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**THE NATIONAL WEAPONS OF
MASS DESTRUCTION STRATEGY:
TIME FOR A MID-COURSE CORRECTION**

BY

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ABSTRACT

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Deterrence of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) is an important element of our National Security Strategy. Over the last several years efforts to counter this threat have grown tremendously. However, there is growing evidence that this effort has not been well planned, coordinated or executed. Numerous audits of the WMD program have found a consistent lack of prioritization and coordination of effort and allocation of resources. This paper will review the WMD threat, examine and assess the evolution of U.S. policy, and highlight specific weaknesses within the current strategy. In addition, the analysis will review Department of Defense (DOD) roles and responsibilities, some of which are duplicative and non-responsive to the needs of local, state, and federal officials. This duplication has directly led to a waste of valuable resources in terms of both manpower and money. Finally, the paper will provide concrete recommendations to improve the national counter WMD effort.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACTiii

THE NATIONAL WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION STRATEGY:1

THE THREAT 3

NATIONAL STRATEGY 3

THE DOD ROLE 7

RECOMMENDATIONS 10

CONCLUSION 13

ENDNOTES 15

BIBLIOGRAPHY 17

THE NATIONAL WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION STRATEGY: Time for a Mid-Course Correction

Protecting the United States from a terrorist attack and protecting American citizens is the most fundamental tenet of our National Security Strategy. Our citizens have every right to demand that they be afforded the opportunity to live and work in a safe and peaceful environment. Unfortunately, today's world is characterized by an ever increasing degree of violence and terrorism that has already reached into the heartland of America. Our traditional boundaries, the Atlantic and Pacific oceans, no longer isolate us from the cold realities of life in the 21st century. We, as a nation, are no longer immune from terrorists and the deadly techniques they can employ. Of particular concern is the use of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) employing nuclear, biological or chemical (NBC) components. These types of WMD share three terrible characteristics, their immense lethality, their portability and their accessibility. Currently, two opposing schools of thought categorize the threat as a virtual certainty or one of complete complacency. Truth is most likely somewhere in between these two extremes. But even with the most remote of possibilities, steps must be taken to appropriately protect the nation and it's citizens from this terrible threat.

Over the past several years, efforts to counter the WMD threat have grown tremendously. However, there is increasing evidence that these efforts have not been well planned, coordinated or executed. Numerous audits of the various governmental programs have revealed a consistent lack of prioritization, a lack of coordination of effort and a misallocation of resources. This paper will review the WMD threat (at the unclassified level), examine and assess the evolution of U.S. policy and highlight specific weaknesses within the current national strategy. In addition, the analysis will review Department of Defense (DOD) roles and responsibilities, some of which are duplicative and non-responsive to the needs of local, state and federal officials. Finally, this paper will provide specific recommendations to improve the national counter WMD effort.

THE EARLY YEARS

WMD threats are not new. One of the most notable and first recorded incidents occurred in May 1974 with an extortion threat made by "Captain Midnight" to detonate an improvised nuclear device (IND) in the city of Boston. Although the incident turned out to be a hoax, the threat was credible enough to mobilize a major deployment of various nuclear experts from throughout the country. This incident also led to the creation of the Nuclear Emergency Search Team (NEST), which was later activated to deal with another extortion IND threat in Spokane, Washington. Likewise, there have been numerous threats over the years involving chemical and biological weapons, including countless threats against community water supplies. The most notable chemical incident took place in a Tokyo subway in March, 1995. Five

members of a Japanese cult, Aum Shinrikyo, boarded subway trains at five different stations around Tokyo. Each carried two plastic bags of sarin nerve agent and a sharpened umbrella to punch a hole in the plastic bags. The gruesome result was 12 dead, over 5,000 injured and a major world city in shock. While many lessons were learned during this unfortunate incident, the most important was how unprepared the city was to handle a major man-made disaster.

In the early 1980's, the U.S. Naval Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) School at Indianhead, Maryland developed an advanced course for the service's EOD technicians specifically designed to counter the WMD threat. This course became known as the Advanced Access and Disablement (AA&D) Course with the specific objective of teaching students how to gain access to and render safe an IND. Still in existence today, the AA&D course has trained hundreds of EOD technicians in this very delicate art. In addition, the Army EOD program designated certain EOD units located at various locations throughout the United States as IND response units. These units received additional training and maintained specialized tools and equipment for this mission.

During the 1980's and early 1990's, the Department of Energy (DOE) and predominately Army EOD units conducted numerous training exercises almost exclusively centered on an IND scenario. These exercises lasted several days and all operations conducted were professional, methodical and very slow. In most exercises it took EOD teams several days to gain access to the simulated IND. The relative slow pace of the 'access phase' was not a function of poor training of the EOD units. Rather it was more a function of the over elaborate protective measures, built by the exercise evaluators, that were designed to protect the simulated device and challenge EOD. Speed was usually sacrificed for safety – that is, not wanting to inadvertently detonate the simulated IND. At the command and control level, one glaring short coming of these early exercises was the absence of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), the coordinating U.S. agency for a terrorist attack. Thus, the entire team, the FBI, DOD and DOE, rarely trained as a cohesive unit. This deficiency was highlighted in October 1994 during a full scale IND exercise in New Orleans code-named Mirage Gold.¹ The after action reviews documented numerous shortcomings to include, conflicts between law enforcement and emergency assistance personnel and a general lack of preparedness particularly on the part of the FBI. Mirage Gold was the focal point for change and the 'wake-up call' that the program badly needed. This exercise along with subsequent congressional hearings chaired by Senator Sam Nunn in 1996 set in motion a number of much needed reforms. Unfortunately, while these reforms were badly needed, they have led to the subsequent uncoordinated proliferation of interest in the WMD arena without a clear strategy. WMD has become a popular band wagon for many agencies to jump on because it brings prestige and resources. This uncoordinated effort, if left unchecked, can prove to be just as damaging as the pre-1994 WMD effort.

THE THREAT

WMD can be categorized into three basic types, nuclear, chemical and biological. A nuclear device can be further subdivided into the more traditional explosive device resulting in a nuclear yield or a radiological dispersal device (RDD) which is designed to spread radioactive contamination through a small high explosive charge. Chemical and biological agents are numerous; some of which can be produced with a minimum of technical obstacles. In addition, chemical and biological agents are relatively easy to transport and very difficult to detect.

Many nation states have built and/or acquired WMD, but few have actually used them. Likewise, with the exception of Aum Shinrikyo, non-state actors have not crossed the motivational threshold to use WMD. However, most experts agree that non-state actors pose the greatest threat for employment of WMD.² These same experts state that the paramount reasons for not using WMD are: inflicting massive human casualties does not serve the interest of most non-state actors; the use of a WMD may actually serve to be counterproductive to the groups cause; and finally, most terrorists lack experience in dealing with nuclear, chemical, and biological agents.³ However, there is mounting evidence and opinion that the reluctance on the part of non-state actors may be changing.⁴ Thus, there is an ever-increasing need to detect and deter the WMD threat. In other words, the U.S. needs an effective, coordinated, and well-trained national WMD response apparatus.

NATIONAL STRATEGY

The objective (ends) of U.S. national strategy is clearly stated in Presidential Decision Directive (PDD) 39, dated June 1995, that "...it is the policy of the United States to use all appropriate means to deter, defeat and respond to all terrorist attacks...".⁵ However, while the objective is clear, the concepts (ways) and resources (means) needed to achieve this objective have not been well coordinated over the past several years. This lack of coordination has resulted in a larger than acceptable degree of risk which could adversely impact this nation's ability to achieve its strategic goal.

PDD 39 and the Nunn-Lugar-Domenici Amendment of 1996 assigned and divided responsibilities for federal agencies combating terrorism and responding to WMD incidents into two (2) basic categories: crisis management and consequence management. Crisis management includes efforts to stop a terrorist attack, arrest terrorists, gather evidence, and perform an initial "render safe" procedure on the WMD device. The laws of the U.S. assign primary authority for terrorist acts to the federal government, thus the FBI is the lead agency with support from the DOD and DOE. Consequence management includes efforts to protect public health, restore essential government services, and provide emergency relief. U.S. laws assign the responsibility for consequence management to the individual states with

federal government assistance being provided through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) with DOE and DOD supporting.

While PDD 39 and the Nunn-Lugar-Domenici Amendment established specific roles and responsibilities, neither provided for an effective interagency planning and coordinating effort at the strategic level. Thus for several years, numerous governmental agencies were earnestly working on what they perceived to be their individual roles in the WMD mission. Unfortunately, this effort was not coordinated resulting in a hodgepodge of uncoordinated and duplicative capabilities. In December 1997, a highly critical General Accounting Office (GAO) report concluded that billions of dollars were being spent by numerous governmental organizations without regard to priorities, the terrorist threat or other agency efforts.⁶

In an effort to regain some degree of control and focus the total counter WMD effort (strengthen ways and means to achieve the national objective), President Clinton signed PDD 62 on May 22, 1998. PDD 62 established the Office of the National Coordinator for Security, Infrastructure Protection and Counter-Terrorism. The National Coordinator works within the National Security Council (NSC) and is responsible for overseeing WMD policy and programs and provides advice regarding budgets for the counter-terrorism effort.

While formation of the office of National Coordinator is constructive, problems remain. First, the number of national organizations supporting this effort has grown tremendously over the past several years. There are no less than ten major governmental agencies and more than 50 sub-agencies tasked with a WMD mission. The Center for Nonproliferation Studies at Monterey Institute of International Studies has prepared a comprehensive listing of those agencies with a WMD mission. Realistically, coordinating and gaining consensus from such a large and diverse group is truly 'mission impossible'. Understandably, the WMD program is complex by its very nature; however, one can truly question the validity of so many agencies being involved. Second, the National Coordinator does not direct national agencies' activities but rather integrates government policies and programs. In providing testimony to the House of Representatives, Subcommittee on National Security, Veterans Affairs and International Relations, March 11, 1999, Assistant Comptroller General Henry L. Hinton alluded that National Coordinator may not have the required authority needed to improve management of the WMD effort.⁷ A lack of direct authority has prevented several federal agencies from completing much needed interagency guidelines and resolving key command and control issues. Furthermore, a May 1999 GAO report highlighted numerous interagency guidelines, which have yet to be worked out between the FBI, Department of Treasury (DOT), Department of Justice (DOJ) and Department of State (DOS).⁸ Thus the message is abundantly clear, the WMD governmental bureaucracy has become too large. Too many organizations have jumped on the bandwagon to the point where the wagon is now too heavy and has become bogged down in bureaucratic ineffectiveness.

Some may argue that an easy and quick solution may be to consolidate all WMD responsibilities under one governmental organization – namely, the DOD. After all, they are the experts in handling

crises, have expertise in chemical/biological/nuclear operations, and have the material and manpower needed to perform the mission. This argument would be true if crisis management consisted solely of planning the counter WMD operation, locating and then disarming the WMD device, and if the identity of those responsible for the attack was known. However, it must be recognized that the identity of the attacker may not be known, terrorists may be of either domestic or international origin, and terrorism is by definition a violation of U.S. criminal law. Thus, crisis management is largely a law enforcement investigation consisting of the gathering of evidence for the arrest and prosecution of those responsible. Given this fact, the FBI should clearly have the lead for crisis management. The U.S. military, under most situations, is prohibited from these types of investigative activities. In addition, investigations of this magnitude, as well as post blast and forensics investigations are not core competencies of the military. Similarly, consequence management encompasses many responsibilities and duties not possessed by the DOD. Thus, FEMA, the lead agency, is clearly the governmental agency of choice for consequence management. The appropriate role for DOD, like DOE, is that of a supporting agency. The true issue is not the organizations leading crisis and consequence management, but rather focusing the enormous resources of the federal government into a unified effort.

Another concern is the annual WMD budget. This budget has grown from \$5.7 billion in FY 1996 to \$6.7 billion in FY 1999 to a projected \$10 billion for FY 2000.⁹ As stated above, this is a major reason for the proliferation of agencies wanting to join the WMD team – the mission carries with it prestige and the all-important ‘dollar’. Again quoting Assistant Comptroller Hinton in his testimony to Congress,

This rapid program growth has occurred in the absence of (1) a government-wide strategy that includes a defined end-state; (2) sound established, defined, and prioritized program requirements; and (3) crosscutting analysis of individual agencies’ budget proposals to ensure that unnecessary duplication and waste avoided and existing federal, state and local capabilities are fully leveraged.¹⁰

This is a serious indictment of the total WMD program and certainly begs the need for a more powerful National Coordinator. The National Coordinator must have the responsibility, mandate and authority to establish agency priorities, cut through interagency infighting and ensure that resources (means) are allocated appropriately and based on a realistic threat assessment. A strong National Coordinator with this type of overarching authority would serve to focus, strengthen and ultimately balance the ways and means of the nation’s WMD apparatus. Bringing ways and means back into balance ensures that the nation can accomplish the mission of protecting its citizens.

A recurring and glaring deficiency in the WMD program was once again highlighted in the most recent GAO report, dated September 1999, in which the agency again uncovered the lack of a formal, written threat assessment on the part of the FBI and other key organizations.¹¹ This deficiency goes back at least as far as the September 1997 GAO report referenced earlier. The lack of a threat assessment is particularly troubling given the large FY 2000 WMD budget and substantial investments being made in the program. A detailed and updated threat assessment is a vital decision making tool that could be used by the National Coordinator to help shape, focus, and prioritize the complete spectrum of federal

agencies involved in the effort. It would also provide the foundation for the development of a strategic WMD roadmap, husband valuable but limited resources and prioritize appropriate countermeasures. Authority to direct governmental agencies to perform a continuing, comprehensive threat assessment program should rest with the National Coordinator. As a side note to the threat assessment issue, experts agree that the near term weapon of choice for terrorists remains focused on conventional explosives and/or industrial type chemical compounds like chlorine.¹² Given this assessment and the fact that several large conventional IEDs have actually been employed over the past several years, it would seem prudent for the WMD community to ensure that countermeasures are developed and in place to inhibit the use of these large devices. For example, EOD units of the Armed Forces do not possess the necessary render safe tools needed to disarm large IEDs. While some tools, techniques, and procedures have been developed, they have become entangled in the "bureaucratic web" of the Pentagon. Getting these tools, techniques, and procedures untangled and into the hands of civilian and military bomb disposal personnel quickly, would be a relatively easy fix for the near term WMD battle.

Another critical role that should fall under the purview of the National Coordinator is to coordinate, focus, and monitor the various WMD exercises. It is essential that the entire WMD apparatus is properly trained; this includes crisis and consequence management synchronization as well as training for political officials at the federal, state, and local levels. There are basically two (2) types of exercises, tabletop exercises and field exercises. A tabletop exercise is performed around a table or command post and players progress through a given scenario and discuss their agency's role in relation to a given set of events. These exercises usually focus on higher-level policy decisions for key leaders. On the other hand, a field exercise is conducted in the field and is meant to closely simulate actual field conditions. Naturally, field exercises are much more costly and resource intensive than tabletop exercises. The number of exercises have grown dramatically since implementation of PDD 39; between June 1997 and June 1998 there were 116 exercises with a little over one-half being tabletop exercises.¹³ While the growth in the number of exercises is a positive step, the proper focus and mix of exercises are essential in order to maintain well-trained WMD leaders and forces. For example, during the same time period, June 1997-June 1998, only 28 percent of the exercises included both crisis and consequence management. Furthermore, of these exercises, 79 percent were tabletop.¹⁴ Synchronization between crisis and consequence management will be difficult at best during the high stress, chaotic periods of an actual WMD event. Therefore, great care must be given to adequately train for the smooth transition between these two critical phases and to the proper mix of tabletop and field exercises in order to hone these important skills. However, the most notable deficiency has actually been the lack of no-notice exercises. Between June 1995 and June 1998, only four (4) no-notice exercises had been conducted. To compound the deficiency, all four had focused solely on international scenarios.¹⁵ The FBI asserts, and rightly so, that no-notice exercises are very disruptive to the overall 'everyday' mission of the Bureau and all other participants. In addition, the FBI argues that the primary goal of a training program should be to train the participants in their specific mission and "...not to test how fast they can respond to a no-

notice exercise."¹⁶ This concept of training is seriously flawed and must be corrected immediately. Both elements, rapid response and proper training, are absolutely essential components of the total WMD response apparatus.

Finally, there must be a coordinated WMD national intelligence apparatus. Intelligence is the most important first line of defense in the counter WMD effort. Determining the viability of clandestine state and non-state WMD efforts is essential. Many of the various governmental organizations involved in the counter WMD effort have their own intelligence activities working the problem. However, as previously stated, unity of effort and clear-cut direction is missing but absolutely essential if we are to have a viable, coordinated intelligence program. A viable intelligence program would provide early warning and timely information to the relevant governmental decision makers. This would also allow for the possibility of a preemptive strike against a potential adversary, if deemed in our nation's best interest.

THE DOD ROLE

The National Defense Authorization Act of 1997 (the Nunn-Lugar-Domenici Amendment referred to earlier) was designed to improve the nation's domestic preparedness against the WMD threat. Because of its unique capabilities and extensive experience in dealing with nuclear, chemical, and biological materials, DOD was tasked and funded to develop a training program for first responders and for the establishment of domestic rapid response teams capable of aiding local and state agencies.¹⁷

With typical military efficiency, the DOD quickly set out to accomplish the requirements mandated in the National Defense Authorization Act. They swiftly developed a plan to conduct training of local agencies and established a rapid response force. Unfortunately, like other aspects of the entire national effort, the military plan is not well coordinated and contains several examples of redundant capabilities. Redundant capabilities maybe caused by the lack of a credible threat assessment. Without a clearly articulated threat assessment, it is very difficult to build the focused counter WMD program as envisioned by Congress.

An excellent example of a redundant program was the establishment of the National Guard's Rapid Assessment and Initial Detection (RAID) team. In November 1997, the Deputy Secretary of Defense directed the DOD to integrate the National Guard into the DOD response plan for WMD attacks.¹⁸ This resulted in the development of an initial ten RAID teams. The mission of the RAID team is to assess a suspect WMD event, advise civilian responders regarding appropriate actions, and facilitate requests for assistance to expedite the arrival of additional federal assets.¹⁹ These twenty-two man force packages consist of military occupational specialties (MOS) in communications, medical, chemical and administrative/logistics and are capable of deploying within four hours of notification. There is one team located in each of the ten FEMA regions, with the goal of eventually having fifty-four teams. While an asset of the state Governor, RAID teams may deploy as a regional asset to other states.

However, acceptance of the RAID team concept into the 'total WMD force' has been less than enthusiastic. FBI, FEMA, and state/local officials have not been universally receptive to the concept. In fact, a 1999 GAO report revealed that officials within the FBI and FEMA saw no role for the RAID teams in the federal response.²⁰ Additionally, officials in states without a RAID team did not see how the team would benefit their state due to the length of time it would take for the team to respond.

Response time is perhaps one of the most critical elements of WMD support. As indicated above, the RAID team has the mission to respond within four hours of notification. However, responding does not equate to arriving on scene. Many question the ability of a National Guard element to meet such a stringent response requirement and most agree that the four hour notification period plus travel time to the incident location would put the team on site much too late to be of assistance to the incident commander.²¹ The most critical period of the WMD incident will be the first one to two hours after the initial event. After that time, local and state Hazardous Materials (HAZMAT) personnel will have had sufficient time to establish the basic detection information that will allow local authorities to begin to gain control of the situation. In addition, while the RAID team would have access to National Guard fixed-wing and rotary aircraft; there are no current plans to have dedicated aircrews on call for immediate response. The time it will take to recall the aircrews, prepare and load the aircraft and then fly to the incident site would put the team on the ground much too late to be of assistance. Contrast this with the assets provided by the FBI's Hazardous Materials Response Unit and DOE organizations located at Kirkland and Nellis Air Force bases which have ready 'flyaway' equipment packages, dedicated aircraft, and dedicated aircrews. It is entirely probable that these teams would arrive in advance of the RAID team, thus rendering the RAID team useless.

Furthermore, RAID teams duplicate existing DOD capabilities. From the technical aspect, DOD possesses numerous units that can quickly assist local first responders in assessing the WMD situation – the first mission of the RAID team. Specific DOD organizations include the U.S. Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps EOD units (over sixty-five units located throughout the continental U.S.), U.S. Army Technical Escort Units (TEU) and the U.S. Marine Corps Chemical/Biological Incident Response Force (CBIRF). These DOD forces already provide support and have mature, proven relationships with local, state, and federal agencies. Most importantly, these units can respond quickly and are located near most major cities, unit members have participated in numerous WMD exercises over the course of the past twenty years, and are already highly trained professionals with years of WMD experience. Since these units are located throughout the United States and possess existing WMD capabilities, their use would certainly reduce response time, provide local authorities with a familiar force, and reduce the overall cost of the WMD support program. The RAID team concept also appears to duplicate the role of the Defense Coordinating Officer (DCO). The Federal Response Plan already provides for the DCO to be the single point of contact regarding military assistance in a disaster. The DCO is responsible for validating requests for military assistance, identifying and deploying active and reserve units, and for operational control of deploying units. Any request for units (other than a National Guard unit in state status) would

have to be made through the DCO since activation authority rests with these officers and not RAID team commanders. Thus, establishing another organization with a similar mission only seems to add a 'confusion factor' as to responsibilities. This would not be very helpful during a period of the utmost crisis, like a WMD event.

Another major concern of the RAID team concept is the inability of the National Guard to train and retain unit members. Providing expert technical support and advice to the local on-scene commander requires a highly trained, seasoned professional. This skill cannot simply be grown overnight. It will literally take years for this proficiency to be realized. As stated above, most members of EOD, TEU, and CBIRF already possess counter WMD skills. These soldiers receive intensive training and then spend years in an understudy status until they reach the status of 'team leader'. The lack of experience of the RAID team leadership does bring into question the competency and proficiency of any advice given to the local on-scene commander. Undoubtedly, this lack of skill and experience will not go unnoticed on the part of local agencies and will make it difficult for RAID team technical advice to be taken seriously. Unfortunately, the DOD did not seem to consider this important aspect when developing the RAID team concept. In addition, retaining these soldiers through the life of their National Guard career is also questionable. In the early 1990's, the Department of the Army restructured the Reserves and the National Guard. Combat Support (CS) and Combat Service Support (CSS) units were predominately moved to the Reserves and Combat Arms (CA) units to the National Guard. Thus, there will be few chemical (CS) and medical (CSS) positions in the Guard outside the small RAID teams. This will make it very difficult for promotions opportunities; creating a dead end job which will affect retention. Any turnover of personnel would further compound the problem given the training and experience factor stated above.

Many cities, particularly larger cities, have very robust HAZMAT capabilities and most major city HAZMAT departments tackle numerous hazardous situations annually. Thus, these organizations are very well trained. Many experts also agree that a chemical attack will be handled in a very similar manner as to that of a major HAZMAT situation.²² Thus, emphasis should remain on DOD training of HAZMAT personnel in the area of chemical and biological agents. A November 1998 GAO report cited that the training and equipment being provided by DOD has clearly improved awareness and should better prepare cities to handle any chemical or biological attack. This approach to the training of first responders and key decision-makers is extremely important. Proper handling of the situation in the very early hours after the attack will help save lives and prevent the further spread of contamination. A similar DOJ training initiative has been underway for over a year at the FBI Hazardous Devices School (HDS) located at Redstone Arsenal, Alabama. HDS is a FBI training facility located on an U.S. Army installation and utilizes FBI, Army EOD and contractor instructors. In existence for years, this training facility has traditionally provided police officers and other public officials' beginner-level bomb disposal skills. Last year, resources became available which allowed HDS to begin conducting courses to counter the WMD threat. Plans are also being developed to expand the training to include an advanced WMD course with

instructors from the DOE and Army EOD. Thus, first responders – the bomb technicians on the ground who are most likely to be the first to come in contact with a device – will now have the ability to recognize the threat and begin to take the appropriate required actions. Handling the situation correctly from the very beginning is absolutely essential and means the difference between a successful conclusion or a 'very bad day'. Government furnished detection equipment would be an excellent and minimal investment (estimated cost is \$1.3 million²³) and would allow for the proper assessment of the device and provide follow-on technicians the requisite diagnostic information.

To date, DOD has spent over \$52 million to establish the ten National Guard RAID teams. However, while the GAO has raised some serious questions and recommended that the National Coordinator reassess the necessity of RAID teams, the DOD continues to push forward with future plans calling for the formation of an additional seventeen teams at a cost of \$107 million.²⁴ The DOD claims that the formation of RAID teams must continue since they were mandated by Congress. However, as stated earlier, the teams were a DOD initiative and Congress, by passing the Fiscal Year 1999 Defense Appropriation Act, funded the RAID team initiative. It is now time for the DOD to carefully assess the RAID team concept and make mid-course corrections, as needed. Failure to carefully analyze the RAID team concept adds unnecessary risk to WMD operations through a duplication of effort and a siphoning of valuable monetary resources.

RECOMMENDATIONS

While great progress has been made over the years in the counter WMD program, much more remains to be done. The following list of recommendations would, if implemented, greatly strengthen, focus, and synchronize the total counter WMD effort.

PDD 62 should immediately be amended to strengthen the authority of the National Coordinator for Security, Infrastructure Protection and Counter-Terrorism. Unfortunately, the basic finding of the December 1997 GAO report, lack of national leadership, remains unchanged.²⁵ In fact, a 1999 study commissioned by the National Guard Bureau (conducted by the Science Application International Corporation) came to the same conclusion; "...no one agency or person is in charge of synchronizing all federal, state, and local agencies needed to respond to a chemical or biological attack."²⁶ This unfortunate situation cannot be allowed to stand. The National Coordinator must have greater direct authority over all national assets. This must include direct authority to prioritize WMD program requirements, readjust federal government responsibilities (as necessary) to ensure there are no duplication of efforts, monitor results of national/regional/local WMD training exercises, monitor and distribute exercise After Action Reviews (AAR), and possess direct oversight of agency budgets and expenditures to synchronize coordination of effort.

The Office of the National Coordinator must task the appropriate governmental agency with the responsibility of immediately producing a formal, written threat assessment. The FBI, as the nations lead

investigative agency, should have this responsibility. Once completed, the FBI should continuously update the threat assessment. Again, the lack of a threat assessment is a long standing and repeat finding of various GAO reports. This deficiency must be corrected. The threat assessment should become the strategic roadmap and serve to shape, focus, and prioritize all federal efforts and in particular, the WMD budget process. Without a doubt, the threat assessment should become one of the most important management tools used by the National Coordinator. This document will also aid all decision-makers in determining the right number and mix of federal organizations that should be involved in the WMD program. Downsizing the complex, labyrinth WMD organizational network, based on a valid threat assessment, would serve to improve the interagency process, thus strengthening the entire program.

The Office of the National Coordinator must focus on the following five components of a coordinated national WMD intelligence program. First, emphasis should be placed on establishing a human intelligence (HUMINT) dimension to the intelligence program. WMD attacks, particularly chemical and biological, are extremely difficult to detect because the weapon development process can be easily disguised. Human intelligence provides the much needed 'eyes and ears' to detect even small scale weapons development. Second, a concerted effort should be placed on targeting the financial dealings of known terrorist groups. Every effort must be made to dry up monetary sources as well as creating a hostile environment for potential financial backers. Eliminating financial resources will make WMD development, particularly nuclear, very difficult. Third, U.S. intelligence agencies must increase their level of international cooperation against known groups with WMD development potential. An aggressive and coordinated international program will increase the chances of detecting state or non-state actors developing WMD weapons. International involvement and cooperation will also gain multilateral support for any subsequent required political, economic or military action against those found to be developing or harboring WMD terrorists. Fourth, both at the national and international level, every effort must be made to institutionalize policies that police the use of commercial dual-use equipment and materials. Companies who report suspected potential sales should be monetarily rewarded while corporate leaders of companies caught illegally trading should be harshly dealt with through the national or international court system. A national central point of contact should be established to which companies could direct their reports. Finally, the intelligence community should continue to push for the development of state-of-the-art WMD detection equipment that can unobtrusively detect small levels of either radioactive, chemical or biological activities. This would allow for the identification of any clandestine effort, particularly among non-state actors.

The Office of the National Coordinator should direct the development of both crisis management and consequence management operation plans (OPLANs). OPLANs are detailed plans, developed by the military, articulating how an operation is to be executed. The FBI should develop crisis management OPLANs. DOD, because of its vast experience in OPLAN formulation, should assist FEMA, local, and state authorities in the development of consequence management OPLANs. Plans, covering several

different scenarios, must be developed, practiced in 'tabletop' exercises and then rehearsed with all participants. OPLANs should identify all participating federal, state and local agencies, establish a time phased deployment plan for all organizations, specify organizational missions, identify resources required and develop proposed courses of actions. OPLANs must contain a complete set of annexes which address such topics as evacuation of population centers and evacuation routes, maintenance of key command and control infrastructures (i.e., communications and information networks), and logistics requirements. In addition, crisis and consequence management OPLANs must be carefully synchronized to insure a smooth transition between these two critical phases. The probability that a WMD event will go public fairly early in the scenario is relatively high; therefore, it is imperative that OPLANs be detailed and adequately rehearsed at all levels. It is particularly important for political leaders to help shape OPLAN development and participate in rehearsals. Once public, the event will cause extreme chaos, thus the need for well rehearsed and coordinated OPLANs.

The Office of the National Coordinator should fund the U.S. National Laboratories (Sandia, Los Alamos, and Lawrence Livermore) to continue the development of sophisticated nuclear, chemical, and biological detection equipment. This equipment would be used for both intelligence purposes, as mentioned above, and for the technical community to identify, diagnose, and develop render safe procedures in order to disarm the suspect WMD device. Because of the importance of this equipment, funding should be made available to field these devices at all levels of federal, state, and local agencies.

The Office of the National Coordinator must be tasked with the overall responsibility of coordinating and focusing the WMD training exercise program. Great care must be given to the proper mix of tabletop versus field exercises. In addition, training exercises must include all applicable agencies, test the synchronization between crisis and consequence management and test the ability of all agencies to rapidly respond to the incident location. After each exercise, a detailed After Action Report should be completed, deficiencies corrected and results distributed to all federal, state, and local officials. It is imperative that all agencies, no matter whether they were directly involved in the exercise or not, learn from the experience.

Given the near-term threat of continued use of conventional explosives, the Office of the National Coordinator should direct the DOD, in conjunction with the National Laboratories, to continue development of tools, techniques and procedures to render safe large IEDs. Once developed, these tools, techniques and procedures should be immediately provided to EOD units of the Armed Forces and be made available to local police bomb squads. In addition, the DOD should be tasked to expedite the fielding of tools, techniques and procedures that have already been developed but have yet to be distributed to EOD units. Many of these tools are already in use in local U.S. communities and have been tested and verified by Allied EOD forces.

The Office of the National Coordinator should reassess DOD capabilities and future DOD roles within the WMD program after detailed consultations with the DOJ, FBI, FEMA, and the DOD. This assessment must take into consideration the WMD threat assessment, current DOD capabilities and

services provided by other local, state, and federal organizations. Special care should be given to re-evaluating the current mission of the NG RAID team concept before additional funds and resources are committed. Without a doubt, the National Guard possesses tremendous assets and expertise; however, creating new skills in an organization that does not appear to meet the needs of the customer is not the answer. Providing technical assistance to local, state, and federal agencies should be tasked to existing DOD organizations like EOD, TEU, and CBIRF. These organizations should also be tasked to participate in training exercises as first responders, a function easily within their capability. Roles for the NG should focus on their expertise and capabilities. Critical tasks for the NG should center on assisting local and state governments in the development of OPLANs, assisting in developing and evaluating training exercises, establishing mobile command and control centers, and providing critical logistics and medical support. Furthermore, DOD should revisit their 1990's decision to move CS/CSS units exclusively to the Reserves versus the NG. Appropriate medical and logistics units may have to be transferred to NG units in order to provide the required support that will be needed by local communities during the consequence management phase of a WMD attack.

CONCLUSION

In today's society, the issue of weapons of mass destruction and terrorism has reached an unprecedented level of concern. To compound this problem, the traditional barriers that have inhibited terrorists from using these hideous weapons may be rapidly eroding. Fortunately, much has been done over the past several years to protect the United States from a WMD attack and with continued advancements in technologies, much more is possible. However, managing this large, complex governmental program has proven to be a monumental and complicated task. In addition, the numerous governmental assessments that have been conducted over the past several years have clearly illustrated that it is now time to make appropriate mid-course corrections within our national counter WMD policy. Hard decisions must be made and made quickly so as not to impede the program. Clearly, countering the WMD threat is complicated; there are no easy answers. Therefore, it is imperative that the U.S. government build a coordinated crisis and consequence management system of defense while at the same time protect our core American values and civil liberties. The recommendations provided above, if implemented, should assist in focusing, synchronizing, and prioritizing a balanced counter WMD program aimed at reducing the vulnerability of the United States of America while protecting the fundamental values of our democratic system of government.

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ENDNOTES

¹ Richard A. Falkenrath, Robert D. Newman, and Bradley A. Thayer, America's Achilles' Heel: Nuclear, Biological, and Chemical Terrorism and Covert Attack (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1998), 321.

² *Ibid.*, 167.

³ *Ibid.*, 45.

⁴ Gavin Cameron, Nuclear Terrorism: A Threat Assessment for the 21st Century (New York, NY: St Martin's Press, 1999), 138-139.

⁵ Presidential Decision Directive 39, 21 June 1995.

⁶ General Accounting Office, Combating Terrorism: Spending on Governmentwide Programs Requires Better Management and Coordination (Washington, D.C.: U.S. GAO, December 1997), 12.

⁷ General Accounting Office, Combating Terrorism: Observations on Federal Spending to Combat Terrorism (Washington, D.C.: U.S. GAO, March 1999), 14.

⁸ John G. Roos, "Who's in Charge?", Armed forces Journal International (September 1999): 44.

⁹ General Accounting Office, Combating Terrorism: Observations on Federal Spending to Combat Terrorism (Washington, D.C.: U.S. GAO, March 1999), 2.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 2.

¹¹ General Accounting Office, Combating Terrorism: Need for Comprehensive Threat and Risk Assessments of Chemical and Biological Attacks, (Washington, D.C.: U.S. GAO, September 1999).

¹² General Accounting Office, Combating Terrorism: Use of National Guard Response Teams Is Unclear (Washington, D.C.: U.S. GAO, May 1999), 3.

¹³ General Accounting Office, Combating Terrorism: Analysis of Federal Counterterrorist Exercises (Washington, D.C.: U.S. GAO, June 1999), 16.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 21.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 19.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 3.

¹⁷ Richard A. Falkenrath, Robert D. Newman, and Bradley A. Thayer, America's Achilles' Heel: Nuclear, Biological, and Chemical Terrorism and Covert Attack (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1998), 262.

¹⁸ General Accounting Office, Combating Terrorism: Use of National Guard Response Teams Is Unclear (Washington, D.C.: U.S. GAO, May 1999), 4.

¹⁹ Colonel Kenneth Gonzales, "Military Support Detachment (RAID): The Tip of the Spear", Engineer Magazine (April 1999), 29.

²⁰ General Accounting Office, Combating Terrorism: Use of National Guard Response Teams Is Unclear (Washington, D.C.: U.S. GAO, May 1999), 2.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 18.

²² *Ibid.*, 11.

²³ James F. McDonnell, "Local Bomb Squads Bolster Response to Nuclear Terror", National Defense (September 1999), 39.

²⁴ Greg Seigle, "Extra RAID teams to combat CBW attacks", Jane's Defense Weekly (25 August 1999), 9.

²⁵ General Accounting Office, Combating Terrorism: Spending on Governmentwide Programs Requires Better Management and Coordination (Washington, D.C.: U.S. GAO, December 1997), 12.

²⁶ "NGB Report: No One WMD Ready", National Guard (October 1999): 13.

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