

# Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) Working Group

**Homeland Security Advisory Council  
Spring 2010**

# Secretary's Tasking of HSAC

Recognizing that there have been many successful cases of local law enforcement working with communities to fight violent crime, at the February 2010 HSAC Meeting Secretary Napolitano tasked the HSAC to “...work with state and local law enforcement as well as relevant community groups to develop and provide to me recommendations regarding how the Department can better support community-based efforts to combat violent extremism domestically – focusing in particular on the issues of training, information sharing, and the adoption of community-oriented law enforcement approaches to this issue.”

# Secretary's Tasking (Con't.)

Specifically, the initial recommendations will focus on the following issue areas:

- **Best Practices:** What are some best practices that demonstrate how information driven, community-based efforts can be effective in reducing violent crime within a community?
- **Information Sharing:** What type of information and intelligence should DHS be providing state and local authorities so that they are better able to leverage existing community-oriented policing efforts to identify and address ideologically-motivated violent crime?
- **Training and Other Support:** What type of training, technical assistance and funding support is required so that local authorities are better able to integrate information driven, community-oriented policing activities into overall efforts to establish safe and secure communities?

# Development of Recommendations

- Recommendations were developed through a series of telephonic and face to face meetings that included working group members, state, county and local government officials, and representatives from community organizations.
- Discussions of the Working Group were organized around four major themes:
  - Every day, across the Nation, local, state, and tribal law enforcement agencies work with community members to prevent violent crime – what are some of the best examples of how police/community partnership can lead to significant reductions in violent crime?
  - Does this approach lend itself to preventing violent crime that is motivated by extreme ideological beliefs – and how does this effort to counter violent extremism impact the police-community partnership?
  - If local law enforcement were to incorporate efforts to counter violent extremism into pre-existing, community-oriented violent crime reduction efforts – what information would these local entities need from the Federal Government – specifically DHS.
  - If local law enforcement were to incorporate efforts to counter violent extremism into pre-existing, community-oriented violent crime reduction efforts, what type of training would front line officers, investigators and management personnel require?

# General Findings

- **Community-Oriented Policing works in preventing violent crime** – The Working Group found that information-driven, community-oriented policing efforts have proven effective in reducing and/or preventing violent crime in numerous jurisdictions across the Nation.
- **Emphasis should be on building safe, secure, resilient, and crime resistant communities** – In working with community members, law enforcement seeks to understand and proactively address factors which enable violent criminal activity to occur.
  - Effective public –private partnerships, designed to enable civic engagement, problem-solving, and violent crime mitigation provide the foundation for efforts to prevent, protect against and respond to violent criminal activity – including that which may be motivated by ideological objectives.
  - While acknowledging that information-driven, community-based law enforcement efforts hold great promise in preventing violent crime that is terrorism-related, that promise will be best realized when local authorities work with community members to understand and mitigate all threats facing local communities.
  - The current level of understanding regarding the sociology of “radicalization” and “extremism” is still immature. Accordingly, Working Group members believe that the concept of building safe, secure, resilient and crime resistant communities should be the priority and operationally, efforts should focus on stopping violent behavior regardless of the motivation.
  - Working Group members felt that discussions regarding how to improve local law enforcement crime reduction efforts should be delinked from the current academic and policy discussions on “radicalization” and “countering violent extremism” until such time that the understanding of these phenomena matures.

# General Findings (Cont.)

- **All violent crime is local** – While there may be some common indicators of ideologically-motivated violence, each circumstance is unique, needs to be viewed individually, and viewed within the context of the specific community in which the suspect lives, works, and operates.
- **There can be tension between those involved in law enforcement investigations and those collaborating to establish local partnerships to stop violent crime** – Community policing can be impeded if other enforcement tactics involving a community are perceived as conflicting with community partnership efforts. Crime control efforts at the local level involve a variety of operational activities that can be – if properly coordinated – supportive and complementary. Roles and responsibilities of federal, state, local and tribal law enforcement, and the community need to be clearly defined and articulated. Law enforcement should be sensitive to the fact that perceptions regarding enforcement actions and intelligence gathering can impact community-oriented policing goals.

# Best Practices of Local Law Enforcement/Community Partnerships Are Leading to Significant Reductions in Violent Crime

- Multiple examples exist of effective community/local government partnerships which have led to significant reductions in violent crime including:
  - **Los Angeles, California**  
*Law enforcement joins communities and government agencies to improve quality of life issues and reduce violent crime.*
  - **Cincinnati, Ohio**  
*College professors collaborate with law enforcement and communities to lower crime.*
  - **Austin, Texas**  
*Law enforcement works with community on rapid response teams to mitigate tough issues and work in partnership to reduce violent crime.*
  - **Las Vegas, Nevada**  
*Grassroots community effort led by faith based organizations that assist in reducing violent crimes and gangs.*
  - **Dearborn, Michigan**  
*Collaborative effort to engage the community in the identification and resolution of community issues to include combating violent crime.*
  - **State of Maryland**  
*Established an executive level coordinating office within the Governor's Office to work with community groups, ethnic groups, and faith based organizations to address quality of life and other issues of concern.*
  - **State of Ohio**  
*Established a community engagement office which built a collaborative and cooperative relationship with the communities based on trust and mutual respect.*
  - **Minneapolis, Minnesota**  
*Designated crime professional specialists who are liaisons between the community and local law enforcement and have safety centers that are funded by the neighborhoods.*

The Working Group recognized that these are only a few examples of best practices by community-oriented policing efforts across the country. The Working Group also noted that it should be a continuing priority to identify best practices as well as to document instances where partnerships have not worked well in order to identify and compile lessons learned.

# Community-Oriented Policing

Community-oriented policing is a viable strategy to address crimes of violence if the approach involves:

- Developing meaningful partnerships between the government and communities in which all partners contribute to the identification of community issues and needs;
- Collaborative problem solving; and
- Law enforcement and other government agencies implement institutional and organizational changes to support the effort.



# Key Elements of Community-Oriented Policing to Reduce Violent Crime

- **Partnerships** – Establishing advisory councils/focus groups to include civic and community organizations, faith based and education entities, private sector security, and the media. Encourage participation through these partnerships to draw involvement from all segments of the community.
- **Leadership** – Executive Leadership/Guidance of local law enforcement heads in taking the lead in outreach to communities.
- **Multidisciplinary** – Leverage all available public and private resources within a local environment including social services, medical, mental health and family/school counseling professionals to help build bridges to communities; an excellent example has been the outreach/athletic programs for community youth spearheaded by some local police departments as well as outreach programs for community youth to include enrichment, education, and participatory programs like Police Explorers and Internships, and other self esteem building initiatives.
- **Training** – Continuous training is key to both law enforcement and the community and should focus on:
  - Improving capacity of law enforcement and other government personnel to communicate and collaborate with individuals from diverse religious, ethnic and racial communities; and
  - Better understanding the threats facing a local community and recognizing behavior and indicators associated with those threats.

# Key Elements of Community-Oriented Policing to Reduce Violent Crime (Cont.)

- **Consistency** – Maintaining a presence at community events year-round including religious events. Law enforcement is partnering with religious and community activists, community leaders and business leaders to hold community events (i.e. barbecues, park events, and rallies), where ideas to reduce or eliminate violence are discussed and relationships are established or enhanced.
- **Broad approach** – Work with community and government partners to reduce violence in all forms. Help design interventions to be included in a community or city anti-violence program.
- **Trust** – Effective partnership requires a relationship built on trust and two-way communication between government personnel and community members.
- **Collaboration/coordination** – Efforts should be proactive and designed to prevent crime, reduce fear, and improve the quality of life within a community.
- **Minimize harmful outside influences** – Local crime reduction efforts can be affected by events occurring outside the community.
  - Some localities have established “rapid response” teams to work with communities to better understand and place into context international, national, and local incidents that “raise the temperature” in terms of targeting the community may face (either for hate crimes or by ideologically-motivated recruiters).

# Key Elements of Community-Oriented Policing to Reduce Violent Crime (Cont.)

- **Conduct research** – A “best lesson learned,” is to ensure the up-front effort of proper research and the identification and inclusion of important under-represented communities is a foundational part of any Community Policing initiative. To that end, the inclusion of all representative sections of a community will lead to a safer and more secure country.
- **Remember the past** – An important facet to supporting and implementing Community Policing initiatives is to recognize that those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it. In analysis of previous major crimes and critical incidents, dating back to the 1960’s, a common theme can be developed. Law enforcement entities that properly researched all segments of the community and developed relationships based on elicited input and free exchange of information did much better in the detection, investigation, and mitigation of these situations.
- **Law enforcement personnel should come from the communities they serve** – Law enforcement should make a concerted effort to hire more individuals representative of the communities served by that agency.

# Recommendations to DHS on Community Policing

- **Document and make available best practices** – DHS should work with external groups to (a) identify and document those information-driven, community based violent crime reduction efforts that represent “best practices” AND making “best practices” resources available online for other law enforcement agencies and the community to be able to have access; and (b) identify challenges and unsuccessful practices so that best practices can be strengthened.
- Information-driven, community based violent crime reduction efforts should be recognized as a critical element of national efforts to protect the homeland from terrorism and other threats.
- DHS should work closely with the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) at the Department of Justice (DOJ) to better incorporate the concept of community-oriented policing into programmatic and policy efforts associated with homeland security preparedness.
  - Increased resources should be made available (funding, training, technical assistance) to state and local authorities.
  - Establishing information-driven community-based violent crime reduction capabilities should be considered a preparedness priority by DHS.
  - Community-oriented policing costs should be included as an allowable expense within DHS grant programs.

## Key Elements of Applying Violent Crime Prevention to Stopping Ideological-Motivated Crime

- Emphasis should be placed on supporting local efforts to establish safe and secure communities – this could mean securing them against all types of threats from outside as well as from within.
- Dealing with ideologically-motivated crime is done best when there is a pre-existing relationship between communities and local law enforcement and needs to be done in the broader context of dealing with all crimes.
- Information-driven, community based violent crime reduction efforts should emphasize stopping violent behavior regardless of the motivation.
  - Communities may be hesitant to enter in relationships with local, state, tribal or federal law enforcement if they perceive that they are viewed as incubators of violent extremism.

# Key Elements of Applying Violent Crime Prevention to Stopping Ideological-Motivated Crime (Cont.)

- Information regarding specific threats should be shared with local law enforcement, who in turn should share with the community, so there is a shared understanding of the threat:
  - Work together to develop a plan to mitigate the threat;
  - Place police actions into context;
  - Be more aware of indicators and behavior associated with a specific threat; and
  - Define roles and responsibilities associated with threat mitigation. The federal government should ensure adequate safeguards for basic rights in cases of individuals about whom information is provided by communities. This is extremely important to maintain trust and cooperation among communities and local authorities.
- Offer the community a separate clear point of contact to open a regular channel of communication and gain information from the government to learn about new programs, initiatives and policies (Protective Security Advisors in the states).

# Recommendations to DHS

- **Develop and use common terminology** – Use of various terms to describe ideologically-motivated violent crime (radicalization, violent extremism, etc...) causes confusion. DHS should work with the federal government, and state and local partners to establish common use lexicon and consistent use of terminology. This product should be made available to the public via the internet.
- **Expand CRCL engagement efforts separate from support of community-oriented policing** – Recognizing that policies implemented by DHS can affect local community partnerships, DHS Civil Rights Civil Liberties (CRCL) and other relevant DHS offices should continue and expand their engagement and grievance resolution efforts at DHS. DHS should also work with other federal agencies to come up with a verification process for groups it interacts with. This in turn will help establish a national environment conducive to the establishment of local partnerships.

# Recommendations to DHS (Cont.)

- **Incorporate information-driven, community-based violent crime reduction into local preparedness efforts** – Efforts to increase support to local, community-based violent crime reduction should be viewed as a core element of preparedness programs as opposed to being part of national efforts to understand the phenomena of domestic violent extremism.
- **Support efforts to establish local dispute resolution capabilities** – DHS should provide resources and guidance to support local partnerships efforts to address community issues and grievances. These resources can be an empowering tool that generate a greater role for communities to extend themselves to law enforcement and have greater input in addressing violence and violent extremists. Moreover, it serves the long term objective of engaging the communities to view violence not only as a law enforcement concern but as society's concern.
- **Through Policy, DHS should utilize the philosophies based on communication, trust, and mutual respect to develop relationships with local law enforcement** – These are the same principles local law enforcement is using through Community Policing to build relationships in their respective communities. Relationships between local law enforcement and DHS must be broader than just communication at the executive level. Individual Agents and Individual Officers must form relationships at the “grassroots” level to effectively communicate and achieve mutual goals.



# Information Partnerships Need from DHS

- To be effective, efforts to combat violent crime should be information-driven, which requires that local partnerships have a shared understanding of:
  - Specific threats facing an individual community;
  - Groups and/or individuals associated with a threat; and
  - Behavior and indicators associated with a threat.
- State and major urban area fusion centers play a critical role in local crime prevention efforts in that they receive intelligence/information from federal authorities regarding threats to the homeland and evaluate those threats from a local context. These fusion centers must share that knowledge with local law enforcement so that it can inform the community on violent crime reduction efforts.
- Knowledge regarding specific threats should be blended with awareness of societal and religious practices so that local authorities can place reported and observed behavior into context, thereby allowing them to distinguish legal behavior from criminal activity.
- The timely sharing of accurate threat-related information is an essential component of community-based efforts to combat violent crime.
- There can be an inherent tension between federal law enforcement investigations and local partnerships to stop violent crime. While this tension can be healthy or unhealthy, it must be managed by senior officials.

# Recommendations to DHS on Information-Sharing

- **Generate threat-related information products** – DHS should increase the availability to local authorities of accurate, threat-related information in a format that allows broader sharing with community members. DHS should work with fusion centers to demystify the process for the community. This information should include:
  - Trends observed internationally regarding types of attacks and recruitment efforts;
  - Specific threats to the community; and
  - Behavior and indicators associated with such threats.
- **Establish communication platform to share threat-related information directly with faith-based or other communities** – DHS should explore expanding the Secure Community Network concept to other faith-based communities and put together a task force to look at best practices for faith-based communities.
- DHS should publicly welcome organized community-based engagement efforts on CVE policy development and best practices promotion around the country.

# Recommendations to DHS on Information-Sharing (Cont.)

- **Increase public awareness regarding terrorism and other homeland security related trends so that they can be demystified and incorporated into local violent crime reduction efforts** – DHS should explore ways in which it can provide the public, particularly the more youthful segments of the population, with a better understanding of terrorism-related trends, and training so that communities are better able to recognize behavior associated with terror-related criminal acts, the variety of government offices that could play a role in a response, and the relationship between these offices. This process should also include education to communities on law enforcement processes and procedures to help demystify law enforcement.
  - DHS should consider building a website that “speaks to” parents, caregivers, educators, counselors, etc.. The website should take a holistic approach and include tools for schools and parents to keep an eye on behavioral traits, as well as the use of internet social networking sites, reporting hate crimes, human trafficking, child predators, and other security issues.
  - DHS should also work with the American Ad Council on public service announcements, which could be for awareness messages that indicate characteristics of individuals who engage in dangerous and anti-social behavior.

# Recommendations to DHS on Information-Sharing (Cont.)

- **Develop case studies** – DHS, in partnership with other federal law enforcement agencies and community representatives, should package and release analytical reviews of major events of domestic violent extremism (Zazi, Holocaust museum shooting, Ft. Hood shooting, etc.) and develop case studies that can be used by local authorities as a learning tool for law enforcement personnel. The use of real life examples of the threats will better illustrate the dangers faced by specific local communities as well as the Nation. Involving community representatives in the development process will help build trust and engage the community in dialogue and greater cooperation that serves the common good.
- DHS should work with its federal partners to increase collaboration to ensure community partnerships and intelligence community (IC) are not undermined by each other but instead work in a complementarily effective manner.

# Recommendations to DHS on Information-Sharing (Cont.)

- **Continue efforts to ensure that fusion centers have the capacity to receive and understand threat-related information and to share that knowledge with local authorities.** DHS should work with fusion centers so that fusion centers have a greater capacity to understand (a) the threat posed by ideologically-motivated criminal activity and share that knowledge with local law enforcement, and (b) cultural, societal, and religious customs so that intelligence is placed in context and legal behavior is distinguished from criminal activity.

# Findings on Training

- Continuous training of government personnel is a key element of successful community-oriented policing efforts. Law enforcement officers must have the ability to have honest conversations with people in their community and must recognize the value that comes from effective, proactive problem solving.
- The capacity to interact with members of the public in order to address crime and quality of life issues needs to be a fundamental skill set of front line and management personnel. Effective and open communication by law enforcement officials provides the foundation for effective collaboration and partnership at both the organizational and individual levels.

# Findings on Training (Cont.)

- Training should focus on:
  - Improving capacity of law enforcement and other government personnel to communicate, collaborate, and partner with individuals from diverse religious, ethnic, and racial communities; and
  - Better understand the threats facing a local community and recognizing behavior and indicators associated with those threats.
- Training should be provided to community members so they better understand how government, and in particularly law enforcement, operates. This will demystify and minimize tensions due to misperceptions.
- Members of the community should be invited to provide training to government personnel.
- Training is needed for school officials and parents on a variety of issues including: how to recognize behaviors consistent with criminal activity or specific threats; the use of internet social networking sites by sexual predators and extremist recruiters; recognizing hate crimes; human trafficking; child predators; gangs; and other security issues.

# Findings on Training (Cont.)

- Current training programs should be re-evaluated and priority given to supporting those programs that introduce or support the community policing model. Good training is essential as bad training not only is ineffective – but can serve to escalate tensions between law enforcement and the community.
- Enforcing hate crimes is one way for law enforcement to build trust with minority communities.
  - Law enforcement and communities rarely reported hate crimes before they received hate crime training. Law enforcement personnel generally respond to crime rather than report it.
- Local law enforcement should train communities on what constitutes a hate crime and encourage them to report hate crimes. This will help strengthen the community-police relationship.



# Recommendations to DHS on Training

- **Expand availability of training and technical assistance focused on the understanding, identifying and mitigating threats through community-oriented policing** – DHS, working in partnership with the COPS office, should explore how best to expand the training and technical assistance provided to state, tribal, and local personnel so that they are better able to:
  - Understand and mitigate threats facing their communities;
  - Identify behavior and indicators associated with ideologically-motivated crime;
  - Engage more effectively with communities; and
  - DHS and DOJ’s COPS should consider providing additional support for efforts that trains law enforcement on community policing such as the Regional Community Policing Institutes and the National Counter-Terrorism Academy for State and Local Law Enforcement in Los Angeles.
- **Improve quality of training** – DHS should institute quality control processes to ensure that training provided through DHS, or paid for by DHS provided grant funding, meets minimum quality control.
- Training should seek to instill greater understanding regarding the “us versus them” perspective that many cultures have toward law enforcement and government and enable law enforcement personnel to better understand and address unrest or anger within the community (whether it be ideologically-based or not) in order to prevent violent activities.

# Recommendations to DHS on Training (Cont.)

- **Expand availability of training for state, local and tribal law enforcement and DHS components** – Operational and law enforcement personnel including corrections personnel, should possess an understanding of cultural and religious practices so that they are better able to distinguish between criminal activity and lawful behavior. A collaborative effort comprised of community, academia, and law enforcement professionals should be involved in helping develop these trainings.
- DHS should fund efforts to expand Federal Law Enforcement Training Center's hate crime training.
- DHS should explore expanding FLETC's role to include training in the building of community capacity, partnerships, cultural knowledge awareness and development of specialized training modules for community leaders and non-governmental organizations.
- DHS should reassess its hate crime training to include understanding extremism and ideological violence.
- DHS should work with state and local partners to provide training for schools and parents on a variety of issues including: how to keep an eye on behavioral traits, the use of internet social networking sites, reporting hate crimes, human trafficking, child predators, gangs, and other security issues.

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