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FEATURED ARTICLE

Facts About WMD Threats Against Washington, D.C. *by Dexter Ingram*

[Editors' Note:]

Someone once made the statement that "We have nothing to fear but fear itself". This statement, while not entirely correct, is very profound, especially when we relate it to matters of terrorism. While so obvious, yet not commonly understood, the term "terrorism" comes from the root word "terror". So often, we tend to associate terrorist activities only with massive amounts of visible destruction and loss of life, when in reality, we should see it for exactly what it is--A ploy by an individual, group or organization to disrupt a common way of life by inflicting fear upon a given population. The threat of a "dirty bomb" being used to destroy massive amounts of life and property is one good example of this. Actually, the detonation of a "dirty bomb" would most likely not produce the level of destruction that most would expect. The terrorists know this. However, their goal, by nature of what they are and what they do, is not only to kill innocent people, but more so to prevent a group or population from being able to live normal lives because of fear. Let's face it, if we think boarding an airplane is going to subject us to a possible terrorist attack, then we will not fly. This is what makes terrorism so effective. It's not necessarily the damage caused, but the fear of the unknown and "what if?". To terrorists, this ability to disrupt life by inflicting fear is half of the battle. If they can cause us as Americans to stop functioning because of fear, then they have succeeded in the largest part of their mission.

The purpose of this article is to again make an effort to better educate our readers to the types of threats that we may face, but more importantly, to ways we can prepare to handle such threats. As you will see in the remainder of this article, we may not be able to completely prohibit additional acts of terror on the U.S., but we can greatly lessen their initial devastation and lasting effects on our lives by being properly prepared to react, regroup and rebuild efficiently.

The following gives some information about the possible terrorist threats that we may face as a country and attempts to disclose additional truths about these threats in an effort to provide a level of "peace of mind" to our readers and to show some examples of what is being done to thwart further terrorist activities in the United States.

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Washington, D.C., is an obvious target for any potential terrorist attack, but the reality behind possible non-conventional threats might surprise many. Deterrents in place range from building codes and restricted air space to thorough policing and controlling fear and panic.

Types of Attacks

A non-conventional emergency may be comprised of several different attacks: biological, chemical, and radiological.

Biological. A biological attack is the deliberate release of germs or other biological substances that can cause sickness. Examples of such biological warfare agents might include Anthrax, Botulinum Toxin, or Plague.

Chemical. A chemical attack is the deliberate release of a toxic gas, liquid or solid that can poison people and the environment. Examples of such chemical warfare agents might include Sarin Gas, VX Nerve Gas, or Mustard Gas.

Radiological. A radiological dispersed attack is the use of common explosives to spread radioactive materials over a targeted area. The most well-known example of such a device is a “dirty bomb”.

Biological & Chemical

One of the best ways for a terrorist to affect the largest number of people is to release a large amount of chemical or biological agents from relatively high above the ground, over a heavily populated area.

This is very difficult to do in the nation’s capitol. The restricted air space above the city is meant to prevent a light aircraft -- such as a crop duster-- from reaching highly populated areas. Helicopters patrolling the skies, tactically placed surface to air missiles (SAM) sites, and military jets patrolling nearby all help to ensure the air space above DC is watched carefully and any potential threat is intercepted or eliminated.

Washington has another innate benefit. The city’s building code restricts the height of most structures. Someone with ill will towards American citizens

would not be able to release an agent from a 30-story building and have it spread over a concentrated population.

Both of these factors mean that any type of outdoor air-released attack will be fairly contained and not pose the threat it could in other jurisdictions.

Another threat would be releasing an agent in a highly populated, closed space, such as the Washington, D.C.’s subway system. This occurred in the Tokyo subway system in 1995 when Sarin gas was released. Tens of thousands were exposed to the deadly gas, 5,500 passengers received medical attention, and of those 12 died. While these attacks can indeed cause fear and chaos, in reality, only a very small percentage of those affected die from the exposure.

A conventional ground based explosion is another method for releasing a biological agent. Other than the fact that the dispersment takes place at ground level and, again, is relatively contained, an explosion is one of the worst ways to spread a biological agent. An agent such as anthrax, for example, is degraded by both heat and light. In any type of explosion there are usually enormous amounts of heat and light, killing or degrading much of the agent.

Dirty Bomb

The purpose of a radiologically dispersed device, otherwise known as a “Dirty Bomb,” is not to cause mass casualties due to radiation, but instead it is at its most dangerous through the fear and panic that it causes. A dirty bomb would likely cause a ground-level explosion of varying intensity, depending on the amount and type of explosives used. Any type of radioactive material used would be fairly low grade, such as cesium or americium. Plutonium and Uranium are much more difficult to obtain and would be more valuable in building a conventional nuclear device.

Once the explosion occurs, the highest amounts of radiation would be around the initial blast area. Most likely, the damage caused by the explosion would harm more people than the radiation. Radioactive debris and dust would travel relatively

short distances - a few blocks - before the radiation threat diminished significantly.

What Has Been Done

Washington, D.C., has taken steps to help prevent such attacks by stepping up security, removing certain newspaper and trash bins, and using canine units to patrol for explosive devices. Besides the constant video surveillance, new sensor units have been installed in metro stations to detect the first signs of a chemical agent release.

Unfortunately, it is very difficult for government at all levels to protect Americans from a person willing to die for a cause. However, officials have combined their efforts to increase the awareness of the average citizen with thorough policing and monitoring, limiting airspace access, and improved technology. Now, if an incident does occur, the outcome will be far less tragic.

---Dexter Ingram is a member of the Washington Metropolitan Council of Governments' Bio-Terrorism Task Force and a Threat Assessment Specialist at the Heritage Foundation.---

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[The points of view and opinions expressed in this article are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily indicate or reflect specific policies, opinions or view points held by TACDA or any of its officers.]

CIVIL DEFENSE NEWS & OPINIONS

**Rumsfeld Thanks CENTCOM Forward
for Its Service
By Jim Garamone
American Forces Press Service**

DOHA, Qatar, April 27, 2003 - Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld thanked the service members and civilians of U.S. Central Command here for the jobs they did as part of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

"You helped rescue a nation and liberate a people," he said. "You have driven a repressive regime from

power, ended the threat to free people everywhere. You've protected our country from a gathering danger and given the Iraqi people a chance to build a free nation and to live normal lives."

Rumsfeld visited the troops during his trip through the Gulf region. He praised the plan devised by Central Command operators as flexible, using the example of reaction to Turkey's refusal to allow coalition troops across its borders to open a northern front against Saddam Hussein's regime.

He said Turkey's decision was disappointing, but "that disappointment was turned to our advantage." CENTCOM commander Army Gen. Tommy Franks decided not to reroute the ships carrying the U.S. Army 4th Infantry Division's equipment out of the Mediterranean area.

"They were kept there ... creating the impression in Baghdad that the attack would not start until the coalition could open a northern front," Rumsfeld said. "This contributed to the surprise of the Iraqi regime when the war began without those forces."

These types of decisions characterized Operation Iraqi Freedom, the secretary pointed out. "While the Iraqi regime was waiting for Gen. Franks to launch the air war, hundreds of special operations forces poured into all regions of the country, securing airfields, attacking terrorist facilities and regime targets, taking out the regime's capability to launch missiles and attack neighboring countries."

A large force rolling across the Kuwait border followed the special operators. "Instead of working their way north to Baghdad with long pauses and pitched battles for each city along the way," Rumsfeld said, "they pressed through southern Iraq in less than a week, leaving follow-on forces to secure the cities they passed as they raced to the capital and were supported by outstanding air/ground coordination."

Even with obstacles of weather and death squads, the land forces reached the gates of Baghdad in less than two weeks. "By the time they were ready to take the city, they had decimated Iraq's command and control and the Republican Guard divisions," he

said, "ringing Baghdad with unquestionably the most precise and deadly air campaign in the history of warfare." The coalition air forces used such great care in targeting that they were able to "take out a tank hiding under a bridge without damaging the bridge."

He said the war was remarkable not only for speed and skill, but also for what did not happen because of the design and execution of the plan. "You prevented the Iraqi regime from attacking its neighbors with missiles, you secured the oil fields and other key infrastructure before they could be destroyed by the regime," Rumsfeld noted.

The swiftness of the plan allowed coalition forces to take the infrastructure intact, averting an environmental catastrophe. There also has not been large numbers of civilian casualties because the coalition took such great care to protect innocent civilians and holy sites, the secretary emphasized.

Lessons learned from the fighting in Afghanistan and Iraq will provide the blueprint for American forces in the future, Rumsfeld said. "We're perfectly capable of living in this world; we need not be afraid; we can do it. It may be a dangerous and untidy world, but our country and our friends and allies are going to be able to preserve our way of life and still continue as free people. We'll do that because we have the ability and kinds of capabilities to do that."

Franks also spoke to the troops. "Thanks to the coalition, the people of Iraq have begun a transition to independence," he said. "On this very day, a large and diverse group of Iraqis are having a meeting. We call it the "big tent" meeting in Baghdad to discuss their future government. To be sure, the Iraqis will have a new government. It'll be a government of their choosing because of all of you and, because of every member of this coalition, Iraqis are allowed to raise their voice in debate without fear of torture or death.

Franks made sure service members realize this was not a victory speech. "To be sure, there is a great deal of work left to be done," he said. "But also to be sure, the Iraqi regime is no longer in power."

The biggest cheer of the day came when Rumsfeld spoke of the families. "We are grateful to your families," he said. "They worry about you, I know. They endure long separations, they also serve our country in that way, and they serve the cause of freedom."

On a lighter note, one service member wanted to know if Rumsfeld had "been bombarded by apologetic phone calls from your critics who had doom and gloom there."

"There were a lot of handwringers around, weren't there?" the secretary asked the crowd. "During World War II Winston Churchill was talking about the Battle of Britain when he said, 'Never have so many, owed so much, to so few.'"

"A humorist in Washington the other day, sent me a note paraphrasing that saying: 'Never have so many, been so wrong, about so much.'"

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Focus on Emergency Management and Public Safety

New Test of Our Terrorism Defenses By Jason Hagey, The News Tribune

A mock "dirty bomb" will "explode" somewhere in Seattle in the month of May, spreading a pretend spray of radioactive debris over part of the Emerald City. At about the same time, a staged bio-terrorism assault will hit the Chicago area, testing the ability of officials there to handle a much different but equally sobering type of attack. Together, the scenarios are part of a congressionally mandated counterterrorism exercise known as Topoff 2, an acronym for Top Officials. It's only the second such exercise mounted in the nation and the first since the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks. It's also the first large-scale counterterrorism exercise since the creation of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

"It's the largest counterterrorism event ever held in the nation," said Eric Holdeman, director of the King County Office of Emergency Management. "Or the world, for that matter."

Lessons learned from the first Topoff, held in 2000 in New Hampshire, Colorado and Washington, D.C. - as well as a shift in national sentiment following Sept. 11 - will make this one different in several ways. Not the least of which is the near-absence of critics charging that it's a waste of money and that nothing like it would ever happen. The purpose of Topoff, however, hasn't changed.

Unlike other emergency preparedness exercises, which primarily test the ability of law enforcement, firefighters, medical workers and other first responders, Topoff - as its name implies - is aimed squarely at the highest-level decision-makers.

"It's an incredible opportunity," said Glen Woodbury, director of the Washington State Department of Emergency Management.

The weeklong exercise begins May 12 and concludes May 16 with a critique session. The full-scale field exercise will conclude May 13, but emergency planners will continue playing the scenario for two more days.

Everyone from Seattle Mayor Greg Nickels and King County Executive Ron Sims to top-level Cabinet officials in Washington, D.C., will play along, making decisions about which agency should do what and what to tell the public. The media also have been invited to join the role-playing to make it seem as realistic as possible. In all, several hundred people will participate and virtually every government agency will be represented. The federal government is paying the entire \$2.5 million cost.

Last fall, federal officials announced that Seattle had been chosen as one of the two main sites for Topoff 2, along with greater Chicago. The Department of Justice, in charge of the exercise at the time, wanted a West Coast city with a major port and proximity to an international border. Canada is also joining in the exercise, adding another layer of complexity missing from the first

Topoff. In addition, Pierce County and the City of Kent are planning smaller, unrelated exercises to coincide with the Topoff drill.

Coordination of many jurisdictions will no doubt be among the greatest challenges, said King County's Holdeman. For example, the county's public health department lacks expertise in radiation, he said, so it will be forced to rely on help from the state, which has training because of the Hanford Nuclear Reservation near the Tri-Cities.

Simply talking to each other may prove problematic. A federal study released this month showed that Washington is one of 36 states that has not upgraded communications equipment enough to ensure that various agencies can talk to each other during a crisis.

Whatever lessons are learned, there's a good chance they will apply not only to potential terrorist attacks but also to earthquakes and other natural disasters. And that's a good thing, said Colorado's Moser. The next challenge, he said, will be convincing the public that a terrorist strike - like an earthquake - is something that can be prepared for but not necessarily prevented. "I think we have to lay it on the table that it's a reality," Moser said.

What Topoff 2 hopes to achieve

Objectives for Topoff 2 include showing that officials can:

- Minimize fatalities from a weapon of mass destruction while managing a crime scene.
- Respond to the impact on critical infrastructure and quickly restore essential services, including communications, utilities, transportation, business operations, medical, law enforcement and fire services.
- Maintain local and state leadership and preserve critical government operations.
- Operate a unified command system with multiple levels of government.
- Demonstrate short- and long-term recovery efforts.
- Exercise mutual aid agreements between various governments.
- Demonstrate an ability to conduct joint public information operations.

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LETTER TO MEMBERS

Dear TACDA Member,

It is with a heavy heart that I am writing to you today to inform you of the death of one of TACDA's Board of Directors.

Edwin N. York, age 78, passed away at his home in Kent, Washington on Sunday, April 27, 2003.

Mr. York, better known to us as just "Ed", was a long-time TACDA member and served more than 20 years on TACDA's Board of Directors. His loyalty to and support for TACDA will always be remembered. He was always there when we needed a bit of advice or direction and always seemed to have encouraging words for us here in the TACDA office.

Perhaps our most vivid memory of Ed is seeing him at the TACDA annual seminars with his video camera in hand, capturing the event on film. It was a rare occasion when we did not see Ed at the TACDA meetings. If he could possibly attend, he would be there to offer his support and his knowledge and expertise in a speech or two.

Edwin York was a retired staff researcher and scientist for Boeing Aerospace Company and was heavily involved with the testing of shelter capabilities. An established and highly respected figure, Ed was one of the

country's leading shelter consultants, as well as a wonderful writer and speaker.

All of us here at TACDA will greatly miss Ed, his support and guidance, but will remember his many selfless contributions to TACDA and to his country. We greatly appreciate all that he has done to help make TACDA what it is today.

"Thank you Ed."

*Sincerely,
Kathy Eiland
Executive Director, TACDA*

FEATURED PRODUCT

Rad Block Potassium Iodide (KI) Tablets

Potassium Iodide (KI) is used in the event of a nuclear/radiological incident where radioactive Iodine, a by-product of nuclear fallout, is released into the air. This radioactive Iodine can be harmful to the Thyroid gland, and excessive exposure introduces the potential for serious complications, sometimes not showing up until years after exposure.

Potassium Iodide (KI) works to saturate the Thyroid gland with "good" Iodine, thereby prohibiting it from absorbing the radioactive Iodine associated with nuclear fallout.

Right now, you can purchase a case of 12 bottles of Rad Block Potassium Iodide tablets through the TACDA Store for only \$131.40 for TACDA members, and only \$151.40 for nonmembers. Each bottle contains 200 tablets at 65 mg each.

Call now to order, or visit www.tacda.org.