



NYPD
New York City Police Department

**TESTIMONY OF POLICE COMMISSIONER WILLIAM J. BRATTON
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**BEFORE THE UNITED STATES SENATE COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND
SECURITY AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS
*“Frontline Response to Terrorism in America”***

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My thanks to the committee for the opportunity to speak with you today.

The issue before us—the frontline response to terrorism in America—is more pressing than at any time since 9/11. New York City, where I am the police commissioner, remains the top target for terrorists in the United States. Since the first bombing of the World Trade Center in 1993, New York City has been the target or nexus for twenty terrorist plots, more than any other American City. There have been four major cases in just the past two years.

Since 9/11, the NYPD has spent hundreds of millions of dollars—in federal funding, city and state monies, and private grants—to counter that threat. My predecessor as police commissioner, Raymond Kelly, oversaw the creation of a sophisticated intelligence and counterterrorism capability. It was highly capable, but was limited by headcount restrictions. Over the past two years, Mayor Bill de Blasio has addressed that with the largest personnel and equipment allocations in the NYPD’s history. Because of these, we are evolving in order to face the increasingly complex threat picture.

That picture now includes ISIL, and lone wolf actors—threats that barely existed two years ago. While we are always on guard for the spectacular Al Qaeda-style attack, with ISIL we have seen a shift towards low tech, low cost, high impact attacks. November’s Paris attacks left 130 people dead. In San Bernardino, 14 were killed. In New York City, this Spring, we saw three separate plots—all influenced by ISIL—to either behead people, bomb public events, or attack police.

We cannot address these threats without partners. Two years ago, I directed John Miller, my Deputy Commissioner for Intelligence and Counterterrorism, to execute a “collaborative reset” with our closest allies: the FBI, Secret Service, DHS, Fire Department, and the Port Authority. By way of example, the FBI sits in on the NYPD’s intelligence case meetings, and we sit in on the FBI’s. We have also worked to improve the NYPD’s intelligence capabilities.

For more than a decade, with the help of the New York City Police Foundation, we have placed NYPD liaison officers overseas where they work with and learn from local law enforcement. We currently have 11 stations, and are adding one in Australia, as well as seconding an officer to Europol. By getting real-time, on-the-ground insight into overseas terrorist attacks—in Tunisia, France, Australia, and Canada—the liaison program has helped us redesign our tactical posture in New York City.

Given the nature of the threat, however, intelligence must be accompanied by a response capability. Our primary asset in this regard is our Emergency Service Unit, or ESU—the best trained police officers in the world. But ESU is small, and needs to be mobile. So for years, critical sites were instead guarded by patrol officers borrowed each day from routine precinct assignments. These officers were neither trained nor equipped to counter the type of threat they were deployed against. With the help of Mayor de Blasio and the New York City Council, we created the Critical Response Command. CRC is a dedicated team of over 500 specially trained officers with special weapons and enhanced body armor. They’re briefed on the latest intelligence, deployed daily to potential terror targets, and prepared to mobilize for active-shooter or terrorist events such as those in Paris or Mumbai.

We have also revamped our citywide task force, the 800-member Strategic Response Command, which is primarily used for crime response and disorder control. It, too, has been trained and equipped to address the new threat picture.

Today, we have 1,800 officers capable of being deployed with special weapons, spread across the city. That capability is unmatched by any other city.

Despite this, it remains likely that the first officers on the scene of any event will be patrol officers. Accordingly, we have already trained 3,500 NYPD officers in active-shooter tactics. They learn how to form small “contact teams” and move toward the threat, with the aim of reducing the gunmen’s “time on target” and saving lives. We will continue the training until all our patrol officers have it.

And through our Shield Program, a public-private partnership, we have already trained 20,000 civilians in what to do—run, hide, fight—if they find themselves caught in such a situation. But

again, these threats cannot truly be addressed without partners. For example, we have worked with the New York City Fire Department to develop ways to get to the victims of a Paris- or Mumbai-style attack as quickly as possible. The Rescue Task Force uses the new tactical teams we have developed—CRC and SRG—to provide force protection to guide paramedics and EMTs into “warm zones” where shooting has ended, while other teams—primarily ESU—go after the terrorists or gunmen in “hot zones.”

Our efforts go far beyond these particulars, but mindful of time, my descriptions of a small number of others will be brief.

We have expanded our pack of bomb-detection K-9s known as “vapor wake dogs,” which can pick up the scent of explosives on the move — for example, being carried by a suicide bomber through a subway station or a public event.

Thanks to \$160 million from Mayor de Blasio and District Attorney Cy Vance, we have given smartphones to every officer—with alerts, tools, and apps that turn all 35,000 of my cops into counterterror assets.

We conduct multi-agency tabletop exercises and field drills that mirror the tactics we see in the latest terror attacks overseas. Secretary Johnson recently attended one, focused on our subways, and gave it high marks. The drill tested the new Rescue Task Force and a larger, full-scale exercise is planned for May of this year. I am pleased to say that the NYPD-DHS relationship has never been stronger.

Finally, I cannot say enough about the work of the FBI-NYPD Joint Terrorist Task Force. Under the leadership of FBI Assistant Director Diego Rodriguez, this 35-year partnership—the first JTTF in the country—is a seamless coalition of federal, state, and local law-enforcement agencies. One hundred NYPD detectives are assigned there, and the four plots interdicted in the last two years were JTTF cases undertaken in concert with our Intelligence Bureau.

No other city faces the threat faced by New York City, and no other city has invested so much—in dollars, personnel, or partnership—to counter that threat.

I would be happy to answer any questions.