

## Question 1

Accountability in the context of policing has three dimensions, two of which are measurable in terms of performance and one in terms of public perception. To me, all three have equal priority.

The first is ensuring that officers operate according to the law and department policy. As a leader, my responsibility is to recruit officers who demonstrate, through their academy record and past experience, a thorough working understanding of the law. Even more directly, I must continually review department policy in the light of best practices to ensure that it is both effective and unambiguous. With these foundations established, my goal is to create a professional culture in which law and policy are executed so faithfully that officer and departmental actions can be articulated and justified to city administrators and the press both transparently and confidently.

The second dimension involves the basic metrics of public safety—the record of the police as measured by their effectiveness in reducing crime. The “father” of modern policing, Sir Robert Peel, believed that “the test of police efficiency is the absence of crime and disorder, and not the visible evidence of police action in dealing with them.” As far as it goes, this is a valid statement. Results count, and they count for a lot. But there is a third dimension, which takes accountability beyond the metrics of crime.

The third dimension of accountability requires us—and by “us” I mean everyone in a public safety department, from patrol officers to police executives—to build trust and legitimacy with the public in everything we do. This requires not only executing our authority by the book while making a measurable positive impact on “crime and disorder,” but also acting in procedurally just ways that earn the public’s confidence in our legitimacy.

My nearly forty years in law enforcement, combined with my recent work on the President's Task Force on 21<sup>st</sup> Century Policing, have invariably confirmed to me the premise (as we put it in the Task Force *Report*) “that people are more likely to obey the law when they believe that those who are enforcing it have the legitimate authority to tell them what to do.” This brings me to the subject of accessing and addressing bias-based policing, because bias—the fact of bias or the public's perception of bias—makes it impossible for the members of a community to confer legitimacy on the police operating among them.

A high volume of community complaints about individual officers and the police in general are *probably* warning signs of actual bias and *certainly* warning signs of the perception of bias. Our department makes use of HR software that tracks individual officer sick days, days off, citizen complaints, and other warning markers of dysfunctional accountability. When we pick up on these, we bring the officer in for non-punitive counseling. Yet I do not consider these markers as *early* warning signs. By the time the complaints become common, problems are already deeply manifested. In the departments I have led, I deliberately look for early warnings of dysfunctional accountability and the presence of bias by listening to supervisors and officers at every level—casually and without any punitive consequences implied or involved. I listen for evidence of what I call imperfect accountability, a destructive sense that “accountability” is optional and that the “real world” is one of winks, nods, and expediency. General George S. Patton once said that the “only discipline is perfect discipline.” My belief is that the only accountability is perfect accountability—without any winks and nods.

Where bias is concerned, I also embrace an alternative to early warning. I simply assume that we all have biases. My training as a clinical psychologist teaches me that biases are implicit in us all. While implicit bias cannot be simply legislated out of existence, it can and must be

recognized so that behavior and performance are not influenced by it. As for explicit biases, the biases people are aware of and act upon, these are intolerable in law enforcement.

Training is the most effective means of understanding and overcoming both implicit and explicit bias. In my department, we focus training on four principles:

1. Treating everyone with dignity and respect
2. Giving people a voice during encounters—listening to them
3. Exercising neutrality and transparency in the decisions we make
4. Conveying to the public motives that are invariably trustworthy

As a counterpart to anti-bias training, I have also instituted in the DeKalb Police Department a community outreach program in which officers and other personnel demonstrate to invited community leaders various aspects of our training, policy, technology, and enforcement procedures. We even invite our guests to participate in some training scenarios. As we want our officers to walk a mile in the shoes of those they serve, so we invite the community to walk in ours.

## Question 2

There is, of course, no one-size-fits-all solution to reducing violent crime. By this I mean that there is no substitute for getting on the ground and studying with fresh eyes, ears, and mind what is happening. This said, in the departments I have led, I apply a mix of three approaches:

1. **Analytics.** I employ whatever works. As the recent (2015) Brennan Center for Justice report *What Caused the Crime Decline?* concludes, CompStat and similar analytical programs have been responsible for reducing violent and property crime by 5 to 15 percent in cities that employ this analytical technology. In short, data-driven resource allocation—hotspot identification—works. So I use it.
2. **Community policing.** Community engagement via community policing, which I discuss in greater detail in my answer to question 4, is essential to reducing crime, especially violent crime, in our most challenged neighborhoods. We in law enforcement tend naturally to think of high rates of violent crime as “our” problem. Of course, it is—but it is a far greater problem for the people who live in the communities ravaged by violence. Task force-style strategies—what some journalists, critics, and others indiscriminately condemn as “militarized policing”—has a role to play in addressing some violent crime scenarios, as I explain in the fourth part of this answer; however, the police cannot present themselves as an invading force at war with the community. We must understand that the majority of the community may be intimidated by the violent element in their midst. They may be fearful of being seen as cooperating with law enforcement. But we must assume and accept that the majority of the community also wants to be rid of the

scourge of violence. So we have to engage their cooperation, compliance, and active partnership. We do this most effectively through the methods of community policing.

3. **Tactical policing.** During my tenure as deputy chief and then chief of the Rochester (New York) Police Department, I employed community policing extensively; however, when gang-related violent crime spiked in one of the city's most challenged neighborhoods—a spike driven home by an incident in which a mother and child waiting at a bus stop were caught in the crossfire of dueling gangs—I responded by sending in a dedicated task force of uniformed officers. It was not an act of desperation, but of necessity, and it was accompanied by a concerted outreach to the community. We did not go in as an uninvited occupying force—as soldiers—but as guardians, guardians of the community.

The tactical situation demanded a tactically appropriate response. But although it is common to consider community policing and task force tactics 100% incompatible, I realized that this Rochester neighborhood faced a threat that required special tactics—not to punish the community, but to rescue and restore it. Our officers were prepared to use vigorous tactics, but they also spent a lot of time talking to folks on the street and on their porches, inviting them to talk about the neighborhood and what they wanted for it.

In the end, both community policing and so-called militarized policing are proactive approaches to crime. Not only can they be used together, they can be used together, synergistically, by the same officers.

### Question 3

It is a fact of policing that we sometimes hurt people to keep other people from being hurt. We even kill people to keep other people from being killed. Everyone working in law enforcement has to come to terms with this reality. For me, coming to terms begins by looking for effective alternatives to deadly force. Among my proudest achievements as a law enforcement executive is having introduced Tasers to the Rochester (New York) Police Department. Prior to my becoming chief, that department had no less-lethal weapon.

As a member of the President's Task Force on 21<sup>st</sup> Century Policing and a law enforcement leader in my community, I collaborated on the creation of the following recommendations and action items regarding police use of force:

1. Law enforcement agencies should have comprehensive policies on the use of force that include training, investigations, prosecutions, data collection, and information sharing. These policies must be clear, concise, and openly available for public inspection.
2. Policies should emphasize de-escalation and alternatives to arrest or summons in situations where appropriate.
3. Policies should mandate external and independent criminal investigations in cases of police use of force resulting in death, officer-involved shootings resulting in injury or death, or in-custody deaths.
4. Independent prosecutors should be used in cases of police use of force resulting in death, officer-involved shootings resulting in injury or death, or in-custody deaths.
5. Police agencies should collect, maintain, and report data to the Federal Government on all officer-involved shootings ... as well as any in-custody death.

6. Policies on use of force should clearly state what types of information will be released, when, and in what situation, to maintain transparency.

The Task Force also recommended that law enforcement agencies establish a “Serious Incident Review Board” consisting of sworn staff as well as community members. We felt that both should have a voice in identifying administrative, supervisory, training, tactical, or policy issues that need to be addressed. In addition, we recommended that agencies implement non-punitive peer review of incidents involving police use of force and that these reviews be separate from criminal and administrative investigations. Our reasoning in making these two recommendations was to bring in the community as well as department peers not only to give both a substantive role in dealing with police use of force, but to also give them an opportunity to learn about the critical issues involved in the decision to use force.

I am convinced that the recommendations the Task Force formulated are the most effective means of dealing with police use of force. The greatest value of these recommendations is in the use of empirical data as a basis not for disciplining or punishing officers, but as a source of ideas on how to reduce the use of force. A close second behind this benefit is the creation of transparency and objectivity, which not only increase the odds for delivering justice, but also develops among the public the much-needed perception of procedural justice and legitimacy.

Turning to the topic of the “militarization” of the police, let me begin by observing that there are some situations that truly resemble warfare, such as school shootings, mall shootings, and terrorist attacks (for example, San Bernardino), in which the perpetrators use high-powered assault rifles and explosives. We therefore have need for quasi-military tactical training and

tactical equipment, but problems occur when these tactics and equipment are misapplied. In some cases, departments have the 1033 equipment but not the training to use the equipment effectively and safely. In other cases, SWAT and other tactically equipped forces are misused in situations where conventional police personnel, tactics, and equipment are not only adequate but appropriate. If a police department projects the impression that it is at war with the community (perhaps because it thinks of itself this way), it is indeed going to go to war with the community. Many community members will respond to the police as they would to any hostile occupier.

How do I feel about “militarization”? When the approach and the equipment are needed, departments should not hesitate to deploy them. But the occasions of real need are few. When the need is not clear cut, discretion is required. For example, rather than use a Bearcat to intimidate demonstrators exercising their First Amendment rights, deploy conventionally equipped officers out front—and keep the tactical vehicle parked discreetly around the corner.

When police act like the Redcoats at the Boston Massacre, citizens have both the right and the responsibility to hold them accountable to the same laws to which they themselves are held accountable. They are justifiably enraged even by the appearance that “brutal” officers are being unfairly shielded or when attempts are made to justify a militaristic response by claiming that “it’s a war out there.”

#### **Question 4**

I was introduced to community policing in the early 1980s by one of its pioneers, Major Doug Hughes, my CO in the Miami-Dade Police Department. Back then, the term “community policing” didn’t yet exist. We called it “community services” or “community-oriented policing.” When Major Hughes invited me to join the “community services” team, I knew I was risking my career on what many at the time considered a dead-end assignment. But I could not resist this new idea that police should make themselves known and familiar in the community, that they should work in genuine partnership with clergy, community leaders, and neighborhood watch groups. What especially appealed to me was that it was by no means a touchy-feely approach to tough places. The idea was for the police to be bold, courageous, and firm—but fair, respectful, and never arbitrary or anonymous. Whatever we did in a community, we wanted to know the people we dealt with and we wanted them to know us. We wanted them to know what we were doing and why we were doing it. We talked, and we listened, and if we were really good at this community thing, we listened a whole lot more than we talked.

We started the program when the Miami area was still reeling from the riots (18 killed, 350 injured, 600 under arrest, property losses exceeding \$ 100 million) that followed the acquittal of four Miami-Dade officers in the beating death of an African American motorcyclist on December 17, 1979. In the Miami-Dade’s predominantly black Liberty City and Overtown neighborhoods, trust in the police was at an all-time low. Officers could routinely expect to fight, draw their weapons, and sometimes fire them. Community-oriented tactics had a reasonable hope of reducing violent offender actions and violent police responses, but even in cases where the approach failed in this hope, it could make those encounters mean something positive. Most of the most challenged communities are populated by good people in hard places, who don’t want

to be menaced by violent crime every time they set foot on the sidewalk. When they see police officers make an arrest—officers they recognize and maybe even have spoken with, either on the street or at a neighborhood meeting—they understand that these men and women are trying to protect them, defend the community, not just assert the authority of a badge over some neighborhood kid.

On the big-picture level, community policing advocates strategies to support police-community partnerships and pragmatic problem-solving techniques to proactively address immediate conditions that exacerbate crime, social disorder, and fear of crime. The conundrum at the heart of 21<sup>st</sup>-century policing is that the most challenged communities present the most urgent demands for public safety yet tend most strongly to resent the methods police employ to provide for public safety. Community policing can transform dysfunctional police-community relations.

Community policing can begin with a respectful few words between an officer and a resident on any street corner. The subject need not be related to a criminal matter. In fact, officer-citizen interactions should *not* be *exclusively* based on emergency calls or investigations. Conversation works wonders.

Individual officers can do a great deal to create positive relationships with the community, but, ultimately, community policing has to be a mode of policing for the entire force in a community. Community policing is about individual relationships as well as relationships between police agency leaders and the leaders and influencers within the community, especially the leaders of churches, businesses, and schools. In addition, police leaders need to reach out into the professional community as well. The Rochester (New York) officers handled many calls for service involving mentally disturbed persons. As both a clinical psychologist and chief of the

department, I instituted training for handling such emergencies. But while officers can be trained to help prevent disturbed persons from harming themselves and others, they cannot be expected to resolve mental health issues. A team approach is called for, in which law enforcement, social services providers, and community support networks work together to provide the appropriate resources and expertise for a given situation. Another example of community policing in which law enforcement partners with outside agencies is Philadelphia's Police Diversion Program, a partnership between the police department and the Philadelphia Department of Human Services, the school district, the Office of the District Attorney, Family Court, and others, is a collaborative initiative that has reduced the number of arrests of minority youth for minor offenses.

Back in Miami-Dade in the 1980s, community policing occupied a small niche in a big department. For community policing to make a sustainable impact, the principles, attitudes, and tactics of community policing have to permeate the entire force. As I mentioned in an earlier response, Sir Robert Peel in 1829 said that the absence of crime is the only meaningful measure of the effectiveness of a police force. This is no longer a sufficient metric. Today's police must not only protect public safety, they must also respect the constitutional rights and the dignity of everyone. The public is not going to study crime statistics to judge the police in its community. They are going to reflect on how they *feel*. Do they *feel* safer? Do they *feel* that the police among them have their well-being uppermost in heart and mind? Creating these feelings throughout the community requires a broad and deep cultural orientation toward community policing.

## Question 5

America's urban areas are diverse and getting more diverse with each passing year. In metro Atlanta, which includes DeKalb County, more than half the population is African American, 38 percent white, about a third is non-Hispanic white, 10 percent Hispanic of any race, and 5 percent Asian. Some 8 percent of the community is foreign born. All the major religions are well represented, and there is a large LGBTQ community. The metro business community actively hires for diversity. Our businesspeople understand the enormous value of engaging a diverse consumer population with employees who are comfortable with diversity—who get it. I would venture to say that there is not a truly successful enterprise in the nation that does *not* benefit from a diverse workforce. Police agencies must do the same.

If a key demographic group is underrepresented in my department, I attempt to address the deficiency through recruitment, but I do not place a high priority on recruiting officers who “look like” the communities they serve. What I want is officers who are capable of working with everyone in every neighborhood and who understand that, while our basic humanity is universal, the immense diversity of our upbringing, experience, and cultural background shapes our values, perceptions, thoughts, and emotions. I want officers who take a genuine interest in the variety they encounter, who respect it absolutely, and who endeavor to understand and engage it on both a professional and personal level.

My strategy for effective, diverse recruitment begins with my current officers. They make the best recruiters simply by performing in the community in exemplary ways. Through our community policing orientation, the members of our department build one-to-one relationships with the public. We do not want our officers to be anonymous bodies wearing uniforms. We want them to become well-known, trusted figures in the community. We expect them to be role

models and examples of the finest in their profession. We want their presence to inspire people in the community to join us. And we do ask our officers to identify promising potential recruits and send them our way.

Beyond leveraging our own officers as role models and informal recruiters, we use our departmental website to streamline the recruitment and selection process through online application; we use community engagement, social media, and print and broadcast media to *tell our story*, and we reach out in particular to the Millennials—a generational cohort, by the way, that has grown up not only with technology but with diversity. The men and women of this generation make wonderful police officers. I hasten to add, however, that we do not focus on the young to the exclusion of older applicants. There is a lot to be said for hiring officers with the wealth of life experience maturity brings.

In appealing specifically to people of color, a group that often distrusts the police and may have little interest in joining our ranks, we try to tell our story all the more urgently. We present membership in our department for what it is: a very real opportunity to make a difference throughout a diverse metro community. My secret weapon in telling our story persuasively includes portraying our officers not as urban soldiers, but as guardians, committed to serving, protecting, and helping their community.

My career has combined the roles of police officer, clinical psychologist, and public safety executive. Some people may see wide vocational variety in this. But I see a single underlying profession: helping people. As guardians, the police belong to a helping profession, and that is the emphasis our department puts on recruiting. It is not a case of imparting “positive spin” to a job that, these days especially, is so often under attack. It is a matter of telling the truth about the core role of 21<sup>st</sup> century policing.

We must come to grips with the widespread public perception that we live in a “bad time to be a cop.” In our recruiting efforts in DeKalb County, we counter this assertion by declaring that, on the contrary, there has never been a better time. In cities everywhere—and no place more than in Chicago—the administration, the press, the public, and a new generation are all demanding reform. Whoever joins the force today has an unprecedented opportunity to help shape, reshape, and reinvent the new policing. The position of police officer has never offered such wide scope for innovation and creativity. This aspect of police work should be emphasized in attracting more and more college-educated officers. Just as every enterprise today benefits from the diversity of its workforce, every enterprise benefits from knowledge—and no “business” is more data- and knowledge-intensive than modern policing.

Finally, departments and city administration must also accept the fact that recruiting requires an adequate financial investment and a willingness to look well beyond the local community for the best applicants.

## Question 6

Not everything our parents and grandparents told us is true. “A few rotten apples spoil the barrel” may be true of apples, but not of police organizations. This bottom-up attitude is not an expression of fact, and it is certainly not a plan of action. Rather, it is an excuse for inadequate leadership. Dysfunctional morale or a bad organizational attitude starts at the very top and percolates downward. The public safety leader must model integrity, honesty, and transparency. This is a demanding role, but, at its core, it is also a simple role. The leader models these qualities by simply always and invariably telling the truth, telling it clearly, and telling it publicly. This is both the first and most enduring step in fostering “a culture in which police officers elevate the importance of telling the truth and complying with Departmental rules of conduct.”

I lead by example. It is the only effective way to lead. By telling the truth and acting transparently, I convey to my entire staff, both sworn and civilian, that I have no hidden motives or secret agenda. I serve the department, which serves the public. I do not serve any other “special” or “private” or “political” interests. And I make it clear that I expect precisely the same focus of loyalty from everyone who works in the department. Officers must dedicate themselves to the policies and rules of the department and to the objectives of the guardian profession they have chosen. They cannot make secret agreements on the side—to protect themselves or their buddies from discipline, to wink at internal infractions, or to sweep critical incidents under the rug.

A deceptive department benefits no one—not the public and not the police. I tell my officers that lying is wrong, but, even worse, lying puts us all in danger. A cover up can be deadly. All corruption in any organization begins with lies—or even a single lie.

I incentivize personal integrity and truth telling, even when this requires reporting the misconduct of a fellow officer or oneself. I do so in three principal ways:

1. As mentioned, I walk the walk. That is, I do not lie.
2. I act toward my officers as I ask my officers to act toward the public they serve—by invariably demonstrating procedural justice. This means never criticizing or disciplining an officer arbitrarily. When I must take disciplinary action, I do so only for causes I can clearly articulate and justify. I go by the book, but, just as important, I want the officer and his colleagues to feel that the action is not only within my official authority, but is fair, proportionate, warranted, and just. Procedural justice is as important internally, within the department, as it is externally, on the street.
3. I always look for non-punitive, corrective, and mentoring solutions as the first response, the first resort in disciplinary action. If a good officer who has value to offer the department and the public can be saved, I want to save him or her. I also want the disciplinary process to be seen by members of the department as a means of salvation and not a path of damnation. I want officers to see it—and see it realistically—as a way to help themselves and to help their fellow officers. However, a lack of candor or lying is an absolute, unquestionable reason for termination.

Of course, #3 is not always possible. Sometimes there is no alternative to dismissal or judicial action. In these instances, I am determined that all officers, including the subject of the action, will experience nothing but fair, just, and proportionate action and, above all, will understand and accept that what is being done enables the department and its personnel to continue to serve effectively and honorably. Administering disciplinary action with vengeful motives or a petty attitude of gotcha is incompatible with internal procedural justice. If

vengeance or gotcha is the motive at the top, there is no hope of incentivizing honesty and integrity throughout the department. In such an environment, cover up becomes standard operating procedure and a means of survival. If, however, officers work in an administrative environment in which the lines separating right from wrong are drawn clearly, in which truth-telling and integrity flows from the top down, and in which procedural justice emphasizes mentoring, amends, education, and rehabilitation over punishment, I am convinced that staff, sworn and civilian, will find ample incentive to report misconduct wherever they see it.

## **Question 7**

Both as chief of the Rochester PD and as Public Safety Director for DeKalb County, I have incorporated what I judge to be the best in two broad categories of technology: less-lethal weapons and surveillance/data/analytical systems.

I introduced Tasers to Rochester to give our officers an effective sub-lethal standoff alternative to deadly force. I am proud of this, and I am particularly proud of having introduced the technology accompanied by the appropriate training in its use. Technology is a tool, never a self-contained solution. Like any other tool, the results it produces depend heavily on the user's level of training.

In metro DeKalb, which is a sprawling county in a region of over 6 million residents, surveillance, data, and analytics are key to effective and efficient policing. We use outdoor surveillance video cameras extensively and have done so for a long time. Our patrol cars are equipped with dashcams, and I am leading an initiative to equip all our officers with body-worn cameras as well. In combination, fixed surveillance sources, dashcams, and bodycams are all critical for officer and citizen safety, for evidence gathering, and for documenting the actions of the police as well as suspects.

Ever since the Rodney King incident of March 3, 1991, the environment in which we operate has become increasingly mediated. In law enforcement, we have all had to learn to live with bystander video, which is now, thanks to the smartphone, ubiquitous. And whereas witness George Holliday had to market his VHS cassette of the Rodney King incident to television stations, today's smartphone videos can be uploaded to the social web instantly. The potentially millions of Internet users who view the video assume that what they see is necessarily objective

and therefore—necessarily—the whole and absolute truth. In fact, bystander video can be valuable as evidence, but each bystander video represents, after all, the point of view of a particular individual at a particular time. As such, it is perspectival, not objective and certainly far from omniscient. Wearable video technology gives us an opportunity to balance the bystander view against the view from the officer’s perspective, and, on this balance, truth and justice may well depend. Body-worn video is an emerging technology that, I am convinced, will quickly prove as indispensable as the two-way radio.

A lot of us in law enforcement are attracted to cool hardware, bodycams included. I am the first to admit that. However, three technologies my department makes extensive use of are software based.

As mentioned, bystanders can seamlessly upload smartphone video of incidents to the social web. In DeKalb County, we are aggressively improving our presence on the web and are using social media to tell our story and to get out in front of breaking news. When an incident occurs, we want to shape the public narrative—and shape it with the truth. In this, Twitter, Facebook, and other social web platforms are absolutely crucial tools. (These platforms also allow us to broadcast emergency information to the public, Amber alerts, and appeals for the public’s help in connection with some investigations.)

A second software technology helps us to make productive use of the continual influx of crime statistics from across our large metropolitan area. We use a CrimeStat-like crime mapping program to provide a detailed spatial and statistical analysis of incidents and calls for service. This picture gives us a data-based rationale for allocating our officer assets. The designation of crime “hotspots” no longer needs to rely on subjective perception and gut instinct. It can be

increasingly data driven and therefore not only more efficient, but also immune to accusations of profiling based on questionable demographic assumptions.

A third software technology is the advanced human resources (HR) analytics that I mentioned in my response to Question 1. We use it to track individual officer sick days, days off, citizen complaints, and other performance markers, both positive and negative. This helps us in counseling and mentoring our officers—and it enables us to do so based on empirical evidence rather than subjective perception and opinion.

## Question 8

In January 2006, I stepped down as chief of the Rochester Police Department to accept appointment as deputy commissioner of the New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services, where I was responsible for (among other things) statewide homeland security and public safety and training that directly supported the operational and administrative functions of all law enforcement agencies across the state. In September 2007, I left this position to join the U.S. Department of Homeland Security as the Transportation Security Administration's (TSA) Federal Security Director at Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport (DFW). Both of these roles put me at the nexus of local and federal homeland security protection and enforcement. At the time, DFW was the third busiest airport in the world in operations with 44 international destinations served by 17 air carriers. My job was to develop and execute the vision and strategic direction of DHS at this key location.

Both my work for New York State and for the TSA gave me valuable insight into working with federal antiterrorism agencies and individual contacts. I learned, first and foremost, that *global* antiterrorism depends on *local* law enforcement and that, conversely, *local* law enforcement can no longer be regarded as exclusively local. Today, every police agency everywhere has global responsibilities and must embrace these through technologies and policies that build effective local-federal partnerships, the more seamless the better. In addition, local jurisdictions must also develop direct relationships with law enforcement agencies worldwide.

Local law enforcement is the eyes and ears of DHS. We are the front line of detection and prevention, and, as we saw most recently in San Bernardino, we are often the front line in engaging criminals inspired by international terrorism.

I would bring to Chicago the relationships I developed at DFW and in Atlanta metropolitan DeKalb County. I participate regularly in FBI and Homeland Security seminars, workshops, and training. Our department makes extensive use of the Homeland Security Information Network (HSIN), a secure web-based portal for information sharing and collaboration with federal, state, and local agencies.

We have also developed intelligence programs and assets in the Atlanta metro area. In December, in the aftermath of the San Bernardino incident, I reached out to Muslim leaders in DeKalb County in an effort to build stronger relationships and trust. My hope, as I told the imams and other leaders, was that our meeting could serve as a role model for the entire nation. “We will have an opportunity to talk about things that will keep all of us safe, our communities safe, and to dismiss a lot of these myths and biases and hateful speech that ... that comes into many of our lives every day,” I told those gathered at the meeting.

I addressed complaints from the Muslim community that many non-Muslims saw every Muslim as a terrorist and that hate rhetoric, both locally and nationally, was on the rise. I suggested that we might want to collaborate on creating a task force to look at challenges within the Muslim community. As I developed personal relationships with local Muslim leaders, I felt empowered to ask them to be vigilant about people in their community who might become radicalized and attempt to commit violence. They agreed to this request.

While we engage with our federal partners, we must not rely on them as our exclusive source of intelligence. We must take the initiative with the Muslim communities in our local jurisdictions and create relationships of trust and information sharing with them. Whether in DeKalb County, Chicago, Baghdad, or Kabul, human intelligence (HUMINT) is best gathered close-up and personal.