

Testimony of Edward F. Davis, III CEO of Edward Davis, LLC and Former Boston Police
Commissioner before the United States Senate Committee on Homeland Security and
Governmental Affairs

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Chairman Johnson, Ranking Member Carper, distinguished members of the Committee, thank you for inviting me to participate in the “Frontline Response to Terrorism in America” hearing. This is a critically important topic that touches every one of us and is in the forefront of the daily news across the country and throughout the world. It may be an active shooter incident in a conference room that devastated a community in San Bernardino or IEDs at the Boston Marathon finish line that destroyed the lives of many of my fellow Bostonians. The terrorists who commit these heinous crimes are radicalized here and abroad, but their theme and their intent is the same – chaos and destruction of civilian populations, offering no quarter to women or children. We must stop it and we must do so in an urgent and coordinated fashion.

In 2014 I testified before this Committee on what worked and what did not work during the Boston Marathon bombing response. At that time I recognized the deceased. Again today, I shall do the same: 8 year old Martin Richard, Krystle Campbell, Lingzi Lu and MIT Police Officer Sean Collier. I also recognize every other victim in the US and those abroad whose lives have been senselessly taken by terrorists. We can never forget them.

Progress has been made since we dealt with the Boston tragedy. We are seeing improvements in quality of intelligence, coordination of agencies, sharing of information, training and equipment. Game-changing technologies are being developed at a rapid rate and first responders (including the medical community) are receiving life-saving training and equipment, like the tourniquets issued to all Boston Police.

Recent terrorist attacks in San Bernardino, Chattanooga and Garland demand a common sense and coordinated response.

Community Policing plays a very important role in the prevention of these incidents. My former colleagues have long recognized the effectiveness of community policing and are laser focused on building community relationships, transparency and accountability. The community in every city and town across the US has the capacity to play a central role in preventing terrorist attacks. If this is going to happen, they need to trust the police. Information also needs to be shared with the community. Citizens can, if properly informed, provide early information on radicalization in their midst. Citizens need to understand what to look for and call the police when they see something that doesn't look right. This becomes most effective when reaching out to community members that are sometimes in the shadows: those that don't attend community meetings, or religious services and those activist groups that never sit down with law enforcement officials. We all need to move beyond our comfort zone if we really want change. Community Policing efforts need to be continuously and properly funded, trained up and they should be audited.

Intelligence gathering and sharing is another critical prevention tool utilized by federal, state and local agencies to fight terrorism. Fusion centers across the country provide crucial information every day in real time to multiple agencies and forward redacted information to the private

sector. Their value for prevention and crisis response management has been proven time and time again. Fusion centers should continue to meet annually to discuss issues, needs, concerns, and trends: what is working and what is not. Funding needs to be increased in order to attract talented analysts and grow properly managed and effective fusion centers that coordinate intelligence from all levels of government.

Since 2013, intelligence sharing among agencies continues to improve. Impediments have been removed. Federal, state and local law enforcement need to continue working together as equal members of Joint Terrorism task forces across the country and in Fusion Centers, with unrestricted access to information that could identify terrorists in their early stages and prevent catastrophic events. Separate systems are ripe for dysfunction. Any deterrent to this seamless coordination needs to be extinguished.

Social media is a proven, effective tool to communicate with and provide information to residents, business owners and visitors during a major emergency. The regular use of Twitter, Facebook and other social media outlets should be utilized by any agency that would benefit from community contact and used for notifications and information. But social media does more than notify, it begins a dialogue that helps understanding on all sides. This was proven during the Boston Marathon bombings when photographs, video and other tips were received via crowd sourcing; and information such as road closings, transportation status and correcting misinformation were all done via social media.

Community policing, intelligence gathering and sharing alone cannot prevent terrorism. Training is an essential component for prevention and response. Prior to the Marathon bombings the US Department of Justice, and the Department of Homeland Security through UASI and other funding programs provided opportunities for law enforcement to receive terrorism prevention and response training. This funding allowed cities and towns to train with other law enforcement partners and in the case of Boston, with the Boston medical community during a Mumbai style scenario and table top exercise. The building of these relationships and practicing emergency response together identified some gaps, solidified practices and saved countless lives at the Marathon. The provision of active shooter response technical assistance and other terrorist prevention assistance through DHS legislation is an important step in furthering prevention and saving lives during an actual incident. I strongly encourage this funding to continue.

Consistent funding for high quality equipment is necessary for responders during a major incident. This could range from armored vehicles to the critical need for tourniquets in every responding vehicle. Law enforcement needs the tools to safely take immediate action, contain the situation and assist those in need.

In closing, what I learned in my role during the terrorist attack in Boston is that there is no panacea. The reality is that such a challenge requires informed and trusting community members who are not afraid to speak, coordinated intelligence gathering and sharing among all equal partners who strive to prevent, highly trained and well equipped law enforcement fire and EMS to respond in unison and all of you, to continue to legislatively and financially support these efforts.