



NJOHSP *at a glance*

YOUR WEEK IN REVIEW | August 15, 2016

Canada: FBI Tip Leads to RCMP Disruption of Suicide Bombing

A tip from the FBI that included a martyrdom video (see photo) led to a “race against time” that resulted in the disruption of a suicide bombing in Canada on August 10, according to Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) officials. In the video, an unknown individual, who pledged allegiance to the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), called for the deaths of Canadians and according to the RCMP, “was clearly in the final stages of planning an attack with a homemade explosive device.” The RCMP issued an immediate Canada-wide alert to police forces across the country, warning of an imminent threat. Police quickly identified the suspect as Aaron Driver, age 24, of Strathroy, about 20 miles west of London, Ontario.



An RCMP tactical team was deployed to find Driver before he conducted his attack, which was expected to target a highly populated area during rush hour. While heavily armed officers were still trying to determine if Driver was still in his residence, a taxi pulled into the driveway, and the suspect emerged from the house, wearing a backpack, and got into the vehicle. When police engaged the suspect, he detonated an explosive device in the back of the cab. Police opened fire, and the suspect was killed. It is still unclear whether he was killed by the gunfire or by shrapnel from his own suicide device. The taxi driver is recovering from his injuries. RCMP officials state that if the suspect had been able to leave the residence before police officers arrived, the incident could have ended much differently.

Attacks in Thailand Highlight the Vulnerability of Beach Resorts

Although Thai police suspect no ties to international terrorist organizations, a series of explosions in southern Thailand last week showed the vulnerability of tourist towns to attacks. A small bomb exploded on a beach in a popular tourist area on Phuket Island. Four other bombings occurred in the beach resort city of Hua Hin, causing businesses to close and tourists to leave the beaches and streets and remain in their hotels. Additional incidents occurred in four other cities that are also popular with tourists. A total of four people were killed in the attacks and more than 30 others wounded (see photo).



The attacks were likely conducted by political opponents of the Thai regime or by a southern insurgent group. Political unrest is at a high level, following a referendum in early August that approved a new constitution, which critics claim will increase the power of the military. Whoever the perpetrators, the attacks clearly target Thailand’s tourist industry, which is one of the few highly performing sectors of the nation’s economy.

NCTC Director Sees Gains on the Battlefield, Continuing Threats to the West

In an interview with National Public Radio last week, Nicholas Rasmussen, the Director of the National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC), said that success on the battlefield against ISIS will not result in an immediate reduction in the threat of attacks in the West. Although ISIS has begun to lose territory in Iraq and Syria, there is not a direct one-to-one correlation between territorial control and the group’s ability to operate as a terrorist network.

One of Rasmussen’s takeaways from the recent terrorist attacks is the speed at which extremists are being radicalized. ISIS is able to reach out to individuals on the Internet or in social media and quickly turn them into, not just believers or consumers of propaganda, but then into people who would actually conduct an act of violence. The process is so compressed that what previously may have taken months or even years can now be accomplished in a matter of weeks.

Contact Information

Any agency with information or comments/questions on this or other analytical products, please contact the NJOHSP Analysis Bureau at analysis@njohsp.gov or 609-584-4000.

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