

April 16, 2013

Bomb Details Emerge in Boston Inquiry

By [KATHARINE Q. SEELYE](#) and [MICHAEL COOPER](#)

BOSTON — The deadly bomb blasts that killed three people and injured 176 at the Boston Marathon are being investigated as “an act of terrorism,” President Obama said Tuesday.

“This was a heinous and cowardly act,” the president said Tuesday at the White House. “And given what we now know about what took place, the F.B.I. is investigating it as an act of terrorism. Any time bombs are used to target innocent civilians, it is an act of terror. What we don’t yet know, however, is who carried out this attack, or why; whether it was planned and executed by a terrorist organization, foreign or domestic, or was the act of a malevolent individual.”

Surgeons at Boston hospitals told televised news conferences on Tuesday that the devices contained small pellets and sharp “nail-like” objects that were designed to maim their victims.

A congressional official who was briefed by Federal authorities said that at least one bomb, and probably both, were pressure cookers filled with shrapnel — nails, metal pellets and ball bearings — that had been packed in a bag or backpack of some kind and placed on the ground near the finish line.

Representative Michael McCaul, a Texas Republican who heads the House Homeland Security Committee, said authorities believe the explosive may have been similar to improvised explosive weapons that have been used against American troops in Iraq and Afghanistan. Mr. McCaul, a former federal prosecutor who received briefings Tuesday morning from the F.B.I. and Homeland Security officials, also said that authorities still did not know whether the attack was a foreign or domestic plot.

A second Congressional official who has been briefed by federal authorities said that at least one bomb, and probably both, were pressure cookers filled with shrapnel, stowed in a bag of some kind and placed on the ground near the finish line, perhaps to look like trash or someone’s personal bag.

An explosive device fashioned from a pressure cooker was used in the attempted [bombing of Times Square](#) in New York in 2010.

Among the dead in Boston was an 8-year-old boy, Martin Richard, of Dorchester, according to Conor Yunits, a family spokesman. He had been watching the marathon

with his family; his mother and a sister were badly injured. The names of the other victims have not been made public.

Late Monday night, law enforcement officials descended on an apartment building in the suburb of Revere, about five miles north of Copley Square, linked to a man the police took into custody near the scene of the bombings. But on Tuesday morning, one law enforcement official said investigators had determined that the man, who was hurt in a blast and was questioned at the hospital, was not involved in the attack.

Representative Stephen Lynch, Democrat of Massachusetts, said doctors had identified material lodged in a survivor's leg as a ball bearing.

Mr. Lynch characterized the choice of the material as deliberate. "This is not a device like Oklahoma City," he said. "That was to bring the building down. The ball bearings are meant as antipersonnel munitions. They're trying to cause carnage here."

The authorities have not announced any arrests, and so far, no one has claimed responsibility as the police conduct what they have said is "a criminal investigation that is a potential terrorist investigation."

Law enforcement officials pleaded at a briefing Tuesday morning for anyone who took pictures or video of the finish line at the time of the blast to submit them to boston@ic.fbi.gov or to call 1-800-CALL-FBI (1-800-225-5324).

The plea underscored just how pervasive cameras have become at events like the marathon and how crucial they can be in helping the police piece together crucial bits of evidence. But it may also suggest how few clues the authorities have otherwise.

The police also said they were examining footage from nearby security cameras frame by frame as they continue their search for the identity of the person or persons who placed explosive devices near the end of the 26.2-mile course.

Police Commissioner Edward Davis said that officials were gradually reducing the size of the crime scene, which on Tuesday stretched for 12 blocks in Copley Square, down from 15 blocks on Monday. He said it was the most complex crime scene in the history of the department.

City streets that normally would be clogged at rush hour were largely deserted on Tuesday except for a cold wind and a few runners out for a morning jog. "It's very surreal," said Mary Ollinger, 32, who works at Wentworth Institute of Technology. "The streets are empty and the Common is filled with media trucks."

At rush hour, the city's subway system was uncharacteristically quiet, watched over by a heightened police presence and SWAT team members. Parts of the city seemed to have

ground to a halt: Stores on Newbury Street, Boston's busy retail thoroughfare, were closed, and tables on the patio at Stephanie's, a restaurant there, were still covered in dishes left there on Monday.

Metal barriers and more police guarded the crime scene, forming something of a black hole in a busy retail and business district in this city. Inside, the streets were still littered in the detritus of the marathon — runners' blankets, water bottles, even a pile of bananas.

Hundreds if not thousands of office workers avoided the city on Tuesday because of the closures. Maria Luna, 38, who lives in Watertown and usually commutes by bus to her job as an investment analyst at John Hancock, said she was staying home. "My manager told me it would be very limited access," she said by phone. The emergency protocol in her office was activated, she said, meaning that essential workers, like those who must move cash on a time-sensitive basis, could report to an off-site disaster recovery station in Portsmouth, N.H., where the company has computers.

She said she felt a combination of sadness and terror. "Right now I have a big ball in the pit of my stomach," she said.

But many runners, clad in the blue and gold jackets given to this year's marathoners, made pilgrimages to the blockade on Boylston Street, pausing to take pictures with their cellphones. Others came wearing jacket from previous marathons — the symbol of accomplishment had, apparently, turned into a sign of solidarity.

Alison Gardner, a runner from Austin, Tex., who completed the race on Monday about 10 minutes before the blasts, left a potted hydrangea and tucked a bunch of tulips into the metal barrier.

"It's supposed to be a day of celebration today, and it's a day of sadness," said Ms. Gardner.

Her companion, Bonnie Yesian, is among many visitors still marooned in the city, because her hotel — and her luggage and identification — is inside the crime scene.

"I can't fly, so I'm stuck," said Ms. Yesian, who said strangers and marathon volunteers had offered her guest rooms and supplies in the meantime.

Marathon officials had set up an ad hoc site adjacent to the crime scene, where runners who had been stopped before the finish line could pick up their medals and bright yellow bags of belongings that they had left at the start. What would ordinarily be a moment to bask in accomplishment was a grim occasion, as runners — many with tears in their eyes — wondered what to make of a medal for a marathon they had been unable to complete.

“It’s heartbreaking to not cross the finish line, you train so hard for this,” said Lauren Field, an auctioneer who now lives in Hampstead, N.H., who was stopped blocks from the finish line. “It’s sad, but I’m safe.”

Caroline Burkhart protested gently as a volunteer handed her a medal. “I didn’t finish,” she said, explaining that she had stopped at mile 25.2. She took off the medal and examined it. “Memories,” she said, with a shudder. “Next year, I’ll wear it.”

In Dorchester, the street outside the home of Martin Richard, the 8-year-old victim, a large two-story gray Victorian with a basketball hoop and a hockey goal in the driveway, was filled with reporters and television cameras on Tuesday. Mourners stopped to leave flowers in the front yard. A neighbor, Jane Sherman, 64, described the Richard children as “very active, very normal American kids.” Ms. Sherman, a real estate agent, said she would often see the children outside the house playing. “They’re very happy-go-lucky kids,” she said. “All of Dorchester is devastated.”

White House officials said that President Obama received updates overnight about the investigation from Lisa Monaco, his chief counterterrorism and homeland security adviser. “The president made clear that he expects to be kept up to date on any developments and directed his team to make sure that all federal resources that can support these efforts, including the investigation being led by the F.B.I., be made available,” a White House official said. Mr. Obama is to be briefed again later this morning by Ms. Monaco and the director of the F.B.I., Robert Mueller.

Almost three-quarters of the 23,000 runners who participated in the race had already crossed the finish line when a bomb that had apparently been placed in a garbage can exploded around 2:50 p.m. in a haze of smoke amid a crowd of spectators on Boylston Street, just off Copley Square in the heart of the city. Twelve seconds later, another bomb exploded several hundred feet away.

On Tuesday morning officials said that the only explosive devices found were the ones that exploded at the marathon — clarifying conflicting statements that were given Monday in the chaotic aftermath of the blast, when some law-enforcement officials had said that other devices were found. “There were no unexploded devices found,” Gov. Deval Patrick said Tuesday morning.

Katharine Q. Seeley reported from Boston, and Michael Cooper from New York. Reporting was contributed by John Eligon and Jess Bidgood from Boston, Steve Eder, Ashley Parker, William K. Rashbaum and Mary Pilon from New York, and Mark Landler, and Michael S. Schmidt, Eric Schmitt and Abby Goodnough from Washington.