(U) Government-Wide Conference Looks at Info Sharing and Homeland Security

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(U) For the past five years, the US Government has held a conference on Information Sharing and Homeland Security. This year, the session was held July 18-19 at DIA, and was focused on "*Addressing the Challenges of the Information-Sharing Environment.* " Attendees from state, local, and federal government attended, as well as members from academia and business.

(U) The intent of this year's conference was to reach across the intelligence and law-enforcement communities, as well as the private sector, and "drill down" to the street level to see what is working in terms of information sharing, what is not working, and what gaps still exist that can be rectified.

(U) Several major themes were apparent throughout the conference, as follows. These themes are useful in determining what areas we can concentrate on in improving information sharing relating to homeland security issues. Determining how to magnify our ability to share information with those who need it, not just across federal agencies, but with various levels of law enforcement, will increase our overall ability to both connect the dots and amplify the value of the information at hand.

- Challenges of the information-sharing environment include getting too much information, not getting the right information, or not getting timely information.

- We need "speed in action" so that the information is still relevant when it gets to those who need it.

- We are bound by the way we have always done business, and that's the hardest thing to break.

- We need to overcome organizational resistance internally and externally, as some policies, processes, and procedures are impediments.

- Information sharing is a people issue, not a technical issue. We can have all the right tools, but people still have to share information.

- Success is determined by our collective integrated effectiveness and efforts. It is the ability to enter into each other's work space and add value.

- Most information sharing issues revolve around the issue of transparency. There's virtually nothing that can't be shared. It just requires some planning.

- We need to share not only information, but processes and methodologies.

- The need to share is replacing the need to know. Sharing and connection increases the value of information.

- Balance is one of the most important concepts in information sharing. We need to protect privacy but also not overwhelm people. Information Sharing involves balancing security, legal, privacy, policy and technical issues.

- "The greatest impediment to all-source analysis is the human or systematic resistance to sharing information" (9-11 Commission report).

- States often do not know with whom to share or report to in the Federal government, because everyone says they "own" terrorism (DOD, Dept. of Health, Dept. of Homeland

Security), and no one is really in charge.

- There must be a standardized system to effectively process the information across jurisdictional and disciplinary boundaries. There is value in every discipline out there, and even parts of the same discipline, like law enforcement, can speak different languages ("fire" has a different meaning for a cop versus a fire fighter).

(U) As an organization, we can best serve the challenges of information sharing by working on bringing about cultural change, clearly defining what information we need and how we want it, as well as better understanding our customers' needs and how we can best meet those needs. What is important at a federal level may not be what state or local officials are looking for, and what one federal agency wants or needs may not equate to the needs of another agency. One size does not fit all in the information game.

(U) The 9-11 Commission Report stated that "The greatest impediment to all-source analysis... is the human or systematic resistance to information sharing." As an agency, we have worked hard to interface on a constant basis, making significant and appropriate changes in how we are reporting our intelligence to a variety of both new and old customers. While we're not there yet in effectively sharing information with all customers who can benefit from that information, we are getting closer at cross-domain solutions, successful collaboration, moving customer priorities and requirements into reporting, and creating more cohesive information sharing standards and processes.

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