



NJOHSP *at a glance*

YOUR WEEK IN REVIEW | October 17, 2016

Domestic Terrorism: Three Kansas Men Charged With Plotting Bomb Attack Against Muslim Immigrants

Three southwestern Kansas men were charged on October 14 with plotting to detonate bombs at an apartment complex (see photo) in Garden City, Kansas, at which one of the apartments is used as a mosque and which is occupied by a large number of Muslim immigrants from Somalia. The defendants—Patrick Stein, age 47; Curtis Allen, age 49; and Gavin Wright, age 49—have been charged with conspiracy to use a weapon of mass destruction (explosive device). The defendants are members of an anti-immigrant, anti-Muslim militia group that refers to itself as the Crusaders. The alleged plot involved parking four vehicles filled with explosives at the four corners of the complex and detonating them to create a large explosion. The defendants allegedly chose the target based on their hatred of Muslims, individuals of Somali descent, and immigrants, as well as a desire to inspire other militia groups and to “wake people up.”



The defendants allegedly conducted surveillance on potential targets, stockpiled firearms, ammunition, and explosives components, and planned to release a manifesto in conjunction with the attack. According to the criminal complaint, the eight-month FBI domestic terrorism investigation began in February, on the basis of reporting from a confidential human source who attended numerous Crusaders meetings at which members discussed plans to carry out a violent attack against Muslims in southwestern Kansas.

Aviation: Explosion in Iraq Highlights Increasing Threat From Weaponized UAVs

An unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV, also known as a drone) with an improvised device exploded on October 2 when it was taken to a camp near Irbil, in northeastern Iraq, for examination, according to an announcement last week by a spokesman for the US-led military coalition in Iraq. The UAV had been launched by Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) fighters. The incident highlights the increasing threat from militant groups using weaponized UAVs, and it also raises the specter of militant operatives using UAVs with explosive devices against targets in the West.



The UAV in Iraq exploded when Kurdish Peshmerga troops tried to lift it after it crashed to the ground, according to a Kurdish official, who believes the UAV was booby-trapped. The explosion killed two Kurds and seriously wounded two French special forces personnel. Press reports quote an unnamed US official as saying the UAV looked like a rudimentary model plane that appeared to be carrying a C-4 charge, batteries, and possibly a timer.

The use of explosives on UAVs adds a new dimension to the threat in Iraq and Syria, as militant groups weaponize their commercially-purchased UAVs. Videos released earlier this year purportedly show the extremist groups Jund al-Aqsa and Hizballah using UAVs to attack targets in Syria with explosives (photo shows screen shot from Jund al-Aqsa video).

Iraq: Prime Minister Announces the Offensive to Retake Mosul Has Begun

In a televised address on October 17, Iraqi Prime Minister Abadi announced that the offensive to retake the city of Mosul has begun. The northern Iraqi city, which has been occupied by ISIS since June 2014, is the last remaining major stronghold for ISIS in the country. Troops participating in the operation have been massing north, south, and east of the city in recent weeks.

Iraqi military officers said Kurdish Peshmerga forces will lead the offensive on the eastern front for the first 48 hours. At that point, they will stop, and Iraqi army and federal police forces will move up the main highway from the south, while Shiite militias will focus on towns west and southeast of Mosul.

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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