



U.S. Department of Homeland Security Homeland Security Advisory Council

May 21, 2010

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Secretary Janet Napolitano
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Washington, DC 20528

Dear Madame Secretary:

The Countering Violent Extremism Working Group originated from the Secretary's tasking of the HSAC at our February 2010 meeting where you directed the HSAC to work with state and local law enforcement and relevant community groups to develop and provide recommendations regarding how the Department can better support community-based efforts to combat violent extremism domestically - focusing in particular on the issues of training, information sharing, and the adoption of community oriented law enforcement approaches to this issue.

Over the course of several weeks, the Working Group convened through phone calls and an in-person meeting in Washington, DC to put together the recommendations to the HSAC.

Among the key findings of the Working Group was that community-oriented policing works in preventing violent crime. The Working Group found that information-driven, community-oriented policing efforts have proven effective in reducing and/or preventing violent crime in numerous jurisdictions across the Nation.

The Working Group also noted that the emphasis should be on building safe, secure, resilient, and crime resistant communities. In working with community members, law enforcement seeks to understand and proactively address factors which enable violent criminal activity to occur.

The Working Group also noted that effective public-private partnerships, designed to enable civic engagement, problem-solving, and violent crime mitigation provide the foundation for efforts to prevent, protect against, and respond to violent criminal activity – including that which may be motivated by ideological objectives.

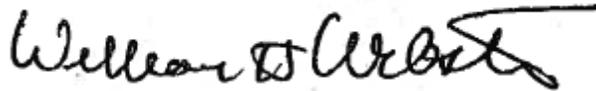
While acknowledging that information-driven, community-based law enforcement efforts hold great promise in preventing violent crime that is terrorism-related, that promise will be best realized when local authorities work with community members to understand and mitigate all threats facing local communities.

The Working Group also established that all violent crime is local. While there may be some common indicators of ideologically motivated violence, each circumstance is unique, needs to be viewed individually, and viewed within the context of the specific community in which the suspect lives, works, and operates.

Finally, the Working Group found that there can be tension between those involved in law enforcement investigations and those collaborating to establish local partnerships to stop violent crime. Community policing can be impeded if other enforcement tactics involving a community are perceived as conflicting with community partnership efforts. Crime control efforts at the local level involve a variety of operational activities that can be – if properly coordinated – supportive and complementary. The Working Group called for clearly defined roles and responsibilities of federal, state, tribal, local law enforcement, and the community.

Working Group members felt that in the short term, and until such time that the understanding of the phenomena of radicalization and violent extremism matures, the Department should focus on expanding the capacity of local authorities to protect their communities from all types of violent crime through information driven violent crime reduction efforts. Close attention should be paid to current and future work on the root causes of radicalization and violent extremism with an eye toward informing and focusing local protection efforts.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "William Webster". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

William Webster

Chair, Homeland Security Advisory Council