

National Capital Region CVE Workshop Summary

Overview

A two day workshop was held on July 11 & 12, 2012 over Countering Violent Extremism in the National Capital Region. The workshop was hosted by the CIA Threat Management Unit in partnership with the Department of Homeland Security, National Counterterrorism Center, Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation, and the Office of the Director of National Intelligence. It was attended by approximately 160 state and local law enforcement officials from the National Capital Region. Panelists represented the hosting departments and local law enforcement. The first day's focus was on Al Qa'ida and non-Al Qa'ida inspired terrorism and were discussed both generally and through some specific case studies provided by DHS, NCTC, and FBI representatives. The second day focused on community-oriented policing, building communities of trust, and other ways for law enforcement officials to become active in their communities in order to prevent homegrown violent extremism.

Panel Summaries

Al Qa'ida Inspired Homegrown Violent Extremism

The panel focused on how the agencies see the threat, what they perceive as targets, and what local law enforcement can do to help combat the Al Qa'ida inspired threat.

- Threats from Al Qa'ida inspired homegrown violent extremism are evolving away from complex attacks to lone actor and small arms attacks, and Al Qa'ida is openly supporting the evolution.
- Al Qa'ida inspired violent extremists have been targeting military buildings and personnel, through small arms attacks.
- Takeaways include: preforming reporting from the local level, increasing dialogue with the community, and continuing suspicious activity reporting.

Non-Al Qa'ida Inspired Violent Extremism

The panel provided insight into domestic violent extremist groups ranging from White Supremacists to militia groups, as well as Lebanese Hezbollah.

- Many domestic groups are nonviolent, however each contain small sections that have and continue to pose a violent threat.
- Hezbollah's presence in the US is based solely on fundraising and is not operational; however there is a continued threat to US interests abroad.
- Takeaway: Domestic extremist groups continue to pose a violent threat.

In-Depth Case Studies on Violent Extremism

The case studies provide insight into homegrown violent extremist threats. The cases presented were on Anders Breivik, sovereign citizens, and Hosam Smadi.

- Breivik's manifesto is unlikely to inspire others ideologically, however it can be used as a guide for future attacks in terms of operations.
- Sovereign citizens are posing a greater violent threat to law enforcement and thus officials need to be informed and alert.
- Takeaways: case studies are easy for local law enforcement to take back and share; case studies provide first hand examples for law enforcement to learn from.

The Role of the Internet in Radicalization to Violence

- Terrorist groups have been increasing their presence on the internet, especially on social media sites.
- Radicalization is not a linear process, but social media can serve of a catalyst in the process.
- Domestic extremist groups use the internet for targeting, recruitment, and propaganda.

Building Resilience to Violent Extremism: Somali-American Case

Dr. Stevan Wiene presented his research on CVE among Somali-Americans in Minneapolis and St. Paul.

- The major risks to radicalization include a lack of communication to educate kids on the realities of Somalia and a lack of resources to keep kids out of trouble.
- Building resilience in the community requires active partnerships between family, community and government.
- Takeaway: some of this study may be generalizable, however the best way to build resilience is to go and engage with the community.

Incorporating Research and Analysis on the Behaviors and Indicators of Violent Extremism into Suspicious Activity Reporting

- SAR training is critical in helping to understand what to report, why the reporting is important, how to report, and what happens to a report.
- Incorporating SAR into daily patrolling is an essential step in combating violent extremism.

The Importance of Community Oriented Policing

This panel brought together chiefs from two local county law enforcement departments and a retired FBI representative to talk about community policing and how to better integrate it into local law enforcement departments.

- Identifying a common thread that resonates with everyone in the community is a good way to initiate building trust.
- Community policing is not soft on crime, mutual trust leads to partnerships and information sharing.
- He stressed that community policing is a philosophy and still requires a treating people with dignity and respect it is an investment for community based problem solving for the future.
- Takeaway: the best way engage a community and avoid securitizing the relationship is to start by discussing issues that affect everyone and to show the main goal is public safety.
- Takeaway: spreading success stories is the best way to inform others about community policing, whether they are in the same department or in a different community; executive involvement is also needed.
- Takeaway: recruitment of diverse staff can help build in-roads; encourage youth to think about a career in law enforcement.

Building Communities of Trust: Partnership between the ADAMS Center and Law Enforcement

In this panel, a local Imam from ADAMS, a local law enforcement officer, a representative from NCTC, and community NGO shared a local success story regarding partnerships to increase public safety.

- The Imam invited NCTC alongside with a local Sheriff's Deputy's presentation on internet safety and in-roads were made into the community regarding internet safety awareness.
- The community had already developed trust with the Deputy Sheriff, and the Imam, but was unfamiliar with federal government; because presentations were given the community responded very well.
- Takeaway: the Deputy spoke about his use of "common thread" issues to build trust with the community and to work with parents to build a foundation for a community trust.
- Takeaway: it is important for communities to know that the federal government is an ally in CVE and public safety.
- Takeaway: the best way is to communicate success is by sharing positive feedback with staff and communities.

Cultural Demystification Training: Understanding Protected Religious & Societal Practices

Nawar Shora from TSA gave a presentation on demystifying Islam and Arab-American culture. Understanding communities will make community policing, developing partnerships, and identifying legitimate criminal behavior easier.

Informing Frontline Officers through Enhanced Training and Better Analysis

- Fusion centers help serve local law enforcement and they are continuing to reach out to the law enforcement community to build a better understanding of informational needs.
- The goal is for local law enforcement to become more involved in reporting SAR's and working with fusion centers to help them better tailor their products and leverage their grassroots analytic capability more effectively.
- The Major City Chiefs is working with DHS to develop a CVE curriculum for law enforcement that should be finished by the end of this year.

Closing: Chief Lanier, MPD

Chief Lanier from the Washington Metro Police Department provided closing remarks for the workshop. She identified three main themes: identifying the threat and preventing it, community policing, and reducing the violent extremist threat.

- Local police are no longer demanding information from the intelligence community to do their jobs, the IC is now asking for information from the local police to do *their* job.
- Community policing is about creating bonds to encourage information sharing and develop public safety partnerships.
- Education on community policing is key to making sure that threats get reported effectively.