

MODULE 5 – WHERE DO WE WANT TO GO?

LECTURE 2 – CRIME AND COMMUNITY POLICING

Starting off with ALL CRIME IS LOCAL!!!

The expansion of the federal agency role in fighting terrorism after 9/11 also impacted the ground game at the local agency level. Recall that crime is a human behavior that occurs in five phases, and that each phase occurs in specific spaces and times.

While there may be multiple levels of government investigation and intelligence agencies, crimes are committed by people at the ground level in our communities and neighborhoods over periods of time. In other words, **ALL CRIME IS LOCAL!!!** Crime is not committed in some **ethereal** stratospheric hierarchical social structure – it is committed at a specific physical location and at a specific time.

In this regard, it is becoming clear that the ramifications of ineffective COMMUNITY POLICING and investigations programs in local agencies can extend well beyond the parochial interests of local police and communities. ¹¹¹

For example, the terrorists involved in the 9/11 attacks lived in our communities that were under the jurisdiction of local agencies. They planned, prepared and carried out their attacks right under our noses and the noses of our neighbors in our communities, and their activities had severe local, national and international implications. But nobody reported them to the police, so the police did not get involved. Traditional investigation process, eh, INSIGHTFUL TRAVELER?.

I remember a few years back I lived next door to this guy who looked and acted a little weird on even his best days. But, being a good neighbor, and a **lousy** detective, I kept to myself and gave him his space. Then after I moved away, I heard that he had been arrested for torturing animals, molesting the neighborhood children and a series of petty thefts. I sure did feel stupid and disappointed in myself for having been such a live-and-let-live jerk. But at least the guy wasn't a 9/11 assassin. Not that I would have acted any differently toward him, though, I suppose.

We have seen that local agencies reported an absence of significant problems and a perception of balance between community interests and individual liberties in their communities. ¹¹⁸ These situations are **not great motivators** for change – especially if the change is in the direction of more **sneaky** or proactive investigative techniques that may require more resources (read money) and are associated with the specter of

the Government Spy problems of the past. Additionally, over the past two decades there has been a steep downward trend in Index crime rates, remember? ¹¹⁹ We saw that with the NCVS and the UCR. This, together with the receding memories of 9/11 (forgetting the past) and the absence of any significant terrorist attacks on American soil since then, all combine to minimize the perceived threat in the public's mind over time. It also tends to heighten public sensitivity to infringements on personal liberties. ¹¹²

IS COMMUNITY POLICING A GAME-CHANGER?

But, and I mean a big but.... There is a huge force multiplier effect here that we overlook at our own peril. There are about 15,500 local agencies (sheriff, municipal and county) in the US, with a combined strength of over 600,000 sworn officers. This is a **large, trained and experienced work force** that is **ideally situated** within our communities **24 hours a day**, every day of the year, and that can routinely access crime-related information in critical areas that state and federal agencies typically have less access to. On the other hand, the 120 or so federal, military and state agencies are comprised of fewer than 200,000 sworn officers, and they are generally constrained to operate within specific limited geographic and legal jurisdictions. In order to function effectively across jurisdictions and in unfamiliar environments, they must often rely upon local agencies for their personnel resources, local area knowledge and expertise, and relations with local citizens. However, they often also have **resources, expertise and cross-jurisdictional contacts** at their respective levels of government that can be helpful to local agencies that are prepared to make use of them. ¹¹¹ We need to take advantage of these combined resources.

To this end, after 9/11, over **100 Joint Terrorist Tactical Forces (JTTFs)** were established to develop an infrastructure for federal, state and local agencies to integrate homeland security issues at the various government levels (that **ol'** "unity of effort" stuff, you know). While this generated some concern that local agencies would be distracted from COMMUNITY POLICING, several recent studies have reported that COMMUNITY POLICING and homeland security are apparently more compatible than conflicting, and that the two missions can be complementary in many respects. ^{113, 114} Duh! Indeed, one might argue that targeting police information collection resources in the areas, and at the sources, most likely to have access to the most crime information, especially in the PLAN phase, to prevent, detect and solve crime, would serve the **common goals** of both COMMUNITY POLICING and homeland security to enhance community security. One might even use the Conceptual Framework to check this out, especially for crimes like terrorism.

In addition to being a force multiplier and sharing common goals with the fed regarding homeland security, local agencies have another ground game asset. We already know that the **overt collaboration** of

COMMUNITY POLICING with community partners has been shown to reduce crime in a number of instances, and that's a big thing. And if the study findings reported earlier regarding the integration of COMMUNITY POLICING and investigations to solve crime are supported in future research, then this type of information collection effort could even further enhance our potential to develop a much broader-based model to prevent, detect and solve crime.

THREE COMMUNITY POLICING ASSETS – FORCE MULTIPLIER, COMMON GOALS, AND OVERT!!!

So **COMMUNITY POLICING** brings **(1) a force multiplier, (2) common goals, and (3) the makings of a successful overt information collection model** to the table. On the federal side, we found out the hard way that “the WALL” wasn't such a good idea mostly, and important changes were made in an attempt to rectify that (the Patriot Act, the 9/11 Commission, JTTFs), although not everyone was always happy about those results, either. We've also repeatedly learn the hard way that covert, **hush-hush, cloaked-in-secrecy** Government Spy techniques used in the past by the feds, the locals and the private agencies (in other words, EVERYBODY!) can have significant long-term drawbacks, and we're still struggling to find a proper checks and balances arrangement for that. But it just might be that the overt local agency COMMUNITY POLICING collaboration techniques could signify a different direction for managing the balance between security and liberty, and it could **provide some practical insights for the feds also**.

We know, or should know by now, that if we keep doing more of the same thing, we will probably get **more of the same thing**. Like the traditional investigation process and 20% clearance rates, for example. Doomed to repeat the past – bet you saw that one coming. We know that in the past, nationally publicized incidents reflecting negatively on the police have driven public demands to **constrain** the police (Google Rodney King and the Christopher Commission, Frank Serpico and the Knapp Commission, Ruby Ridge and Branch Davidian). But catastrophic events such as 9/11 could once again suddenly push the public in the opposite direction and increase **demand for even greater** community security.¹¹² Its **kinda** fun to look at all this **back-and-forth-ing** from a historical perspective, but it's just pure misery for those who actually have to live through it. And some of us never made it through.

Same techniques, same results; different techniques, different results – remember that? To the extent that local agencies do not directly integrate their COMMUNITY POLICING and investigations programs to effectively address both local and national priorities, both our local and our national security and our liberties are **diminished**. It is incumbent on local agencies to comprehend the importance and nature of their roles and

responsibilities in this context, and to recognize the potential risks and consequences of inaction to both their communities and to their country. ¹¹³

It just may be that the **overt partnerships** and community collaborations advocated in the COMMUNITY POLICING model and practiced by patrol officers and investigators at all levels of government to do the CUIPDSC stuff would provide a better alternative to the same old strategies we have traditionally clung to in the past. But I wouldn't bet on any mad rushing to check this out. Future research may eventually address this issue at some point, but as I mentioned, I am **not aware of any interest or effort** in this regard in the foreseeable future. Compared to research going on in other areas, research on the investigations process is **rare**. I mean, just look at the dates of some of the citations I listed in the reference sections. 1970s, 1980s ---- ? Not exactly a hotbed of activity for inquiring minds.

OK, let's get an update on some of that forensics, technology, classical detective stuff in the next lecture.