



**Statement of Michael C. Mines
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Before the Subcommittee on Intelligence,
Information Sharing, and Terrorism Risk Assessment,
House Homeland Security Committee
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Good morning, Chairman Harman, Ranking Member Reichert, and Members of the Subcommittee. I am pleased to be here today to demonstrate the Federal Bureau of Investigation's (FBI) commitment to the timely sharing of intelligence and information related to our national security.

As the Deputy Assistant Director of the Directorate of Intelligence, I want to share with you the central and critical mission of enhancing the FBI's ability to stay ahead of the threat by our collaborative efforts with our federal, state, local, and tribal partners. By these partners, I am referring to the network of fusion centers whose goal is to "maximize the ability to detect, prevent, investigate, and respond to criminal and terrorist activity."

Our participation in the fusion center network allows us to provide a national perspective on regional threats and trends, so we can better inform decision makers at all levels. I thank you for this opportunity to testify about the FBI's involvement with fusion centers.

Fusion Centers

The establishment of this general of fusion centers stemmed from The Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004, which required the President to facilitate the sharing of terrorism and homeland security information by establishing an information-sharing environment (ISE) to link people, systems, and information among federal, state, local, and tribal partners and the private sector. The Department of Homeland Security, along with the Department of Justice, established partnerships with fusion centers to provide operational intelligence advice and management assistance and to facilitate close communication. The goal was for the federal government, through the ISE, to rely on a nationwide network of fusion centers as the cornerstone for information-sharing with state, tribal and local governments.

In September 2005, the FBI's fusion center initiative began when FBI Director Robert S. Mueller III instructed all Assistant Directors in Charge (ADICs) and Special Agents in Charge (SACs) to ensure coordination among the FBI and all statewide fusion centers and significant major regional fusion centers. These activities were reinforced in 2006 with the dissemination of policy and guidelines for FBI integration with statewide fusion centers and the Department of Homeland Security, to jointly codify expectations for our roles in these centers and to place a minimum of one Special Agent (SA) and one Intelligence Analyst (IA) in the lead fusion center in each state.

The FBI has always depended on strong partnerships with our state, local, and tribal counterparts. Our participation in the fusion center network continues this tradition of partnering. The FBI recognizes that fusion centers are fundamental in facilitating the sharing of homeland security and criminal-related information and intelligence and

considers our participation in fusion centers an extension of our tradition of strong working relationships with our state, local, tribal, and private sector partners. The FBI has been an active participant in the information-sharing environment ISE Program Manager's development of Guideline 2 and is ensuring our partnerships with fusion centers are consistent with that guideline. The FBI is also an active partner in developing the implementation plan for a national level coordination group to facilitate timely information-sharing.

Fusion Centers and Information-Sharing

The FBI participates in One DOJ, the Information-Sharing Policy Coordination Committee, the Fusion Center Coordination Group, and the Global Justice Information Sharing Initiative Advisory Committee to define further, the relationship between the fusion centers and the FBI and the Department of Justice and the Department of Homeland Security. Fusion centers are fundamental in facilitating the sharing of homeland security and law enforcement related information among agencies in specific geographic areas. To that end, the FBI is committed to participating in all leading statewide fusion centers and select regional fusion centers. Further, our participation in these fusion centers has expanded and enhanced our efforts to share raw intelligence reporting and analysis with state, local, and tribal entities. Also, our efforts and ability to produce bulletins jointly with DHS, for the consumption of our law enforcement partners has been enhanced dramatically through our participation in the fusion centers.

FBI Participation in Fusion Centers

Currently, the FBI participates in 36 fusion centers, which is realized through

our 56 Field Intelligence Groups (FIGs), that serve as the primary link between the FBI and the fusion center network. To date, a total of 256 FIG personnel are assigned to the 36 fusion centers throughout the United States. Of these, 68 are Special Agents, 123 are Intelligence Analysts, and 65 are personnel assigned to other work roles (e.g., Language Analysts, Financial Analysts, and Investigative Support Specialists).

We have established connectivity to the FBI's secure level computer system in 25 of the 36 supported fusion centers. In addition, the FBI has obtained security clearances for 520 state and local personnel assigned to fusion centers.

Presently, 16 of the 36 fusion centers in which the FBI is involved are co-located with the respective division's FIG, leading to even stronger partnerships. Each FIG provides the intelligence link to the Joint Terrorism Task Forces (JTTFs) as well as fusion centers, FBIHQ, and the U.S. Intelligence Community at large.

How does the FBI decide which center to support?

Through our participation in One DOJ, the Information-Sharing Policy Coordination Committee, and the Fusion Center Coordination Group, we work to clearly define the relationship between the fusion centers, the FBI, other Justice Department components, and the Department of Homeland Security. The FBI's Directorate of Intelligence coordinates FBI participation in fusion centers with other Justice Department components, the Department of Homeland Security, and our other federal partners.

The FBI has adopted the Global Justice Fusion Center Guidelines as a tool to be used by field offices when assessing the fusion center environment in their territory and when prioritizing participation in multiple fusion centers.

All FBI field offices must assess the information-sharing environment within their territory and assign FBI FIG IAs and SAs to the leading fusion center in their area. FBI participation in the fusion center network is in the form of personnel and connectivity rather than direct funding.

The field office Special Agent in Charge (SAC) assesses the maturity of the fusion center by asking the following questions:

1. Does it have a facility and connectivity to local systems?
2. Will multiple agencies commit full-time personnel?
3. Is the fusion center attempting to meet the Global Justice Guidelines?
4. Does the fusion center cover a significant region or metropolitan area?

If the fusion center meets the aforementioned criteria, then the FBI participation is mandatory. If the fusion centers are not mature enough to warrant full time FBI personnel assignment, the SAC is directed to establish an effective and robust connectivity allowing for effective two way exchange of intelligence.

Given that fusion centers are created and managed by state and local entities, the FBI and our federal partners cannot mandate the centers to adhere to specific guidelines. However, we continue to work with the Department of Justice, Department of Homeland Security and Department of State to develop the suggested guidance for these centers.

The FBI subscribes to the concept of one federal voice when addressing issues relevant to the fusion center network, and we are committed to coordinating this outreach with our federal partners.

Fusion centers and JTTFs

FBI personnel selected for an assignment to a fusion center are selected from the FIG of the local FBI field office. As such, their participation serves as an extension of the FIG and a conduit for information-sharing and collaboration between the FBI and the fusion center. They accomplish their work as part of the fusion center team, ensuring that the local FIG is responsive to the needs of the fusion center, while looking for opportunities to leverage fusion center and FIG resources as a “force multiplier.”

FBI personnel assigned to fusion centers are tasked with four basic missions:

1. Establish a gateway/connectivity between the FBI and the federal, state, local and tribal partners across all investigative programs.
2. Provide an effective two way flow of information through the intelligence cycle (e.g., requirements, taskings, intelligence and feedback) between the fusion center and the FBI.
3. Participate as an investigative/analytic partner in uncovering, understanding, reporting and responding to threats.
4. Ensure the timely two way flow of terrorism-related threat information between the fusion center and the local JTTF and FIG.

All terrorism information and intelligence generated from the fusion center/FIG relationship will continue to be directed to the JTTFs. The JTTFs remain the recognized and designated environment for which federal to local operational partnerships take place to detect, investigate, and disrupt terrorist threats or pursue perpetrators.

There are 101 JTTF locations throughout the United States, involving the participation of 5,535 investigative personnel from more than 700 federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies.

Challenges Ahead

The FBI recognizes how essential fusion centers are, and I will address some of the challenges that we face today. In our efforts to establish and operate these fusion centers, we encountered some limitations: accessing information from federal systems or networks, obtaining security clearances, funding, and sustainability, and developing sufficient guidance and training. We are working with federal agencies to review these information systems and discover ways to streamline system access. We have set goals to reduce the time to obtain a security clearance. And lastly, we are working with the Department of Homeland Security to establish guidelines and training for fusion center personnel.

The FBI is in the process of working through these challenges and harmonizing with the Department of Homeland Security and our state, local, and tribal partners to resolve these issues.

FBI Cooperation with Federal Partners

The FBI participated in establishing the Global Justice Fusion Center Guidelines published in 2005, and we continue to participate in the National Fusion Center Coordination Group, which I co-chair with DHS. The FBI is committed to sharing information with all intelligence initiatives, including the state and local fusion centers. This will be accomplished through participation in working groups, committees, and ongoing liaison.

Our participation in the fusion centers has enhanced our ability to provide intelligence and direction to federal, state, local, and tribal partners on the tactics and vulnerabilities of international and domestic terrorist groups, as well as potential indicators of terrorist activity. Insofar as it is important that the federal government speaks with one voice on terrorism, 80 percent of the assessments and bulletins issued in FY2007 were produced jointly with the DHS.

The FBI continues to partner with DHS to further clarify our respective roles and avoid unnecessary duplication. We look forward to additional coordination with the Department of Justice, the Department of Homeland Security, and other federal partners in the fusion center initiative. Meanwhile, we are pleased that state and local fusion center personnel will be participating with us and our federal partners in the Interagency Threat Assessment and Coordination Group (ITACG). Just as the fusion centers strive to attain a shared view of the threats in their specific regions, the ITACG will facilitate the production of “federally-coordinated” terrorism information products.

Our participation with these fusion centers will strengthen the FBI’s relationships with its law enforcement and U.S. Intelligence Community partners, allow for the exploitation of robust intelligence streams, and expand the FBI’s intelligence capabilities.

I appreciate the opportunity to be here today, and I would be happy to answer any of your questions.