

Excerpt: Fusion Center Supports Goose Creek Case²³

Florida Fusion Center, August 2007

On August 4, 2007, a DHS IO [intelligence officer] assigned to the Florida Fusion Center (FFC) received a call from the Florida Homeland Security Adviser (HSA) regarding an on-going traffic stop of two University of South Florida students in Goose Creek, South Carolina. The HSA didn't have specifics other than it involved a bomb squad and a Florida registered vehicle. The Department of Homeland Security NOC had no visibility of the traffic stop, but began to query North Carolina and South Carolina. The Department-deployed IO received further information regarding the incident from an FFC representative with specific information he received from a colleague at Operation SeaHawk in South Carolina. The FFC was able to provide the tag number of the vehicle and conducted full database checks on the vehicle's history and owner information.

All of the results were provided to the NOC, South Carolina, and Tampa-JTTF within minutes for their situational awareness. The FFC was able to provide full database checks on the subjects to South Carolina and Tampa-JTTFs.

An indictment was unsealed August 31, 2007, against the two students, Ahmed Abdellatif Sherif Mohamed and Youssef Samir Megahed, both Egyptian nationals, charging them with transporting explosives in interstate commerce without permits. Mohamed was also charged with distributing information about building and using an explosive device. Mohamed pled guilty to providing material support to terrorists on June 18, 2008, and was sentenced to 15 years in prison December 18, 2008. Megahed was acquitted of explosives charges in April 2009. Immigration and Customs Enforcement later took custody of him and launched removal proceedings against him.

If it were not for the fusion centers and an Operation SeaHawk representative, Florida and the Department would not have gained situational awareness regarding the incident. Florida was able to provide relevant information regarding the subjects and associates to South Carolina law enforcement officials and the JTTF within minutes to aid in their investigation.