

**STRATEGY
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**THE WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION ABYSS:
INADEQUATE THREAT FOCUS,
POLICY & STRATEGY WEAKNESSES,
AND RESPONSE SHORTCOMINGS**

BY

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USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

**THE WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION ABYSS:
Inadequate Threat Focus,
Policy & Strategy Weaknesses,
and Response Shortcomings**

by

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ABSTRACT

AUTHOR: Kenneth S. Kasprisin

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Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) in the hands of non-state actors are a major threat to U.S. security. Efforts to counter the threat are disjointed. Strategy remains overly reliant upon non-proliferation without adequately implementing possible preemptive and response alternatives. Deterrence is failing and operational capabilities to respond are hampered by bureaucratic complexity and dogmatic institutional nearsighted economics. Hence, America is vulnerable and at risk. This paper reviews the WMD threat and examines policy and strategy weaknesses. The paper then discusses U.S. response strategies and highlights current methods for establishing command and control Headquarters. Finally, it recommends an enhanced response strategy by creating a Standing Joint Task Force Headquarters to address terrorist induced WMD incident consequences.

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INTRODUCTION

DATELINE NEW YORK - THOUSANDS OF U.S. CITIZENS DIED TODAY AS A RESULT OF THE RECENT TERRORIST INCIDENT IN NEW YORK CITY. TWO DAYS AGO TERRORISTS RELEASED A COMBINATION OF CHEMICAL AND BIOLOGICAL AGENTS AT SCATTERED LOCATIONS THROUGHOUT THE MANHATTAN METROPOLITAN AREA. INITIAL REPORTS INDICATE IT WAS SIMILAR TO THE 1995 TOKYO SUBWAY INCIDENT. IT APPEARS THERE WERE FOUR PRIMARY TARGET AREAS - THE WORLD TRADE CENTER, THE SUBWAY SYSTEM, THE WATER PUMPING STATION IN NORTHERN MANHATTAN, AND THE THEATER DISTRICT IN THE VICINITY OF BROADWAY AND TIMES SQUARE. SO FAR, OVER A THOUSAND SUBWAY TRAVELERS WHO COMPLAINED OF STOMACH CRAMPS AND CONVULSIONS DIED IN MAKESHIFT DISASTER CENTERS. TODAY THOUSANDS MORE HAVE SATURATED ALL AVAILABLE MEDICAL FACILITIES COMPLAINING OF FLU LIKE SYMPTOMS...

I saw several dozen people on the platform who had either collapsed or were on their knees unable to stand up... One man was thrashing around on the floor like a fish out of water. Those who could walk staggered up three flights of stairs to the clean fresh air. Some vomited, others lay rigid.¹ People who had moved more slowly, spent more time near the spilled liquid, were retching blood and half blind.²

The first paragraph describes a New York City fictional scenario occurring sometime in 1998. The second captures eyewitness accounts from Tokyo in 1995. In both cases, simple but deadly weapons of mass destruction(WMD) were used.

The scenario raises serious questions. Is America at risk? Why is America in this position and how does it now respond? Who is in charge and what role does the military play?

THESIS

America is vulnerable. U.S. strategy implementation shortcomings inadequately address the threat. Deterrence is failing and our operational capabilities to respond are hampered by bureaucratic complexity and dogmatic institutional nearsighted economics.

OVERVIEW

This paper reviews and highlights the threat associated with weapons of mass destruction (specifically the threat posed by non-state actors). It examines and identifies United States policy and associated national security strategy weaknesses. Speculating deterrence fails due to ineffective deterrence strategy implementation, the paper then discusses U.S. response strategies. It highlights current methods for establishing operational level command and control structures while presenting some of their weaknesses. Finally, it recommends an enhanced response strategy by creating a Standing Joint Task Force Headquarters to address terrorist-induced WMD incident consequences. In effect, this paper bridges one of the gaps between the strategic failure of terrorist WMD proliferation and the operational efforts to contain its impacts.

An analogy is provided throughout to better understand the problem. Think of WMD as the abyss - that deep,

threatening dark hole full of fear and death. It is located right outside of your home and right outside of your work. In fact, you can't go anywhere in any urban setting without feeling and knowing its presence. You can smell and even feel disease and death whenever you get close. The sounds of pain and suffering of those who have fallen haunt you 24 hours a day. It is always threatening.

Think of national policy as your general way of dealing with this problem. Can you ignore it or do you recognize that it is there and attempt to protect yourself from it? Do you try to defeat it by throwing shovels of dirt into it every day of your life?

Think of national strategy as what you do to mitigate its presence. Maybe you build a fence around it to help protect you from falling in. Maybe you build a fence behind you to protect yourself from someone pushing you into the hole. Maybe you contract someone to hold the end of a rope you have attached to yourself so they can pull you out just in case you fall or are pushed in. Who do you trust with this rope?

THREAT

Weapons of mass destruction pose the greatest potential threat to global security. We must continue to reduce the threat posed by existing arsenals of such weaponry as well as work to stop the proliferation of advanced technologies that place these destructive capabilities in the hands of parties hostile to U.S. and global security

interests. Danger exists from outlaw states opposed to regional and global security efforts and transnational actors, such as terrorists or international crime organizations, potentially employing nuclear, chemical or biological weapons against unprotected peoples and governments³.

The greatest threat to our national security is the employment of a WMD on United States soil by a non-state actor. Why? Because deterrence and the threat of massive retaliation have thus far been successful in deterring existing nation-states. Can the same policies be as effective on others who do not have as much to lose? If the answer to this question is anything but an unequivocal 'yes', then we are facing a potential calamity greater than anything previously experienced in documented history.

Do you recognize the abyss as a threat? Do you even know it is there?

Weapons of Mass Destruction fall into three broad categories: Biological, Chemical, and Nuclear. Biological weapons include various toxins, bacteria, viruses, fungi and rickettsiae. Many of these are relatively unsophisticated but can be extremely deadly and are difficult to detect. The production, transportation and employment require very little in terms of support.

Chemical weapons encompass a variety of nerve agents, blood agents, choking agents, and vesicants. The production, handling and employment of chemical agents is,

in general, more sophisticated than biological weapons but much of the equipment and precursor chemicals are readily available commercially. Detailed information is easily found on the Internet.

The development of nuclear weapons on the other hand requires an order of magnitude increase in sophistication over chemical and biological weapon creation. There is, however, with the dismantling of the previous Soviet Union, a significant opportunity for a potential belligerent to clandestinely acquire a viable device.⁴ Previous technical challenges are easily overcome. The entire Manhattan Project has been declassified and workable designs are located on the Internet.

Nearly a decade after the end of the cold war, some 30,000 nuclear warheads are still available for use around the world, each with devastating destructive power.⁵ Security lapses at some federal labs and plants that house nuclear weapons have left them increasingly vulnerable to theft and sabotage...⁶

There are heightened concerns about Russia's nuclear weapons security program.

Former Russian general Alexander Lebed, Russia's former security chief..., announced in early September that perhaps 100 suitcase-sized nuclear bombs were unaccounted for....On Oct.6, Yeltsin signed a law classifying all information relating to military bases, nuclear weapons or radioactive material -⁷ renewing speculation about Lebed's assertions.

Additionally, former "Soviet scientists, accustomed to a certain lifestyle and government support, now find themselves fortunate to be employed".⁸ Hence, they are extremely susceptible to offers of hard cash.

It appears everyone is in agreement that a significant threat exists. President Clinton, in A National Security Strategy for a New Century acknowledges "the dangers we face (today) are unprecedented"⁹. He specifically cites terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction as global concerns¹⁰. A recent Pentagon report Proliferation: Threat and Response, highlights the growing problem of weapons of mass destruction. With our porous international borders, Secretary of Defense Cohen states "A lone madman or...fanatics with a bottle of chemicals, a batch of plague-inducing bacteria, or a crude nuclear bomb, can threaten or kill tens of thousands of people in a single act of malevolence...These are not far-off, or far-fetched scenarios. They are real - here and now."¹¹

He also appeared on a TV talk show displaying a five-pound bag of sugar "averring that a similar quantity of anthrax would be sufficient to wipe out half the population of Washington, D.C."¹²

Chemical and biological weapons are readily available (at least in discrete quantities) to anyone with the

motivation to acquire them. Nuclear weapon proliferation has continued within the nation-state arena and is certainly a threat to expand into the hands of aggressive non-state actors. The bottom line is this - weapons are available. So, since the availability is widespread, who are the potential players in the contest for acquiring and potentially using weapons of mass destruction?

The abyss is there but who wants to make it bigger and more threatening?

There are two broad categories of actors: nation states and others. In the past, nation states were the predominant threat. They remain a viable concern due to existing stockpiles and capabilities for additional technological advances. Fortunately, most have also demonstrated a degree of restraint in the deployment and use of WMD. Even the Iraqi leader, Saddam Hussein, who had chemical weapons ready during the 1990 - 1991 Gulf war, blinked for fear of the massive retaliation.¹³

Hence, it appears time we switch our prevailing concern to the 'other' potential actors in this equation. These include transnational elements such as terrorist groups, religious cults, ethnic sects, and criminal organizations. These asymmetric threats differ significantly from nation-states. There are no territorial boundaries and they offer no clearly defined target for retaliation. Their goals and

desires are often ill-defined or irrational. They lack structure and mechanism for established diplomatic relations and they lack any clearly defined decision making protocols. They are not party to non-proliferation agreements and they are not easily deterred.

Who are those people nudging others towards the abyss?

James K. Campbell, in a research study "Weapons of Mass Destruction and Terrorism: Proliferation by Non-State Actors", argues that the "terrorist WMD threat will emanate from non-state groups operating under a veneer of religion and ethnic-racist hate".¹⁴ He reasons that the traditional constraints deterring WMD use by these groups are weakening. First, the previous technical complexities associated with developing and weaponizing WMD have been overcome. Secondly, the concern over government and public reaction (backlash) has eroded. Thirdly, the utility and success of conventional tactics has diminished.¹⁵

The number and type of recent incidents support Mr. Campbell's argument. The realities are frightening.

More than three dozen incidents on U.S. soil... are under active investigation by the FBI's antiterrorism unit. That's double the number from the previous year.¹⁶ In Oregon, investigators now believe an outbreak of salmonella food poisoning in Portland salad bars that made more than 700 ill and hospitalized dozens was the work of a religious cult hoping to sabotage voter turnout on Election Day.¹⁷

Other incidents include radioactive material in toothpaste (Long Island, New York), and mail-order vials of bubonic plague (Ohio).¹⁸

The issue then, becomes how to deal effectively with the WMD threat in the hands of these non-state actors. If the prospects of attaining diplomatic solutions are dismal, then we must be prepared to respond.

Back to the abyss. You now know it is there. Worse than you ever imagined and there are people out there who would love to see you fall in. In fact, if they could, they would rush to be the one pushing you over the edge.

NATIONAL POLICY

What is the U.S. policy dealing with this issue? If national policy is "a broad course of action or statements of guidance adopted by the government at the national level in pursuit of national objectives"¹⁹, then current U.S. policy dealing with this issue is found in multiple documents.

To keep things in perspective, national strategy (the ends, ways, and means of implementing policy) and its subset military strategy evolve from national policy. This national policy should support our national interests and values and be based on some strategic vision that depicts the desired endstate of our nation and our world at some

futuristic time. This vision acts as the foundation for the creation of policy and subsequently strategy.

Although it is difficult to clearly identify the 'vision' for our nation from current administration documents, a recent National Defense Panel report outlines several possibilities. These include the possible worlds described as Shaped Stability, Extrapolation of Today, Competition for Leadership, and Chronic Crisis.²⁰ All four possible future worlds reflect a significant WMD threat.

To a large extent, the basis for today's policy is found in several National Security Decision Directives (NSDDs) from the Reagan Administration. These were followed by a key National Security Directive (NSD) during the Bush Administration titled NSD-77, U.S. Policy on Counterterrorism. President Clinton has added several Presidential Decision Directives (PDDs), Presidential Review Directives (PRDs), and Executive Orders (EOs) that also include policy direction. Further investigation reveals the policy is also intermixed with both National and Military Strategy.

A National Security Strategy for a New Century has numerous passages that provide insight to our current policy. Presidential Decision Directive (PDD)-39 provides additional specifics while capturing the essence of the policy: "it is the policy of the United States to use all

appropriate means to deter, defeat and respond to all terrorist attacks on our territory and resources, both people and facilities, wherever they occur."²¹

If this is indeed our policy, are we appropriately implementing it and is it effective? On one hand, an evaluation indicates it is working since the experiences with WMD incidents on U.S. soil are minimal. On the other, it appears to be failing since the potential threat of an incident occurring has increased.²² One obvious metric is to examine the resources (ways and means) made available to counter the threat under the umbrella of the current policy. In effect, is our National Strategy (the ways and means of implementing policy) working?

You have decided as a matter of policy that you cannot ignore the abyss. You realize it is there and want very much to do all that you can to avoid the dreadful journey into the hole.

NATIONAL STRATEGY

The United States' overarching security plan is summarized in a document referred to as the National Security Strategy. The most recent version, A National Security Strategy for a New Century, establishes the strategy framework by discussing three key components: Shape, Respond and Prepare.²³ These terms are new but there

is little difference from previously used terms such as Deter, Respond, and Defeat. Understanding this framework and the interdependence of the three components is key to comprehending the importance of our ability to respond.

It is in fact our ability to respond that acts as a key deterrent to anyone contemplating an assault on our interests. Indeed, the need to respond to any crisis manifests itself only if the efforts to shape our environment or deter threats to our national interests have failed. So what are we doing to Shape or Deter the WMD threat? Presumably, all elements of national power (diplomatic, economic, informational, and military) are being employed to protect against this devastating threat. What are some of these actions?

Mitchell B. Wallerstein, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense, in a presentation to the Conference on Dealing with the Spread of Nuclear Weapons (The Hague, May 19-20, 1995) outlined many elements of our strategy.²⁴ These included various treaties, alliances, export controls, arms control & disarmament agreements, and chemical & biological weapons conventions. He summarized by stating "a key part of our strategy is to seek to stem the proliferation of such weapons."²⁵ Clearly, non-proliferation is our apex strategy.

Other diplomatic and economic actions contribute to the overall strategy. Economic sanctions and financial support in the form of grants and loans are used to influence other nation-states. Efforts to improve technology security and export controls are expanding. The Cooperative Threat Reduction Program is a joint DOD and FBI program to expand and improve efforts to deter, prevent, and investigate incidents involving the trafficking of NBC weapons and related material. It has resulted in the Department of Defense/FBI Counterproliferation Program.

Quantifying the effectiveness of strategic level activities such as pursuing non-proliferation treaties and Secretary of Defense William Cohen's recent creation of a new Threat Reduction and Treaty Compliance Agency are purely speculative.²⁶ Some would argue this administration's dismantling of "programs associated with U.S. efforts to ensure the survival of constitutional, representative government in the event Washington is attacked with a weapon of mass destruction" is potentially disastrous.²⁷ "Few things could do more to weaken deterrence, if not actually serve to invite attack, than the prospect that the U.S. military could be paralyzed by 'decapitation' of its command structure."²⁸

The element of 'shaping' (in the form of non-proliferation) is relatively common throughout most of the

previously discussed strategy. Unfortunately, it is not enough. If it fails, we must be prepared to 'respond'. The problem is the growing threat from non-state actors. It is difficult to shape their activities in ways other than direct military action or pressure from host countries. Hence, what is our 'response' strategy?

You have agreements with friends and neighbors in an attempt to reduce the imposing threat of the abyss. But who are the people pushing others near the edge? You have no idea where they live nor what motivates their behavior.

Response can take several forms. We can act preemptively and preclude an incident or we can attempt to control and mitigate the effects after one has occurred. What do we need to do this? We need the capability to identify, characterize, and neutralize NBC weapons, related facilities, and their supporting infrastructure. We need remote biological and chemical agent detection systems. We need covert capabilities within our Special Operations Forces to eliminate the threat once identified and we need to educate the American public while rehearsing and revising our response plans.

Although implied in PDD-39 with words like "use all appropriate means", and "expand the program of counterterrorism", the classified nature of preemptive activities are beyond the scope of this paper. LTC Lee A.

Van Arsdale describes plausible preemptive scenarios in his AY 1997 USAWC Strategy Research Project U.S. Special Operations Forces and the Counterproliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction. Our focus instead, will be on responding to the consequences associated with a WMD incident.

In PDD-39, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) was given lead agency responsibilities for consequence management. They have since published a 'TERRORISM INCIDENT ANNEX' to the Federal Response plan. In it, FEMA defines **Consequence Management** as those "measures to protect public health and safety, restore essential government services, and provide emergency relief to governments, businesses and individuals affected by the consequences of terrorism".²⁹ FEMA further states that the "laws of the United States assign primary authority to the States to respond to the consequences of terrorism; the Federal Government provides assistance as required."³⁰ The essence of our strategy for dealing with a WMD incident on U.S. soil then, is to parallel our response efforts dealing with other domestic emergencies such as floods, fires, hurricanes, and earthquakes.

Several of FEMA's planning assumptions however, indicate the scenario is much more severe. They state:

- no single agency has the authority and the expertise to unilaterally handle the many difficult issues

- the consequences of a WMD incident would almost immediately overwhelm local, state, and federal capabilities

- enforcement of various perimeters by different authorities may impede response

- responders cannot be required to put their own lives at risk in order to enter a contaminated perimeter (hence it is possible the area will be closed until contaminants have degraded to safe levels)³¹

These assumptions are significant! In essence, they state the consequences may far exceed our abilities to mitigate. Even more importantly, they indicate that those upon whom we rely for help may withhold their assistance.

Who are the key players and organizations and how does the military fit into the response effort? At the national level the Senior Interagency Coordination Group (SICG), chaired by FEMA, is the policy level forum for policy guidance and issue resolution.³² Lower level organizational structures depend on the timing. There is a Pre-Incident organization, a Trans-Incident (transition from threat to an act) organization, and a Post-Incident Consequence Management organization. Over 100 organizations and command and control structures are involved.

The number of players is phenomenal. They include most if not all federal and state government agencies and multiple management levels within many of the organizations. The point here is that there are significant numbers of people from a multitude of organizations all attempting to 'help'. "So many programs have blossomed, in fact, that

critics claim the agencies are stepping all over each other".³³

There are quite a few individuals assigned to hold the fibers at the other end of your rope. Sure hope they know they are supposed to be there and how to pull in unison so as not to break your rope!

How does the military fit into this array and who is in charge? The military supports all of the Emergency Support Functions (ESFs) outlined in the Federal Response Plan and has the lead responsibility for ESF-3 (Public Works & Engineering). Additionally, the budget for the Domestic Preparedness Program flows through DOD (at least for the next several years).

From the broad perspective (strategic level), DOD is intimately involved. At the Operational and Tactical levels, the military is also heavily involved. If a WMD incident were to occur, the National Guard (NG), serving in a Title 32 status, is a readily available state asset. Additionally, U.S. Army Reserve (USAR) units may be available to provide support. If Hurricane Andrew and numerous other domestic emergencies can be used as an indicator, active duty units will also be heavily involved.

As stated in section 1412, Title XIV, DoD will also establish "a designated telephone link to a designated source of relevant data and expert advice for the use of

state or local officials responding to emergencies involving WMD or related materials."³⁴ DoD ties this 'hotline' into the National Response Center(NRC). The purpose is to establish access to expert Chemical/Biological (CB) advice and assistance for state and local agencies during emergency situations. The NRC then links the caller with personnel from CBDCOM's operations center and the U.S. Army Medical Research and Material Command (MRMC). The point to all this is to illustrate DOD's involvement and the complexity regarding the number of players. Does the system work?

Establishing unclassified measurement criteria for effectiveness is difficult. Measuring available resources and examining actions taken to counter the threat gives an indication of implementation effectiveness. Overall, the funding levels are extremely low and there are significant implementation shortcomings.

This means ultimate deterrence is unlikely and initial response efforts will be haphazard. This magnifies the importance of military response efforts.

Your strategy for countering the abyss continues to grow. You want the hole to go away. You want it filled in and therefore want to stop those who keep trying to make it deeper. You now also want to neutralize those who would push you in and you want a safety line - just in case! You have contracted with a significantly large number of people

to each hold a strand of your safety line - hoping enough will be there operating in unison to pull you out. But there is another problem. If too few are there in time, or those that are there pull at different times straining their fibers to the breaking point - you lose. The rope breaks and you continue your plunge. Since the 'first responders' may choose not to show if the situation is life-threatening, your only remaining hope is a military response.

With this as background, how does the military tie into the robust response effort we can expect?

OPERATIONAL LEVEL COMMAND AND CONTROL

The command and control of U.S. forces and their integration into civilian disaster response efforts is absolutely critical to maximizing their effectiveness during no-notice recovery and mitigation efforts. The time sensitive nature of a terrorist incident compounded by the magnitude of damage caused by WMDs make timely and effective response essential. The price of ad hoc command and control structures and piecemeal response efforts to a major disaster is American lives.

Assuming a major incident occurs and presuming FEMA's assumptions are reasonably accurate, the U.S. military is going to receive a 'consequence management' mission. The initial mission statement might read something like this:

MISSION: On order, JTF RESPONSE immediately deploys to AO NEW YORK and provides all necessary support to enhance FEMA's efforts to mitigate the circumstances associated with the 'incident' in order to expedite the region's return to normalcy.

If you are the commander, one of your initial questions is 'What kind of command and control structure is needed?' Given the magnitude and relative importance of the problem, the military will probably want at least a 3-star headquarters on the ground. This headquarters must be completely integrated into an amazing array of federal, state, and local agencies. It needs significant expertise and must have heavy representation from the following areas: chemical, nuclear, biological, law enforcement, intelligence, engineer, medical, rescue and recovery, civil affairs, public affairs, legal, special operations, transportation, space systems, communications, logistics, and operational personnel with a fine tuned ability to plan and execute operations.

The military HQ must be capable of rapid coordination efforts with other key military organizations: TRANSCOM, SPACECOM, and possibly STRATCOM to name a few. The headquarters must also be closely tied to any on-going Joint Special Operations Task Force (JSOTF) efforts. It must know how to articulate and manage significant change if the deployed forces are also required to rapidly respond to another incident or world crisis.

The headquarters must be well trained in Crisis Action Planning and be capable of immediately responding to the threat. The HQ's ability to rapidly identify all critical tasks, assign these to component forces, and synchronize their immediate execution is critical to a successful response.

After establishing the requisite 'headquarters' structure, significant thought must be given on how to focus its energies. To do so effectively, the commander must focus on both the friendly and enemy 'centers of gravity'. In this scenario, what are they? At the strategic level, an argument can be made that the U.S. center of gravity is 'National Will'. Consequently, the terrorist attack on New York is a direct attack on our center of gravity. It attacks the people directly; it instills terror and a psychological feeling of helplessness; it attacks a key communication center in the World Trade Center; it attacks our economy by disrupting market trading and fund transfers; and it attacks the continuity of government (at least at the local level).

What is the enemy's center of gravity? For that matter, who is the enemy? It may be that the best anyone can do here is identify the critical elements for recovery and in so doing, negate the terrorist's actions. So then,

how is the JTF Headquarters assembled to optimize recovery efforts?

Given these considerations, the commander may well adopt a relatively common JTF structure but with a much heavier representation from personnel with technical skills as opposed to traditional 'warfighters'.

The United States military routinely uses Joint Task Forces (JTFs) to respond to various situations. The forces assigned to JTFs normally come from well established organizational structures. Establishing the headquarters element to oversee these forces is a different story. There are three basic techniques for forming and manning a Joint Task Force Headquarters (JTF HQ): create a standing JTF HQ; form one on an Ad Hoc basis; or build it based upon a lead component staff. Each option has advantages and disadvantages.

The advantages of a Standing JTF HQ are numerous. Since it has been in existence for a period of time, its strengths and weaknesses are normally well known. It is easy to ensure the staff is properly manned (all service elements and technical skills adequately represented). Assigned personnel have worked together, know each other, and know the standard operating procedures of the unit. They have also had the opportunity to train together. Assuming the JTF HQ is focused on a particular type of

mission (in this case Consequence Management), key personnel and critical points of contact (POCs-listings and numbers) should be readily available. Additionally, a series of planning and execution exercises would probably have been conducted to educate the staff on the types of problems and solutions they may encounter. The disadvantages all relate to cost. It is expensive to maintain any standing force.³⁵

The primary advantage of an Ad Hoc JTF HQ is cost savings in that day-to-day expenditures associated with personnel, facilities or equipment comprise normal unit expenses. The disadvantages are significant.

There is no continuity within the organization: the people do not know each other, there are no standardized operating procedures, and they must create and learn these things while simultaneously handling the crisis; there are few, if any, training opportunities to prepare for a crisis...³⁶

The third option, to build on a Lead Component Staff, is really a blend of the first two. Consequently, it also has a blend of their advantages and disadvantages. By basing the JTF HQ around a lead component staff, you begin with a functioning, cohesive core for the JTF staff. Hence there are standing operating procedures and policies in place. It is relatively economical because the facilities, equipment, personnel, and operating budget already exist and therefore do not have to be duplicated. However, when "additional personnel are introduced to complete the needed

JTF HQ structure, they are often treated like a foreign body: the new people are not initially trusted, an old boy, back-channel network of the former staff members operates and, therefore, Jointness exists in name only."³⁷ You also have the problem with workload. Existing service component staffs have responsibilities that do not disappear in time of crisis. Unfortunately, these responsibilities often become significant distracters to a staff attempting to execute a time sensitive mission.

CINCPAC, CINCEUR and CINCUSACOM have created an additional plug of personnel

who upon the creation of a JTF would leave the CINC staff and assume critical positions within the JTF staff. These staff members have already worked together, they have vital knowledge of and contacts within the CINC staff, and they understand joint because they work in that environment on a daily basis.³⁸

The problems with the plug are longevity and loyalty. They may only remain for an initial jump start and it is difficult to break with their previous identities associated with the higher headquarters.

To further complicate matters, most JTFs deal with war-related circumstances and have been (relatively speaking) somewhat shielded from the day-to-day intricacies of the interagency process. This has recently changed.

As joint military exercises and real world operations become further intertwined with federal agencies, more attention to planning and anticipation of preparatory requirements will be

required.³⁹ The unique aspects of the interagency process require the joint task force (JTF) headquarters to be especially flexible, responsive, and cognizant of the capabilities of not only the JTF's components, but other agencies as well.⁴⁰

A brief review of the Joint Center for Lessons Learned Bulletins indicate "coordination is a key to any successful mission but it is even more applicable to interagency operations...The intricacies of interagency relationships...can prove daunting for even the most efficient staff".⁴¹ Which JTF HQ staff would best handle a domestic disaster scenario with all of the inherent interagency actions?

Several previous research projects have examined and recommended the creation of Standing JTF Headquarters for quick response scenarios. Their conclusions were based on several relatively common factors: The need for expedient execution and the need for trust and teamwork. Members of the team must be given the opportunity to learn and adjust to the group dynamics. The team building process needs time to fully develop. A team identity must develop as the organization transitions from a forming stage to a performing stage.

Per the Federal Response Plan, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is the lead agency for most domestic disasters. In a scenario like the one described in

the opening remarks of this paper, there is a high degree of certainty that every functioning local, state, and federal agency will be involved. The operative word and key to their participation is 'functioning'. During Hurricane Andrew recovery operations, with no phones, street signs or in some cases buildings, there was significant delay locating functioning representatives of various organizations. Hence, local involvement is dependent upon their own exposure to disaster related effects. Additionally, countless non-government and volunteer organizations will want to assist. How then, will a quick, synchronized effort be put together? How will the military effort be coordinated and controlled - a Standing JTF, an ad-hoc organization, or an existing component staff augmented with additional personnel?

Do you want a pick up team controlling the other end of your rope or do you want a team that has practiced a few times before they attempt your complicated and sophisticated rescue?

The problems any JTF staff face can be categorized into two sets: internal operations and synchronization and external operations and synchronization. Some of the internal problems include: interoperability issues; control of logistical movement and arrival of aircraft; communication among all involved; establish a Movement

Coordination Center (MCC); radio frequency signals; information management; staff synchronization (meeting deconfliction and decision making cycles); intelligence gathering and dissemination operations; airspace coordination and the use of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV); and coordination with all key players (interagency representatives; local, state, and federal government officials; NGO and PVO organizations).

Some of the possible external tasks include; ability to assess the situation; capability to detect, neutralize, contain, dismantle and dispose of a chemical or biological device; agent detection; low level agent monitoring; decontamination (personnel, equipment and geographical areas); search and rescue activities; identifying and restricting access to hazardous areas; dissemination of medical assistance and location information to affected personnel; medical triage; immediate casualty management with the potential administration of atropine and other appropriate drugs; providing vaccinations and other prophylactic measures as necessary; preventing riots and looting; and providing basic life support facilities (food, water, sanitary, lodging).

BOTTOM LINE - Consequence management is a very sophisticated and complex operation. Can we afford the cost not to have a standing JTF HQ prepared to respond? "A

poorly-organized or trained JTF will not...be an effective instrument of national policy".⁴² It would be a travesty to hear the After Action Review (AAR) comments echoed from previous experiences while evaluating what we could have done better to save American lives. Here are the potential comments:

- Civilian relief agencies and military units did not understand each other's operations.⁴³ There was a lack of understanding of how the civil relief agencies operated. This caused confusion on how to interface with FEMA, the Red Cross, the Salvation Army, and the local governments. These agencies also had difficulty interfacing with our operations. Liaison teams helped however, prior training would have cured many of the problems.⁴⁴

- Training required for personnel assigned to positions as Commander or on the staff/staff element of a JTF must, for the most part, take place prior to stand-up of the JTF. This pertains particularly to individual skills necessary to perform effectively in these positions. Additional knowledge and skills pertinent to cross-functional and cross-Service tasks (or potentially multilateral tasks) and to a specific mission that must be performed in a joint context will need to be frequently trained once the JTF is formed... In particular, the level of JTF staff training was found to directly influence the success of the joint task force staff. Focusing training conducted for the JTF staff as an entity on critical essential collective tasks is crucial for making effective use of the very limited time available to the JTF once it is stood-up.⁴⁵

- Overall, lack of familiarity or experience with joint doctrinal concepts appeared to be the root cause of many of the problems identified. In some cases, it was evident that difficulty in performing functions at the joint level stemmed from deficiencies in individual, component or specialty training.⁴⁶

What command and control capabilities currently exist to respond to this specific threat? Chemical and Biological Defense Command (CBDCOM) is key to integrating technical expertise. Additionally, First and Fifth Armies have established the nucleus of a Response Task Force (RTF) in an attempt to secure an initial command and control structure. But are they viable? Are the dual-hatted, battle-rostered personnel adequately trained in Joint and Consequence Management Operations? Do they have sufficient staff, communication equipment, procedures and interagency experience to properly respond?

The Marine Corps has a battalion-sized unit called the Chemical-Biological Incident Response Force (CBIRF) activated in April 1996. It provides rapid assistance in a disaster involving certain kinds of contaminants but can it provide the operational level command and control required of a JTF? Several national level statements say it best.

The development of effective capabilities for preventing and managing the consequences of terrorist use of nuclear, biological or chemical (NBC) materials or weapons is of the highest priority...there is no higher priority than preventing the acquisition of such materials/weapons or removing this capability from terrorist groups⁴⁷

"The United States shall give the highest priority to developing capabilities to...manage the consequences of nuclear, biological or chemical materials or weapons use by

terrorists."⁴⁸ If these statement are true, establishing a fully manned and properly trained Standing JTF HQ to deal with Consequence Management is imperative.

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The threat is real and it is unlike anything we have faced in our past. In Secretary Cohen's words, "We face a clear and present danger today."⁴⁹ "There is ample evidence of the immediacy and extent of the threat."⁵⁰ International trends towards a more transnational world structure pose a menacing challenge to our nation.

The abyss is there, as big as it could be, and there are unknown forces with a desire to push you into the hole.

Upon review of the current policies and strategies, current U.S. policy appears viable for the near term future. Its only apparent weakness lies in its failure to openly address how we should deal with other nation states. Clearly, we must involve them in the fight. We must emphatically persuade them to adopt vigorous policies to reduce the threat within their sphere of influence.

Implementation is another issue. Policy implementation is lacking given the primacy of the issue. Key government studies conclude "that the United States is grievously ill-prepared to deal with attacks involving weapons of mass

destruction (WMD)."⁵¹ Hence, there lies significant room for improvement in this area. Having publicly identified this as the number one threat to our national security, the requisite emphasis is lacking. "Personnel and funds (one-tenth of one percent of the Defense budget)... are not remotely proportional to the threat" and utilization of available resources has been lackluster.⁵²

Overall strategy effectiveness is insufficient. It is certainly less than what U.S. citizens have a right to expect of a strategy dealing with 'the greatest threat to our National Security'. It is too heavily reliant upon non-proliferation and fails to effectively incorporate other deterrent options. Implementation lacks emphasis on a key element of the threat -- non-state actors. This must change. We need the capability to identify, characterize, and neutralize NBC weapons, related facilities, and their supporting infrastructure before they are used against us. This means we must push for technological advances to improve detection and mitigation capabilities and significantly expand our intelligence gathering systems with emphasis on HUMINT. We need to expand the covert capabilities within our Special Operations Forces to eliminate the threat once identified. We need remote biological and chemical agent detection systems and we need to educate the American public of the threat and our plans

to deal with it when an incident occurs. This may mean creating and activating a public awareness and involvement campaign (potentially not too dissimilar from what the nation did in the 1960's regarding bomb shelters and air raid drills within the schools as a reaction to the Soviet Nuclear missile threat).

We must conduct a major review of the command and control structure required for military response efforts. If the mission is indeed a high priority, the establishment of a standing JTF HQ with the sole mission to mitigate all aspects of the threat must be considered. We must implement a complex exercise program incorporating all appropriate players from the interagency process to properly prepare for the inevitable event. We also need to review the entire consequence management approach under FEMA. If their assumptions are correct, we have serious problems and must react now. It may truly be a time to 're-engineer' the corporation. The military's natural resistance to institutional change combined with forced downsizing may be leading to expedient but flawed financial decisions. It may be time to start all over with a thorough evaluation of the problem and generate fresh solutions.⁵³

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⁴ Dale A. Blackburn, Gregory T. Boyette, Robert K Brannum, Tommy D. Dickson, William M Napolitano, Dwayne R. Turmelle, Elise M. Vander Vennet, and Steven C. Williams, A National Policy for Detering the Use of Weapons of Mass Destruction, Research Paper at the Air Command and Staff College, April 1996, 4-5.

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¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Bill Gertz, "Cohen details threats posed by Baghdad," Washington Times, 26 Nov 1997, 1.

¹² George Melloan, "Saddam's Secret Weapons: Much Ado About Something," Wall Street Journal, 2 Dec 1997, 23.

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³¹ Ibid. TI-5.

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