State of Readiness-Reorganization of the LASD Special Operations Division

By the time Jim McDonnell was elected Sheriff in 2014, the U.S. State Department had declared that worldwide terror attacks had increased by more than 30% from the previous year.

In 2015, terror struck close to home when on December 2, 2015, 14 people were killed and 22 others were seriously injured in a mass shooting at the Inland Regional Center in neighboring San Bernardino County.

The reorganization of the LASD Special Operations Division was inspired by the changing landscape of emerging threats. The high profile status of Los Angeles County, known for its iconic landmarks, the entertainment industry, and one of the world’s busiest airports and port, has long been considered a target rich environment.

The Special Operations Division evolved to be more intelligence based and more response ready in its training and tactics. The goal was to centralize crime analysis into an ongoing intelligence mission while building tactics based on emerging terror threats such as mass shootings, the use of improvised explosive devices and the interest in using weapons of mass destruction. The Special Enforcement Bureau, as the primary response unit to these high risk situations would combine special weapons and tactics with specialists in explosive devices. The LASD Transit Services Bureau would be part of this strategic organization of resources since numerous cases of terrorism actively target trains and buses around the world in order to prevent, mitigate or respond to an attack against transportation.

And finally, strategic partnerships would be developed with international government outreach as well as the Los Angeles Crime Stoppers program to ensure all threat reporting was identified, assessed and addressed.