

---

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NSD

MONDAY, DECEMBER 5, 2016

(202) 514-2007

[WWW.JUSTICE.GOV](http://WWW.JUSTICE.GOV)

TTY (866) 544-5309

**CINCINNATI-AREA MAN SENTENCED TO 30 YEARS IN PRISON FOR ATTEMPTING TERRORISM PLOT TO KILL GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES**

WASHINGTON – Christopher Lee Cornell, 22, of Green Township, Ohio, was sentenced today to 30 years in prison for plotting, planning and attempting an attack on government officials during the State of the Union Address in 2015 in the name of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), a designated foreign terrorist organization.

Acting Assistant Attorney General for National Security Mary McCord, 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 made the announcement. Cornell pleaded guilty on Aug. 1 and was sentenced by Senior U.S. District Judge Sandra Beckwith of the Southern District of Ohio, who also ordered Cornell to serve a lifetime term of supervised release.

“With this sentence, Christopher Lee Cornell is being held accountable for plotting to kill federal officials in the name of ISIL,” said Acting Assistant Attorney General McCord. “Counterterrorism remains our highest priority and we will continue to identify and hold accountable those who seek to commit acts of terrorism within our borders.”

“The seriousness of this crime is apparent,” said U.S. Attorney Glassman. “Cornell plotted to commit violence as a symbolic attack on the United States as a whole. An attempt to murder another individual is horrific enough and justifies a significant sentence. But this was more than that. Cornell wanted to inflict pain on the spirit of the entire country, and terrorize its leadership. Today’s sentence appropriately holds him accountable for that.”

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 Jan. 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. He intended to kill officers and employees of the United States, and possessed two semi-automatic rifles and approximately 600 rounds of ammunition.

In addition, Cornell admitted that his planned attack on the U.S. Capitol was an attempt to provide material support and resources – both personnel and services – to ISIL.

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 admissions made in connection with 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.

Acting Assistant Attorney General McCord and 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.

###

16-1423

DO NOT REPLY TO THIS MESSAGE. IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS, PLEASE US