



NATIONAL HOMELAND SECURITY CONSORTIUM SUMMARY

June 28-29, 2011 ♦ Seattle, Washington

June 28, 2011

Welcome & Introductions

Consortium Tri-Chairs, Gen. Terry Nesbitt (AGAUS), John Madden (GHSAC), and Joe Wainscott (NEMA)

Self Introductions of Participants

Interactive Discussion: The Japan Disaster and Lessons Learned for the United States

The event revealed significant issues with interdependencies and raised questions about the roles of mitigation, the private sector, and traditional response and recovery doctrine. Operationally, the predictions of the tsunami track, size, and speed were all accurate and forecasts were no more than 10 percent off from the actual impact. While the major systems of notifications worked, they did tend to become saturated.

The tsunami hit the U.S. Mainland in the middle of the night and in some remote areas which challenged authorities with how to communicate effectively. Washington state officials knew early-on it would likely not be necessary to evacuate the coast thanks to dependable and accurate data from the tsunami buoys. Culling through vast amounts of information became difficult especially once the mainstream media began making unrealistic predictions. Local media which had exercised and trained with local officials, however, were far more informed and helpful in communicating with the public.

The event shifted dramatically as it went from the earthquake, to the tsunami, and finally to the danger of a nuclear incident. This shift also changed the event from a west coast incident to one impacting the entire nation. Nuclear experts represented a new partnership for public health officials. The biggest challenge became a run on potassium iodide despite officials indicating it was not needed. The need for maintaining public calm remained one of the biggest tasks. Federal officials performed poorly in managing information and staying on top of public fears. The EPA and NRC remained quiet during the discussion by state officials as to whether potassium iodide would be necessary.

States also took advantage of the opportunity to use the event as a teachable moment for the public. This event brought-up the challenge of managing a disaster with little to no physical damage. It became an event of public information and outreach. One of the biggest struggles politically in Washington, DC was managing a disaster in a foreign and sovereign country which impacted the US. Information was hard to acquire at times, and multiple federal agencies became involved.

A suggestion for “next steps” was to have the NHSC convene a roundtable of media representatives to discuss some of the communications issues from the Japanese event. In summary, participants saw three key lessons learned:

1. There was a failure to think big and anticipate catastrophic events
2. The assumptions of physical destruction of infrastructure is lacking in our planning documents; and,
3. The interdependencies and “just in time” aspects of our economy are exposed through such an event.

The WH is developing a Supply Chain Strategy and the question was raised as to whether the NHSC could provide comments.

Interactive Discussion: Are we Prepared to Handle a Catastrophic Earthquake? Initial Observations and Lessons Learned from NLE 2011

Tim Manning provided an overview of how the exercise was conducted. It was the largest-ever civilian exercise including massive private sector participation simulating multiple earthquakes along the New Madrid Seismic Zone. FEMA still working through the after-action process, but will take their time to make sure justice is done to all the work of the participating states.

One of the primary goals was the test all the new processes and policies FEMA has put in place. They learned that some worked well and others did not. Mission critical findings included:

- Efforts such as the pre-scripted mission assignments were not necessarily as effective as had been anticipated. FEMA will work toward making them more mission-ready.
- The USAR capacity in the US is not where it needs to be. There were also challenges with making sure international teams were properly certified.

One of the goals was to “break the system” and that was accomplished. Communications breakdowns into the NRCC, ineffective communication with the private sector, a lack of trained personnel for mass care facilities, and FEMA was not able to get around all the challenges injected throughout the exercise. Overall the exercise was very effective, and many capability gaps were discovered and will be addressed, but FEMA “learned what we expected to learn.” One surprise included a general lack of cohesion on what plans were being implemented at the federal level. At one point, three different plans were being utilized.

Joe Wainscott reported on the event from the state perspective. He found it very encouraging and beneficial to have the POTUS, VPOTUS, and DHS Secretary engaged in the exercise. Such involvement also helped reinforce the importance of the event to state officials.

Exercise spread over 8 states and 4 FEMA regions. Coordination among all the players was a challenge. It was the first non-terrorist, natural hazard, bottom-up approach exercise with involvement across the US. Since the entire response plan could not be tested at the state level, Indiana specifically focused on 15 objectives including mass care, EOC management, evacuation, and district response task force validation. The state also severely restricted traditional communications for 24 hours in the affected area including cell phone, email, and even power. This restriction allowed for testing of back-up systems, amateur radio operators, and satellite communications.

The exercise helped better define some roles for the private sector, VOADs, and even some federal agencies. One success was the ability for states to manage multiple events simultaneously. States were somewhat concerned that they spent a significant amount of time developing individual plans specific to the NLE, but then regional and overall planning efforts were rushed and not as thoughtful.

Gen Nesbitt provided an overview of Georgian forces provided to Mississippi during the actual storm response and the NGB involvement in the NLE. Forces stayed well-informed through regular VTC's with the players.

For the first time, EMAC was integrated into a major NLE. EMAC participated in the exercise as well as the Resource Allocation Workshop to identify necessary assets to respond. The National Coordination Group was activated and 11 A-Teams were deployed. Through the NLE, EMAC learned the feds do not do resource typing and that many states still have work to do in resource typing. EMAC is also working on the development of an online EMAC training program and may be able to provide CEU credits soon.

Presidential Policy Director 8; Implementing the National Preparedness System

Richard Reed and Tim Manning provided some insight into the current process for the new PPD-8. The Directive focuses on 5 key aspects; prevention; protection; mitigation, response, and recovery. Both stressed the need for an "all of nation" approach especially in making improvements with the private sector.

Non-traditional first responders must be engaged and as a nation we need to focus on capability-based outcomes. Some of the same capabilities are needed to solve some very different problems through a variety of disasters. New doctrines and directives must remain flexible and adaptable. They continue to try and answer where we are at as a nation in terms of preparedness.

The White House still needs help with the issue of distributing medical countermeasures and would like thoughts from the NHSC. In addition, Richard is working with FEMA, NORTHCOMM, and NGB to help improve processes to distribute countermeasures.

Most of the assignments in PPD-8 are prescribed through PKEMRA. The first step is the establishment of the National Preparedness Goal, but such a goal is difficult because of the inability to determine the final objective. The goal will be a series of goals comprised of capability targets. FEMA sees the National Preparedness System as how the objectives are aligned to reach the goal which leads to the framework. The entire effort will be achieved through an "all of nation" or "whole of community" approach so as to afford significant buy-in. Integrating the national training and exercise programs, grant doctrine, and other initiatives all come together to form the overall national preparedness effort. FEMA has created a new Program Executive Office in the NIC to help implement the work. The deadline is currently November.

Business Session

John Madden led a discussion to brainstorm ways the NHSC can contribute to the FEMA and White House efforts. A summary of some of the thoughts include:

- Must support the pinnacles of HLS at the basic local, regional, and state levels and efforts such as intelligence fusion and intelligence sharing.
- The balance between core capabilities and enhancing those areas with the greatest risk. Must ensure everyone is prepared across small and large jurisdictions. Establishing capabilities does not mean everyone has to know how to do everything. The task must be specific and informed by risk. Remember, vulnerabilities and risk can change over time.
- Should consider establishing capabilities regionally instead of nationwide
- Much has already been done in engaging the private sector in terms of preparedness guidance to businesses. The language in the PPD is just meant to be the "next step" from current efforts.
- The NHSC could contribute to how the frameworks all fit together.

- Some were frustrated with the language of the PPD and a relatively vague framework. Reed and Manning reminded that the PPD is a national-level document and does not represent the goals of all 50 states and the major cities.
- Reed thought the NHSC could find ways to work the national guidance down to the local level and make it operational.



June 29, 2011

Business Session (cont...)

Madden led a discussion on the funding of the HLS enterprise. NEMA and NGA are working together on how to address current challenges in HLS funding through an informal ad hoc group to discuss emerging priorities. A straw man is expected around November to impact the FY2013 process.

Concepts include; flexibility with accountability; increase innovation; new ways to assign emphasis on priorities; address interdependencies; prevent winners and losers while still addressing threats; must translate national priorities down to the local level; how to protect current investments. Some comments in response to Madden’s discussion included:

- As concepts are being developed, consider vetting through the NHSC so as to afford broad buy-in.
- This is a good approach because in many associations, including NGA, there is no consensus in how to move forward with grant funding.
- The NHSC could focus on the fundamental shifts in the past couple years and how that could be utilized in a reevaluation of the grant programs

Fusion Centers: Current Priorities and Future Evolution

A discussion of fusion center issues was conducted by Thomas Kirk, Board Member and Ross Ashley, Executive Director of the National Fusion Center Association. The National Fusion Center Association is a 501 (c) 6 organization which can lobby Congress. They are currently focusing more on the authorization process than appropriations seeing it as a more long-term solution, but would like to see the Law Enforcement Terrorism Prevention Program fenced off instead of consolidated with other homeland security grants. Ashley provided an overview of the association which is a member-driven association. They are focusing on the needs of individual fusion centers since they are all different. A doctrine is being developed and they’re studying the issue of how fusion centers provide information to EOCs not activated.

Fusion centers are not seen as a federal program, but an evolution by the states in the aftermath of 9/11. Each fusion center serves different needs and a variety of customers, and the Association wants to maintain the unique nature of each fusion center. It is sometime difficult to communicate locally since many think they are a federal entity and the trust is not always there. The Association is working hard to develop relationships directly with non-law enforcement entities to diversify outreach, but trying to stay focused on the needs of first responders. They continue to work with locals to tailor requirements and needs. NFCA conferences are utilized to develop best practices on how to meet customer needs.

Facilitated Group Discussion: National Terror Alert System, After the Next Attack, and The Changing Threat

The new alert system is meant to reach the broadest possible office, but initial information will likely still come to officials from news outlets. In reality, intelligence will also come from multiple other avenues including HSA’s, fusion centers, or EM Directors.

The threat has changed significantly in recent years. Shortly after 9/11, the threat was centrally designed, and today it is more fluid and amorphous. This does not necessarily change how we discuss the issues, but it does alter operational efforts.

Each association and membership has responsibilities after the next attack, but it remains unclear how the NHSC fits into that process. One suggestion was that the NHSC could be a clearinghouse of information to the media, DHS, the public, and each other. Caution should be issued, however, because each organization in the NHSC is different and a one-size-fits-all approach may not be best. The NHSC could be utilized even before the next attack by continuing to have an open and honest dialogue with the public. The NHSC could also help avoid any Congressional over-reaction after an event. The challenge will be working together as a consortium while at the same time managing a significant event and our disparate national memberships.

Even before an attack, the NHSC could contribute recommendations on creating better integration of policies. The Consortium is a node in a “network of networks” and many members also participate in other systems. Information could be run through the NHSC from other federal and national efforts. This could also lead to efforts to connect various constituencies together especially when different sectors will be receiving different information.

The suggestion was offered to adopt more robust features on the NEMA website to allow for functions such as a forum and a means to share upcoming events. Also, more needs to be done in between bi-annual meetings. Working together and talking with one another will provide greater situational awareness and a more integrated response. If the preference would be to remain non-operational, the consortium could be utilized to work back with DHS after an escalation of the NTAS to review the performance and effectiveness of the system.

The following is a bullet list of potential roles the NHSC could fill following the next major attack on U.S. soil:

- Serve as a media resource
- Serve as a resource to one another/information clearinghouse
- Identify emerging issues and/or questions that need to be asked
- The network could help fill gaps (get out of silos)
- Conduct an After Action report from a multi-discipline, intergovernmental perspective
- Provide context (reality check), serve as subject matter experts, interject calmness after an event
- Continue to remind the public that there will be another successful attack
- Provide integrated analysis of policies
- Validate recommendations of other groups and share information

The group agreed that after an event the NHSC could come together quickly. Within (x) number of days an announcement will be made about an NHSC conference call or another mode of communication. Purpose would be to share information, to identify sources and accuracy, provide analysis of information and what it means, look at what’s next. All of this information and insights could be shared with DHS. It was suggested the NHSC might practice the protocol using a localized event in the future.

Other Issues/Final Business

No remaining issues were addressed, and the Consortium adjourned.