



REPORT TO CITY COUNCIL ON THE PORTLAND JOINT TERRORISM TASK FORCE (JTTF) - 2019

PORTLAND POLICE BUREAU
CRIMINAL INTELLIGENCE UNIT

FEBRUARY 12, 2019



Report to City Council on the Portland Joint Terrorism Task Force (JTTF) - 2019

Overview

On February 19, 2015, the Portland City Council adopted Resolution 37113, The resolution allowed the City of Portland and Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) outlining the Portland Police Bureau's (PPB) participation in the Portland Joint Terrorism Task Force (JTTF).¹

PPB currently has two police officers assigned as Task Force Officers (TFOs) to the JTTF.² These police officers are assigned to the PPB's Criminal Intelligence Unit (CIU).³ These officers fill a dual role as TFOs and officers assigned to CIU. As such, they physically work at both locations. Through the end of 2018, these officers filled a third role, as part of PPB patrol operations rotational support, i.e., they were required to work one patrol shift per week in addition to all other duties. That responsibility has been lifted with the intent for the officers to spend more time focusing on CIU and JTTF investigations.

During the Federal Fiscal Year 2018 (10/01/2017 – 09/30/2018), approximately 300 threat reports were received and addressed by JTTF investigators throughout the state of Oregon.⁴ The majority of threat reports were submitted by the public. Other reporting mechanisms include federal, state and local agencies, foreign law enforcement partners and other FBI Field Offices. The threats range in severity from potential acts of mass violence using weapons or explosives and allegations of support for terrorism, to cyberstalking and online harassment.

Many threats were deemed not credible and did not result in significant investigative actions. Some threats were opened as assessments and resulted in referrals to local mental health services or engagement with family members, school officials or other community resources. A small percentage of threats resulted in full investigations and criminal prosecution. For example, the Portland JTTF used search warrants, arrest warrants and other law enforcement action to mitigate threats posed in four separate incidents involving evidence that individuals possessed weapons or explosives and engaged in credible online threats and/or planned to commit violence. None of these law enforcement actions involved immigration.

¹<https://www.portlandoregon.gov/citycode/article/522896>

² <https://www.fbi.gov/contact-us/field-offices/portland/news/stories/portland-fbis-joint-terrorism-task-force-jttf-111318>

³ <https://www.portlandoregon.gov/police/76178>

⁴ See attached density map at end of report.



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Nationally, the FBI has had well over a hundred arrests of domestic terrorism subjects for each of the past three years. The FBI has had more arrests of domestic terrorism subjects than international terrorism subjects. Racially-motivated violent extremists and adherents to sovereign citizen ideology accounted for the largest number of domestic terrorism arrests in FY2018. Arrests were made on federal, state and local charges including arson, murder for hire, explosives, theft, firearms and weapons violations, fraud, cyberstalking and threats, violation of probation and traffic violations.

Racially-motivated violent extremists and other lone offenders on the domestic terrorism side are a significant concern for law enforcement. In many cases, these individuals are being radicalized online through violent ideology and graphic materials readily available on the internet. Data released by the FBI in November 2018 showed a 17% increase in hate crimes across the United States – the third year in a row that there has been an increase in this violent crime category.⁵⁶

The FBI has domestic terrorism investigations across all 56 FBI field offices. The FBI sees lone offenders on the domestic terrorism side in a similar way that they see Homegrown Violent Extremists (HVEs) on the international terrorism side. The FBI has seen an evolution in the threat, away from the large conspiracies that people often think of from the past and toward the threat of HVEs inspired by violent ideologies and graphic online materials.

The threat from HVEs continues to be one of the greatest concerns for both the FBI nationally and the Portland JTTF. HVEs are considered to be individuals inspired by designated global terrorist organizations such as ISIS or Al Qaeda. HVEs are (1) based in the United States, (2) have been radicalized primarily in the United States, and (3) are not receiving individualized direction from a foreign terrorist organization as designated by the U.S. Department of State.

- In May 2018 members of the Portland JTTF worked closely with local law enforcement and family services to mitigate the threat posed by an individual who was espousing increasingly violent ideology and committing physically abusive acts against family members. The individual was arrested by members of the JTTF on state charges and successfully placed into mental health counseling and a treatment plan.

⁵ <https://www.justice.gov/hatecrimes/hate-crime-statistics>

⁶ <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/hate-crimes-america-spiked-17-percent-last-year-fbi-says-n935711>



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Terrorist attacks this year by juvenile HVEs underscore the vulnerability of some adolescents to violent extremist ideologies that appeal to a range of developmental needs, such as a desire for a sense of belonging, identity or attention seeking through rebellion.

- In March 2018, a 17-year-old in Florida allegedly stabbed and killed a 13-year-boy and stabbed another 13-year-old boy and the boy's mother at a sleepover on behalf of ISIS. The 17-year-old, who often watched violent extremist videos online, confessed to the attack and advised that the deceased had made fun of the 17-year-old's Muslim faith and idolized celebrities—which the 17-year-old said was against his religious beliefs.
- Also in March 2018, a 16-year-old in Utah allegedly tried to detonate a homemade IED with shrapnel in his backpack during lunchtime at his high school cafeteria. No one was injured, but the individual told authorities that he intended to kill students. He also said that he had replaced the US flag with an ISIS flag at another high school in February and spray painted "ISIS is coming" on the building's exterior.
- In November and December 2018, a series of violent threats were received by the Beaverton School District and other organizations in the Portland area. The JTTF worked with local law enforcement and school district official to determine the credibility of the threats and develop mitigation strategies. One subject has been identified overseas and the investigation is continuing to identify additional individuals involved.

The FBI identifies HVEs who mobilize to violence through a variety of investigative methods. According to an FBI review of disrupted plotters, 24% of cases involving HVE disruptions were predicated on information provided by the community, including family members, associates and coworkers. Other cases were predicated on information received from local law enforcement, other US Government agencies and foreign partners. The FBI utilizes all necessary resources to support terrorism investigations, drawing on expertise across all of our field divisions as well as the skills and authorities of the law enforcement partners in the JTTF.

The JTTF partnerships remain a critical element in the nation's counterterrorism strategy and success in disrupting violent attacks. The JTTF is in many ways the first line of defense against terrorism in the U.S. and locally in Oregon. The JTTF allows for regular assessment of intelligence regarding possible threats and sharing of that information in real time with federal, state and local law enforcement partners. Time is often a critical component in the successful disruption of credible threats to conduct violence.



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Threat assessments and investigations performed by the JTTF are conducted in accordance with policies set forth in the Domestic Investigations and Operations Guide (DIOG)⁷, specifically chapters 4-8. The DIOG states that no investigative activity can be based solely on the exercise of First Amendment protected activities or on the race, ethnicity, gender, national origin, religion, disability, sexual orientation or gender identity of an individual. All JTTF investigators, Agents and TFOs alike, receive regular training to ensure they understand and adhere to the policies set forth in the DIOG.

Stringent oversight of the JTTF is governed by bi-partisan congressional committees, FBI HQ and Office of General Counsel, the Department of Justice in Washington, DC, the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Oregon, and Federal Judges presiding in the District of Oregon and on the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA) Court. It is important to note that the JTTF does not charge individuals with crimes, that authority rests with the U.S. Attorney's Office. The JTTF collects factual evidence and presents the facts to the U.S. Attorney's Office. If an individual is subsequently charged with a federal crime by the U.S. Attorney's Office, additional oversight then occurs through defense counsel, a jury, district court judges and appeals courts.

In addition to conducting over 300 hundred threat assessments the JTTF was engaged in the following investigative activity, training programs and outreach efforts.

- During FY 2018 the JTTF provided terrorism and Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) training for approximately 360 Oregon police officers in training at the Department of Public Safety Standards and Training (DPSST) Academy.
- JTTF Bomb Technicians responded to 30 bomb threats involving suspicious devices.
- JTTF investigators responded to 13 aviation-related incidents including crimes aboard aircraft, use of lasers against aircraft and an assault on a TSA officer.
- Members of the JTTF have provided education and outreach to multiple community groups and faith-based organizations.

In 2018 the Portland JTTF consisted of Task Force Officers from seven different local, state and federal agencies. These seven agencies are the formal members of the JTTF Executive Board. JTTF executive board meeting invitations are sent on a quarterly basis to approximately 55 law enforcement agencies, including the seven agencies which make up the formal executive board. These meetings are a venue for providing training and updates on general counterterrorism threats.

⁷ <https://bit.ly/2SpJrl8>



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As the Commissioner of Police, the Mayor is a member of the Executive Board, however participation in board meetings is delegated down to the Police Chief. The Mayor is provided quarterly individual briefings. These briefings are more in depth regarding JTTF case-specific activities than is discussed at the JTTF executive board meetings.

PPB Oversight

During the course of their work, PPB TFOs are subject to all relevant federal, state, and local laws; all PPB directives (policies); and relevant federal regulations. Violation of any of these could result in an investigation resulting in discipline up to an including termination. Legal violations could also result in a criminal investigation and prosecution.

In summary, PPB TFOs are subject to all established oversight measures within PPB and the City of Portland.

PPB TFOs have the appropriate security clearance to work at the Portland FBI Office and their immediate PPB supervisor has the appropriate security clearance to be briefed on and review any of their work on the JTTF. The Chief of Police is briefed when needed or upon request and is in the process of obtaining the appropriate security clearance.

Oregon Revised Statutes 181A.250 and 181A.820 - Information Gathering and Immigration Enforcement

ORS 181A.250 (formerly known as 181.575) states, "No law enforcement agency may collect or maintain information about the political, religious or social views, associations or activities of any individual, group, association, organization, corporation, business or partnership unless such information directly relates to an investigation of criminal activities, and there are reasonable grounds to suspect the subject of the information is or may be involved in criminal conduct."⁸

ORS 181A.820 (formerly known as 181.850) states in part, "No law enforcement agency of the State of Oregon or of any political subdivision of the state shall use agency moneys, equipment or personnel for the purpose of detecting or apprehending persons whose only violation of law is that they are persons of foreign citizenship present in the United States in violation of federal immigration laws."⁹

⁸ <https://www.oregonlaws.org/ors/181A.250>

⁹ <https://www.oregonlaws.org/ors/181A.820>



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Specific to the PPB MOU and City Council Resolution 37113, there have been no investigations that would violate either Oregon Revised Statute (ORS) 181A.250 or 181A.820.

Enforcement and Removal Operations (ERO)¹⁰, a branch of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) is not a member of the Portland JTTF. Homeland Security Investigations (HSI)¹¹, a different branch of ICE, does provide a full-time TFO to the JTTF.

Statistics

Since October 1, 2017¹², the JTTF has responded to over 220 reports and referrals from the public regarding terrorism-related threats. These reports and referrals led to the writing of more than 350 investigative reports.

TFO's from all participating partner agencies on the JTTF have co-managed (with an FBI Case Agent) the following investigative efforts:

- 101 Assessments
- 9 Full Investigations
- 2 Preliminary Investigations
- All JTTF TFOs have authored 355 interview reports

PPB TFOs have co-managed the following investigative efforts:

- 29 Assessments
- 4 Full Investigations
- 35 interview reports

The PPB investigative efforts have included school shooting threats, acquisition of firearms/explosives, threats to government officials, threats to law enforcement, white supremacy extremism, anarchist extremism, domestic terrorism, international terrorism, weapons of mass destruction, and threats to Jewish holy facilities.

94% of the cases co-managed by PPB TFOs were generated by public referrals, with the rest being referred by PPB, the Oregon TITAN Fusion Center, or generated by the FBI.

¹⁰ <https://www.ice.gov/ero>

¹¹ <https://www.ice.gov/hsi>

¹² Unclassified information provided by the FBI – Portland Field Office.



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PPB Outreach, Education, and Transparency

PPB TFOs (and their PPB supervisor) maintain relationship with community groups and organizations with an interested in the JTTF. Specifically, presentations have been made to the Jewish Federation of Portland¹³, the Muslim Advisory Council¹⁴, the Columbia River Chapter of the American Society for Industrial Security (ASIS)¹⁵, and the Portland Citizen's Crime Commission¹⁶.

Additionally, PPB CIU has a webpage¹⁷ to highlight partnerships with the JTTF, the Oregon TITAN Fusion Center, and the Portland Police Bureau's Behavioral Health Unit. This page also serves to educate the public by providing links to resources and a way to provide information to PPB.¹⁸

Density Map of Public Referrals to the Portland JTTF

¹³ <https://www.jewishportland.org/>

¹⁴ <https://www.portlandoregon.gov/police/72132>

¹⁵ <https://www.asisonline.org/>

¹⁶ <http://www.pdxccc.org/>

¹⁷ <https://www.portlandoregon.gov/police/76178>

¹⁸ This report was prepared by PPB CIU Sergeant Peter Simpson, with cooperation and assistance by the Portland FBI Office.



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