



Richard W. Kelly, Director of the Regional Operations Intelligence Center (ROIC), New Jersey State Police, Captain Ray Lasso and Lieutenant Mike Zimmerman talk to Gwyn Winfield about improving response times

ROIC-IT Man

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GW: What is the ROIC and how does it work? How does it integrate diverse data and spread it across state and non-state actors? Perhaps, more importantly, what does it not do? Is it a hazard warning and reporting tool or a plume modelling simulator?

RK: The ROIC comes from Regional Operational Intelligence Centre. It is the United States' all-crimes, all-hazards, all-threats, all-the-time fusion centre. The way we do it in New Jersey (NJ) – and for that matter in all the states (I think there are 43 of these fusion centres standing up) – is to take the guidelines from the Department of Justice (DoJ) and Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and apply them to the envi-

ronment in that particular state.

In NJ we have married up the operations and intelligence side. When I say operations, I mean NJ State operations – the uniformed service that does patrols. The State Police have done in it their own division, but it also includes the county and municipal law enforcement entities. NJ has about 479 independent police departments, which can range from 2-2,000-man departments. The State Department has always supported those departments with the resources they might not have, like bomb tech, hazmat or canine. All those operational areas are run out of the ROIC; requests for support come from the operational side and we marry that up with the intel side because that gives us an intel

feed into what is going on at a law enforcement level – not only on the Interstate and State highways but also at the provincial levels.

On the intel side we bring in our organic partners, such as the FBI, DHS, Immigration, NYPD, Port Authority, etc. We connect to other fusion centres, mainly in the ten NE states; all that activity maintains situational awareness and lets you know what is going on, not only in our own environment but also internationally. We followed the London bombings, and when they happened the ROIC, on the asset side, made the call to deploy resources because an event like this can cause the world to spin a little faster. Those are some of the elements that work in

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the fusion centre, as well as critical infrastructure preparedness (CIP), and we are currently going through the process of identifying CIP sites.

RL: When we activate Level Four and Five of the activation centre we transition from daily operations, though we still support their mission; we allow the subject experts to come into the ROIC and see what is happening with that particular threat

GW: So it would seem that the ROIC operates on two levels: the intelligence fusion and logistics/hazard management?

RK: What Ray just referred to are our five levels of activity – sort of like the colour-coded national levels. We sit in a building that was originally designed as the emergency operations centre, but post 9/11 and Katrina the intel fusion centre has overcome that narrow vision. At Level Four or Five we do evolve into the emergency operations centre – when a large percentage of the police who handle that response start populating our building. We sit them in specific areas to do specific functions; even though we continue to support local missions, our primary mission becomes supporting the emergency management people. In the spring, for example, the State capital gets flooded, and in the summer we have hurricanes; about 80-90 per cent of all NJ emergency management is driven by weather. We went to Level Four on two occasions last year thanks to a blizzard, and that it is times like that when we get into the emergency management mode.

GW: In terms of a CBRNE incident, do you push all the information in the ROIC into the DHS or other specialist agencies and let them do all the hazard prediction and warning and reporting? Or do you do the hazard prediction and plume modelling yourself?

RK: We do all of that. The notification initially comes here, and we would start an immediate deployment response. So we launch the response to that situation, we make notification to the in-house assets such as the hazmat side, all three regions, the homeland security people, the governor, the attorney general, etc. While that is going on we are deploying resources – as well as hazard prediction or plume modelling, our system support technical folk have the software to address that. All that comes out of here and,

if we need to do mid-course corrections, the subject matter experts are seated here and we can do that.

GW: I'm familiar with some of the civil warning and reporting systems such as DTRA's CATS. Do you have the ability to pull information from GPA and feed it into the hazard management? If you know Trooper Jones is heading towards the plume – you can see it – can you redirect him and keep planning?

MZ: There is an ability, through the radio system, to track our troopers on a GPS locator level. We don't utilise it as a matter of course; we know how many troopers are in an area through a computer aided dispatch, but we couldn't tell you he was on Fourth and Main, for example. The ROIC allows us to tie into emergency management and allows us to do notification through local county and then up to the Regional/State Emergency Management Co-ordinator. The situational awareness comes from human interaction rather than technical.

We have a new database that we will be rolling out – the resource directory database. If there was a chlorine incident on Ninth and Main, we could call up that database and if they needed something to knock down a plume we could say, "This department has three assets that can do that and they are only a mile away". We can do that on assets but not human assets.

RK: In all three regions there are preparedness bureaus and they know better at the local level what their assets are. What we would want to pull into the ROIC is CCTV coverage of the event, whether that is Department of Transportation, private sector, etc. We are looking to the nuclear sites in NJ to bring in their coverage, and anything we couldn't bring in on existing coverage we would send a helicopter with a satellite downlink to cover. I am a visual kind of guy and I like to see what is going on and put up on the big board what the assets and liabilities might be.

We have a very big chlorine plant in NJ which would affect about 50,000 people if it was blown up. We want to know what chemicals are there in our threat assessment. There are four different levels of critical infrastructure, as suggested by the federal assessment. We are now in peace-time mode, dataloading those sites what they have there, liaising with the local responder so if they have an event

we can put it on the big screen.

GW: Does this CCTV have to be a manned system, or do you use algorithms to tell you, for instance, that you have 80 non-ambulant down on this road but only 30 on this one, allowing you to target your assets better, improve response and save more lives, etc?

RK: We would have to have some kind of sensor for that; we still rely on "boots on the ground". We could plume model, and we know from training exercises what is there and the weather patterns for NJ in November, for example. We know what to expect, but any event like that will be dealt with by having a ton of human resources thrown at it.

RL: We have a lot of that pre-planned; the chlorine plant has all types of plume models pre-loaded. So if we have a westerly wind we can pull it straight out and estimate and then, in the worst case scenario, we know we can start evacuating here, or whatever the case might be.

GW: I was thinking about an automatic software solution for CCTV that can do the work automatically, and doesn't need a trained individual counting, or estimating bodies. With that you can target assets, or move assets with an automatic push rather than sit behind a desk telling people what to do...

RK: We don't have anything like that – but if you do let us know.

GW: We saw this in the 2005 London bombings; that there was signal about the terrorist intention, but it was lost in the noise. Are you able to do some automatic intel sensor fusion, to sort out the signal from noise – plugging into syndromic surveillance, for example – or does it still require old-fashioned detective work?

RK: As you mentioned, there is a lot of noise out there. We marry up with other agencies – we are split between Philadelphia, Newark and NY, we tie into the Joint Terrorist Task Forces in those FBI office and we have troopers deploy to the JTTS as well as the DHS Washington Office. That is our connect to those threat assessments and the intel threads on the terrorist side. We also build on the investigation side of the State Police who have long-term relationships and good links with things like hotel owner programs, where

hotel owners will call in with information – primarily in this state that is driven by drug traffickers and general criminal activities. But everything that we look at from a crime side gets an initial wash from CT.

GW: Do you require all that data come to come from police forces and their contacts, or do you have the ability to drag information, for instance, from agricultural wholesalers – that they have seen out-of-season peaks of nitrates or large amounts of acetone?

RK: We don't monitor chemical sales from a producer or factory, but we do have an interface with the private security directors, who are usually ex-law enforcement. We lecture with the private sector, and we would hope our intelligence feelers would pick up something like that. We go out and look for trends, which is all part of the fusion centre concept and 21st Century policing.

GW: Within counter-terrorism and CBRN you have the phrase "The Golden Hour". This is the period when every action has the maximum effect, and you are always striving to get deep inside the Golden Hour. How does ROIC fit into that? How does it get assets moving faster?

MZ: We have operations people that do each region, identifying staging areas, targets that might be possible, resources that we have. We have a fabric that is interconnected, and it would feed information into the ROIC, which would work simultaneously with the people that are out there meaning we can deploy assets immediately. We have also set up rapid deployment forces that have identified officers at the stations who are trained and equipped with things like radiation pagers, and they respond to that threat and would feed into the incident command system and the ROIC who would then feed assets to that threat.

GW: The genesis of this interview was a discussion with a NJSP officer, Major John Hunt, about the fundamental differences between Fire, EMS and Police. I suggested that, while Police might be the first responders on the scene, they would be there in a piecemeal fashion, since they have to deploy from a wide area and variety of missions. Fire and EMS, on the other hand, have a central pool of assets that are ready to respond to any incident. He suggested that I was wrong because of the advantages of the ROIC. How does it overturn my statement?

RK: We are here with the lights on 24/7 – it's a cold day in January, zero degrees outside, and we are sitting here with the engines idling. We cut down the response time, and because of our constant monitoring of events, our response time and our embedded resources in the NJ regions, while the first responders are likely to be the fire department or local police, as they roll so do we. The ROIC draws on situational awareness and our authority and ability to deploy resources cuts down that response time. We don't wait for a local fire department to call us. An example, an executive airport, Peterboro, operated by the Port Authority, lost an executive jet on take-off when it went across the highway and into a building. The people on the highway called 911 and those calls were answered by the ROIC and we called the Port Authority and said "You guys lost a jet". That jet was embedded in the building and while the tower might have seen that they'd lost it, we made the call to the police and fire department before the tower did, because we picked it up from the intel feed from

the mobiles. That's how we learn things – either through mobile phones, radios or by monitoring the world, small towns or Madrid: we pick it up and assess it and what we need to do about it.

We had a plane crash into a building in NY recently – one of the Yankee baseball players – and we knew it belonged to him in less than a minute because we had the tail number of the plane. So rather than worrying that it belonged to Mohammed Attah, we grabbed that info, crunched it for intel, and assessed the response.

GW: Where next for the ROIC? Do you focus on training and tactics, how to get the most out of what you have got, or is it an increase in technology, improving the links, speeding things up, improving the granularity of data.

RK: I don't think we'll ever be done building the ROIC; it is a very dynamic environment and we will change every day and if we think we could do something better tomorrow than we could today, we will shift policy and do that. Driven by 9/11 and Katrina, the State and local law enforcement had to become part of the intelligence-driven environment and feed into the Federal system – but also look after our own jurisdiction without relying on DHS. We like to think that at NJ we are the tip of the spear; we had two acts of terrorism in America that were plotted right here, so we need to be on our toes.

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