



# COUNTERING IMPROVISED EXPLOSIVE DEVICES

FEBRUARY 26, 2013



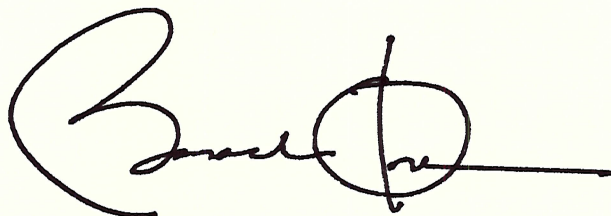
**THE WHITE HOUSE**

WASHINGTON

February 26, 2013

We have no greater responsibility than providing for the safety and security for our citizens, allies, and partners, while providing an economic environment that promotes opportunity and prosperity. The use of improvised explosive devices (IEDs) threatens these interests by killing, injuring, and intimidating citizens and political leaders around the world, inflicting damage on U.S. forces on the battlefield, and disrupting transportation and the flow of commerce. The terrorists and criminals responsible for these attacks are resilient, technologically adept, and adaptable. They employ the most recent and successful tactics, techniques, and procedures gained from experience in Iraq, Afghanistan, and around the world. The use of IEDs worldwide has increased in recent years, with the number of attacks exceeding 4,000 in 2011.

Today marks the 20th anniversary of the first World Trade Center attack. We have come a long way since that time. Our capabilities to counter IEDs have evolved and grown. In issuing this policy statement, I recognize the important achievements to date and establish our priorities for the future in countering the threat. We must not become complacent, but must continue to challenge ourselves and each other to be more effective against these threats as we work together to reach our shared national interests of safety, security, and prosperity.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Barack Obama", written in a cursive style. The signature is positioned at the bottom center of the page.

# COUNTERING IMPROVISED EXPLOSIVE DEVICES

## Strengthening U.S. Policy

Improvised explosive devices (IEDs) remain one of the most accessible weapons available to terrorists and criminals to damage critical infrastructure and inflict casualties, as was demonstrated in the attempted bombing of Northwest Flight 253 on December 25, 2009, the October 2010 air cargo plot, and the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. The tactics used in IED attacks continue to evolve as our adversaries seek to overcome countermeasures. This Administration is expanding and broadening its counter-IED focus, building upon existing policy and strategy, which establish and implement measures to discover, prevent, protect against, respond to, recover from, and mitigate IED attacks and their consequences at home or abroad. We will enhance our effectiveness by:

- **Leveraging, Integrating, and Aligning United States Government Efforts.** The United States Government uses its military, law enforcement, diplomatic, regulatory, intelligence, and financial tools to counter IEDs globally. By actively and responsibly coordinating efforts across departments and agencies, we can increase our effectiveness against IED threats while making the best use of existing capabilities and resources.
- **Enhancing Our Focus on Protecting American Lives.** IED attacks threaten American lives at home and abroad. Overseas, we are working with partner nations to reduce the IED threat to members of our military and diplomatic services, as well as U.S. citizens engaged in commercial travel and trade. To better meet the IED threat at home, we will seek to incorporate lessons learned abroad, while respecting legal and policy factors relevant to domestic counter-IED operations.
- **Promoting Cooperation with Governmental, International, and Private Sector Partners.** Sharing meaningful information about the IED threat with partners that are familiar with their communities increases the chance that suspicious activity will be recognized and reported to law enforcement authorities. The United States will work with partners to reduce the IED threat by sharing intelligence, building capacity, and developing complementary activities.

## Translating Policy into Actions

To realize these policy objectives, we will employ the following priority capabilities and enabling technologies, which leverage existing investments, including:

1. **Increasing Domestic and International Engagement.** We will seek to:
  - Improve public awareness of IED threats and corresponding reporting of suspicious activity to local authorities through enhanced information sharing resources;
  - Enhance information sharing with public and private sector partners on current IED threats and preparedness measures; and

## Countering Improvised Explosive Devices

- Increase global participation and partnership in dialogues on counter-IED efforts and information sharing.
- 2. Effectively Exploiting Information and Materials from IED Attacks.** We will enhance our capability to identify IED networks, tactics, techniques and procedures through:
    - Coordinating our IED collection and exploitation efforts, to better gather, share, and analyze forensic, technical, and biometric information; and
    - Enhancing policy, process, and mechanisms to analyze more effectively and share IED exploitation results.
  - 3. Advancing Our Intelligence and Information Analysis.** We will improve our understanding of technologies, trends, and networks through:
    - Enhancing the reporting on and dissemination of criminal intelligence, incident information, and suspicious activity involving explosives;
    - Making counter-IED-specific intelligence resources more accessible to those who need it;
    - Conducting multi-mode data analysis of IED patterns, trends, and tactics, techniques, and procedures to anticipate future IED threat evolutions; and
    - Advancing the analytic tools available to better link information across sources, including financial information, biometrics, movements of people and technology, and other intelligence, in a secure manner.
  - 4. Maintaining Our Deployable Counter-IED Resources.** We will maintain our scalable and layered counter-IED capabilities, including personnel and equipment through:
    - Developing and maintaining deployable United States Government counter-IED resources;
    - Assisting international partners with the development of deployable counter-IED capabilities; and
    - Conducting exercises with deployable counter-IED resources.
  - 5. Screening, Detecting, and Protecting Our People, Facilities, Transportation Systems, Critical Infrastructure, as well as the Flow of Legitimate Commerce.** We will continue to develop and use advanced protection and detection technologies and capabilities by:
    - Improving the performance of explosives screening, detection, and protection technologies through prioritizing and coordinating research within the United States and with our allies; and
    - Effectively deploying and integrating these technologies and capabilities into our critical infrastructure and transportation systems to decrease the risk of an IED attack while facilitating legitimate trade and travel.
  - 6. Safeguarding Explosives and Select Precursor Materials.** We will enhance our ability to identify, prevent, and interdict the illicit diversion or transport of select materials used to manufacture IEDs through:

## Countering Improvised Explosive Devices

- Promoting mechanisms for industry to better detect, report, and prevent the illegitimate acquisition, theft, or diversion of explosives and related materials;
  - Enhancing enforcement of U.S. laws regulating commerce in explosives and materials that could be used as IED components;
  - Increasing global awareness of actions to mitigate the use of munitions, precursor chemicals, and other components in IED construction;
  - Evaluating methods to further restrict, control, or monitor select dual-use precursors and components; and
  - Coordinating domestic and international efforts to investigate, disrupt, dismantle and arrest members of networks involved in the financing and illicit movement of IED components.
7. **Coordinating and Standardizing Training and Equipment.** Based on an updated assessment of our national counter-IED training and equipment needs and priorities, we will improve coordination to deliver standardized training to our domestic and international partners through:
- Incorporating the lessons learned globally, including those from Iraq and Afghanistan, into our training and equipment requirements;
  - Resourcing and implementing the Federal electronic countermeasures program to achieve a national capability;
  - Enhancing national guidelines for bomb technicians;
  - Finalizing and implementing national guidelines for explosives detection canine teams; and
  - Leveraging existing technology transfer programs to address counter-IED capability gaps at the Federal, state, and local levels.
8. **Enhancing Our Operational Planning.** We will develop interagency operational plans to advance the Nation's ability to counter the use of IEDs, and establish measures to assess overall effectiveness and progress. This will include:
- Developing and exercising a Federal counter-IED operational plan for a domestic or transnational threat;
  - Enhancing counter-IED preparedness planning for Federal, state, and local response; and
  - Evaluating and reporting annually on interagency progress toward the goals set.

The Joint Program Office for Countering IEDs, administered by the Attorney General through the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), is an interagency group that will coordinate and track progress across the departments and agencies toward building these capabilities. The Joint Program Office will also provide metrics and assist departments and agencies in coordinating their priorities.

## Examples of Success

Departments and agencies are already at work implementing these policy objectives. Examples include:

- **Increased International Engagement.** The Departments of State and Homeland Security have, working through the World Customs Organization, engaged global partners in an effort to track and limit the flow of IED precursor materials into Afghanistan. Our allies and partner nations have had similar success in stopping IED plots and limiting the flow of explosives precursors by raising awareness among the public and across industries. The United States is also raising awareness of the global IED threat within the Group of 8, and other multilateral fora.
- **Exploiting IED Information and Materials.** The Departments of Defense and Justice adapted law enforcement investigative and forensic expertise to fit the needs of warfighters. We are now able to use the materials generated through the exploitation of thousands of IEDs to enhance counter-IED technologies and inform best practices and training.
- **Safeguarding Explosive Materials.** The Departments of State, the Treasury, Defense, Justice, and Homeland Security, and the Intelligence Community are working together, with the assistance of international partners and multilateral organizations, to stem the flow of explosives precursors to Afghanistan and disrupt the illicit finance networks that support the production and use of IEDs. Domestically, we continue to seek to prevent terrorists from acquiring and converting these materials into IEDs, while maintaining access for legitimate use. For example, a recent attempt to make explosives in West Texas was stopped by the FBI when a chemical company reported suspicious purchases.
- **Screen, Detect, and Protect.** The Department of Homeland Security uses intelligence gathered by other departments and agencies to best position screening measures that keep explosives out of transportation systems.
- **Coordinating and Standardizing Training.** By using the intelligence and exploitation information generated from IEDs found overseas, the FBI and the Department of Homeland Security have updated and enhanced the training and information provided to public safety bomb technicians, law enforcement, and first responders on how to respond to the latest terrorist IED tactics.

## Conclusion

The threat from IED use is likely to remain high in the coming decade and will continue to evolve in response to our abilities to counter them. A whole-of-government approach that integrates Federal, state, local, tribal, territorial, private sector, and global participation in counter-IED activities will best position the United States to discover plots to use IEDs in the United States, or against U.S. persons abroad, before those threats become imminent.