



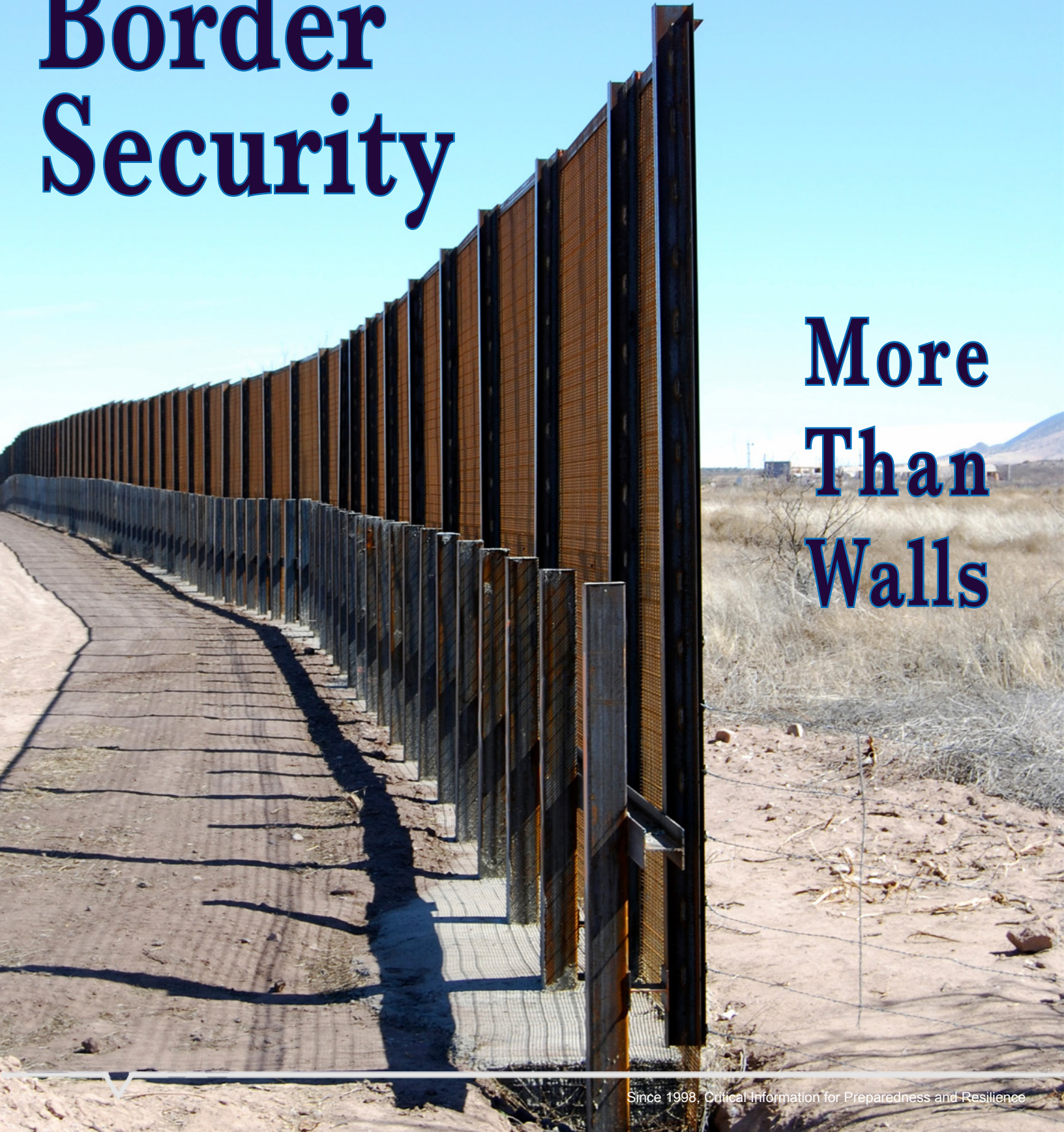
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About the Cover: Walls may be a hot topic for U.S. presidential candidates, but a comprehensive border security plan involves much more than simply constructing walls. Law enforcement, public health, and other community stakeholders must collaborate and communicate to ensure protection from threats to the lives and health of their communities. (Source: [©iStockphoto/Phototreat](#))

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Border Control Challenges – A Roundtable Discussion

By Robert C. Hutchinson & Catherine L. Feinman

The topic of borders – ports of entry, security, and public health concerns – has become politicized, and the focus on true border security has been somewhat lost. Educating politicians and instilling practicality in the public are necessary before any effective border security policy changes can be made. A recent roundtable discussion addressed these critical issues.

On 29 March 2016, a group of 28 subject matter experts from the public and private sectors convened at Florida International University in Miami to address how the topic of border control affects many facets of modern society and homeland security, including but not limited to: legal and illegal migration, passport and visa concerns, spread of public health threats, border surveillance and control capabilities, and international travel. The surge of Syrian and other refugees into Europe, the reopening of relations with Cuba, talks of building a wall along the Mexican border, the international spread of the Zika virus and other emerging pathogens, and other current issues emphasize the importance of addressing issues surrounding the management, control, and protection of borders – land, maritime, and air. This article summarizes the comments and views shared by these subject matter experts during the 29 March discussion.

Evolving Border Security Challenges

The current “wet foot, dry foot” policy – that is, if Cuban immigrants reach U.S. soil, they can stay under current law and policies – continues to be very controversial. As relations with Cuba change and travel to and from the United States becomes easier, identifying potential threats becomes a greater challenge. The influx of migrants from various nations into South Florida, in particular, makes law enforcement agencies and emergency planners alert to the increased threat of terrorism as well. The current background screening procedures can be inadequate because, in some cases, there may be insufficient documentation to fully prove identity. As an example, countries such as Somalia currently lack a valid or trusted document authority, so it is difficult to vet people traveling from that country. One participant pointed out that DNA swabs were used in the past as a tool to address such challenges, but they are no longer in use.

In addition, many Cuban nationals seeking asylum are now arriving through the airport system. One roundtable participant stated that he observed 70-80 asylum seekers arriving on a single plane. Mass migration is an inverted public policy issue – a federal issue that has numerous local implications. When immigrants have the desire and determination to risk their lives to cross a border, it certainly has a local impact. Immigration laws can be complex and confusing, so local officials do not always know what to do when they encounter possible illegal immigrants. Some immigrants are able to maintain anonymity to commit crimes, while those who are in the country legally are sometimes victimized. Even in cases where the laws are clear, policy implementation is a problem. Furthermore, closing legal loopholes may result in the creation of new problems.

Law enforcement participants expressed frustrations. However, one participant stated that the current judicial system is also very frustrating when the same individuals make repeated attempts to enter the country without serious consequence. Of course, certain Department of Defense resources are available for border security purposes, but much of the responsibility falls on officers at the ports of entry to determine backgrounds and initiate sufficient security checks, without the ability to follow the migrants throughout the complicated and extended process. In addition, getting the necessary information to perform these tasks can be sporadic because some immigrants are not identifiable as a risk.

Humans vs. Technology – Some technology like the Homeland Security Information Network (HSIN) was designed to be interdisciplinary and interoperable, but not all stakeholders agree that it as a valuable and useful resource. For example, local law enforcement, industry, and citizens may know what to look for, but they are not often included in international security efforts. Other technology is outdated (with antiquated software), and siloed databases introduce uncertainties about how this information is being stored and used. Social media tracking and geotagging capabilities are helpful but still being developed as effective support functions. From an intelligence perspective, terrorist organizations are utilizing these capabilities and the massive amounts of information in the non-classified cyberspace much more efficiently than official organizations trying to thwart such activities.

Although technology complements border security efforts, it cannot replace human observations and intuition. By automating many security processes, agents are conditioned to use and rely on technology for daily tasks. However, they need to be constantly reminded that the system will not tell them the intent of travellers while they are inside the borders. Border agents using human intelligence techniques and behavioral cues, for example, have intercepted many nefarious activities near the Canadian and Mexican borders. Fingerprints, facial recognition, and scanning and detection technologies are useful tools, but border security screening must also include interviewing and observational techniques. Agents must be trained on what technology can do and what it cannot do. Operator experience and judgment play critical roles in the process.

Security Solutions – When faced with significant threats and limited budgets, force multipliers on both sides of the border are needed to ensure security. Diplomatic regional security officers, for example, provide invaluable information about societal and cultural challenges – extending out the borders. Consulates capture photos, process visa applications, etc., which could assist border protection efforts and information sharing.

A significant security concern in Florida is the many miles of beachfront that must be protected. Although considered a local law enforcement issue by some, it is one that requires greater investment at the federal level to be able to adequately monitor and deploy resources when, as one participant stated, “things wash up” on the marine or international border. Some of the subject matter experts believed that a sophisticated national database could integrate the disparate federal, state, and local information systems that currently are not linked, so that agencies can access police reports from other jurisdictions, create consistency in forms and processes, better inform the boots on the ground, and review best practices.

Locations such as South Florida routinely absorb immigrants into society. Consequently, the community must provide an adequate infrastructure including schools, hospitals, and other public services. A scorecard could be useful to rate how communities around the world are integrating these new community members and how the costs are being addressed. Topics to address on such a scorecard include: technology, computer networks, school boards, hospitals, and bilingual speakers. In any case, fundamental border security tactics involve advance analysis and documentations.

Federal policy makers should consider what keeps local authorities up at night. Feedback from roundtable participants included: (a) subpar information sharing; (b) inability to comprehensively control the borders; (c) asset sharing in a declining budgetary environment; (d) reactive rather than proactive approaches; (e) minimal control mechanisms; and (f) lack of necessary tools (e.g., training, technology, intelligence) to do their jobs. Some participants asserted that the nation's situational awareness has returned to a pre-9/11 level. Although there has been some progress including matching task forces with threats; reconsidering one-way information flow; and building a unity of effort to address trade and other concerns that may present in the future). The problems expressed at the roundtable are not new, but they have evolved over the years. Old issues such as communication, technology, and unified efforts also must continue to be strengthened.

Public Health Concerns

For public health concerns, information infrastructures are once again critical. Communicating risk factors and determining if people are travelling from high-risk areas during outbreaks, such as the Ebola virus, are difficult because the information and public health surveillance capabilities available varies for each country of origin. Domestically, lessons do not seem to be truly learned from previous encounters with Ebola, SARS, Lassa Fever, influenza, and other pathogens.

Unfortunately, public health agencies often do not fully understand law enforcement authorities, responsibilities, expectations, and preparedness levels – and vice versa. The extremely infrequent enforcing of federal quarantine laws, for example, crosses military and civilian law enforcement jurisdictions and agencies. One roundtable participant dispelled the myth that, when a situation occurs, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) can “swoop in and fix it.” In reality, the limited CDC staff must cover multiple states and jurisdictions and cannot have quarantine officers at every airport gate or border crossing. Therefore, border security partners must monitor public health concerns. The CDC leverages partnerships and relies on first responders to be its eyes and ears by:

- Providing training programs and symptom cards to help responders detect certain threats
- Empowering first responders on the frontlines to recognize symptoms such as fever, rashes, etc.
- Teaching responders how to take necessary precautions for their own safety
- Encouraging responders to notify the CDC to determine severity and further instruction

However, the system is consistently under-resourced and may start failing as larger numbers of people require medical attention and support services. Those who do not have visible symptoms may walk right through screening or conceal symptoms, especially considering that many people knowingly take public health risks to avoid losing time or money dedicated to their travel plans. Public health concerns typically do not attract as much media coverage as criminal activity or terrorism and, once the threat passes, these concerns are quickly forgotten. Readiness and training for communicable diseases are critical to avoid operational shutdowns at border entry points, but a lack of consistent training can make the nation vulnerable for the next serious public health concern.

Cruise Ships & Academic Institutions – Roundtable participants addressed the challenges for both security and public health risks that the cruise line industry faces. Even non-life threatening events can still affect a cruise line’s business and reputation, so safety, security, detection, decontamination, communication, and information sharing must all be part of the business model. Relationships with ports and law enforcement are critical, as the ships’ personnel travel to various parts of the world, work with medical, public health, and law enforcement professionals from various countries. Being highly regulated yet also isolated while at sea, the cruise industry must be stringent on following or exceeding recommended guidelines for potential threats. Public health concerns about passengers or crewmembers could cause ports to deny access. One participant shared the following suggestions to maintain business continuity for the cruise industry, which is applicable to border security in general:

- Share intelligence and best practices with others in the industry
- Invest on the front end to have robust crew care
- Collaborate and communicate with local public health and law enforcement authorities at all ports
- Require inoculations (however, this may introduce cultural challenges)
- Maintain situational awareness

Similar to the concerns of the cruise line industry, study abroad programs through academic institutions present major security and health issues. With little or no guidance from experts about what to do when students travel to areas directly or indirectly affected by outbreaks – such as Ebola – fear can easily spread. Clear and communicated policies can help address misguided fears, but public perception may override even the best policies.

Public Health Solutions – International health regulations pose additional challenges because some countries may fear economic and political consequences for telling the truth and, as a result, may not want to divulge too much information or conceal an outbreak as long as possible. Others may not want to alarm the population and overwhelm hospitals with the “worried well.” A concern among public health experts is the possibility that a communicable disease could emerge that combines the lethality of the Ebola or Marburg viruses with the spreadability of influenza.

Ease of worldwide travel raises the risk of transporting novel or re-emerging diseases to new areas, but it also offers opportunities for anyone to play a critical role in surveillance networks. Advance notice could facilitate advance containment and mitigate potential disasters. Other suggestions include:

- Pushing the borders out to points of departure
- Finding interagency cooperation in times of need
- Identifying hotspots for disease outbreaks
- Developing and exercising robust pandemic and public health plans
- Instilling a cross-cultural understanding for outbreaks
- Training and including medical schools, first responders, Medical Reserve Corps, and other resources as force multipliers (e.g., exit screenings, patient evaluations)
- Promoting testing protocols to act as tripwires for diseases
- Asking key questions (e.g., “Where have you travelled?”)

To be adequately prepared, planners and responders must imagine and plan for worst-case scenarios to even the most mundane subjects. For example, during the Ebola outbreak, U.S. agencies were unprepared for the quantity of garbage that one Ebola patient could create, the transportation difficulties, and the costs associated with a quarantined dog. Lack of imagination is a critical failing point in any disaster.

Volunteers, who play a significant role at the community level, must also be adequately prepared and involved in border-related discussions. Some regions have strong Citizen Corps, Medical Reserve Corps, and other volunteer components that can be used to assist local hospitals, share information, provide other support during a response. However, this presents additional challenges related to vetting and standard requirements.

At times, law enforcement and public health issues coincide during outbreaks when jails are expected to detain potentially infected or exposed prisoners. In such cases, personnel may not go to work (due to illness or worried well), mutual aid may not want to send resources to areas where they may bring something back, and security may be required at points of distribution or quarantine areas. One law enforcement officer at the roundtable acknowledged that, “We are the canaries. There is an expected loss because an officer will go down.” He further said that working with all community stakeholders is necessary because, “Whether it’s our duty or not, it’s the right thing to do.”

Other respondents stated that personal relationships are critical, but there need to be strategies and policies to sustain duties and build a unity of effort as needed. Mandates should be developed to help fill gaps when specific guidance does not meet the current situation. The National Incident Management System (NIMS) and Incident Command System (ICS) were developed as an all-hazards approach to incident response. However, not all stakeholders are using NIMS and ICS. Communities need to exercise contingency plans as well as the NIMS component, rather than simply waiting for a problem to arise. These systems are only effective with initial training, regular refreshers, and efforts to integrate different sectors and make it part of the daily culture.

In a global environment, border security is not confined only to geographical boundaries. Expanding physical boundaries and capturing information throughout the entire emergency preparedness enterprise are critical. As issues become more politicized

and trade and travel expand, closing the borders is not a viable solution. It simply pushes threats underground and causes additional problems in the future, including the inability to quickly get trained medical professionals to and from areas in greatest need. Leaving a problem alone would most often only exacerbate it. Since intergovernmental issues require intergovernmental solutions, border security involves all community stakeholders both inside and outside the “walls.”

In This Issue

In this issue, subject matter experts address border control challenges. Richard Schoeberl leads the issue by addressing the porosity of U.S. borders and how to address the growing national security threats. Armin Cate follows with one agency’s success in thwarting border threats despite budgetary and political constraints. As the U.S. presidential race continues, Mark-Jon Nichols highlights four key national threats that will still need to be addressed by the next administration.

Romeo Lavarias and Freddy Zelaya have experience overcoming hurdles when it comes to personnel needs. They offer suggestions for meeting human resource needs and using community members as force multipliers. Of course, during any crisis, communications is key. Steven Johnson and Thomas Wahle share ways to leverage media resources and improve crisis communication plans.

Rounding out the issues are three articles describing historical accounts of international relations that have significant application for today’s border protection. In Miami, Manuel Morales has observed rapid changes as movement between Cuba and the United States increases. Jerome Kahan expresses international security concerns about the United Nations’ nuclear deal with Iran. And James Terbush shares the account of Dr. Rajko Anic’s survival tactics during the 1992-1995 war in Yugoslavia. Best practices and lessons learned can be found on both sides of the border.

A special thanks goes to all the roundtable participants, authors, and sponsors who contributed to this edition of the DomPrep Journal.

The opinions expressed herein are solely those of the author in his individual capacity, and do not necessarily represent the views of his agency, department, or the U.S. government.

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Catherine Feinman joined Team DomPrep in January 2010. As the editor-in-chief, she works with subject matter experts, advisors, and other contributors to build and create relevant content. With more than 25 years of experience in publishing, she heads the DomPrep Advisory Committee to facilitate new and unique content for today’s emergency preparedness and resilience professionals. She also holds various volunteer positions, including emergency medical technician, firefighter, and member of the Media Advisory Panel of EMP SIG (InfraGard National Members Alliance).

Porous Borders & Cultivated Threats

By Richard Schoeberl

As the United States embarks on the 2016 presidential campaign, the great debate on immigration and border security continues to be a blistering topic. However, controlling the borders is far more than just immigration control, it is about providing national security and protecting the American people from the threats that loom on the horizon.



According to a [study conducted at Princeton University](#) in 2015, the United States has only been able to stop roughly 30 percent of those attempting to cross the Southwest border. Failing to secure the border is certainly not for a lack of trying; since 9/11, the number of Border Patrol agents has risen from [3,000 to nearly 21,000](#). Additionally, the United States has added countless drones, mass surveillance systems, and 700 miles of fencing. But it may not be enough.

In an area that stretches from California to Texas – encompassing more than 2,000 miles – the border between the United States and Mexico remains porous and unsecure. Although no specific threat is addressed, according to a [bulletin](#) issued in 2014 by the Texas Department of Public Safety, Islamic State militants have raised awareness among its followers that entry into the United States through the Southwest border is a viable option. The bulletin addresses social media posts that call on Islamic State supporters to enter the United States via Mexico, which raises numerous concerns.

Government Reports of the Long-Term Threat

Recent information that the Islamic State has accessed the United States through the Mexican border has not yet been confirmed. However, a report dating back to 2006 by the [House Committee on Homeland Security](#) indicates that, each year, hundreds of individuals from countries that are “known to harbor terrorists” or “promote terrorism” routinely cross the Southwest border. The report also substantiates that, sometime before 2005, members of the terrorist group Hezbollah had crossed into the United States.

In a [2009 Government Accountability Office report](#), Border Patrol agents encountered at least three people with links to terrorist organizations at border checkpoints that year. Moreover, the House Committee on Homeland Security released an [additional report](#) in November 2012 that indicates nearly 2,000 people classified as “special interest” with ties to countries that “could bring harm” were apprehended at the Southwest border.

Before the House Oversight Committee’s National Security subcommittee, U.S. Representative [Ron DeSantis stated in March 2016](#) that, “The U.S. Customs and Border protection has apprehended several members of known Islamic terrorist organizations crossing the

border in recent years.” In the wake of deadly attacks in 2016 in several European countries, the potential for Middle Eastern immigrants with terrorist organization ties gaining access to the United States through the Southwest border raises alarms.

No Slowing of the Threat

In 2015, utilizing stolen Greek passports, eight Syrian refugees were detained at the border attempting to cross from Mexico into Texas. According to the [Washington Times](#), in September 2015, the U.S. Border Patrol apprehended two Pakistani males, who had links to a terrorist organization, as they attempted to cross the border. Most concerning is that, in a 2014 Federal Bureau of Investigation effort, five men from a Somalian-based community in Minnesota plotted to join the Islamic State and were charged in a [criminal indictment](#) with conspiracy to provide material support to terrorism. One of those charged, Guled Ali

Omar, communicated to Islamic State members a route that could be used to get Islamic State terrorists into the United States to carry out attacks through the Southwest border.

“Approximately 800,000 people are trafficked across international borders each year, with approximately 14,500 to 17,500 trafficked into the United States.... Over the past 5 years, there have been over 150 elaborate tunnels discovered at the Southwest border.”

Government officials continue to affirm the vulnerability of the Southwest border. In fact, in 2007, [Mike McConnell](#), former director of national intelligence, confirmed that terrorists have

used this border to access the United States and that they will continue to do so as long as it is seen as a viable possibility. At a [hearing before the House Homeland Security Committee in 2012](#), U.S. Secretary of Homeland Security Janet Napolitano confirmed that there was credible evidence that terrorists had already crossed this border. Since the United States is dealing with sophisticated terrorist organizations like the Islamic State, Hezbollah, and al-Qaida, the Southwest border has become the greatest threat for infiltration into the United States because these organizations continue to seek alternate and innovative methods to gain access to the United States and increase their chances at a successful operation.

Human Trafficking

Another fear to national security and border control is terrorist organizations gaining access to the United States through the exploitation of human trafficking networks. According to the [United Nations](#), human trafficking is the fastest growing area in the international criminal activity arena. In a [Congressional Research Service report](#), approximately 800,000 people are trafficked across international borders each year, with approximately 14,500 to 17,500 trafficked into the United States. Trafficking networks are engaged in an endless

quest to create innovative methods to get people smuggled across the U.S. Southwest border. For example, over the past 5 years, there have been over [150 elaborate tunnels](#) discovered at the Southwest border.

In an effort to address the ongoing border threat, the Southwest Border Security Threat Assessment Act of 2016 ([H.R. 4482](#)) was introduced on February 2016 and passed by the House in April 2016. H.R. 4482 requires and directs the Secretary of Homeland Security to conduct Southwest border analysis that focuses on several areas of deficiency, including the following:

- Terrorism and criminal threats posed by individuals seeking to unlawfully enter the United States
- Shortcomings and added improvements needed at ports of entry to prevent possible terrorists from entering
- Coordination efforts between state, federal, and local law enforcement that may hinder effective security, anti-terrorism strategies, and anti-human trafficking networks
- Further examination of technology and infrastructure needs and challenges
- Intelligence collection to disrupt transnational criminal organizations

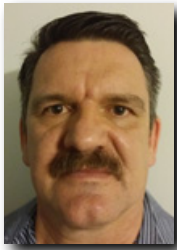
Spanning terrorist organizations attempting to acquire weapons of mass destruction, drug cartels, and human traffickers, the United States confronts a wide assortment of threats daily at its borders. One factor the United States must consider is that terrorist organizations are changing the way they operate and are looking to exploit vulnerabilities. The question is, “How can we effectively secure 2,000 miles of the Southwest border?” As long as there are opportunities and fortunes to be made, drug and human smugglers will use elaborate means to penetrate the border. The United States already has a difficult time “containing” illegal drug smuggling and human trafficking – imagine someone attempting to gain access to the United States who is motivated by an ideology rather than just money.

Richard Schoeberl, a Ph.D. candidate in criminology and terrorism, has over 20 years of security and law enforcement experience, including the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and the Central Intelligence Agency’s National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC). He has served in a variety of positions throughout his career ranging from supervisory special agent at the FBI’s headquarters in Washington, D.C., to acting unit chief of the International Terrorism Operations Section at the NCTC’s headquarters in Langley, Virginia. Before his managerial duties at these organizations, he worked as a special agent investigating violent crime, international terrorism, terrorist financing, cyberterrorism, and organized drugs. He also was assigned numerous collateral duties during his FBI tour – including a certified instructor and member of the agency’s SWAT program. In addition to the FBI and NCTC, he is an author and has served as a media contributor for Fox News, CNN, PBS, NPR, Al-Jazeera Television, Al Arabiya Television, Al Hurra, and Sky News in Europe. Additionally, he has authored numerous articles on terrorism and security.

Border Control: Always on Guard

By Armin Cate

Significant budgetary and political constraints should not keep people from fully exercising their authority and cause them to suffer the consequences should an attack take place. Working under budgetary-constrained environments is always difficult, but it takes on more urgency when there are clearly identified enemies that intend to harm the homeland. Difficult times call for innovative measures.



In a previous combat arms position on active duty with the 101st Airborne Division under President Jimmy Carter, combat units were unable to exercise their combat capabilities in the field due to the lack of a budget, yet were later chastised by inspection teams as not being ready to fight. This lack of readiness – due in large part to budgetary policy – may have been a major factor influencing Carter’s decision to first send and then hours later scrub two combat missions for the Third Brigade, 101st Airborne. In his book [*Killing Hope: U.S. Military and CIA Interventions Since World War II*](#), William Blum wrote that Carter, who had been in office for only two months, was reluctant to involve his administration in a far-reaching intervention whose scope and length could not be easily anticipated. This happened once in 1978 in response to the Cuban intervention in Angola and again in 1979 in response to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. The difference is that, in 1978-1979, the threat was overseas and far away. Today the threat is at the doorstep!

Rebuilding Awareness

The group of government and industry participants at the roundtable held by DomPrep on 29 March 2016 at Florida International University in Miami are more than ready for the challenge. They have the experience of cooperating across jurisdictional and regulatory boundaries in South Florida from “closer than normal” cooperation after 9/11 and have set aside their egos in order to protect the citizens of South Florida by whatever means they have available. For example, after 9/11, strategies developed to leverage cooperation and new tactics created to keep ports and borders safe resulted in the [capture of a suspected terrorist](#) in the port of Miami in March 2003.

The main difference between 2003 and now is that there were no budgetary restrictions and the sense of urgency had not been diluted by the 15 years that have gone by since the fateful day that brought large-scale terror to U.S. shores. The nation is once again at that same point, only this time with an even greater threat of major terror attacks on the supply chain system or the infiltration across borders by incoming foreign and returning domestic terrorists. Difficult times call for extraordinary solutions that stretch limited budget dollars.

The key to operating under tight budgetary constraints is to implement strategies that leverage all available resources to increase cooperation and awareness. This multi-prong approach must include:

- Introduction of cutting-edge technology;
- Fostering of increased interagency/private sector cooperation, not just among senior executives but all the way down to the deck plate level, where government workers carrying out day to day enforcement tasks interact with their industry counterparts; and
- Collection and processing of “passive intelligence” utilizing public outreach/ awareness campaigns such as United States Coast Guard’s Operation On Guard, which was one of the foundations for the [America’s Waterway Watch](#) – a nationwide campaign to passively leverage the voluntary cooperation of the public in and around critical infrastructure.

The following are recommendations to operate effectively in an environment that has severe budgetary constraints, yet remain an effective force by: leveraging organic capabilities through close cooperation among agencies and the private sector; and incorporating state-of-the-art technology that reduces labor costs and increases effectiveness.

Recommendation 1: Cutting-Edge Technology

Numerous types of technology can aid the government in threat detection by eliminating antiquated processes that deplete precious resources and increase productivity by enabling one person to do a job that would normally require several people. Bulk identification for the detection of unknown threats such as chemicals and other hazards has evolved over the past decade and has become the vanguard in detection devices.

“After 9/11, strategies developed to leverage cooperation and new tactics created to keep ports and borders safe resulted in the capture of a suspected terrorist in the port of Miami in March 2003.”

By compressing the technology that previously was only reserved for the laboratory environment and placing it in the hands of field

agents, the process of sending something to the laboratory and waiting hours or days for a substance to be identified has now been eliminated. Industry leaders understand that threats are constantly evolving, thus continuous interface with government partners allows for new substance identification and sharing of best practices as they emerge.

As the only two-in-one technology of its kind on the market, the Thermo Fisher Scientific Gemini instrument just won an Edison Gold Award for incorporating Fourier Infrared and

Raman Spectroscopy into one machine. With less bulk, rapid detection times, and less complex methodology or decision-making algorithms for reading spectra or scans, the right equipment helps to increase confidence levels of government stakeholders by enabling them to quickly make assessments in critical situations.

Recommendation 2: Leveraging Cooperative Capabilities

In addition to technology, another component is for federal and state agencies, industry, and academia to come together and leverage each other's capabilities with "closer-than-normal" cooperation. It requires agencies that are competing for a slice of the same austere budget "pie" to focus on smoothing over any interagency conflicts, especially in areas of overlapping jurisdiction, and developing an atmosphere of mutual trust. To accomplish this requires all parties to recognize the importance of overcoming the regulator/industry conflicts between government and private sector workers in order to focus on the real enemy – domestic terrorists.

In some ports, such as those in South Florida, this is exactly what happened after 9/11. Whereas in others, it took pressure from above to attempt to force cooperation among federal and state agencies as well as among government and industry senior managers. In fact, this is what the Customs-Trade Partnership Against Terrorism ([C-TPAT](#)) and the Area Maritime Security Advisory Committees are designed to facilitate. The problem is that this facilitation is, for the most part, limited to the upper levels of management. This type of cooperation must be supported and pushed down from the top through mid-level management and manifest itself in the daily interactions between front line government regulators and industry employees. It requires eliminating the "us against them" mentality often prevalent between government and industry workers and instead refocusing on "us against the terrorists."



U.S. Coast Guard Patrol (Source: DomPrep 2013)

This can only occur if all concerned are given clear indications about the gravity and immediacy of the real threat that terrorism poses today. Some of the issues that must be overcome to implement this "heightened" level of cooperation are complacency and mutual distrust. This requires education on both sides in the form of periodic awareness training and "live" exercises. For example, engaging a private sector facilitator that works with the training

departments of both government agencies and the private sector can help develop timely unclassified intelligence briefings that can be shared with industry partners at the worker level. The key to fighting domestic terrorists is to know the enemy. The facilitator would alert partners about the latest terrorist tactics that they could encounter in their day-to-day work and report to their government counterparts. Further entrenching this level of cooperation can be achieved by developing relevant training programs that are reinforced with random drills and exercises.

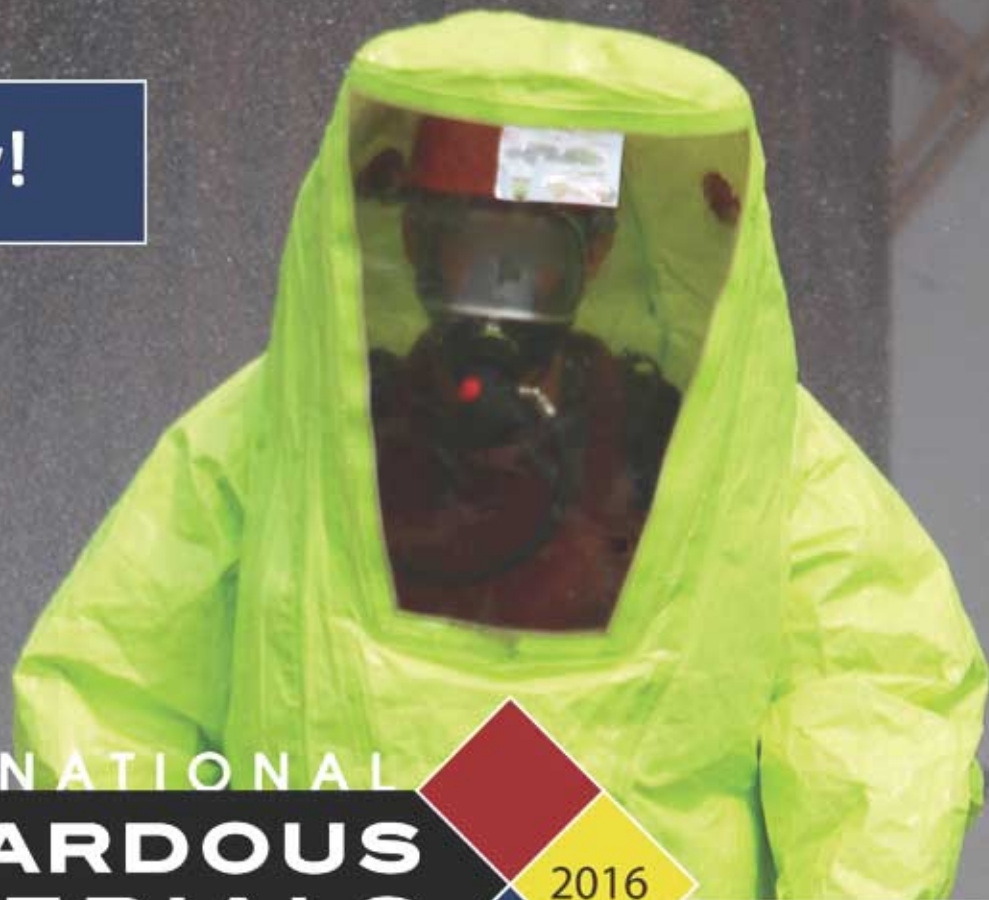
Recommendation 3: Passive Intelligence

The operative word is “random.” Given almost any long-term security, the enemy can and usually will figure out how to breach almost any level of security if it remains static. According to the [al-Qaida training manual](#), domestic terrorists are instructed to study patterns and movements, look for weak spots, perhaps penetrate with one or two of their own operatives (or gain information from an unsuspecting employee), and then pounce when they are best prepared. Maintaining a high level of security for a long period of time without a specific threat is self-defeating because of complacency and the ability of the enemy to study the defenses. Instead, the key to keeping the enemy off balance and unsure of when to strike is the random flexing of security muscles – even more so during higher threat periods.

In summary, when budgets are tight and forces are limited, agencies with overlapping or complementary missions must collaborate with academia and private sector organizations even closer in areas that can be exploited by terrorists – such as dirty bombs in cargo containers or persons of interest attempting to enter the country surreptitiously. The best way to accomplish this is through ongoing training initiatives to ensure that frontline government and private sector resources are focused on a common threat and are tested randomly. Protecting against terrorist surveillance at critical infrastructure sites is best accomplished by leveraging the public through “passive intelligence” collection such as existing terrorism outreach/awareness campaigns. Finally, by utilizing emerging technology that reduces labor costs and increases effectiveness, government stakeholders will greatly increase their ability to thwart emerging threats from terrorism against the homeland.

Armin Cate is a 34-year veteran of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), retiring as a special agent with Homeland Security Investigations Immigration and Customs Enforcement and as a commander with the Coast Guard Reserve. Prominent among his achievements was the [detection and apprehension](#) of Sayed Malike, a terrorist at the Port of Miami in March 2003. Since retiring from DHS, he has served as a consultant on border security for the transition team for Mexican president Pena-Nieto and has been a key member of design teams developing complex security solutions for airports, seaports, and intermodal transportation – including the modernization of the Air Defense system for Mexico and designing a secure rail corridor across the US/Mexican border. Trained by the Secret Service as a member of the JUMP team for presidential candidate George W. Bush, he has led executive protection teams for a Fortune 100 CEOs traveling to Colombia, Mexico, and Brazil. He has worked as a consultant for sales and marketing for several manufacturers of cutting-edge, high-tech security products including Thermo-Scientific. He also provided protective services at the 2014 Sochi Winter Olympic games, along with five former members of U.S. Navy DEVGRU, Seal Team Six.

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National Threats: Advice for the Next President

By Mark-Jon Nichols

Four key threats the nation faces will follow the next president of the United States into office. These threats are not new, but will increase if not effectively addressed. Whoever is elected for this leadership position must be equipped with the right information in order to prioritize and make tough decisions regarding these threats.



Perhaps the biggest threat the nation faces in the next coming years is terrorism. Groups like Islamic State group and al-Qaida are no longer threats to just U.S. interests abroad. They are now a significant threat to the homeland, as seen in [San Bernardino in 2015](#). By using the internet to radicalize disenfranchised persons, terrorists are successfully turning people against their governments. In the case of the San Bernardino shooting, the two attackers are suspected of being self-radicalized, and also planned and executed their attack with no major organization support. That attack demonstrated that these organizations have the capability to strike a blow even without their presence in the United States. Additionally, the Paris attacks showed the world that these organizations are also using the Syrian refugee crisis as cover to infiltrate nation states. The [Homeland Security Enterprise](#) needs to realize this and act appropriately to counter any threat to U.S. citizens or infrastructure.

Ineffective Current Policies

Current policies in practice today must be altered to successfully combat the asymmetric threat of terrorism. The Department of Homeland Security made the first step in this process by establishing the Homeland Security Enterprise. This action was an attempt to bring together intelligence and law enforcement agencies so they can work in concert to protect the homeland. Essentially, this merger was successful and has thwarted many untold terror plots. However, federal, state, local, and tribal agencies need to combine their assets to contain or eliminate new and old threats that are sure to be troublesome in the future. Existing policies need to address terrorism (focusing on self-radicalization), human trafficking, immigration, social stability, and the “war on drugs” to prevent further atrocities.

The nation’s borders are not secure. The porosity of the borders is providing human traffickers the ability to bring in thousands of people and allowing illegal aliens to enter the country uninhibited. It is estimated that, during Obama’s tenure, [2.5 million illegal aliens](#) have settled in the United States. The current administration’s push toward amnesty is compounding the immigration problem, which is barely being contained.

Additionally, the United States is experiencing increasing economic and social instability. The housing bubble implosion left its mark on the economy, which is having adverse effects on the social landscape. In its aftermath, unemployment shot up to 10 percent and has slowly been declining, but not yet back to the rate before the housing market burst. It also needs to be taken into consideration that [current rates](#) do not account for people who have simply

given up on getting a job; the numbers are based on only those receiving unemployment benefits.

“A primary contributing factor to the radicalization process of a future terrorist is a feeling of being disconnected, not having a voice, and/or a desire to do something significant that incites change on a broad scale.”

Contributing to all of the problems identified thus far is the failed “war on drugs.” Since its inception in 1971, the battle against drugs has proven to be a costly endeavor with little to no benefit. The U.S. government spends more than \$51 billion a year on a

system that favors arrests and incarceration over treatment and support. In 2013, [1.5 million](#) U.S. citizens were arrested for nonviolent drug crimes, a majority of whom were minorities and/or from low-income communities. These issues are interrelated, and policy changes must be done during the next presidential term to safeguard the future.

Suggested Policy Changes

To protect future generations, the following policy changes are recommended in descending order of severity of the threat they pose:

- *Terrorism* – A primary contributing factor to the radicalization process of a future terrorist is a feeling of being disconnected, not having a voice, and/or a desire to do something significant that incites change on a broad scale. Two of these causes can be alleviated in one simple action: make government transparent to citizens. As of September 2015, U.S. citizens had a [45 percent distrust rate](#) of the government’s ability to handle domestic issues. By adopting transparency initiatives, the public will slowly begin to give trust where trust is due.
- *Human trafficking/illegal immigration* – The United States was founded on immigration. Migrants gave birth to this country and, for a long stretch, immigration continued to bolster the nation as a global power. However, many illegal aliens and those who use human traffickers to enter the country do so because of the bureaucratic mess associated with the legal immigration process. The current process of becoming a citizen is exhausting and expensive. Major reforms need to be made in the application process, so it does not take several years to enjoy and embrace citizen rights. Once the process is streamlined,

federal agencies along with local law enforcement need to uphold the law and turn apprehended illegal aliens over to U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents. Once received by ICE, an illegal should be deported at the expense of the illegal's home country within one month. Additionally, the [Secure Fence Act of 2006](#) needs to come to fruition.

- *Social instability* – Once a transparent government is realized, and the borders are filled with law-abiding citizens, then policies geared toward increasing social capital can be implemented. Engaging citizens and entrusting them with functions typically managed and performed by government officials will help bridge the gap between citizens and governments. Enacting policies that foster a “whole community” concept will prove only to make the nation more resilient to unforeseen tragedies.
- *Drugs* – Because of reactionary criminal justice policies, the country's prison system is straining to house incarcerated persons. Sentencing policies like “[Three Strikes](#)” has crippled the ability of authorities to efficiently house and rehabilitate inmates. To reduce recidivism, policies like the decriminalization of marijuana should be considered. According to [drug war statistics](#), in 2014, 700,993 people were arrested for marijuana, 88 percent of which were arrested for possession. The legalization and taxation of marijuana could serve two purposes: (a) decrease the prison population, which could have tremendous positive effects on social stability; and (b) generate revenue for a struggling economy. It is estimated that California alone could raise \$1,400,000,000 annually if marijuana were taxed.

In conclusion, this nation cannot afford another four years of the status quo. In 2008, Obama was able to capture and entrance a population into a hope for change and promised an era of transparency like no other before it. Eight years later, the country is still plagued with threats of terrorism, America's borders remain [porous](#), Washington politicians continue to be [out of touch](#) with the average citizen, and the social fabric that has held everything together thus far is starting to rip at the seams. Failure to enact policies that address the issues discussed here will likely bring the nation to its knees.

Mark-Jon Nichols is a retired U.S. Navy Senior Chief Petty Officer with 21 years of experience in electronic warfare, counter drug and counter improvised explosive device (IED) operations. He earned his Master's degree in Political Science & Terrorism and is now pursuing his second Master's degree in Homeland Security & Emergency Management. He also obtained certifications with the American Board for Certification in Homeland Security in the areas of Domestic Preparedness and Homeland Security. Currently, Mr. Nichols is a Program Manager specializing in military training for the Department of Defense (DoD).

Inexperience – Filling the Void

By Romeo Lavarias

In response to 9/11, the United States instituted one of the most massive changes in government with the creation and development of the Department of Homeland Security. Since then, a combination of massive attrition, personnel retirements, and complacency due to lack of new disasters has created a void of experienced personnel that must be addressed.



Through the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's efforts after 9/11, the United States has become much more resilient in responding to human-caused and natural disasters. Motivated government emergency personnel at the national, state, and local levels who had experienced disasters firsthand, such as hurricanes and terrorism, carried out these early efforts. However, today, there are an increasing number of inexperienced government emergency personnel left to deal with the next round of more-complex disasters, which include border-control challenges, cyberterrorism, bio-hacking, and more-frequent extreme weather events.

Assessing Training Needs

In order to address these challenges, efforts must be made to educate and train the next generation of local, state, and national government emergency personnel to carry out the preparation, response, recovery, and mitigation actions that society has come to expect from its government at all levels. To accomplish this, governments must implement training and exercises as part of their organizational culture, instill confidence in elected officials on their staff's ability to handle disasters, provide greater understanding of threats to the general public and what the public's and the government's roles should be in all phases of a disaster. The National Incident Management System (NIMS) is one way of addressing this issue.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has just completed soliciting input from all stakeholders on refreshing NIMS, so now is an excellent time for all to refresh NIMS within their own organizations. It can start by assessing appropriate-level NIMS classes for new and current employees tasked with carrying out various levels of work before, during, and after a disaster. Often, previous staff had taken all the appropriate NIMS classes, but new staff has not. Or, in some cases, emergency government personnel took NIMS training years ago and may not have had an opportunity to operate under the NIMS. Regardless, if activation were to occur and were handled by staff not familiar with NIMS, it could lead to poor decision making and subsequent negative consequences.

The lack of training and exercise of emergency government personnel would also be viewed by elected officials as mismanagement and chaos, thus instilling in them a lack of

confidence in staff to handle an extreme situation. In some cases, it may even make them feel that they should take over the handling of the event. Although their intent is to help their communities, they would not be aware of all the available resources, how to procure them, or how outside assisting agencies operate. In addition, their unfamiliarity with NIMS and emergency management could delay securing the appropriate resources.

“Inexperienced government emergency personnel are now left to deal with the next round of more-complex disasters, which include border-control challenges, cyberterrorism, bio-hacking, and more-frequent extreme weather events.”

Instilling Confidence

The purpose of emergency management efforts is to help the community at large. It is no secret that how government operates before, during, and after a disaster can either instill or destroy the public’s confidence in its government, which in turn could last for years after the community recovers. Training at all levels of government is essential, but training the local community is equally important. By educating citizens on what they should do to prepare themselves for a disaster, being transparent about how government will respond in the aftermath of a disaster, and taking action to mitigate the impact could all provide much needed public support to the government in times of disaster.

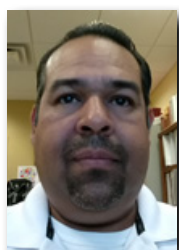
In today’s instantaneous society – “We want what we want when we want it” – commercial businesses have responded by providing just-in-time deliveries at peoples’ doorsteps. In the event of a disaster, though, the interruption of these supplies – for instance, grocery stores only carry a three-day supply of products – could compound the disaster and create a breakdown in society. The degradation may be avoided by having trained government emergency personnel help educate businesses and citizens to prepare for disaster. It is accepted that people (government emergency personnel, citizens, businesses, etc.) cannot rise to the occasion if they do not have adequate training to fall back on. A well-trained staff provides reassurance to the public and elected officials that everything that possibly can be done is being done by those responsible for emergency management and support functions.

Dr. Romeo B. Lavarias is employed by the City of Miramar, Florida, as the city’s emergency manager. In addition, he teaches undergraduate and graduate public administration classes at Barry University in Miami Shores, Florida. He has spent his government career working in county and municipal governments in the state of Florida. His local government experience has included working as a city planner, emergency management coordinator, and public information officer. He received his bachelor’s degree in political science and master’s degree in urban and regional planning from the University of Florida, his master’s degree in public administration from Baruch College-City University of New York as an Urban/National Fellow, his doctorate in public administration from Nova Southeastern University, and a master’s degree in homeland security from the Naval Postgraduate School (NPS).

Florida – Doing More With Volunteers

By Freddy Zelaya & Romeo Lavarias

Today's disasters are more frequent and more complex than ever before. Although governments at all levels have risen to the occasion by training personnel and securing equipment and resources, there will always be a lack of manpower. This gap has been addressed using volunteers, who – despite having the best of intentions to help those in need – often lack the requisite knowledge, skills, and abilities.



In order to address this, the [Citizen Corps](#) was created through the Federal Emergency Management Agency. Its purpose is to provide education and training to individuals who wish to make their communities safer, stronger, and better prepared to withstand natural and manmade disasters. As stated on the Broward County, Florida, [Emergency Management Agency Citizen Corps](#) webpage, the following organizations help citizens to be involved and trained:

- [Community Emergency Response Team \(CERT\)](#) – Volunteers are trained by professionals to take care of themselves in the first days following a major disaster. The program is administered by U.S. Department of Homeland Security. With basic skills training, these teams are able to prepare their homes and neighborhoods before a disaster, and immediately assist those in distress once the danger has passed.
- The [Fire Corps](#) promotes the use of citizen advocates to enhance the capacity of resource-constrained fire and rescue departments at all levels: volunteer, career, and combination. Fire Corps provides resources to assist fire and rescue departments in creating opportunities – including fire safety outreach, youth programs, and administrative support – for citizen advocates and promotes citizen participation. Fire Corps is funded through the Department of Homeland Security and is managed and implemented through a partnership between the National Volunteer Fire Council, the International Association of Fire Fighters, and the International Association of Fire Chiefs.
- [USAonWatch](#)-Neighborhood Watch works to provide information, training, and resources to citizens and law enforcement agencies throughout the country. In the aftermath of 9/11, Neighborhood Watch programs have expanded beyond their traditional crime prevention role to help neighborhoods focus on disaster preparedness, emergency response, and terrorism awareness. USAonWatch-Neighborhood Watch is administered by the National Sheriffs' Association in partnership with the Bureau of Justice Assistance, U.S. Department of Justice.
- The Medical Reserve Corps ([MRC](#)) Program strengthens communities by helping medical, public health, and other volunteers offer their expertise

throughout the year as well as during local emergencies and other times of community need. MRC volunteers work in coordination with existing local emergency response programs and also supplement existing community public health initiatives, such as outreach and prevention, immunization programs, blood drives, case management, care planning, and other efforts. The MRC program is administered by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

- Volunteers in Police Service ([VIPS](#)) works to enhance the capacity of state and local law enforcement to utilize volunteers. VIPS serves as a gateway to resources and information for and about law enforcement volunteer programs. Funded by the U.S. Department of Justice, VIPS is managed and implemented by the International Association of Chiefs of Police.

“These programs have been successful, but additional effort should be implemented to get more out of the volunteers who wish to do more and be more effective.”

These programs have been successful, but additional effort should be implemented to get more out of the volunteers who wish to do more and be more effective. Examples of providing more opportunities include: integrating the Medical Reserve Corps component in southern Florida with local hospitals and Broward Health Systems; having the South Florida Regional Citizen Corps Taskforce share information with prophylaxis support training; and piloting a one-day course on a Saturday with Texas A&M Engineering Extension Service (TEEX) to encourage more volunteers to train in this capacity.

Freddy Zelaya Jr. is a 24-year veteran of public safety. He currently serves as the emergency management coordinator, Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) program manager, Fire Explorer Program manager, FEMA/DHS and UASI (Urban Area Security Initiative) grant manager, FEMA adjunct instructor, and the South Florida Regional Citizen Corps Taskforce chairperson with the City of Fort Lauderdale Emergency Management Bureau with the Fire-Rescue Department. As the EM coordinator, he works in partnership with the government of Chile to build the Community Emergency Response Team in Santiago De Chile. With over 20 years of experience managing volunteers specializing in disaster volunteer management, he co-founded the Broward County Citizen Corps Council and South Florida Regional Citizen Corps Taskforce and currently chairs the South Florida Regional Citizen Corps Conference and Drill Exercise Committee. He is the recipient of many FEMA, CERT, and other volunteer awards.

Dr. Romeo B. Lavarias is employed by the City of Miramar, Florida, as the city’s emergency manager. In addition, he teaches undergraduate and graduate public administration classes at Barry University in Miami Shores, Florida. He has spent his government career working in county and municipal governments in the state of Florida. His local government experience has included working as a city planner, emergency management coordinator, and public information officer. He received his bachelor’s degree in political science and master’s degree in urban and regional planning from the University of Florida, his master’s degree in public administration from Baruch College-City University of New York as an Urban/National Fellow, his doctorate in public administration from Nova Southeastern University, and a master’s degree in homeland security from the Naval Postgraduate School (NPS).

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Tapping Media for Credible Disaster Communication

By Steven Johnson

Few preparations made in anticipation of a disaster pay bigger dividends than how the team communicates with the news media and the public during a disaster. Seamless and coordinated communication is as important as seamless and coordinated operations – both during the disaster and in the recovery stage. Communications and operations must work in tandem.



Timely and relevant information flow is obviously vital to sound decision-making during a disaster, but is also a vital public service that informs – and may protect – the public from further effects. Executed professionally and timely, disaster communication also can play a major role in transforming concerned or even angry audiences into allies. A critical linchpin in the effort is the news media, which must collaborate to efficiently and credibly disseminate information to the public.

Tell the Truth & Tell It Fast

To engage the news media, information must be truthful, clear, and timely. This requires that emergency response authorities, operations directors, and first responders provide updates and their best thinking efficiently and regularly. Even if all disaster preparedness professionals and first responders are on board, often very little information is available in the early stages of a disaster. Even as a team awaits information – about what happened, when, why, and how many people have been affected – its authority and credibility is bolstered when they demonstrate empathy and action early and often.

The public wants to see and hear concern and contrition, and spokespeople need to acknowledge the uncertainty and fluidity of the situation. For example, in the case of AirAsia flight 8501's crash in 2014, Chief Executive Officer Anthony Francis (Tony) Fernandes had little information about the tragedy. He knew the statistics of the aircraft and experience of the pilot and crew. Beyond that, though, all he could do was express the deep sadness that he and his colleagues felt and how his organization was committed to working with authorities to learn what happened and what could be done to ensure that it would not happen again. Ultimately, the entire disaster preparedness community wants to foster trust and credibility – which is most likely to happen via timely, transparent, and proactive communication.

Crisis Communications – Starting With News Conferences

The first evidence most members of the public see of a coordinated disaster response is a news conference or briefing, which is an efficient means to distribute information during a chaotic time. Although it is no longer the information behemoth it once was, and social media support is crucial, television continues to be a [primary information](#) outlet for the

majority of the public. Its immediacy and ability to compellingly package the visual and verbal remain unparalleled.

Setting a schedule of news briefings provides media and the public a consistent rhythm of information. Truthful, timely communications can minimize harm and reduce the scope of impact. To that end, risks and potential risks should be identified and explained to help ease concerns and help people cope. From the first engagement, the communications function should establish what the public can expect in terms of frequency of updates and level of detail regarding the effectiveness in response and recovery. This information can be effectively delivered during a news conference.

When preparing for news conferences, teams must be prepared to answer these questions, or to say when answers may be available:

- What happened?
- Who's affected? Why? How? How many?
- How bad is it?
- Who's at risk? Why?
- How bad will things get?
- How can I protect myself/my family?
- What's being done to protect/mitigate harm?

A secondary set of questions can include:

- What's the latest?
- What steps are being taken?
- Who's responsible?

Supporting Documents & Communication Flow

A key internal reference document would: contain messages that address the most likely crises or disasters that could strike; keep a running list of actions taken by the team and authorities assigned to respond; and include activation times and dates. In anticipation of the inevitable emergency or crisis, disaster preparedness professionals should compile a list of detailed questions and answers of every imaginable question they expect and then prepare answers infused with key messaging and actions that can be delivered by any spokesperson. Questions should be solicited from every aspect of the disaster preparedness effort, and the resulting questions and answers should be regularly reviewed and revised. An updateable fact sheet also is an important resource that can quickly and efficiently answer the “who, what, where, when, and why” for any media outlets at any phase of the disaster.

An organization's established communications channels – its website, email, RSS subscription feeds, and social media channels – can be leveraged to provide round-the-clock updates and details beyond regularly scheduled news conferences and briefings. These

channels are available to the news media and the public at any time. An organization can also prepare an emergency website (a “dark site”) that is not visible to the public or even much of the organization until the immediate minutes and hours after a disaster or crisis strikes. When needed, a dark site can very quickly take the place of a traditional site.

Social media increasingly plays a role in effective crisis response. Imagery, recorded video, and even live video are frequently sought after as response content. To complement social media channels, disaster preparedness officials should consider establishing hashtags that the news media and public may follow to filter information that is specifically related to the disaster. An excellent example of social media’s value is how authorities used Twitter to disseminate information during the Branson, Missouri, tornado of 2012. There was a clear focus to leverage the channel for real-time information through key hashtags such as #LeapDayStorm.

“Social media increasingly plays a role in effective crisis response. Imagery, recorded video, and even live video are frequently sought after as response content.”

Beyond the virtual world, a call center still proves invaluable during large-scale events, especially as crises and disasters know no demographic boundaries. Age and income play major roles in the digital divide – understanding of and access to newer technologies and communications platforms. Many affected may not be comfortable with constantly evolving social media tools. Beyond the 1-800 number, a designated information headquarters also provides a physical anchor to provide municipalities, public agencies, and private organizations an identifiable venue from which news media and the public can retrieve essential information. Email list services and RSS feeds to which the news media and/or the public may subscribe can also facilitate media distribution.

Getting Comfortable With the Highly Uncomfortable

It is essential that people assigned to lead the crisis communications effort are comfortable with the highly uncomfortable. This means that public and private agencies and organizations should practice various operational and communications responses appropriate for the types of crisis or disaster most likely to occur in the community. If possible, they should incorporate local media in any exercises because they can provide not only a realistic volley of questions across an array of formats, but also can help identify gaps in both the information flow and content. In the end, the flow of information to the public is about being accurate and timely.

Steve Johnson is a Chicago-based associate of WPNT Ltd., which has provided crisis communications training and strategy to disaster preparedness professionals for more than 20 years. He also is principal of SJConnects Public Relations. Over his two-plus decades in communications, he has develop and initiated issues and crisis communications plans across traditional and social media channels.

A Checklist for Rethinking Crisis Communications

By Thomas Wahle

Crisis communications planning is key to any emergency preparedness effort. One reason that so many organizations struggle with communications when crises strike may be that they focused their planning efforts on the crisis plan document without creating a shared vision of desired outcomes. They failed to define what they actually needed to do to communicate.



Surely, the plan is essential to communications. But plan execution requires strong leadership, trained personnel, well-established relationships, accessible technology, and resources. What is needed is a shared understanding of desired outcomes and the ability to perform a series of well-defined functions (capabilities) to achieve those outcomes. Capabilities define what you need to be able to do to overcome barriers to communications, such as inoperability and lack of situational awareness.

Crisis Communications Capabilities

Those familiar with the National Preparedness Goal (Federal Emergency Management Agency) and Public Health Preparedness Capabilities: National Standards for State and Local Planning (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) will recognize the capabilities approach. The principle should apply to crisis communications as well.

Well-defined capabilities – anchored in a clear vision of the end-state – provide a basis for not only crisis plan development, but also leadership coaching, employee outreach, exercise design, and partnership development. Capabilities enable leaders to see the crisis challenge in all its dimensions and resist the tendency to prematurely commit to a given script or technology.

Figure 1 lists 15 crisis communications capabilities that can be used to drive a planning approach. The capabilities apply to all types of scenarios. For example, the ability to rapidly notify and assemble leadership could be needed following a cyberattack, a natural disaster, a major fire, a reputational threat, or any situation requiring a rapid response.

Crisis Planning Questions

The following questions should be asked when incorporating these capabilities into the planning process:

- Based on personal and organizational experience responding to crises, which capabilities require immediate attention? Where are the gaps?
- What priorities come to mind in light of the organization's primary threats and hazards?

Crisis Communications Capabilities

Notification and Assembly

1. *Response team notification* – Ability to rapidly notify and assemble leadership and key decision-makers 24/7; ability to notify, assemble, and organize the crisis team
2. *Employee and stakeholder notification* – Ability to notify employees and other stakeholders of crisis situations

Assessment

3. *Media monitoring* – Ability to track and analyze traditional and social media to inform decision-making
4. *Situation awareness* – Ability to maintain an operational picture of rapidly evolving events; ability to track diverse stakeholders' concerns, perceptions, and needs

Management

5. *Employee protection* – Ability to help employees prepare for, respond to, and recover from threats and hazards
6. *Remote access* – Ability to access remotely (at any time and from any place) incident response tools and information
7. *Call/email management* – Ability to manage large volumes of phone calls and requests for information in multi-day events
8. *Information management* – Ability to maintain version control of documents; ability to manage data and statistics in rapidly evolving events
9. *Coordination and approval* – Ability to coordinate actions across multiple entities; ability to obtain timely approval of public statements, employee messages, and news releases

Communication

10. *Strategy and message formation* – Ability to rapidly develop targeted communications strategies and messages in any incident
11. *Product production* – Ability to develop media products and public information, such as social media content, videos, and print materials
12. *Stakeholder communications* – Ability to inform and engage employees and stakeholders (briefings, dark website, social media, partnerships, and many other means)
13. *Media relations* – Ability to manage media relations; ability to communicate effectively in hard-hitting media interviews
14. *Risk communications* – Ability to communicate risk in a way that prompts actions that benefit stakeholders' health, safety, or security
15. *Backup communications* – Ability to conduct crisis communications without electric power or access to primary facilities

Fig 1. Fifteen crisis communications capabilities for driving a planning approach.

- How do staff assignments and the organization of the team align to the capabilities? What additional roles and responsibilities come to mind?
- Which capabilities require subject matter expertise beyond the planning team? What types of partnerships are needed?
- Which capabilities require relationships with legal counsel, security, mission assurance, information technology, human resources, or operations?
- What training and exercise objectives come to mind in light of these capabilities?

With a holistic view of the end state, emergency planners and leaders can more effectively assess all aspects of their crisis programs. Although pre-approved communications policies, procedures, and messages may, in fact, be in fairly good shape, it may be necessary to rethink the capabilities to ensure that the organization is actually capable of communicating when crisis strikes.

Thomas Wahle specializes in crisis communications and disaster preparedness for Booz Allen Hamilton. He has 28 years of experience supporting government agencies and private sector organizations in homeland security, transportation, energy, intelligence, and defense markets. Previously, he was a radio news reporter and anchor.

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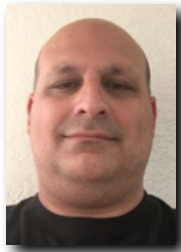
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Today's Emergency Management:
Working in a Complex World

Planning in Miami for Changes in Cuba

By Manuel A. Morales

Changes in the relationship between the United States and Cuba have come fast and furious since the [December 2014 announcement](#) by the Obama administration that diplomatic relations would resume between the two former foes. Understanding past incidents will help the nation address current and future concerns as movement between these two countries increases.



The opening of the U.S. embassy in Havana in the summer of 2015 cemented President Barack Obama's seriousness to embark on a course of stark contrast from previous administrations and normalize the lines of communications with the Castro regime. The current changes mark the most significant modifications to foreign policy since the Eisenhower administration severed relations with Cuba in the 1960s.

For many Cuban and American entrepreneurs, and those who have been long secluded on the island, this is an exciting time. There is the potential for expanding U.S. commerce and exchanging democratic ideas; there is potential for change within the Cuban government itself. However, South Florida's elected officials, police, and city administrators should be concerned how any changes on the island will affect their respective jurisdictions.

Past Policies for Cuban Immigrants

Miami is the adoptive home of the Cuban diaspora, with more than one million residents of Cuban descent living in its metropolitan area. Most South Florida residents can remember the [1980 Mariel boatlift](#) that brought 125,000 Cubans to the United States in a six-month period and the impact that it had on Miami. The city was not logistically ready to handle the mass influx and the demands the refugees placed on local services – both governmental and private.

The lack of emergency housing combined with the limited availability of social services compounded the effects of the population explosion. Local police departments were caught undermanned and unprepared to manage the need for additional police services. Most departments lacked a plan that would aid the police leadership to respond to the quick changes that affected their cities. The lack of a comprehensive response plan potentially played a role in the rise of violent crime that plagued the city streets and labeled Miami as the most dangerous city in America for most of the decade.

In 1994, the "[Balseros](#)" or rafters crisis witnessed 30,000 Cuban immigrants crossing the Florida straits in one month and had all the makings of a second Mariel. Only the fast response and intervention by federal officials mitigated a deal with the Cuban government



to end the migration and limited the impact on the local landscape. However, Miami still failed to have a plan to respond to the incident, despite the previous devastating effects of the 1980 boatlift.

The 1994 incident led to the 1996 amendment to the Cuban Adjustment Act, better known as the “wet-foot/dry-foot policy,” by the Clinton administration. The policy allowed Cubans that reach U.S. soil, regardless of method of entry, to claim asylum and relief benefits. Though different in the severity

of their local impact, both cases highlighted the misunderstanding and unpreparedness of local city administrators of the serious impact that changes in Cuba have in Miami.

Current & Future Changes

Federal officials report a spike in the number of Cubans trying to reach U.S. soil since the changes in 2015. U.S. Customs and Border Protection reported a [78 percent increase](#) compared to 2014. One reason for the rise in numbers is the increasing fears of Cuban nationals over what is to come of U.S. relations. At this point, it is unclear if the current shifts in diplomatic relations might prompt another mass exodus from the island nation to U.S. shores. Nevertheless, it is imperative that municipal jurisdictions be cognizant of the possibility for local influences due to changes in Cuba. Miami officials must understand the potential impact that changes in Cuba could have on their cities and recognize the need for action.

In February 2016, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) published the [National Planning System](#), which strengthens the federal emergency planning philosophy and “provides a unified approach and common terminology to plan for all-threats and hazards and across all mission areas.” The system allows homeland security practitioners and emergency managers to get an overview of the planning architecture and process to enable a consistent approach to address risk and keep their communities safe in accordance with the [National Preparedness Goal](#) of keeping the nation secure and resilient. Some [emergency practitioners](#) are not impressed with the latest FEMA document for its redundancy and lack of integration of new ideas and methodology into the national framework. However, the document serves as a wakeup call for local officials to set in motion preparations to better protect their communities.

In Miami, area administrators should start taking proactive measures to prepare their respective departments for the Cuban influences. They could start by following FEMA recommendations and guidelines as described in the Comprehensive Preparedness Guide (CPG) 101 to prepare an emergency operations plan that will:

- Conduct community-based planning that engages the whole community by using a planning process that represents the actual population in the community and involves community leaders and the private sector in the planning process
- Ensure plans are developed through an analysis of risk
- Identify operational assumptions and resource demands
- Prioritize plans and planning efforts to support a seamless transition from development to execution for any threat or hazard
- Integrate and synchronize efforts across all levels of government.

Law enforcement executives and emergency planners should take a structured and comprehensive look at the local response to developing changes in Cuba, but understand that it must be flexible and adaptable to the approach recommended by the National Preparedness System planning process:

- Form a collaborative planning team
- Understand the situation
- Determine goals and objectives
- Plan development
- Plan preparation, review, and approval
- Plan implementation and maintenance

South Florida communities need a strategy that will allow them to prepare an emergency operations plan that builds relationships between federal, state, and local stakeholders to facilitate unity of effort. They need a strategy that shares common objectives and lays the foundation for effective problem solving on strategic, operational, and tactical levels. And they need a plan that prepares first responders to accomplish their missions by believing that the key to success is knowing that the planning process is as important as composing a final product that serves the needs of their communities.

Manuel A. Morales is police executive in the South Florida area. During his 26 years career as a law enforcement officer he has worked in patrol, investigations, and as a supervisor in the street narcotics and gang unit. He is currently pursuing a Master's Degree in Homeland Security Studies from the Center for Homeland Defense and Security at the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, CA.

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Assessing the Iran Deal

By Jerome H. Kahan

“Under no circumstances will Iran ever seek, develop, or acquire nuclear weapons.”
—Preamble to the Comprehensive Plan of Action (14 July 2015)

With the United States as de facto leader, the five members of the United Nations Security Council plus Germany – the so called “5+1” club – spent over two years negotiating the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), or so-called “nuclear deal,” which is expected to reduce the danger of Iran acquiring nuclear weapons. However, the nuclear deal is not seen by all as a “good deal.”



The nuclear deal theoretically reduces the threat by placing obstacles in the path of any Iranian efforts to build a nuclear weapon. Opponents in Congress and elsewhere forcefully argue that “no deal” is better than a “bad deal,” and claiming that President Barack Obama has led the nation into a trap that neither enhances its security nor increases stability in the Middle East. Summarizing the pros and cons of the agreement will show how tough it is to assess its “on balance” implications. But first, here are some key features of the JCPOA.

Features of the Deal

The agreement constrains Iran’s nuclear program for 10 to 15 years by placing stringent limitations on the weapons-related aspects of its entire array of nuclear activities, along with unprecedented restrictions and verification measures, some of which will remain for 20 to 25 years. The key attribute of the JCPOA is an asymmetrical *quid-pro-quo*, where Iran accepts constraints on its nuclear weapons activities in return for obtaining relief from [sanctions](#) imposed by the United States, the European Union (EU), and the United Nations Security Council. These sanctions encompass Tehran’s nuclear-related imports; areas such as finance, transportation, trade, technology, and energy; and tens of billions of dollars of frozen revenues. This grand bargain was accepted by Tehran, “so long as Iran did not have to give up its nuclear capability entirely and forever in return for the lifting of sanctions,” as stated by [Kenneth Pollack](#), before a [House Committee on 9 July 2015](#).

The Pros

Proponents of the JCPOA welcomed the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) pre-agreement report that it had accounted for Iran’s prior nuclear activities with sufficient confidence to recommend signing of the JCPOA. Given this baseline, advocates point to the restraints on Iran’s nuclear activities that severely curb weapons-related programs but allow

peaceful efforts to go forward. For example, according to [The Iran Nuclear Deal – A Simple Guide](#), extended limitations have been placed on the numbers, types, and locations of centrifuges that Tehran is allowed to keep in order to prevent further production of so-called “weapons-grade” uranium for use in bomb making. Supporters also note that Iran has agreed to curb production of plutonium, which, when reprocessed into weapons grade, offers another path toward constructing a nuclear weapon. Among other limitations on this dangerous material is the requirement that Iran ship contaminated fuel rods produced by peaceful reactors to other countries where plutonium can be extracted and stored or used for nonmilitary purposes.

“This causes many critics to charge that the nuclear deal, touted as an arms-control accord, might well have the reverse effect by stimulating a regional nuclear arms race!”

As expected, advocates stress the far-reaching provisions for verifying Iran’s compliance with the terms and conditions imposed on its weapons-related nuclear activities, arguing that these

would not only have the effect of deterring violations, but also help catch attempts to cheat. In the run-up to the agreement, Iran accepted standard IAEA safeguards as well as the more enhanced protocol that would remain in force as long as Tehran stayed party to the [Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty](#). Designed to discover any non-allowed efforts Iran might undertake, these measures enable access by IAEA inspectors to all elements of Iran’s complete fuel cycle, including uranium mines, centrifuge and plutonium facilities, and other declared nuclear sites, as summarized in the official [JCPOA Packet](#).

The JCPOA also requires that Iran grant IAEA inspectors access within 24 days to any undeclared location where there are signs of clandestine nuclear weapons-related activities, if a majority of negotiating partners agree this is necessary to prove or disprove potential cheating. Advocates of the JCPOA argue that this would make it difficult for Iran to remove signs of cheating, such as ripping out large numbers of centrifuge machines or removing all traces of fissionable material. If all indications of cheating cannot be removed before inspectors arrive, the Iranians could find an excuse for blocking onsite visits, thus avoiding being caught in the act but increasing suspicions. If major noncompliant activities by Iran are not resolved, the agreement calls for sanctions to be reimposed as a means of pressuring Iran to “come clean.”

Supporters affirm that the JCPOA averted the risk that Iranian acquisition of nuclear weapons would trigger a so-called “domino effect,” leading other nations in the Middle East, notably Saudi Arabia, to “go nuclear,” citing a still relevant [article by Timothy Miklos](#), published on 3 March 2013. With its undeclared but powerful nuclear weapons inventory, Israel has promised to take military action to destroy any Iran nuclear weapons, another danger to Middle East stability that the JCPOA has averted.

The Cons

Opponents of the nuclear deal continue to express fear that Iran will not allow its ambitions to be thwarted by the JCPOA, and will implement prepared plans for cheating by using a cleverly disguised network of underground sites to continue production of weapons-grade uranium using high-tech centrifuges that were never known to exist when the IAEA estimated Iran's pre-agreement nuclear infrastructure. If such covert actions raised suspicions, Tehran would exploit the 24-day review period, which is far short of the "spot inspections" the 5+1 negotiators failed to achieve. Under the agreed process, if accusations of cheating are made, Iran is allowed to rebuff these allegations, which then results in the negotiating partners deciding whether onsite inspections are needed. If such inspections are deemed necessary, the Iranians, having made plans to deal with such a contingency, would be able to hide evidence of foul play before the IAEA inspectors showed up at the undeclared site.

In order to deter cheating, Iran was warned that the sanctions released would be "snapped back" as a reprisal in the event such violations occur and more could be instituted. However, those arguing against the agreement believe Tehran would take this risk, since the EU and most of the United Nations Security Council members are not likely to restore their sanctions because of the economic and other benefits they accrue, although the United States would almost surely do so.

Many still accuse the negotiators of "giving away too much" in sanctions relief as a trade for restrictions on Tehran's nuclear program, claiming Iran will employ some if not all of the almost \$100 billion of unfrozen assets for nefarious purposes, including support of proxy wars and terrorist activities that threaten many of its Gulf neighbors as well as Syria, Yemen, and other states. In a [statement in mid-January 2016](#) when the JCPOA went into effect, Obama praised the agreement, but reiterated that it, "was never intended to resolve all of our differences with Iran."

Strongly voiced opponents of this "bad deal" point to the ease with which Iran can violate the agreement by outfoxing the inspectors and building nuclear weapons covertly in a network of clandestine facilities. However, this risks getting caught and having its sanctions reinstated as well as facing other reprisals. More worrisome in the view of many is the danger that Iran might first secure the benefits from relief of an array of sanctions and then abrogate the agreement only a few years after it went into effect. This would enable Tehran to develop nuclear weapons in a relatively short period of time, given that the agreement leaves its basic nuclear infrastructure relatively intact.

In connection with this scenario, the United States and its partners have been accused of weak negotiations by failing to get a ban on testing nuclear-capable ballistic missiles put into the JCPOA. Ignoring a non-binding UN resolution that bans such testing, Iran can

therefore continue testing with a dummy payload, develop a nuclear capable warhead, and soon after abrogation deploy an effective ballistic missile nuclear delivery system with the capacity to endanger the region and potentially threaten the United States. Once Iran decides to break out of the JCPOA, it will presumably walk away from its Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty obligations, as in the case of North Korea, which is not officially recognized as a nuclear weapons state, yet it built nuclear weapons and carries an expanding nuclear punch.

Ironically, opponents highlight the possibilities that a string of unpunished Iranian violations – or indications that Iran is contemplating abrogation of the JCPOA – would force many of the “doves” who favored the JCPOA to become “hawks” and propose that the administration launch selective conventional strikes against Iran’s critical facilities. This in turn would pressure the president to reconsider the military option rather than diplomacy as a means to set back Iran’s progress toward nuclear weapons, which goes against one of Obama’s fundamental beliefs.

Even more ironic, critics enjoy discussing the prospect of Iran deploying nuclear weapons systems sooner rather than later by ignoring the JCPOA, which could pressure Saudi Arabia and other Middle East nations to seek their own nuclear weapons, even if this means foregoing their membership in the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty. This causes many critics to charge that the nuclear deal, touted as an arms-control accord, might well have the reverse effect by stimulating a regional nuclear arms race!

On Balance

Only time will tell whether the nuclear deal will fulfill its expectation or fall apart within a few years, thereby failing to halt Iran’s march toward nuclear weapons. Obama will do his best to ensure that this “good deal” stays in place as the torch passes to the next administration, making the argument that it will curtail if not eliminate Iran’s acquisition of nuclear weapons and help secure stability in the Middle East. If the Democrats lose the White House, however, Obama will face the challenge of trying to trump Trump, who, in an interview on 4 April 2016 with [*The Washington Post*](#), “dubbed the deal ‘disastrous’ and suggested it would be one of the first arrangements he would ‘renegotiate’ should he assume the office of the presidency next January.”

Jerome Kahan is an independent analyst with over 40 years of experience on national and homeland security issues, including senior positions in the Foreign Service, the Brookings Institution, and the Homeland Security Institute. In addition to his publications, he has been an adjunct professor in the graduate school at Georgetown University and a member of the Council on Foreign Relations, with BS and MS degrees from Columbia University.

Plan D: A Bosnian Healthcare Worker's Survival Guide

By James Terbush

"Everybody has a plan until they get punched in the mouth."

—[Mike Tyson](#), Boxing Heavyweight Champion

This article derives from an extended interview with Dr. Rajko Anic. As a physician during the [1992-1995 Yugoslav war](#) and an accomplished mixed martial arts fighter, Anic explained that – when in a fight and the opponent seems to be countering every move – “If Plan A doesn’t work out for you, then try B, C, or even D.”



In the opening chapters of the celebrated book, [“Five Days at Memorial,”](#) the author [Sheri Fink](#) recounted in detail the horrifying facts of “life and death in a storm-ravaged hospital” following Hurricane Katrina in 2005. She described a major medical center without electricity, clean water, wastewater treatment, and ventilation, as well as only limited communications, supplies, and transportation. Patients, deprived of lifesaving technology, lingered and then died in the heat.

Of the 16 U.S. critical infrastructure sectors, Healthcare and Public Health is particularly important in the immediate response and recovery phase of a disaster. The populations served – critically ill, injured, and hospitalized patients – are vulnerable segments of society. The Healthcare and Public Health sector is also one of increasing complexity that relies on a combination of support from the other sectors, especially the power grid, and increasingly on moment-to-moment connectivity with information technology (IT) and the internet.

Lessons From Bosnia

Dr. Rajko Anic’s firsthand knowledge and recollections of what it was like for a European country to devolve quickly into chaos – and the need for healthcare providers to continue providing care – are instructive. He and his family lived in Bosnia during the first half of the war, until they were able to escape to Germany via a series of refugee camps, leaving their former lives (and extended family) behind. Beginning in March 2016, Anic was interviewed several times in Colorado Springs, Colorado, about what it was like to practice medicine, or attempt to, without reliable electricity or supplies for approximately one year.

Although this interview describes Anic’s experience in a conflict zone – sometimes referred to as a “complex humanitarian emergency” – conclusions can be drawn from his experience in the former Yugoslavia and applied to a prolonged power outage in the United States. The fact that a prolonged power outage would affect all critical infrastructure sectors is especially worrisome because of the “interconnectedness” of these sectors. Anic described how the long-term power outages affected the various sectors and, therefore, healthcare responsibilities.



Dr. Rajko Anic

Hospitals, Physicians & Surgeons

Within 3-5 days, hospitals needed to adapt to the new normal – without electricity. The military was called in to provide support to hospitals, as many of the injured were also soldiers. The military medical units stayed intact with their own chain of command but supplemented and worked alongside the staff of the civilian hospitals. Throughout the war, hospital supplies were mostly provided by the military, but also by international humanitarian aid agencies. Depending on location, there was intermittent electrical power, perhaps a few hours per day. Central Bosnia was fortunate to have some of its power supplied by hydroelectric dams and their power stations.

Shelling structurally damaged hospitals, which markedly increased the difficulty of providing care. Eventually these hospitals were abandoned and “buildings of opportunity” were set up to function as field hospitals. One of the best and most capable was located underground. Although the civilian medical staff was initially motivated to “come to work,” as their patriotic duty, the continued shelling of cities (and hospitals) changed this motivation over time.

Anic was able to go home at night to see his family, but others were not so fortunate. He was able to continue to take care of patients as long as there were supplies trickling in. Later in the war, confusion at the front lines made it difficult to distinguish friendly from enemy casualties, but casualties from all sides were treated at his hospital. Unless medical staff members were reassured that their families were taken care of, there was a steady loss of doctors and nursing staff over time.

Surprisingly, Anic stated that, “Surgeons continued to perform life- and limb-saving surgery even under very austere circumstances.” Trauma surgery outside the chest cavity and orthopedic injury were the most likely cases to be undertaken. However, not surprising, he stated, “the post-surgical infection rate increased and the mortality rates increased accordingly,” given the difficult conditions – for example, operating rooms without glass or even screens in the windows.

In many cases, “anesthesia needed to be provided by an anesthesia tech or even with OJT (on the job training) for a medical assistant.” The ability to use an injectable anesthetic or even ether by a drip method, although extremely dangerous, was a useful skill to have.

Unlike in the United States where a pack of sterile items is opened to use once and the rest discarded, he said that healthcare workers would, “plan on sterilization and re-use of single use items.”

Logistics, Barter & Exchange

“Elevators no longer worked. Stairs became the only access to upper floors in hospitals,” Anic said. Therefore, “there was an increased need for physical manpower to move patients up/down stairs.” This need for additional physical labor was also apparent in the aftermath of Katrina, which was highlighted in Fink’s book. Related to that event, in the urban environment, multi-story buildings presented a special hazard. “Patients or the elderly stuck several floors up in an apartment block were in real trouble unless there was a coordinated effort to assist them.” Because of lack of communications, transportation, a means of exchange, and means of local production, everything became harder. “Taxi drivers became ‘kings’ or ‘generals’ for a variety of reasons: local knowledge, contacts, transportation, and communications,” he said.

Anic’s comments followed exactly with a book about the Yugoslavian War, “[Lie in the Dark](#)” by Foreign Correspondent Dan Fesperman. Anic further commented that, “Hard currency, preferably in large denomination notes (i.e., 100DM or US\$100) were still the best means of exchange.” Obviously, credit or debit cards did not work. Anic explained that, “coins were essentially useless; gold, jewelry, other similar tangibles did not work very well for trading either. Tobacco, cigarettes, alcohol, and coffee were always welcome in trade.” For a variety of uses, especially for radios and flashlights, batteries of standard types were also very welcome in trade.

According to Anic, “Some trade happened with weapons and ammunition; ammo was cheap and widely available but also heavy to carry in quantity.” Hospitals and physicians (and perhaps patients who require chronic lifesaving medication) should, “stockpile medications and medical supplies in advance, if possible.” Anic stated that they did not, “worry too much about expiration dates,” since most prescription medications are still safe and effective for some period beyond the expiration dates when kept in controlled environments. “Narcotics or illicit drugs were not exchanged in trade, as it was not a part of the culture,” he said. Finally, he stated with encouragement for any incident, “Remember this, somewhere, perhaps a long distance away, someone will have the resources you need. You just have to locate them.”

Communication, Transportation & Migration

The need for improved communications is the most frequently mentioned “after action” de-briefing item in disaster after disaster. The same was true in the former Yugoslavia. Anic stated, “AM and FM broadcasts continued throughout the war. HAM (amateur) radios were very helpful.” In fact, HAM radio links could be used to connect the local telephone system outside the conflict area, to pass messages to loved ones in another country.

In other communications, Anic said, “word of mouth information (rumors) passed amazingly fast, but it was not always accurate.” Because Anic was in the Bosnian military, he had access to the military communication systems. “The military always had communications

and was one of the best sources of outside information, if you could access it.” There was some civilian use of handheld radios for local communications, but this was not always reliable. “Public safety and emergency services communications were severely stretched,” he said.

“Early on, there was mass migration of the population. Anyone who could get out early, did so.” For those left behind, just getting around was a major effort. “Roads were controlled by the military. You had to have documentation to travel.” For persons who still had access to automobiles, “all the gas stations were empty; gasoline/diesel was a very critical and very scarce resource.” As such, gasoline was one of the most sought after items of trade because any gasoline remaining in underground tanks was inaccessible unless electricity was available to run the pumps.

Particular to this conflict, “migration within Yugoslavia was for alignment by race, religion, and culture.” Throughout the conflict, there was still trading between the opposing factions. However, two groups moved in and out of the conflict area transporting people. First, “transportation for refugees provided by the United Nations (UN) was a Godsend but rare.” Second, “human smugglers were in high demand and became rich as a result of their services.”

Public Health & Wellbeing

Although few did it, “stockpiling of nonperishable food in advance turned out to be important,” Anic said. Food was either consumed quickly or used in trade, so lack of food caused people to migrate from one area to another. However, despite a few specific nutritional deficiencies, Anic saw no signs of obvious starvation. A complex disaster such as war still brings about some predictable patterns of disease. For example, he said that, “Water borne and food borne illnesses were frequently on the rise. The elderly, pregnant women, and children were hit especially hard. Communicable disease increased in relationship to the duration of the emergency.” In contrast to some scenarios, “disposal of corpses turned out not to be such a risk for spread of infectious diseases, although the smell was horrific.” Many families had to bury their own. In addition, clean water was always in short supply, so those who did not have their own wells (with pump handles) had to “plan on carrying water some distance, each day.”

Anic is an amazingly resilient person. He was able to reflect back on some of his feelings during his time in the war zone, and experienced symptoms similar to post-traumatic stress disorder. He said that, “in a state of constant stress, you remain alert for possible threats,” yet “street smart (as opposed to book smart) people were much more resilient and better able to survive.” Unfortunately, those who were “nice, civilized people did not remain that way for very long.”

Weapons were ubiquitous in the former Yugoslavia, so snipers on the hillsides kept everyone in a constant state of fear. Surprisingly, people adapted and changed their patterns of behavior to accommodate that risk. Unfortunately, “weapons were equal to law” and

“people were willing to use them for personal benefit.” Even this many years later, Anic said that it is still difficult for him to completely relax and is always in a semi-alarm or increased alert state.

Anic dealt with many life-and-death decisions during his time in the conflict zone. “Physicians and others did the very best they could for their patients, with what was at hand. There were many hard choices to be made.” Patients in severe pain without hope of survival posed particularly difficult scenarios. As humanitarian assistance medicine has become increasingly professionalized since the 2005 tsunami/earthquake in Indonesia and the 2010 earthquake in Haiti, disaster responders must abide by the “highest possible” standards of medical care. This assumes the possibility of re-supply of pharmaceuticals and other consumables, as well as free movement of healthcare workers into and out of the “conflict zone.” In the former Yugoslavia, this was not the case (re-supply or free movement) for prolonged periods.

Call to Action

Although the experience that Anic and his family had was extreme and not as likely to occur in the United States, numerous other scenarios could result in an extended loss of power over a large geographic area. When that happens, hospitals will be especially vulnerable under current requirements, which include having only a limited number of days of fuel for the emergency electrical generation system. For example, during Hurricane Sandy in 2012, at least one large hospital lost power and had to close and evacuate its patients, so such requirements are being reviewed and updated as needed.

Education about the vulnerability of the power grid – especially for emergency planners and other policy makers – is essential. In addition, a continued call for preparedness at a variety of levels (individual, family, community, medical staff, and other hospital staff) would save many lives. In general, the concept of resilience – that is, to be able to “take a punch in the mouth and still remain standing,” to paraphrase Mike Tyson – is essential for healthcare institutions that plan to continue to provide healthcare during and after a disaster.

James Terbush, MD, MPH, belongs to an FBI sponsored organization Infragard EMP-SIG, which is focused on several specific threats such as a prolonged and widespread power outage. He was previously (2012-2014) the medical lead for Innovation and Experimentation, Science and Technology Directorate, North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD), and United States North Command. His particular area of interest is in protection of public health and healthcare critical infrastructure. <https://www.linkedin.com/in/jamesterbushmdmph>, <https://www.infragard.org/> and <https://www.empcenter.org/>

Dr. Rajko Anic graduated with a Doctorate of Medicine in 1988 from the University of Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina (former Yugoslavia). During the breakup of Yugoslavia, he was living and practicing medicine in Bosnia until 1993, when he left hometown of Zenica to move with his family to Germany. In 1999, he and his family emigrated to the United States (Colorado Springs, Colorado). Since 2004, he has been working for El Paso County Public Health. He proudly became a U.S. citizen in 2005.

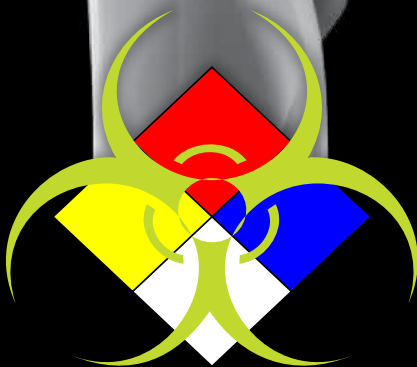
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