

JOINT THREAT ASSESSMENT



(U) 2017 Presidential Address to a Joint Session of Congress, Washington, DC

23 February 2017



**Federal Bureau
of Investigation**



**Homeland
Security**



**Washington Regional
Threat Analysis Center**



**United States
Secret Service**



**United States
Capitol Police**

Office of Intelligence and Analysis
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**(U) 2017 Presidential Address to a Joint Session of Congress
Washington, DC**

(U) Scope Note

(U//FOUO) This Joint Threat Assessment (JTA) addresses threats to the 2017 Presidential Address to a Joint Session of Congress (the Presidential Address) at the US Capitol Building in Washington, DC, on 28 February 2017. This assessment does not consider nonviolent civil disobedience tactics (for example, protests without a permit) that are outside the scope of federal law enforcement jurisdiction; however, civil disobedience tactics designed to cause a hazard to public safety and/or law enforcement fall within the scope of this assessment.

(U//FOUO) This product is intended to support federal, state, and local government agencies and authorities in identifying priorities for protective and support measures against terrorism and other existing or emerging threats to Homeland security. Information in this assessment is current and accurate as of 10 February 2017.

(U) Key Findings

(U//FOUO) As of 10 February 2017, the FBI, DHS, and the United States Secret Service (USSS) have no information to indicate a specific, credible threat to the Presidential Address or related activities within the National Capital Region (NCR). We assess the Presidential Address is an attractive target for violent extremists, as there will be a large gathering of senior US Government officials and members of Congress. There will also be a large presence of global media outlets, making it likely that any significant incident would garner widespread international media coverage, which is a common objective in terrorist attacks. We remain concerned about unaffiliated lone offenders,^a homegrown violent extremists (HVEs),^b and domestic extremists^c targeting the Presidential Address, as well as the sustained interest of foreign terrorist organizations (FTOs) in attacking gatherings, landmarks, and critical infrastructure within the NCR.

^a (U//FOUO) The FBI and DHS define a lone offender as an individual motivated by one or more violent extremist ideologies who, operating alone, supports or engages in acts of violence in furtherance of that ideology or ideologies that may involve influence from a larger terrorist organization or a foreign actor.

^b (U//FOUO) The FBI and DHS define an HVE as a person of any citizenship who has lived or operated primarily in the United States or its territories who advocates, is engaged in, or is preparing to engage in ideologically motivated terrorist activities (including providing support to terrorism) in furtherance of political or social objectives promoted by a foreign terrorist organization but whose actions are independent of direction by a foreign terrorist organization. HVEs are distinct from traditional domestic terrorists who engage in unlawful acts of violence to intimidate civilian populations or attempt to influence domestic policy without direction from or influence from a foreign actor.

^c (U//FOUO) The FBI and DHS define domestic extremists as individuals based and operating entirely within the United States or its territories, without direction or inspiration from a foreign terrorist group or other foreign power, who seek to further political or social goals, wholly or in part, through unlawful acts of force or violence. The mere advocacy of political or social positions, political activism, use of strong rhetoric, or generalized philosophic embrace of violent tactics may not constitute extremism, and may be constitutionally protected.

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(U//FOUO) Although the FBI, DHS, and the USSS lack reporting to show a specific interest by FTOs in the Presidential Address itself, we remain concerned about the sustained interest of some terrorist groups—such as core al-Qa’ida, the Islamic State of Iraq and ash-Sham (ISIS), and their affiliates—in targeting gatherings and public locations within the NCR, given its status as the nation’s capital. In addition, these groups continue to call on individuals to conduct independent attacks in the United States using vehicle ramming, edged weapons, improvised explosive devices, and small arms.

(U) Event Overview

(U//FOUO) The Presidential Address will take place 28 February 2017 at the United States Capitol Building in Washington, DC. The event has been declared a National Special Security Event (NSSE)^d and will follow the following schedule:

- (U//FOUO) 2040: POTUS arrives at US Capitol Building
- (U//FOUO) 2100: Address begins
- (U//FOUO) 2150: Address concludes
- (U//FOUO) 2215: POTUS departs US Capitol Building

(U) Potential Threat Indicators

(U//FOUO) Absent a specific, actionable threat to the Presidential Address, we are providing indicators to aid law enforcement and first responders in identifying and mitigating threats. The totality of behavioral indicators and other relevant circumstances should be evaluated when considering any law enforcement response or action. (Note: Behaviors associated with the below indicators can include constitutionally protected activities. The FBI does not initiate any investigative activity based solely on the exercise of First Amendment activities or on the race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or gender identity of the subject, or a combination of only such factors.)

(U//FOUO) Possible indicators of pre-operational surveillance or attack planning include:

- (U//FOUO) Unusual or prolonged interest in or attempts to gain sensitive information about security measures of personnel, entry points, peak days and hours of operation, motorcade routes, and access controls such as alarms or locks;
- (U//FOUO) Observation of security reaction drills or procedures, or multiple false alarms or fictitious emergency calls to same locations or similar venues;

^d (U//FOUO) On 9 February 2017, the Secretary of Homeland Security signed a letter officially designating the Presidential Address as an NSSE. (U) **Warning:** This document is UNCLASSIFIED//FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY (U//FOUO). It is subject to release restrictions as detailed in the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (6 U.S.C. 482) and the Freedom of Information Act (5 U.S.C. 552). It is to be controlled, stored, handled, transmitted, distributed, and disposed of in accordance with FBI policy for FOUO information and is not to be released to the public, media, or other personnel who do not have an authorized need-to-know without appropriate prior authorization. State and local homeland security officials may share this document with authorized critical infrastructure and key resource personnel and private sector security officials without further approval from the FBI.

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- (U//FOUO) Discreet use of cameras or video recorders, sketching, or note-taking consistent with pre-operational surveillance;
- (U//FOUO) Unusual interest in speaking with building maintenance personnel;
- (U//FOUO) Unusual observation of or questions about facility security measures, including barriers, restricted areas, cameras, and intrusion detection systems;
- (U//FOUO) Unusual observations of or questions about facility air conditioning, heating, and ventilation systems;
- (U//FOUO) Suspicious purchases of dual-use items that could be used to construct an explosive device, including hydrogen peroxide, acetone, gasoline, propane, or fertilizer;
- (U//FOUO) Attempted or unauthorized access to rooftops or other potentially sensitive areas; and
- (U//FOUO) Missing or stolen law enforcement or emergency responder equipment or uniforms.

(U//FOUO) Please report suspicious activities associated with any of the indicators listed above to the contact information in the box below.

(U) Report Suspicious Activity
(U) The FBI encourages recipients of this document to report information concerning suspicious or criminal activity to the local FBI Joint Terrorism Task Force (JTTF). The FBI's Washington Field Office can be reached at 202-278-2000 or by e-mail at Washington.Field@ic.fbi.gov .

(U) Tracked by: HSEC-1.1, HSEC-1.2, HSEC-1.6.21, HSEC-8.1, HSEC-8.2, HSEC-8.3, HSEC-8.5, HSEC-8.6.2.21

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