



# Partnerships between Public Law Enforcement and Private Security Should Become the Norm

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## WHAT'S INSIDE:

**Partnerships** between law enforcement and private security agencies allow communities to leverage scarce resources while effectively combatting threats to public safety.

**Budget constraints** contributed to the need for private/public sector cooperation in day-to-day crime prevention and securing national infrastructure assets.

**Businesses, private security companies,** and law enforcement agencies can harness each other's knowledge, experience, and resources in their own jurisdiction through ongoing partnerships.

**Sharing information and technology** resources can maximize public safety when law enforcement and their communities operate in "cylinders of excellence."

Faced with dwindling resources and more responsibilities, law enforcement leaders are beginning to leverage every available resource to address terrorism, cyber-crime and day-to-day policing. Inspired by community policing philosophies, new public/private-sector partnerships are delivering cost-effective “force multiplier” benefits at the municipal, state and national levels.

**If events in the post-9/11 security landscape have proven one thing, it's that law enforcement can no longer afford to “go it alone.”**

The most potent, cost-effective means of neutralizing criminal and terrorist threats require close partnerships between law enforcement, private security companies and business and community groups. Only through such partnerships can police and other law enforcement agencies leverage increasingly scarce resources to combat existing and emerging threats to public safety. Community policing philosophies, strategies and best practices have already proven to be excellent models – models that law enforcement must explore and expand in the face of budget cuts, downsizings and hiring freezes.

### The Existence of Operating Silos

Prior to 9/11, law enforcement leaders tended to operate in isolated silos, rarely tapping resources outside their usual networks. Even as community policing developed over the years, relationships between local law enforcement and private security contractors were often weak or nonexistent. During the first 15-20 years after I entered policing in 1968, I frequently witnessed disrespectful attitudes toward private security, as well as a general lack of police interest in what happened in their jurisdictions (except when calls were received). However, as I gained experience and leadership responsibilities, I recognized that as a result of these attitudes, opportunities to share information, technology and other resources were being overlooked or even ignored.

### Doing More with Much Less

In the wake of 9/11 and the Great Recession, outdated attitudes toward private security and community policing quickly evaporated as law enforcement leaders needed to leverage every available resource, not just for day-to-day crime prevention and investigation, but also to combat terrorism and cyber-crime. A new appreciation of the benefits of private/public-sector partnerships was born of harsh necessity – from budget constraints and new mandates requiring that law enforcement agencies do more with *much less*.

#### Some examples of decreasing public resources:

- The current strength of the New York City Police Department is 34,450. In 2004, it was approximately 35,500.
- The Chicago Police Department had 13,326 officers in 2004. In 2012, the number had fallen to 11,944.<sup>i</sup>
- In Camden, New Jersey, the number of uniformed police stood at 408 officers in 2007; today that figure has dropped to less than 280.
- Among the law enforcement agencies surveyed by the Police Executive Research Forum (PERF) from 2010-2012, 51 percent experienced budget cuts during 2012, and 78 percent reported cuts in 2010. In 2010 and 2012, approximately 45 percent of law enforcement agencies reported hiring freezes, while 23 percent reported layoffs.<sup>ii</sup>
- Coincidentally or not: in 2013, the FBI released preliminary statistics indicating that violent crime had increased 1.9 percent during the first six months of 2012 while property crime had risen 1.5 percent – the first increases in these statistics since 2006.<sup>iii</sup>

Although roughly 85 percent of the nation's vital infrastructure – power plants, bridges, ports, and so forth – are in private hands, police are increasingly called on to protect these assets. But following the financial crisis of 2009, public resources began to dry up.

Stark numbers like these have caused the public and private sectors to recognize that cooperation is no longer a luxury. A recent poll of police departments nationwide found that 94 percent have partnered with other police agencies to increase the coordination of their crime-fighting strategies. In addition, 80 percent are now partnered with non-profit or governmental organizations; 69 percent with businesses and corporations; and 34 percent with private security companies.<sup>iv</sup>

## A Marriage of Goals

Enhanced public/private sector cooperation has done more than compensate for shrinking police budgets and manpower. It has provided “force multiplier” benefits that allow businesses, private security companies, community groups and law enforcement agencies to harness each other’s knowledge, experience and expertise. After all, nobody knows more about a particular neighborhood, or a single building, than the people who live and work there. And there are substantially more private security contractors working in big cities such as Washington, DC and Chicago than local police. By forming ongoing partnerships, these groups can better understand and monitor what happens in their jurisdictions, neighborhoods and individual buildings. They can alert each other to problems and trends, partner with each other to help prevent and solve crimes, and even team up to foster quality-of-life improvements.

The need to unify public- and private-sector security goals was clearly demonstrated during the September 2013 Navy Yard shooting in Washington, DC. A great deal of private/public cooperation was required to help responding officers take command of the situation, and a number of vital lessons were learned. Among them was the need to better synchronize police communications with those of private security companies. At the time of the shootings, the communications system used by private security on the base wasn’t linked to local law enforcement’s system. In particular, the street names inside the base didn’t transfer to the CAD (Computer Aided Dispatch) system used by local police.

This lesson and others can and must be applied to active shooter situations in other settings, including gated communities, office buildings and schools. Questions that must be asked and answered include: Has there been enough communication about what the street names are in the community? What will private security do in the event of active shooter scenario? Will gates and doors be locked so people can’t get in or out?

There is a great deal of information-sharing and technology-sharing that must be done so that mistakes are avoided and public safety maximized, which is why law enforcement and the communities they serve can no longer afford to operate in silos. They can operate in “cylinders of excellence” if they link to each other to share intelligence, expertise and new technologies in law enforcement, but this will require advanced planning, ongoing cooperation and, in some instances, periodic disaster preparedness exercises.

## Removing Obstacles to Cooperation

Historically, a number of obstacles have hindered cooperation between law enforcement agencies and private security firms, as well as the larger community. Perhaps the biggest obstacle was a profound lack of understanding of, and familiarity with, the capabilities of key individuals, civic groups and industries. In addition, public security agencies have been slower to adopt new security and law enforcement technologies than private security agencies. From electronic monitoring and surveillance to Internet security, the private sector has more of the type of IT experts needed by law enforcement.

For example, the largest retailers have spearheaded many advances in Internet security technology and technology-sharing. Sharing their hard-won expertise and technology has benefited both the companies and law enforcement in the areas of cybercrime and theft prevention.

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Elsewhere, business groups and sometimes entire municipalities, such as Grand Rapids, Michigan, are now sharing access to private surveillance cameras to increase the real-time monitoring abilities of police and aid in identifying criminal suspects.<sup>v</sup>

Unfortunately, it often takes a crisis, such as news of Target's December 2013 data breach or the aforementioned Navy Yard shooting, to trigger increased cooperation. It's not until a problem strikes that everyone wakes up and says, "If that can happen to Target, what could happen to a big city or the federal government?" Only then do we see well-publicized calls for increased information- and technology-sharing.

Other obstacles to cooperation have included:

**The federal government's reticence about sharing information.** The federal government has routinely asked industries and companies to provide information, but has often been loath to provide helpful information in exchange. For a variety of reasons, data had a tendency to flow to the government from private industry, but not vice versa. In addition, government-supplied information had a tendency to get so "watered down" en route to the private sector that, in many cases, civic groups and businesses could learn more by watching network news.

**The private sector's desire to protect proprietary data,** as well as concerns about the anti-trust ramifications of sharing certain information with competitors. For example, the Gas & Oil Information Sharing and Analysis Center (ISAC), one of many ISACs that coordinate with the Department of Homeland Security, took years to get up to speed because of its constituent members' concerns about sharing information with competitors on topics ranging from product pricing to hydraulic fracturing technologies.

## **Government officials and leaders in the private sector now recognize the value in cooperation, including information-sharing built on trust.**

Efforts to overcome these obstacles and enhance cooperation include a new FBI public/private partnership council and the National Council of ISACs. The latter was formed in 2003 to nurture relationships among the public and private sectors and address common concerns.

Activities include:

- *Drills and exercises*
- *Hosting a private sector liaison at the DHS and National Infrastructure Coordinating Center (NICC) during incidents of national significance*
- *Emergency classified briefings*
- *Real-time sector threat-level reporting.*<sup>vi</sup>

At the local level there are initiatives like those between the Albuquerque police and area businesses to share information about patterns of criminal activity and suspects. Retail stores, construction-related businesses and hotels/motels are some of the groups in Albuquerque that share information with each other and police through a secure Internet portal.<sup>vii</sup>

## **Early Success Stories**

Already, increased cooperation has produced significant success stories. To start, the United States hasn't suffered catastrophic terrorist attacks like those of 9/11 in nearly 15 years, though there is ample evidence that a number of such attacks were planned. For example, in my capacity as head of the Capitol Police, I worked closely with the FBI to thwart an attempt to fly model airplanes, loaded with explosives, into the Capitol building. More widely publicized was the 2010 Times Square car bombing attempt, a planned terrorist attack that was foiled when two street vendors discovered the car bomb and alerted a New York Police Department patrolman to the threat.

This last case illustrates another (and perhaps the biggest) success of the new partnership between the public and private sectors: increased awareness and vigilance on the part of the average citizen. Over the past 14 years, enhanced cooperation between law enforcement and the general public

has fueled awareness about both terrorism and crime, encouraging more people to be proactive in reporting potential threats, however large or small. At the same time, law enforcement has become more vigilant when it comes to answering these calls and taking them seriously. No longer do police automatically dismiss seemingly "crazy" reports.

Another success has been the widespread development of business continuity plans and continuity of operation programs across the nation – plans governing responses to hurricanes, tornados, flooding, earthquakes, etc. Business and public officials today are more sensitive about the need for advanced planning and the need to communicate contingency plans within their organizations. There isn't a town or city in the country that doesn't face threats like these, and we are much better prepared to respond to emergencies than we were just 15 years ago.

## Conclusion

Force multiplier – a condition or capacity that makes a force more effective than it would be otherwise – is a term that originated in the military. But more than ever, force multipliers are something that must be harnessed on the domestic front by combining the resources, expertise and talents of private security firms, businesses, community groups and law enforcement.

Private security companies are now trying to support local law enforcement in a variety of ways. Much of this takes the form of education, information sharing and helping to build *resilience* in police departments based on private sector experiences. From my past experience as a police officer, the sheer number of private security contractors is invaluable, as is their knowledge of the facilities and communities that they patrol.

**Public/private sector partnerships are not just beneficial but increasingly crucial to the nation's security. None of us can – or should – go it alone any more.**



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<sup>i</sup> "Uniform Crime Report: Full-time Law Enforcement Employees by City," Table 78, The Federal Bureau of Investigation, Criminal Justice Information Services Division.

<sup>ii</sup> "Policing and the Economic Downturn: Striving for Efficiency Is the New Normal." Police Executive Research Forum, February 2013.

<sup>iii</sup> Ibid

<sup>iv</sup> "Future Trends in Policing." Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, Police Executive Research Forum, 2014.

<sup>v</sup> Garret Ellison, "Police getting real-time access to private security cameras in downtown Grand Rapids." Grand Rapids Press, June 29, 2014.

<sup>vi</sup> <http://www.isaccouncil.org/>

<sup>vii</sup> "Future Trends in Policing." Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, Police Executive Research Forum, 2014.



**Terrance W. Gainer**

Terrance W. Gainer is a security consultant with a distinguished 47-year career in law enforcement, security innovations, and organizational change in the United States and worldwide, most recently spearheading the security of the U.S. Capitol Building, staff, and visitors to the nation's capital.

The Honorable Mr. Gainer retired as the 38th United States Senate Sergeant at Arms in May 2014, a culmination of 11 years of Service on Capitol Hill as Sergeant at Arms and Chief of the United States Capitol Police. During that time, he was responsible for the screening of more than 2.2 million visitors per year, as well as 24,000 Congressional staff, in addition to the physical security of the United States Capitol, its grounds, and the Senate and House office buildings.

Chief Gainer began his law enforcement career as a police officer in the Chicago Police Department and rose through the ranks, including many years as an experienced homicide detective. An accomplished attorney, Mr. Gainer served as chief legal officer of that department before he entered the Illinois State Government as Deputy Inspector General and Deputy Director of the Illinois State Police. He served at the U.S. Department of Transportation as Special Assistant to the Secretary before being appointed as Director of the Illinois State Police in 1991.

Born in Chicago, Mr. Gainer is a decorated veteran who served in Viet Nam and retired as a Captain in the United States Navy Reserve. His degrees include a Bachelor's degree in Sociology, a Master of Science in Management, a Juris Doctor degree, and an Honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters. He is married and has six children and 14 grandchildren.



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