



Department of Justice

STATEMENT OF

**ERIC VELEZ-VILLAR
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE
FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION**

BEFORE THE

**SUBCOMMITTEE ON COUNTERTERRORISM AND INTELLIGENCE
COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY
UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

ENTITLED

**“FEDERAL GOVERNMENT INTELLIGENCE SHARING
WITH STATE, LOCAL AND TRIBAL LAW ENFORCEMENT:
AN ASSESSMENT TEN YEARS AFTER 9/11”**

PRESENTED

FEBRUARY 28, 2012

**Statement of
Eric Velez-Villar
Assistant Director
Directorate of Intelligence
Federal Bureau of Investigation**

**Before the
Subcommittee on Counterterrorism and Intelligence
Committee on Homeland Security
United States House of Representatives**

**At a Hearing Entitled
“Federal Government Intelligence Sharing with State, Local and Tribal Law
Enforcement: An Assessment Ten Years After 9/11”**

February 28, 2012

Good morning, Chairman Meehan, Ranking Member Speier, and Members of the Subcommittee. It is my privilege and pleasure to address you today as the Assistant Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation’s Directorate of Intelligence, and to demonstrate our organization’s commitment to the timely sharing of intelligence and information related to United States national security.

The constantly evolving national security threat requires an adaptable information sharing strategy. In the period immediately following 9/11, the FBI focused on threats originating outside the United States, but we now also must direct our resources to address the threat from individuals residing in our country who demonstrate violent extremist actions on behalf of either a foreign-based or domestic ideology. The FBI will continue to provide relevance and context on foreign threat information; however, we also recognize that the violent extremism threat may be first identified within our communities by State, local, or tribal law enforcement. As a result, we have taken numerous proactive steps in the past year to develop a more robust information-sharing capacity with all Federal, State, local, and tribal law enforcement partners.

Given the diverse threats we face, it is essential that law enforcement entities work together, making our partnerships with all levels of law enforcement that much more invaluable. As the lead agency for domestic intelligence collection, as outlined in Executive Order 12333, the FBI must ensure that we maintain responsibility for all investigative activity involving terrorist threats while also sharing as much information as possible with our partners. We routinely disseminate raw and finished intelligence products to our partners to help us achieve this goal, and we focus on three critical tools to facilitate information sharing with our partners: fusion centers, the FBI’s Field Intelligence Groups (“FIGs”), and the FBI’s Joint Terrorism Task Forces (“JTTFs”).

As the analytical counterpart to the fusion centers — sharing a similar mission of gathering, analyzing, and disseminating intelligence information — FIGs are the focal point for

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sharing information with fusion centers. FIGs ensure all terrorism-related information is passed to the FBI's JTTFs. Unlike fusion centers and FIGs, JTTFs conduct operations and are focused exclusively on terrorism, with the responsibility for operations against and investigations of terrorist acts and terrorist threats inside the United States as well as related intelligence collection activities inside the United States.

The FBI has implemented an engagement strategy to enhance our relationship with fusion centers and has demonstrated its commitment to partnering with other agencies, specifically, the Department of Homeland Security ("DHS"), on fusion center initiatives in several key ways. To foster better coordination and integration of intelligence dissemination, the FBI has directly supported fusion centers by assigning approximately 96 FBI personnel to at least 55 of the 77 fusion centers on a full-time or part-time basis. Of the more than 100 JTTFs operating throughout the country — comprising more than 4,000 task force members from more than 650 Federal, State, and local agencies — 16 are collocated with fusion centers, providing even greater coordination and information sharing and enabling FBI and fusion center personnel to better understand each other's roles and responsibilities. All participants in fusion centers and JTTFs act as equal partners: Federal, State, local, and tribal JTTF participants can access all threat information relevant to their area of responsibility, and the JTTFs share specific threat information concerning operations and investigations with relevant State and local entities.

Fusion centers maximize our ability to detect, prevent, investigate, and respond to criminal and terrorist activity. They assist the FBI by providing information made available by the combination of knowledge, expertise, and information within local law enforcement and homeland security agencies operating throughout the nation, and our participation allows us to provide a national perspective on regional threats and trends so we can better inform decision makers at all levels. The exchange of intelligence that takes place in fusion centers aids other intelligence and law enforcement organizations — including the JTTFs — in their investigative operations and serves as a critical tool for collaboration at all levels.

With the DHS, the FBI co-chairs the Fusion Center Sub-Committee of the Information Sharing and Access Interagency Policy Committee, a group that coordinates Federal support to fusion centers by providing guidance and standards to support interconnectivity, thereby ensuring information sharing among fusion centers and all levels of government. Moreover, the FBI recently hosted a two-day northeast regional meeting of the fusion center directors, and we invited all of the directors to participate on their respective JTTF Executive Boards to ensure more effective coordination. We have also requested that the Special Agents in Charge of each FBI field office participate on their respective Fusion Center Advisory Board.

In addition to its collaboration with Federal, State, local, and tribal law enforcement through its fusion center initiatives, the FBI works with its law enforcement partners in many other areas. We have partnered with the International Association of Chiefs of Police, DHS, and other agencies to establish a unified approach to addressing the critical information needs of Federal, State, local, and tribal law enforcement. Concurrence among senior interagency leaders has resulted in an unprecedented commitment to unified messaging to the public regarding the

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proper protocols for reporting suspicious activity. This message encourages agencies at all levels of government to encourage the use of the If You See Something Say Something™ campaign to raise public awareness of behavioral indicators of terrorism, and to emphasize the importance of reporting suspicious activities to proper law enforcement authorities, which will forward suspicious activity reports to fusion centers and the FBI's JTTFs for follow-up and de-confliction.

Training materials for law enforcement agencies in several States will be rolled out in the coming weeks and months to ensure that line officers understand how to identify the suspicious behaviors associated with pre-incident terrorism activities, how to document and report suspicious activity, and how to ensure the protection of privacy and civil liberties when documenting information. This messaging will be replicated nationwide at all levels of government to educate the public and raise awareness.

Further, the FBI and its partner agencies have renewed their commitment to ensuring all information — whether it is reported to a fusion center or to a JTTF — is shared with those who need to know. Over the past few months, the FBI has worked closely with the Nationwide Suspicious Activity Reporting (“SAR”) Initiative’s Program Management Office to implement technical and business processes that enable two systems — the FBI’s eGuardian system and the Information Sharing Environment’s Shared Space systems — to share SARs more quickly and efficiently. While they continue to work to improve this synchronization, as of December 1, 2011, SARs and other information are now pushed from one system to the other more effectively. This has ensured that all SARs entered into Shared Space are shared with eGuardian. The final goal in linking the two systems is to ensure that SARs will automatically pass between them without duplicating users’ efforts and without changing the Shared Space system, resulting in more seamless sharing of information between fusion centers, FIGs, and JTTFs.

I appreciate the opportunity to be here today, and I would be happy to answer any of your questions.