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\$5 Per Issue

Volume 1, Issue 8, April 20, 2005

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A Message From the Publisher

DomPrep CEO comments on Chertoff's CFSI speech, the FDIC conference in Indianapolis, and CBS's allegations of waste at DHS. His conclusion: Changes are needed – in the allocation of funds; in the management of programs; and in the attitude of the American people.

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System: "a set of things working together." The same definition applies to schools, hospitals, and government agencies. But how does the careful administrator ensure that all components of the system receive the individual training each needs, before exercising the system as a whole?

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DHS is accused of "throwing money" at the problem – which is partly true. The department's defense, also partly true, is that that is the way Congress wants it. A reordering of priorities is in the offing, though, and not all previous grant recipients will be pleased.

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Communities of Homeland Security**

Commentary: The Day Before The Day That Was

By Martin Masiuk
Publisher

Sometimes it seems more like September the 10th than September the 12th.

For preparedness professionals, who put their lives on the line every day, it will always seem like September the 12th. They will never forget the taste of the terrorists' dust. However, to many other elements of American society – including the political leaders who set policy and control the funding provided to those professionals, the bureaucracies at all levels of government who should be serving them, and the media that should be supporting them – it may be, for all practical purposes, September the 10th all over again.

To validate that statement, one needs only take a close look at three "events" of various types that occurred during the past few weeks: the annual dinner of The Congressional Fire Services Institute (CFSI); the Fire Department Instructor's Conference (FDIC); and the 10th of April 2005 edition of 60 Minutes, the popular Sunday night CBS news magazine.

Those attending the CFSI dinner in Washington or the FDIC meeting in Indianapolis – and/or viewing the 60 Minutes program – found their knowledge of homeland-security to have been pushed up another notch, so their time was well spent. Each of the two meetings, and the TV program, appealed to its own audience, and each set its own agenda. More important, though, is that, although they represented different points of view, all reached the same conclusion – namely, that well-trained, well-equipped, and well-prepared first responders mean a safer America.

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Mass Casualties: A Terrorist Crime-Scene Primer

By Neil C. Livingstone
Smart Security

Terrorist crime scenes are generally different from all other crime scenes, especially those involving terrorist attacks that result in mass casualties, and therefore present a unique set of problems for law-enforcement personnel in terms of complexity, crime-scene management, and the quantity and types of resources needed.

First, there is the matter of scale. Most terrorist crime scenes, especially those involving bombing attacks, encompass an area of land (and/or, sometimes, water) much larger than that of an "ordinary" crime scene. The Pan Am 103 crime scene, to consider but one notorious example, was spread out over 65 square miles; the crime scene for the bombed UTA flight covered more than 250 square miles.

To deal with the first of those disasters, every square foot of the massive area around Lockerbie, Scotland, where Pan Am 103 came down, was examined by British investigators. Ultimately, a tiny piece of a Swiss timer, no larger than the fingernail on a man's little finger, was recovered.

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Regrettably, there is much less unanimity in the answers to two of the most important questions facing the nation's decision makers today: How does the United States attain a comfortable level of safety? And, unless there is another attack, how does this nation maintain vigilance and zeal, and not slip back to the traditional American complacency exhibited for so many days, months, and years up to and including the 10th of September?

A Welcome Message for the Right Audience

At the CFSI dinner, Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Secretary Michael Chertoff was the keynote speaker. The principal thrust of his message was that DHS has heard the first responders' call for the HAZMAT placard system to stay as it is. For those not familiar with the subject, there had been a long-running debate about the system in which placards are prominently displayed to identify, by a coded number system, hazardous materials that are shipped in containers, trains, and trucks. Those who wanted to change the system said that it gives the terrorists readily identifiable targets to hit. Representatives of the HAZMAT community replied, though, that the system not only is workable as is but also gives them the information needed to properly, and safely, respond to emergencies of any type, not just terrorist attacks. Chertoff shrewdly chose the CFSI venue to announce, to the applause of the crowd, that DHS accepts that point of view and the placards will remain.

Chertoff also touched on the \$715 million DHS Firefighters Grant program for operations and safety equipment, and briefly discussed both the National Incident Management System and the National Response Plan. These remarks also received polite applause from the CFSI attendees. In addition, he mentioned the DHS Risk Assessment program, but without providing any substantive information on what that program will mean to the many fire officials in attendance, especially those who come from so-called "low-priority communities" that may be in danger of losing their Homeland grant funding. It seems safe to suggest that, if Chertoff had elaborated on the plan in any detail, the most likely reaction would have been a thunderous sound of silence.

Homeland Waste Spelled Out for the Masses

The producers of 60 Minutes also like applause, and they know that presenting "evidence" of government waste always has appeal. Featured on the 10th of April 2005 show was U.S. Representative Christopher Cox (R-Calif.), chairman of the House Homeland Security Committee and an ardent advocate of the DHS Risk Assessment program. Establishing a list of the most likely target priorities of would-be terrorists, and allocating the funds to be used to defend those targets, is one of the cornerstones of his personal homeland-grant philosophy.

To provide some visual zing to Cox's Risk Assessment message, viewers of 60 Minutes were shown air-conditioned garbage trucks and bulletproof vests for canines, with a segment on rap songs (focused on emergency preparedness, of course) thrown in for good measure – all of which were funded by homeland-security grants. To many viewers these apparent misuses of taxpayer dollars were distressingly reminiscent of the Defense Department's notorious purchases of \$600 hammers and \$1,500 toilet seats. Despite some allegations that were quickly disputed by DHS officials, the show underscored the need for a responsible DHS

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grant program based primarily on Risk Assessment and the allocation of funds to meet clearly identifiable homeland-security needs. The show's clear message – with which no one in Congress or at DHS would disagree – is that Congressional pork programs, no matter how articulately “justified,” ultimately hurt the very citizens they pretend to help.

Professionals Roll Up Their Sleeves

More than 27,000 firefighters and concerned citizens traveled to Indianapolis last week to attend the Fire Department Instructor's Conference, participate in one or more of the over 150 FDIC training classes available, and view the 800-plus exhibits at the huge annual show. The attendees also took advantage of the many valuable networking opportunities available, often enjoyed over good Midwestern food and beverages. Unlike those at the CFSI dinner and the 60 Minutes viewers, the FDIC attendees know the importance of preparedness from their own first-hand experience. Political speeches, Congressional pork programs, and self-righteous diatribes are not the most judicious subjects to discuss with this audience. In short, these are preparedness professionals who put their lives on the line every day, so they are looking for straightforward and easy-to-implement solutions.

Many private-sector homeland-defense companies were represented in Indianapolis, exhibiting a dazzling array of state-of-the-art equipment and providing some truly innovative technology solutions. Like many other industries geared to specific industries, the companies that support firefighters employ personnel trained in that profession to help potential customers make the right purchasing decision.

Not surprisingly, the message at FDIC differed in various particulars from that delivered at CFSI and viewed on 60 Minutes. At CFSI the Congressional message was “Help is on the way – just keep pressuring your local Congressman for more money.” The 60 Minutes show presented a story of waste, greed, misuse, and non-use of taxpayer funds. At FDIC, the message was much more practical in nature. Attendees learned, for example, that the supply chain has certain kinks in it. One, a very big kink, is that orders for necessary breathing devices, decontamination systems, protective garments, detection devices, and other essential equipment items needed by first responders are not being processed quickly enough. Bureaucratic red tape is blamed for the slow deliveries, and suppliers are being told that their orders are “in the mail” or “waiting for processing.”

There is another problem: When the equipment finally is delivered, it usually comes without a training component. One can only imagine the uproar that would ensue – appropriately – if the nation's armed services were found to be buying airplanes without providing training to the pilots who must fly them!

The same principle applies here: When high-tech systems, devices, or other equipment items of various types arrive at the fire hall and those who risk their lives to fight fires have not been given the training needed to properly operate this new and presumably safer and more effective equipment, the equipment cannot, and should not, be used, and the taxpayers' money has been wasted. (There is yet another difficulty worth mentioning: In those rare instances when adequate training is provided, there is usually no redundancy considered. It is clear, though, that if only one responder learns how to operate a particular device – and if that person is taken out of action for any reason – the device is useless.)

How does all the preceding relate to the 10th of September 2001? To this observer the answer is clear: Guardians of the homeland-security management system must be diligent in carrying out all of their important responsibilities: fighting complacency; investing homeland-defense funds when and where it makes the most sense; supporting the National Response Plan; and building a meaningful, effective, and cost-effective, risk-assessment program.

The American people should not have to be reminded that they are living at a very dangerous time in their nation's history. The United States cannot afford another Pearl Harbor wake-up call similar to the one that was delivered on the 11th of September 2001.

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Because it subsequently was traced to Libya, the timer fragment proved to be a critical piece of evidence showing that Libya was involved, in one way or another, in the conspiracy to blow up the U.S. jetliner.

Individually and together, the 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Center towers in New York City were the largest single-site disasters in U.S. history. The crime scene there encompassed almost all of lower Manhattan and other nearby areas, involved thousands of law-enforcement authorities, firemen, and investigators working around the clock for weeks and months, and the removal and sorting

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through of tens of thousands of tons of debris – in which a literally uncountable number of human body parts were embedded.

Chemicals, Politics, and Other Bloody Side Effects

Which brings up a second typical characteristic of terrorist crime scenes – namely, that they often are contaminated with scores of hazardous materials, including blood products and toxic chemicals.

A third typical aspect of terrorist crime scenes is that there is frequently a potential conflict between the hope to preserve the area as a crime scene and the more urgent requirement to address the needs of victims, particularly those who might still be trapped in the debris. In such situations, understandably, law enforcement is almost always forced to take a backseat to rescue operations.

Yet a fourth factor that must be taken into consideration is that, because of the large numbers of responders required to carry out a broad spectrum of tasks and responsibilities, there often are overlapping, and sometimes competing, layers of command and control, involving a varying but frequently large number of agencies. Not surprisingly, this usually leads to, among other difficulties, some serious communications problems.

Finally, because of the large number of victims, and the impact on state and local agencies as well as the federal government, terrorist attacks are, almost by definition, inherently political – and for that reason often become media circuses.

The All-Important Question; An Encyclopedia of Answers

Perhaps the most important question facing contingency planners at all levels of government, therefore, as they prepare to deal with such issues, is this: What should law-enforcement agencies do to better prepare for such attacks? Following, in the subject areas indicated, are a few comments, recommendations, and suggestions:

1) *Planning and Exercises* – The more planning done and training exercises completed prior to an “incident” the better. There will be no time available to work out the answers to problems once the incident has occurred. The degree of success law-enforcement agencies will enjoy in alleviating suffering, restoring order, minimizing property losses, and determining criminal responsibility will be directly related to the amount of time and effort that they have devoted to planning and preparing for such incidents. Exercises, in particular, will reveal problems related, for

example, to overlapping lines of authority, differing law-enforcement cultures, traffic control issues and the dispersal of emergency equipment, the communications difficulties mentioned earlier, and deficiencies in the resources needed.

2) *Secondary Devices* – Law-enforcement agencies and individuals responding to suspected terrorist crime scenes must now, always, be aware of and on the lookout for secondary explosive devices, which have become increasingly common in recent years in terrorist attacks throughout the world.

3) *Equipment and Resources Needed* – Because mass-casualty terrorist crime scenes are often contaminated by blood, body parts, sewage, and toxic chemicals – including PCBs from transformers and other dangerous substances – every effort must be made, as an initial and continuing priority, to protect first responders and crime-scene investigators. Among the equipment items that should be readily available at all times are gloves, hard hats, steel-toed boots, HAZMAT suits, respirators, and face masks. Portable generators and high-intensity lamps also will be needed so that rescuers and investigators can work around the clock if necessary – as after the 9/11 attacks. Barricades and pylons also are required to keep unauthorized persons from intruding into the crime scene. Digital cameras and video equipment will be needed so that the entire crime scene can be properly recorded – from as many angles and views as possible. Finally, body bags, evidence bags, storage boxes, and possibly auxiliary morgue facilities – such as refrigerated trucks – are on the mandatory resource list. A shortage of any of those items at the time of a terrorist attack – more accurately, before the attack takes place – might seriously handicap investigative efforts.

4) *Immunizations* – Because terrorist crime scenes are almost always contaminated, especially when there are decomposing bodies, it is strongly recommended that all rescue workers be immunized for – at least – tetanus, cholera, diphtheria, and typhus.

5) *Identification of the Dead* – This also has to be a top priority, not only to alleviate the suffering of victims’ families, but also for the settlement of estates, the validation of wills, proof of death (for insurance purposes), the possible remarriage of surviving spouses, and legal and financial adjustments of partnerships and businesses. Another reason for the complete and accurate identification of victims is that the kinds of wounds they suffered, and/or any shrapnel found in their bodies – all of which must be considered evidence – might assist in solving the case. For that reason alone, criminal investigators must be trained in body tagging, the precise recording of recovery locations,

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and the mundane but important filling out of disaster-victim forms. It should be kept in mind at all times that a simple scrap of clothing or piece of jewelry may be critical evidence in identifying a body, particularly in situations where fingerprint or dental records are inconclusive or not available.

6) *Money and Logistical Support* – The investigation of terrorist crime scenes almost always requires a huge amount of hard work and the extraordinary expenditure of both time and money. The sheer magnitude of the rescue, investigative, and recovery work required may involve thousands of people – all of whom will need food, shelter, and sanitary facilities – and mandate the early and continuing availability of a broad spectrum of equipment, reliable communications systems, and other logistical support. Tons of debris may have to be removed from the crime site and carefully sifted for clues. In addition, disposal sites must be found for the debris, which might well be hazardous and lead to other problems that only the Environmental Protection Agency may be able to deal with.

7) *Media Support* – By their very nature, terrorist crimes tend to be high-profile news events. The more celebrated the victims, or the greater their number, the more likely it is that the media will have a major interest in the incident. Whether they want to or not, federal, state, and/or local authorities on the scene will have little choice but to accommodate the media, because any effort to ignore them, or to bar them from the crime-scene site, is likely to result in a flood of unfavorable publicity and, justifiably or not, unpleasant criticism. To deal with such situations, all members of the media who show up at the crime scene should be properly vetted and, if they are legitimate representatives of the print or broadcast media, issued appropriate credentials. They should, however, be restricted to a clearly designated area where they will not be in the way and cannot disrupt or contaminate the crime scene. Preferably, that area should be a location – as in the Oklahoma City bombing – from which television news teams, for example, can film the disaster site in the background for the standups by on-camera reporters. Any reporter who violates the reasonable rules set down by the site commander can, and justifiably should, be expelled from the area and not permitted to return. Regular briefings for the media also are important. Such briefings should be both substantive and, whenever possible, responsive to the questions asked by the reporters. Here it should be remembered that, when reporters believe that briefers are being unresponsive, they will invariably look for other

sources. That might lead, in turn, to rumors and inaccuracies in their stories – and later press coverage might therefore take on a hostile tone.

8) *Nuclear/Biological/Chemical Attacks* – The personnel responding to mass-casualty terrorist attacks should be trained to sample the site, as quickly and as thoroughly as possible (while at the same time observing all relevant safety precautions), for chemical, biological, or radiological agents and residues. The failure to do so may turn what is already a serious calamity into a catastrophe of much greater magnitude.

Virtual Exercises: They're The Real Thing!

By Joseph J. Cahill
Emergency Medicine

The Oxford English Dictionary defines a system as “a set of things working together as a mechanism or interconnecting network.” There are many such systems in the public health world, and throughout the nation's private sector in general.

To begin with, there are entire groups of hospitals – sometimes within the same geographic area, sometimes not – bound together by a common ownership. Similarly, there are numerous schools – primary schools, middle schools, and high schools – within the same school district. The typical county or city government has a number of different agencies, headquartered at and/or working out of different locations, that are bound together primarily by the fact they are all working for the same constituency of citizens.

For a number of reasons, including but not limited to “ownership” (however that term is defined), matters affecting many if not all of the system components or facilities (e.g. hospitals, schools, government facilities, and the like) in the same group require common planning and, frequently, common use of the same emergency resources. This of course adds another level of complexity to any program of drills and training exercises that might be planned to deal with domestic-preparedness or other emergencies. It goes without saying that each individual school or facility must exercise its own emergency plans. In addition, the entire system – of schools, agencies, hospitals, etc. – also should be exercising as a group.

At a minimum, all of these exercises, and the emergency plans they are testing, and sometimes challenging, should help determine how the individual components of the system communicate and connect with one another. Or, of perhaps greater importance, how they do not communicate and connect. Such exercises, frequently if not always, are not only complicated but also rather expensive.

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Connectivity and Continuity

Traditionally, there has been a clear dividing line between full-scale exercises and what are called tabletop exercises. The latter are valuable as a development or teaching tool, and can be used, by representatives of the agencies involved in the plan, to run a draft plan through its paces.

A virtual tabletop is an exercise that is designed and run as a tabletop, with many if not all of the participants at different locations, however – but closely connected by the miracles of modern communications.

The principal value of this type of exercise is in testing the connectivity between system components. Instead of simply saying that a message will be sent to another component of the same system, that message really is sent. This approach tests the actual communications technologies – and the operator's knowledge of them – rather than just the written plan itself.

One example of how this would work would be when a hospital system decides to test a written emergency plan – more specifically, a plan that involves both the communications system and the business-continuity response teams. One option would be to carry out an extensive (and costly) functional exercise that takes emergency-team personnel from their day-to-day tasks and requires them to assume the roles they would play in a real emergency. Doing this would mean that the vacancies thus created would have to be backfilled with overtime staff. This has a great deal of value, but may not be practical at all times, and testing these aspects of the emergency plan may not always be desirable.

Another possible option would be to carry out a traditional tabletop exercise in which the participants gather in the same room and run through a scenario. In this simulation, the participants would be provided an introductory story line and then asked what they would do in response. Additional information would be provided by the moderator from time to time as and when needed, and various components of the plan would be verbally activated. This interplay could continue back and forth for a considerable period of time, moving through an entire plan.

A Realistic Scenario and Credible Time Line

In today's era of tight budgets and rising populations hospital administrators are more and more reluctant to take staff off-line even for something as important – and, frankly, as mandated both by law and by common sense – as emergency planning and training.

This brings up yet a third option – namely, to schedule an exercise that straddles the two extremes previously discussed. This option is particularly well suited for a system in which there are a number of separate facilities run as independent entities, but operating under a common upper-level management structure. The common denominators here are the multiple locations, with distinct command structures for each facility in the system, and a common upper level of management that typically carries out most of its management tasks through a middle management layer.

Rather than requiring the managers of each facility to gather in a central location for a tabletop exercise, a virtual tabletop can be used – at least to test the communications plan for the system. This would require the development of a realistic scenario, preferably created by the members of an experienced development team (often referred to as trusted agents) who are familiar with the system emergency plan.

In addition to knowledge of the plan, the trusted agents must possess a broad enough base of knowledge to foresee the impact of various events in the scenario. In the example cited, it would help if at least one of the trusted agents knows which communications pathways would or would not work during a power outage, and what backup power is available. The trusted agents should not take part in the exercise, because they already know what is coming next. However, they may be useful as evaluators/controllers.

The scenario should include not only the initial status quo but also a credible time line that provides the testing of “injects” of various types at some if not all of the facilities participating.

This virtual scenario structure does not vary substantially from that of the traditional tabletop. It provides, however, a simpler and less costly method for conducting the actual exercise. The participants would report to the same work locations they do in a normal workweek.

Ideally, the beginning scenario should start in one of the facilities that, according to the story line, is dealing with a deviation from its normal workday operation – perhaps an increased patient flow, or a local crisis, such as a power outage at one of three facilities in the system being tested. In this example, the exercise controller(s) would provide information about the initial scenario by phoning a participant, from an appropriate level of management, who represents the affected facility.

Again, more specifically: In the example cited, the scenario would start with a call to the administrator of the hospital directly affected. It is important to stress in all messages that “This is a drill” and make this clear to all who hear or read it. Although a power outage would be readily apparent to

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the manager if it were really occurring, many other types of emergencies would not be quite so apparent. The last thing that an emergency manager needs is to start a panic similar to that caused by Orson Welles in his famous but fictitious 1938 "War of the Worlds" radio broadcast.

The Strength of a Well-Scripted Scenario

Equally important is that the controller tells the manager who is first contacted the scope and extent of play that has been established for the exercise – including, for example, the levels of management involved, the identities of the other players, and the instructions they have been given. The most important instruction, however, is that they should use any type of communications that are available to them. It is imperative that this part of the scenario be well scripted and delivered so that the managers participating know that they are not expected to be going it alone.

The controller should continue stating, "This is a drill" – and also should continue to explain that the facility has lost power. This is the point where the real strength of this type of exercise becomes apparent. The first critical action that must be evaluated is how the information that there has been a loss of power is conveyed, and to whom. Here there are several questions that must be answered, including but not limited to the following: Does the first manager who was given the initial scenario contact upper-management decision makers? Do they in turn call the system's emergency team together? Or, perhaps, do they try to solve the entire crisis by themselves? More generally, do they take the notification actions that have been prescribed in the plan being tested? How do they react to communications failures?

The fact that they are in their normal work facilities and have been expressly instructed to use the forms of communications available to them forces them to test those means of communications. This situation might be compared to what a manager might do sitting at his or her desk and dealing with a crisis by contacting others. Phones that are assumed to be available may not be; or they may not work. Such information would be invisible in the traditional tabletop exercise, but readily apparent in the virtual tabletop.

As various injects present problems to the players, they should pass information and requests for action to other players to solve the problem rather than giving their responses to the controllers. In this way the action progresses in much the same way it would during a real crisis – i.e., over the phone. In this example, the end result would be that the affected facility either restores power or moves its patients to a safe location.

As play progresses the scenario injects may be presented to any of the participating managers. This distribution of tests and challenges would allow the play to progress as the action probably would in reality, and would permit as much of the communications infrastructure to be tested as possible.

This type of exercise is particularly relevant to the flow of communications. Its strength is that the participants cannot rely on one another's reactions to gauge the correctness of their own actions, nor can they overhear information that they would not actually know in a real emergency. The fog of war becomes a real player in this type of exercise. The only way that information can or should flow in this type of exercise is when the participants move it through a viable channel.

Finally, because the system's real communications routes are forced into use, their real effectiveness is shown. If they do not actually work, or if – for any of a number of other reasons – it is not possible to use them, the information stays put, and this becomes painfully evident to all involved.

That, of course, should lead to remedial action as soon as possible – which validates the requirement for the exercise and makes the final outcome not a partial failure but an actual success.

Risks and Realities, Grants and Vulnerabilities

By James D. Hessman
Coast Guard

Neither the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) itself, nor any of the numerous congressional committees that have jurisdiction over DHS funding and operations, is able to determine whether the tens of billions of dollars the department has been provided to date are being spent wisely or well. One example of the confusion that now exists is that for the past two years Congress has appropriated "billions of dollars ... to enhance the terrorism preparedness of first responders." But there is a growing body of evidence that at least some of that money is spent for equipment and programs not related to terrorism preparedness, and that no one at DHS knows how much money has been wasted, and for what purposes.

Under current law, though, it should be emphasized, the huge sums provided to DHS cannot be spent by that department as part of a concentrated and tightly controlled program to ensure that U.S. taxpayer dollars are used primarily to protect the most vulnerable targets, and the ones most appealing to terrorists – e.g., nuclear power plants, major U.S. ports, and the tunnels and bridges leading into New York City. Instead, the funds are

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distributed somewhat haphazardly to cities and states throughout the country “without any [prior] analysis of risk,” and the grateful recipients then “look for ways to spend the money.”

DHS is, at worst, therefore, only partly responsible for the “abuses” this process leads to, because most of the discretionary “grant” funds it distributes are allocated in accordance with rules set down by Congress itself.

The preceding charges probably would be described as “shocking” or “scandalous” if they were included in the executive summary of a CBO (Congressional Budget Office) or GAO (Government Accountability Office) report, or a Brookings Institution or Heritage Foundation study. Their source, though, is not only much more authoritative than any of those respected institutions but also quite possibly the best-positioned person in Washington, D.C., to correct the problems with the present system by replacing it with a new, more effective, and much more cost-effective process for the allocation of government funds: Rep. Christopher Cox (R-Calif.), chairman of the House Committee on Homeland Security and, in that post, probably the most influential member of either the House or Senate on matters related to homeland defense and domestic preparedness in general.

Chertoff Orders “Second-Stage Review”

The charges of possible abuses in the allocation of grant funds and wasteful spending not just by DHS but by Congress itself were included in Cox’s opening statement at last week’s full committee hearing on the promotion of “Risk-Based Prioritization and Management.” Without blaming DHS itself – which, he commented, distributes grant funds “with the complicity, if not outright direction, of Congress” – Cox said he had long advocated that federal programs “to prevent, prepare for, and respond to terrorist attacks” should be based primarily on an assessment of the risks and vulnerabilities involved.

The “risk-based approach,” he added, “should be expanded beyond specific grant programs to encompass all the department’s activities.” It would, Cox conceded, require “strong leadership and clear congressional direction ... to instill risk-based prioritization into the formulation of [DHS] budgets, policies, and programs.” But that approach is necessary “to enhance our national security” and also is “critical” to the nation’s long-term economic security.

The leadoff witness at the hearings, DHS Secretary Michael Chertoff – making his first appearance before the Cox Committee – not only agreed with the chairman’s comments but seemed to have anticipated them. In the past two years, Chertoff said, the department’s 180,000-plus people had made “great strides” and had demonstrated “unflinching resolve and a driving determination that such an attack [the 9/11 terrorist attacks on the Pentagon and the World Trade Center towers] should never occur on American soil again.”

But much more still has to be done, he said, to prepare the department, and the nation, to meet future threats, particularly in the coordination of intelligence, policy, and operational issues throughout DHS. This requires “an unwillingness to accept complacency,” Chertoff emphasized. “Old jurisdictions,” “old turfs,” and “old stove-pipes” should be torn down, and the emphasis has to be on the future.

To meet that lofty goal, the DHS secretary said, he had ordered that a “comprehensive review” be carried out “of the organization, operations, and policies of the department as a whole.” A team of senior DHS officials has been appointed to carry out the “Second-State Review,” as Chertoff described it, and will report back to him “by Memorial Day” with a list of recommendations. He used “maritime cargo security” – because it “cuts across several departmental components” – as an example of what he hopes to achieve: “Customs and Border Protection, Coast Guard, Science and Technology, Information Analysis and Infrastructure Protection, and the Transportation Security Administration each address aspects of this overall mission [maritime cargo security]. Each might perform its element well, but we must go further to ensure that each is performing seamlessly and in coordination with the others, that we eliminate any duplication of effort, and that we reap the full strength of our wide spectrum of capabilities.”

Addressing the topic of risk assessment per se, Chertoff concurred with Cox that a risk-based approach is needed “in both our operations and our philosophy.” The department will have to be “realistic” in setting forth its priorities, though, and must “assess the full spectrum of threats and vulnerabilities.” The assessment of risk, moreover, cannot be made in a vacuum, but requires using “a trio of threat, vulnerability, and consequence as a general model for assessing risk and deciding on the protective measures we undertake.”

Although still relatively new to his job, Chertoff added a politically shrewd “note of caution” by pointing out that “the media and the public often focus principally on threats.” Nonetheless, although threats “are important,” they should not be, he said, “automatic instigators of

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Risks and Realities, Grants and Vulnerabilities

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action.” A terrorist attack “on the two-lane bridge down the street from my house,” he said, picking a close-to-home example, “... has a relatively low consequence compared to an attack on a major metropolitan multi-lane bridge.

“At the other end of the spectrum,” he added, shifting to the ultimate terrorist scheme, “even a remote threat to detonate a nuclear bomb is a high-level priority because of the catastrophic effect” such an attack would create.

Short-Term Analysis: Although there will be additional hearings, and some trading back and forth between various committees – and between the Senate and the House – it seems likely at this stage that DHS funding for fiscal year 2006 will be relatively close to the overall total requested by President Bush. In view of the opinions already expressed by Chertoff and Cox (and other members of the committee), it also seems likely that there will be much tighter controls on grant programs in the future. This does not necessarily translate into lower appropriations – and, in fact, there may well be significantly higher appropriations for a number of projects that have been well substantiated. The writing of funding proposals, therefore, will require not as much creative writing as before but, to begin with, extremely clear writing. After that, the proposal will have to stand on its merits.

Sidebars: (1) One of the most interesting (but not necessarily the most comprehensive or authoritative) reports on alleged “abuses” in the allocation of grant funds appeared on the 10 April edition of CBS’s 60 Minutes, which used the following and other examples to make its case: Converse, Texas, used DHS funds for the purchase of a “homeland-security trailer” which was then used to carry riding lawn mowers to local lawnmower races; Newark, N.J., spent \$250,000 “on air-conditioned garbage trucks”; and Washington, D.C., spent some of its grant funds for a new emergency operations center (a reasonable expenditure, it would seem), and other funds “to send sanitation workers to a Dale Carnegie course” – allegedly to help them develop the skills needed to deal with panicky customers in the aftermath of a disaster. Some citizens would question the absolute importance of the latter expenditure.

(2) Veronique de Rugy, a National Research Initiative research fellow at the American Enterprise Institute (AEI), has recently updated (on 1 April 2005) an AEI Working Paper (“What Does Homeland Security Buy?”) that spells out, clearly and succinctly, some of the major issues involved in the allocation of DHS funds for grant

programs. Her 35-page monograph is exceptionally well documented (203 footnotes) and is highly recommended as an essential primer for those who want to know more about what to many Americans is a complex and somewhat esoteric subject. For more information about the de Rugy Working Paper see www.aei.org/workingpapers

States of Preparedness

By Anthony Lanzillotti
State Homeland News

OHIO

Tests Lake Erie Dirty-Bomb Scenario

Just two weeks before the major “TOPOFF3” exercise tapped major resources in New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut, the state of Ohio held its own much smaller tabletop exercise. The Ohio scenario, which focused on the threat posed by a sea-borne radiological dispersal device, postulated the hiding of a “dirty bomb” somewhere within a vessel at a port facility on Lake Erie. The list of participants for the daylong exercise, which took place at the Maumee Bay State Park, included the Ohio Emergency Management Agency, the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR), the Ohio National Guard, the Ohio State Police, and various county agencies from across the state. The U.S. Coast Guard, U.S. Customs and Border Protection, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation also participated in the exercise.

ODNR, which sponsored the exercise, asked the participating agencies to discuss and develop plans for addressing the threat posed by a radiological device within the multi-jurisdictional port area. The exercise yielded several valuable lessons learned and allowed the agencies involved to assign roles and responsibilities, address some difficult communications and logistics issues, and practice coordination between and among the federal, state, and local agencies participating. A full-scale drill is planned for a later date.

CALIFORNIA

Stage-Manages VBIEDs, Student Victims

California, another state actively participating in drills and exercises emphasizing responses to terrorist incidents, carried out a 24-hour exercise at an abandoned housing complex in Monterey County on Saturday, April 9, that involved more than 20 local, state, and federal agencies and over 180 first responders, including SWAT teams and hazmat response personnel.

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Also participating were a number of EMS (emergency medical services) students – “dressed up” for the occasion with realistic fake injuries – who were playing the roles of victims. The training scenario included drills dealing with vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices (VBIEDs), radiological materials, structural damage to buildings, and the care of multiple victims. The exercise, the county's largest ever, was funded through a homeland security grant. The scenario was made more realistic by the damaging of certain sections of buildings and the positioning of wrecked vehicles and human dummies in and around the buildings.

Related Note: California's Statewide Emergency Management Strategic Plan is available in draft form for viewing (www.oesstrategicplan.net). The California Office of Emergency Services (OES) spearheaded the drafting of the plan, working in cooperation with an advisory task force made up of a cross-section of stakeholders representing various state, local, and federal agencies and organizations. Officials said that comments on the plan are welcome.

MINNESOTA

Sets Statewide Tornado Watch

A different type of drill will be run next week in Minnesota, which has scheduled a statewide tornado drill for Thursday, April 21. The event will actually consist of two separate drills. A tornado watch will be simulated at 0900 hours, and the first drill will be run at 1345 hours, allowing schools, businesses, and emergency-services agencies to practice sheltering. A second drill, scheduled for 1855 hours, will allow families and workers on other shifts to practice their sheltering plans as well.

The Minnesota Homeland Security and Emergency Management (HSEM) agency is also offering training courses at a number of locations throughout the state. One such course, on the Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP), is available on various dates in April and May. The training is free for state and local agency personnel who are eligible for such training. Travel expenses will be covered by funding from the U.S. Office of Domestic Preparedness, a DHS (Department of Homeland Security) agency. Another course being offered in both April and May is a Train-the-Trainer Awareness Level course on weapons of mass destruction. This free two-day course is designed to help participating agency members in their training of other personnel at mutually convenient times and locations.

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