Community policing analysis

A great deal of the responsibility for preparing for and responding to terrorist events rests with local police departments. Community policing presents an overarching philosophical orientation that agencies can use to better deal with the threat of terrorist events and the fear that they may create. The community policing philosophy can be roughly divided into three interrelated elements: organizational change, problem solving, and external partnerships.

Each element applies to the issues of terrorism prevention and response, as well as to fear. Since 11 September, the federal government has greatly increased terrorism prevention and response efforts. However, a large degree of responsibility for dealing with these threats and for alleviating citizen fear rests at the local level. To some degree, the majority of local police departments in the United States have worked to reduce the fear of future terrorist attacks and to prevent and plan for attacks.

Law enforcement officials are strategically rethinking public security procedures and practices to maximize the potential of their resources. The philosophy of community policing is important for police in preparing for possible terrorist acts and in responding to the fear they may create. Community policing involves broadening the nature and number of police functions compared to traditional policing models. It emphasizes organizational change, active problem solving, and external partnerships to address issues that concern both the police and citizens.

In recent years, the philosophy of community policing appears to have been adopted to differing degrees by a large number of law enforcement entities

in the United States. For example, a 2001 U. S. Department of Justice report indicates that from 1997 to 1999, departments employing personnel designated as community police rose from 34% to 64%. 1 In addition, the absolute number of community policing officers rose from 21, 000 to 113, 000. However, traumatic events can cause organizations to revert to more traditional modes of operation.

The events of 11 September may have been no exception for U. S. law enforcement. Some police departments may have been quick to dismiss community policing efforts and programs for seemingly more immediate and pressing security concerns. However, the community policing philosophy is well positioned to play a central role in local law enforcement responses to terrorism. Community policing shifts the focus of police by placing equal emphasis on crime control, order maintenance, and service provision. , 3 In addition, it asks police to work with citizens and with other government agencies in efforts to increase overall quality of life. Thus, the model moves away from police-dominated crime control through reactive responses to calls for service. Community policing models move toward active problem solving centered on the underlying conditions that give rise to crime and disorder and on fostering partnerships between the police and the community. , 5, 6 There is no one commonly recognized definition of community policing. Here we offer one possible definition that we will then apply to preventing and responding to terrorist events. Community policing can be defined as a philosophy that, through the delivery of police services, focuses on crime and social disorder; the philosophy includes aspects of

traditional law enforcement as well as prevention, problem-solving tactics, and partnerships.

As a fundamental shift from traditional, reactive policing, community policing stresses the prevention of crime. Community policing requires police and citizens to join as partners in identifying and effectively addressing the underlying conditions that give rise to crime and disorder. Community policing can be roughly divided into three inter-related elements: organizational change, problem solving, and external partnerships. The Community Policing Philosophy Organizational Change

Ideally, community policing should be adopted organization-wide and be reflected through department participation at all levels as well as through the organization's mission, goals, objectives, performance evaluations, hiring and promotion practices, training, and all other systems that define organizational culture and activities. One of the most important specific aspects of organizational change relevant to community policing is a flattened organizational structure.

Community policing departments are often less hierarchical, supporting management's dispersion of decision-making authority to the lowest organizational level and holding those individuals accountable for the outcomes. A second important element of organizational change is fixed geographic responsibility. Officers or deputies are assigned to fixed geographic areas for extended periods, based on social and cultural considerations and on the assumption that this fosters better communication with residents; increases the police officers' ability to understand, revent,

and respond to community problems; and enhances accountability to the citizens in that area. Problem Solving Community policing departments also actively address the underlying conditions that give rise to or facilitate crime or disorder in an effort to prevent future problems by identifying and analyzing problems and by developing tailored strategies that may include traditional and nontraditional responses that focus on deterring offenders, protecting likely victims, and making locations less conducive to crime and disorder.

Departments should use a wide array of relevant traditional and nontraditional data sources to better understand and evaluate the nature of problems and work in conjunction with the community and other organizations to develop effective long-term solutions. Problem solving often manifests itself in the " scanning, analysis, response and assessment" problem-solving model. , 8 Departments first identify relevant or perceived crime problems (scanning), determine the nature and underlying conditions that give rise to those problems (analysis), craft and implement interventions that are linked to that analysis (response), and evaluate its effectiveness (assessment). The process is understood as continually involving feedback among the components. For instance, through in-depth analysis, agencies may come to define problems differently, effectively returning to the scanning phase.

Likewise, an assessment may determine that a response was ineffective and that the problem requires additional analysis. External Partnerships Under a community policing philosophy, departments partner with other government, social service, and community agencies in attempts to identify and address

persistent problems in the community. They form external partnerships in recognition of other agencies' unique strengths, tools, and expertise that can be leveraged when addressing community problems.

The police are only one of a host of local government agencies responsible for responding to community problems. Under community policing, coordination with other government agencies in developing comprehensive and effective solutions is essential. In addition, the police are encouraged to develop working partnerships with civic and community groups to accurately survey community needs and priorities and to use the public as a resource in problem solving and in developing and implementing interventions. Community Policing and Terrorism Prevention and Response

Organizational Change A flat organizational structure may ensure more effective terrorist prevention and response. It has been demonstrated that local law enforcement officers are likely to come into contact with those who may be directly or indirectly involved in terrorist activities and most certainly will be among the first responders to any future terrorist attack. Empowering officers at lower levels with decision-making authority and familiarizing them with making (and taking responsibility for) important decisions could be of value in any crisis.

In a terrorist event, there may be little time for decisions to move up the chain of command. Officers who are accustomed to making decisions and retaining authority may be better prepared to respond quickly and decisively to any event. In addition, in terms of prevention, developing a flat organizational structure can help lower-level officers feel free to pursue leads

or suspected terrorist activity. In addition, having fixed geographic responsibility may assist officers in identifying possible terrorist threats.

Officers who work in a community or neighborhood for an extended time can develop specific intelligence concerning resident and community activities. This street-level knowledge is a vital part of counter-intelligence efforts. Problem Solving Problem-solving models are well suited to preventing and responding to terrorist activity. Departments can use many existing data sources ahead of time to develop detailed risk management and crisis plans. Identifying potential terrorist targets in local jurisdictions is an important first step.

Police can determine what in their jurisdictions (dams, electric grids, chemical warehouses, large-scale public gatherings) are potential terrorist targets. Community policing encourages agencies to conduct complex analyses of the possible threats and of their relative likelihood of occurring. Finally, agencies in conjunction with other government, social, and community entities can develop detailed crisis prevention and response plans. Finally, the community policing model encourages continual refinement of these plans to suit changing conditions and threat levels. External Partnerships

The threat of terrorism provides a unique opportunity to create partnerships with citizens, other government organizations, and other law enforcement agencies. Prior apathy toward these partnerships that may have existed is often reduced by the presence of terrorist targets and threats. Recent terrorist events and associated concerns may have created a sense of

uneasiness and urgency in many communities. The specter of additional terrorist activity has created an opportunity to galvanize local police to work with their communities, other law enforcement agencies, and local, state, and federal entities.

The community policing model encourages the development of such ongoing and effective partnerships, which can be invaluable in preventing terrorist activity because of increased opportunities for intelligence gathering and sharing. They can also be central to developing coordinated responses to any actual terrorist events. Community policing encourages agencies to establish and expand upon existing partnerships with a goal of developing model crisis plans and processes to deal with the aftermath of terrorist incidents.

These plans and processes would consider the needs and concerns of all community stakeholders. Law enforcement and local government can come together with community partners to develop a plan on how to prepare for such a crisis, what to do in the event of such a crisis, and how to cope with its aftermath. Community Policing and Fear of Terrorism By definition, the primary goal of terrorism is to create fear and an atmosphere of uncertainty. This fear can greatly affect the quality of life of many individuals, extending far beyond those who are directly affected by a terrorist event.

In the United States the police have increasingly been asked to address the fear of crime generally. The expansion of their role to include quality of life and partnerships with citizens, as emphasized by the community policing philosophy, has increasingly brought fear of crime under the purview of

police professionals. As A. Steven Dietz stated in " Evaluating Community Policing," " Reduction of fear of crime has been associated with community policing programs since their inception. " 9 It is clear that reducing fear of crime has become an essential element and an ften explicitly articulated goal of community policing. 10 Thus, community policing finds itself well positioned to deal with issues of fear that can arise as a direct result of terrorist activity. In addition, dealing directly with citizen fear of crime is important, as unchecked fear of terrorism (or feelings of revenge) can manifest itself in hate crimes and illegal bigotry targeted particularly at people who are Muslim and of Middle Eastern descent. These are important social problems that law enforcement should be prepared to respond to and prevent.

Organizational Change Adoption of the community policing philosophy partly involves reengineering department processes and resources away from randomness and reactivity and toward information- and service-driven community-based approaches. Police officers are often assigned to specific geographic areas to foster communication with residents and are accountable to those residents and their superiors for the safety and well-being of that area. Other aspects of the agency are realigned to support the most fundamental focus of all activities, the beat.

As a result of this emphasis, police officers should be more attuned to rising levels of community concern and fear and, by virtue of the relationships they have established within the community, be in a position to respond effectively to those needs and concerns. Community policing has been found to engender trust and increased satisfaction among residents for the police,

11 which in periods of heightened unrest can be parlayed into dealing more effectively with community fear that can be based on both rational and irrational concerns. Problem Solving

Community policing encourages a deeper understanding of the fear that may result from terrorist events. The first step is to determine whether fear is a problem in the community and to determine the extent of the problem. Police can conduct citizen interviews, surveys, and face-to-face interactions to determine levels of citizen fear. Then they can analyze the underlying conditions that give rise to or encourage fear. Perhaps it is a result of a specific terrorist-related fear such as living near what is perceived to be a potential terrorist target, or the fear may involve fear for loved ones who reside in high-threat areas.

Finally, perhaps the fear is a more general fear of terrorism. In any event, law enforcement should work to understand the extent and nature of fear in their community if they want to develop effective responses. Law enforcement should then work in partnership with other community groups to develop responses aimed at decreasing levels of fear if they are negatively affecting quality of life and are determined to be highly exaggerated.

Community policing efforts to deal with citizen fear of crime have included foot and vehicle patrols in high-crime neighborhoods, as well as community meetings, citizen patrols, neighborhood cleanup programs, opening neighborhood substations, and citizen awareness campaigns. 12 Clearly, citizen fear of terrorist events is somewhat different than fear of crime

generally. However, some of the same techniques may also be useful for reducing this type of fear. For example, citizen awareness campaigns can inform citizens about what the local police and city government are doing to prevent and prepare for possible terrorist events.

Crisis response plans can be discussed in addition to general prevention activities. Citizens can be informed about what they themselves can do—such as preparing emergency survival kits for their own homes—to prepare for possible terrorist events and can be informed of evacuation routes to use in the event of a large-scale disaster. Finally, law enforcement agencies should assess the effectiveness of any fear-reduction efforts and modify their responses accordingly. External Partnerships

The emphasis on building strong community partnerships encouraged by a community policing philosophy may also help reduce citizen fear of terrorist events. These partnerships may be able to directly reduce fear by increasing citizen feelings of efficacy, increasing the bond among neighbors themselves, and involving citizens in prevention and preparedness activities. Encouraging citizen involvement in neighborhood watch, youth education, and cleanup programs can increase social cohesion among citizens and has been found to result in decreased fear of crime. 3 It is likely that these increasing feelings of efficacy in response to terrorist events may have similar effects. Citizens can be involved to differing degrees in prevention and preparedness discussions. Conclusion Immediately following 11 September 2001, local law enforcement agencies in the United States responded to disasters, lost officers, were placed on various levels of alert, provided a visible security presence at public events, partnered with federal

intelligence agencies, and investigated hate crimes at greatly increased rates and with a new urgency.

Community policing offers law enforcement agencies an overarching orientation from which to conduct this myriad of tasks. Since its inception, the success of community policing has been based on the relationships built between law enforcement and community members. These relationships, often expressed as collaborative partnerships, have served functions as diverse as the communities that maintain them: solving traffic problems, shutting down drug houses, keeping children safe in school and after school, referring offenders to drug courts, and cleaning up abandoned properties.

Addressing these quality-of-life issues has helped give citizens a voice in the public safety of their community and an active way to address crime and their fear of crime. For the past 20 years, community policing has encouraged community members to partner with law enforcement to identify potential threats and create a climate of safety. The community policing philosophy is well positioned to take a major role in preventing and responding to terrorism and in efforts to reduce citizen fear.

Instead of de-emphasizing community policing efforts, police departments should realize that community policing may be more important than ever in dealing with terrorism in their communities. Bibliography Trevor Bennett, " Confidence in the Police as a Mediating Factor in the Fear of Crime," International Review of Victimology, vol. 3, 1994, pp. 179–194. Lee P. Brown and Mary Ann Wycoff, " Policing Houston: Reducing Fear and Improving

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