



# The Beacon



**By and for first responders**

## EXERCISE "BASELINE" – TRAINING FOR TERRORISM

*Editor's Note: The following excerpts are from an article previously published in the FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin and provides an example of an exercise that was conducted in 1997. Some protocols and operations may have changed. The NDPO is publishing these excerpts to provide an example of WMD exercise development. The article's full text can also be found in the January 2000 issue of FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin.*

**Dateline: November 19, 1997, New London, Connecticut.** At approximately 11:30 this morning, the US Naval Submarine Base at New London, Connecticut, became the target of a possible terrorist attack. Initial reports indicate that hostages may have been taken, although the number of hostages is unknown, and the terrorists have not made public demands at this time. A railroad tanker carrying hazardous materials appears to have derailed inside the base; however, it remains unclear if this derailment is related to the hostage taking . . . .

This broadcast interrupted the workday for hundreds of local, state, and federal law enforcement officers, military personnel, and public safety employees. Fortunately, the scenario was fictitious; it was, in fact, a training exercise designed to test the ability of jurisdictions to respond to the terrorist attacks that many experts believe are inevitable. Without such training scenarios, American towns remain vulnerable to a terrorist attack employing weapons of mass destruction (WMD). All levels of government, from the executive branch of the federal government to city and town leaders, must consider how they would manage a WMD attack.

Nothing provides a more effective preparation than an actual hands-on exercise. One such exercise, "Baseline," involved the FBI's New Haven, Connecticut, Field Office, and the US Naval Submarine Base in New London, Connecticut. It became the first test of the FBI WMD Joint Operations Center (JOC) model, which seeks to provide a command, control, communications, and intelligence architecture for all participating agencies; coordinate all crisis resolution and subsequent consequence management operations; and unify interagency emergency management functions.

## **Establishing the Baseline**

In June 1996, the FBI's New Haven Field office conducted an assessment survey that identified the US Navy Submarine Base at New London as a high-value facility vulnerable to terrorist action. In addition, the New London area serves as home to the company that builds and fits many of the nation's nuclear submarines. Because of the FBI's lead role in terrorist incidents, a senior-level FBI agent served as the on-scene commander. He coordinated with the base commander, who played an integral role in the JOC command group and participated in all critical decisions during the exercise.

## **The Scenario**

For training to provide significant value, realism must play a central role. The planning and preparation phase took place over an 18-month period and included multiagency crisis management training. This training involved lessons the FBI learned from actual WMD incidents. To foster the interest of all participants, each participating agency having potential emergency management responsibilities for the area provided input to develop the scenario, as well as its goals and objectives, to ensure applicability for their respective agency functions. Agencies from the state of Connecticut, the federal government, and the military, as well as local police and fire services, provided participants. The exercise intended to facilitate a positive interaction among all agencies and to familiarize other agencies with the FBI's crisis management model.

To reinforce basic crisis management principles and to foster improved liaison during an actual WMD incident, all agencies with potential emergency management responsibilities for the area were invited. Ultimately, 16 agencies, with over 100 representatives, participated in the scenario.

A multiagency working group developed scenario requirements, which focused on a credible chemical/biological threat from a domestic terrorist group. The scenario included an explosion and a derailment of railroad cars carrying hazardous material (HazMat) on the submarine base. This served as a diversion and gave sufficient experience to state and local responders for consequence management of a HazMat/WMD incident. Additionally, the terrorist group took control of a building on the base and held hostages. This increased the threat and required negotiations, which eventually resolved the threatened release of a chemical/biological agent.

The working group based the design philosophy of the scenario on reality. As part of the exercise plan, the group selected the biological agent based on what an average person could reasonably exploit with minimal training, public-source information, such as the Internet, and readily obtainable ingredients. At the same time, the scenario did not employ often-used biological agents, which have well-documented characteristics and may have generated predictable, textbook solutions. Instead, the group selected rabies as the biological threat agent. Potential terrorists could produce distributable volumes of the virus without sophisticated lab equipment by trapping diseased livestock. From a psychological perspective, the general public almost universally recognizes and fears rabies, adding to the scenario's reality.

In addition, a technician working with bomb experts devised, produced, and tested a realistic, practical delivery system at the FBI Academy. Each delivery device, upon command detonation, would release an aerosol mist of the deadly rabies virus.

Drawing upon composite profiles of likely domestic terrorists, the group developed characters of four disgruntled Vietnam War veterans. The fictitious characters possessed a military background in special operations or health services and formed friendships. They

shared their views at veterans events about the failure of the government to acknowledge and provide medical care for veterans exposed to Agent Orange and Gulf War Syndrome (GWS). Additionally, they each had children who suffered from GWS symptoms. Because of their backgrounds and beliefs, the characters demanded immediate government acknowledgment of GWS and paid medical treatment for veterans and their families.

### **Agency Coordination**

To ensure involvement by all exercise participants, the scenario required action and coordination among all agencies. The exercise involved two related events at the submarine base. The first event, the deliberate derailment of a train, included a number of tank cars that contained very large quantities of hazardous compounds. The derailment technique ensured that the train overturned and hazardous fluids leaked from the tank cars. The explosive charge that caused the derailment also spread an incendiary mixture, which enhanced the airborne dissemination of toxic materials, further complicating the HazMat response. This derailment initiated a first response by local police and fire units and their establishment of a local ICS to deal with the HazMat and train derailment situation. First, the local police and fire departments implemented the local ICS to determine the extent of injuries or fatalities and to assess the effects of the explosion. The FBI's exercise objective was to test the integration of an ongoing ICS with the FBI JOC. To ensure realism, the participants walked the actual railhead in the planning phase and used public access information to identify the contents of scheduled trains. By knowing the train's schedule and its contents, the terrorists determined the most effective time to execute their plan.

The second event occurred at noon, approximately 30 minutes after the train derailment. The actors seized a fast-food restaurant and held the occupants hostage. After moving the hostages to the roof of the building

due to the need to disperse the biological agent in the air, they demanded that the President or the Secretary of Defense admit to both deliberately contaminating the environment and endangering the health of the military forces and surrounding communities. The adversaries prepared to disseminate approximately 3.5 gallons of the rabies if the president or secretary failed to make such an admission. The crisis response plan included activating the JOC. The FBI responded to the crisis in less than one hour. Extensive negotiation partially achieved crisis resolution when the hostage takers released some of the hostages. However, the detonation of the biological agent appeared imminent when the subjects became irrational with the negotiator. The hostage taker picked up the detonator device, presenting a danger to the hostages. At this point, negotiations broke down with the subjects, and the decision makers exercised final tactical solution by using both special weapons and tactics and hostage rescue team members to intervene.

### **Exercise Methodology**

Unlike the active military, most federal, state, and local agencies lack the required on-scene infrastructure to rapidly establish an operating command post. Accordingly, the planning group requested that the National Guard provide critical communications and logistical support. The group housed the crisis and consequence management team under one roof. The planners established emergency operations centers for the state's Office of Emergency Management (OEM), FEMA, and submarine base, local cities and towns, and state police, as well as major industries in the area. The group placed the crisis and consequence management operations together to facilitate the exchange of information during the exercise and to provide a learning experience for all parties to observe the full spectrum of exercise activities.

The scenario accommodated a briefing, a 4 to 5 hour exercise, and, finally, a postexercise "hot wash" (when agencies immediately discussed the most salient points of

the exercise), all within the time constraints of a single shift for state and local agencies. During the exercise, the chief exercise controller displayed the sequence of events on an overhead projector as they occurred. The FBI and the state OEM developed possible actions, investigative leads, and responses for crisis and consequence management. An internal telephone system established by the National Guard connected exercise controllers in separate rooms to crisis and consequence management components. These controllers injected descriptive items at the appropriate times during the incident while radio traffic and couriers provided written directions to supplement internal telephone traffic. For example, the controllers could increase the momentum of the exercise to stimulate interaction or discussion by calling the JOC and advising that a local militia group, out of sympathy for the hostage takers, was coming to the base to help them in their mission.

All exercise participants and observers received identification badges and briefing books prior to the exercise. The local police department provided security for the exercise area. In order to optimize the learning experience and to improve interoperability among agencies, a signpost clearly identified each component. Extensive use of a public address system and cinema screen multimedia projection system ensured that all participants received regular updates on the status of the scenario. Additionally, participants dealt with other issues of concern during the protracted operation, including shift changes, rest room breaks, and nourishment needs. Finally, the large number of agencies using computers and other high-tech electronic devices illustrated the need for an adequate, stable power supply, which the site provided.

### **Postexercise Assessment**

Immediately after the resolution of the crisis and the hot wash, the participants gathered to make observations and suggestions. A single representative from each participating agency

provided a general and limited critique of the exercise. The working group prepared and furnished a transcript of comments to all participants. Agency representatives commented that the exercise proved a positive and worthwhile experience. At the same time, they gained a new appreciation for the amount of resources involved in the planning, preparation, execution, and after-action activity for the exercise. Training and briefing initiatives over the 18-month period required substantial commitment by all participants. Other federal, state, and local agencies learned how to work with a variety of agencies that have different jurisdictions and authority. Unlike the military, which has a built-in training cycle, federal, state, and local agencies must continue normal operations while conducting exercises.

The inadequacies of training and equipment and the lack of a full understanding of medical and decontamination requirements in response to a WMD incident became apparent during the exercise. These inadequacies, although anticipated, advocated the purpose of supporting legislation, such as the Nunn-Lugar bill, which approved WMD preparedness training for state and local law enforcement agencies. Additionally, this exercise served as a catalyst for the FBI and the state in which it was held to conduct a seminar for health care professionals concerning medical preparations to respond to a WMD incident. The Navy also left the exercise with a better appreciation for WMD incident preparation.

The Baseline Exercise also highlighted a collective problem of information flow among the various agencies of the JOC. Typically, each agency deployed an intelligence group responsible for collecting and analyzing information that focused on the essential elements for that organization. This often resulted in incomplete and narrowly interpreted intelligence, leading to distorted analysis and inaccurate assessments. As a result of this problem, the FBI developed the Joint Interagency Intelligence Support Element (JIISE), a component of the JOC. The JIISE

created a responsive intelligence architecture consisting of a collection management section, a dissemination section, and a current intelligence section. These sections, integrated accurate and up-to-date information, and enabled on-scene commanders to make the best possible decisions based on this knowledge

### **Addressing the Media**

On the day of the event, participants announced the exercise with a press release, drawing immediate and considerable media attention. The press release aimed to preempt any public misperception of the exercise and to ensure citizens that confident, organized preparations existed to deal with a WMD incident. Although exercise planners anticipated the media's high level of interest, they reacted as they would to an actual event; they answered questions concerning terrorism, in particular, a WMD incident. In this way, the exercise became even more realistic. To ensure the safety of media representatives, the command group denied them an actual view of the incident and selected a predetermined location for the media to consult with spokespersons from the FBI, Navy, and local town. Additionally, the command group provided photo opportunities of an area near the incident site and authorized all press releases. With their needs met as much as possible, the media cooperated.

### **Prosecuting Terrorists**

No federal statute exists that defines terrorism as a crime. The US government investigates, arrests, and convicts terrorists under existing criminal statutes; places suspected terrorists under arrest, regardless of nationality; and provides access to legal counsel and judicial due process, including Fifth Amendment privileges. Accordingly, all agencies involved in WMD crisis or consequence management must preserve evidence, document actions and observations, and coordinate such information with the FBI.

### **Conclusion**

Terrorism involving weapons of mass destruction requires that leaders at all levels think outside conventional counterterrorism and hazardous materials programs, requiring an honest assessment of weaknesses and the development and implementation of corrective actions.

The Baseline exercise represents lessons learned in this first incident as well as the remaining amount of work to do in training and preparing for such a crisis. Although the FBI remains responsible for the crisis management of any terrorist incident in the US, the successful resolution of both the crisis and consequences requires that all government agencies and private organizations immediately develop interagency liaison, cooperation, and training. The first opportunity to meet one another's counterparts and lay the groundwork for responding to a terrorist threat should not wait until the aftermath of an actual WMD crisis: those who will harm the national security of the US will not wait

### **OJP ANNOUNCEMENT**

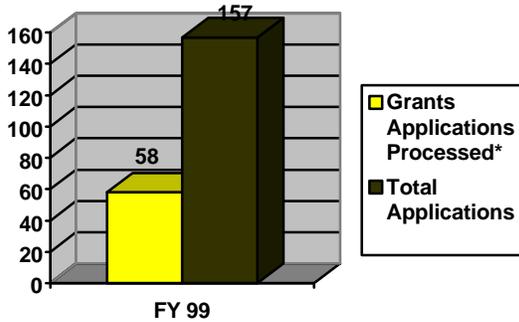
The Office for State and Local Domestic Preparedness (OSLDPS), Office of Justice Programs (OJP), in coordination with the NDPO, is pleased to announce that the funding applications for the Fiscal Year 1999 State Domestic Preparedness Support Equipment Program were delivered to gubernatorial designated state agencies on February 2, 2000.

In recognition of the role local jurisdictions play in any WMD response, it is expected that local police, fire, hazardous material, and emergency medical units will receive the majority of funds under this program.

For up-to-date information on the Fiscal Year 1999 State Domestic Preparedness Support Equipment Program, see the OJP webpage at [www.ojp.usdoj.gov/osldps/](http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/osldps/). For other specific questions relating to OSLDPS grant funded

programs and initiatives, call Scott Kelberg at the NDPO at 202-324-9034.

### **FY 1999 County and Municipal Domestic Preparedness Equipment Support Program**



*\* OJP is working diligently to award all 157 cities.*

### **NDMS ANNOUNCES ANNUAL CONFERENCE**

The US Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Emergency Preparedness, National Disaster Medical System's (NDMS) 2000 Conference entitled "Catastrophic Care for the Nation," will take place April 29<sup>th</sup> through May 3<sup>rd</sup> in Las Vegas, NV. The conference will include courses on telecommunications, injury simulation, emergency response and planning, and mass fatality incident response. The conference will also feature interagency meetings. For additional information on the conference or to register online, please visit the NDMS website at [www.oep-ndms.dhhs.gov](http://www.oep-ndms.dhhs.gov).

### **WEBSITE OF THE MONTH**

This month's featured website is the Journal of the American Medical Association article entitled WMD Events With Contaminated Casualties – Effective Planning for Health Care Facilities. The website is at <http://jama.ama-assn.org/issues/v283n2/full/jsc90100.html>.

The abstract of the article indicates that "biological and chemical terrorism is a growing concern for the emergency preparedness community. While health care facilities (HCFs) are an essential component of the emergency response system, at present they are poorly prepared for such incidents. The greatest challenge for HCFs may be the sudden presentation of large numbers of contaminated individuals. Guidelines for managing contaminated patients have been based on traditional hazardous material response or military experience, neither of which is directly applicable to the civilian HCF. We discuss HCF planning for terrorist events that expose large numbers of people to contamination. Key elements of an effective HCF response plan include prompt recognition of the incident, staff and facility protection, patient decontamination and triage, medical therapy, and coordination with external emergency response and public health agencies. Controversial aspects include the optimal choice of personal protective equipment, establishment of patient decontamination procedures, the role of chemical and biological agent detectors, and potential environmental impacts on water treatment systems. These and other areas require further investigation to improve response strategies."

**National Domestic Preparedness Office  
Director, Thomas M. Kuker  
935 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W., Rm. 11286  
Washington, D.C. 20535  
202-324-9025, fax: 202-324-2224**