

**House Committee on Homeland Security, “The Critical Role of First Responders: Sharing Lessons Learned from Past Attacks.”**

**Wednesday, June 18, 2014**

Thank you Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee.

In the 12½ years since the horrific events of September 11, 2001, the fight against al-Qaeda and its network has uncovered an adaptable enemy that has continued to mature in its ability to spread its message as well as shift in shape and tactics. In response, the law enforcement community has undergone fundamental changes. In New York City, like every city and town, we have had to re-evaluate everything from how we gather and analyze intelligence, to how we plan for and police major public events. After 9/11, the New York City Police Department formed two new Bureaus, the Intelligence Bureau and the Counterterrorism Bureau to spearhead our efforts to protect the Nation’s largest city from terrorist activity.

Today, we examine the lessons learned not just from the 9-11 attacks, but also from the 16 other plots devised by al-Qaeda, or from those taking its cues, which have targeted New York City. Looking at some of the most recent and most significant, we take these lessons.

In 2009, Najibullah Zazi and three other men plotted to place more than a dozen backpacks filled with explosives on the New York subways. This plot was intended to kill scores of people and injure many more. Zazi traveled with his friends from Queens to Afghanistan in order to fight U.S. Forces, however, al-Qaeda recruited them to return to New York to launch these attacks once it was discovered that they were Americans, flying under the radar, with U.S. Passports that would easily allow them to return to the United States. Zazi was trained in explosives by none other than Rashid Rauch, who was al-Qaeda’s top explosives expert at the time. Zazi also met with Saleh al-Somali, al-Qaeda’s chief of external operations. From this case, we have learned that if al-Qaeda can find U.S. persons who are willing to fight and die in the fields of Afghanistan, they have a greater advantage in turning them back to launch attacks on the country they once called home.

This lesson was reinforced by the case of Faisal Shahzad. He traveled to Pakistan in an attempt to join fighters attacking U.S. forces in Afghanistan, but the Pakistani Taliban quickly identified him as an individual who could return to the U.S. and fight the war in our streets. Shahzad placed a large amount of explosives in an SUV in Times Square on May 1, 2010. However, a small technical error in his bomb making saved our crowded Theater District in the streets off Times Square from destruction. We also learned from Shahzad that his pre-operational surveillance was conducted in a way that was unlikely to attract the attention of law enforcement. He chose his target by watching crowded conditions on different streets through streaming video over the internet from cameras in and around Times Square.

We have also come to learn the power of al-Qaeda’s use of social media and online messaging to operatives that the terrorist leaders will never meet, or in some cases, may never even know are followers.

Jose Pimentel was a 27-year -old New Yorker who followed al-Qaeda's message through its online publication, "Inspire Magazine" as well as the videos extolling violence by the charismatic al-Qaeda commander Anwar Aulaqi. Aulaqi, born in New Mexico, spoke in perfect, unaccented English and his call to violence has resonated with a dozen plotters in the U.S. who have sought to kill their fellow Americans. Pimentel was arrested by NYPD Emergency Service Unit and Intelligence Bureau detectives while putting the final touches on a bomb he hoped to use to attack military recruiting stations.

Mohammed Quazi Nafis came to New York from Bangladesh and, inspired by al-Qaeda's magazine and Aulaqi's videos, he set out to find partners to attack New York City's financial hub near Wall Street. He parked what he believed to be a thousand pound bomb, hidden in the back of a white van, in front of the U.S. Federal Reserve and placed six calls from his cell phone to the number he thought was connected to the bomb's detonator. However, he had no idea that the bomb was designed by the FBI's New York Joint Terrorist Task Force not to function.

We learned from the Boston Marathon Bombing what we already suspected; major public events, which attract large crowds, continue to be a terrorist target. The instructions likely used by the Boston bombers to make the pressure-cooker bomb came from the now infamous article, "How to Make a Bomb in the Kitchen of Your Mom," in Inspire Magazine. Those same instructions were used by Jose Pimentel in New York City.

Recent issues of Inspire Magazine feature stories idolizing the Marathon bombers as well as Jose Pimentel. The latest issue contains a set of instructions for a car bomb against a backdrop of pictures of Times Square. The article calls for those who believe in al-Qaeda's message to attack New York as well as Washington DC, Los Angeles, Chicago, and other major cities. The fact that we have seen people accept this call to arms, and to use the instructions that appear in Inspire Magazine and similar publications, reminds us that the threat from al-Qaeda, whether through its central command, or its prolific propaganda machine, is still real. It can emanate from a camp hidden in the tribal areas of Pakistan or from an apartment in the Washington Heights section of Manhattan.

This is why it takes additional resources, specialized equipment, and more money to police events that used to simply require police personnel for crowd and traffic control. Whether it is the Israeli Day Parade, the Super Bowl Boulevard events in Times Square this past February, or the New York City Marathon, each plan comes with a complex counterterrorism overlay that requires additional equipment, officers and investigators. We deploy specialized equipment from radiation detection pagers to detect a dispersal device attack to a portable network of cameras to scan the crowds. To that end, I would like to thank the Committee, the Congress and the Department of Homeland Security for the continued support to New York City's counterterrorism grant funding. This funding has played a crucial role in helping the NYPD carry out its mission of keeping the City and its citizens safe. It might be helpful to break that down:

The Counterterrorism Bureau receives money from 8 funding streams and 22 active grants, for a total of \$169.8 million. These sources are:

- Urban Areas Security Initiative
- State Homeland Security Grant
- Law Enforcement Terrorism Prevention Program
- State Law Enforcement Terrorism Prevention Program
- Securing the Cities
- Transit Security Grant Program
- Port Security Grant Program
- National Nuclear Security Administration

Major Counterterrorism Bureau grant-funded projects include:

- **Domain Awareness System:** an innovative law enforcement application that aggregates real-time data from counterterrorism sensors and law enforcement databases, providing members of the service with a comprehensive view of potential threats and criminal activity.
- **Securing the Cities Program:** the NYPD purchases and distributes radiation detection equipment to over 150 law enforcement and public safety agencies across the region, provides training, conducts exercises, and develops a region-wide Concept of Operations for radiation detection.
- **Regional Counterterrorism Training**
- **World Trade Center Campus Security Plan and Environmental Impact Statement:** a comprehensive vehicle security perimeter around the World Trade Center Campus, increasing stand-off distances from the buildings to reduce the risk of catastrophic damage from a vehicle-borne explosive device.
- **Explosive Detection Equipment Program**
- **Transit Security-Related Programs and Purchases**
- **Port Security-Related Programs and Purchases**

In addition to the grant funding, which is critical to our counterterrorism mission, information sharing is also crucial to our efforts. Examples of our information sharing initiatives include:

- The Lower Manhattan Security Initiative is a public-private partnership that creates an information sharing environment to leverage the security resources in place at some of the City's most targeted buildings and institutions and to forge partnerships that will facilitate an integrated response to incidents at these facilities.
- The Joint Terrorism Task Force is a natural information sharing environment between stakeholders including investigators, analysts, linguists, and other specialists from dozens of U.S. law enforcement and intelligence agencies.
- The NYPD's partnership with the FBI provides the NYPD with access to national classified intelligence and is also a means by which the NYPD can disseminate its own intelligence and analysis at the federal level and to other law enforcement agencies.

- A representative from the Metropolitan Transit Authority (“MTA”), New York State Courts, Federal Air Marshal Service, U.S. Marshal Service, and the Department of Homeland Security (“DHS”) Federal Protective Services are detailed to the Counterterrorism Division and share information from their respective agencies.
- A Senior Intelligence Officer from the DHS Office of Intelligence and Analysis disseminates DHS generated reporting, information from DHS Fusion Centers, and joint seal products like Joint Intelligence Bulletins.
- The NYPD is the lead agency for the Securing the Cities Initiative, an inter-agency collaboration and capacity building effort to protect the metropolitan region from a nuclear or radiological attack. Examples of information sharing include inter-agency conference calls before major events like the Fourth of July and New Years Eve where federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies discuss potential threats.
- NYPD SHIELD is a partnership with private-sector security managers with the goal of protecting NYC from terrorist attack. SHIELD includes members who work in a wide range of critical sectors, including the energy sector, and exchange information on issues of concern.
- DHS provides access to the Homeland Secure Data Network (“HSDN”). HSDN enables information exchange of both tactical and strategic intelligence and other homeland security information up to the SECRET level.
- Access to Suspicious Activity Reports

Using Homeland Security funding and working with DHS partners in research and development, we have expanded our use of “Vapor Wake Dogs”, the bomb detection K-9s that can identify if a suspicious package left unattended contains explosives, but can also detect the invisible vapor trail that indicates an explosive in a bag or a backpack is moving through a crowd on a busy street or public event. We have helped in the testing and development of virtual simulators that can put officers in “active shooter” situations where they move down hallways and face the challenges of identifying shooters, rescuing hostages or dealing with the wounded, while making critical tactical decisions. Controllers at the big screen see the same images being flashed through the officer’s goggles to gauge and critique their tactical proficiency. We have applied federal funding to the acquisition of highly sensitive radiological detection equipment onboard our helicopters and harbor units that could detect a nuclear device aboard a cargo ship miles before it entered New York harbor. We continue to train, in tabletops and live field exercises with multiple agencies to hone our response to another terrorist attack, active shooter situation or natural disaster. With every drill, with every exercise, we glean lessons that will be invaluable if, or more likely when, we are faced with one of these real-world challenges in our streets.

I would be happy to answer any questions.