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Reno Man Sentenced To 15 Years For Conspiracy To Provide Material Support To Terrorists

RENO, Nev.— Balwinder Singh, 41, was sentenced today by U.S. District Judge Larry R. Hicks to 180 months in prison for conspiracy to provide material support and resources to terrorists for a movement to create an independent Sikh state in the Punjab region of Indian, announced Acting Assistant Attorney General for National Security Mary B. McCord, U.S. Attorney Daniel G. Bogden for the District of Nevada and Special Agent in Charge Aaron C. Rouse for the FBI's Las Vegas Division.

"The JTTF investigation led to the discovery of a Reno resident who was a member of two terrorist groups and provided material support to intimidate the Indian government and to harm persons that were not supporting the terrorism groups' cause," said U.S. Attorney Bogden. "This case is an example of multi-law enforcement agencies working collaboratively together to protect the United States and our foreign allies from a terrorist act."

"The sentence imposed today sends a clear message: Members of the FBI's Joint Terrorism Task Force will work vigorously to uncover and stop any efforts to provide monetary or material support to organizations created to do murder," said FBI SAC Rouse. "This investigation clearly highlights the magnitude and importance of the law enforcement community's commitment to combatting terrorism and keeping our nation safe."

Singh, aka Jhaji, aka Happy, aka Possi, aka Baljit Singh, is a citizen of India and a permanent U.S. resident. Singh pleaded guilty on Nov. 29, 2016.

According to court documents, between September 2013 and Dec. 17, 2013, Singh conspired with others to support terrorist attacks in India as part of a movement to create an independent Sikh state in the Punjab region of India. Singh agreed to provide material support by helping facilitate a co-conspirator's travel to and within South Asia; to provide necessary funding; and to provide materials necessary to carry out the attack. On occasions, Singh traveled from Reno to California to meet a co-conspirator in person.

In October 2013, Singh and co-conspirators agreed that one co-conspirator would travel to India and commit a terror attack – likely an assassination or maiming of an Indian governmental official. The final target would be determined after the co-conspirator arrived in South Asia.

In November 2013, Singh purchased two sets of night vision goggles and a laptop computer. In December 2013, he provided these items to a co-conspirator who was going to carry out the planned terror attack. On Dec. 9, 2013, the co-conspirator attempted to board a flight from the San Francisco International Airport to Bangkok, Thailand in order to carry out the terror attack with the night vision goggles provided to him by Singh. United States law enforcement prevented the co-conspirator from boarding that flight. As a result, the planned terror attack never occurred. After these events, Singh and his co-conspirators continued to discuss and plan the terror attack in India until Singh's arrest.

The case was investigated by the FBI-led Joint Terrorism Task Force in northern Nevada. The northern Nevada JTTF is comprised of the FBI, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's Homeland Security Investigations (ICE-HSI), Naval Criminal Investigative Service and Nevada Department of Investigation. In addition, ATF, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, and the Washoe County Sheriff's Office provided assistance in the investigation.

Assistant U.S. Attorneys Sue Fahami, Brian L. Sullivan, Carla Higginbotham, and Trial Attorney Mara M. Kohn of the National Security Division's Counterterrorism Section prosecuted the case.

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Topic(s):

Counterterrorism

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