



NJOHSP *at a glance*

YOUR WEEK IN REVIEW | June 20, 2016

ISIS: CIA Director Says Despite Setbacks, ISIS Remains a Threat, Is Planning to Send Operatives to the West

In testimony last week before the Senate Intelligence Committee, CIA Director John Brennan said that despite the successes of the US-led coalition against the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) on the battlefield in Syria and Iraq and in the financial arena, “our efforts have not reduced the group’s terrorism capability and global reach.” He described ISIS as “formidable” and “resilient,” and said that the group “has a large cadre of Western fighters who could potentially serve as operatives for attacks in the West.” He said that ISIS will likely try to exploit the flow of refugees, smuggling routes, and legitimate methods of travel to smuggle operatives into Western countries.



Director Brennan added that as we have seen in Orlando, San Bernardino, and elsewhere, ISIS is attempting to inspire attacks by sympathizers who have no direct connections to the group. As an example, he cited a message last month by an ISIS leader, urging the group’s followers to conduct attacks in their home countries if they were unable to travel to Syria or Iraq.

Director Brennan also made the point that the challenge of defeating ISIS is no longer limited to Syria and Iraq, as the group has spread through a global network of affiliates. He cited the ISIS affiliate in Libya as “probably the most developed and the most dangerous,” and noted that the affiliate in the Sinai has become “the most active and most capable terrorist group in Egypt.”

“The Road to Orlando:” Syrian War and the Rise of ISIS Coincide With Increased Attacks in the West

An analysis of 47 cases of violence inspired by militant Islamic extremism in Western countries between January 1, 2012, and the Orlando attack on June 12, 2016, shows that the Syrian civil war and the rise of ISIS have coincided with an increase in the number of attacks, with more than half of all violent incidents taking place in France and the United States. The analysis, published by the Combating Terrorism Center (CTC) at West Point in an article by Sam Mullins, an Australian professor, shows that notwithstanding the attacks in Paris and Brussels, most attacks were conducted by individuals with no direct ties to foreign terrorist groups and were low-tech and relatively ineffective.

The article is available online at <https://www.ctc.usma.edu/posts/the-road-to-orlando-jihadist-inspired-violence-in-the-west-2012-2016>

Aviation/New Jersey: Elizabeth Man Pleads Guilty to Federal Charge of Pointing Laser at TV News Helicopter

At the federal court in Newark on June 14, an Elizabeth (Union County) man pleaded guilty to pointing a laser at a television news helicopter on November 11, 2015. Stiven Lopez-Bender, age 27, admitted that when the helicopter arrived over Elizabeth to cover a news story, he aimed a green laser at it and struck the flight deck through the main windshield. (The photo depicts the blinding effect on a pilot when a laser pointer shines into a cockpit.) The defendant also admitted that he pointed the green laser at the helicopter a second time as he got out of his SUV, and again as he walked toward an apartment building. He then pointed the green laser at the helicopter a fourth time from a window in the apartment building.



Sentencing is scheduled for September 28. The charge is punishable by a maximum of five years in prison and a \$250,000 fine, under a federal law that was enacted in February 2012 in response to an increase in laser incidents. Actual sentences for this offense during the past year have ranged from probation to 18 months in prison.

Contact Information

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