

Post-Boston Marathon Counterterrorist Strategies: A Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Analysis of Increased Physical Presence of Law Enforcement Units, Bomb Detection Dogs, and Proactive Video Surveillance for Urban Outdoor Events

This law enforcement study will define the additional steps to be taken through increased physical law enforcement presence, bomb detection dogs, and proactive video surveillance by the Department of Homeland Security to prevent future bombing attacks for large-scale urban outdoor events. The increased presence of local and state law enforcement officials under DHS supervision defines the increased costs for physical patrols and monitoring by police departments as a necessary expenditure in preventing terrorism. The cost of hiring police officers to work with DHS can be costly for federal law enforcement budgets, yet the use of street cameras to proactively monitor suspicious activity can be inexpensively utilized through ongoing surveillance during the event. In addition to these improvements, DHS will hire more bomb-detecting dogs to patrol target areas and to expose any potential bombs threats on a person or a specific location. In essence, the increased presence of policing units and the use of video surveillance technology may represent costly budgetary limitations, but these additional tool for monitoring terrorism are essential for DHS

to succeed in preventing terrorism in large-scale urban outdoor events.

The use of bomb specialist policing units at the local and state levels can also be utilized through the funding and management of the DHS for large outdoor events. This type of strategy has been a proven, yet a sometimes costly means in which to prevent terrorists from gaining physical access to important areas of an outdoor event. After the Boston Marathon attack, the DHS organized numerous local counterterrorist units in New York as a means in which to prevent further terrorist access to city landmarks:

In New York, authorities deployed highly visible patrol units that move in packs with lights and sirens along with more than 1,000 counterterrorism officers. Highly trafficked tourist landmarks were being especially monitored (Worldwide Security", 2013, para.16).

From a policing perspective, the DHS can provide funding for local specialists in terrorist monitoring and provide the necessary support needed for future sporting events taking place in large cities. Since April 18th, many of the large-scale movements of policing units throughout the country were a necessary reaction to the Boston Marathon attack. However, the DHS needs to proactively fund and manage local and state terrorist policing units to monitor and provide a physical

presence through bomb squads, undercover police presence, and uniformed police foot patrols. The large-scale federal reaction to urban terrorism at the Boston Marathon dictates a macro style of management when coordinating local and state law enforcement. DHS has a wide range of fiscal and legal authority to manage these types of terrorist events through a diverse array of policing units, bomb specialists, and federal counterterrorist agents throughout the entire course of an outdoor event.

The use of bomb-detecting dogs has become an increasingly inexpensive way for policing units on the street to monitor urban events for DHS officials and local policing authorities in the search for terrorist explosives. For instance, DHS can create federal umbrella programs for local law enforcement patrols that utilize canine olfactory detection to seek out potential bomb threats. By understanding the cost-effectiveness of bomb-detecting dog units, the DHS often funds these projects to help defray costs from the city and/or state budgetary allowances. Often, states with limited law enforcement budgets are vulnerable to terrorist attacks because they do not have the funds to supply extra dogs at these types of urban events. For example, Pittsburgh local law enforcement agencies and the DHS are proactively hiring more bomb-detecting dogs for the Pittsburgh Marathon in reaction to the events of the Boston Marathon:

"We paid for dogs. We trained the dogs. We have about 16 of them throughout the region. We have a specialized response vehicle, all purchased with Homeland Security dollars," said Demichiei [Pittsburgh's emergency management director]" ("Boston Marathon Bombing", 2013, para.9).

This proactive example of the use of bomb-detecting dogs is primarily based on the lessons learned by the DHS and local policing authorities in Boston, which are now being utilized by Pittsburgh city officials. Historically, bomb-detecting dogs have traditionally played a crucial role in finding bombs at stationary locations such as schools, cars, and buildings. However, the DHS can provide funding for mobile canine units to cover the entire route of the Pittsburgh marathon at key locations. These factors define the immediate sense of preventative methods being used by local bomb-detection dog units, which are proactively working to cover large urban areas through increased mobility. The funding provided by the DHS can provide funding and the more advanced coordination and management of dog teams in this type of urban environment. Currently, Pittsburgh is ready to implement greater policing resources through bomb-detection dogs as an inexpensive way for local policing units to detect explosives and prevent terrorism in this Post-Boston Marathon event.

The use of video surveillance has become an increasing inexpensive way for DHS officials and law enforcement agents to evaluate suspicious behavior in detecting a crime after its inception. Certainly, the availability of street cameras and private video monitors for local business is already an important tool in detecting terrorist activity. Yet the DHS and local policing units need to be proactively monitoring street activity in coordination with physical policing units on the ground. However, the use of proactive video surveillance through public street cameras can be of a great assistance in reducing workloads for policing units on the street. This video surveillance strategy is crucial for monitoring large groups in open urban areas as a cost-effective for preventing terrorist activity:

For many communities, the most immediate benefit of video is increased safety on the front line. Video also can act as a crime deterrent and enable proactive policing, therefore playing a significant role in reducing crime rates, helping make the community safer. (Hutchens, 2013, para.1).

In this example of video surveillance, the mere presence of a video camera can act as a deterrent to a terrorist plot in an open area. More so, the DHS is able to provide federal monetary assistance to increase the level of protection against future

bombs threats. The importance of adding more bomb-detection dogs enables police units to patrol long stretches of road and to proactively investigate suspicious terrorist bomb placement. Therefore, the city is able to decrease the threat of bombs being placed in open areas where people can congregate. The DHS could provide this aspect of terrorist monitoring as a crucial part of new programs that can prevent terrorist attacks from occurring like those found at the Boston Marathon.

In conclusion, the additional use of increased police presence, bomb-detecting dogs, and increased video surveillance are important and inexpensive ways for DHS to provide local law enforcement with the tools to prevent future attacks like those found at the Boston Marathon. The DHS's ability to fund counterterrorist operations in large cities, such as Boston, validates the use of larger policing units that can be implemented without budgetary strain for local and state law enforcement budgets. In addition to the physical presence of police officers, the increased use of bomb-detecting dogs is crucial to preventing future attacks in which a terrorists can place a bomb near a public landmark or an important street route. More so, the use of proactive video surveillance needs to be utilized in order to apprehend a terrorist in the act versus using video technology as a way to investigate events after the bombing occurs. The use of DHS funding and policing strategies

illustrate the increased presence of policing units and video surveillance as cost-efficient programs that can prevent dangerous terrorist activity. These terrorist orientated strategies can support the more important fiscal and social aspects of citizen morale and public safety in major urban outdoor events.

References:

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