

White House, US tech giants to discuss fighting terror

January 8 2016



A rose and flag stand atop a fence surrounding the scene of the massacre in San Bernardino, California, December 21, 2015

The White House's top security officials are to meet with leading Internet companies in Silicon Valley Friday in an effort to build cooperation against terrorism.

High on the agenda will be how to make it harder for terror groups to

use the Internet to recruit supporters and to use technologies like encryption to mask their activities, according to the agenda of the meeting obtained by AFP.

Underscoring the high importance of the meeting, President Barack Obama's Chief of Staff Denis McDonough will lead the delegation from Washington.

The group will also include Attorney General Loretta Lynch; Director of National Intelligence James Clapper, the directors of the National Security Agency and the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and other top officials, according to the agenda.

From the tech industry, top executives from Apple, Facebook, LinkedIn, Dropbox, Microsoft, Twitter, and YouTube are expected to attend.

The White House did not confirm the meeting, but four of the companies on the list, Twitter, Facebook, Google and Apple, have confirmed they are attending.

The talks come amid mounting frustration in Washington that the Islamic State group, Al-Qaeda and other groups have been able to use publicly available technology to build their influence and hide their activities from even the most advanced US intelligence operations.



Smoke rises in the distance behind an Islamic State group (IS) flag and banner on September 11, 2015

Key issues on the agenda include:

- How to make it harder for terrorists to leverage the internet to recruit, radicalize, and mobilize followers,
- how to support efforts online to undermine IS,
- how to use technology to disrupt radicalization and identify recruitment patterns,
- and how to make it harder for terrorists to use the Internet to facilitate and operationalize attacks, and make it easier to identify operatives and prevent attacks.

The meeting, scheduled to start in San Jose at 11 am Pacific Time (1900 GMT), raises a challenge to some of the world's top tech companies, wary of being seen to cooperate with and share data with the US or other governments.

It comes after Obama, in a speech following the December 2 attacks by two IS sympathizers in San Bernardino, California that killed 14, called on "high-tech and law enforcement leaders to make it harder for terrorists to use technology to escape from justice."

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Citation: White House, US tech giants to discuss fighting terror (2016, January 8) retrieved 19 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2016-01-white-house-tech-giants-discuss.html>

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