

Testimony of Boston Police Commissioner Edward F. Davis, III
before the House Committee on Homeland Security

May 9, 2013

Chairman McCaul, Ranking Member Thompson, distinguished members of the Committee, thank you for inviting me here today to discuss the tragedy that occurred in Boston on Patriots Day, April 15 when two cowardly brothers laid siege to one of Massachusetts' most venerated traditions, the Boston Marathon.

I am here as the Commissioner of the Boston Police Department, but I also speak on behalf of Mayor Thomas Menino, the Mayor's Emergency Management staff and law enforcement from across the State and across the Nation, when I describe our cooperative response to these attacks and what they did to our community.

On April 15 at 2:50 pm, the elite runners had long passed the finish line. Boylston Street was busy with runners, spectators and those enjoying the restaurants on a beautiful Marathon Monday. A young family with three small children, happy and clapping, stood in front of the Forum restaurant, pressed up against the barriers for a closer look at the runners. One of the children was eight year old Martin Richard. Close by was Boston University graduate student, Lu Lingzi. A restaurant manager, 29-year-old Krystle Campbell stood with her friends near the finish line. Suddenly without warning an explosion rocked the sidewalk of Boylston Street, near the finish line, killing Krystle Campbell. Before the smoke had even cleared, a second bomb exploded 12 seconds later, in front of the Forum Restaurant, a few blocks west of the finish line. Martin Richard and Lu Lingzi both perished.

First responders sprung into action and ran toward the bomb scenes to help. They did so with full knowledge that there could still be other unexploded devices in the immediate area. When I saw Boston Police Sgt. Christopher Connolly of the Explosive Ordnance Unit at the site preparing to slice open unattended backpacks that had been abandoned as spectators fled, searching for unexploded bombs, I paused to wish him luck and safety.

Other heroes, meanwhile, rushed injured and maimed people by wheelchairs to the nearby medical tent with lost limbs and massive bleeding. Runners and spectators with medical training also did what they could to comfort gravely injured and dying people.

Terrorists had killed three innocent people and injured nearly 300 others.

The death toll increased later in the week when MIT Police Officer Sean Collier was executed by the same two terrorists in nearby Cambridge when they ambushed him and unsuccessfully tried

to get his weapon. Finally, Transit Officer Richard Donohue was gravely injured during a pursuit of these individuals who were throwing explosives and shooting at police officers. Thankfully, Officer Donohue will survive.

There was tremendous work by police and other first responders throughout the week culminating in the death and capture of the brothers in the nearby community of Watertown. There was unprecedented cooperation among Federal, State and Local law enforcement agencies at the leadership and ground levels.

The Boston Police Department for many years has enjoyed long-standing professional and personal relationships that helped facilitate effective collaboration during this case. For example, within moments of my receiving notification from my officers about the two explosions at the finish line, I contacted my colleague, Special Agent in Charge of the FBI Boston Office Richard DesLauriers and shared all of the information I had at the time. He immediately began to deploy resources to assist us.

Detectives and Detective Supervisors from the Boston Regional Intelligence Center represent the Boston Police Department on the FBI Joint Terrorism Task Force. Additionally, the Boston Police Department maintains a close and ongoing working relationship with both the FBI and DHS through the intelligence personnel both agencies have assigned to work within the Center.

I want to acknowledge the U.S. Attorney's office, the Attorney General's office, the FBI, ATF, ICE, the National Guard, and our Massachusetts partners including the Executive Office of Public Safety and Security, the State Police, the Attorney General's office, Cambridge, Watertown, MIT, Transit and other neighboring police departments, as well as everyone who worked around the table at our command posts, helping us find answers.

I also want to thank President Obama and his administration and especially the Department of Homeland Security for their immediate offer of assistance to our efforts during that crucial time.

The Boston Marathon route is a target that spans not just the 26.2 miles traveled by the runners, but grows to a 55 mile perimeter when you factor in the surrounding environs. It is clear after these events and other types of mass casualties such as those which have happened in our nation's schools and colleges that we need to continue to harden soft targets, especially events that lend themselves toward large gatherings celebratory in nature. In the future we will review the need to deploy more assets including technology, cameras, undercover officers and specialized units. We will continue to enhance preparedness training for all of our officers to protect these large events.

This need, however, must be balanced against the protection of our Constitutional liberties. I do not endorse actions that move Boston and our nation into a police state mentality, with surveillance cameras attached to every light pole in the city. We do not, and cannot live in a protective enclosure because of the actions of extremists who seek to disrupt our way of life.

My police career has been built on the concept of community policing that encourages our officers to get out of cars, talk with people and solve problems in partnership with the community. This absolutely works. The community played a critical role in this fight against terrorism. In Watertown, despite heavy police presence for more than 12 hours, and a house by house search in a twenty block perimeter for one of the two suspects, it was the critical observation of a neighbor that something was amiss in his backyard that led to the capture of one of the bombers. In Boston, it was the cooperation of the owners of the Forum Restaurant whose video cameras led to the identification of the two terrorists. It was the cooperation of the people of Boston, Watertown, and several other neighboring communities who voluntarily assisted our police departments by staying indoors during this protracted manhunt that led to the safe resolution of the capture.

Communication with the public was essential throughout the entire week. Employing the Boston Police Department's Facebook and Twitter social media accounts allowed us to stay immediately connected with our residents, tourists and business community. We were able to both give and receive information that maintained our dialogue with our community partners.

The Federal Government provided invaluable assistance both in helping us prepare for and respond to this tragic event. Preparedness training provided through UASI and other federal funding set a framework for multiple jurisdictions to work seamlessly with one another in a highly effective manner. Technology such as the vehicle that pulled the tarp off a boat in Watertown where the second suspect was hiding and we believed was armed with another improvised explosive device, or other support systems such as our command posts or armored vehicles all provided safety and allowed for the suspect to be captured alive.

Additionally, the word-wide exchange of information that has occurred in law enforcement has absolutely led to better preparation and training for our first responders. For example, I and other members of the Police Executive Research Forum met in London with Metropolitan Police Commissioner Sir Ian Blair following the 2005 terrorist bombings there. At that meeting, Sir Ian provided certain information about backpack bombs, information that eight years later would prove invaluable to our management and helped me make informed, strategic decisions.

Working with police officials from Northern Ireland, Israel, and Jordan has given me invaluable insight in dealing with what is now a global problem. Such meetings and exchange of information going forward should be a fundamental part of our preparedness in this country.

The actions of September 11, 2001, as well as the other discovered plots against our nation have helped all of us prepare better. We have all adapted our way of living, and have forced us to think the unthinkable. Because of that preparation, when a crisis does emerge, there are carefully scripted and measured responses to these emergencies. This evolving process has taught us to remain vigilant and to continue to strive for the highest level of safety possible.

Clearly, we can and must do more. I come before you today to ask for continued investments in infrastructure that would aid in our policing efforts.

In the case of the Boston Marathon bombings, we had to rely almost exclusively on the support of our business partners to provide critical video surveillance along the finish line. The information helped us identify and catch these two terrorists. I strongly support the enhanced ability to monitor public places. This monitoring, which been upheld by the United States Supreme Court, violates no Constitutionally protected rights but gives police the ability to investigate and effectively prosecute. Images from cameras do not lie. They do not forget. They can be viewed by a jury as evidence of what occurred.

These efforts are not intended to chill or stifle free speech, but rather to protect the integrity and freedom of that speech and to protect the rights of victims and suspects alike.

I also encourage the federal government to continue the important funding for the hiring of police officers as well as intelligence analysts, who are needed for both the prevention of further crimes as well as to respond to incidents such as this one.

Additionally, law enforcement needs secure radio bandwidth in a public safety spectrum dedicated exclusively to public safety use. We cannot rely on commercial carriers for public safety emergency communications. In the minutes immediately following the attacks, cell phone communication was ineffective, and virtually non-existent. For this reason, radio communications for first responders became the only means to deploy forces and manage the operations. These frequencies play a critical role during a major incident and allow us to do our jobs properly.

Patriots Day 2013, and indeed, the ensuing days that saw the largest manhunt in the history of New England unfold across several of our communities, changed us all forever. It is my fervent hope that we can maintain our freedom, and protect our fundamental values and at the same time, harden our resolve to discourage and thwart extremists like the two who tried and failed to change our way of life. These criminals, who cultivated their plans by accessing extremist literature and then executed them on unsuspecting men, women and children, are reprehensible deviants, nothing more.

In closing, on behalf of the Boston Police Department, I want to thank the massive showing of support from law enforcement agencies who answered our call for help during that week in April. I also want to thank the scores of unexpected heroes who emerged during that horrific event, literally saving the lives of innocent victims.

The actions of the Boston Marathon medical personnel who rushed and provided life-saving first aid to the victims, as well as those runners and spectators who assisted, and the scores of doctors and nurses at 26 of some of the best hospitals in the world saved dozens more lives. Thank you also to the scores of Boston Athletic Association volunteers who assisted the Boston Police, Fire, and EMS first responders on the scene.

We also must acknowledge the tidal wave of financial support that has helped raise more than \$30 million for the victims, money raised by grassroots events such as community bake sales, or

from everyday citizens like the staff at the Lenox Hotel, which was commandeered as a tactical command post, and whose staff donated every penny of their tips during those initial days to the One Fund charity set up to help the victims.

I want to acknowledge the devastating effects those explosions took on nearly 300 innocent victims – the four you see before you, as well as victims such as Celeste and Sydney Corcoran from Lowell, Massachusetts, where I first became a police officer. I had the honor of visiting with them in their hospital room, and to say I was humbled by their courage, tenacity and unyielding human spirit would be a gross understatement. I also met with Transit Officer Richard Donohue, shot in the leg during a shootout with the suspects in Watertown. He lost his whole volume of blood and nearly died from his wounds but was saved by fire department personnel and hospital medical personnel. Thankfully, he is on his way to recovery.

I want to thank the residents of the city of Boston, as well as our neighboring communities who found themselves under attack during those five days in April, and in many cases, provided us with crucial information to help bring this case to a resolution.

I want to thank Governor Deval Patrick and Boston Mayor Thomas Menino for their unrelenting support and the ongoing deployment of resources to assist both law enforcement and the victims of this attack.

But most importantly, I want to recognize names that must never, ever, under any circumstances, be forgotten.

MIT Police Officer Sean Collier was assassinated by the two terrorists while doing his job, helping to keep his college community safe. Sean wanted nothing more than to be a police officer, and his courage and legacy must never be forgotten.

Boston University graduate student Lu Lingzi was on Boylston Street with her college friends, cheering alongside the thousands of other supporters when one of the bombs killed her.

Krystle Campbell was described by friends as always having a smile on her face. Her smile lives on in all of the memories and photographs of her shared by family and friends.

And finally, remember the name of Martin Richard, the innocent 8-year-old boy who stood wide-eyed as marathon runners raced past him, standing atop the braces of a metal barrier as one of these killers purposely left a backpack of explosives just feet from him, a boy now forever immortalized by his school project poster, imploring “No more hurting people. Peace.”

Thank you on behalf of the City of Boston, where next April we will proudly honor not just the tens of thousands of runners in the 118th Boston Marathon, but we will also remember the countless supporters who come to cheer them on and who help make the Boston Marathon such an historic celebration of perseverance and the human spirit. Boston is considered by many to be the birthplace of our nation’s liberty, and we won’t let actions like these deter us.

We continue to move forward, because in Boston, home of the Boston Marathon, we were born to run.

These two terrorists tried to break us. What they accomplished was exactly the opposite. They strengthened our resolve, causing us to band together as a City and a Nation in times of crisis, to help one another during life changing moments, to allow heroes to emerge, and to prove to Bostonians and to the world, that our City is indeed, Boston Strong.

