

Suspicious Activity Report: A Tool or a Threat?

I. The following are "Seven Signs of Terrorism," taken from the Virginia Fusion Center

(<http://www.vsp.state.va.us/FusionCenter/7-Signs.shtm>).

1. **Surveillance:** Recording or monitoring activities. May include drawing diagrams, note taking, use of cameras, binoculars or other vision-enhancing devices or possessing floor plans or blueprints of key facilities.
2. **Elicitation:** Attempts to obtain operation, security and personnel-related information regarding a key facility. May be made by mail, fax, e-mail, telephone or in person.
3. **Tests of Security:** Attempts to measure reaction times to security breaches or to penetrate physical security barriers or procedures in order to assess strengths and weaknesses.
4. **Acquiring Supplies:** Attempts to improperly acquire items that could be used in a terrorist act. May include the acquisition of explosives, weapons, harmful chemicals, flight manuals, law enforcement or military equipment, uniforms, identification badges or the equipment to manufacture false identification.
5. **Suspicious Persons:** Someone who does not appear to belong in a workplace, neighborhood or business establishment based on their behavior, including unusual questions or statements they make.
6. **Dry Runs/Trial Runs:** Behavior that appears to be in preparation for a terrorist act without actually committing the act. Activity could include mapping out routes and determining the timing of traffic lights and flow.
7. **Deploying Assets:** Placing people, equipment and supplies into position to commit the act. This is the last opportunity to alert authorities before the terrorist act occurs.

II. Using these standards, the video and prior activities, choose one of the two statements below. If you prefer, you may create a third statement that more accurately reflects your views.

STATEMENT 1:	"The use of Suspicious Activity Reports creates an atmosphere of surveillance and suspicion among Americans that is harmful to our way of life."
STATEMENT 2:	"The use of Suspicious Activity Reports provides a valuable resource on potentially criminal behaviors which has helped to keep this country safe over the past 10 years."

III. Now compose a short essay explaining why you chose that statement. Be sure to support your answer with relevant examples (especially from the video *Are We Safer?*) and consistent logic.