

Bombs mailed to prominent Democrats and Trump critics

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Six mail bombs were sent to prominent Democrats and critics of President Trump, it was reported on Wednesday. None of the devices exploded and no one was injured, but the attacks dominated the US media and caused widespread alarm, including redoubled screening of mail to all political and corporate offices and a vast mobilization of police and security forces in New York City, Washington and elsewhere.

Whatever the source of the mail bombs, which, as of this writing, remains uncertain, the attack on top Democratic Party leaders and CNN's New York offices only two weeks before the midterm elections is a sharp warning of the explosive political tensions in the United States, which will only escalate as the economic and social crisis deepens and mass struggles of the working class develop.

The alert over alleged terrorism also led to the first live-action use of the emergency takeover of cell phone text messaging by the police authorities, under a program tested for the first time only last month. Warnings to stay away from the Time Warner building in midtown Manhattan, the home of CNN's New York center, were blasted out to cell phones within a certain GPS radius of the building, followed some hours later by a second text giving an all-clear.

The first mailed bomb was delivered Monday to the home of billionaire George Soros in the town of Bedford, New York, in suburban Westchester County. Soros was not at home and the aide who collected the mail thought the package suspicious, placed it in a wooded area and called the police. The bomb squad detonated the package, which apparently contained a pipe bomb filled with explosive black powder.

Late Tuesday and early Wednesday, suspicious packages were detected by the Secret Service in mail addressed to the homes of former President Barack

Obama and former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, Trump's Democratic opponent in the 2016 election. Both packages were set aside and never reached their targets.

Another mail bomb addressed to Representative Maxine Waters of California was caught during screening at a postal facility in the Los Angeles area on Wednesday. Again, the package was never taken to the office of the congresswoman.

Two more packages did come closer to reaching potential targets. A mail bomb sent to former Attorney General Eric Holder was improperly addressed and sent back Wednesday by the postal service to the return address written on the package, which was the Florida office of Democratic Representative Debbie Wasserman Schultz, former chair of the Democratic National Committee. The package was actually opened in the mail room of her Sunrise, Florida office, but did not explode.

The sixth mail bomb was addressed to former CIA Director John Brennan in care of CNN's New York offices in Manhattan. Brennan is now a highly paid commentator for another network, NBC, and has never worked for CNN. That package reached the CNN mail room inside the Time Warner building, where it was opened but again did not explode. The building was then evacuated.

According to CNN, a seventh mail bomb may have been sent to former Vice President Joe Biden prior to the mailing to Soros, but was detected and disposed of before it could be recognized as the beginning of a series of such attacks.

FBI and police officials involved in the investigation into the mail bombs told the media that the packages addressed to Obama, Clinton, Brennan, Soros, Waters and Holder all appeared to have come from the same

source. The bombs were of similar construction, simple but powerful enough to kill or maim.

They were mailed in similar envelopes, and the return address of Representative Wasserman Schultz was used on all of them. No information has yet been made public about the triggering devices and why the bombs failed to explode in the two instances when the packages were opened.

The list of targets is one that could have been drawn up based on any Trump campaign rally of the past three years, where all seven have been vilified and threatened, most notoriously Clinton, the subject of incessant chants of “lock her up.” Trump has singled out Waters among the nearly 200 Democrats in the House of Representatives, unleashing a stream of racist abuse depicting her as a “low IQ person” because she has advocated his impeachment.

Soros has been regularly demonized, both by Trump and, in openly anti-Semitic terms, by fascistic supporters like Breitbart News, because he is a Jewish billionaire who finances the Democratic Party and many liberal groups. Most recently, Trump suggested that he was financing the caravan of Central American immigrants now traveling north through Mexico.

As for Brennan, Trump revoked his security clearance during the summer after the former CIA director publicly denounced his meeting with Vladimir Putin in Helsinki as an act of treason.

Certain aspects of the mailing suggest that the bombs may have been the work of an amateur. For example, the names of Brennan and Wasserman Schultz were misspelled, the Brennan bomb was mailed to CNN rather than NBC, the Holder bomb went to the wrong address and was sent back by the postal service. It is also of note that of the seven apparent targets—including Wasserman Schultz—three were African American and two were Jewish.

Trump accorded the mail bombs only three words of condemnation in his daily tweet storm, and then delivered a grudging statement at a previously scheduled White House event in which he did not mention any of the targets of the mail bombs by name.

At a campaign rally Wednesday evening in Wisconsin, he continued his denunciations of the media. “The media also has a responsibility to set a civil tone and to stop the endless hostility and constant negative and oftentimes false attacks and stories,” he

said. “They’ve got to stop.”

The Democratic Party and the pro-Democratic elements in the corporate media were eager to put the blame on Trump’s violent rhetoric for stirring up violence on the part of his supporters. Senate Minority Leader Charles Schumer and House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi issued a joint statement saying Trump’s words condemning the attacks “ring hollow until he reverses his statements that condone acts of violence.” They continued, “Time and time again, the president has condoned physical violence and divided Americans with his words and his actions.”

CNN Chairman Jeff Zucker also weighed in. “There is a total and complete lack of understanding at the White House about the seriousness of their continued attacks on the media,” he said in a statement.



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