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The U. S. Department of Homeland Security Center of Excellence, Department of Homeland Security Science and Technology Directorate Center of Excellence through the Borders, Trade, and Immigration Institute, held a Homeland Security Symposium titled: **“Counter-Terrorism and Intelligence.”**

More than 16 years after the 9/11 attacks led to dramatic reform in American counterterrorism and intelligence agencies and procedures, the terrorist threat remains high both within the United States and around the world. Many experts, in fact, believe that the threat today is at or near the level it was immediately after 9/11.

Much of the debate over counterterrorism today concerns questions about intelligence, such as: is the American intelligence community as effective as it can be in preventing terrorist attacks? And, how can intelligence agencies preserve Americans’ civil liberties and personal freedoms, while collecting the information needed to keep us safe? This symposium will examine these and other questions about the state of American counterterrorism and intelligence today. The presentations will discuss topics including the development of state and local intelligence fusion centers, the use of law enforcement intelligence tools such as predictive policing, and the challenges that social media intelligence and big data analysis offer for homeland security. In addition, Dr. Erik Dahl discussed the lessons learned from one of the greatest intelligence successes of recent years: the ten-year search for Osama bin Laden following the 9/11 attacks.

Instructor’s Biography

Erik Dahl, Ph.D. – Associate Professor of National Security Affairs, Naval Postgraduate School

Erik Dahl is Associate Professor of National Security Affairs at the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, California, where he is also on the faculty of the Center for Homeland Defense and Security at NPS. In addition, he is a Research Fellow with the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START) at the University of Maryland. His research focuses on intelligence, terrorism, and international and homeland security, and he is the author of “Intelligence and Surprise Attack: Failure and Success from Pearl Harbor to 9/11 and Beyond” (Georgetown University Press 2013). His work has been published in *Political Science Quarterly*, *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, *Intelligence and National Security*, *Homeland Security Affairs*, *The Journal of Strategic Studies* and *The Naval War College Review*, among others.

Dr. Dahl received the Naval Postgraduate School’s LCDR David L. Williams Outstanding Professor Award in 2013, and in 2014 he received the Carl E. and Jessie W. Menneken Faculty Award for Excellence in Scientific Research. Before joining the NPS faculty in 2008, Dahl was a pre-doctoral fellow at the Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs at Harvard’s Kennedy School of Government. He received his Ph.D. from The Fletcher School of Tufts University, from which he also received an M.A. in law and diplomacy. In addition, he holds master’s degrees from the Naval War College and the London School of Economics, and he received his bachelor’s degree from Harvard. Dahl retired from the U.S. Navy in 2002 after serving 21 years as an intelligence officer.

Topics Covered

1. Current Challenges in Homeland Security Intelligence
2. Finding Bin Laden

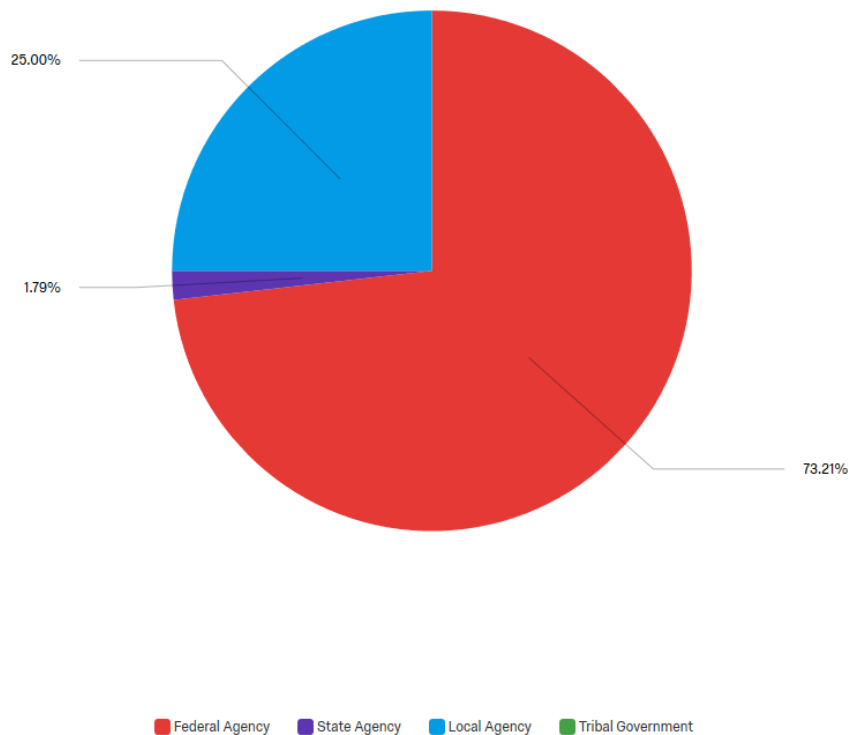
Analysis of Symposium Feedback

The symposium was well-attended with a total of:

- **89 Confirmed RSVPs**
- 65 Attendees (Approximately **73%** of RSVP total)

A total of **11** government agencies were represented by the symposium attendees. Attendees from El Paso and Austin, Texas attended this event. The following table displays each of the agencies/organizations with the total number of representatives in attendance.

Federal Agencies		State and Local Agencies	
DHS, ICE, Enforcement & Removal Operations	6	El Paso Police Department	7
DHS, CBP Border Patrol	21	El Paso County Sheriff's Office	3
DHS, TSA	2	UTEP Faculty	1
DHS, CBP Office of Field Operations	6	El Paso Community College PD	1
DHS, ICE, Homeland Security Investigations	4	Students	13
Department of Defense (Fort Bliss CID)	1	Total	25
Total		40	



Every attendee was asked to fill out a symposium evaluation. A total of 63 surveys (**96.9% of total attendees**) were submitted. Overall, the assessment feedback was overwhelmingly positive (listed percentages are the sum of both the “agree” and “strongly agree” percentages):

The seminar met my expectations	84.1%
The overall topics covered in this seminar were relevant and useful to my current assignment	84.1%
The seminar description accurately described the seminar content	90.4%
The seminar increased my knowledge of the subject matter	82.5%
The seminar increased my interest of the subject matter	87.3%
The overall quality of this seminar was excellent	87.3%
The instructors’ presentation style was effective	88.8%

The exit survey also contained the following question (Q3): Would you attend a second more in-depth symposium on this topic? The survey revealed that **95%** of the symposium participants would attend a second more in-depth symposium.

Open-ended responses indicated a common satisfaction with the course with particularly positive comments regarding the competence of the instructor and the content’s utility and pertinence to their field of work. The following questions were asked in the exit survey and no edits have been made to the comments with the exception of spelling.

Q5. What other topic/subject matter would you like to see presented in similar seminars, tabletop exercises or practicums?

- *Street gangs & modern slave trade*
- *A campaign to educate people on what intel is needed & who to notify*
- *Organized crime in Africa, such as human trafficking*
- *Current issues law enforcement officers face*
- *The use of social media to influence homegrown terrorism*
- *Mexican cartels and their impact on the US-Mexico border*
- *School/active shooter*
- *Active shooter, intelligence sharing with law enforcement, & community involvement*
- *Civil liberties and how they interact with terrorism investigations*
- *Any topics related to national security and counter intelligence*
- *New generations of prison and street gangs*
- *Cyber criminology and the dark web*
- *Mobilization of radical Islam*
- *Links between DTO’s and terrorist organizations*
- *More in-depth case studies, human behavior training*
- *DACA and illegal aliens*
- *Interrogation techniques*

Q6. If there are any additional comments you have about the seminar topics covered please provide them below.

- *Dr. Dahl’s Presentation was excellent.*
- *Best symposium so far, great speaker.*
- *Excellent speaker*
- *Great presentation*
- *Great topics*
- *Thank you for the opportunity to experience this conference.*
- *Excellent presentation!*

Webcast Analytics

This symposium was the eleventh effort to add a webcast feature as part of the value added deliverable of this program. All eleven symposiums have been filmed and can be viewed by the public on our website and YouTube account to enhance future viewings of the symposium series. The PI will continue with simultaneous webcast broadcasting of the symposium series with efforts to increase viewership through this medium.

Total views: 39

Symposium Series Visibility

In an effort to promote the symposium series and the work of the Borders and Trade Institute (BTI) we have actively engaged on Twitter and local news media outlets.

- There were twenty-five (25) tweets that were sent prior, during, and just after the symposium event. The tweets received a total of 3,198 impressions.

Learning

Every attendee was asked to take a Pretest Questionnaire in order to gauge the level of understanding of the topic. In addition, the participants were asked to take the same Posttest Questionnaire at the conclusion of the symposium. A total of 61 pretests/posttests (**93.9% of total attendees**) were returned by the participants.

Analysis: The average Pretest Questionnaire score was 62% and the average Posttest Questionnaire score was 83%. The results of the Pretest and Posttest Questionnaires revealed a **21% increase** in learning.

Lessons Learned

As part of the program's self-evaluation process the following areas will be addressed:

- Continue to emphasize to symposium participants the importance of the Exit Surveys and Pretest and Posttest Questionnaires.
- The "live webcast" experienced technical difficulties for the first 20 minutes due to internet connection issues. We are in the process of attempting to address those issues.

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Victor M. Manjarrez, Jr.

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Victor M. Manjarrez, Jr.
Center for Law & Human Behavior
The University of Texas at El Paso

Date