

B. Information Sharing between Intelligence Agencies and State and Local Officials

Although federal officials emphasized the importance of state and local perspectives, the Joint Inquiry heard witnesses complain that the federal government does not systematically involve state and local agencies in counterterrorism programs. Governor Gilmore, Chairman of the Advisory Panel to Assess Domestic Response Capabilities for Terrorism Involving Weapons of Mass Destruction, testified:

[T]o the extent that there has been intelligence sharing, it has been ad hoc. It has been without a real systematic approach. And what would you expect? With the Intelligence Community, it is within the culture if not within the statute that you don't share information. If you do [share information], you are even subject to criminal penalties. . . .

Some progress was made on information sharing with state and local officials after the FBI organized Joint Terrorism Task Forces in its field offices. Starting with the first JTTF New York City in 1980, the FBI made a concerted effort to expand the program. As Director Freeh noted, "We doubled and tripled the number of Joint Terrorism Task Forces around the United States so we could multiply our forces and coordinate intelligence and counterterrorism [page 380] operations with FBI's federal, state, and local law enforcement partners." As of September 11, thirty-five FBI field offices had JTTFs; now all fifty-six offices do.

JTTFs are designed to combine federal and local law enforcement and intelligence capabilities into a cohesive unit to address complex international and domestic terrorism investigations. JTTFs might include federal participants from CIA, INS, the Marshals Service, the Secret Service, TSA, Customs, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms, the State Department, U.S. Postal Inspection Service, the IRS, Park Police, and other agencies.

According to FBI representatives, JTTFs have improved communication among these agencies and enabled the FBI to leverage their capabilities in counterterrorism investigations. For example, INS personnel assigned to the Minneapolis JTTF were able to determine quickly that Zacarias Moussaoui's authority to stay in the United States had expired, leading to his arrest and detention.