

## III. Establishing Partnerships

### WHY PARTNER?

When federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies develop partnerships with members of the American Muslim, Arab, and Sikh communities, they obtain cultural and linguistic insights, information, cooperation, and informed observations that can become part of a productive strategy for crime prevention as well as a catalyst for respectful policing. In the post-September 11<sup>th</sup> environment, the information gleaned from these community partnerships has become invaluable to counterterrorism efforts to gather domestic intelligence and to develop effective hate crime protocols. Further, these partnerships have allayed community fears, helped to ensure effective hate crimes investigations and prosecutions, and fostered open communications.

### THE COMMUNITY PERSPECTIVE

From the perspective of the American Muslim, Arab, and Sikh communities, these partnerships are critical for three reasons. First, these partnerships help to ensure the mitigation of damage to the community that could result from counterterrorism initiatives that are by their very nature intrusive. Second, communities need partnerships with law enforcement to guarantee the effective investigation and prosecution of hate crimes and hate incidents that have recently reached previously unseen levels. Since September 11, 2001, members of these communities have experienced hate crimes, hate incidents, and discrimination in the workplace, schools, public areas, airports, and in encounters with law enforcement and other government agencies. In order to redress this burgeoning trend, affected communities need the assistance of law enforcement to investigate, prosecute, and detain individuals who pose a threat to them. Communities that have ongoing relationships with law enforcement leaders are more likely to obtain swift, effective, and appropriate responses to these incidents.

Finally, the development of law enforcement-community partnerships presents an opportunity for the Muslim, Arab, and Sikh communities to affirm their willingness to actively participate in homeland security efforts which will help to debunk growing negative stereotypes. Members of these communities stand ready and willing to assist law enforcement, as they too have a stake in rooting out terrorists: these communities know that it is in their interest to assist law enforcement in counterterrorism investigations because they and their families could be potential victims of the next attack.

### THE LAW ENFORCEMENT PERSPECTIVE

While many law enforcement agencies have adopted a community-policing strategy for interdicting guns and drugs and for solving violent crimes, community-policing has not been the dominant protocol in counterterrorism investigations. This historic lack of a community-based approach to terrorism investigations developed for a variety of reasons. First, the lack of local political will to address terrorism as a serious domestic concern prior to September 11<sup>th</sup> discouraged state and local investigators from giving counterterrorism investigations high priority and full cooperation. Additionally, federal counterterrorism investigators' traditional reliance on an expertise model of policing emphasized the analysis of domestic and friendly foreign government intelligence information rather than the development of partnerships with state and local law enforcement and local community leaders. Finally, community-based terrorism investigations have traditionally been stymied by the historical partnership between counterterrorism investigators and immigration authorities.

After September 11<sup>th</sup>, it became increasingly clear that community input and assistance is even more critical to counterterrorism investigations than it was to traditional investigations focused on guns, drugs and violent crime. In traditional investigations, law enforcement is aided in its work by the existence of a crime scene and/or a focus on a specific criminal object, e.g. a weapon or narcotics. In contrast, terrorism investigations focus on information and the nuanced analysis of that information. Further, the primary goal of a counterterrorism investigation is to prevent, detect, and deter crime before it occurs. Both the relevant cultural information and the linguistic expertise needed for accurate analysis reside predominantly in the Arab, Muslim, and Sikh communities in this country; therefore, a community-based approach is not only beneficial to counterterrorism investigations, it is an essential component for success.

### THE GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

The war on terrorism cannot be won with military might alone. The most dangerous threats in this war are rooted in the successful propagation of anger and fear directed at unfamiliar cultures and people. The only way to ultimately counter this type of threat is to address the anger and fear through the presentation and demonstration of alternative paradigms.

Currently, extremists—both those abroad who spread anti-American propaganda and those at home who tout anti-Arab and Islamophobic messages of hate—are propagating a series of ideas that are based on the notion that Islam is ultimately incompatible with American ideals. Partnerships between American Arab and Muslim com-

munities and law enforcement have the potential to offer an ideological counterweight to this idea. Specifically, the very existence of such partnerships explicitly demonstrates the desire of these communities to actively participate in American life. Additionally these partnerships demonstrate the American government's need for assistance from these communities. The partnerships envisioned in this Guide may facilitate discussions that would better inform U.S. policies, both domestic and foreign, by including the perspectives of communities who have a unique understanding of international concerns.

The key to this alternative paradigm is not only the existence of partnerships but also the international dissemination of information about the mutually beneficial successes achieved through them. This communication can occur through a number of channels including: the international media, international law enforcement associations, and community members who are willing to discuss their experiences with their international counterparts. By communicating the success of these partnerships internationally, the myth that being an American and a Muslim, Arab, or Sikh is an inherent contradiction, can begin to be debunked.

For all these reasons, in a post-September 11<sup>th</sup> world, it is critical for law enforcement and the Muslim, Arab, and Sikh communities in this country to strengthen their relationships. Historically, these relationships have not existed in any significant way. Prior to September 11<sup>th</sup>, law enforcement primarily focused their community policing efforts on other communities of color—Latinos, Asians, African-Americans, etc. Similarly, hate crime enforcement efforts mostly focused on crimes against the gay community, Jews, Latinos, Asians and African-Americans. Consequently few state, local or federal law enforcement agencies had any significant contact with the Arab, Muslim, or Sikh communities prior to September of 2001.

It is the premise of the Partnering for Prevention and Community Safety Initiative that Americans will only truly be safe from terrorist attacks when law enforcement agencies adopt a strategy focused on building trust and strengthening relationships with the Muslim, Arab, and Sikh communities. This paradigm is not only more consistent with our constitutional ideals, it also represents our best hope for securing our homeland.

## PRECEDENT: ARE THERE LESSONS TO BE LEARNED FROM HISTORICAL LAW ENFORCEMENT – COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS?

During the 1990's, there was a dramatic transformation in the style of policing practiced by many large urban police forces. Instead of a top-down, military or "expertise" model of policing, some cities began to adopt a community policing strategy. While such strategies differed from city to city, the basic framework for this new model embodied the principle that effective law enforcement entails partnerships between police organizations and the communities they serve.

One example of this strategy, the so-called "Boston Model of Community Policing," is representative of that change in focus and is worth examining in this context because it has been studied intensely and has received widespread acclaim. In addition, the philosophy and principles animating the Boston Model are specifically relevant to the adoption of a "partnership" approach in a post-September 11<sup>th</sup> world. Although this guide is focused on terrorism and hate crime prevention and the Boston Model was focused on general violent crime reduction, some of the lessons learned about community policing in Boston are relevant to the current post-September 11<sup>th</sup> situation.

### THE BOSTON MODEL

A 1992 gang-related shooting and stabbing which occurred during a funeral service at Morning Star Baptist Church in Boston was the catalyst for the development of a new approach to public safety and the creation of community and law enforcement organizational structures that would be needed to implement it. While there was considerable tension between the community and local law enforcement following the Morning Star shooting, community and law enforcement began to come together and organize around a common goal—stop the killing. It was clear to both community activists and law enforcement that in order to reach this goal they needed each other: the police needed the community to help solve crimes, give information, and be witnesses; and the community needed the police to enforce the laws and keep their communities safe.

In Boston during the 1990's, after the adoption of a community policing model, the city witnessed a dramatic fall in violent crime. Specifically, the homicide rate fell over 75% from a high of 152 in 1990<sup>2</sup> to a low in 1998 of 35.<sup>3</sup> In contrast to other cities such as New York,

<sup>2</sup>"Talk of the Nation Interview with Boston Police Commissioner Paul Evans," National Public Radio, July 14, 1999., audio version available at: <http://www.npr.org/features/feature.php?wflid=1054037>

<sup>3</sup>"New York's Troubled Police Force Can Learn from its Counterpart in Boston," The Economist (US), May 1, 1999 v351 i8117 p25(1).

this dramatic decrease in crime occurred without increasing racial tensions and with a steady decline in the number of civilian complaints filed against Boston police officers.<sup>4</sup>

While the complete story of the development and implementation of the Boston Model of Community Policing is complex, for the purposes of this report it is critical to articulate several key principles that defined this initiative and guided its successful implementation.<sup>5</sup>

- *Abandon Expertise Model/Embrace Shift in Focus:* One element of the Boston Model was that the local police were willing to acknowledge that they alone would not be able to solve Boston's crime problem. Recognizing the community as an expert on their own safety was a critical first step. Additionally, under the Boston Model, local law enforcement began to more thoroughly shift their focus from reacting and responding to violent crimes to prevention and intervention techniques.
- *Embrace a Collaborative Model:* In Boston, law enforcement and community groups began to forge relationships. Specifically, law enforcement officials began to work directly with key community stakeholders such as clergy, business people, the YMCA, and Boys and Girls Clubs; and the community began to work with a wide variety of law enforcement and city agencies in order to address a myriad of concerns. This approach required law enforcement agencies to treat the community they served primarily as potential partners rather than as suspects, and to expand their willingness to address areas of concern to the community whose problem might be out of their traditional jurisdiction. So, for example, when the community identified a lack of appropriate streetlights as a structural problem that facilitated violent crimes, the police partnered with the community to obtain adequate streetlights from city government officials.
- *Focus on a Common Goal:* The community and law enforcement groups kept focused on their mutually agreed-upon goals during the course of implementing the model. This enabled meetings to stay on track and avoid the diversions easily created by current events or discussion of historical encounters.
- *Prioritization of Enforcement Initiatives Based on Mutual Objectives:* In Boston, law enforcement agencies were open to the reprioritization of enforcement initiatives based on ability to contribute to overall public safety goals. Specifically, this meant the strategic, intelligent deployment of scarce enforcement resources targeted at serious violent crime and the abandonment of a "zero tolerance" approach to minor offenses. Instead of "casting the net wide," Boston Police Department used community partnerships to identify the small percentage of people who were at the core of the violent crime problem.<sup>6</sup>
- *Willingness to Change Standard Operating Procedures and Reallocate Resources as Needed:* As part of its effort to prioritize community partnerships, the Boston Police Department dedicated its critical resources—time, money, and legitimacy—to this initiative. In addition to staffing the community policing initiative, the Boston Police Department provided training to its officers where necessary. Further, law enforcement and the community in Boston recognized the utility of involving intermediaries such as faith-based organizations and academic partners in the dialogue. Boston Police and the community worked together to develop mechanisms for measuring success of their collaborative effort. This commitment to evaluation helped maintain accountability and legitimacy. For the Boston Police Department, this meant redefining the job of many officers and developing new recruitment strategies, promotion criteria, and incentive structures. This process took several years to implement.
- *Utilization of Community Leaders:* When the Boston Model began, community distrust and antagonism was so high that some community members refused to participate in the process. Many of them had relevant information that would assist law enforcement, but they refused to have any interactions with them. To facilitate the exchange of information, intermediaries were sometimes used. For example, Rev. Ray Hammond, a trusted and respected African-American minister, on occasion received information from community members which he communicated to police without revealing the source of the information. If police needed more specific information or had more specific questions for the "confidential community source," Hammond would go

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Many of the following points are informed by: Interview, James Jordan, Director-Professional Programs, Office of the Vice President for Adult and Continuing Education, University College, Northeastern University; Former Director, Office of Strategic Planning and Resource Development, Boston Police Department, 4/5/04.

<sup>6</sup>"New York's Troubled Police Force Can Learn from its Counterpart in Boston," *The Economist* (US), May 1, 1999 v351 i8117 p25 (1).

back to the source and obtain the information. With detailed information from a number of these confidential sources, police were able to execute search warrants and, on occasion, solve "cold cases," old murder cases that had been abandoned when all investigative leads had been exhausted.

## **DEVELOPING A NEW PARADIGM FOR COMMUNITY-LAW ENFORCEMENT RELATIONSHIPS**

While historical precedent such as the Boston model is useful to the development of new models for post-September 11<sup>th</sup> community-law enforcement partnerships and has informed the recommendations included in the final chapter of this report, it is important to avoid force-fitting a paradigm created in a different time and under a different set of circumstances upon today's unique realities and constraints.

To effectively establish partnerships today, law enforcement representation must include a broad range of federal, state, and local agencies including Immigration, Homeland Security, Border Patrol and the Transportation Security Administration. On the community side, religious, political and other community groups representing the diverse Muslim, Arab, and Sikh communities must participate for partnership initiatives to be effective. Moreover, there may well be a need for academic partners or other intermediaries. These broad populations require a unique and tailored approach.

Post-September 11<sup>th</sup> models for partnership need to be specific to these new communities and to their relevant issues. By studying the recent experiences of communities who have attempted such partnerships, other communities and law enforcement can learn about common pitfalls and successful strategies. Since the creation of these partnerships is critical and time is of the essence, every effort should be made to build on historical foundations and utilize lessons learned from contemporary work being done in this area nationwide.

For any partnership model to be effective at the local level, ultimately it must be designed, initiated, built, coordinated and implemented by the local teams who will participate in it. This is critical because each local partnership needs to be based on trust and mutual accountability. Thus, successful partnership models will always be specifically tailored to the unique needs and objectives of a region or locality. Each partnership will involve learning from the challenges and successes of others and building upon that knowledge to create a unique partnership structure. Only by working collaboratively to learn from others' challenges and successes and to create a unique local plan for partnership will participants be able to establish a process that has legitimacy, utility, and relevance.