

**Department of Homeland Security
University Network Summit**

Building First Responder Capacity to Prevent, Interdict, and Respond to the Delivery of Terror

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**As long as a man stands in
his own way, everything
seems to be in his way.**



Ralph Waldo Emerson

Concepts such as excellence, proficiency, collaboration, diligence, and innovation – all of which are essential to capacity building – are realized only when inhibitors, obstacles, and impediments to achieving them are understood and removed.

Overcoming Obstacles and Inhibitors

For every obstacle and inhibitor to public safety response to terror, there is a series of objectives that if undertaken will affect change and build capacity.

In most cases, accomplishment of these objectives does not require additional funds or people but, rather, commitment, skill, risk taking, and willingness to deviate from the norm.

Applied mastery...

Attaining mastery of skills and applying those skills conscientiously is the primary component to overcoming the obstacles and inhibitors that diminish public safety response to the delivery of terror.

No amount of money or equipment surpasses applied mastery at the grassroots level as a means to prevent, interdict, and respond to the delivery of terror.

Obstacles are those frightful things you see when you take your eyes off the goal.



Hannah Moore

**The greatest obstacle to
discovery is not ignorance --
it is the illusion of knowledge.**



Daniel J. Boorstin

Ten Obstacles and Inhibitors to Public Safety Response to Terror

1. Politics
2. Greed
3. Parochialism
4. Fragmentation
5. “Show and tell” service
6. Statistics as primary measure of success
7. Complacency and mediocrity
8. Lack of mastery
9. Poor allocation of resources
10. Deficient education, training, and simulation



Lack of well-defined end

Without a well-defined end – a clear vision of success – the failure of first responders to connect, leaders believing their own hype, organizational mistakes, and government waste are destined to recur.

Downside of the “all hazards” approach

The “all hazards” approach, which focuses primarily on response, has diminished focus on the prevention and interdiction of the delivery of terror, especially by the nation’s first responders/first preventers.

Illusions

1. First responders are engaged
2. First responders currently work to capacity
3. First responders understand what they are supposed to do
4. First responders possess the knowledge and skills to prevent, interdict, and respond to the delivery of terror

Illusions

5. First responders are uninhibited in taking action to prevent the delivery of terror
6. Political and agency leaders want first responders to engage fully
7. Public safety agencies are incapable of building capacity without the infusion of federal funds
8. Vendors seek to build the capacity of public safety agencies as a high priority

Building capacity

1. Incorporate homeland security into the culture of public safety, rather than treating it as another program or process – balance “quick fix” programs with those designed to affect long-term change
2. Provide clear tasks – tangible expectations – for first responders, relevant to the prevention and interdiction of terror
3. Master basic skills as the foundation on which greater prevention and interdiction can be built

Building capacity

4. Focus on front line personnel – police, fire/EMS, and corrections – rather than specialty units and external vendors as the primary preventers
5. Cut federal funding or make it more difficult to obtain – make prevention, interdiction, and response a local responsibility – make homeland security the right thing to do rather than a source of funds

Building capacity

6. Focus greater attention on the capability of first preventers to do more – get over the “poor me’s”
7. “Unmuddle” homeland security -- distinguish response to hurricanes, floods, and earthquakes from prevention and interdiction of terror – let first preventers know the difference
8. Hold every agency that receives federal funds accountable to build a plan that engages first preventers on a grand scale – no plan; no funds

Building capacity

9. Make prevention and interdiction part of daily duties, not an overtime function – eliminate the notion that homeland security equates to extra duty or extra pay
10. Restructure education and training to build homeland security into the basic fiber of first responder functions – focus on teaching the essential skills (observation, interviewing, patrol techniques, neighborhood canvas, problem solving) - not an afterthought or “special” course

Building capacity

11. Teach first line supervisors to lead homeland security efforts and build first preventer capacity – in prevention, interdiction, and response – and hold them accountable to do so
12. Minimize the rhetoric about how well prepared and focused first preventers are...and generate “nuts and bolts” discussion about needs, expectations, readiness, and hard work

Building capacity

13. Provide rapid, meaningful feedback to first preventers, especially when they provide information or intelligence of value – quality feedback can be the motivator to engagement
14. “Humanize” terror. Put a face on the deliverer of terror, to which first preventers can relate. (Police do not interdict or arrest ideology or political concepts. They interdict and arrest people.)

Whether you think you can or
you think you can't, you're right.

Henry Ford



Thank you...