

Sunny to Partly Cloudy by Lana Davis

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Being a retired teacher, the mention of the word *cloud* brings to my mind such words as nimbus, cumulus, and cirrus. But if you research the word cloud on the internet, you will find such words as cloud computing or cloud storage. It definitely makes me feel like I should be a student instead of a teacher.

So what does all this talk about the cloud mean, and how does it relate to our national security? Basically, the cloud is the Internet; it's all of the things you can access remotely, such as the emails in your inbox, over the Internet. Information is stored on servers on the Internet instead of on your computer, thus making that information "in the cloud." Other services that use the cloud include Dropbox, Evernote and Mozy. Dropbox lets you store and share files with others; evernote lets you organize notes you have typed or photos you have taken. To save everything, you can use Mozy. Many businesses and organizations use cloud computing.

The cloud is now considered a must for good business. No one knows this better than ISIS. Jeff Bardin, a U.S. military officer who has been keeping track of sites run by supporters of al Qaeda, reported at the RSA Conference in San Francisco that there are between fifteen and twenty main sites used by terrorist groups for everything from recruitment to the distribution of violent videos of beheadings. Furthermore, cell phone and satellite numbers are posted on the site where the Taliban can be reached. The existence of these sites are well-known by the intelligence community, who monitor and gather information from such sites.

Knowing about the cloud and how it is used by terrorist groups brings me to another question. Why would ISIS need to recruit on our college campuses? A Tennessee lawmaker recently argued that ISIS should have that right. This certainly is a cloudy subject, especially when it comes to matters of national security versus free speech. Personally, I am glad that the bill being discussed was taken off notice. Not only do we need to weigh our priorities; we need to consider the goals of terrorist groups as well as the ideology supported by those groups. Once this is done, decisions and laws will move from cloudy to partly sunny.