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Before the

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Testimony of Boston Police Commissioner Edward F. Davis, III
Before the Senate Committee on Homeland Security

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Chairman Carper, Ranking Member Coburn, distinguished members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today about the impact of the terrorist bombing at the Boston Marathon on Patriots Day, April 15, 2013.

I am here today as the Commissioner of the Boston Police Department, but I also speak on behalf of Mayor Thomas Menino, Major Cities Chiefs across the Nation, and Massachusetts law enforcement when I describe the response and lessons learned from this tragic event.

On April 15 at 2:50 pm two bombs exploded 12 seconds and 550 feet apart on Boylston Street at the finish line of the Boston Marathon. Two terrorists killed 3 people at the scene: 8 year old Martin Richard and 23 year old Lingzi Lu, a graduate student at Boston University in front of the Forum Restaurant; and 29 year old Krystle Campbell at the finish line.

There were multiple amputations. Every ambulance and police transport vehicle available transported nearly 300 people to world-class hospitals. There were countless examples of bravery that day by first responders, medical personnel, runners and spectators who ran toward the explosions and rushed severely injured people to medical care; police officers who used their belts as tourniquets, their bare hands to extinguish a man on fire and citizens like Carlos Arredondo, a peace activist who helped save Jeff Bauman so he wouldn't bleed to death by holding his femoral artery. Jeff lost both legs.

The perpetrators were identified in video footage and the photos were publicly released on Thursday night. Sadly these terrorists executed MIT Police Officer Sean Collier that evening in a botched effort to take his gun. Officers were shot at and had explosive devices thrown at them during a pursuit that began in Cambridge and ended in Watertown.

One of the bombers, Tamerlan Tsarnaev was killed during an exchange of gunfire in Watertown on Friday morning. MBTA Officer Richard Donohue was shot and critically injured at that scene, lost 100% of his volume of blood, but thankfully survived.

The second bomber, Dzhokhar Tsarnaev, eluded police during the shootout. A massive house-to-house manhunt was conducted in a 20-block perimeter. The City of Boston and several surrounding communities were extremely cooperative when they were asked to shelter in place during this time. Tsarnaev was located in a Watertown backyard boat on Friday evening as a result of the homeowner's key observations and information.

Both terrorists were captured within 102 hours from the time of the initial explosions. This success was the direct result of dedicated training, relationships already in place, an engaged and informed public, and an unprecedented level of coordination, cooperation and information sharing on the line by local, state and federal agencies. Throughout this event Boston showed the Nation how to conduct a complicated investigation involving over 120 Federal, State and local law enforcement and partner agencies with multiple crime scenes over an extended period of time.

The Federal Government, particularly the Department of Homeland Security and the Department of Justice provided valuable assistance before, during and after this tragic event. Preparedness training provided through the Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) and other federal funding set a framework for multiple jurisdictions to work seamlessly with one another in a highly effective manner. Urban Shield training with Boston's law enforcement and medical professionals was one of the most important steps we took to prepare for this day. The significance of this can be no better illustrated than by looking at the facts: the scene was cleared of all spectators and nearly 300 injured within 22 minutes; the 19 critically injured victims admitted to hospitals all survived, due to exceptional medical care and backed up by the response and use of tourniquets.

UASI funding also provides highly trained analysts in the Boston Regional Intelligence Center (BRIC), critical to the Department's daily decision-making, intelligence gathering, deployment and information flow, coordination and communication with law enforcement and other first responders. Funding also provides important technology that would not be possible without UASI funding: vehicles such as command posts, armored vehicles, robots, harbor patrol vehicles and other safety equipment. This equipment allowed us to take Dzhokhar Tsarnaev into custody alive. Over the course of the last several years the City of Boston has experienced both level funding and cuts to local aid. If we had to depend solely on local assistance prior to April 15th we would have been much less prepared and without the appropriate information and equipment to do our jobs. I would like to take a moment to thank President Obama and his Administration for this support and urge each one of you to continue this important funding for major cities around the US.

The community plays one of the most important roles in our Nation's fight against terrorism. They contributed to the success, efficiency and safe resolution of the investigation by providing videos, photographs, information and sheltering in place. Law enforcement needs to continue to seek opportunities and new ways to encourage dialogue and cooperation with the community as we look to stop violent extremists.

One of the most effective ways the Boston Police Department engaged the community was through the use of social media. Communication with the public was essential throughout the entire week. Employing the Boston Police Department's Facebook and Twitter social media accounts allowed us to stay immediately connected with our residents, tourists and business community. We were able to create and maintain a dialogue with our community partners. We learned that social media gave us the immediate ability to correct misinformation and break news. Even news outlets were waiting for our Twitter information before they reported on developments.

The Boston Police Department for many years has enjoyed long-standing professional and personal relationships that helped facilitate effective collaboration during this investigation.

As I previously testified, within moments of receiving notification from my officers about two explosions at the finish line, I contacted my colleagues, Special Agent in Charge of the FBI Boston Office, Richard DesLauriers and Colonel Timothy Alben, the Superintendent of the Massachusetts State Police and shared all of the information I had at the time. Both men immediately began to deploy resources to assist us. I want to also acknowledge our other partners who contributed to the efficiency of this operation: the Department of Justice, the U.S. Attorney's office, the Attorney General's office, FBI, ATF, ICE, National Guard and our state partners including the Executive Office of Public Safety and Security, the Massachusetts State Police, the Attorney General's office, Suffolk and Middlesex County District Attorneys Offices, Cambridge, Watertown, MIT, Transit and other neighboring police departments as well as everyone who worked tirelessly at our command posts looking for answers.

Contrasted with the strong partnership by local, state and federal law enforcement at the crime scenes and command posts, there is a gap with information sharing at a higher level while there are still opportunities to intervene in the planning of these terrorist events. I speak specifically about the Joint Terrorism Task Forces (JTTF).

The Boston Police Department has four members assigned to the JTTF in Boston. All have the appropriate security clearances and many of the Task Force Members have served in that capacity for a number of years. Information sharing with local law enforcement task force members need to be improved. The current MOU for JTTFs around the country needs to be amended to mandate immediate sharing of terror information that poses a threat to our cities.

In the aftermath of the Marathon bombings, the FBI improved information sharing. This sharing needs to continue and be consistent across all JTTFs. I urge you to review the current language of the JTTF MOU, its restrictions and suggested changes to the language and practices that members of the Major Cities Chiefs Association believe need to be addressed. This revision is critical as we all work to prevent further violent extremist attacks in this country.

Another challenge that occurred immediately after the explosions was the overload to cell phone service. They were rendered completely useless as a means of communication at the scene. The capacity of the cell phone companies was overrun by the general public usage, forcing first responders to rely exclusively on radios. Based on this experience, satellite phone technology is not effective for indoor command posts and communication across multiple bodies as they do not have the capacity to effectively function. I want to reiterate that law enforcement needs secure radio bandwidth in a public safety spectrum dedicated exclusively to public safety use now, as it is the only way to communicate during an event of this magnitude.

September 11, 2001 forever changed the way we do business. We need to be constantly vigilant and informed on emerging violent extremist threats. The worldwide exchange of information in law enforcement on terrorist threats and activities must continue. My experience with authorities from London, Northern Ireland, Israel and Jordan was critical to an understanding of what was happening on April 15, 2013. These international learning and training experiences need to be a fully integrated part of our preparedness.

In closing, on behalf of the Boston Police Department, I want to thank all of our law enforcement partners, State and City of Boston agencies, our outstanding medical teams, runners, spectators, Boston Athletic Association Volunteers, business owners and our Boston and neighboring community citizens for the outpouring of support that continues today. I would be remiss if I did not mention that the OneFund for the victims and families, established by Mayor Thomas Menino and Governor Deval Patrick is now at 61 million dollars and being distributed among victims.

I want to give special thanks to Mayor Menino and Governor Patrick for their support and deployment of the necessary resources that allowed us to do our jobs. Finally, I once again want to mention the names of those tragically lost at such young ages: Martin Richard, Lingzi Lu, Krystle Campbell and Officer Sean Collier.

This tragic series of events set in motion by two violent extremists intent on destruction has changed us, emboldened us, strengthened us, better trained us, bonded us – I am proud to be a small part of this impressive team that is Boston. Thank you