



This Issue:

Homeland Defense Begins at Home!

The Department of Homeland Defense and American Red Cross are leading the way, but true national preparedness requires an all-hands effort starting with teachers and students, parents, first responders, businessmen and factory workers, the media and the military, and decision makers and other officials at all levels of government.

By James D. Hessman
Editor in Chief, Page 1

Lessons Learned:

A Major Educational Resource

The LLIS.gov secure website provides an encyclopedia of helpful information for first responders and other information-seekers in the rapidly growing U.S. domestic-preparedness community. It may not have ALL the answers (yet), but it is headed in that direction, on course and at flank speed.

By Laurie Thomas
Maritime Security, Page 1

Interview: Governor James S. Gilmore III A Focus on Border Protection, Medical Surge Capacity

Former Virginia Governor James S. Gilmore III shares his views, as chairman of the bipartisan Congressional Commission appointed to assess U.S. domestic-response capabilities, on such major issues as vulnerability assessments, risk management, border protection, and medical needs in times of major disasters.

By John Morton
Interviews, Page 3

New York, Madrid, London: What City Is Next?

The latest Great Awakening terrorist strikes should serve not only as another warning but also as a spur to collective action, particularly by the nation's first-responder communities. First, though, there are a number of important questions that have to be answered.

By Joseph Cahill
Emergency Medicine, Page 7

States of Preparedness

In this issue: Alabama ports upgrade their video-surveillance capabilities. New Mexico is about to become the next state to receive border-patrol assistance from the Minutemen civilian volunteers. And Texas makes plans to deal with simulated Hurricane Greg – which carries an anthrax-loaded wild card.

By Adam McLaughlin
State Homeland News, Page 9

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Homeland Defense Begins at Home!

By James D. Hessman

Editor in Chief

The terrorist attacks against London's subway and bus systems last week provided additional proof – although none was needed – that it is impossible to provide 100 percent protection against disasters, natural or manmade, threatening any nation, any family, or any individual.

The attack by Hurricane Dennis against the U.S. Gulf Coast just two days later provided comforting evidence, though, that – despite a certain number of fatalities, and numerous injuries, as well as a massive amount of damage to homes, businesses, and infrastructure – advance planning, combined with modern technology, can not only keep losses to the minimum in times of great turmoil but also help significantly in the aftermath of such disasters.

The terrorist bombings, carefully timed to cause maximum damage during London's morning rush hour, killed more than 50 people and injured hundreds more in the space of less than a minute. The first three bombings, on widely separated trains, led to a closure of the entire London Underground system; the fourth bombing, half an hour after "the Tube" had been closed, shattered a crowded two-decker bus. The attacks came completely without warning, according to government spokespersons.

Continued on the Next Page

Lessons Learned: A Major Educational Resource

By Laurie Thomas

Maritime Security

In the middle of an Area Maritime Security Committee meeting, a facility security officer wonders out loud why it is so difficult to coordinate and disseminate information about terrorist activities, particularly in the maritime field, between all of the government agencies and private-sector entities that have a legitimate "need to know" such information. Another committee member suggests that the committee look into the possibility of establishing a Terrorism Early Warning (TEW) group.

As good ideas tend to do, this suggestion is changed into a motion, which is quickly passed. A subcommittee is then formed, and the facility security officer previously mentioned finds himself drafted onto the subcommittee. As he leaves the meeting, he realizes that he personally does not know enough about TEW groups, and wonders where he can obtain more, and more detailed, information.

Continued on Page 4

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Hurricane Dennis, in contrast, had been tracked since its birth, and before hitting Florida and other Gulf Coast states had already killed five people in Jamaica and ten in Cuba. Thanks to the advance intelligence provided by satellites and the 24/7 information reported by U.S. television networks, thousands of businesses closed early and were boarded up (as were probably tens of thousands of private homes), and hundreds of thousands of people headed north, from the Florida Keys and the Gulf Coast, to emergency shelters and various safe harbors hundreds of miles from the predicted path of the storm.

There is no way to calculate the exact number of lives that were saved by the early warning and quick evacuation, but few would argue with the statement made by Keith Roberatory of the American Red Cross (ARC) that the number of deaths and injuries had “apparently been kept to the minimum.” At least part of the credit was due, Roberatory said (in a 12 July ARC press release), that those fleeing north were better prepared this year than ever before. “They learned some lifesaving lessons from last year’s storms,” Roberatory said, referring to the four hurricanes that hit Florida last year. (One of them, Hurricane Ivan, killed more than 100 people, including 52 Americans.)

Similarities, Differences, and Advanced Technology

There were, in short, a number of similarities between Dennis and the bombings. There also were some important differences. The most important similarity, perhaps, was that, thanks to previous experience, the decision making authorities and emergency-response communities on both sides of the Atlantic were demonstrably better prepared than they were last year or the year before or at any time prior to 11 September 2001. So were the millions of British and American citizens directly involved in one way or another in the two disasters.

Thanks to detailed advance planning, followed by numerous training drills and exercises, the emergency rooms in London’s hospitals performed at a level reminiscent of the U.K.’s finest hours in the early days of World War II. Their efforts were matched across the Atlantic by the American Red Cross and other U.S. public and private sector agencies and organizations coping with the wrath of Hurricane Dennis. The ARC alone opened an estimated 180 shelters and served more than 45,000 meals and snacks in just two days. Moreover, although an estimated half-million people along the U.S. Gulf Coast still had to repair structural and property damage ranging from fallen trees to total devastation, recovery time was expected to be much shorter than after Hurricane Ivan last year.

Continued on the Next Page

Meanwhile, surveillance cameras, including one at the King's Cross subway station – combined with improved forensics technology and dogged police work – were used by Scotland Yard to help identify the remains of four young men alleged to be the suicide bombers, according to today's Washington Post.

Lessons Learned Are Not Enough

The Scotland Yard investigations, in which the United States and other allies have a strong vested interest, will continue for the indefinite future. At some point, official reports will be released. Included in those reports, as always, will be long lists of “lessons learned.” Those lessons will be useless, though, if they are not followed – not only by national decision makers and first-responder agencies and organizations, but also by businesses and schools (ranging from primary and middle schools to the great colleges and universities), other private-sector organizations, families, and the average everyday citizen.

In the United States, those lessons will be studied as thoroughly as they will be in the United Kingdom – perhaps even more thoroughly, if only because, as is generally recognized, the United States is the primary target of so many international terrorist groups.

As suggested earlier, advanced technology will help make the United States better prepared to cope with terrorist attacks. So will additional funding for security measures and equipment earmarked not only for buses and subway systems, but also for trains and cruise ships, both of which have been overlooked in previous appropriations bills approved by Congress.

What will help most, though, will be a major and continuing infusion of common sense, strongly flavored both by patriotism and by a collective determination to “never surrender,” as Winston Churchill thundered in the darkest days of early World War II, but to persevere and eventually win the global war on terrorism.

Whether that determination exists today has yet to be determined, so to speak. Fortunately, there already is an abundance of common sense ready to be distributed, much of it written or accumulated, distilled, and promulgated by the Department of Homeland Security

Interview with Governor James S. Gilmore III

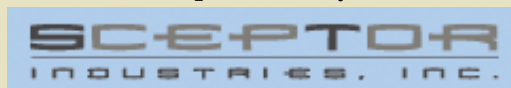


On June 30, 2005, DomPrep.com's John F. Morton met with Governor James S. Gilmore III, former chairman of the Congressional Advisory Panel to Assess Domestic Response Capabilities for Terrorism Involving Weapons of Mass Destruction (also known as the Gilmore Commission).

In the DomPrep/T.I.P.S. interview, the former Virginia governor discusses the need for the Department of Homeland Security to expand and improve the federal government's coordination efforts with U.S. cities, states and the private sector, particularly in the areas of incident prevention and the role of intelligence. He also shares his views on vulnerability assessments, prioritizing/incentivizing critical infrastructure protection, the promotion of best practices in risk management, HSPD-8, and terrorism insurance. He concludes with an overview of his current focus: border protection, and medical surge capacity.

To get the complete audio download of the interview, please visit
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and the American Red Cross – the co-sponsors, not coincidentally, of the September 2005 National Preparedness Month.

Continued on the Next Page

Sites of Great Wisdom

The ARC, which has been in the preparedness business for more than a century, used Hurricane Dennis as an example last Saturday (9 July) to encourage “every American household” to develop “A Family Communication Plan.” Included in such plans – which also are recommended for schools and businesses – should be such information as how family members will be able to stay in contact during an emergency (or regain contact after the emergency is over), the advance designation of a relative’s home or other place where family members could meet “if your home is affected or the area is evacuated,” and various “alternate modes of travel” (another way of saying “escape routes”) that can be used “in case you [or other family members] need to walk or take ... [an alternate] form of transportation.”

The keys to developing (and, if necessary, implementing) an effective plan, the ARC emphasizes, are advance planning, preparation, and practice. The highest priority on the planning list should be detailed “contact information” for every member of the family, so that “people close to you know how to reach you and you know how to reach them.”

Again, there are several common-sense steps that have to be taken. The first is to designate “an out-of-town friend or relative” to serve as the family’s contact point. “In an emergency,” the ARC notes, “it may be easier to call long distance ... [because] local phone lines may become overloaded.”

The next step is obvious: “Write down your contact information and encourage each member of your family to do the same.” Once that is done, each family member should keep his or her contact information current, and all family members should keep with them, at all times, the contact information for all members of the family.

The contact information for each member of the family should include, as a minimum, the following: the name and phone number of the family’s out-of-town contact; the regular and emergency phone numbers of all family members; and the location (preferably with directions on how to get there) of the family’s pre-designated emergency meeting place.

For additional information about the American Red Cross and its Family Communication Plan, see www.redcross.org. Included on that website are recent ARC press releases and “Spotlight” reports on Terrorism Readiness, Commuter Preparedness, and other information helpful in coping with disasters of any type.

The preceding is the first of two reports related to the ARC/DHS plans for the September 2005 National Preparedness Month. A follow-up report will provide detailed information on the DHS ready.gov website, which includes a wealth of information on how businesses, government agencies, public- and private-sector organizations and agencies, and everyday American citizens can cope with biological, chemical, and radiation threats, explosions, and natural disasters. ▼

Lessons Learned: A Major Educational Resource

Continued from Page 1

Fortunately, there is a secure website that provides such information – and where homeland security professionals can gather information and share resources on a wide variety of various related topics. That website, created by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), is formally titled “Lessons Learned Information Sharing” – but is usually, and less formally, called *LLIS.gov* (the LLIS part is pronounced ell-iss).

As of 7/5/05, the site – <http://www.llis.gov> - had over 14,500 members from a broad and rapidly growing spectrum of agencies, companies, and first-responder communities involved in all aspects of homeland defense and domestic preparedness. Emergency management, law enforcement, fire service, DHS, the nation’s armed services – specifically including the U.S. Coast Guard – the U.S. land/sea/air transportation communities, state governors’ offices, the financial community, Congressional offices and committees, and private-sector companies ranging from major corporations to second- and third-tier suppliers are all represented on the *LLIS.gov* membership list.

Continued on the Next Page

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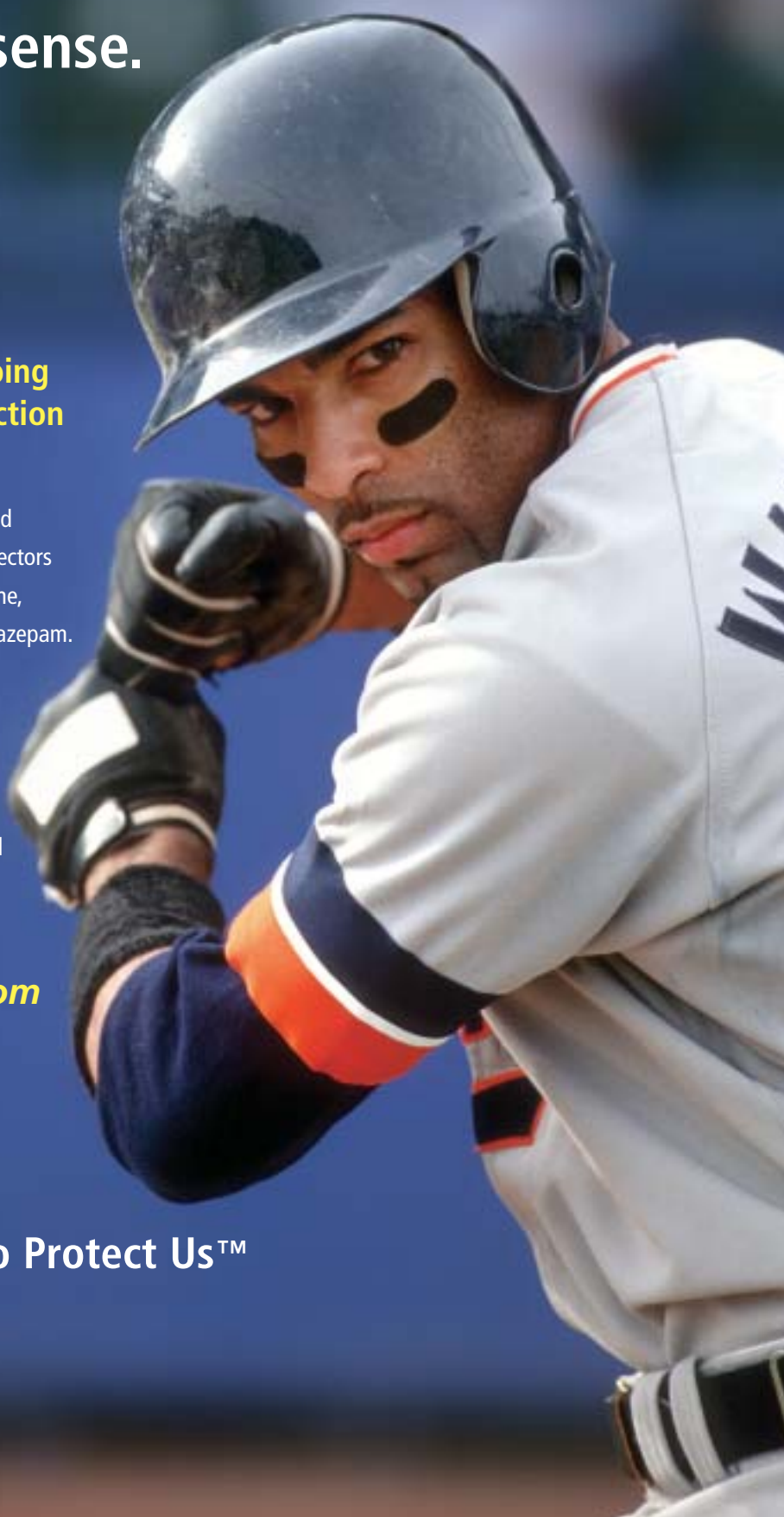
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Prior DHS Approval Mandatory

LLIS.gov was established as a secure site, and prospective new members must be approved by DHS before they are allowed to join. Membership is deliberately restricted to emergency-response providers and homeland-security officials at the local, state, and federal levels. As part of the registration process, prospective members are required to provide the names of persons who can verify their employment status. For additional security, *LLIS.gov* information is encrypted and can be viewed only through use of an Internet browser capable of 128-bit encryption.

A team effort from the beginning, *LLIS.gov* was launched on 19 April 2004, the ninth anniversary of the Oklahoma City Bombing. The Oklahoma City-based National Memorial Institute for the Prevention of Terrorism joined with DHS's Office of State and Local Government Coordination and Preparedness to develop the site. Among the other major corporate team members are DFI International, the Henry L. Stimson Center, and the Chemical and Biological Arms Control Institute. The ESP Group LLC provides the site's hosting and system security services.

LLIS.gov is and/or serves as, among other things: a professional directory; an extensive library; a bulletin board; an events calendar; a direct line to subject-matter experts; a direct line to a multitalented research team; and a direct link to an ever-expanding on-line community of homeland-security professionals.

Although there are many other documents available on the site, content *original* to the site is presented in three formats. Time that might otherwise be spent (another way of saying "wasted") in reinventing the wheel can be minimized by browsing through the user-friendly *LLIS.gov* files, which are accessed through a drop-down menu under "Resources."

Following are brief descriptions of the types of files available in the three formats:

The **Lessons Learned** section consists of very concise files providing empirical information garnered from actual incidents or experiences. Most if not quite all of these lessons are about a page in length, and end with

links to source documents that can be used for further research.

Best Practices are described as "peer-validated techniques, procedures, good ideas, or solutions that work and are solidly grounded upon actual experience in operations, training, and exercises." The front page ("Overview") of Best Practices lists a number of peer-review subject-matter specialists and provides links, complete with contact information, to their directory entries. (The topic of mutual-aid agreements – always a sensitive one in the port environment, with its mixture of federal, state, and local jurisdictions and numerous private-sector stakeholders – is extensively and clearly covered in the Best Practices section.)

Good Stories are programs or initiatives that have worked in specific jurisdictions and have been offered to the network as useful information. These programs and initiatives have not been subjected to a peer-validation process, however.

Here, a cautionary note: The term "Stories" may be misinterpreted. In the enforcement/responder community, "stories" often have a "tall tales" connotation and/or may be considered to be stretching the truth a wee bit. The difference between a war story and a fairy tale, according to one instructor, is that a fairy tale begins, "Once upon a time" and a war story begins, "Back in the old days, when I first came into this outfit ..."

In *LLIS.gov* terminology, though, a Good Story, strictly speaking, is another way of saying a Good Example of a policy, procedure, or initiative that seems to have merit – and therefore may be worthy of imitation – but has not (or not yet) been peer-validated.

Continued on the Next Page

**September is National
Preparedness Month!**

What is Your *FAMILY* Doing About It?

Homeland Defense Begins At Home!

The reader-member can post a comment on the front page of any or all of the three formats. The front page also lists various publications available on the *LLIS.gov* site itself, and provides links to a large number of related websites. Lessons Learned, Best Practices, and Good Stories are relatively succinct documents themselves, but many if not all of the lessons/practices/stories provide links to helpful source documents such as agency policies, forms, self-study courses, and many other types of publications.

AARs and a Long List of Helpful Links

There are many other resources available on the *LLIS.gov* site – After-Action Reports (AARs), for example, most of which are fascinating reading and very pertinent. To illustrate: The threat posed by radiological weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) concerns every maritime-security professional. Even a cursory reading of the radiological AARs, and of the lessons learned found on the *LLIS.gov* site, will further deepen that concern. (Distressingly, one learns from those readings that radioactive material might sometimes be included in a ship's cargo not only because terrorists smuggled it aboard but also because the people handling the cargo simply failed to recognize the cargo's radiation symbol as a deadly warning.)

LLIS.gov is very user-friendly. The site's technical support Help Desk is particularly responsive to unforeseen problems. Two recent T.I.P.S. calls – one of them during the peak hours of Monday morning – were answered immediately, and the problems (both of which involved lost passwords) were resolved within minutes.

The improvement of communications within and throughout the nation's rapidly growing first-responder and domestic-preparedness communities is one of the most important reasons *LLIS.gov* was created. Communications and feedback links are provided in numerous places on the site, and feedback comments are answered promptly. The research staff keeps open an ongoing thread – “Ask LLIS” – on the message board that members can use to ask the staff any research or policy questions that they cannot find answers to elsewhere. The site's user-friendly feedback page is very well organized in many other ways.

A port-facility security officer who is tasked with carrying out basic research on how to form a local TEW group will find a large volume of information, including a series of Best Practices documents addressing local anti-terrorism information and intelligence sharing, on *LLIS.gov*. Using TEW as a search term, he also will find a Good Story about an agency TEW, written by one of the peer validators – who can be contacted directly to answer questions and address other potential concerns. The site's Member Directory, and contact information about members from agencies that already have organized their own TEW groups, also can be easily accessed. The security officer can also search the Message Board for messages related to TEW, and/or post a thread to the group requesting information.

In short, *LLIS.gov* is a unique source of information, conveniently located on one system, available to all qualified maritime-security professionals. “*Lessons Learned Information Sharing* is a valuable resource for the entire emergency-response and homeland-security communities,” said LLIS Program Director John Rabin, commenting on the symbiotic match between *LLIS.gov* and the nation's information-seeking maritime-security community: The information available on *LLIS.gov*, he said, “will help port-security officers carry out their regulation-driven tasks of protecting the port communities.

“Port security crosses many of the emergency-response disciplines,” Rabin continued, “and *LLIS.gov* is a valuable tool in helping these professionals better secure our ports and provide them with peer-validated information to better prevent, prepare for, respond to, and recover from significant incidents.” ▼

**September is National
Preparedness Month!**

**What Are Your LOCAL SCHOOLS
Doing About It?**

New York, Madrid, London: What City Is Next?

By Joseph Cahill

Emergency Medicine

Like 11 September 2001, the dates 11 March 2004 and 7 July 2005 will be forever remembered by those who lived through the terrorist attacks launched against the defenseless citizens of three of the Western world's greatest cities. These and other large-scale attacks, which affect all democracies everywhere, pose a special set of problems for those charged with the responsibility of planning for an appropriate response.

The essence of most if not quite all such attacks is their unpredictability. All military professionals know that the optimum field of battle is at a time and place chosen by their own commanders. In the global war on terrorism it is recognized that the opposition – al Qaeda and other international terrorists – usually will have the advantage of picking the time and place of the initial assault. But the emergency-management community of the nation attacked can and should, with proper planning, choose how, when, and where to respond.

Last week's terrorist attacks in London, coming without warning as they did, raise a number of questions, some new and some old. Among the more important issues now being addressed by U.S. and allied contingency planners are how to prepare for and respond to future attacks and how to set and, as necessary, adjust the graduated alert levels needed under the current system.

The first and possibly most difficult question the contingency planners have to answer is, "What is an acceptable level of day-to-day risk?" The United States is a risk-adverse society, and the historical American tendency has been to look to legislation, and to government bureaucracies, for solutions to almost any problem – with litigation available as a fallback. Current laws in most if not all U.S. jurisdictions, for example, require the use of a helmet when operating a motorcycle – or even a bicycle or a scooter. The nation's enforcement structures are built around such laws, but usually allow for litigation when there are extenuating or mitigating circumstances – or when the law itself does not cover all possible contingencies.

Risk-Free Lives; Rush-Hour Complications

Unfortunately, by their very nature terrorists do not worry about the legality of their actions. Once the decision has been made to make a bomb and bring it onto a train or other public conveyance all of the various safeguards and small rules that have been implemented to minimize risk in the day-to-day lives of average citizens make no difference.

The traditional desire to live risk-free has to be weighed against the compressed, non-stop, high-speed life style most Americans follow today. At first glance the possibility of having to spend a certain amount of additional time waiting to get on a plane or train (or bus or subway, as in London) does not seem to be a major problem – perhaps because, in the case of planes, most Americans fly only occasionally. But if there were an additional half hour added to every train or bus ride a two-hour round-trip commute to and from work would become a three-hour round trip – and at rush hour an additional half-hour delay might easily balloon into an hour or more, pushing the total commute past the four-hour mark.

The London bombings apparently occurred in the absence of an increased level of background "chatter." And that raises another question: With little or no intelligence from the ground (or from cyberspace), and with no overt threat, how can authorities develop, in advance, a reasonable response plan that might be implemented when an unexpected disaster occurs suddenly and without warning?

Insofar as alert levels are concerned, perhaps the first question to ask is, "What is an appropriate and acceptable baseline level to start from?" It seems obvious that a rise in the national threat level should trigger at least some action that raises the alert level above the original baseline. An increase in the threat level also should trigger a change in security habits and procedures from those followed at the previous (i.e., lower) level. To consider but one prosaic example, doors – into a bank or hotel or government office building – that are left unlocked and unattended at Green (Guarded), may remain unlocked at Yellow (Elevated), but would have an attendant monitoring access.

Continued on the Next Page

At Orange (High), the same doors probably would be locked, and no one would be permitted access to the building without prior clearance by the attendant or a security guard.

Along with a heightened state of overall vigilance and enhanced situational awareness a number of other actions might be appropriate – and not only in the sector that has been put under a higher security level. In the wake of last week's bombings in London the alert level for the U.S. mass transportation sector was raised almost immediately to Orange or High. Unfortunately, that might not have been enough. The reality is that any rise in the security level set for a single narrow sector may do little or nothing to help other sectors that, even if they are not the direct targets of terrorists, must deal with the consequences of a successful attack on large numbers of people.

Links, Principles, and Erroneous Assumptions

There are several links in the consequence-management chain, and there are several chains of varying lengths in the U.S. domestic-preparedness matrix. Raising the alert level for the first link in a particular chain – e.g., mass transportation – ignores the fact that the entire U.S. first-responder community, as well as the nation's secondary and tertiary responders, might and probably would be gravely affected by a successful terrorist attack on the mass-transportation system and therefore also should be considered when the alert level is changed.

The principle involved is really, or should be, a universal one. Today, *all* organizations – whether they are first-responder agencies, nonprofit support organizations, or businesses – should have detailed plans in place specifying not only what to do when their own sector becomes the target, but also when a sector that they support becomes a target and/or when a sector that supports them becomes a target.

It is now more than four years since the 9/11 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center Towers in New York City, and on the Pentagon, and more than one year since the attacks on four commuter trains in Madrid. There is therefore no acceptable excuse for any emergency-response agency – or a secondary-responder agency or organization such as a hospital – *not* to have

developed and promulgated a detailed plan specifying how a rise in the threat level, of any sector in the overall homeland-defense infrastructure, would affect that agency or organization.

If that principle is valid, it becomes obvious that, immediately after the rise in the mass transportation sector's threat level, all of the nation's hospitals should have started to consider, as a matter of the highest urgency, how they would ramp up to handle the massive influx of patients flowing in from a successful attack not in London but in Boston or Chicago, Seattle or Houston, Philadelphia or Denver, or any of dozens of other major U.S. cities.

It is urgent, in developing response plans, that all hospitals know the answers to the following (and to many other questions that might be asked): (1) How should contaminated patients be cleaned and kept out of the emergency room (ER)? (2) How should the hospital deal (efficiently and effectively, and as compassionately as possible under the circumstances) with large numbers of people – many of them suffering from only minor injuries or other medical problems – who are seeking treatment at the same time, without the hospital staff being overwhelmed and losing control of the situation? (3) What is the hospital's current surge capacity – and, of perhaps greater importance, what has to be done to activate the additional resources needed to bring more capacity on line?

Hospitals in relatively close proximity to the scene of any mass-casualty incident will inevitably be overwhelmed by those – both the walking wounded and the so-called “worried well” – who are able to walk away from the scene under their own power. While most of those who walk into the Emergency Room may require very little care – or, at worst, relatively uncomplicated care – their numbers alone might literally overwhelm an ER simply by occupying all of the usually limited space available.

Continued on the Next Page

Unfortunately, many hospitals continue to labor under the erroneous impression that the U.S. first-responder community will somehow or other be able to hold back this tide of suffering (and/or scared) humanity – and at the same time make sure that only those who absolutely have to pass through the ER's doors will be permitted to do so. Moreover, those same patients, it is further assumed (by many if not all contingency planners), will show up clean and free of all dangerous chemicals. Time and again those assumptions have proven to be not only erroneous, but dangerously so.

Helpful Examples, and Some Linger- ing Questions

Hospitals have to have the ability to control the medical buildings and other facilities on their own property. One of the fastest ways to close an emergency room is to permit a patient contaminated with a dangerous chemical wander around the ER unattended and spread the contamination over everything and everyone in his or her wake. The only sure way to avoid this is simple – i.e., easily stated but not always easy to carry out: All hospitals must have the ability to clean contaminated patients without bringing them into the building.

Surge capacity is the term used to describe the unused portion of the hospital's productivity or capacity. Almost every day that a hospital operates there are at least a few unused beds; this is a necessity because the flow of emergency patients who need beds is not a predictable constant.

In addition, many hospitals possess capacity that is unstaffed, and therefore unused, simply because demand is down. Some hospitals have wings or floors that are not in use; others may hold eight beds empty in an otherwise busy ward and not schedule a nurse to cover those beds.

Knowing how to activate these untapped resources is one of the keys that will allow administrators to respond to a major disaster. Unfortunately, with health-care costs still on the rise it becomes difficult to keep fiscally unproductive capacity waiting as a “just in case” asset. Most hospitals also cannot afford to pay for excess staff just to keep them available if there is an attack on a commuter train or a similar disaster affecting the local community.

The first-responder communities also must be prepared to deal with increased threat levels not only within their own purview, but also within those sectors – the other links in the consequence-management chain – that could affect their own capabilities and/or productivity. If the threat level for the water supply is raised, for instance, this could activate a plan in the law-enforcement community to make more frequent passes by wellheads and water-treatment facilities.

Assigning on-duty resources to make extra patrols to protect the water-treatment infrastructure is one example of how to use existing resources more productively. Most major fire departments also are able to surge from a state of almost complete inactivity to a rapid sprint to the big fire in no time flat. Using these two examples as models, the medical community must ask itself how it should ramp up for a disaster that may not happen.

Meanwhile, city planners and administrators, and the American people, should be asking themselves an even more important question: What would the result be if hospitals do *not* plan for such contingencies? ▼

States of Preparedness

By Adam McLaughlin

State Homeland News

ALABAMA

Purchases Video Technology to Improve Port Security

In an effort to enhance existing security operations against terrorism and theft, the Alabama State Port Authority selected ObjectVideo Inc. late last month to monitor the port's perimeter and other sensitive areas.

ObjectVideo provides intelligent video surveillance software specifically designed to protect critical infrastructure such as airports, seaports, and chemical manufacturing plants. The software provides real-time detection, identification, and alerting capabilities to Port Authority security personnel. The system's technology is based upon artificial intelligence that uses threat-specific pre-programmed rules to monitor all objects within view of the system's cameras.

Continued on the Next Page

The Alabama State Port Authority, which operates and maintains shipping ports and terminals that facilitate the movement of over 24 million tons of cargo per year, has immediate access to two interstate road systems and five railways. "We have a large port complex with many ways to exit and enter, and ObjectVideo will give us a terrific edge in securing the perimeter," said Hal Hudgin, vice president of security at the Port Authority.

ObjectVideo is a featured component of a competitively bid larger project awarded to Honeywell Building Solutions. The purchase of the ObjectVideo software was partially funded by a Transportation Security Administration grant awarded, as one element of an ongoing security upgrade, in conjunction with other U.S. Department of Homeland Security efforts to enhance state and local preparedness.

New Mexico

Minuteman Patrols Expected to Start in October

The Minuteman Civil Defense Corps, made up of civilian volunteers from throughout the United States, plans to start patrolling the U.S./Mexican border in the vicinity of Columbus, N.M., this October. The group received national attention earlier this year for patrolling a 23-mile stretch of the U.S./Mexican border in Arizona. Officials said the Minutemen plan to conduct patrols along likely crossing points from Mexico in an effort to report suspected illegal immigrants and drug traffickers to authorities.

Robert Wright, director of the New Mexico Minuteman Chapter, stresses that the Minutemen will not seek to confront or detain suspects. "No one is against Mexicans, no one is against immigrants," Wright said. "... All we ask is that you sign at the gate before entering the United States."

There are an estimated 11 million illegal immigrants already living in the United States, and hundreds of thousands more cross over the border each year through New Mexico, Arizona, and Texas. There has been increased concern in the post-9/11 era that terrorists may be infiltrating the United States through Mexico. U.S. Senator Jon Kyl (R-Ariz.), for example, said during Senate hearings last month that the number of "other than Mexicans," or OTMs, crossing the U.S./

Mexican border jumped 175 percent last year, to an estimated 98,000. The illegal-migration problem is exacerbated by the fact that many of the migrants who are apprehended are quickly released on their own recognizance and do not appear for court hearings.

Texas

Conducts Hurricane Preparedness Exercise in Houston Area

Emergency management coordinators from five Texas counties conducted a tabletop exercise late last month at the Houston TransStar building in order to better prepare for, and mitigate the effects of, a hurricane touching down in the greater Houston area.

The exercise scenario depicted "Hurricane Greg" moving into the Gulf of Mexico in early September 2006. On 9 September, the scenario continued, National Weather Service officials declared the storm a hurricane, and predicted that it would reach land on 15 September as a Category 5 hurricane in the Galveston Bay area, with Brazoria County and Matagorda County the jurisdictions most likely to be affected.

The principal goals of the exercise, which was facilitated by the Governor's Division of Emergency Management, were to help pre-designate possible evacuation routes, determine how to evacuate special-needs residents, and develop step-by-step plans for the conduct of a possible mandatory evacuation. The exercise scenario also included a theoretical "wild card" – i.e., a terrorist threat to hurricane shelters in the form of anthrax-laced letters.

Although a major hurricane has not struck the Texas Gulf Coast since 1983, the four devastating hurricanes that battered Florida last summer heightened the preparedness concerns of local and state officials, and the general public, throughout the South, particularly in states along the East Coast and the Gulf of Mexico. ▼

**September Is National
Preparedness Month!**

What Are YOU Doing About It?

Homeland Defense Begins At Home!