

White Paper

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# THE ATTACKS ON PARIS: LESSONS LEARNED

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## A Presentation of Findings

Courtesy of HSAC and the Paris Public Safety Delegation

June 2016



Prepared by QuinnWilliams, LLC





## Preface

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The purpose of this white paper is to document the findings of the Los Angeles delegation that traveled to Paris in April 2016, to meet with key members of the Parisian law enforcement and intelligence communities, as they shared their lessons learned from the attacks on Paris in November 2015.

The November 13 attacks were the deadliest on French soil since WWII. The terrorists targeted the Stade de France, restaurants in the 10th and 11th arrondissements and the Bataclan concert hall. In a little over three hours, the nine attackers killed 130 and wounded 368. The Paris law enforcement community did a commendable job responding to coordinated, simultaneous attacks. The death toll likely would have been much higher if not for several key decisions made immediately after the attacks began.

The Los Angeles delegation returned with a deeper understanding of the Parisian response and how these lessons learned can be best applied in the Southern California region. These findings are summarized in this "unclassified" white paper and presented to local public safety agencies in the Los Angeles area.

This white paper was prepared by QuinnWilliams, LLC in coordination with the Los Angeles delegation at the request of the Homeland Security Advisory Council (HSAC).



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## Acknowledgments

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The multi-agency delegation from Los Angeles included representatives from the HSAC, Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD), Los Angeles Sheriff's Department (LASD) and Beverly Hills Police Department (BHPD).

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Bernard Khalili, Police Officer (Reserve), Los Angeles Police Department  
Bobby Wyche, Captain, Los Angeles Sheriff Department  
Tony Lee, Captain, Beverly Hills Police Department

HSAC is deeply grateful to our friends and colleagues in Los Angeles and Paris for making this trip possible.

Charlie Beck, Chief of Police, Los Angeles Police Department  
Jim McDonnell, Sherriff, Los Angeles Sheriff Department  
Sandra Spagnoli, Chief of Police, Beverly Hill Police Department  
Pierre-Edouard Colliex, Police and Homeland Security Attaché, French National Police  
Police Nationale, DCI (French Police International Communication Bureau)  
John Stedman, Commander, Los Angeles Sheriff Department

HSAC Sponsors who supported this endeavor:

Mr. Peter Lowy	Westfield
Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence Bond	Mr. and Mrs. Jonathan Dolgen
Mr. and Dr. Marc Nathanson	Mr. and Mrs. Stewart Resnick

## **Executive Summary**

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Between April 4-10 2016, a multi-agency delegation from Los Angeles traveled to Paris to meet with key members of the Parisian law enforcement and intelligence communities. Over the course of their visit, the Los Angeles delegation met with high-ranking officials from the French law enforcement, intelligence and public safety communities to identify best practices and lessons learned from the November 13, 2015 attacks, through policy and tactical level briefings.

The Los Angeles delegation returned with a deeper understanding of the November attacks and the challenges that arise when responding to coordinated, simultaneous strikes carried out by attackers familiar with the local terrain and culture. The delegation held several meetings in Los Angeles to discuss the findings and their applicability to the Southern California region.

The lessons learned from the discussion of the Paris attacks center around six key areas: intelligence, community engagement, investigation, incident command, crisis communication and training/equipment. The Los Angeles delegation proposes the following recommendations:

### **Intelligence**

- Increase efforts to cultivate and leverage human intelligence sources.
- Improve tracking of fighters who travel abroad for training and return to the US.

### **Community Engagement**

- Adopt and/or create training programs to counter violent extremism.
- Develop training programs and/or protocols to neutralize the radicalization of incarcerated individuals.

### **Investigation**

- Study past terrorist attacks to identify lessons learned.
- Create an investigative tracking system to maintain real-time information on the status of the victims of a major attack as they make their way through the medical system.
- Continue efforts to improve major case management software with a look at off-the-shelf product(s) that could be used today.
- Continue use of real-time data tracking systems to enhance situational awareness for incidents involving multiple attacks in the Southern California region.

### **Incident Command**

- Encourage a working knowledge and application of National Incident Management System (NIMS) and Incident Command System (ICS) training to all first responders and first supporters.
- Ensure protocols are in place and are practiced so that department emergency operation centers and city/county emergency operation centers are ready to quickly stand up in

response to terrorist attacks. For large departments, consideration should be given to creating an operational command post out of existing centers.

- Ensure multiple communications processes are in place to avoid communications challenges that can impact first responders.

### **Crisis Information**

- Continue current media protocols, including media credentialing systems.
- Continue efforts to incorporate social media into crisis communications, both mining real time data to gain greater situational awareness and pushing out notifications to enhance the public's understanding and general safety.
- Educate the public on how to react and respond during an active shooter incident.

### **Training/Equipment**

- Continue and enhance counter-terrorist training provided to patrol officers. Training such as Multiple Assault Counter Terrorism Action Capabilities (MACTAC) or an equivalent course should be offered to all first responders.
- Continue and enhance efforts regarding Tactical Emergency Medical Service (TEMS) to include Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) teams cross-training on TEMS with Fire Department personnel.

## Methodology

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Between April 4-10 2016, the multi-agency delegation from Los Angeles met with key members of the Parisian law enforcement and intelligence communities. The purpose of the trip was to identify best practices and lessons learned from the 2015 attacks, through policy and tactical level briefings with French personnel.

Units from across the French law enforcement spectrum responded to the attacks on November 13. Over the course of their visit, the Los Angeles delegation met with high-ranking members from each of these units, including the French National Police, the Gendarmerie, BRI and RAID, as well as the Intelligence Director.

France has two national police forces: the Police Nationale and the Gendarmerie Nationale. The Police Nationale is the civilian police force. The Paris Police Prefecture, which is a unit of the Police Nationale, provides the police force for the city of Paris and three neighboring suburbs. As part of the French armed forces, the Gendarmerie Nationale polices smaller towns and rural areas, as well as ports and military installations.

France has three distinct elite police units: RAID, GIGN and BRI. RAID (Research, Assistance, Intervention and Dissuasion) is a special forces unit of the Police Nationale formed to counter organized crime and terrorism. RAID responds to hostage situations and high-profile crises. The military police unit GIGN (the Intervention Group of the Gendarmerie Nationale) is similar to RAID but responds to events in the more rural areas of France. BRI (Research and Intervention Brigade) is part of the Police Nationale and responds to serious criminal events in and around Paris.

For the purposes of this paper, in an effort to protect the sensitive nature of the information shared during the briefings, the terms law enforcement and police response will be used interchangeably to refer to the any of the formal government-sponsored response to the terror attacks. When not attributed to an outside source, any facts or statistics contained within this report were shared with the Los Angeles delegation during the course of their visit.

## Glossary of Terms

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BRI: (*Brigade de Recherché et d'Intervention* - Research and Intervention Brigade). The "SWAT" team of Paris. They specialize in serious criminal cases such as robbery and kidnappings within the city limits.

GIGN: (*Groupe d'Intervention de la Gendarmerie Nationale* - Intervention Group of the National Gendarmerie). The special operations unit of the military national police. While stationed throughout France, the GIGN units can operate anywhere in the world and are frequently sent to French Armed Forces outposts for missions.

RAID: (*Recherche, Assistance, Intervention, Dissuasion* - Research, Assistance, Intervention, Dissuasion). A National Police unit specializing in counterterrorism throughout France. A highly tactical response unit which is comparable to the GIGN Gendarmerie units.

SINUS: (Standardized Information Numeric System). France's national database used to identify and track crime scene victims. At the scene, victims are given a wrist-band bar code and their information is entered into a database and updated as they move through the hospital or morgue.

## **Significant Names**

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Abdelhamid Abaaoud: The reported mastermind of the November Paris attacks. After a nationwide search, Abaaoud was killed in a raid on an apartment in Saint-Denis five days after the attacks.

Salah Abdeslam: The only survivor of the Paris attackers, he was apprehended in the Molenbeek neighborhood of Brussels after four months in hiding. His capture and subsequent interrogation was the suspected catalyst of the Brussels attacks of March 2016. He is currently in French custody.

Mohamed Abrini: A childhood friend of Salah Abdeslam, he took part in planning the Paris attacks and was instrumental in the attack on the Brussels airport. After photos surfaced of the attackers, Abrini was known as “the man in the hat” or “the man in white.” He was arrested in Brussels weeks after the Brussels attacks.

Armedy Coulibaly: French national who met Cherif Kouachi in prison. Coulibaly shot and killed a policewoman in Montrouge and later entered a Kosher market killing four and taking the remaining patrons hostage until he was killed in a police raid.

Cherif and Said Kouachi: French brothers who carried out the attacks on the Charlie Hebdo offices, killing twelve. After an intense manhunt, they were killed three days later in a shoot-out with police.

## **Pre-Incident Overview**

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Prior to the attacks in Paris on November 13, 2015, France was still recovering from, and responding to, terror events from earlier in the year.

### Charlie Hebdo Attacks

On the morning of January 7, 2015, French brothers Cherif and Said Kouachi stormed the offices of the French satirical magazine Charlie Hebdo. Armed with assault rifles the brothers shot and killed eleven people, including Stephane Charbonnier, the magazine's editor who was under police protection at the time. En route to their getaway car, the brothers shot and killed a police officer before stealing another car and escaping out of Paris.

A massive manhunt began for the brothers, with over 500 additional police deployed throughout Paris. The morning of January 8, nearly twenty-four hours after the attack on the Charlie Hebdo offices, the Kouachi brothers robbed a convenience store in an area north-east of Paris. Because they were still driving the same car they had hijacked in Paris, the police were able to track the Kouachi brothers to a printing factory near Charles de Gaulle airport. Police swarmed the area and for the next eight hours a stand off ensued. During the negotiations, Cherif Kouachi said they had been sent by Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP). At approximately 1700 local time, the police used flash bombs to storm the building. The brothers emerged, firing at the police. Both brothers were killed and two police officers were injured.<sup>1</sup>

During the siege at the printing factory, another shooting and hostage situation unfolded at the HyperCacher, a Kosher grocery store on the outskirts of Paris. Armed with a rifle, two pistols and a submachine gun, Armedy Coulibaly entered the market, pledged allegiance to the Islamic State and shot and killed four people. He took fifteen hostages and threatened to kill more if the Kouachi brothers were harmed. Security forces negotiating with Coulibaly feared that he had access to real-time information on a cell phone. Minutes after the Kouachi brothers were killed at the printing factory, police stormed the supermarket, killed Coulibaly and freed all fifteen hostages.

Police confirmed that Coulibaly was the attacker from an incident on January 8, during which a lone gunman shot and killed a police officer in the southern Paris suburb of Montrouge.

Days after his death, a video from Coulibaly emerged. Entitled, "Soldier of the Caliphate," Coulibaly is asked by an off-screen voice whether he has connection to the Charlie Hebdo attackers. He responds, "The brothers of our team were split into two groups ... I went out a bit against the police. If we did things a bit together and a bit separately it was to have more impact."<sup>2</sup> Coulibaly also states that he helped to fund the attack on Charlie Hebdo.

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<sup>1</sup> It was later learned that the brothers had released one hostage unharmed and another person had remained hidden in the cafeteria, unbeknownst to the brothers.

<sup>2</sup> *New York Times*, "A Shot, a Glimpse of an AK-47, and U.S. Servicemen Pounced on Gunman on Train to France," August 22, 2015.

Later investigations revealed that all three attackers had been under electronic and physical surveillance for suspected ties to terrorist organizations. Coulibaly met Cherif Kouachi in jail in 2010. Coulibaly was serving time for armed robbery; Cherif Kouachi was serving time for his role in a jihadi recruiting network. After his release, Cherif and his brother Said traveled to Yemen for weapons training in 2011.

#### Thalys Amsterdam-Paris train attack

On August 25, 2015, Ayoub El-Khazzani boarded a high speed rail train in Brussels operated by Thalys, traveling from Amsterdam to Paris and carrying 554 passengers. Shortly after the train crossed the border from Belgium into France, Khazzani emerged from a bathroom, brandishing an AK-47 assault rifle. In his bag, he carried nine rounds of ammunition, a pistol, a bottle of gasoline and a box cutter. Mark Moogalian, a Franco-American in line to enter the bathroom, tried to wrestle the AK-47 out of Khazzani's hands. Khazzani drew his pistol and shot Moogalian in the neck. Khazzani then tried to fire the AK-47 but the weapon jammed.

Responding to the gunfire, three Americans - Spencer Stone, Alek Skarlatos and Anthony Sadler - charged Khazzani and attempted to subdue him. Stone held Khazzani in a chokehold, though Khazzani used the box cutter to slice at Stone's hands and neck. Skarlatos took the rifle and used it to knock Khazzani unconscious. A British passenger and a French train driver came forward to assist with Khazzani's continued restraint. Once Khazzani was secured, Stone, a medic with the U.S. Air Force, tended to Moogalian's wounds. Moogalian was airlifted to a nearby hospital and survived.

There were no deaths as a result of this attack. Sadler later told reporters that they were lucky the AK-47 jammed. "I mean, if that guy's weapon had been functioning properly I don't even want to think about how it would have went."<sup>3</sup>

Khazzani carried no identification, but authorities were able to use his fingerprints to identify him. Khazzani was a known extremist, who had moved from Morocco to Spain in 2007. In May of 2015, he traveled to Turkey and authorities believe he then traveled on to Syria. However, because Khazzani was unsure how to fix his jammed rifle, some question whether he in fact received received military training in Syria. Prosecutors also say that he watched a militant Islamist video shortly before launching the attack attempt.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> *Sky News*, "US Solider: How We Stopped Train Gunman", October 9, 2015.

<sup>4</sup> *UPI*, "Year of Terror: Paris Attacks Following Charlie Hebdo, Train plots", November 3, 2015.

## Summary of Paris Attacks

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The coordinated attacks in Paris on November 13 left 130 people dead and hundreds wounded. There were nine attackers, each wearing a suicide vest. The attackers targeted a soccer stadium, bars and restaurants and a concert hall -- all venues they knew would be crowded on a Friday evening.

### Mastermind's Plot

Abdelhamid Abaaoud is credited with planning, organizing and coordinating the three teams that carried out the November 2015 Paris attacks. After his family emigrated from Morocco, Abaaoud spent his youth in Molenbeek, an area of Belgium now known for its association with terrorist activity. Salah Abdeslam is credited with being the logistical planner for the attacks. Abaaoud and Abdeslam knew each other as teenagers and were part of a street gang in Molenbeek. They also spent time in the same prison in 2010.

In January 2014, Abaaoud left for Syria with his younger brother, who was just fifteen years old. (Abaaoud was charged and convicted of abduction.) In Syria, Abaaoud is said to have joined a group within ISIL known as al-Battar Katiba or "Brigade of the Sword of the Prophets." He was featured in various recruitment campaigns and valued because of his friends and contacts in Europe willing to carry out attacks.<sup>5</sup>

By early 2015, Abaaoud was planning an attack in Belgium, which he was coordinating from Greece. Belgian security forces surveilled his calls for several days and, believing an attack was imminent, raided an apartment belonging to one of Abbaoud's friends. After a gun fight, two suspected militants were killed and a large cache of weapons was found in the apartment. Abaaoud disappeared and did not resurface until days before the November attacks.<sup>6</sup>

On November 10, 2015, three days before the Paris attacks, Salah Abdeslam's brother Brahim arrived in Paris and began finalizing details for the attack. The brothers sold their Molenbeek bar, Les Beguines, and used the money to fund the operation. They rented cars in Brussels and booked hotel rooms in Paris, each time using their real names.<sup>7</sup> Over the next three days, the Abdeslam brothers shuttled people, cars and weapons across the French-Belgian border.

On the evening of November 13, the nine attackers split into three groups. Salah Abdeslam drove three suicide bombers to the Stade de France, one group drove to the Bataclan and another toward the bars and restaurants of the 10th and 11th arrondissements. (See Appendix 1: Suspects in November 2015 Paris Attacks and Appendix 2: Map of Attack Locations Within Paris.)

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<sup>5</sup> *New York Times*, "An ISIS Militant From Belgium Whose Own Family Wants Him Dead," November 17, 2015.

<sup>6</sup> *New York Times*, "Paris Attacks Suspect Killed in Shootout Had Plotted Terror for 11 Months," November 19, 2015.

<sup>7</sup> At the time, so long as the IDs and credit cards used were valid, car rental companies and hotels did not vet clients or check them against any security watch lists.

### Stade de France

At 21:20, the first of three explosions occurred outside the Stade de France stadium where thousands of fans watched France play Germany in an exhibition soccer match. A man wearing a suicide belt was prevented from entering the stadium near Gate D. The man backed away from security guards and detonated the explosives. The bomber and a bystander were killed.

At 21:30, a second man detonated his suicide vest outside Gate H. President Hollande, who was inside the stadium watching the game, was rushed to safety. The crowd was not notified of the events and the match continued. At 21:53, a third suicide bomber self-imploded at a fast-food store near the stadium.

### Parisian Cafés and Bars

At 21:25 in the 10th arrondissement, a neighborhood known for its plethora of bars, restaurants and cafés, gunmen in a black vehicle open fire on Le Carillon and Le Petit Cambodge. Fifteen people died in the attacks, with fifteen severely injured.

The gunmen continued on to Rue de la Fontaine au Roi in the 11th arrondissement and opened fire on two more restaurants, Café Bonne Biere and La Casa Nostra. Five people were killed, with eight severely injured. Witnesses reported that the gunmen were travelling in a black vehicle.

At 21:36, gunmen opened fire on another bar in the 11th arrondissement, La Belle Equipe. Witnesses again said that the attackers arrived in a black vehicle. Nineteen people died in the shooting, with nine severely injured.

At 21:40, an attacker - later revealed to be Brahim Abdeslam - entered the restaurant Le Comptoir Voltaire, also in the 11th arrondissement. The attacker sat down, placed an order and then detonated his suicide vest, killing himself and injuring fifteen others.

### Bataclan Concert Hall

The deadliest attack of the night occurred at the Bataclan, a 1,500 seat concert hall, where the American rock group Eagles of Death Metal was playing to a sold out crowd. At 21:40, three men with assault rifles emerged from a black vehicle, entered the club, killed the security guard and began firing on the crowd. Ninety people were killed and the rest of the audience was taken hostage. The siege lasted over two hours. At approximately 00:20, police forces stormed the Bataclan. A police officer shot one of the gunmen and his suicide belt detonated. The other attackers self-detonated. Ninety-nine injured were taken to the hospital.

### French State of Emergency

In response to the attacks, President Francois Hollande declared a state of emergency on November 14. France's borders were closed and an additional 1,500 troops were deployed to Paris. The state of emergency granted security forces and police the ability to search homes and place suspects under house arrest without judicial approval. The state of emergency has been extended twice and is currently scheduled to expire on July 26, 2016.<sup>8</sup> Within 48 hours of the attacks, 168 homes had been raided and 104 people placed under house arrest.<sup>9</sup>

### St. Denis Raid

Four days after the Paris attacks, authorities targeting Abdelhamid Abaaoud raided an apartment in the St. Denis neighborhood, a few miles from the Stade de France. Abaaoud was killed in the raid, along with his female cousin, Hasna Aitboulahcen, and Chakib Akrouh, one of the seven attackers.

### Search and Capture of Salah Abdeslam

Abaaoud's death left Salah Abdeslam as the only suspected Paris attacker still alive. On November 15, French and Belgian authorities released his name and photo to the public. In mid-December, police raided an apartment in Brussels. They found explosives and a fingerprint matching Abdeslam. After a four month-long manhunt, Abdeslam was captured in Molenbeek on March 18. He was shot in the leg but taken alive. The family suspected of sheltering him was also arrested.

In the wake of Abdeslam's arrest, Belgian authorities worried about the prospect of another attack. Belgian Interior and Foreign Ministers warned the public on March 20, and again on March 21, that authorities suspected Abdeslam and his accomplices were planning an imminent attack.

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<sup>8</sup> This is current as of the writing of this report.

<sup>9</sup> *The Guardian*, "France under first state of emergency since 1961," November 15, 2016.

## Chronology of the Attacks

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### November 13, 2015

- 21:20 Suicide bomber detonates suicide vest near Gate D outside Stade de France north of Paris, killing himself and one victim.
- 21:25 Gunmen open fire on terraces of Le Carillon bar and Le Petit Cambodge restaurant in the 10th arrondissement of Paris. There are fifteen fatalities and ten injured.
- 21:30 Second suicide bomber detonates his vest outside Gate H at Stade de France, killing only himself.
- 21:32 Gunmen open fire at the Café Bonne Biere and La Casa Nostra in the 11th arrondissement of Paris. There are five fatalities and eight injured.
- 21:36 Gunmen open fire on the terrace of La Belle Equipe bar located in the 11th arrondissement. There are nineteen fatalities and nine injured.
- 21:40 Suicide bomber detonates his vest inside Le Comptoir Voltaire café, in the 11th arrondissement, killing himself and injuring fifteen.
- 21:40 Three attackers enter the Bataclan Concert Venue, located in the 11th arrondissement, and begin a twenty minute shooting spree inside the venue. There are ninety fatalities and ninety-nine injured victims.
- 21:53 Third suicide bomber detonates bomb outside the Stade de France killing only himself.
- 21:55 Patrol officers respond to the Bataclan Theatre. One of the attackers is shot and his vest detonates killing him but none of the hostages.
- 22:15 BRI police unit enters Bataclan concert hall.
- 23:15 BRI officers begin negotiation with two attackers holding hostages on the second floor.

### November 14, 2015

- 00:20 Police begin assault on Bataclan concert hall. Two attackers detonate their suicide vests and are killed. All remaining hostages are freed.

## Incident Management Overview

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The lessons learned from the discussion of the Paris attacks center around six key areas: intelligence, community engagement, investigation, incident command, crisis communication and training/equipment. In each of these areas, findings specific to the Paris attacks highlight the challenges and opportunities facing the law enforcement and public safety communities.

### Intelligence

The attacks in Paris in 2015 caught authorities off guard for several reasons. Previous attacks by fighters trained in Syria had relied on a single mode of operation: a shooting, an explosion or an attempted hostage-taking. In Paris, the attackers did all three, with the goal of overwhelming the country's emergency response capabilities. The terrorists employed new tactics, exploited weaknesses in Europe's border controls and demonstrated a desire for maximum carnage, as opposed to directing attacks at symbolic targets.

In many ways, the Paris attacks closely resembled the Mumbai attacks in 2008. In India, ten attackers mounted a complex operation that unfolded over sixty hours. The terrorists were heavily armed, each carrying assault rifles and multiple rounds of ammunition, as well as improvised explosive devices. The attackers divided into four teams. One targeted Mumbai's main train station, and then a hospital. A second team targeted a Jewish residential complex. The third team stormed the Trident-Oberoi Hotel, while the fourth team attacked the Taj Mahal Palace Hotel. All attackers killed indiscriminately. Indian commandos ultimately brought down all ten attackers, but not until they had killed 164 victims.

The Mumbai attacks required, "precise planning, detailed reconnaissance and thorough preparation, both physical and mental. It relied on surprise, creating confusion and overwhelming the ability of the authorities to respond."<sup>10</sup> As in Mumbai, the Paris attackers had carefully planned, carried heavy firepower along with explosives, and divided into teams, simultaneously attacking different locations to prevent the authorities from developing an accurate assessment of the situation. The attackers were better planned than in the Charlie Hebdo attacks and their goal was mass murder rather than targeted killings. At the Bataclan, they knew to kill the security guard first and then took large numbers of hostages, creating a siege. This suggests that the terrorists studied Mumbai and replicated what worked. While the Paris attackers were organized into blind cells, they had extensive logistical support.

Unlike the Mumbai attackers who came from outside India (specifically, the Pakistani terrorist group Lashkar-e-Taiba), five of the eight Paris attackers were French. They spoke the language and knew the geographical layout of the area. The team that attacked the restaurants in the 10th and 11th arrondissements targeted crowded intersections that provided a high volume of potential victims, but also multiple options for ingress and egress. Additionally, at least two of the attackers had trained in Syria.

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<sup>10</sup> The RAND Corporation, "The Lessons of Mumbai," January 9, 2009.

French intelligence officials estimate that upwards of 700 people have trained in Syria and returned to France. That number jumps to 1200, if ardent supporters and those who have tried to travel to Syria or Yemen are included. French forces routinely question and surveil those who are known to have gone abroad to train, but it is difficult to prioritize among the returning travelers and there is inadequate manpower to follow all potential radicals. An arrest over the summer of 2015 provided information that an attack on a concert venue was imminent, but with no specific information, law enforcement was unable to act on the tip.

For the intelligence community, the Paris attacks highlight the necessity of tracking travelers across borders. Security and intelligence officers need to follow the movements of people coming from Syria and Yemen, but also coming across the porous border with Brussels. In December 2015, the European Union (EU) approved the use of a Passenger Name Record (PNR), a database which tracks the movements of EU citizens and residents by air travel. The database contains several different types of information, such as travel dates, travel itinerary, ticket information, contact details, baggage information and payment information. Adoption and effective use of the PNR should facilitate the tracking of possible terrorists moving in and out of the EU. However, there will still be easy access across borders within the Schengen Area of the EU.

Some intelligence authorities believe that one of the intents of the Stade de France attack was meant to draw security forces out of the city. Frequently after an emergency, law enforcement's reaction is to flood an area with resources, depleting the ability to respond to another event. This, coupled with the fact that the terrorists used recognized military tactics in the Bataclan, reinforces the need for tactical training for patrol officers. Because of the success of the November attacks (and the attacks in Brussels five months later), law enforcement assumes there will be more of these coordinated attacks designed to wreak havoc and drain response capabilities. MACTAC training, discussed in detail in the Training/Equipment section, will be a critical response tool for all law enforcement agencies.

It is also important to note that French authorities do not believe technological intelligence could have prevented these attacks. They iterated that human intelligence is the most effective form of counter-terrorism, and the best intelligence comes from community engagement and not coercion. However, gaining the necessary trust to build human intelligence sources within the European Muslim community is proving particularly difficult for French authorities.

## **Community Engagement**

France has the largest Muslim population in the European Union.<sup>11</sup> The Pew Center for Research estimates that 4.8 million people, or approximately 7.5% of French residents, are of Muslim

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<sup>11</sup> By law, the French government is prohibited from asking or keeping data on its citizens' race and religion so exact demographic data is hard to come by.

descent.<sup>12</sup> However, France has a complicated colonial past that leaves many Muslims today feeling isolated and discriminated against.

Many of France's Muslim immigrants come from the former French colonies of Morocco and Algeria. In the mid-eighteenth century, France invaded Algeria and began efforts to convert the indigenous Muslims to Christianity. Algeria remained under French colonial rule for the next century, gaining independence in 1962 after a brutal eight-year war. Hundreds of thousands died, and nearly one million refugees fled to France. But assimilation was difficult, especially for practicing Muslims who found France to be openly hostile to their religious beliefs.

France is a deeply secular country. French religious policy is based on the concept of *laïcité*, a strict separation of church and state under which public life is considered completely secular. As the twentieth century advanced, *laïcité* became increasingly entrenched in the fabric of French political culture. However, much of mainstream Muslim culture embraces public declarations of religiosity, such as the wearing of a veil or the call to prayer. This tension has increased in recent decades. In 2004, France banned the wearing of veils, crosses and yarmulkes in schools. In 2010, France banned public wearing of face-coverings, including the niqab, a face veil worn by some Muslim women.

Today many Muslims live in the Parisian suburbs known as the *banlieues*. While the word literally means "suburbs," it has become a pejorative term synonymous with poor, immigrant, and crime-ridden areas. France has 717 "sensitive urban zones," most of them in the *banlieues*, in which unemployment is over twice the national rate and over a third live below the poverty line.<sup>13</sup> The unemployment rate can be even higher for young Muslim men, with some estimates placing it near 40%. This population of young, under-employed, socially isolated men is ripe for radicalization. A recent project analyzing data from The International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation found a distinct connection between youth unemployment and a rise in (Sunni) extremism.

If the *banlieues* are the source of the disenfranchised youth, French prisons are quickly becoming the epicenter of radicalization. An estimated 50% of the French penal population is Muslim.<sup>14</sup> French authorities are finding that young men enter prison as petty criminals and exit radicalized. The Charlie Hebdo/HyperCache attackers Charif Kouachi and Amady Coulibaly met in prison, as did at least two of the November attackers, Abaaoud and Brahim Abdeslam. France is experimenting with education programs to combat this radicalization process.

However, it is challenging for the French authorities to make inroads with the community and gather the necessary intelligence on potential extremists. Many Muslims are distrustful of the police and are hesitant to assist with an investigation. Authorities have been alerted to the

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<sup>12</sup> Pew Research Center, "Five Facts about the Muslim Population in Europe," November 17, 2015.

<sup>13</sup> *The Economist*, "Forgotten in the Banlieus," February 23, 2013.

<sup>14</sup> Congressional Research Service, "France: Efforts to Counter Islamist Terrorism and the Islamic State," November 18, 2015.

presence of "basement mosques" but until the French can offer incentives to rival those being provided by the extremists, disenfranchised young Muslims may continue to answer the call to jihad. Greater outreach into the community will be crucial moving forward, as human intelligence will be one of the keys to stopping a future attack.

In the United States, the Muslim population is much better integrated and does not suffer from the same outsider status. They are a smaller percentage of the population -- less than one percent -- and they are well educated. According to a 2009 Gallup poll, U.S. Muslims have the second-highest level of education among major religious groups in the United States. They are also dispersed throughout the country, and not clustered in specific areas. Importantly, when surveyed, a much higher percentage of American Muslims identified as "American" than their counterparts in Europe, the majority of whom identified as "Muslim" as opposed to European.<sup>15</sup>

## **Investigation**

While the style and ferocity of the November attacks caught law enforcement off-guard, the immediate response and the ensuing investigation was largely successful. Though the French do not have a traditional NIMS/ICS command system, the many responding agencies were able to coordinate quickly and share information, despite the difficulties of encrypted communication, multiple crime scenes and numerous fatalities.

France's SINUS system allowed investigators to quickly and accurately track the victims of the attacks, as they made their way through the medical system and other care-giving services. SINUS - (the acronym is the English translation) Standardized Information Numeric System - is a digital database to which all information about the victims is transferred in real time.

Using SINUS, authorities were able to create a comprehensive, real-time list of all victims, regardless of location. At the scene of the attacks, bar-coded wrist-bands were placed on every victim. The information was then uploaded to the database and updated when a patient was admitted to a hospital or morgue. The information was continually updated as the patient moved through transport, hospital and beyond.

This victim tracking system allowed the French authorities to quickly locate and share information with family members. The Los Angeles delegation was impressed with the amount of information that was collected and stored amid such chaotic crime scenes. Unfortunately, there were instances in which hospital staff cut off the SINUS wristbands, unaware of their significance. Moving forward, more training and coordination would likely alleviate this problem.

Currently, there is no comparable national or regional database for the tracking of victims in the Southern California region. Traditionally, police and sheriff departments rely on their Field Interview cards for basic biographical knowledge. When trying to locate a given individual, law enforcement officials turn to their informal network of contacts, personally calling colleagues at

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<sup>15</sup> *The Economist*, "Islamic, Yet Integrated," September 6, 2014.

various locations to track down information. In the event of a large scale coordinated attack, the lack of a formal database would greatly hinder attempts to locate victims and/or reunite them with their family members.

The criminal investigation began while the attacks were still ongoing. After the suicide bombers detonated at the Stade de France, the police sent investigators to the scene to gather intel on the suicide vests. Authorities determined the attackers were using TATP (triacetone triperoxyde). This information later helped responders plan their strategy at the Bataclan.

At the Bataclan, the attackers fired automatic weapons for seven straight minutes, pausing only to reload, leaving behind a complex crime scene. Investigators divided the Bataclan into zones to assist with evidence collection; teams were placed at each zone to comb through the bullets. Other teams interviewed the hundreds of survivors. Witness statements initially underestimated the number of attackers, but a review of the surveillance-camera footage helped authorities determine that there were more than initially assumed. (Further examination of the footage later in the investigation confirmed that the attackers had driven in from Brussels.) President Hollande's immediate call for a State of Emergency allowed investigators to raid homes and take suspects into custody without judicial approval. Law enforcement conducted 414 warrantless searches within six days of the incident.

Investigators later found a cell phone in a trash bin near the Bataclan. The phone contained detailed information about the attack and a text message from 21:42 on November 13 saying, "On est parti en commence." (Translation: "We have left, we are starting.")<sup>16</sup> Authorities were able to use the geolocation services on the phone to find the attackers last known location before the assault.

Intelligence also led police to an apartment in the Parisian suburb of St. Denis, where suspected mastermind Abaaoud was thought to be sheltering. A seven hour shoot-out with police ended with explosions and the deaths of three people, including Abaaoud.

After the raid on the St. Denis apartment, the only surviving attacker was Salah Abdeslam. Because he had rented the cars used in the attacks under his own name, authorities were able to tie fingerprints and DNA found in the car directly to Abdeslam. After a five month manhunt, police arrested him in Molenbeek, Belgium in March 2016.

Despite the chaos and the variety of crime scenes, French authorities were able to achieve situational awareness with a high degree of accuracy in a short period of time. After the attacks, the police were criticized for their inability to locate Abdeslam, especially as he was hiding a short distance away in Brussels. However, as discussed earlier, the deep cultural divide likely impeded cooperation between Muslim communities and the authorities.

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<sup>16</sup> *New York Times*, "Paris Attacks," November 18, 2015.

## Incident Command

Two key decisions made during the first phase of the attacks at the Stade de France likely saved hundreds of lives. After the first attacker detonated his suicide vest outside the stadium, President Hollande, who had been inside the stadium watching the game, was rushed to safety. However, concerned that the attacker's intent was to create a stampede out of the stadium with other attackers lying in wait to ambush the exit spectators, Hollande decided not to tell the fans and players what was going on.<sup>17</sup> The stadium was quietly locked-down and play continued. Because of the spotty cell reception inside the stadium, the public remained largely unaware of the events that were unfolding outside.

At the same time, police commanders opted not to flood the area surrounding the stadium with resources. Learning from their response to the Charlie Hebdo attacks earlier in the year, authorities determined that this was a likely a terrorist attack. Expecting a second wave, police preserved resources to ensure they could respond as necessary.

Another crucial decision was made by the patrolman responding to the Bataclan. He opted to violate protocol and actively engage the shooter. (Protocol dictated he should secure the scene and wait for back up.) When the patrolman shot the attacker, the suicide vest detonated and the attacker was killed. No other hostages were killed at the Bataclan from that point.

Despite these successes, law enforcement's response suffered from a lack of an incident command system. There was much confusion in the response phase of the crisis. Because there were three difference crime scenes, there were also three separate command posts that were operating independently, exacerbating police attempts to get accurate information in real time.

In the event of a terror attack, BRI and RAID are supposed to jointly mobilize under a unified command system known as FIPN, (Force d'intervention de la Police Nationale.) However, police sources explained that high-level command in all agencies acted independently during the attacks.

There was also information lost after the patrolman shot and killed the attacker in the Bataclan. The patrolman had incident-specific information including estimates as to the number of attackers, number of hostages and weapons involved. As counter-terrorism forces arrived they could not capitalize on his valuable intelligence because the patrolman was too upset to debrief.

At several locations, ingress and egress was blocked for first responders. France allows the self-deployment of officers in an emergency. Despite good intentions, these self-deployed officers and their vehicles created bottlenecks at key locations. Because resources were not deployed from a centralized command, resource management suffered.

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<sup>17</sup> *Wall Street Journal*, "Behind Francois Hollande's Snap Decision," November 15, 2015.

The first responders had been using their radios to communicate with one another and the Command Post. However, Headquarters took control of the radio communications, which interfered with the first responders' ability to effectively communicate with each other on scene. A dedicated tactical frequency would have allowed all parties to communicate more effectively and efficiently.

Paris has already responded by creating a 24/7 Command Post that functions much like an Emergency Operations Center (EOC). In this way, inter-agency relationships will be fostered and there will be a greater understanding among all personnel as to their respective roles and responsibilities. Additionally, the military has a seat in the EOC, given the likelihood of a coordinated response between the Police Nationale and the Gendarmerie Nationale.

Coordination between medical and tactical teams was complicated because of the medical response required to tend to the high volume of victims. The BRI unit which responded to the Bataclan had only one medic. After entering the concert hall, the medic began tending to the victims on the first floor. As the BRI attempted to manually breach the door on the second floor, the attackers opened fire, injuring one of the officers. However, because their only medic was downstairs, there was no one to provide medical attention. Due to the mass numbers of people self-evacuating from the Bataclan, it was nearly impossible for other emergency services personnel to gain access.

In such high-risk, extended duration operations, it has become a best practice in the United States to have a Tactical Emergency Medical Support (TEMS) element as a component to any tactical response. With the proper training and equipment, TEMS providers are able to render immediate medical care in austere environments and provide logistical support to further the health and safety of law enforcement personnel. The goal is to have medical personnel gain access to the victims - even in a "hot zone" - as quickly possible, with the goal of saving as many lives as possible.

### **Crisis Information**

Managing crisis communication and the flow of information proved to be one of the most challenging aspects of the November 13 attacks. First, the emergency information call system (the French 9-1-1) was completely overwhelmed. There were two call centers, each staffed with forty operators. French authorities estimated that only one in six emergency calls was answered.<sup>18</sup> To try and keep pace with the onslaught of incoming information, authorities assigned an additional 160 officers to the call centers. One call line was dedicated to the ongoing investigation with another line dedicated to victim support.

Second, the media in France is largely unregulated and has unrestricted access to crime scenes even as an investigation is unfolding. In the Los Angeles area, full-time employees of news organizations must be credentialed if they want to cross police and/or fire lines to cover a story.

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<sup>18</sup> There were likely many duplicate calls reporting the same event.

To receive proper credentialing, a reporter must submit an application, pay a small fee and submit fingerprints, as part of the Livescan identification confirmation process. Even with the proper credentials, there is an understanding between the formal media outlets and law enforcement agencies that reporters will not report on police tactics or carry live news feed that could compromise an investigation.

No such understanding exists in France. During the attacks on the HyperCacher in January 2015, French stations aired live feed of police amassing outside the market, preparing their attack. Coulibaly was able to watch in real time and gain situational awareness from these media reports. But the authorities have limited, if any, recourse. The media in France are not credentialed so there is no way to enforce crime scene perimeters.

Third, the authorities did not effectively use social media to share official news updates. The first coordinated statement and social media push came the following morning. In the hours after the attacks, the informational void only increased the sense of panic throughout the city. A recent paper released by the Department of Justice highlighting the Boston Police Department's effective use of social media in response to the marathon bombings noted the importance of speed during an emergency situation. "In the absence of information from a reliable source, inaccurate or misleading information can circulate rapidly on social media ... Embracing this opportunity to broadcast widely and instantaneously requires a significant cultural shift for many law enforcement agencies. In many ways, law enforcement communications in recent times have been characterized by efforts to control rather than distribute information. However, any hesitation to be more open and prompt in releasing information should be tempered by the fact that police information will be broadcast rapidly on public media regardless of whether the police choose to do the broadcasting themselves."<sup>19</sup>

### **Training/Equipment**

In the months following the Paris attacks, no one discounted the bravery of the responders, but critics within and outside the French law enforcement community questioned whether the police are capable of adequately responding to this new generation of terror attacks.

Simultaneous attacks with multiple crime scenes require a nimble response from a security force trained in crisis and counter-terrorism strategies. But the French police system is highly centralized. Across the country, specialized units have largely replaced neighborhood patrols. Community policing, a common practice in the United States, is not the norm in France. In most situations, local officers are trained to wait for the specialists to arrive. However, speaking to the events of November 13, one expert said "ordinary policing might have limited the damage."<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> David, Edward F. III, Alejandro A. Alves and David Alan Sklansky, "Social Media and Police Leadership: Lessons from Boston." *New Perspectives in Policing Bulletin*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice, 2014.

<sup>20</sup> *New York Times*, "Response to Paris Attacks Points to Weaknesses in French Police Structure," December 31, 2015.

The first officer to respond to the Bataclan was a local patrolman. He shot one attacker, exploding the attacker's suicide vest, while sparing the hostages around him. The patrolman was then ordered to withdraw and wait for the BRI. It was another thirty minutes before the full team of special forces arrived, while inside the Bataclan the terrorists were able to assemble a group of hostages and barricade themselves in an upstairs room.

To effectively manage a terrorist incident, first responders need appropriate equipment and training to neutralize or at least contain the terrorists. However, French first responders are currently only trained in crime scene procedures. They lack counter-terrorism training and they do not have adequate firepower to match up against automatic weapons.

A key lesson learned is the importance of tactical training for patrol officers. MACTAC - Multiple Assault Counter-Terrorism Action Capabilities - has been championed and pioneered by the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD). MACTAC allows officers to spontaneously and effectively control various threats as quickly as possible by using small unit infantry tactics to immediately apply pressure on assailants versus waiting and holding a perimeter. MACTAC allows prompt, cooperative training and response among multiple agencies. Using MACTAC, LAPD is able to provide high-impact squads to respond to multiple, simultaneous critical incidents in Los Angeles and the surrounding area.

## Post Incident Overview

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Four months after the attacks on Paris, and three days after the arrest of Salah Abdeslam, Brussels was the target of a coordinated, multi-site terror attack. Below is a summary of the events.

### Brussels Attacks

On the morning of March 22, 2016, three coordinated bombings occurred in Belgium: two at the airport in Zaventem and one at a metro station in Brussels. Thirty-two victims and three suicide bombers were killed, with over 300 injured.

At 07:58 two explosions - nine seconds apart - occurred in the airport's departure area. Authorities halted air traffic, evacuated the terminals and stopped rail transport to the airport. Seven minutes later, at 09:11, there was an explosion on board a train at the Maalbeek metro station. By 09:30, all public transportation in Brussels was suspended. That afternoon, Amaq, a news agency affiliated with the Islamic State, claimed responsibility for the attacks.<sup>21</sup>

After the attacks, a taxi driver who suspected that he may have driven the bombers to the airport approached the police and led them to a house in the Schaerbeek neighborhood of Brussels, where he said he had picked up three men. Police found fifteen kilograms of the explosive TATP, chemicals, a suitcase with nails and screws, an ISIS flag and other equipment meant to make explosives.

Belgian authorities released surveillance footage, which showed three men exiting a taxi and pushing luggage trolleys through the Brussels Airport. Two of the men were identified as as Brahim el-Bakraoui and Najim Laachraoui. The third attacker, who appears besides the pair wearing a black hat, was believed to be on the run after he failed to detonate his explosives. He was picked up two weeks later and identified as Mohamed Abrini. The fourth bomber, who struck the Maelbeek metro station, was named as Khalid el-Bakraoui, Brahim's brother. Abrini is also suspected of providing logistical help for the Paris attackers.

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<sup>21</sup> *New York Times*, "Strikes Claimed by ISIS Shut Brussels and Shake European Security," March 22, 2016.

## **Recommendations**

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The multi-agency delegation that went to Paris returned with a deeper understanding of the November 13 attacks and an appreciation for the lessons learned by the French law enforcement, intelligence and public safety communities. The delegation held several meetings in Los Angeles to discuss the findings and their applicability to the Southern California region. Based on their analysis, they propose the following recommendations:

### **Intelligence**

- Increase efforts to cultivate and leverage human intelligence sources.
- Improve tracking of fighters who travel abroad for training and return to the US.

### **Community Engagement**

- Adopt and/or create training programs to counter violent extremism.
- Develop training programs and/or protocols to neutralize the radicalization of incarcerated individuals.

### **Investigation**

- Study past terrorist attacks to identify lessons learned.
- Create an investigative tracking system similar to SINUS to maintain real-time information on the status of the victims of a major attack as they make their way through the medical system.
- Continue efforts to improve major case management software with a look at off-the-shelf product(s) that could be used today.
- Continue use of real-time data tracking systems to enhance situational awareness for incidents involving multiple attacks in the Southern California region.

### **Incident Command**

- Encourage a working knowledge and application of National Incident Management System (NIMS) and Incident Command System (ICS) training to all first responders and first supporters.
- Ensure protocols are in place and are practiced so that department emergency operation centers and city/county emergency operation centers are ready to quickly stand up in response to terrorist attacks. For large departments, consideration should be given to creating an operational command post out of existing centers.
- Ensure multiple communications processes are in place to avoid communications challenges that can impact first responders.

### **Crisis Information**

- Continue current media protocols, including media credentialing systems.
- Continue efforts to incorporate social media into crisis communications, both mining real time data to gain greater situational awareness and pushing out notifications to enhance the public's understanding and general safety.
- Educate the public on how to react and respond during an active shooter incident.

### **Training/Equipment**

- Continue and enhance counter-terrorist training provided to patrol officers. Training such as Multiple Assault Counter Terrorism Action Capabilities (MACTAC) or an equivalent course should be offered to all first responders.
- Continue and enhance efforts regarding Tactical Emergency Medical Service (TEMS) to include Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) teams cross-training on TEMS with Fire Department personnel.

## Appendix 1: Suspects in November 2015 Paris Attacks

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### Suspects held



Salah Abdeslam (Arrested) Mohamed Abrini (Arrested)  
Both men suspected of links to Paris and Brussels attacks

### Stade de France



Bilal Hadfi (Dead) 'Ahmad al-Mohammed' (Dead) 'M al Mahmod' (Dead)

### Bars and restaurants



Chakib Akrouh (Dead) Abdelhamid Abaaoud (Dead) Suspected ringleader  
Brahim Abdeslam (Dead)

### Bataclan



Omar Ismail Mostefai (Dead) Samy Amimour (Dead) Foued Mohamed-Aggad (Dead)

Source: Pictures AFP, EVN, EPA, Belgian Police

BBC

# Appendix 2: Map of Attack Locations Within Paris



Prefecture de Police jurisdiction:

- Population: 6.4 million people
- Area: 4000 square miles
- Police officers: 34,000
- Fire fighters: 8,500

Information from the Prefecture de Police website, English translation.



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