



Emergency Preparedness and Response

We must prepare to minimize the damage and recover from any future terrorist attacks that may occur despite our best efforts at prevention. Past experience has shown that preparedness efforts are key to providing an effective response to major terrorist incidents and natural disasters. Therefore, we need a comprehensive national system to bring together and command all necessary response assets quickly and effectively. We must equip, train, and exercise many different response units to mobilize for any emergency without warning. Under the President's proposal, the Department of Homeland Security, building on the strong foundation already laid by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), will lead our national efforts to create and employ a system that will improve our response to all disasters, both manmade and natural.

Many pieces of this national emergency response system are already in place. America's first line of defense in the aftermath of any terrorist attack is its first responder community—police officers, firefighters, emergency medical providers, public works personnel, and emergency management officials. Nearly three million state and local first responders regularly put their lives on the line to save the lives of others and make our country safer. These individuals include specially trained hazardous materials teams, collapse search and rescue units, bomb squads, and tactical units.

In a serious emergency, the federal government augments state and local response efforts. FEMA, which under the President's proposal will be a key component of the Department of Homeland Security, provides funding and command and control support. A

number of important specialized federal emergency response assets that are housed in various departments would also fall under the Secretary of Homeland Security's authority for responding to a major terrorist attack. Because response efforts to all major incidents entail the same basic elements, it is essential that federal response capabilities for both terrorist attacks and natural disasters remain in the same organization. This would ensure the most efficient provision of federal support to local responders by preventing the proliferation of duplicative "boutique" response entities.

Americans respond with great skill and courage to emergencies. There are, however, too many seams in our current response plans and capabilities. Today, at least five different plans—the Federal Response Plan, the National Contingency Plan, the Interagency Domestic Terrorism Concept of Operations Plan, the Federal Radiological Emergency Response Plan, and a nascent bioterrorism response plan—govern the federal government's response. These plans and the government's overarching policy for counterterrorism are based on a distinction between "crisis management" and "consequence management." In addition, different organizations at different levels of the government have put in place different incident management systems and communications equipment. All too often, these systems and equipment do not function together well enough.

We will enhance our capabilities for responding to a terrorist attack all across the country. Today, many geographic areas have little or no capability to respond to a terrorist attack using weapons of mass destruction. Even the best prepared states and localities do not possess adequate resources to respond to the full range of terrorist threats we face. Many do not yet have in place mutual aid agreements to facilitate cooperation with their neighbors in time of emergency. Until recently, federal support for domestic preparedness efforts has been relatively small and disorganized, with eight different departments and agencies providing money in a tangled web of grant programs.

National Vision

We will strive to create a fully integrated national emergency response system that is adaptable enough to deal with any terrorist attack, no matter how unlikely or catastrophic, as well as all manner of natural disasters. Under the President's proposal, the Department of Homeland Security will consolidate federal response plans and build a national system for incident management. The Department would aim to ensure that leaders at all levels of

government have complete incident awareness and can communicate with and command all appropriate response personnel. Our federal, state, and local governments would ensure that all response personnel and organizations—including the law enforcement, military, emergency response, health care, public works, and environmental communities—are properly equipped, trained, and exercised to respond to all terrorist threats and attacks in the United States.

Major Initiatives

Integrate separate federal response plans into a single all-discipline incident management plan. Under the President's proposal, the Department of Homeland Security will consolidate existing federal government emergency response plans into one genuinely all-discipline, all-hazard plan—the Federal Incident Management Plan—and thereby eliminate the "crisis management" and "consequence management" distinction. This plan would cover all incidents of national significance, including acts of bioterrorism and agroterrorism, and clarify roles and expected contributions of various emergency response bodies at different levels of government in the wake of a terrorist attack.

The Department of Homeland Security would provide a direct line of authority from the President through the Secretary of Homeland Security to a single on-site federal coordinator. The single federal coordinator would be responsible to the President for coordinating the entire federal response. Lead agencies would maintain operational control over their functions (for example, the FBI will remain the lead agency for federal law enforcement) in coordination with the single on-site federal official. The Department would direct the Domestic Emergency Support Team, nuclear incident response teams, National Pharmaceutical Stockpile, and National Disaster Medical System, as well as other assets.

Create a national incident management system. Under the President's proposal, the Department of Homeland Security, working with federal, state, local, and non-governmental public safety organizations, will build a comprehensive national incident management system to respond to terrorist incidents and natural disasters. The Department would ensure that this national system defines common terminology for all parties, provides a unified command structure, and is scalable to meet incidents of all sizes.

The federal government will encourage state and local first responder organizations to adopt the already

widespread Incident Management System by making it a requirement for federal grants. All state and local governments should create and regularly update their own homeland security plans, based on their existing emergency operations plans, to provide guidance for the integration of their response assets in the event of an attack. The Department of Homeland Security will, under the President's proposal, provide support (including model plans) for these efforts and will adjust the Federal Incident Management Plan as necessary to take full advantage of state and local capabilities. State and local governments should also sign mutual aid agreements to facilitate cooperation with their neighbors in time of emergency. Starting in Fiscal Year 2004, the Department would provide grants in support of such efforts.

Improve tactical counterterrorist capabilities. With advance warning, we have various federal, state, and local response assets that can intercede and prevent terrorists from carrying out attacks. These include law enforcement, emergency response, and military teams. In the most dangerous of incidents, particularly when terrorists have chemical, biological, radiological, or nuclear weapons in their possession, it is crucial that the individuals who preempt the terrorists do so flawlessly, no matter if they are part of the local SWAT team or the FBI's Hostage Rescue Team. It is also crucial that these individuals be prepared and able to work effectively with each other and with other specialized response personnel. Finally, these teams and other emergency response assets must plan and train for the consequences of failed tactical operations.

The Department of Homeland Security, as the lead federal agency for incident management in the United States, will, under the President's plan, establish a program for certifying the preparedness of all civilian teams and individuals to execute and deal with the consequences of such counterterrorist actions. As part of this program, the Department would provide partial grants in support of joint exercises between its response assets and other government teams. (This program would be voluntary for assets outside of the Department of Homeland Security.)

Enable seamless communication among all responders. In the aftermath of any major terrorist attack, emergency response efforts would likely involve hundreds of offices from across the government and the country. It is crucial for response personnel to have and use equipment, systems, and procedures that allow them to communicate with one another. Under the President's proposal, the Department of Homeland Security will work with state and local governments to achieve this goal.

In particular, the Department would develop a national emergency communication plan to establish protocols (i.e., who needs to talk to whom), processes, and national standards for technology acquisition. The Department would, starting with Fiscal Year 2003 funds, tie all federal grant programs that support state and local purchase of terrorism-related communications equipment to this communication plan and require all applicants to demonstrate progress in achieving interoperability with other emergency response bodies.

Prepare health care providers for catastrophic terrorism. Our entire emergency response community must be prepared to deal with all potential hazards, especially those associated with weapons of mass destruction. Under the President's proposal, the Department of Homeland Security, working with the Departments of Health and Human Services and Veterans Affairs, will support training and equipping of state and local health care personnel to deal with the growing threat of chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear terrorism. It would continue to fund federal grants to states and cities for bioterrorism preparedness. It would use the hospital preparedness grant program to help prepare hospitals and poison control centers to deal specifically with biological and chemical attacks and to expand their surge capacity to care for large numbers of patients in a mass-casualty incident. These efforts would enhance training between public health agencies and local hospitals and seek improved cooperation between public health and emergency agencies at all levels of government.

A major act of biological terrorism would almost certainly overwhelm existing state, local, and privately owned health care capabilities. For this reason, the federal government maintains a number of specialized response capabilities for a bioterrorist attack. The National Disaster Medical System, a federal/private partnership that includes the Departments of Health and Human Services, Defense, Veterans Affairs, and FEMA, provides rapid response and critical surge capacities to support localities in disaster medical treatment. Under the President's proposal, the Department of Homeland Security will assume authority over the System as part of the federal response to incidents of national significance. The System is made up of federal assets and thousands of volunteer health professionals that are organized around the country into a number of specialty teams such as Disaster Medical Assistance Teams, National Medical Response Teams, and teams trained in caring for psychological trauma. In addition, the Department of Veterans Affairs operates a vast health care, training, and pharmaceutical procurement system with facilities in many communities nationwide. The Department of Defense provides specialized skills and transportation

capabilities to move these teams and evacuate casualties.

The Department of Homeland Security, working with the Department of Health and Human Services, would lead efforts to test whether illnesses or complaints may be attributable to chemical, biological, radiological, or nuclear exposure; establish disease/exposure registries; and develop, maintain, and provide information on the health effects of hazardous substances. The Environmental Protection Agency will continue to provide a laboratory diagnostic surge capacity for environmental samples during crises.

Augment America's pharmaceutical and vaccine stockpiles. The National Pharmaceutical Stockpile ensures America's ability to respond rapidly to a bioterrorist attack or a mass casualty incident. This program, which the Department of Homeland Security will operate in consultation with the Department of Health and Human Services under the President's proposal, maintains twelve strategically located "Push Packs" containing 600 tons of antibiotics, antidotes, vaccines, bandages, and other medical supplies. The federal government can transport these packs to an incident site in less than 12 hours for rapid distribution by state and local authorities. This system performed extremely well in the aftermath of the September 11 attacks, delivering a "Push Pack" to New York City in seven hours. Additional deployments followed the anthrax attacks of October 2001.

The National Pharmaceutical Stockpile already contains a sufficient antibiotic supply to begin treatment for 20 million persons exposed to anthrax and should contain enough smallpox vaccine for every American by the end of 2002. The Department of Homeland Security, working with the Department of Health and Human Services, would provide grants to state and local governments to plan for the receipt and distribution of medicines from the Stockpile. In addition, the Departments of Homeland Security and Health and Human Services would pursue accelerated FDA approval of safe and effective products to add to the Stockpile and the development of procedures to accelerate the availability of investigational drugs during a public health emergency.

Prepare for chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear decontamination. The Department of Homeland Security would ensure the readiness of our first responders to work safely in an area where chemical, biological, radiological, or nuclear weapons have been used. The Department would begin requiring annual certification of first responder preparedness to handle and decontaminate any hazard. This certification process would also verify the ability of state and local

first responders to work effectively with related federal support assets.

Under the President's proposal, the Department of Homeland Security will help state and local agencies meet these certification standards by providing grant money (based on performance) for planning and equipping, training, and exercising first responders for chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear attacks. It would launch a national research and development effort to create new technologies for detection and clean-up of such attacks. After a major incident, the Environmental Protection Agency will be responsible for decontamination of affected buildings and neighborhoods and providing advice and assistance to public health authorities in determining when it is safe to return to these areas.

Plan for military support to civil authorities. The armed forces were an integral part of our national response to the terrorist attacks of September 11. The Department of Defense currently uses a "Total Force" approach to fulfill its missions overseas and at home, drawing on the strengths and capabilities of active-duty, reserve, and National Guard forces. In addition to response from the active-duty forces, Air National Guard fighters took to the air on September 11 to establish combat air patrols. New Jersey and New York guardsmen and Navy and Marine Corps reservists provided medical personnel to care for the injured, military police to assist local law enforcement officials, key asset protection, transportation, communications, logistics, and a myriad of other functions to support recovery efforts in New York City. Maryland Army National Guard military police units were brought on duty and dispatched to provide security at the Pentagon. President Bush asked governors to call up over seven thousand National Guard personnel to supplement security at the Nation's 429 commercial airports. Guardsmen also reinforced border security activities of the Immigration and Nationalization Service and the U.S. Customs Service.

The importance of military support to civil authorities as the latter respond to threats or acts of terrorism is recognized in Presidential decision directives and legislation. Military support to civil authorities pursuant to a terrorist threat or attack may take the form of providing technical support and assistance to law enforcement; assisting in the restoration of law and order; loaning specialized equipment; and assisting in consequence management.

In April 2002, President Bush approved a revision of the Unified Command Plan that included establishing a new unified combatant command, U.S. Northern Command. This Command will be responsible for homeland defense and for assisting civil authorities in

accordance with U.S. law. As in the case with all other combatant commanders, the commander of Northern Command will take all operational orders from and is responsible to the President through the Secretary of Defense. The commander of Northern Command will update plans to provide military support to domestic civil authorities in response to natural and man-made disasters and during national emergencies. The Department of Homeland Security and the Department of Defense would participate as appropriate in homeland security training that involves military and civilian emergency response personnel.

Build the Citizen Corps. Under the President's proposal, the Department of Homeland Security will maintain and expand Citizens Corps, a national program to prepare volunteers for terrorism-related response support. If we can help individual citizens help themselves and their neighbors in the case of a local attack, we will improve our chances to save lives. (See *Organizing for a Secure Homeland* chapter for additional discussion.)

Implement the First Responder Initiative of the Fiscal Year 2003 Budget. Before September 11, the federal government had allocated less than \$1 billion since 1995 to help prepare first responders for terrorist attacks. A range of federal departments provided funding for training and equipment, technical assistance, and other support to assist state and local first responders. These disparate programs were a step in the right direction but fell short in terms of scale and cohesion.

In January 2002, President Bush proposed the First Responder Initiative as part of his Fiscal Year 2003 Budget proposal. The purpose of this initiative is to improve dramatically first responder preparedness for terrorist incidents and disasters. This program will increase federal funding levels more than tenfold (from \$272 million in the pre-supplemental Fiscal Year 2002 Budget to \$3.5 billion in Fiscal Year 2003). Under the President's Department of Homeland Security proposal, the new Department will consolidate all grant programs that distribute federal funds to state and local first responders.

Build a national training and evaluation system. The growing threat of terrorist attacks on American soil, including the potential use of weapons of mass destruction, is placing great strains on our Nation's system for training its emergency response personnel. The Department of Homeland Security will under the President's proposal launch a consolidated and expanded training and evaluation system to meet the increasing demand. This system would be predicated on a four phased approach: requirements, plans, training (and exercises), and assessments (comprising of evaluations and corrective action plans). The

Department would serve as the central coordinating body responsible for overseeing curriculum standards and, through regional centers of excellence such as the Emergency Management Institute in Maryland, the Center for Domestic Preparedness in Alabama, and the National Domestic Preparedness Consortium, for training the instructors who will train our first responders. These instructors would teach courses at thousands of facilities such as public safety academies, community colleges, and state and private universities.

Under the President's proposal, the Department of Homeland Security will establish national standards for emergency response training and preparedness. These standards would provide guidelines for the vaccination of civilian response personnel against certain biological agents. These standards would also require certain coursework for individuals to receive and maintain certification as first responders and for state and local governments to receive federal grants. The Department would establish a national exercise program designed to educate and evaluate civilian response personnel at all levels of government. It would require individuals and government bodies to complete successfully at least one exercise every year. The Department would use these exercises to measure performance and allocate future resources.

Enhance the victim support system. The United States must be prepared to assist the victims of terrorist attacks and their families, as well as other individuals affected indirectly by attacks. Under the President's proposal, the Department of Homeland Security will lead federal agencies and provide guidance to state, local, and volunteer organizations in offering victims and their families various forms of assistance including: crisis counseling, cash grants, low-interest loans, unemployment benefits, free legal counseling, and tax refunds. In the case of a terrorist attack, the Department would coordinate the various federal programs for victim compensation and assistance, including the Department of Justice's Office for Victims of Crime and FEMA's Individual Assistance programs. (See *Costs of Homeland Security* chapter for additional discussion.)
