

THE DAILY CALLER

How The PlayStation Network Got In Europe's Crosshairs

Steve Ambrose

November 17, 2015

Some verbal jabs from a European official critical of PlayStation's network security ignited unsubstantiated claims that PlayStation services were used in the Friday Paris terrorist attacks.

Jan Jambon, the interior minister of Belgium, told Politico Nov. 10, the "most difficult communication between these terrorists is via PlayStation 4. It's very, very difficult for our services — not only Belgian services but international services — to decrypt the communication that is done via PlayStation 4."

However, his comments were made three days before Islamic State launched a series of attacks in Paris Nov. 13 that left over 120 people dead. There has been no official confirmation that ISIS used the PlayStation services to execute the attack.

Former National Security Agency employee Jay Kaplan told Motherboard that it "is possible that these [non-traditional] networks have simply been overlooked or difficult to sort through the troves as data. Impenetrable? That word doesn't exist in the [intelligence community's] vernacular."

In addition, Julian Sanchez, a senior technology fellow at the Cato Institute, said PlayStation does not even have end-to-end encryption.

End-to-end encryption is data that is "encrypted on the sender's system or device and only the recipient is able to decrypt it. Nobody in between, be they an Internet service provider, application service provider or hacker, can read it or tamper with it."

Outside of the technical aspects, there are other reasons why Jambon's claim is puzzling.

According to Motherboard, religious doctrine does not clearly address whether ISIS members are allowed to use video game consoles or not.

With respect to other games like pool and table football, ISIS members are allowed to play, but under strict conditions. An Islamic legal document known as a fatwa states that "these matters that do not render the Muslim benefit, especially the mujahid in the path of God and what is in these things regarding wasting time and harshness of the heart."

