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FORSYTH MAN SENTENCED FOR ATTEMPTED ATTACK ON THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON – Hasher Jallal Taheb, 23, of Cumming, Georgia, has been sentenced to 15 years in prison for attempting an attack upon the White House. Taheb also planned attacks on the Statue of Liberty, Washington Monument, Lincoln Memorial, and a synagogue.

“Taheb planned to conduct a terrorist attack on the White House as part of what he claimed was his obligation to engage in jihad,” said Assistant Attorney General for National Security John C. Demers. “And that was just one of the iconic American landmarks he wanted to target. Thanks to a tip from a member of the community and the work of the agents, analysts, and prosecutors responsible for this case, the threat posed by the defendant was neutralized and the defendant has now been sentenced for his planned terrorist attack.”

“Taheb painstakingly planned an attack on the White House that potentially jeopardized the lives of White House employees and visitors,” said U.S. Attorney Byung J. “BJay” Pak. “We are thankful to members of our community and our federal and state law enforcement partners who identified Taheb’s scheme and worked cooperatively to bring him to justice.”

“Because of a tip from the public, the FBI Atlanta Joint Terrorism Task Force and our law enforcement partners began a year-long investigation that resulted in Taheb's arrest and potentially saved many lives,” said Chris Hacker, Special Agent in Charge of FBI Atlanta. “The phrase 'If you see something, say something' may seem trite, but our citizens are our eyes and ears in our communities, one of our most important weapons in fighting terrorism, and this case exemplifies that.”

According to the charges and other information presented in court: In March 2018, a member of the Atlanta community reported concerns about Taheb to a local law enforcement agency, which then contacted the FBI. The community member specifically alerted law enforcement that Taheb had become radicalized and was making plans to travel abroad.

During an undercover operation conducted by the FBI, federal investigators learned in October 2018 that Taheb, in fact, applied for a passport and planned to travel overseas. At the same time, Taheb had begun planning domestic attacks in the United States as part of his desire to engage in “jihad.” His targets initially included the White House and the Statue of Liberty. Later in December 2018, Taheb broadened his prospective targets in the Washington, D.C. area, to include the Washington Monument, the White House, the Lincoln Memorial, and a synagogue. During undercover meetings with Taheb in January 2019, Taheb produced sketches of the White House and described the types of weapons and explosives he intended to use in the attacks, including semi-automatic weapons, improvised explosive devices,

an anti-tank weapon, and hand grenades. FBI special agents arrested Taheb on Jan. 16, 2019, after Taheb arrived at a pre-arranged location where he expected to obtain semi-automatic assault rifles, explosive devices, and an anti-tank weapon.

Federal investigators searched Taheb's computer following his arrest and found a video that he made. In the video, Taheb addressed ". . . America, its allies, its president, and its people." He recounted his grievances with American policy and proclaimed that America would not see peace unless it changed its foreign policy as he was a man who loved death more than American's love life. He also encouraged other Muslims to fight.

Hasher Jallal Taheb has been sentenced by U.S. District Judge Mark H. Cohen to 15 years in prison to be followed by three years of supervised release. Taheb pleaded guilty to these charges on April 1, 2020.

This case was investigated by the FBI's Joint Terrorism Task Force, which includes the U.S. Secret Service. The Forsyth County Sheriff Office and Gwinnett County Police Department also provided assistance.

The case was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Ryan K. Buchanan, Deputy Chief of the Violent Crime and National Security Section, and Matthew Carrico, Deputy Chief of the Organized Crime and Gangs Section, and Trial Attorneys Danielle Rosborough and B. Celeste Corlett of the Department of Justice National Security Division.

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