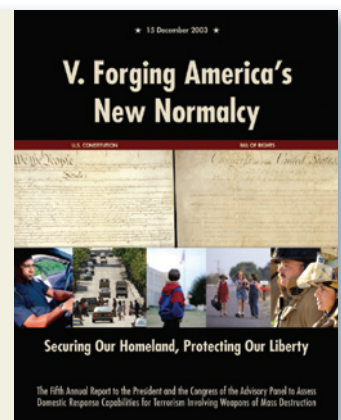


Final Gilmore Commission Report Defines ‘New Normalcy’

On December 15, 2003, the Advisory Panel to Assess Domestic Response Capabilities for Terrorism Involving Weapons of Mass Destruction—or Gilmore Commission—released its fifth and final report to the President and Congress entitled, “Forging America’s New Normalcy: Securing Our Homeland, Protecting Our Liberty.” (Access a pdf of the 329-page report via the RAND Website at www.rand.org/nsrd/terrpanel/volume_v/volume_v.pdf.) Commission member Paul M. Maniscalco, who participated on the Medical Subpanel and the Research Panel, and chaired the Threat-Reassessment Panel as well as the State and Local Response Panel, sat down with *HFR* to discuss the commission’s recommendations.



Please explain the commission’s recommendation that the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) take a stronger role in developing standards for state and local responders?

The position was, after much spirited discussion, that we needed to define what readiness is and assist state and local responders to get to that goal. Up until this point, most of the activity that was taking place from the federal government was truly needed. But they were stopgap measures to remedy some of the operational shortcomings that had been identified. I’m including the planning processes, operational doctrine and the lack of equipment. For example to a large extent, we still have a somewhat fragmented system. *Case in point:* EMS, the folks responsible for turning victims into patients, really has no fiscal support whatsoever. They don’t have access to get personal protective equipment, the training dollars, the backfill dollars, the whole gamut of resources that went out

to many of the other areas. EMS was left out of the mix, more so because Congress sort of fragmented the process, and they went after the areas they knew, but didn’t take the time to develop a comprehensive understanding of the emergency response continuum—all the different primary players, peripheral players, the second-responder community. Only then can we build a comprehensive and cohesive plan.

What are your thoughts on the communications equipment issues?

We need to come together as an emergency response and emergency management community to understand what it is that we want in the end. It’s truly easy for us to throw out buzzwords like the “interoperability” issues, but what is interoperability? How interoperable do we want the radio communication equipment? Once we define what we want the technology to do, then we can bring the tech whizzes in and make this requirement-driven to achieve

what we want. An incident commander, does he want everyone with a portable radio to be able to talk to everybody? Perhaps. But if we don’t have a solid incident management system in place, if we don’t have that radio protocol in place about who communicates with whom, then we’re going to have radio gridlock.

Who is spearheading the effort to explore these issues?

Organizations such as the Interagency Board for Equipment Standardization and InterOperability (IAB, access at www.iab.gov) are working on it. You also have professional associations, such as the National Association of Emergency Medical Technicians (NAEMT, www.naemt.org), International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC, www.iafc.org) and the Fraternal Order of Police (FOP, www.grandlodgefop.org), ect., that are working those issues.

We need to have everything that we’re doing be requirements-driven, based upon

the needs of the operational doctrine that the state and local organizations identified.

Can you comment on the need to develop a mechanism for prioritizing regions of the country according to risk?

One of the more interesting discussions that we engaged in was to determine the whole realm of the “new normalcy” and how much is enough, and what is readiness. All three of those components basically tie into using risk models. Just so this isn’t misinterpreted, we’re not saying that some communities shouldn’t get training and equipment or anything, while other communities—because the risk profile indicates that they’re much higher—should get everything. What we’re saying is that once we define what readiness is, the logical next step is to

Information sharing continues to be a headache for a lot of folks.

determine what the requirements are across the board and then achieve that goal. Every state, every community, every town—what do they need to have that fundamental level of readiness? Just because you don’t work in a high-profile, high-value targeted city, doesn’t mean that when the next big event takes place you’re not going to find your folks operating in that environment on mutual aid.

We discussed institutionalizing the training requirements, so that when every police officer, paramedic, firefighter, nurse, doctor, whoever, goes to take their initial training, they receive that specialty module that is applicable to their functional area. And each of those functional areas, those positions, has to go in—sometimes every year, others every two years—for refresher and recurrency training. And then the members can revisit those issues to give them updates on everything from treatments to the new equipment, so that it becomes just part of their lives and it doesn’t become a standalone in the emergency response community. It’s always, “Oh yeah, there’s emergency response, and then there’s terrorism.” Terrorism is just another chapter in the book called emergency response that we have to deal with.

Now we’ve established the readiness. Based upon the risk profile, let’s say you’ve got XYZ threats in your commu-

nity. You may need to have higher levels of proficiency and other types of equipment and protective countermeasures because of prevailing threats, not just in this community but perhaps a region. Again, it’s requirements-driven, because now we look at the mutual-aid compacts, we look at the state operations and then we look at the EMAC (Emergency Management Assistance Compact, see info box), which allows us to move resources across state lines, prior to the activation of the National Response Plan.

Why is information sharing still a problem?

Information sharing continues to be a headache for a lot of folks. The degree of the information that’s out there, at least for me personally, provides for pause. Having clearances and all the other club cards that you have when you’re working these issues from a research and an analysis standpoint—if you read the news, and you have multiple sources and someone in your organization who’s culling the open-source intelligence opportunities—you can get a pretty good snapshot of what’s taking place around the world and do trend analysis and event projections.

Tom Ridge has done an incredible job of managing the resources that he’s been loaned, and I use that word very carefully. He’s got the 22 agencies that have been consolidated into the DHS. All of these folks are essentially “detailed” to the DHS. Secretary Ridge, in March of this year, will finally officially take control of all the personnel and all the budgets. So that gives them a greater platform to be more effective to make decisions, because now they’re not trying to go across agency lines and working through the issues that emerge when you’re trying to bring that many cultures, those many organizations together.

I think that the information sharing, from the discussions that I’ve been privileged to be engaged in, is truly at the top of the list. Having organizations such as the CDC, FBI, CIA and others working hand-in-hand with TTIC (the Terrorism Threat Integration Center), should, based upon the structure, be effective, and bring to the local agencies the information that they’re looking for. But again, having someone in your organization—and it doesn’t have to

be on a full-time basis—who is culling the open-source intelligence networks, the media, and bringing that together using multiple sources can really give your planners a leg up in understanding what the current environment is, or what the future environment is in the near-term, mid-term or long-term.

Can you discuss the commission’s recommendation to revamp the color-coded alert system?

Some of the discussions that we had indicated that the Homeland Security Alert System was a needed tool that had to get out quickly so that we could have sort of a barometer. What alarmed us was that a tool that was designed for emergency response and emergency management professionals was being grabbed and used as the old civil-defense siren by the media. In a perfect world, we want a system that alerts, not alarms. We need to be able to implement it for a regional area, and I think that you’re starting to see that to a certain extent. You just saw that with us going back to yellow in most of the nation, but in communities such as New York and Washington and some of the others, they were advised to stay at orange. We want everything done yesterday. But you have to go through the trials and tribulations, use it, evaluate it, take your output from your evaluations and tweak it a little more. I think it’s going to be a living tool, a dynamic tool. We’re never really going to be satisfied with just one model, because the threat is so unique, the actors so creative that they always look to exploit what they perceive to be another weakness. Again, it’s designed to alert the organizations that have to respond at the local and state levels, not alarm the *(Continued on pg. 13)*



EMAC ONLINE

Visit www.emacweb.org for current Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC) news, as well as access to the 2003 EMAC Guidebook. To date, 47 states and two territories have signed on. California and Hawaii are currently working through the financial issues associated with EMAC participation.

BY TIMOTHY ELLIOTT

People who live and work in America's high-rise buildings understand, at least unconsciously, the lessons of the World Trade Center attacks. They know high-rises exist beyond the reach of ladders, beyond easy rescue when systems and people fail. A Chicago high-rise fire killed six people in October and reinforced that knowledge—as did the grief, lawsuits and scathing media coverage.

HFR spoke with high-rise expert Curtis Massey about the perils and preparedness issues facing fire departments, public-policy makers, building owners and tenants. Massey Enterprises (www.disasterplanning.com) develops comprehensive disaster plans for many of North America's tallest buildings.*

“For a successful operation in a high-rise building, you need three elements; I call it the ‘critical triangle,’” Massey said. Those three components include:

Technical-staff training

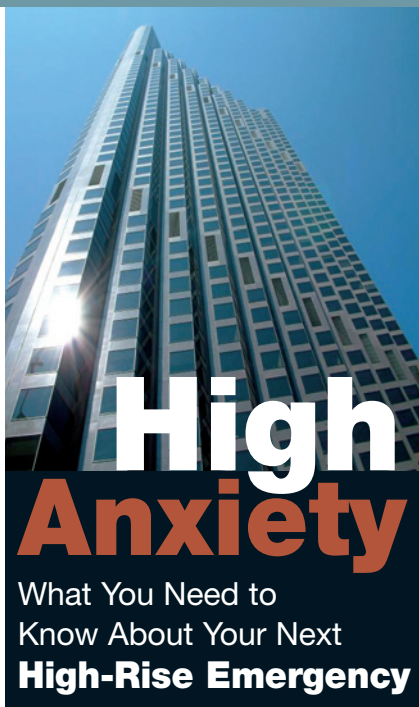
The building's engineering, security and management personnel must be trained in emergency procedures, he said. They need to know what they should and should not do before the fire department arrives.

“If you have a fire at 4 p.m. in a 50-story building, you may have six to eight engineers on duty,” he said. “Those engineers should be pre-assigned to go to the fire-pump room, the emergency generator room, the ventilation controls. You need key people in key locations ready to go, to turn things on or off for the incident commander. The building's chief engineer should be in the lobby available to the incident commander. He should not be up in the building fighting the fire!”

Tenant training, including regular drills

Office tenants need to have fire wardens, deputy fire wardens and alternates in case someone's sick or on vacation. “You need them for every floor,” Massey said. “They need to be trained in emergency procedures, how to evacuate their floors, and how fire departments will operate.”

For instance, Massey said, if an announcement comes over the building's PA system —“Do not use the north stairwell, that is the firefighting attack stairwell”—they'll understand and help move their charges to alternate exits.



High Anxiety

What You Need to Know About Your Next High-Rise Emergency

Running drills at least once a year, preferably twice a year, can pay off. “That's the only way to make these practices a knee-jerk reaction for the people who work in the building,” Massey said. “When the alarm goes off, no one should have to find a procedural manual and read what their duties and responsibilities are. It has to be right from the gut.”

Pre-plan for the fire department

Fire-department personnel need a rapid, yet thorough, understanding of the building and its systems: how to move around, how to turn things off, plus where to get floor plans and diagrams showing risers, ventilation, elevators, standpipes and stairwells.

“The building staff also should have a structural diagram so the fire department can have an overview—in 20 seconds or less—of all the key structural features of the building,” Massey said. “Is it steel frame, concrete or a combination? Concrete or sheet-rock core? Truss floors or not? Those are key items the chief would have to know early on.”

DECISIONS & TACTICS

Public policy and emergency tactics vary widely from community to community. Still, Massey said, some universal truths apply. “Obviously, the best thing would be to have sprinklers in every building out there,” he said. “But the needs and desires of the local fire department—adding automatic doors and sprinklers—have to be balanced with the needs and economics of the real-estate community.” He suggested that

legislation allowing sprinkler installation to be phased over a 10-year period would make such moves more cost-effective for building owners.

Massey also cautions that most fire departments don't truly understand 21st century high-rise buildings. “They're new, modern, and they have a lot of new features and systems that didn't exist 10 years ago,” he said. In days gone by, he said, if you wanted to cut power to a given fire floor, you could usually cut it right there. Not anymore. “There are buildings with data and computer centers that require you to go to three separate areas to shut down power,” he said. “They don't want to lose power to that equipment for anything shy of a nuclear strike. If you don't know where those cut-offs are, and you shut down the wrong cut-offs on the fire floor, you're going to get lit up like a Christmas tree when you stretch a hoseline and start flowing water. These redundant power supplies, in addition to raised floors, special suppression systems and unique cable delivery networks, add to the confusion.”

Another universal truth: After a major terrorist attack, you can expect to lose your high-rise infrastructure: electricity, firefighting water from the fire mains, telephone communication. You may have severed gas mains. How are you going to rebound from that? “The firefighting water supply at the World Trade Center came from a retired fireboat they brought down the Hudson River,” Massey said. “What happens if you're in the middle of Dallas?”

Now's the time to start answering such questions.

** Having a plan is one thing; executing it correctly is another. Six people died October 17 after becoming trapped in a smoke-filled stairwell of Chicago's Cook County Administration Building—a building for which Massey Enterprises developed a pre-fire/disaster plan for fire department use. Survivors who testified at a public hearing in December described stairwell doors that locked behind them and other serious deviations from the evacuation procedures they'd practiced. The Chicago Fire Department and the Cook County state's attorney have separate investigations into the incident.*

☒ The former communications director for the International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC), Timothy Elliott has covered fire, EMS, public-health, disaster-preparedness and terrorism issues for nearly 15 years.

Ridge Visits San Diego for Townhall Meeting

Department of Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge visited San Diego for a Homeland Security Townhall Meeting in January, one of many being held in cities across the country by the Council for Excellence in Government.

Moderated by former CNN anchor Frank Sesno, the panel offered few questions beyond audience members being confused about the different "Threat Levels." However, to begin things, Ridge was put on the spot with a question about the protest going on outside the television studios where the Townhall occurred. Activists were holding a "funeral for democracy" in response to the controversial Patriot Act.

"The First Amendment is alive and well in San Diego, and that's good," Ridge said. "I will tell you that the concern about the Patriot Act is way overblown—that's my opinion—because by and large the Patriot Act gave to the law enforcement community many of the same tools that they had to combat organized crime. And if you're going to give it to the FBI and others to combat organized crime, then you've got to give it to them to combat terrorism."

As far as giving the proper tools to those who would respond to terrorism here in America, Ridge had only to offer some comic relief to the proceedings. San Diego Police Chief Bill Landsdowne stood up to address the panel, and after some brief pleasantries, he got right to the heart of what many first responders across the country are thinking: Where is the money?

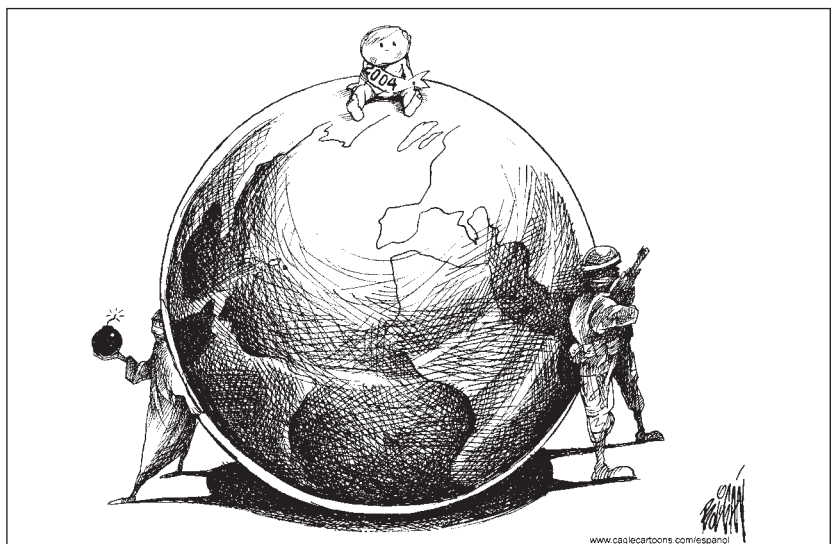
"Secretary Ridge, we've been promised \$36 million here in San Diego and we've only seen a half a million of that," Landsdowne said. "Do you think you could write us a personal check?"

Ridge feigned reaching into his back pocket, drawing a nervous laugh from the crowd.

As for the rest of the proceedings, perhaps the most important development was a challenge issued by San Diego Fire Chief Jeff Bowman to anyone watching to find out more about Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT) in their area. When asked, the attending audience of 200 people revealed that only a handful were even aware of the concept.

"The first 72 hours of an incident can be critical," Bowman told the audience. "That's usually how long it's going to take [emergency services] to get to you if something truly large scale occurred. With CERT training, it's a year-long program, we'll train you to be self sufficient for the first 72 hours. You will also be able to teach your neighbors tips on how to be prepared."

Ridge and Bowman were joined on the panel by Patricia McGinnis, president of the Council for Excellence in Government; Rick Martinez, chief deputy director of the California State Office of Homeland Security; Deborah Steffen, director of the San Diego County Office of Emergency Services; and Steve Peck, president of SAP, Public Services Inc. —*Blaine Dionne*



(Continued from pg. 10)

public. It's not the old civil defense siren, and we need to work to educate the community on that.

Any parting words as the commission folds its tents?

It's been five long years. In 1999, our first report said that while weapons of mass destruction were something to pay attention to, we were going to experience a large-scale, high-impact, high-yield event with terrorist groups exploiting the freedoms and technologies of our society. Then, all the sudden, 2001 hits. I don't think that we were soothsayers; we had the facts in front of us and we drew conclusions based upon the best available information. You could do the trend projections. You could see that there was activity taking place around the world. We continue to make observations and recommendations, such as the potential to exploit the petrochemical industry and the food-supply chain, and the need to increase readiness for emergency response organizations in a sustainable manner and understanding the nuances of the emergency response community—both career and volunteer organizations. We need to have a healthy respect and embrace how emergency response organizations do business in terms of mutual aid. We're not trying to change how the emergency response organizations conduct their organized response, but ensure that the federal system augments them to enhance their capacity. ...This is a journey, and we're going to continue to engage in this for decades.—**Jennifer Doyle**

FREE Terrorism Information Resource

The George Washington University operates a free terrorism list serve that's sponsored by The GWU's DHS, the Response to Emergencies and Disasters Institute (READI) and GW's Emergency Services Management Program. To get on the mailing list, visit www.homelandsecurity.gwu.edu. "We generate one email a day in digest form, if there's no news, we're not in the business of generating email."