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CIA knew of impending ISIS attack days before Paris: report

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Speaking on the channel's *60 Minutes* program, which was broadcast on Sunday, Brennan said that the agency and its allies were aware of covert ISIS activity in the lead up to the attacks in the French capital, however attempts to stop it was foiled by "sophisticated" use of encrypted Internet communication.

When asked what he and his colleagues have learned from the November attacks, Brennan said the attacks showed "that there is a lot that ISIL [an alternative acronym for ISIS] probably has underway that we don't have obviously full insight into."

"We knew the system was blinking red," Brennan said "We knew just in the days before that ISIL was trying to carry out something. But the individuals involved have been able to take advantage of the newly available means of communication that are walled off from law enforcement officials."

The exact number of the people involved was subject to some speculation in the aftermath of the attacks but all eight of the assailants who were either killed during the attacks or in the raids that followed have been [identified as French citizens](#).

Brennan said that following the attacks he told his agents they had to "work harder" to prevent anything like that happening again.

"We have to work harder. We need to have the capabilities, the technical capabilities, the human sources," Brennan said.

"Believe me, intelligence security services have stopped numerous attacks, operatives that have been moved from maybe the Iraq to Syria theater into Europe," he added. "They have been stopped and interdicted and arrested and detained and debriefed because of very, very good intelligence."

The CIA chief also said ISIS is attempting to orchestrate an attack and “find its mark” on the U.S.

“I’m expecting them to try to put in place the operatives, the material or whatever else that they need to do or to incite people to carry out these attacks, clearly,” he said. “So I believe that their attempts are inevitable. I don’t think their successes necessarily are.”

In other parts of the interview the CIA chief shed some light onto his relationship with his Russian counterpart, Alexander Bortnikov, head of Russia’s federal security service (FSB).

Brennan said he and Bortnikov had spoken several times over the last few months and that the CIA maintains direct contact with the FSB. The main focus of their conversations is to notify Russian President Vladimir Putin of potential clashes between U.S. aerial activity in Syria and the Russian air force.

The CIA chief backed Bortnikov’s suspicions that ISIS had been responsible for downing the Russian passenger plane above Egypt in November, killing all 224 on board. He also said that terrorism as a phenomenon has no end, but encouraged the CIA to find a way to minimize terrorism’s impact.

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