



عندما ISIS يأتي إلى الحرم  
الجامعي

eindama ISIS yati 'iilaa  
alharam aljamiei

## WHEN ISIS COMES TO CAMPUS

An icon of American higher education was targeted this week with an attack on The Ohio State University Campus. In what is being described as a “terrorist inspired” incident the weapons of choice were a motor vehicle and knife. Exactly as taught in a recent Islamic State group video.

Ohio State is not alone. The image above proclaims *We Are Coming*, a pro-ISIS message painted on a rock at Youngstown State University in November 2015. American campuses are targeted by threats of terrorism or terrorist acts every week. There are few places better than a college campus for a terrorist to find a target-rich environment. Faculty, students and staff are generally unknown to one another and their movements are extremely predictable, moving about at regular intervals associated with class change schedules. At larger institutions, it is not uncommon for thousands of people to be entering and exiting buildings every hour or so. If an individual can enter a classroom and kill classmates, professors and others, think of the success a terrorist would have at a football game, in the residence halls, or the many other areas where people congregate on campus.

The still-ongoing federal investigation of the OSU student responsible for the attack reveals Abdul Razak Ali Artan was inspired by ISIS propaganda. According to those close to the investigation, Artan’s Facebook posts reveal he was also inspired by Anwar al-Awlaki, a Yemeni-American cleric who headed al Qaeda in Yemen before his death in 2011.



While not confirmed yet, authorities believe that Artan acted on his own, and not as an ISIS soldier, as claimed by the Islamic State’s propaganda office. As of this writing, there is no evidence to indicate that Artan had contact with any terror group and was acting as a lone wolf.

In his 2003 testimony before the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence the Director of the FBI at that time Robert Mueller, said that schools and universities were soft targets for multiple small-scale attacks. He went on to describe the threat as being from single individuals sympathetic or affiliated with terrorist organizations “acting without external support or surrounding conspiracies”.<sup>1</sup>

Director Mueller could not have anticipated how accurate his analysis came to be. Fortunately, the Ohio State University incident was resolved through quick action by campus police officer Alan Horujko and the loss of life limited to the criminal actor.

There has been much talk, articles written and news reports about the incident and certainly more will follow. For those responsible for campus safety, whether at OSU or elsewhere, a key question following a critical incident on campus is what are the next steps?

Campus public safety officials and institutional leadership across the country should be broadly examining their preparedness and response capabilities. Many campuses are incorporating a terrorism annex into their Emergency Operations Plans (EOP). EOPs should be based on an all-hazards approach to crisis management and terrorism is no exception. Additional considerations for dealing with terrorism events include:

- A framework for developing supplemental emergency operations plans adequate for addressing the consequences of a terrorist act involving weapons of mass destruction.
- A consistent planning approach that will foster efficient integration of State, local, and Federal terrorism consequence management activities.
- The most current information regarding the planning and operational challenges faced by communities that have dealt with terrorist events.<sup>2</sup>



It is important to treat terrorism-related preparedness in the same way as preparedness for other disasters. Following the emergency preparedness cycle will ensure, to the extent possible that campus officials are best suited to reduce, or avoid, losses from terrorism events, assure prompt assistance to victims, and move toward a fast and effective recovery.

Other considerations that campus public safety leaders should be evaluating include:

- Staffing: Whether law enforcement, security or a blended force
- The issue of having armed or unarmed police or unarmed security officers
- Updating mutual aid agreements
- Training for first responders, faculty staff and students and training for senior administrators

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<sup>1</sup> Source: <https://archives.fbi.gov/archives/news/testimony/war-on-terrorism>

<sup>2</sup> Source: Managing the Emergency Consequences of Terrorist Incidents, Federal Emergency Management Agency; 2012.

- Preparing a crisis communication plan to assure coordinated media response
- Security camera systems, body camera systems and the ability to quickly retrieve and evaluate evidence from these sources
- The effectiveness of the emergency notification system
- Determining the investigative capabilities of the campus police agency
- Does the behavioral assessment program on campus consider new or evolving threats; could the program identify and intervene when someone believes they are politically disenfranchised to the point of violence

Police departments at The University of Toledo, Bowling Green State University, and Owens Community College in Ohio are taking steps in this regard examining training for officers and students and their mass notification systems.<sup>3</sup>

High Point University in North Carolina is reviewing the similar capabilities and looking at security camera coverage and perimeter/access controls.<sup>4</sup>

OSU Public Safety will certainly, at some point conduct a formal internal after action review. This is the standard of excellence for which the department is known.

Those who prepare best in the aftermath often consider supplementing their internal review with an external, objective assessment and review. Security Risk Management Consultants (SRMC) LLC. provides this service to higher education clients. With over 50 years of combined experience in higher education public safety our staff consultants are considered experts in their field.

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<sup>3</sup> Source: <http://www.toledoblade.com/Police-Fire/2016/11/29/Attack-reinforces-need-for-training.html>

<sup>4</sup> Source: <http://www.twcnews.com/nc/triad/news/2016/11/29/universities-reviewing-safety-after-osc-attack.html>