

other parts of Dagestan or into Chechnya.³⁸ While the facts presently known about Tamerlan Tsarnaev's travel do not indicate that this attack has connections to an external terror network, they do raise significant questions. For example, it is possible that Tamerlan Tsarnaev's travel provided him with an opportunity to make contact with militants in the region. Tamerlan Tsarnaev also reportedly prayed at the al-Nadira mosque during his time in Makhachkala.³⁹ Writing for *The Wall Street Journal*, Alan Cullison alleges that the mosque's founder, Nadirshakh Khachilaev, also aided Ayman al Zawahiri, "during a 1997 trip to Dagestan."⁴⁰ Furthermore, some media accounts report that while in Dagestan, Tamerlan Tsarnaev made contact with Mahmoud Mansour Nidal, a known insurgent in the region, and perhaps others.⁴¹

(U) Mahmoud Nidal was reportedly a recruiter for Islamist insurgents in Dagestan and some media reporting suggests he and Tamerlan Tsarnaev could have met several times in 2012.⁴² Though on the run from Russian authorities during much of Tamerlan Tsarnaev's time in Dagestan, a former Russian investigator familiar with Mahmoud Nidal noted that he would probably not have been afraid to emerge from hiding and that the two could have met.⁴³ Mahmoud Nidal was killed in a raid by Russian forces on May 19, 2012.

(U) In January 2014 Chairman McCaul and Representative William Keating traveled to Russia and met with investigative journalists who had spent time in Makhachkala, Dagestan, looking into Tamerlan Tsarnaev's time there. These sources reported that he had attempted to join the Chechen fighters, and met with Mahmoud Nidal. These sources further allege that Tamerlan Tsarnaev was rejected by these groups, in part because of his conspicuously Western style.

(U//~~FOUO~~) However, according to briefings provided to Committee staff by officials at the U.S. Embassy in Moscow, official investigators have uncovered no evidence of such a relationship between Mahmoud Nidal and Tamerlan Tsarnaev. Furthermore, investigators have

³⁸ (U) Miriam Elder, "Tamerlan Tsarnaev in Dagestan: the unanswered questions," *The Guardian*, April 22, 2013. (Available at: <http://guardian.co.uk/world/2013/apr/22/tamerlan-tsarnaev-dagestan-boston-bombings>)

³⁹ (U) James Brooke, "Boston Bomber Spent 6 Months in Russia's Most Violent Republic," *Voice of America News*, May 20, 2013. (Available at: <http://www.voanews.com/content/tsarnaev-dagestan-russia-ties-may-hold-valuable-clues/1664419.html>)

⁴⁰ (U) Alan Cullison, "Dagestan Islamists Were Uneasy About Boston Bombing Suspect," *Wall Street Journal*, May 9, 2013. (Available at: <http://online.wsj.com/news/articles/SB10001424127887324059704578473160866108832>)

⁴¹ (U) Jake Tapper, Jessica Metzger, Sherisse Pham, "Russian sources tell congressman Boston suspect met with two Chechen extremists," the Lead with Jake Tapper, *CNN*, May 9, 2013. (Available at: <http://thelead.blogs.cnn.com/2013/05/09/russian-sources-tellcongressman-boston-suspect-met-with-two-chechen-extremists/>)

⁴² (U) Simon Shuster, "A Dead Militant in Dagestan: Did This Slain Jihadi Meet Tamerlan Tsarnaev," *TIME*, May 1, 2013. (Available at: <http://world.time.com/2013/05/01/a-dead-militant-in-dagestan-did-this-slain-jihadi-meet-tamerlan-tsarnaev/>)

⁴³ (U) Ibid.