



From San Bernardino to Orlando: Steps to reforming homeland security

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The Orlando shooting marks the third time a terrorist attack has been carried out by someone scrutinized by the FBI, revealing serious gaps in America's homeland security apparatus.

In AEI's [Homeland Security Reform Series](#)

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outlines real world policy suggestions for the next administration to better protect Americans:

[Expand human intelligence capabilities](#)

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With the threat shifting from al Qaeda's large attacks to smaller attacks directed, enabled, or inspired by ISIS, and in view of terrorists' increased use of technology, our national security enterprise must adapt.

A key component of that adaptation is substantially increasing local law enforcement's HUMINT capabilities....We should expand HUMINT in three areas: monitoring, surveillance, and undercover investigations. The Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) defines these as follows:

- **Monitoring:** *the short-term or preliminary act of observing or watching the activities of an individual or organization...for the purpose of gathering information relevant to an investigation;*
- **Surveillance:** *the continuous or prolonged observation of a targeted individual*

or group by clandestine means for the purpose of collecting information material to an approved investigation; and

- **Undercover Investigation:** *an approved investigation involving the use of an undercover officer who clandestinely obtains information about individuals or organizations through the development of ongoing in person relationships with such individuals or organizations.*

[Consolidate Domestic Intelligence entities under the FBI](#)

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The federal government should eliminate the multi-headed federal lead on state and local counterterrorism by designating the FBI as the lead agency for state and local counterterrorism efforts. Under the FBI lead, the DHS fusion centers, given their limited value and high cost, should be consolidated into the more established and numerous Joint Terrorism Task Forces (JTTFs).

[Give states and localities a voice in Washington](#)

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...[M]uch of the conversation since September 11, 2001 has focused on federal efforts and programs. Because of the federal government's inherent bureaucratic nature, lack of resources other than money, and minimal operational experience in communities across America, it simply does not possess all the relevant information to enact optimal policy decisions, no matter how well-intentioned its efforts are.

To fix this, the president and Congress need to stop giving the principal of federalism lip service and let states and localities play a far more significant role in our domestic national security enterprise... No one knows a particular population better than the men and women who spend every day of their lives immersed in it. Local law enforcement expends enormous resources to develop and maintain close relationships across their communities, including with at-risk communities.

For more information about the series, click [here](#)

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To interview Matt Mayer, or another AEI scholar, please contact AEI media services at mediaservices@aei.org (mailto:mediaservices@aei.org) or 20-862-5829.

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