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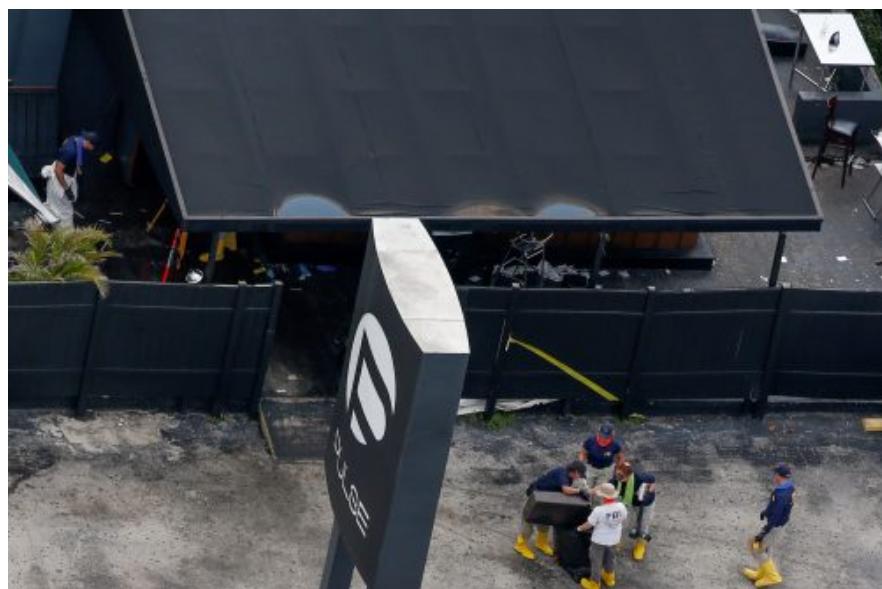
# Time to leverage local law enforcement to stop terrorists

**Matt A. Mayer**

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The FBI's failure to cooperate with and leverage local law enforcement to monitor the perpetrator of the Orlando terrorist attack, Omar Mateen, and possibly other terrorist suspects, undercuts and will continue to undercut our national security, making us vulnerable to future attacks.

In the aftermath of the Orlando terrorist attack by Omar Mateen, nearly every news story, commentary, and talking head has focused almost exclusively on the failure of the Federal Bureau of Investigation's actions on Mateen, and the challenge the FBI faces in detecting and stopping future terrorists — given how many cases are active and how limited available resources are.



[http://www.aei.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/RTX2GGWJ\\_fbi\\_pulse\\_orlando.jpg](http://www.aei.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/RTX2GGWJ_fbi_pulse_orlando.jpg)

FBI officials in the parking lot of the Pulse gay night club, the site of a mass shooting days earlier, in Orlando, Florida, June 15, 2016. REUTERS/Adrees Latif.

This [Politico piece is a great example](http://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2016/06) (<http://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2016/06>)

</orlando-terror-fbi-surveillance-gap-213967>), as it spends roughly 3,000 words on the issue and only once notes the role of local law enforcement: FBI Director's James Comey's [request for help on surveillance](http://www.cnn.com/2015/05/28/politics/fbi-isis-local-law-enforcement/) (<http://www.cnn.com/2015/05/28/politics/fbi-isis-local-law-enforcement/>) in May 2015. The problem for the FBI is:

The FBI actually isn't big *enough* to tackle the new era of online radicalization and independent-acting lone wolves. It's not that the FBI didn't recognize Mateen as a threat; it's that there are too many people like Mateen and Tsarnaev and Hasan across America today for the FBI to track them all—leaving the vast majority of people who the FBI suspects might harbor terrorist aspirations to go about their daily lives without any regular government surveillance.

Though I may have missed it, in the days since Mateen's deadly attack, I've not seen any mention of how the FBI worked with local law enforcement to investigate or monitor Mateen from 2013 to last Sunday morning. If the FBI failed to partner with local law enforcement, it would represent yet another case in which the FBI siloes information, which is disappointing fifteen years after the September 11 attack.

Nonetheless, my American Enterprise Institute report out today on why [Enhanced Human Intelligence Is Key to Defeating Terrorists](https://www.aei.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Human-Intelligence.pdf) (<https://www.aei.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Human-Intelligence.pdf>) aims to push reforms to our domestic national security apparatus.

This piece is [part of a homeland security series](http://www.aei.org/feature/homeland-security-reform-series/) (<http://www.aei.org/feature/homeland-security-reform-series/>) focused on key reforms we can make to improve our nation's security.

As I state in the report:

We can overcome the increased use of encryption technology by terrorists and their increased presence in our cities by expanding our HUMINT capabilities. ...

Through wise use of monitoring, surveillance, and undercover investigations, local law enforcement can overcome the obstacles encrypted technology presents. HUMINT techniques also will allow law enforcement to determine more quickly the intentions of individuals and groups, thereby freeing resources for use in cases which warrant more intensive investigation.

Federal terrorism funding from the US Department of Homeland Security should be used to fund these activities. With local law enforcement playing a more active role along with the FBI, our chances of detecting and stopping the next Orlando should improve.

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**Learn more:** [Enhanced Human Intelligence Is Key to Defeating Terrorists](http://www.aei.org/publication/enhanced-human-intelligence-is-key-to-defeating-terrorists/) (<http://www.aei.org/publication/enhanced-human-intelligence-is-key-to-defeating-terrorists/>) | [Giving states and localities a voice in Washington](http://www.aei.org/publication/giving-states-and-localities-a-voice-in-washington/) (<http://www.aei.org/publication/giving-states-and-localities-a-voice-in-washington/>) |

I've not seen  
any mention of  
how the FBI  
worked with  
local law  
enforcement to  
investigate or  
monitor  
Mateen.

[Consolidate Domestic Intelligence Entities Under the FBI](http://www.aei.org/publication/consolidate-domestic-intelligence-entities-under-the-fbi/)

[\(http://www.aei.org/publication/consolidate-domestic-intelligence-entities-under-the-fbi/\)](http://www.aei.org/publication/consolidate-domestic-intelligence-entities-under-the-fbi/)

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This article was found online at:

<http://www.aei.org/publication/time-to-leverage-local-law-enforcement-to-stop-terrorists/>