



CHILDREN AND FAMILIES  
EDUCATION AND THE ARTS  
ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT  
HEALTH AND HEALTH CARE  
INFRASTRUCTURE AND  
TRANSPORTATION  
INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS  
LAW AND BUSINESS  
NATIONAL SECURITY  
POPULATION AND AGING  
PUBLIC SAFETY  
SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY  
TERRORISM AND  
HOMELAND SECURITY

The RAND Corporation is a nonprofit institution that helps improve policy and decisionmaking through research and analysis.

This electronic document was made available from [www.rand.org](http://www.rand.org) as a public service of the RAND Corporation.

Skip all front matter: [Jump to Page 1](#) ▼

## Support RAND

[Purchase this document](#)

[Browse Reports & Bookstore](#)

[Make a charitable contribution](#)

## For More Information

Visit RAND at [www.rand.org](http://www.rand.org)

Explore the [RAND Corporation](#)

View [document details](#)

## Limited Electronic Distribution Rights

This document and trademark(s) contained herein are protected by law as indicated in a notice appearing later in this work. This electronic representation of RAND intellectual property is provided for non-commercial use only. Unauthorized posting of RAND electronic documents to a non-RAND website is prohibited. RAND electronic documents are protected under copyright law. Permission is required from RAND to reproduce, or reuse in another form, any of our research documents for commercial use. For information on reprint and linking permissions, please see [RAND Permissions](#).

This product is part of the RAND Corporation conference proceedings series. RAND conference proceedings present a collection of papers delivered at a conference or a summary of the conference. The material herein has been vetted by the conference attendees and both the introduction and the post-conference material have been reviewed and approved for publication by the sponsoring research unit at RAND.



# Identifying Enemies Among Us

Evolving Terrorist Threats and the Continuing  
Challenges of Domestic Intelligence Collection  
and Information Sharing

Brian Michael Jenkins, Andrew Liepman, Henry H. Willis

This conference report is a product of the RAND Corporation's continuing program of self-initiated independent research. Support for such research is provided, in part, by donors and by the independent research and development provisions of RAND's contracts for the operation of its U.S. Department of Defense federally funded research and development centers.

**Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data** is available for this publication.

ISBN: 978-0-8330-8266-4

The RAND Corporation is a nonprofit institution that helps improve policy and decisionmaking through research and analysis. RAND's publications do not necessarily reflect the opinions of its research clients and sponsors.

**Support RAND**—make a tax-deductible charitable contribution at [www.rand.org/giving/contribute.html](http://www.rand.org/giving/contribute.html)

**RAND**® is a registered trademark.

© Copyright 2014 RAND Corporation

This document and trademark(s) contained herein are protected by law. This representation of RAND intellectual property is provided for noncommercial use only. Unauthorized posting of RAND documents to a non-RAND website is prohibited. RAND documents are protected under copyright law. Permission is given to duplicate this document for personal use only, as long as it is unaltered and complete. Permission is required from RAND to reproduce, or reuse in another form, any of our research documents for commercial use. For information on reprint and linking permissions, please see the RAND permissions page ([www.rand.org/pubs/permissions.html](http://www.rand.org/pubs/permissions.html)).

RAND OFFICES

SANTA MONICA, CA • WASHINGTON, DC

PITTSBURGH, PA • NEW ORLEANS, LA • JACKSON, MS • BOSTON, MA

DOHA, QA • CAMBRIDGE, UK • BRUSSELS, BE

[www.rand.org](http://www.rand.org)

## Summary

---

This report summarizes a daylong, in-depth seminar, hosted by the RAND Corporation, at which a group of acting and former senior government and law enforcement officials, practitioners, and experts discussed domestic intelligence operations and information sharing as these relate to terrorist threats. The collective experience of the participants spanned the breadth of the homeland security apparatus. The participants included officials who have served or are serving in the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), the Department of Defense (DoD), state and local law enforcement agencies, first-responder organizations, and state-level homeland security agencies. Several RAND analysts who have written on and thought about homeland security issues for decades also participated. The discussions were unofficial and nonpartisan.

The goal of the seminar was not to solve perennial problems but rather to elicit the views of a diverse and experienced group of officials with very different perspectives and opinions on the threat of terrorism to the United States and what might be done about it. With these divergent perspectives in mind, the following areas of agreement emerged.

**The terrorist threat has changed, although disagreement about its direction and scope persists.** From a strategic perspective, al Qaeda is greatly diminished; its ability to launch another catastrophic attack has been substantially reduced. The terrorist threat is now more diverse and complex, and from a local perspective, it is still challenging and dangerous. Moreover, it seems likely to persist.

**Local law enforcement focuses on how the terrorist threat manifests itself within the communities the agencies protect.** Violence spreading to new regions overseas can impact local U.S. communities, sparking radicalization and eventually violence. The global jihad is no longer the sole organizing principle behind this violence. Rather, locally focused al Qaeda offshoots in Yemen, Iraq, Somalia, and North Africa and emerging extremist groups and conflict elsewhere in places like Nigeria and Mali and the countries affected by the Arab uprisings, especially Syria, are the concern of not only our foreign-focused federal agencies but also homeland security agencies and state and local entities.

**Categorizing threats by group and compartmenting them by origin (terrorism, domestic terrorism, cyber terrorism, etc.) may unduly limit intelligence sharing and cooperation and pertains more to past threats than likely future threats.** The cyber threat, organized crime, narco-traffickers, and terrorists might intersect, yet law enforcement and intelligence agencies are disconnected and not positioned to detect an intersection among disparate groups.

**Building national resilience will require a more composed and nuanced national dialogue that starts in Washington.** The rigid diktat that all terrorism must be prevented

and Washington's tendency to focus on fault-finding rather than improving performance are counterproductive.

**Joint Terrorism Task Forces (JTTFs) remain the central construct of the domestic counterterrorist structure.** Better investigative cooperation with state and local entities could be achieved by removing unnecessary obstacles that prevent consistent and quality cooperation between the JTTFs and local police.

**Some of the obstacles that limit cooperation, information sharing, and collaboration among the various layers of government were put in place for good reason.** Privacy and civil-liberties protections must be at the forefront in rethinking relationships and breaking down barriers.

**Privacy and civil liberties should not be used as a blanket excuse to keep the intelligence community and local law enforcement apart.** We should think about how to remove barriers that prevent cooperation and communication between these two communities that have much to benefit and learn from each other.

**The intelligence community has much to offer local police, and vice versa.** For example, the intelligence community can provide analytic tradecraft, understanding of the adversary, and national-level technical collection. Local law enforcement can provide information that would assist federal intelligence agencies.

**Fusion centers seem to fall short both with their local customers and in contributing to the national-level counterterrorism effort.** Some fusion centers are performing well, but many are not. Some sort of market system that reduces duplication, harnesses existing expertise, encourages more cooperation, and normalizes protocols could reduce costs and improve effectiveness.

**It is difficult for national intelligence structures to talk about domestic terrorism, i.e., terrorism conducted by purely domestic violent extremists on the far left or far right of the political spectrum or extremists motivated by specific issues.** National security has a foreign-intelligence focus. Political discomfort precludes the deployment of federal agencies against Americans, although the FBI and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms have a long history of pursuing terrorist groups.

**The nation's zero tolerance for terrorism may soon come into direct conflict with the need to reduce budgets, including, perhaps for the first time, to consider real declines in counterterrorism funding.** This raises a broader question: What is the end state? Must the nation realistically tolerate some level of terrorist risk, and if so, what is that level?