

An excerpt from:  
The Partnering for Prevention & Community Safety Initiative  
Developing Partnerships Between Law Enforcement and  
American Muslim, Arab, and Sikh Communities:  
The Greater Chicago Experience  
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BENEFITS OF EXISTING PARTNERSHIP MODELS Partnership efforts in the Greater Chicago area have provided a number of tangible benefits for the area's Muslim, Arab, and Sikh American communities as well as for area law enforcement agencies. An example of these benefits was relayed at the March 2005 Multicultural Forum by Shiva Singh Khalsa, a Sikh community organizer and an active member of the Forum.

Mr. Khalsa reported that he was responsible for organizing the visit of four high ranking Sikh religious leaders who were coming to Chicago from India for a conference. This visit was significant and unique because these religious leaders rarely travel together outside India. Further, there was reason for concern because unlike most practicing Sikhs who carry a small ceremonial knife, called a kirpan, these Sikh religious leaders carry a full-sized ceremonial sword.

The kirpan is a small ceremonial dagger or knife carried by many Sikhs in a manner that is usually not visible. As it is not a weapon, the constitutional right to wear a kirpan has been recognized by the courts. Source: "Recommendations for Law Enforcement When Interacting With Sikh Americans," SALDEF material ([www.saldef.org](http://www.saldef.org)).

The high-profile nature of these religious leaders and the potential for questions regarding their ceremonial objects, Mr. Khalsa wanted to ensure that their arrival through the airport in Chicago was safe and smooth. Due to the relationship he had established with law enforcement through the Forum, Mr. Khalsa reached out to the Superintendent in order to make him aware of the pending visit and to ask for assistance with coordination and security issues.

In response, Superintendent Hilliard worked with CPD personnel detailed to the airport to ensure that the arrival of the religious leaders was handled appropriately. Specifically, Mr. Khalsa was escorted to the airport by CPD officers. Upon his arrival he found the religious leaders waiting comfortably with their swords visible. CPD had assigned a six officer plain clothes protective detail to ensure the security of the leaders during their time at the airport.

This type of law enforcement – community coordination, which was made possible by the Multicultural Forum, not only facilitated this particular visit but served as a positive example of law enforcement working with the community that resonated locally, nationally, and internationally. In addition to working together on specific high-profile issues, the Multicultural Forum facilitates the general exchange of perspectives, which results in a myriad of benefits. One example of the benefits of perspective sharing which was reported in Chicago as well as other sites that have community-law enforcement partnership models in place, is the understanding on the part of law enforcement that Fridays are the busiest days at mosques. This is important for traffic control planning, planning of protective visibilities, and coordination of community outreach initiatives. Similarly, it is also beneficial for community members to be aware of law enforcement agencies' standard operating procedures. For example, in Chicago Mr. Khalsa reported the change in his reaction to having his kirpan confiscated at the airport based on his exposure to law enforcement through the Multicultural Forum. According to Mr. Khalsa, after his work on the Forum, where he learned about the operational realities of airport security personnel, he felt less anxious personnel, he felt less anxious and angry when prohibited from carrying his kirpan.