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***Mass. fuses intelligence***

*05/12/05 --- by Dibya Sarkar*

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Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney announced the creation of an intelligence fusion center that will integrate and analyze information from disparate sources statewide to spot criminal and terrorism patterns.

Officials estimate development and implementation of the fusion center's system

will take six months. The state signed a contract with Raytheon for integration services, installation, training and continued support. A subcontractor, **Knowledge Computing, will provide the COPLINK software** for analyzing large volumes of information from disparate law enforcement databases to uncover trends and produce leads for investigators.

In the meantime, the Commonwealth Fusion Center is currently staffed with 15 analysts and 23 intelligence officers and will operate round-the-clock. There will be 18 analysts by July. The center is expected to be fully operational in 2007.

"This includes a group of people skilled in analysis of data, identifying patterns and trends, which again may be useful in any kind of law enforcement setting, but in particular our thought with regards to homeland security," Romney said at a May 11 press conference.

State and local law enforcement mainly protect large critical assets and respond to attacks, but prevention is difficult to organize, Romney said. The fusion center is a step to address that gap.

While he proposed such a center in 2003, Romney also chaired a 21-member working group -- part of the Homeland Security Advisory Council, which advises the Homeland Security Department's secretary -- that issued a national report in December outlining the roles and responsibilities of the different levels of government and private sector in collecting and sharing intelligence data.

Essentially, the group proposed a plan where various state and local entities would collect data daily, send it to regional or state centers, which in turn would analyze and identify trends related to emerging terrorist activities and relay such information to the federal government. The federal authorities would develop a national picture and relay actionable intelligence back to state and local authorities.

The Massachusetts State Police is the primary agency overseeing the fusion center and in partnership with several other state, local and federal agencies. They are collaboratively developing an operations plan to be used statewide once the software is in place. Each of the five homeland security regional councils in the state will receive \$2 million in state funding to accomplish this phase.

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