

Australia.TO International Edition – Local and World News

Counter Terror First Responder Experts from Israel and the USA Establish Unique Organization

The mission of the American Israel Counter Terror Officers Organization is to provide a medium that brings First Responders from around the globe together to network and share ideas in order to make a difference. American Israel Counter Terror Officers Organization will strive to provide the most current training and Counter Terror issues from some of the industries' leading experts to all members through articles, forums and annual conferences. Daily alerts and special reports on Terror Groups and Organizations will be available to all the AICTOO members.

This organization was founded by Counter-Terror First Responder experts who understand that terror is an escalating global problem. This organization is open to all first responders; Police, Fire/Rescue, Military, Private and Public Security, Analysts and Consultants.

Founded by **Marc Kahlberg** (ISR), Jim Gort (USA) and Yuval Shomroni (ISR)

A percentage of each membership fee goes to aiding and assisting Victims of Terror

The American Israel Counter Terror Organization is pronounced ICTOO (I see too)

Israeli Concept used by US Police and Spreads

Below is a quick intro about a Secure Zone concept that was set up in the City of Pembroke Pines, FL by the Anti-Terrorism Unit there. A little background on this:

The Detectives went to Israel where we met with none other than Detective. Sgt Major Marc Kahlberg from the Netanya Israel Police.

Marc was one of the first people on scene of the disastrous Park Hotel Suicide Bombing where 30 people were killed and hundreds more injured, (over and above at least another dozen terror attacks that he was a First Responder to).

After that event, he set into motion this concept in the hotel district and the industrial district of his city. We asked him a million questions about the concept and learned that once implemented the crime rates in both areas dropped by 70%. We then took this concept and adapted it to our city's retail area. It now encompassed a stretch of the main road that is roughly 40 blocks long and uses the major businesses along that stretch. There are over 40 members who are active in this system. It has been sent out to agencies across the US and the Detective running the program now will gladly Fed Ex anyone the entire plan that we set up here. In the two+ years that this brilliant concept has been implemented t, the crime rate has dropped by more than 23% in this specific area.

Marc has also been involved in on-site security consulting for the upcoming World Cup Soccer to take place in South Africa. We brought this concept to that incredibly beautiful but crime-ridden country and it is working with a great deal of success in many areas. Obviously, Israel is using this concept throughout the country with tremendous success. Just looking at the thwarted car bomb containing 40Kg's of explosives that was neutralized in the main Haifa shopping mall on Saturday night as a successful example of how this secure zone concept works. This is a concept that has proven effective on at least three different continents and will defiantly help your community. If anyone is interested and really wants to make a difference, please contact the American Israel Counter Terror Officers Organization at info@ictoo.org

Introduction

The attacks of September 11 highlighted the vulnerabilities of a society that embraces freedom. The fact is that terrorists are capable of inflicting enormous damage not only by attacking our country's critical infrastructure, but also by attacking the basic elements of our everyday life. The Madrid train bombings, the London transportation suicide attacks, and most recently, the Indian Mumbai attacks on various targets as well as the attack on the Sri Lankan Cricket team, have clearly demonstrated that the more nefarious extremists living amongst us will not set their sights on a hardened nuclear reactor, but the soft underbelly in which we live day in and day out.

The Pembroke Pines Police Department operates a unique element within the municipal law enforcement community: the Antiterrorism and Intelligence Unit (AIU). It is the mission of this unit to detect, identify, deter and disrupt any organizations or individuals, domestic or international, which would pose a threat to the precious freedoms enjoyed by all citizens.

In accordance with its mission, the AIU has implemented a new program {taken directly from The Israel Police, where Marc Kahlberg the retired Commander of the Tourist Police in Netanya}, by that which was designed to increase the safety of the thousands of citizens that live, work and pass through Pembroke Pines every day. The program, the Secure Zone Concept or the "Kahlberg Plan" as we have called it, establishes a system of communication, coordination and information sharing between the private sector, specifically the hotel areas and retail business community, and the law enforcement agency that serves it. The Secure Zone Concept will serve citizens twofold; the program provides greater protection against domestic and international terrorist acts while making a significant contribution in reducing the daily criminal activity that affects all citizens.

Background

Approximately 80 percent of our nation's critical infrastructure belongs to the private sector. This makes it imperative that any security strategy utilized by a local, state or federal law enforcement agency be a unified approach between entities, government and private. With this in mind, the AIU sought to address the security concerns of one of the most critical and vulnerable areas in the city of Pembroke Pines: the busy commercial area located adjacent to Memorial West Hospital and Pembroke Lakes Mall.

During the continual training of its members, the Antiterrorism & Intelligence Unit traveled to Israel where it trained with the Israeli National Police in counter terrorism operations. Israel is a country that has suffered repeated terrorist attacks against its citizens for over 60 years just as the case in other Countries including the UK. The majority of these attacks have been waged against the civilian population at their retail establishments such as malls, restaurants, and nightclubs. The vast difference is the Israeli's never get a call warning of an imminent attack. Israeli National Police statistics show that it has thwarted close to 90 percent of all suicide and or car bomb terrorist attacks. This high success rate is attributed to a number of factors including: intelligence gathering, police presence, public awareness, and cooperation between the government and private sector security elements.

Communication, coordination and information sharing between the private sector and the police department are the ideology that the Secure Zone concept is based on. Pembroke Pines Police Department, as a partner with the private security apparatus already in place, has created a new standard of safety for the citizens, the businesses, and the property within the Secure Zone.

The Secure Zone - Gaps

The Secure Zone has been implemented in the busy commercial area of the city of Pembroke Pines known as the Mall Corridor. The Mall Corridor is made up of the Pembroke Lakes Mall which is in turn surrounded by many high profile retail businesses such as Best Buy, Circuit City, Comp USA, Office Max, Sports Authority, Sound Advice and Target. Adjacent to these retail businesses is the Memorial West Hospital.

Many of the businesses in the Mall Corridor are served by internal security personnel or through loss prevention employees. While all of the businesses within the Mall Corridor are in close proximity to each other, in the case of the Pembroke Lakes Mall the businesses are structurally connected, the safety and security personnel of these businesses operate unilaterally.

In a system of unilateral safety and security operations, none of the personnel from different parent companies communicated in the past, something that has now changed for the better. The loss prevention personnel from an anchor store such as Macy's did not share its safety and security concerns with the personnel working at Sears on the other end of the mall, in fact, the anchor stores did not share the information with Pembroke Lakes Mall security which represents the greatest number of uniformed security personnel in the area. This system in which one company may communicate directly with the police, but other businesses, in close proximity and responsible for their own clientele and property, were never aware of any kind of safety or security concern, was a serious weakness for the effective identification and disruption of criminal activity in the area.

Memorial West Hospital, located adjacent to the Mall Corridor, plays an integral part in the Secure Zone plan. The Hospital employs a significant security apparatus augmented by an off duty sworn police officer. The hospital, which must address the basic security concerns such as the access to its property, the security of the vehicles parked at the facility and the safety of all personnel and patrons, has a second critical need to address: any kind of health or safety hazard in the area will directly affect its operations. As the closest health care facility in the area, the hospital will most likely be the recipient of patients from any of the surrounding businesses in case of emergency.

The gaps created by unilateral safety and security operations were significant. The lack of communication, coordination and information sharing limited each of the organizations in the area to operate in a vacuum. The safety and security personnel were limited to the information available from their own security apparatus, operate blindly, and in turn could do little to prevent or predict any criminal activity that may be days, hours, or minutes away from their location. The resulting situational awareness was extremely low, and it forced the safety and security personnel to operate on a strictly reactive basis. This in turn results in law enforcement becoming involved too late, after the citizen/patron has been hurt, the property illegally removed or the suspect had already fled the area.

The Secure Zone is based upon the direct and timely communication between the Secure Zone Team Members. This communication is further augmented by monthly meetings and the sharing of additional information through crime trend analysis and information bulletins issued by the Police Department. Another basic building block of the Secure Zone is the professional relationship developed between the security personnel of each organization through daily interaction. By maintaining constant contact with their colleagues in the immediate area, the security personnel of each organization are better informed and now fully aware of the issues surrounding their businesses.

Benefits of the Secure Zone

The benefits of the Secure Zone are as far reaching for the private sector organizations as they are for Law Enforcement interests in the area. In the private sector, particularly the retail businesses involved, the Team Members can now see a decrease the daily criminal activity that impacts their bottom line. Shoplifters, organized criminal groups, and individuals that prey upon patrons as they enter and leave businesses are directly affected by the implementation of the Secure Zone.

Law Enforcement personnel responsible for the Mall Corridor are benefiting by getting a better picture of the criminal trends and activity in the area. Direct communications with other Team Member's security personnel, who are on scene at the time of a call for service, have effectively decreased the potential danger for all those involved. The Secure Zone greatly assists Law Enforcement in keeping its officers better informed of the safety and security concerns of the area.

Benefits for Secure Zone Team Members (Businesses)

Security Force Multiplier – By coordinating the security forces, individual security personnel now work in conjunction with their counterparts creating a network of security personnel dedicated to protecting the entire area.

Early Warning System – All security personnel are now alerted to potential criminal activity in the area. This enables all security personnel to be on the lookout for the suspected individuals or groups that may be targeting their location.

Deterrence of Crime – Heightened awareness of security personnel creates a far less enticing environment from criminals to operate in.

Fraud Prevention – Security are better preventing fraud with the information and description of individuals attempting to obtain merchandise through fraudulent means, (i.e. credit card fraud).

Better Allocation of Law Enforcement Resources - Police are better directing their efforts specifically to the needs of the area.

Crime Free Environment – Customers are more apt to frequent an area where they feel safe from crime. This translates into higher customer flow and more profits for the businesses.

Increased Protection Against Terrorist Acts – Heightened awareness of security personnel creates a "hardened" target that is less appealing for a potential terrorist attack.

Benefits for Secure Zone Police Department

Crime Prevention – Police are better able to prevent crime through the sharing of information regarding criminal activity.

Criminal Apprehension – More criminals are apprehended with the help of a private security force that possesses a heightened awareness level. Suspect/vehicle descriptions provided by security personnel afford better opportunities for locating and apprehending criminals.

Allocation of Resources – Police resources are efficiently allocated to prevent crime based on the information provided by the private security force. The information provided by Team Members will allow police to tailor their operations to meet the needs of the area.

Intelligence – Human intelligence is enhanced through more information and descriptions of criminal elements that may be active in the area. Valuable information in the form of descriptions, tag numbers, suspicious incidents, and crime trends is shared.

Terrorist Threat Reduced – Information on suspicious incidents, such as individuals photographing or videotaping entrances or food courts is shared with police. Police are better able to bolster security efforts to prevent potential terrorist acts.

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