



SATELLITE COMMUNICATIONS FOR HOMELAND SECURITY

March 2005

Background Information

- Local law enforcement asked to be first line of defense in protecting the homeland from terrorist attack.
- All “first preventers” and “first responders” dependent upon older communications systems that suffer from limitation in interoperability and service coverage.
- Homeland Security funds spread too thinly to make significant changes in communications technologies used by nation’s law enforcement.
- DHS has created the Office of Interoperability to address this issue.
- More than 80% of all city officials asked, reported that protecting water from terrorist attack was their highest priority.
- Limited human resources can be made more effective through the use of space-based communications technologies similar to those applied in the battlefield.
- The nation’s drinking and agricultural water distribution systems are largely vulnerable to terrorist attack.

Consequences

- Locally acquired information concerning potential suspects can’t be shared on a real or near real time basis with other local law enforcement personnel.
- Many overextended law enforcement agencies unable to complete and store (in readily transferable electronic form) information collected in Field Interviews (FIs).
- Law enforcement officials collected limited information concerning 9-11 terrorists but were unable to synthesize and share it with other law enforcement officials.
- Water intended for human consumption, agriculture and livestock are easily contaminated with chemical, biological and radiological agents

Recommended Action

- Provide DHS with funds dedicated to local law enforcement access to national satellite services that will (1) provide back up to current law enforcement data and voice communications, (2) encourage the rapid sharing of information among local law enforcement agencies, (3) allow for monitoring of drinking and agricultural water supplies regardless of point of attack.

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