

Witness: Richard Daddario
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New York City Police Department

Hearing: House Committee on Homeland Security
Subcommittee on Counterterrorism and Intelligence
“Counterterrorism Efforts to Combat a CBRN Attack on the
Homeland”
April 25, 2013

TESTIMONY

Thank you for the invitation to speak at today’s hearing.

The subject of the hearing - Counterterrorism Efforts to Combat a CBRN Attack on the Homeland – is especially timely in light of international developments which I am sure concern everyone in this room.

Very briefly –

Al Qaeda has exploited the Arab Spring to its great advantage. Thousands of men who support its ideology have taken up arms to train and fight in Syria, Mali, Yemen and other places in the Middle East and North Africa. No so long ago, we heard that al Qaeda was close to defeat. Now we see it has an expansive space in which to operate, recruit, train and plan in areas with weak governments and states where its ideology has significant public and political support. That ideology advocates attacks against the United States.

Iran appears to be intent on creating all the components it needs to assemble and deliver nuclear bombs. If it goes ahead and does that, and there is no reason to think it will not have that capability soon, it will be very difficult to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapon technology in the Middle East.

North Korea’s intentions are unknown. However, its hostility to the United States is obvious. The danger, at minimum, that it could export its technical bomb making expertise, is therefore real.

The New York City Police Department pays attention to these events because our City too often is the face of America to al Qaeda and other enemies of the United States. I don’t need to go over the history of attacks and plots against our City. We

are in the crosshairs and therefore commit enormous resources to keep the City safe not only from conventional means of attack, but also by an attack using a radiological or improvised nuclear weapon.

The possibility of such an attack is real.

President Obama has said:

- “The gravest danger to the American people is the threat of a terrorist attack with a nuclear weapon and the spread of nuclear weapons to dangerous regimes.”
- “The threat of global nuclear war has gone down, but the risk of nuclear attack has gone up.”
- “We must ensure that terrorists never acquire a nuclear weapon. This is the most immediate and extreme threat to global security.”

We could not address the radiological and nuclear threat effectively without the Securing the Cities Program. If Congress had not had the vision to fund Securing the Cities, New York City would now be completely vulnerable to a form of attack, which might well overwhelm our capacity to recover. Needless to say, the use of a dirty bomb or improvised nuclear device against our City would cause immeasurable personal, economic, political and psychological harm to the United States.

The NYPD does not run the Securing the Cities Program alone. It has 12 principle partners in New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut. These 12 principle partners represent 150 local law enforcement and public safety agencies within a 40 mile radius of New York City.

The NYPD and its regional partners have achieved several important accomplishments, among them:

- We have distributed and put to daily use enough personal radiation detectors (PRDs), PackEye backpacks, radiological isotope identification devices, and mobile detection systems to afford us a measure of protection.
- We are close to achieving complete wireless connectivity of detection devices used by the NYPD to the Lower Manhattan Security

Coordination Center. Data from these devices is thereby viewable in real-time and stored for analysis.

- We have developed one concept of operations for detection and interdiction of illicit radioactive materials; this concept of operations will enable the regional partners to lock down and secure the region based on 400 pre-determined chokepoints in the face of an imminent threat.
- We have conducted land-based, maritime, and transportation-based exercises involving surreptitiously transported radiological substances. In April 2011, the NYPD and its STC partners conducted a full-scale, regional exercise designed to evaluate our ability to detect and interdict illicit radiological materials. The five-day exercise involved chokepoints and other activity in New York, Connecticut, and New Jersey both on land, including rail and highways, and in the waterways of the region.

Although we have made great progress, much work needs to be done. We need to put in place a permanent radiological defensive ring through the installation of fixed radiological detection equipment to monitor traffic at all bridges and tunnels that lead into New York City. We are working with Domestic Nuclear Detection Office (DNDO) to accomplish this goal using existing, commercially available detection equipment.

We also need to procure more advanced equipment to enhance land, air, and sea detection capabilities; and enforce procedures and programs for inventory control, standardization, maintenance, and calibration of equipment purchased with STC program funds across the region; continue work to network all the mobile radiation detection equipment purchased with STC program funds, not only that used by the NYPD; continue equipment training and exercises with the regional partners; and conduct advanced radiation detection and interdiction deployments on a regional scale to assure our operations are effective.

The STC program has been an extraordinary example of interagency and intergovernmental collaboration that would not, and going forward, could not exist without federal funding. We thank you for your support.