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Applying Lessons Learned from Past Response Operations to Strengthening National Preparedness

Addendum

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RAND Office of External Affairs

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Document submitted on July 11, 2014 as an addendum to testimony presented before the House Homeland Security Committee on June 18, 2014

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The RAND Corporation

***Applying Lessons Learned from Past Response
Operations to Strengthening National Preparedness
Addendum²***

**Before the Committee on Homeland Security
United States House of Representatives**

July 11, 2014

The subsequent question and answer found in this document was received from the Committee for additional information following the hearing on June 18, 2014 and were submitted for the record.

Question for the record from Chairman Michael T. McCaul:

How can we improve the sharing of information developed in a JTTF to outside organizations, such as State and local law enforcement, and fusion centers?

- Perhaps some sort of integration between JTTFs and fusion centers?
- Do you have any other suggestions as to how we can make the best use of the resources in the fusion centers?

The sharing of information from JTTFs to other organizations clearly has to be done with care, given concerns regarding maintaining the integrity of criminal investigations and eventual prosecution. This has been a challenge identified for domestic intelligence more generally, not just with respect to the JTTFs.³ A recent report by three of my RAND colleagues based on discussions with a number of state and local law enforcement officials took on the issue of JTTFs and intelligence sharing directly. Though the group was not a scientific sample of the community, it did represent a set of senior representatives from a number of major departments and agencies

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² This testimony is available for free download at <http://www.rand.org/pubs/testimonies/CT411z1.html>.

³ Jackson, BA., ed., "The Challenge of Domestic Intelligence in a Free Society: A Multidisciplinary Look at the Creation of a U.S. Domestic Counterterrorism Intelligence Agency," Santa Monica, Calif., RAND Corporation, 2009.

at varied levels of government.⁴ Those participants highlighted continuing challenges with the interaction between JTTFs and local law enforcement, as well as complaints about the nature of the information that was shared. There was also the suggestion of some local departments pulling back from participation in JTTFs because of perceptions of continuing information sharing problems.

Questions were also raised in those discussions about the effectiveness of information sharing between fusion centers and police departments, though there is clearly variation across the country. The group specifically took on the question of whether fusion centers could be used to better link JTTFs to state and local police departments, and few participants thought that was the right solution. Differences that exist between fusion centers also make it hard to generalize – and the absence of good and objective measures of what they are producing means that there isn't a common yardstick to use to identify, for example, particularly effective fusion centers as candidates to potentially play this bridging role. In the absence of such measures, seeking to use fusion centers in that sort of bridging function could be piloted in one or more sites to assess the viability and effectiveness of the approach.

More systematic measures and assessment of fusion centers would also make it possible to better identify what resources currently exist in individual centers – which are generally viewed to vary considerably in capability across the country – and is a needed first step to determine how they could be better leveraged. Following the 2012 Senate report on the fusion center program,⁵ some researchers – including at RAND – have made progress to developing methods for such evaluation.⁶

⁴ Jenkins, B.M., A. Liepman, H.H. Willis, "Identifying Enemies Among Us: Evolving Terrorist Threats and the Continuing Challenges of Domestic Intelligence Collection and Information Sharing," Santa Monica, Calif., RAND Corporation, 2014.

⁵ Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations, Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, United States Senate, "Federal Support for and Involvement In State and Local Fusion Centers," Majority and Minority Staff Report, Washington, D.C., October 3, 2012.

⁶ For example, Jackson, BA, "How Do We Know What Information Sharing is Really Worth?" Santa Monica, Calif., RAND Corporation, 2014.