a subway station near Madison Square Garden before the Republican National Convention (August 2004).

#9. Yassin Aref and Mohammad Hossain are charged with plotting to purchase a grenade launcher to assassinate a Pakistani diplomat (August 2004).

#10. Umer Hayat and Hamid Hayat are arrested in California for allegedly lying to the FBI about Hamid’s attendance at an Islamic terrorist training center in Pakistan (June 2005).

#11. Four members of a radical Islamic prison group founded by Kevin James are arrested in Los Angeles and charged with conspiring to attack National Guard facilities, synagogues, and other targets (August 2005).

#12. Michael C. Reynolds is arrested for a plot to blow up an oil refinery, a gas refinery, and pipelines in Wyoming and New Jersey (December 2005).

#13. Three men are arrested in Toledo, Ohio, for conspiring to kill or injure people in the Middle East and providing material support to terrorist organizations (February 2006).


#15. Seven men are arrested in Miami and Atlanta for plotting to blow up the Sears Tower in Chicago (June 2006).

#16. Eight men including Assem Hammoud are arrested for plotting to attack train tunnels between New York and New Jersey (July 2006).

#17. 24 men are arrested in London for plotting to blow up U.S.-bound commercial airliners with liquid explosives (August 2006).

#18. Derrick Shareef is arrested for planning to set off hand grenades inside a Chicago shopping mall (December 2006).
Sources: Heritage Foundation research by Jena Baker McNeill, James Jay Carafano, and Jessica Zuckerman.