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# NJOHSP

## EXECUTIVE INTELLIGENCE BRIEF

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### UAVs: Difficult for Terrorists to Utilize

***Terrorist groups and individuals face major hurdles in arming and deploying unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) for attacks against public and private institutions in the United States.***

Although we cannot rule out the possibility that terrorists could seek to use UAVs in the future, most groups lack the technical know-how to mount and effectively utilize IEDs and firearms on a UAV, and these groups and individuals also face rapidly evolving UAV counter-technology.

- A review of all terrorist plots and attacks in the US since last year reveals terrorists' tendency to use readily available, simple resources. The attacks in May in Garland, Texas; the plot in April against a military base in Illinois; and the hatchet attack in New York in November all featured relatively simple attack methods. Homegrown violent extremists continue to try to heed calls from the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria and al-Qa'ida encouraging unsophisticated attacks with very short timespans between planning and execution.
- The successful use of UAVs requires a level of proficiency that exceeds most terrorist capabilities. In 1995, the Japanese terrorist group Aum Shinrikyo tried to use UAVs to attack the Tokyo subway with no success. In 2004, moreover, several HAMAS operatives were killed while attempting to equip UAVs with explosive devices. ***The Global Terrorism Database – which includes over 125,000 terror attacks from 1970 through 2014 – recorded no incidents involving UAVs.***
- We expect counter-UAV technology to evolve in the coming years. Physical barriers and disabling wireless networks offer ad hoc protection for critical infrastructure that local law enforcement can implement. Earlier this year, DJI – the one of largest consumer UAV companies – released geofencing software updates for one of its most popular models – the Phantom 2 – restricting movement across some international borders, around major airports, and within a 15.5-mile radius around Washington, DC.

#### Contact Information

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