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Statement for the Record of
The Honorable Michael E. Leiter
Director, National Counterterrorism Center
on
Information Sharing with State, Local, and Tribal Authorities
before the
House Committee on Homeland Security
Subcommittee on Intelligence, Information Sharing and Terrorism Risk Assessment
September 24, 2008

Introduction

In October 2007 the President issued his National Strategy for Information Sharing. This strategy sets forth his vision for establishing a more integrated information sharing capability aimed at ensuring that those who need information to protect our Nation from terrorism receive that information. The Director of National Intelligence (DNI), in his role as the leader of the Intelligence Community, has guided the Community's implementation of key parts of the President's strategy to include the establishment of the Interagency Threat Assessment and Coordination Group at the National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC). Under the leadership of the DNI, NCTC, along with our partners at the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), continues to make the timely flow of accurate information to our State, Local, and Tribal (SLT) partners a critical mission priority and focus. Through a variety of activities, including meetings with city, state and regional law enforcement and security officials, presentations at key law enforcement conferences and training centers, as well as briefings and training sessions at State and Local Fusion Centers, NCTC informs SLT partners of the Center's mission, its capabilities and the range of intelligence products available to them. Working closely with our key federal partners, we provide SLT organizations with terrorism intelligence analysis

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and other appropriate information needed to fulfill their missions. Finally, we inform and help shape Intelligence Community products by providing advice, counsel, and subject-matter expertise to better meet the needs of our SLT partners. Let me briefly elaborate on some ways in which NCTC has facilitated improved information sharing with our State and local partners.

NCTC's Perspective on Information Sharing

The NCTC understands the importance of preparing intelligence products that address the counterterrorism concerns of SLT agencies. As a result, the NCTC launched the *Terrorism Summary* (TERRSUM) -- a SECRET collateral digest of terrorism-related intelligence of interest to Federal and non-Federal law enforcement, security and military personnel.

Produced Monday through Friday, the *Terrorism Summary* includes terrorism-related intelligence available to NCTC and other Intelligence Community elements. The product is posted on NCTC Online-Secret (NOL-S) and is available to State and Local Fusion Centers nationwide via a number of SECRET-level networks. Thanks to DHS, there are 300 state and local analysts with access to NOL-S through their accounts on the Homeland Secure Data Network (HSDN) system installed in fusion centers around the country. The *Terrorism Summary* joins existing products designed to support SLT entities, including the *Threat Review* -- a SECRET collateral compilation of terrorist threat reporting received at the Federal level and the *Terrorism Intelligence Product Sharing* (TIPS) product line. TIPS products provide SLT consumers increased access to NCTC finished intelligence analysis through the accelerated review and sanitization of highly classified products for publication at the SECRET level.

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We recognize the need for improved dissemination of products and making our intelligence as accessible as possible to our SLT partners. The ITACG has worked closely with NCTC's software developers to improve the NOL-S portal to ensure that the "look and feel" of the portal is conducive to SLT partners' needs especially at the State and Local Fusion Centers nationwide. As a result, the new interface is more intuitive and easier to use. In addition, the portal contains a greater number of products and more up-to-date counterterrorism information from throughout the Intelligence Community. We have begun incorporating additional recommendations from the ITACG into the next version of the portal interface.

To better understand the needs of SLT authorities, the ITACG has prepared a survey in coordination with the FBI, DHS, and the Program Manager - Information Sharing Environment (PM-ISE). The survey will help the Intelligence Community understand how well its intelligence products are received by SLT consumers of intelligence, the difficulties that SLT organizations may encounter trying to receive intelligence products, and how to better address the SLT need for intelligence. The survey is undergoing final review, and will be disseminated to the field shortly.

The ITACG has also identified several instances where Intelligence Community "For Official Use Only" (FOUO) products were not easily accessible to SLT organizations. These products were perfectly suited for SLT consumers of intelligence, but were not previously available on official UNCLASSIFIED systems. The ITACG negotiated the posting of these products onto DHS' Homeland Security Information Network-Intelligence (HSIN-I) and

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FBI's Law Enforcement Online (LEO), the primary vehicles through which SLT entities access unclassified counterterrorism, homeland security and WMD information. Today, our SLT partners, particularly State and Local Fusion Centers around the country, can access information from NCTC, the Department of Defense, and other agencies via HSIN-I and LEO.

The ITACG is also drafting a reference guide for SLT consumers of intelligence. This SLT Glossary will help SLT entities better understand source statements and estimative language found in Intelligence Community threat products, so that SLT decision-makers can appropriately address threat reporting within their jurisdictions. This glossary contains a list of acronyms, abbreviations, and terminology typically found in intelligence reporting and used within the Intelligence Community that will assist SLT intelligence consumers better understand the context of the reports they receive.

The ITACG will continue to evolve. In consultation with our Federal, State, Local and Tribal counterparts on the ITACG Advisory Council, we are in the process of expanding representation on the ITACG Detail. The Detail currently consists of four State and Local law enforcement officers and one part-time Tribal representative. We hope to increase those numbers to a total of ten State and Local personnel, including a full-time Tribal representative, a firefighter, a health and human services representative, a homeland security officer, and a State and Local intelligence analyst. This will allow ITACG to provide perspectives beyond law enforcement to Intelligence Community reporting. Additionally, having given greater consideration to the level of responsibility of the ITACG Director, we

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have proposed making the ITACG Directorship a Senior Intelligence Service-level position. This will place the ITACG leadership on a more even playing field with its Intelligence Community and SLT partners, and reflects the level of commitment the Intelligence Community has made to ensure the success of ITACG.

The Way Ahead

NCTC, indeed the entire Intelligence Community, understands that we must continue to stress the dissemination and access of counterterrorism, homeland security, and weapons of mass destruction (WMD) information to our SLT consumers of intelligence. Increased access will allow SLT entities to more effectively identify, pre-empt, and respond to terrorist threats. To accomplish this goal, we will collectively need to expand the number of SECRET clearances granted to SLT partners; we also need to continue to build upon the work that has already been done to streamline and expedite the security clearance adjudication process. SLT consumers of intelligence will also require greater access to SECRET intelligence information technology systems. DHS has and continues to increase the number of HSDN sites nation-wide.

Intelligence Community leaders will need to continue encouraging their analytic organizations to prepare FOUO versions of their products whenever possible. Additionally, we must continue to encourage the production of intelligence reporting which directly addresses the needs and concerns of SLT entities. The ITACG will continue its outreach to Intelligence Community analytic entities to promote the production of intelligence products written at the FOUO level and tailored for SLT consumers of intelligence.

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NCTC also believes that increased Federal and State and Local analytic interaction, especially with State and Local Fusion Centers, has shown demonstrable and positive results and should be further expanded. Periodic, formal, Intelligence Community-sponsored, SLT-focused forums serve to enhance information sharing by cementing the federal and SLT intelligence partnership. Analytic forums -- such as NCTC's "Current Terrorist Enemies of the United States: Prospects for a New U.S. Administration" and DHS' Homeland Security-State and Local Intelligence Community of Interest (HS-SLIC) "National Analytic Conference: Domestic Extremist Subcultures in America" -- are crucial to developing our SLT analytic counterparts. Continued and expanded outreach to SLT agencies is vital to everyone's success in this critical mission.

Information sharing is among NCTC's and our Intelligence Community partners' highest priorities, and significant progress has been achieved. Challenges to information sharing remain as we seek the proper balance between and among a host of technical, legal, security and privacy issues; however, as NCTC and our partners at DHS, and FBI and PM-ISE are committed to ensuring information sharing between the Federal Government and our SLT partners continues to improve.

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