Lecture Notes Module 5

In this presentation, you will learn about examples of primary techniques in terrorism investigations, including information sources, undercover operations, surveillances, and communications intercepts.

The ability to develop relationships with potential information sources or cultivate sources for the purpose of gathering and collecting information are key factors in successfully countering terrorism. With the preceding in mind, when those in law enforcement are seeking to be proactive and pre-emptive they frequently seek overt and covert human sources of information. Overt sources may stem from the Community Outreach Program, a nationwide initiative, that connects local FBI offices with their communities, or local police Community Policing initiatives that increased exponentially in the post-9/11 environment, or mere concerned citizens. Covert sources may include sting operations and confidential informants. Fusion Centers are sources of analytical information.

Law enforcement organizations also employ undercover operations using assumed identities and legally deceptive practices in order to gather information, criminal intent and criminal activities, and probable cause required for search warrants, arrests, indictments, and successful prosecutions. Undercover officers are able to gain access to or circulate among individuals or groups that have committed certain crimes or who are predisposed to commit certain crimes.

Surveillances are well-established investigative tools involving techniques, devices, and equipment. Physical and electronic surveillances are used for the collection and analysis of information about individuals and groups. Most surveillance is preceded by preliminary investigative activities and reconnaissance. Surveillance can be a valuable and essential tool in developing evidence and combating a wide range of sophisticated criminal activities, including terrorism. Most types of surveillance include human, audio, visual, global positioning systems, and aerial.

Information and communication intercepts are also effective means of collecting information for developing intelligence. One of the most key intercept methodologies involves the use of roving wiretaps via court orders in order to intercept communications regardless of changes in locations or communications devices. Such an ability is critically important considering the era of disposable cell phones and e-mail addresses.