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RUTGERS SUMMIT FOCUSED ON COMMUNITY-BASED APPROACHES TO PREVENTING VIOLENT EXTREMISM CONCLUDES

WASHINGTON – The Rutgers Institute for Emergency Preparedness and Homeland Security (IEPHS), the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) and the Bipartisan Policy Center (BPC), in collaboration with the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), today concluded its two-day summit bringing together academics, practitioners, faith leaders, healthcare experts and educators from across the United States and Europe to develop community-based strategies to prevent targeted violence and mass casualty attacks.

“As FBI Director Comey has said, our country faces a significant threat from disaffected people drawn to the extremist ideology of groups like ISIS. It is time to do more than talk about engaging with local communities,” said Professor John Cohen of Rutgers’ School of Criminal Justice and Faith-Based Communities Security Program (FBCSP) lead. “It is time to put in place local partnerships, that will better enable those communities to prevent acts of violence. I look forward to continuing to work with our partners as we develop programmatic guidance and an educational curriculum to assist local
authorities from a variety of disciplines.”

“Collectively, and collaboratively, the FBI will work with our communities to develop countering violent extremism (CVE) frameworks which are sustainable, inclusive, and that address the many forms of violent extremism,” said FBI Deputy Director Mark Giuliano. “Only by working with our community partners, schools, social service groups, academics, and mental health providers, can we, as a country, build resilience and prevent future attacks.”

Coming on the heels of the horrific attack in Chattanooga, TN, and other instance of ideologically motivated violence in the past year, the two-day summit, which was held at FBI headquarters, included panel discussions on a range of topics related to radicalization and extremism, as well as case studies and best practices from both the US and Europe in mitigating extremist violence. Participants considered the latest threat information and trends, discussing why westerners may be drawn to conflict areas like Syria and Iraq, successful mitigation and intervention strategies employed in the U.S. and Europe, and how social media is used in the extremist context.

"Last year, on the 10th anniversary of the 9/11 Commission Report, the Commission convened with the Bipartisan Policy Center to issue a new report examining how the threat has evolved. Now, I'm struck by how dramatically things have changed from just a year ago. The senior national security officials we spoke to then highlighted the threat posed by foreign fighters returning from the battlefield. But what we need to be concerned about now is groups like ISIL that are actively reaching out to individuals through social media as part of a strategy to inspire individuals to take violent action right here in the United States," said Michael Hurley, advisor to BPC’s National Security Program.

The summit follows a year of research by the Rutgers FBCSP, examining mass casualty attacks in Europe and the U.S. for the purposes of identifying effective prevention strategies.

“Our research, as well as our law enforcement partners’ experience, tells us that to break the cycle of radical or extremist violence, we need to fundamentally change how we approach the issue and involve the community in new and real ways,” said John Farmer, Rutgers’ Special Counsel to the President and faculty lead for FBCSP. “The summit allowed us to share what we have learned to date, but also to hear from a variety of experts who believe that critical to this effort is building capacity and trust at a local level.”

“By utilizing community-oriented policing strategies law enforcement can build partnerships within their community, based on understanding, trust, and respect. Through these partnerships, law enforcement and the community can more effectively develop early intervention solutions, allowing the community to better respond and
redirect individuals who may be on the path of violence,” said Richard Beary, IACP President and Chief of the University of Central Florida Police Department.

Rutgers’ IEPHS, a federally designated Intelligence Community Center for Academic Excellence, blends expertise and experience in the sciences and humanities from all campuses statewide to protect and enhance life, health, and wellness of individuals and populations—and to safeguard the physical, economic, and societal infrastructure—through national and international collaboration in research, education, community outreach, and practice. The FBCSP, founded in 2014, conducts research around the world to assess current security efforts; better understand best practices and operational gaps; foster closer collaboration between law enforcement authorities and faith-based communities; and help at-risk communities implement best practices. The program is supported by Paul S. Miller, a 1962 graduate of Rutgers School of Law–Newark, through the Miller Family International Initiative Fund.

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