



United States Attorney's Office
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TWO PLEAD GUILTY TO DOMESTIC TERRORISM CHARGES OF CONSPIRING TO ATTACK MILITARY FACILITIES, JEWISH TARGETS

Two men who were part of a domestic terrorist cell pleaded guilty this morning to federal terrorism charges, admitting that they conspired to attack United States military operations, "infidels," and Israeli and Jewish facilities in the Los Angeles area.

The two men – Kevin James, who formed the terror group while in a California state prison, and Levar Washington, who was recruited by James while in state prison and recruited others into the plot – pleaded guilty to conspiring to wage war against the United States.

A third member of the radical Islamic organization which James dubbed Jam'iyyat Ul-Islam Is-Saheeh, or JIS – Gregory Patterson – is expected to plead guilty to the terrorism conspiracy charge on Monday. The fourth member of JIS named in an indictment – Hammad Samana – has been found unfit to stand trial and is currently receiving psychiatric care at a federal prison facility.

"We are keenly aware of the threat posed by home-grown terrorism. As the guilty pleas today demonstrate, we will continue to identify and disrupt extremist cells before they can inflict harm. This case demonstrates how law enforcement cooperation at all levels thwarted a domestic plot that targeted U.S. military facilities as well as Israeli and Jewish facilities in the Los Angeles area," said Attorney General Michael B. Mukasey.

FBI Director Robert S. Mueller III stated: "This is a case in which a terrorist cell grew out of a prison cell. Despite the fact that they had no connection to al-Qaeda leaders, they had adopted their cause. These home-grown terrorists had raised the money, recruited the people, chosen the targets, obtained the

weapons and set the date. All they had left to do was to strike. The JIS case is an outstanding example of how the Joint Terrorist Task Force system works. A local crime yielded clues that pointed to terrorism. That information was brought to the JTTF and soon over 300 FBI personnel and police officers were tracking suspects and unraveling the plot. It was the superb partnership between law enforcement agencies that prevented that.”



United States Attorney Thomas P. O'Brien commented: "The prevention of future terrorist attacks is the number one priority of the Justice Department, and the investigation and successful prosecution of the JIS terrorist organization stands out as a landmark case in Southern California. With the defendants considering a series of targets to attack – including U.S. Army personnel, synagogues and others perceived as 'infidels' – this terror plot had reached an advanced level. Because these men were driven by ideological fervor, had a demonstrated ability to obtain weapons, and had planned attacks on identified targets, an untold number of lives may have been saved when this terrorist cell was dismantled."

In plea agreements filed this morning and court proceedings conducted this morning in United States District Court in Santa Ana, James and Washington admitted that they conspired "to levy war against the government of the United States through terrorism, and to oppose by force the authority of the United States government."

FBI Assistant Director in Charge Salvador Hernandez said: "Law enforcement personnel at all levels put forth a tremendous effort to put this case together and the proof of that is evident today. A terrorist attack on the city of Los Angeles, hatched in our midst and on our soil, was thwarted in the advanced planning stage. This case is a perfect example of the Joint Terrorism Task Force in that no single agency could have done this alone."

After forming JIS in 1997 while in state prison, James recruited Washington into the organization in late 2004 while both were prisoners at New Folsom Prison, where James had Washington swear an oath of loyalty and obedience to James and to JIS. After his release from prison several weeks after taking the JIS oath, Washington recruited Patterson and Samana into JIS and had them swear oaths of allegiance and obedience to JIS. After forming this cell, Washington and Patterson conducted about a dozen armed robberies of gas stations to supply money for the group's planned attacks in the Los Angeles area.

Samana researched targets and prepared a document called "Modes of Attack." The document listed "LAX and Consulate of Zion," "Military Targets," "Army Recruiting centers throughout the county," "Military base in Manhattan Beach" and "Campsite of Zion."

After Torrance Police investigators linked the two to a gas station robbery, various Jihadist documents were found at a South Los Angeles apartment where Washington and Patterson lived. In addition to the "Modes of Attack" document, investigators discovered a document titled "Notoriety Moves," which contained a James-authored statement to be given to the media after a deadly attack. The proposed press statement reads, in part, "This incident is the first in a series of incidents to come in a plight to defend

and propagate traditional Islam in its purity.” The document also warns “sincere Muslims” to avoid a series of targets, including “Those Jewish and non-Jewish supporters of an Israeli state.”

Torrance Police Chief John J. Neu said: “I am proud of the dedication and professionalism displayed by all involved in this critical case. The awareness, knowledge, skills and abilities of the officers involved effectively thwarted this terrorist plot. This case is a prime example of the powerful radical influence which poses a serious threat from within right here in Southern California. Today’s announcement shows that through teamwork we can effectively combat this threat. Unity is the key.”

Los Angeles Police Deputy Chief Michael Downing, Commanding Officer, Counter-Terrorism and Criminal Intelligence Bureau, stated: “This case was an outstanding example of cooperation between local, state and federal law enforcement and in particular the Joint Terrorism Task Force (JTTF) model. It also illustrates that the best information comes from the cops on the beat and those involved in criminal investigations, hence the all-crimes approach to terrorism prevention. Homegrown terrorism remains a grave concern for the security of our country and this cell was closer to going operational than any we have seen post-911. Jamiyyat Ul Is Saheeh (JIS), translated as Assembly of Authentic Islam, practiced a form radicalized Islam that was neither authentic nor peaceful.”

James and Patterson pleaded guilty this morning before United States District Judge Cormac J. Carney, who is scheduled to sentence James on March 31 and Washington on April 28. As a result of his guilty plea, James faces a statutory maximum sentence of 20 years in federal prison. Washington, who also pleaded guilty to using a firearm in relation to the terrorist plot, faces up to 25 years in prison.

“Investigators from the Office of Correctional Safety dedicated a significant amount of time and resources to this case. Our department has a long history of dealing with prison gangs and inmates who advocate violence. We assist our law enforcement partners on many investigations to root out criminal organized enterprise activity in our prisons,” said Undersecretary David L. Runnels, California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation.

The investigation into the terrorist conspiracy was led by the FBI's Long Beach Joint Terrorism Task Force, whose participating agencies include the Los Angeles Police Department; U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement; the Torrance Police Department; the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department; the Long Beach Police Department; the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives; U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement; the Los Angeles Port Police; U.S. Customs and Border Protection; the U.S. Coast Guard Investigative Service; the Defense Criminal Investigative Service; and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Redondo Beach Police Department.

Substantial assistance during the investigation was provided by the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office, Bureau of Investigations; the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation; the California Department of Justice; the Drug Enforcement Administration; the U.S. Air Force Office of Special Investigations; and the Department of Defense.

The Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office worked collaboratively with the United States Attorney's Office during the investigation.



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