



## Senate HSGAC Hearing on Information Sharing: Ten Years After 9/11

Posted by Kshemendra Paul, ISE Program Manager on Wednesday, October 12, 2011

This morning, an esteemed panel testified before the [Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee](#) <sup>[1]</sup> on progress in information sharing since 9/11 ([watch the recorded webcast here](#) <sup>[2]</sup>). Providing a non-federal perspective, this panel was well positioned to ?tell it like it is.?

Senator Lieberman opened the panel with a discussion of the importance of information sharing and protection, and the progress that has been made since 9/11. He stated that the community undoubtedly operates on a need to share basis more now than ten years ago and emphasized the need to strike a balance between sharing information necessary across all levels of government and protecting information after problems like WikiLeaks.

Senator Collins spoke about how gratifying it is to hear frequently that many in the intelligence community now embrace information sharing since 9/11. She also stated that it is increasingly important for agencies to think creatively about other potential uses of intelligence, outside their own missions, and how best to share that information; she cited the example of the importance of sharing fingerprint information collected by the war fighter from disassembled bombs with watchlisting and immigration agencies who screen travelers to this country.

**The Honorable John McLaughlin**, former Deputy and Acting-Director of the Central Intelligence Agency, spoke about his experience prior to 9/11 and what he has seen in interviews and investigations recently. He discussed three key positive trends in information sharing:

- the dramatic increase since 9/11 in the desire and willingness to share information;
- the improvement in capabilities and data sharing programs, some of which he called ?world class;? and
- an improved policy foundation for access to and sharing of data.

However, he also described three countervailing, negative trends:

- the ever-increasing and overwhelming volume of data for analysts;
- the breakdown in security discipline and authorized and unauthorized leaks, which harm information sharing; and
- the slow pace of policy, procedure, and law in keeping up with current challenges.

**The Honorable Thomas McNamara**, former Program Manager for the Information Sharing Environment, described some of the changes and successes that have taken years to incubate and implement, including:

- National Network of Fusion Centers,
- sharing Controlled Unclassified Information (CUI),

- Suspicious Activity Reporting (SAR),
- National Information Exchange Model (NIEM), and
- privacy rights and civil liberties in the ISE.

He also provided a list of high priorities to move the ISE to the next level, including:

- expanding monitoring and auditing,
- enhancing discovery and authorized use,
- improving interoperability across networks,
- and expanding the PM-ISE mandate.

**Cathy Lanier**, Chief of Police for Washington DC's [MPD](#) [3] offered her perspective of how changes in information sharing have reached the frontlines and shared stories that demonstrate the information sharing progress that our mission partners have made. For example, she described the significant success of a whole-of-government response to the potential threats in Washington DC that surrounded the tenth anniversary of 9/11 and contrasted this with past World Bank meetings, where she greatly struggled to access key information about potential plots.

**Ronald Brooks**, Director of the Northern California Regional Intelligence Center and a representative of state and local law enforcement on the [Information Sharing and Access Interagency Policy Committee](#) [4], shed light on how federal efforts are influencing mission effectiveness on the frontlines. He also stressed the separate and important roles that JTTF investigative centers play in comparison to national fusion centers and how in Brooks' Center, the JTTF and fusion center are co-located to further enhance collaboration and information sharing.

Finally, **Jeffrey H. Smith**, who played a major role in the development of the Markle Foundation's report on [Information Sharing](#) [5], spoke about our failure ten years ago to adjust to a networked world and how our current state of information sharing in government is proof that Washington can work. He also reiterated the need to continue to press forward, as we cannot yet declare victory.

I found this hearing valuable and interesting ? the witnesses underscored the tremendous work and progress that our mission partners have made to date in information sharing at all levels of government. However, as they also stated, much more needs to be done to continue to develop the Information Sharing Environment.

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[2] <http://www.senate.gov/fplayers/jw57/urlMP4Player.cfm?fn=govtaff101211&st=1135&dur=6788>

[3] <http://mpdc.dc.gov>

[4] <http://www.ise.gov/ise-governance>

[5] <http://www.markle.org/national-security/markle-task-force-national-security>

[6] <http://www.twitter.com/shareandprotect>

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