**ISIS Wannabes Focusing on U.S. Attacks, Study Says**

America's ISIS wannabes are increasingly focused on waging jihad in the United States instead of becoming foreign fighters overseas, a new analysis of terrorism suspects arrested in the last 15 months shows.

The study by Fordham Law School's Center on National Security found that before March, ISIS-related cases were "largely comprised of alleged foreign fighters" who wanted to join the Islamic State abroad.

"Beginning in late March 2015, there has been a substantial increase in cases involving individuals accused of plotting attacks in the United States in the name of ISIS. Out of the 59 individuals, 17 are domestic plotters, 15 of whom were identified or indicted since late March 2015," the study says.

It's unclear if the numbers reflect a shift in the mindset of ISIS sympathizers or a change in who is being arrested. But many of the newer plots are in line with a communiqué that ordered followers to attack Americans and other westerners after the U.S.-led coalition began bombing ISIS positions in September 2014.

"Smash his head with a rock, or slaughter him with a knife, or run him over with your car, or throw him down from a high place, or choke him, or poison him," the communique from ISIS spokesman Abu Mohammad al-Adnani said.

The Fordham report also tracked the demographics of those arrested and found:

* Eight out of 10 are U.S. citizens
* The average age is 26.
* Eighty-five percent are men.
* One-third are converts to Islam.
* Only eight had a previous felony conviction.
* Three actually made it to Syria to join ISIS.

"Individuals charged with ISIS-inspired terrorism in the U.S. cannot be profiled," said Karen Greenberg, director of the center. "They belong to a wide swath of ethnic backgrounds, including African, African American, Caucasian, Central Asian, Eastern European, and South Asian. Few are of Middle Eastern Arab descent."

The study group included the feds' latest arrest: Justin Sullivan, 19, of North Carolina, who was turned in by his father.

The frequency of arrests has jumped in recent weeks. Since the beginning of 2015, the Justice Department has brought 42 cases compared with 14 in the 10 months before that. Nine cases have been resolved, all with guilty pleas; four of those resulted in sentences between four and 20 years.

Eight of those arrested since March 2014 had ties to other defendants. Greenberg noted that four young men charged in New York and New Jersey over the last two weeks had exchanged hundreds of phone calls, texts and emails, according to court papers.

"That's new. There's now a little more coherence here to the alleged ISIS narrative. We see it in this massive email exchange," Greenberg said. "Apparently, this interconnected group is less 'lone wolf' and more 'on message' from ISIS."

The study said the ISIS wannabes are also distinct from earlier militants "because of the young age of the accused, the presence of women, the role of social media in their radicalization, and the desire of many of them to travel abroad and serve what they view as the caliphate.

"We have also seen a pattern of domestic plots directed at U.S. military and government targets rather than civilian targets, although very recent arrests have involved more mass murder plots," the report says.

"Although it is very early in the process for most of these cases, law enforcement and the judicial system seem to be approaching this new threat in a novel way, looking for opportunities to intervene to prevent catastrophic outcomes," Greenberg noted.

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