**LA 1 Article of the Week #11 Week of 12/14-12/18**

**Obama addresses nation on new phase of terror threat after Calif. attack**

**By Associated Press, adapted by Newsela staff on 12.09.15**

WASHINGTON, D.C. — In a rare Oval Office address Sunday night, President Barack Obama sought to reassure Americans shaken by recent attacks in Paris and California. He vowed that the United States will overcome a new phase of the terror threat that seeks to "poison the minds" of people here and around the world.

"I know that after so much war, many Americans are asking whether we are confronted by a cancer that has no immediate cure," he said, speaking from his West Wing office. "The threat from terrorism is real, but we will overcome it," he declared.

The president's speech followed Wednesday's shooting in San Bernardino, California, that killed 14 people and wounded 21 others. Authorities say a married couple carried out the attack, and that the wife pledged allegiance to the Islamic State group in a Facebook post. Also called ISIS, Islamic State is an extremist group attempting to set up a country governed by its extreme version of Islamic law. The group's fighters have captured parts of Syria and Iraq.

**"The Dark Path Of Radicalization"**

Obama said that there was no evidence that the shooters were directed by Islamic State or another extremist group, or were part of a bigger plot. However, "the two of them had gone down the dark path of radicalization," he said. "This was an act of terrorism designed to kill innocent people," he said in the 13-minute address. In speaking from the Oval Office, Obama turned to a tool of the presidency that he has used infrequently. His decision to speak during the evening reflected the White House's concern that people were not really paying attention to his message on the recent attacks, particularly in the midst of a heated presidential campaign. Yet Obama's speech was likely to leave his critics unsatisfied. He announced no significant shift in U.S. strategy or new policy solutions for defeating the Islamic State, showing both his confidence in his current approach and the lack of easy options for countering the extremist group. Nothing in Obama's speech will ease people's fears, said Florida Senator Marco Rubio, a Republican presidential candidate. Obama did call for cooperation between companies and law enforcement to ensure potential attackers cannot use technology to evade detection. Islamic State militants have used smartphone apps that encode conversations to communicate. He urged Congress to authorize military actions already underway against the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria. He also urged the lawmakers to approve legislation to bar guns from being sold to people on a no-fly list, who are not allowed to board a plane flying in or out of the United States.

**Don't Turn Against U.S. Muslims, Obama Says**

The president implored Americans to not turn against Muslims at home. He said Islamic State is driven by a desire to spark a war between the West and Islam. Still, he called on Muslims in the United States and around the world to fight extremism. The spread of radical Islam into American communities, he said, is "a real problem that Muslims must confront without excuse." The president did order the government departments of State and Homeland Security to review the fiancé visa program that the female shooter in California used to enter the United States. It gives permission for people marrying U.S. citizens to come to America. He also repeated his call for a new gun control laws, saying no matter how effective law enforcement and intelligence agencies are, they cannot identify every would-be shooter. He called it a matter of national security to prevent potential killers from getting guns. "What we can do, and must do, is make it harder for them to kill," he said. Obama stands little chance of getting the Republican-led Congress to agree to any gun control law. On Thursday, the Senate rejected legislation barring people suspected of acts of terror from purchasing firearms. Gun rights advocates say such a ban would violate the rights of people who have not been convicted of crimes. Congress also has been unable to agree on any plan to authorize more force against the Islamic State.

**"Strong And Smart, Resilient And Relentless"**

Obama repeated his long-standing opposition to an American-led ground war in the Middle East. "Our success won't depend on tough talk, or abandoning our values or giving in to fear," he said. "Instead, we will prevail by being strong and smart, resilient and relentless." The president's critics — and increasingly, some members of his own party — have questioned his strategy. Hours before he spoke, Hillary Clinton — his former secretary of state and the front-runner for the Democratic presidential nomination — said the United States is "not winning" the fight against Islamic State. Obama has insisted that ISIS is not expanding in Iraq and Syria. However, the group has set its sights elsewhere in the world, launching attacks in Lebanon and Turkey and blowing up a Russia airliner over Egypt. The Nov. 13 attacks in Paris, France, marked the group's most aggressive actions in Europe. The coordinated series of attacks left 130 people dead and wounded hundreds more.

**Massacre In California**

Last week, the terror threat drew even closer to home. A couple — a 29-year-old woman originally from Pakistan and her 28-year-old American-born Pakistani husband — launched an attack on a holiday party in San Bernardino, California. The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) is investigating the massacre as an act of terror. If proved, it would be the deadliest attack by Islamic extremists on American soil since the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks that destroyed the Word Trade Center in New York City. More than 3,000 people died that day in attacks on New York, Washington, D.C., and in Pennsylvania. The woman pledged allegiance to Islamic State in a Facebook post, according to a U.S. official who was not authorized to discuss the case publicly and spoke on condition of anonymity. A Facebook official said it was posted about the time the couple stormed the San Bernardino social service center.