

Kelly the Leader

Commish delivers results

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It is difficult to remember the feeling of insecurity that gripped New York City when Police Commissioner Ray Kelly took office in January 2002. With the ruins of the World Trade Center still smoldering, the threat of terrorism loomed large. Many predicted a return to the bad old days when businesses and residents fled in droves.

No one predicted that crime would continue to decline or that the city would not suffer another terrorist attack. Yet that's exactly what has happened — even though the NYPD has fewer officers, less money and more work than it did four years ago. The credit belongs in full measure to Kelly's extraordinary leadership.

Crime has dropped 20 percent since 2001. The number of murders is on pace to hit a 40-year low this year, possibly dipping below 500 for the first time since 1961.

Some academics have tried to

attribute the city's crime turnaround to all kinds of external factors. But (as usual) they overlook the obvious answer: a lot of intelligent police work.

Under Kelly's leadership, for example, the NYPD has expanded the famous Compstat data-collection and accountability system. No longer does it simply map crime by precinct: Under "Operation Spotlight," the police use data to pinpoint specific individuals responsible for a disproportionate share of offenses. And the department has expanded its DNA lab and launched a "Real-Time Crime Center" that immediately gets information on potential suspects into the hands of officers responding to a crime scene.

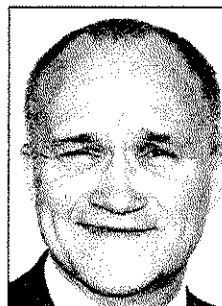
Kelly also started "Operation Impact" to identify high-crime zones and flood them with police officers. So far, those officers have made more than 20,000 arrests and issued 335,000 summonses in those zones. No matter what the academics say, it's no coincidence that major felonies fell by 26 percent in the Operation Im-

pact zones last year.

But Kelly's greatest challenge has been retooling the NYPD to respond to the new realities the city faces in the post 9/11 world.

Immediately on taking office, Kelly began to profoundly reorganize the NYPD and turn it into a premier counterterrorism operation. He hired David Cohen, a 35-year CIA veteran, to totally revamp the department's intelligence division and he brought in Michael Sheehan, former director of counterterrorism for the National Security Council, to head up a new Counterterrorism Bureau.

Under their direction, the NYPD has put 1,000 cops full-time on the anti-terror beat, stationed detectives across the globe to gather information on potential threats to the city and hired scores of intelligence and foreign-language experts. They've launched innovative programs like Operation Hercules, which deploys cops in massive numbers based on po-



Kelly: No passing the buck to feds.

tential threat analysis, and Operation Nexus, through which the NYPD has established relationships with 20,000 city businesses to make sure they're alert to the terror threat.

Note that Kelly didn't *have* to do any of this. It would've been easy to say, "That's the feds' job," and not assume the tremendous responsibilities he and the NYPD have taken on. But that's not what a true leader does.

And, having quite a bit of Washington experience himself, Commissioner Kelly knew that New York could not sit back and rely on the feds to keep its 8 million residents safe from terror. In fact, the NYPD, which is twice the size of the FBI, is now lending expertise and resources to the federal government.

The Manhattan Institute has been honored to play a role in helping the NYPD by establishing a Center for Tactical Counterterrorism that works with the police to provide research

and access to policy experts. We firmly believe that the key to keeping New York and other cities safe lies with local law enforcement. After all, they're the ones who best know the neighborhoods and communities they are sworn to protect.

This summer, The New Yorker did a glowing profile of the NYPD's counterterrorism efforts, in which journalist William Finnegan wrote that the most common word in Commissioner Kelly and his deputy commissioners' collective vocabulary is "worry."

Although it's mostly unknown to the general public, all this worry and hard work by the NYPD has resulted in a number of planned attacks being thwarted or deterred over the past four years. For example, al Qaeda operative Lyman Faris came to town a couple of years ago to take down the Brooklyn Bridge. But he looked at the heightened security in the area and changed his mind — sending back word to his fellow terrorists that "the weather was too hot" to complete the operation.

For all their innovative work in keeping crime down — and the "weather too hot" — we all owe Ray Kelly and the NYPD our thanks.

Adapted from remarks yesterday by Lawrence Mone, the president of the Manhattan Institute, as he awarded Commissioner Kelly the institute's 2005 Urban Innovator Award.