

Summary of Forum Held on April 8, 2005: Intelligence-Led Policing

Summary's Highlights

Note: Hosted by the University of Pennsylvania's Jerry Lee Center of Criminology, this Forum was one in a series highlighting promising and pioneering state and local efforts to address crime.

Particularly since the 9/11 attacks, leaders at all governmental levels have underscored the critical need for timely, reliable counterterrorism intelligence. Filling that need depends on effective federal-state-local coordination and cooperation, such as participation of federal, state, local, and tribal agencies in Joint Terrorism Task Forces (JTTFs) located throughout the country. Also important is community policing's intelligence-related role, wherein officers know in-depth what is occurring locally, thanks to trust built up during officers' day-to-day contacts with residents. Analyst training is another critical intelligence building block.

Carl Peed—Director, Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS Office), U.S. Department of Justice—noted the intelligence role of community policing since 9/11 and the efforts of the COPS Office and various law enforcement associations to strengthen police agencies' intelligence operations. Maureen Baginski—FBI Executive Assistant Director for Intelligence—emphasized that the value of intelligence is determined by whether it helps people make better decisions and, therefore, intelligence should be viewed from the user's perspective, not from the producer's. David L. Carter—Professor, School of Criminal Justice, Michigan State University—stated that each community must accept that it may be touched by terrorism, that intelligence inherently involves interacting with the community, and that every law enforcement agency should develop intelligence capacity, if not a unit. Clark County, Nevada, Sheriff Bill Young cited the local impact of 9/11, noted the importance of the JTTFs, and suggested a path by which intelligence should flow up and down the intergovernmental chain.

Forum Executive Director Laurie Robinson noted that law enforcement intelligence is a controversial, difficult, and timely topic not only post-9/11 but also in an era of increasingly complex crime at the state and local levels. She stressed the importance of understanding the intelligence relationship between the federal government and state and local police agencies as well as the potential for their collaboration and cooperation.

Post-9/11 Intelligence Role of the COPS Office and Community Policing: Remarks by Carl Peed, Director, COPS Office, U.S. Department of Justice

Following up the President's post-9/11 call to mobilize America, the COPS Office undertook to help achieve that in communities across the country through community policing. About a week after 9/11, major national law enforcement associations met with the COPS Office and advised that the best course of action to keep communities safe would be to build on community policing strategies. Shortly thereafter, 50 police chiefs from across the country responded to a COPS Office request for suggestions by recommending that a key post-9/11

¹ The Forum summarized here was one in a series to afford Capitol Hill and Executive Branch staff, selected representatives from the practitioner and research communities, and key interest-group leaders an opportunity to hear perspectives of state and local frontline criminal justice practitioners and researchers. The Forum was held in Washington, D.C. The moderator was Laurie Robinson, Executive Director of the Forum on Crime & Justice and Director of the University of Pennsylvania Master of Science in Criminology program. Ted Gest is Forum Associate Executive Director. Participants' comments are paraphrased unless placed between quotation marks.

strategy for the U.S. Department of Justice to pursue would be to help local agencies in redefining, refocusing, and reformulating what should be done in the area of intelligence.

Acting on the feedback, the COPS Office sponsored an intelligence summit in early 2002 at the request of the International Association of Chiefs of Police. The summit led to several progressive changes in the intelligence community and to COPS Office funding of the development and publication of *Law Enforcement Intelligence: A Guide for State, Local, and Tribal Law Enforcement Agencies*, by David L. Carter, Ph.D. The COPS Office also worked with the Police Executive Research Forum to sponsor six executive sessions on how 9/11 affected law enforcement. One session involved the FBI, the Department of Homeland Security, and state and local agencies. Its subsequent white paper on the sharing of intelligence emphasized how community policing can lead to good information that might help prevent future attacks. An effective plan takes advantage of communities nationwide and their 800,000 police officers. A local law enforcement agency may not have an intelligence unit or intelligence officer, but it can have intelligence capability and responsibility to capture appropriate information.

Defining, Collecting, and Sharing Intelligence: Maureen Baginski, Executive Assistant Director for Intelligence, Federal Bureau of Investigation, U.S. Department of Justice

Intelligence is “vital information about people who would do us harm.” The value of intelligence is measured by whether it helps someone make a better decision. The needs of users of intelligence differ according to their positions. Thus, intelligence should be viewed from the user’s perspective, not the producer’s.

The intelligence community grew up in a different information and threat environment from what applies today. During the Cold War, intelligence operations focused on one adversary. We had too little information, and it was very difficult to obtain. So we spent most resources on collecting it and shared it with people according to what we thought was best for them. After the fall of the Berlin Wall, however, the “peace dividend” set the stage for globalization of everything, including crime and threats. Today, we have too much information, and it is too hard to understand. The only value it has is in the eyes of the user. But we do not know enough about one another and the decisions we make. So law-enforcement agencies must shift their emphasis from being collection-driven organizations to being consumer driven—that is, zeroing in on producing intelligence to improve users’ performance.

A dissection of the March 2004 Madrid bombings provides useful insights into today’s threat environment. Ethnic Moroccans joined Spanish society, made their living through low-level drug trafficking and counterfeiting compact disks, bought their explosives from a known criminal enterprise, purchased their telephones from a known transnational enterprise, stole a truck, and blew up passenger trains. Who was more likely to encounter those people first? The federal intelligence security services or officers who are on the street every day working and knowing who is in their community? As terrorist organizations are decapitated, the remaining members become harder to locate. Who will find them? The people who know their communities best: state, local, and tribal law enforcement personnel.

Currently, our adversary is networked, is equipped with technology permitting instantaneous decision making, employs tight, quick decision loops, and shares information. The goal of

intelligence is to get inside those decision loops, constantly stay ahead of adversaries, and disrupt what they are doing. Achieving that goal begins with a shared understanding of the threat, known as intelligence requirements—what you want to know about. We cannot continue to be in a react mode. The current environment of too much information and “noise” tempts us to run after everything, a challenge impossible to meet. We must, instead, examine the threat, evaluate and analyze it, and decide where to expend precious resources—and in so doing ensure that the rights of U.S. citizens are protected.

The intelligence group in each of the FBI’s field offices stands ready to respond to questions from state and local agencies. The FBI shares information by rule and withholds it by exception. Operationally, the response to information sharing is often “they will mess up my case” or “they will take my source.” Rather than information sharing becoming an issue, the concern should be about how we all can operate together. Criminals and terrorists every day have an unambiguous view of what they want to do, a clear understanding of roles and responsibilities, and a network configured so they can act. If we do not act that way each day, our global adversary will get the better of this country. We are making progress but have a long way to go.

Intelligence Capacity and Community Policing: David L. Carter, Ph.D., School of Criminal Justice, Michigan State University

The law enforcement intelligence guide, alluded to by Carl Peed above, is important beyond its content in that its development resulted from a strong partnership between the COPS Office, Maureen Baginski’s office at the FBI, and the Bureau of Justice Assistance. Their cooperative efforts resulted in establishing the guide as a foundation to fulfill one of the dynamics of the National Criminal Intelligence Sharing Plan, funded by the Office of Justice Programs but whose leadership is driven by state and local law enforcement through the Global Intelligence Working Group. The guide presents standards needed for police to share information at the state, local, and tribal levels in a lawful and effective manner to counter terrorism and organized crime.

The guide states that each law enforcement agency should develop an intelligence capacity—not necessarily a unit or an analyst—but someone who understands what intelligence is, has secure e-mail to receive it, can digest reports, and knows how to pass critical information up through the chain. To help police agencies develop that capacity, a series of special programs, using the guide as the curriculum, will be offered across the country. A significant challenge for many communities is to accept the possibility that terrorism can touch them. Accordingly, reaching out to the community is essential, such as through community policing principles and terrorism awareness symposiums. Intelligence inherently involves the community.

Local Perspective on Intelligence: Bill Young, Sheriff, Clark County, Nevada

Clark County, NV, comprises about 8,000 square miles encompassing rural and urban communities, including Las Vegas. The economy is totally dependent on tourists, two-thirds of whom arrive by air. The 5-day grounding of airplanes following 9/11 resulted in 47,000 layoffs. The region required almost 2 years to recover. Five of the 19 hijackers were in Las Vegas just preceding the attacks. If local officers had picked up on what became known later, could we have prevented those attacks? I submit we could if we had kept this on our radar, had the information to work with, and had gotten it to where it needed to be.

Intelligence is a product with which to make operational and strategic decisions. About 75 percent of police chiefs do not know what intelligence is—they confuse information sharing and getting along with their counterparts with good intelligence. We need more and better training on what intelligence is. The intelligence agencies have done a marvelous job in collecting a tremendous amount of information and honing it down to something we can use. But have we learned how to use this intelligence? What are we doing with it once we get it?

We need to leave our egos at the door and blend cultures so local, state, and federal agencies work together. The true answer to fighting terrorism is the success of the more than 100 Joint Terrorism Task Forces, where police and FBI agents and analysts work on developing intelligence, which is getting better and more useful. And, by the same token, we need to transmit information from the beat officer up the line to the JTTFs. We need to focus our intelligence to a sharp point, where it is coming from one voice to one place in our local communities—and that is from the FBI as lead agency to the local JTTFs and to the police chiefs and officials in local government. Working through JTTFs also helps us deal with drug trafficking, money laundering, and other local crimes wherein the threat of terrorism may first evidence itself through local investigations or a tip from John Q. Citizen.

Questions and Answers

An enormous need exists for upgrading and professionalizing policing, given that some 1,000 departments employ just one person and the vast majority of chiefs do not have a good idea about what intelligence is. What are your comments about this? **Young:** Agencies are relying more on intelligence, and we must adopt intelligence-led policing. Our profession must get into the intelligence game and really embrace and learn it. Training and education are needed. **Baginski:** Training is a critical issue. The FBI has decided to put a field intelligence group in each of the 56 areas where field offices are located. Those groups will share information that you need, sometimes share people if needed, and if you really need it, share equipment. I think I may add training to that list.

How can we best train intelligence analysts? **Young:** We do not have an adequate number of trained intelligence analysts, who need not be police officers. **Carter:** On-line computer-based training could be used for nonanalysts—that is, for awareness training. Probably one of the best tools would be the Regional Community Policing Institutes. **Peed:** Those institutes, which number about 27, have delivered state and local antiterrorism training to some 6,000 officers since 9/11 and thus are good mechanisms for delivering training rapidly across the country. **Baginski:** Analysis is reasoning based on evidence. Subject matter expertise is another matter but can be learned. Analysts are not hard to come by. In 22 months the FBI doubled the number of its analysts. The hard part is keeping them sequestered and resisting “tying them to the hamster wheel of current operations.”

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