

TRANSCRIPT OF REMARKS

L. A. County Sheriff Lee Baca, September 29, 2002
10th Anniversary Breakfast FULL DISCLOSURE NETWORK
California Yacht Club, Marina del Rey, CA

Thank you and good morning; I am delighted to be here, especially in view of the fact that you have such a great group of friends here for Leslie. I am pleased that our Congresswoman [Jane Harman] was able to open up the discussion, and I will continue with theme. We can all together do a better job on this question of Homeland Security.

The “EMMY” do you mind if I touch the Emmy [statuette]? I never have touched one before. So now that is out of my system, I want to thank LAPD Assistant Chief [David] Gascon as well as the Congresswoman [Harman] for being here and all the other law enforcement that are a part of this breakfast.

Why is this breakfast important? First of all, Citizens Protection Alliance in itself has a mission, and Full Disclosure Network is the voice for that mission. You have been able to impart messages to hundreds of thousands of people, quite frankly, on subjects that often are not brought to the forefront enough. Other than the newspaper telling you how every bad deed that is possible is going to get reported and then we don't really get the full effect of what does that truly mean. The question is [the news] is just something over there, and does it effect us? When you put forward something as important as the Full Disclosure Network program you are doing something that all Americans need to have more of and I congratulate you on that. Leslie, you have been the voice of this wonderful program I am thrilled that you have assembled so many good friends here today.

There are things that you need to know about the world of terrorism. All of us here obviously had a different kind of life up to September 11th. We had an unimaginable crime committed in our presence, and the fact that it was appropriately reported in the media as it was, left us in complete disbelief and shock that human beings could even conceive of something as horrific as that and do it with no concern at all. We, you and I, constantly remind ourselves, if it were not for God, we would not be here on this earth. Therefore, when you associate religion and terrorism together it is a terrible condition, and we have to take a deep breath and ask ourself: this is something appropriate. Can some group of criminals invoke religion and use God's name in the interest of committing mass murder? I don't think so. I think murderers are murderers and these individuals are certainly not Muslims in the sense of practicing the faith. They are of that region, and they have some of that in their thinking, but they definitely are not Muslim because

Muslims do not condone murder on that level. You and I would certainly not use the name of God in the interest of committing murder.

When the attacks occurred, the L.A. Police Department and the L. A. County Sheriff's Department have emergency operation centers and we immediately opened them. What happens in advance, in this county, is that we look at all critical facilities whether it is entertainment centers, bridges, schools, government buildings, power services, places where people will be in large numbers and we immediately go out and look at these places. We find out if there is anything suspicious or unusual, and then we report back into a centralized system as to whether or not these critical facilities are in jeopardy. We found out within an hour and a half there were no critical facilities in jeopardy and at the same time as we were doing that, we were mobilizing thousands of police officers and firefighters throughout the Southern California area because we have a mutual aid plan already in place in Los Angeles County. We are also connected to Orange, Ventura, San Bernardino, Riverside, Kern and Santa Barbara Counties. So what we have, in effect, is a planned strategy in the event there is something terrible that we are going to face, and we can go into action right away. We did not know whether or not more attacks were going to occur on September 11th, but we were prepared.

The problem with intelligence gathering, as Congresswoman [Harman] alluded to earlier, is that you have too many agencies at the federal level and literally thousands of police departments at the local level. We have here a joint task force with the FBI. I have Deputy Sheriffs on that Joint Task Force; the Los Angeles Police Department also has representatives. We are essentially cleared for top secret-type information, so whatever the FBI knows, we know. It is on real time, therefore, there is not an absence of sharing, at least in Los Angeles County. This was not necessarily true on September 11, 2001, in every other part of the United States, but we did have a system here. Jane [Rep. Harman] alluded to the Terrorism Early Warning Group. This is something that is unique to Los Angeles. It is now being used as a model all over the United States so that other law enforcement agencies can create similar programs. That is, you have to have a coordinated body of people who take intelligence information, who look at it and give scenario planning. In the event that something were to occur, you can send people out to prospective targets and you can start looking at things.

Interestingly enough on the week of Sept. 11th here, the FBI offices and local police experienced a week where we received 6,000 tips of suspicious activity. The question is "What do you do with all this information?" You have to sort it out. We learned quickly that we did not have enough resources with which to do that. Fortunately, the Board of Supervisors quickly went into action and authorized more resources for the Sheriff's Department for the Terrorist Early Warning

Group so we could do a better job at chasing down these clues. But is this just local law enforcement's job? It is also the FBI's job, the highway patrol and the job of the Department of Justice. The Governor did something within several weeks after Sept. 11th that was rather remarkable. He, along with the Attorney General, decided to form the California Anti-Terror Information System, which is an intelligence network with the 300-plus Police Departments and the 58 Sheriffs Departments in California. This network now allows us to collect intelligence on our own, communicate it to the FBI, and at the same time, do an analysis of the intelligence all over the State of California in real time. The system went on line in January of this year. So far, we had thousands and thousands of pieces of information that were analyzed by analysts at about ten different parts of the State. The system is a network system so no one in any part of California is without access to whatever anyone else has. This makes sense, folks. It also tells the federal bureaucracy that "you may have special powers for intelligence gathering," but "you are not the only game in town." We as first responders, have an obligation to be ready to go, to mobilize, and to hopefully even prevent acts of terrorism.

We are now developing a terrorism early warning system across the Nation where the same process is in place in New York, Chicago, Philadelphia, Miami and San Francisco. Also, Sacramento has it, San Diego has it, and eventually the entire Nation will be involved in this process, especially in large urban areas where targets for terrorism are very plentiful. We have many targets in California, but there are also many targets in other parts of the Nation. Therefore, we have to do our very best to organize ourselves in a way to make us much more effective.

The last point on this is that Homeland Security is an evolving science and also an evolving art. We can't say: "Well we haven't detected anything here," and therefore get lackadaisical about what is going on in New York, in Wyoming, in Florida, and what's going on in other parts of the United States. I know that in the business community and the entertainment community here in Los Angeles, there are people who have a high degree of anxiety about being targets for terrorism. They are especially concerned when it comes to explosives or things that deal with nuclear or biological agents. These things make us all extremely nervous because they are threats on a whole new level.

The Terrorism Early Warning Group can be of help here. It is linked with our medical system in Los Angeles County so in effect we have a full inventory of our medical capacity to respond to anything that might occur. We also have developed a Homeland Security Advisory Group, headed up by Marc Nathanson, and we have assembled a group of very influential people who will assist us. We have representatives from the entertainment industry, we have representatives from

others in the business community, and we have representatives from the medical community, as well as police and fire. This is how we are organizing.

I also believe the Emergency Medical Technician role has to be expanded. We don't have enough firefighting paramedics, we don't have enough doctors, we don't have enough hospital rooms, and so forth. We need an expanded EMT program. An Emergency Medical Technician is someone like you who gets special training, who can be a "first responder" and assist police and firefighters. It is going to have to get to that level folks. If you think there are enough fire fighters and police officers to handle these big problems, you are wrong. We need a regional program to develop more volunteer "first responders," and I am starting to put together such a program right now.

The good will of Americans will have to be put to use here. We are going to have to have EMT people who can be quickly assembled at a pre- designated place. These new EMT volunteers are going to have to help firefighters and police officers in this battle. Anything short of that is like saying, "Well, the rest of you folks can just lean back and leave it all to us in the police and fire departments. It can't be that way. Trained police and firefighters are the best prepared, no question about it, but we cannot just say the public has no role. There has to be this consciousness building. I think that Homeland Security will eventually provide that, and outreach will occur, and a massive educational system for volunteer EMTs will evolve. We, as a people, are best defended when we are best prepared. That will send a message out to the Al Qaeda types in the world that America is no easy target. Because the American public will not tolerate the World Trade Center holocaust, which is what it was. So, those are my few thoughts. I thank you very much for inviting me here today. I would be happy to respond to a few questions.

QUESTION: What would it take, in terms of security, to protect the Harbor?

ANSWER: Well, the Harbor as you know is an open vulnerable place. We are not talking about one harbor; we are talking about two, the Long Beach and L.A. Harbors. Part of the strategy obviously is to have more patrolling; the Coast Guard is doing it. Each harbor has their own patrol units out there. The key is to cover the outer edges of the ocean, not just the dock areas. I am not saying that everything is perfect, because it is not, but what would be good is if Leslie would get the Chief of the L. A. Port Police, Earl Cunningham, on her program along with the Chief of the Long Beach Port Police and let those guys answer the question you are asking me. They can do the job but they need more boats and personnel; they cannot just do business as it was done before September 11th. They will also tell you we are all waiting for the Congress to pass the Homeland Security Bill with its 3.5 billion dollar spending authority.

QUESTON: Unintelligible

ANSWER: We are trying to do it now, but we need that money. I'll tell you, politicians are funny people. They like to talk all the right talk, but they don't walk down the same streets that you and I do. They certainly don't go over enough bridges and harbors and things to figure out that their inactivity is really risky at this time. It is a year now since Sept. 11th for crying out loud. Congress started talking about this big legislative package two months after the whole thing occurred and they still can't get their act together.

QUESTION: This is going to date me, but I belonged to the Civil Air Patrol back in World War II and it seems like a similar program could be done at the Port of L.A. We already have some of the boat owners with flashlights sailing along the water at night. They need to be organized; now they are just doing it on their own.

ANSWER: I am going to give you my card, I think that it would be important for you to participate with this advisory group on Homeland Security and give us the benefit of your experience during WWII.

QUESTION: Do you have in mind to include the Municipal airports that we have across the State? In California, we have volunteer pilots who are now transporting vital organs, but it would seem to me that we are sitting there ready and nobody is looking at us. Do you possibly think that we could be of assistance to the Homeland Security program?

ANSWER: Yes I do, Civil Air Patrol definitely and I will give you my card as well. I think that everything that we do as a society is critical. Public safety is no longer the exclusive responsibility of governmental agencies. The more that we engage the public and those who are capable of being part-time "public safety" eyes and ears, the more we are sending the message abroad that this isn't as easy a country to defeat. But there can be no question about it: Los Angeles, as Mayor Guiliani said in today's article in the L. A. Times, is a target rich environment. If we say to ourselves, "let somebody else worry about it," we are not being patriotic. You can wear that American flag all you want, but if you don't care if someone else next to you is doing something that is goofy, then you are not a patriot. It takes action, folks so thank you very much.