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## **Developing A Mandatory, Formal "Lessons Learned" Approach To Doing Business**

As an institution we need to develop and implement a formalized "Lessons Learned" approach to doing business which assures that both operational and administrative lessons that we learn are identified, documented and distributed to all relevant parties for future use.

**Current Situation:** As an institution we do not have a formalized and effective procedure for identifying, documenting and distributing the operational and administrative lessons that we learn. To the extent that we do currently perform lessons learned analysis outside of the crisis management arena, our efforts are ineffective due to the fact that the process is largely informal, the results are rarely documented and are not routinely distributed to the parties who might benefit from them. Our efforts in crisis management lessons learned, where after-action reviews are currently required, are largely ineffective due to incomplete/spotty compliance with existing rules and a failure to effectively distribute the collected lessons through out the Bureau. Accordingly, we can, and often do, make the same mistakes again and again at the expense of Agent safety and operational efficiency and effectiveness.

For example, with regard to the Bureau's immediate response to the attacks on 9/11, what are the top five crisis response lessons that the Bureau, as an institution, learned? Where can we go to find them? What are the principle lessons learned by the New York and Washington, DC field offices and how can the rest of the Bureau leverage off the experiences of these offices? Undoubtedly, reviews were conducted at all levels after 9/11 and, based on these reviews, lessons were learned. Unfortunately, the reviews were probably informal, the results of those reviews were generally not officially documented and, even if some were, they were not provided the Bureau-wide distribution that they deserve. Are the crisis response lessons learned after 9/11 very different from the lessons learned by the Oklahoma City field office during its response to the bombing of the Murrah Building? Where can we go to find the lessons learned that day?

The need for lessons learned extends beyond crisis management arena. Where can we go to find the lessons learned during the Bureau's successful multi-year manhunt for Mir Aimal Kansi (CIA shooter) and the Bureau's large and costly, yet unsuccessful manhunt, for Erik Rudolph (abortion clinic bomber)? How can the lessons learned during the Kansi manhunt in Pakistan and Afghanistan help us during our current counter-terrorism efforts in those two countries? Where do we go to find the lessons learned during the successful penetration and dismantling of the New York organized



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## **Iraq Issues - Lessons Learned**

**1) Utilize Mandatory, Formal After Action/Lessons Learned Debriefings:** A formal process needs to be implemented to identify, document, and distribute to all relevant personnel, lessons learned during the deployments. (RDLU should be commended for its efforts in this regard; however, more needs to be done.) The after action debriefs should be mandatory for all deployed personnel. They should be formally documented and the results should be shared with all relevant parties.

**2) Overseas Operations/Deployments Must Start With A Clearly Defined and Articulated Mission:** Prior to sending Agents overseas, the FBI must be able to articulate specific, clearly defined and prioritized, goals and objectives. The Bureau should not be sending bodies merely to have an "FBI presence" nor should we have some vague and amorphous mission statement. During the course of the deployment, continual evaluations should be made in order to determine whether the "results" are worth the effort/risks.

**3) Operation of Sources Overseas:** Given our ever expanding international role, consideration needs to be given to working with the CIA (and other relevant governmental officials) to craft mutually agreeable guidelines which would, in limited situations, allow Agents to operate sources overseas. The Agents sent to Iraq were given the mission of protecting "the United States against terrorist attack and espionage activity by engaging in intelligence gathering activities" but were expressly prohibited from operating sources. The ability to be successful at that mission is severely adversely affected by the prohibition against operating sources overseas.

**4) Bureau Policy/Guidance regarding Coercive Interrogations:** During the Iraq deployment FBI Agents routinely worked with intelligence personnel from other agencies/entities whose policies and procedures regarding coercive interrogations differ from ours (i.e., military intelligence, CIA, DOD contractors, Iraqi nationals). Prior to deployment, all Agents should be briefed regarding the Bureau's policy on presence during /assistance to (etc.) coercive interrogations.

**5) Decentralized Decision Making:** Approval of sensitive site exploitations should be made by the On-Scene Commander ("OSC"), or his designee, and not by an Assistant Director ("AD") at FBIHQ, literally half way around the world. The existing policy of requiring AD approval at FBIHQ diminished our credibility, and correspondingly our perceived effectiveness, in the eyes of the military because we could not commit to operations within the short time frame which the military operates. In addition, in the military's eyes, the existing policy undermined the authority and effectiveness of the OSC because he did not have the authority to make operational decisions which are routinely made, in military operations, at the correspondingly lower levels.