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LIVONIA

Meeting to showcase ties to Israel

BY NIRAJ WARIKOO • FREE PRESS STAFF WRITER • JULY 17, 2008

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A conference in Livonia this week highlights growing ties between Michigan law enforcement and Israeli counterterrorism officials.

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Several law enforcement officials from Israel are to speak today and Friday about their experiences at a homeland security meeting sponsored by Michigan Attorney General Mike Cox and the Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs.

The meeting comes after a visit to Israel earlier this year by Oakland County Sheriff Michael Bouchard and Tom Cameron, chief of the justice bureau in the state Attorney General's Office, sponsored by the institute, Cox spokesman Matt Frendewey said.

In previous years, other law enforcement officials, such as Ann Arbor Police Chief Barnett Jones, who led Sterling Heights Police at the time of his Israel visit, and Wayne County Sheriff Warren Evans, have made similar trips.

"One of the keys to effective law enforcement is a sharing of knowledge," Frendewey said. "It's about law enforcement coming together."

The speakers will include a terrorist profiler and bomb squad commander from the Israel National Police, a retired officer of Israel's intelligence agency, the Mossad, and Steven Pomerantz, a retired veteran of the FBI who was chief of its counterterrorism section. Pomerantz, now the institute's associate executive director, said the

program of sponsoring trips to Israel -- known as the Law Enforcement Exchange

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Program -- came about because of the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks.

David Tsur, a conference speaker who is a retired police commander for Tel Aviv, Israel, said the experiences of Israeli officials can help police in the United States since both countries are open democracies.

"It's not easy to fight against terrorism and crime in an open society and democracy because the terrorists and criminals take advantage of the freedom," Tsur said.

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