



Center for Development of Security Excellence
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INSIDER THREAT JOB AID



Awareness in Action: Case Study

Who could become an insider threat? Anyone with authorized access to U.S. Government resources who uses that access, either wittingly or unwittingly, to harm national security. Insider threats can have far reaching consequences and impacts on national security.



Mostafa Ahmed Awwad

- Targeted Department of the Navy
- Civilian General Engineer at Norfolk Naval Shipyard
- Age at conviction: 36
- Conviction date: 15 June 2015
- Charges: Attempted Espionage
- Sentence: 11 years prison term

Espionage Indicators

- Foreign Preference
- Ideology
- Mishandling of Classified/Sensitive Information
- Gaining access to Sensitive Areas/Information without a “need to know”



What Happened

- Based on a joint investigation, an Arabic speaking undercover FBI agent contacted Awwad by telephone and asked to meet him the following day. Without seeking additional information from the caller, Awwad agreed.
- The following day Awwad met with the undercover FBI agent who introduced himself as an Egyptian intelligence officer.
- Awwad claimed it was his intention to use his position with the U.S. Navy to obtain military technology for use by the Egyptian government, including but not limited to the designs of the USS Gerald R. Ford nuclear aircraft carrier.
- Awwad agreed to conduct clandestine communications with the undercover FBI agent, and to conduct “dead drops” in a concealed location in the park. Awwad offered to circumvent U.S. Navy computer security by installing software on his restricted computer system and to wear a pinhole camera to photograph restricted material.



Impact

“This case underscores the persistent national security threat posed by insiders stealing critical national defense information in order to benefit foreign governments,” said FBI’s Assistant Director Coleman. “Working together, we prevented the loss of billions of dollars in research costs and the exposure of potential vulnerabilities to our newest generation of nuclear aircraft carrier.”

Learn More

This case study examined a real-life insider threat. Your awareness is key to protecting our national security from insider threats like this one. Visit the Center for Development of Security Excellence’s website (<http://www.cdse.edu>) for additional case studies, information, materials, and training or go directly to the Insider Threat Toolkit at <http://www.cdse.edu/toolkits/insider/index.php>.

If you SEE something, SAY something.