

# The Interagency Threat Assessment and Coordination Group

First responders are a vital part of the nation's defense against terrorism, charged with protecting America's cities and towns from terrorist attacks. As such, it is absolutely critical to keep them informed. The better informed these first responders are, the better prepared they will be to identify, respond to, mitigate, and most of all, prevent potential terrorist attacks in the homeland. Enacted at the behest of the President and the Implementing Recommendations of the 9/11 Commission Act of 2007, the Interagency Threat Assessment and Coordination Group (ITACG) consists of federal intelligence analysts, and state, local, and tribal first responders, working at the National Counterterrorism Center to enhance the sharing of federal counterterrorism, homeland security, and weapons of mass destruction information with our state, local, and tribal (SLT) partners.

## How is this done?

Members of the ITACG Detail are experienced first responders from around the country, and intelligence analysts from the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). The State, local, and tribal representatives to the ITACG are on one-year fellowships sponsored by DHS or FBI. There are currently four police officers, and one firefighter on the Detail. Each member leverages his or her experience and knowledge to enhance intelligence information sharing on behalf of SLT first responders and leadership. To supplement their operational skills, ITACG members are provided counterterrorism and intelligence training.



Fig.1 - ITACG representatives as of September 2009; clockwise from the top: New Jersey State Police, Illinois State Police, Seattle Fire Dept, DHS, Oakland County Sheriff's Dept, FBI, Las Vegas Metropolitan Police, Boston Police Dept.

Each day, ITACG Detail members develop and maintain situational awareness of breaking and ongoing terrorism, homeland security, and WMD reporting relevant to the homeland. Broad access to government intelligence systems and close coordination with IC members during face-to-face discussions, permit Detail members to follow threats, breaking events, and reporting of interest to SLTP consumers of intelligence.

During periods of heightened alert, the ITACG monitors the reporting and actions taken by the Intelligence Community in response to threats, to ensure the counterterrorism needs and concerns of SLT entities are adequately addressed. As necessary, the ITACG makes recommendations on behalf of STL partners. These recommendations may include better qualifying the threat or source of the threat, further addressing the credibility of the threat, and ensuring there is enough information available, so that SLT

partners can take the most informed course of action. The goal is to increase the probability of appropriate SLT responses to genuine terrorism threats, while diminishing the possibility of disproportionate reactions to reporting of low, questionable, or no credibility.

To make more information accessible by SLT entities, the ITACG identifies, reviews, and evaluates intelligence products not already available to SLT, to determine their potential benefit to these consumers. Once a suitable report has been identified, the ITACG determines if and how the product can be made more relevant to SLT entities, and whether the product can be made more widely available, taking into account the classification of the product. In addition, the ITACG may propose the production of intelligence, based on topics which may be of special interest to SLT entities. The ITACG not only works to make information more available, but it also works to make information more relevant to the SLT consumer of intelligence.

The ITACG also encourages and participates in the creation of intelligence focused for SLT intelligence consumers. Two such products, the Roll Call Release and the Terrorism Summary were created to address the specific counterterrorism needs of SLT. The Roll Call Release is an ad hoc, collaborative, “For Official Use Only” product developed by DHS, FBI, and the ITACG. The product is written specifically for “street-level” law enforcement officers, and focuses on terrorist tactics, techniques, and procedures; terrorism trends; and indicators of suspicious activity. These products are posted on Homeland Security Information Network- Intelligence (HSIN-I [<https://hsin-intel.dhs.gov>]) and Law Enforcement Online (LEO [<http://www.leo.gov>]). The National Counterterrorism Center’s (NCTC) Terrorism Summary (TERRSUM) is a daily, SECRET digest of counterterrorism intelligence of interest to Federal and non-Federal law enforcement, homeland security, and military personnel. The TERRSUM is posted on NCTC Online-Secret (NOL-S [<https://nol.nctc.sgov.gov>]).

In order for the ITACG to succeed, they must also get buy-in from their Federal partners. ITACG members perform extensive outreach, in order to establish working relationships with Intelligence Community members. It is through these relationships that the ITACG is able to inform the Intelligence Community of the importance of SLT as a consumer of intelligence, introduce the SLT perspective into intelligence products, identify potential gaps in information sharing, and encourage the broadest possible distribution of intelligence products.