

Learning from Bridget Matty About National Counterterrorism Center Activities



I attended the guest speaker event with Bridget Matty and she discussed a lot of the United States' current situation concerning terrorism. I learned that our concerns are not typically with specific countries, but groups that may make up or control the government within a country currently, or are just present in a country. The National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC), was created to collect intel and monitor these groups around the world.

The NCTC began fifteen years ago, and employees around 1,000. They are designed to prevent international threats and events such as the terrorist attack on September 11, 2001. A big player in the international threat field, was Al Qa'ida. Their group gained a lot of popularity with 9/11. A very radical section of Al Qa'ida, calling themselves ISIS, emerged in 2014, and they broke off from Al Qa'ida. They have grown gaining nearly 40,000 members worldwide. Under 300 (known) from the U.S. have left and attempted to join or returned home. About 40 Americans have died in leaving to join ISIS.

Between 2014-2015 there were 40 attacks in Europe. Most of these attacks were committed by amateurs, however three of them were known, trained, and considered “professionals”. The casualties created by these three made up at least half of the casualties caused by all 40 attacks. In positive light, NCTC has kept a close watch on ISIS activities and notices their weaknesses. Matty described some of them being: a shrunken talent pool. Many of their followers are as great of fighters as they used to be. The ideological rifts among leaders, many of them don’t agree on things which causes internal conflict. They have also claimed violent acts, they didn’t commit. This can mean that they are losing power, and cannot make the statements they want to. The NCTC is a great asset to the U.S., in finding, analyzing, and preventing threats made against our country. They have many tools in helping protect the U.S., for example, they have a knowledge bank, which contains any information regarding any person of interest, that is accessible to other agencies when they need information of a person. After a near major national incident referred to as the “underwear bomber”, where a man had a bomb in his underwear. The bomb did not go off, but because of this incident, NCTC created Pursuit. Pursuit is a branch that is dedicated to “connecting the dots” of information that may or may not seem pertinent to the case. Matty says that still one of the biggest tools is locals, and it remains the best approach to finding national threats.

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