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## **CINCINNATI-AREA MAN PLEADS GUILTY TO TERRORISM CHARGES**

WASHINGTON – Christopher Lee Cornell, 22, of Green Township, Ohio, pleaded guilty today to one count of attempting to kill government employees, one count of possession of a firearm in furtherance of a crime of violence and one count of attempting to provide material support to a designated foreign terrorist organization.

The plea was announced by Assistant Attorney General for National Security John P. Carlin, Acting U.S. Attorney Benjamin C. Glassman of the Southern District of Ohio and Special Agent in Charge Angela L. Byers of the FBI's Cincinnati Division. Cornell pleaded guilty before Senior U.S. District Judge Sandra Beckwith of the Southern District of Ohio.

Cornell was originally charged by an indictment returned by a federal grand jury on Jan. 21, 2015. On May 7, 2015, Cornell was additionally charged by superseding indictment with attempting to provide material support to a designated foreign terrorist organization.

According to the plea agreement, from on or about August 2014 through January 2015, Cornell plotted, planned and attempted to travel to Washington, D.C., in order to attack the U.S. Capitol during the State of the Union Address on January 20, 2015.

Cornell admitted that he conducted online research of weapons, the construction of bombs, the U.S. Capitol and other potential targets in the Washington, D.C., area. Cornell intended to kill officers and employees of the United States, and possessed two semi-automatic rifles and approximately 600 rounds of ammunition, according to the plea agreement.

The defendant admitted that his planned attack on the U.S. Capitol was an attempt to provide material support and resources – both personnel and services – to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL).

The material support count carries a potential maximum sentence of 15 years in prison. Attempted murder of government employees and officials is a crime punishable by up to 20

years in prison. Possession of a firearm in furtherance of an attempted crime of violence is a crime punishable by a mandatory sentence of five years in prison.

Cornell was arrested on Jan. 14, 2015, by the FBI's Joint Terrorism Task Force (JTTF). After his arrest, he posted statements online that included a call for others to join him in violent jihad against the United States and its citizens on behalf of ISIL, according to his admissions in the plea agreement.

The JTTF is made up of officers and agents from the Cincinnati Police Department; Colerain, Ohio, Police Department; Dayton, Ohio, Police Department; Ohio State Highway Patrol; University of Cincinnati Police Department; U.S. Air Force Office of Special Investigations; FBI; U.S. Immigrations and Customs Enforcement; U.S. Internal Revenue Service; U.S. Secret Service; U.S. Postal Inspection Service; West Chester, Ohio, Police Department; and Xenia, Ohio, Police Department.

Assistant Attorney General Carlin and Acting U.S. Attorney Glassman commended the JTTF for its investigation of this case. The case is being prosecuted by Trial Attorney Michael Dittoe of the National Security Division's Counterterrorism Section and Assistant U.S. Attorney Tim Mangan of the Southern District of Ohio.

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