Counterterrorism Security Efforts

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**Executive Summary**

One of the primary roles of any government has always been the protection of the people it governs. Before any other activity, any government has a responsibility to ensure that the public in the country is secure enough from any forms of threat that could otherwise cause anxiety in society. Consequently, any cases of insecurity receive significant attention from the federal government, because insecurity implies that the government has been ineffective in meeting its core mandate to the people. Incidents such as the September eleventh attacks in New York caused radical changes to the government’s security structure, since the government, in addition to having a responsibility to protect its people, could not afford to show the public that it was as shaken as the rest of the country was. Ultimately, these cases highlight the importance of activities of departments such as the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to the country.

Security takes many forms, with one of the most prominent security issues in contemporary society being the protection from possible cases of terrorism. In particular, the government undertakes different measures that include deterrence and gathering of evidence for use in the prosecution of people arrested in connection with cases of terrorism, or potential ties to terrorism (Norman, 2016). While most people would like to believe that terrorists develop ideas outside the national borders, there have been cases in which terror activities were developed and implemented in the country. The Oklahoma City Bombing was one incidence in which a plot was hatched within the country, and executed much to the detriment of the welfare of American citizens. Therefore, solutions to address terrorism should also focus on the country’s interior as well as the external environment, on persons of interest to the country.

In the presented case, the Bureau of Explosives and Weapons transferred a case to the Department of Homeland security, having observed the suspect to have engaged in suspicious purchases of ingredients that could ultimately be important in making a weapon of mass destruction (WMD). The Bureau has so far gathered the information that points to the suspect had made not only purchases of materials for about four months, but also his gradual acquisition of the chemicals necessary in constructing a bomb with enough energy to destroy ten city blocks. Therefore, the transferring agency has made significant developments in acquiring information, including purchase data derived from CCTV cameras and witness accounts of the suspect’s purchasing activities and behavior. Ultimately, these findings have led the agency to believe that he plans to make the weapon at his house, and even detonate it there to achieve maximum energy output and affect a significantly populated area. Based on the available information, the suspect has all the necessary ingredients, which makes the threat significantly imminent.

In particular, the case begins on the 15th of January 2014, when the suspect is observed to have made extensive purchases of explosive materials through a CCTV camera. The camera has time available on the file footage, which further makes it easy to note the dates of the purchases for evidence purposes. He continues to purchase the material over the next three months, to avoid raising any suspicion. However, the team at the hardware store, aware of the potential uses of the purchased material raises the alarm with the local security team, leading to the eventual efforts to investigate his activities. Consequently, the investigators gather evidence from different individuals that witnessed him make the purchases to understand whether he may have made comments that could have indicated what he intended to achieve with the purchase of explosive products.

About a month after making the first purchase at the hardware store, there were reports of missing chemicals at ABC Chemical Plant, where the suspect works. Investigations pointed to the suspect had been the one who took away the chemicals, to use them to achieve his ultimate objective of making the WMD. However, much this information may prove to be helpful to the prosecution; it would be important to seek further evidence, in the form of determining where the suspect took the products upon purchase. This would serve as the ultimate evidence that makes it clear that he intended to create carnage in society by detonating the final bomb product following the assembly. Otherwise, the technical information on the investigation process by the Bureau provides significant insight into the activities that led to the case being presented to the investigating team.

Based on the information available relating to the issue, it would be possible to pursue the case and seek a conviction against the suspect for crimes against the state. In particular, eyewitness accounts and evidence from the CCTV footage place him at the stores making the purchases. However, it would be important for the team to acquire some form of evidence that proves beyond doubt that the suspect indeed intended to engage in terrorist activities by making a WMD using the acquired material. Therefore, the prosecution team has a case that could end in a conviction, which makes it sound to go through with the case and proceed to have the suspect tried.

References

Norman, T. L. (2016). *Risk analysis and security countermeasure selection*. Boca Raton, FL: CRC Press.