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December 19, 1986

To: Carl Henry, Chief Controller
From: William H. Chambers, CONUS Site Controller

Subj: "Quick Look" Report, Mighty Derringer CONUS

Background

The CONUS portion of the Mighty Derringer exercise carried the scenario for a second device, notionally identical to the one located OCONUS, from search in downtown Indianapolis through barricade, negotiation, assault, access, identification, detonation and early consequence management phases. The exercise was primarily a CPX except that the search included a limited number of teams with handheld and van-mounted detection systems, and the FBI HRT negotiations and assault were played full-scale.

Following location of the surrogate source downtown, the action was moved to Camp Atterbury for the HRT negotiations and assault. Technical working point activities were successfully simulated after gaining control of the device, including completion of the disablement procedure employed OCONUS. Site Control allowed the play to deviate from the original script in this regard, because the action progressed more rapidly than anticipated. The consequence phase was then started on the exercise timeline with a simulated nuclear detonation downtown as though the render-safe had not occurred.

Over four hundred players and controllers took part from FBI, DOE, DoD/EOD, FEMA and various state and local law enforcement and emergency management agencies. The CP was located in a complex of three buildings at Camp Atterbury with the TOC for search operations in Franklin, about midway between Camp Atterbury and Indianapolis. Only one of the CP buildings was secured for classified discussions and materials. The HRT was housed and fed at Camp Atterbury but the remainder of the participants stayed in motels in the area.

Controller Observations

Some issues and concerns are related to real world problems while others resulted from artificialities introduced by exercise constraints. Subsequent reports will deal with these in more

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detail, but a few significant ones are highlighted here - starting with the real world. These observations will undoubtedly be modified after more extensive review with the key players.

Terrorism Phase

Because the OCONUS action was ahead of schedule, the NEST advance party was prepared to play earlier than the agreed-upon schedule with the Indianapolis FBI. The artificial delay was frustrating.

Technical difficulties with the secure communication systems slowed the sharing of intelligence and assessment information between sites initially. Exchanging significant quantities of data by secure FAX is also inherently slow, so that the backlog became substantial for a while.

The Indianapolis Channel 8 inquiry prior to start caused some concern, both with respect to the initial information leak and the potential for media interference at Camp Atterbury. The noncommittal press release successfully defused the situation, and subsequent inquiries were half-hearted.

A misunderstanding about administrative signals for removing the surrogate source from the house downtown caused the search teams to fail to confirm the hit on later passes.

(b) (1)

Liaison between HRT, DOE and EOD in preparing for the assault was excellent and an EOD representative followed the assault team into the building almost immediately. However, the joint procedures for withdrawing the HRT and survivors, securing the perimeter, and clearing access to the device need clarification.

Good use was made of the information on disable options from OCONUS, with the choice hinging on whether or not the devices were identical. There appeared to be less certainty however about what important features constituted identity and what techniques were available to evaluate them before and after access was complete.

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Although the direction from NSC regarding the change in leadership in the consequence phase was not anticipated, the transition was handled smoothly in the field. This can perhaps be attributed more to good will than good policy and procedure.

Consequence Phase

Most participants in the consequence phase recognized the need for a CP organized more along functional rather than institutional lines, i.e., putting together similar specialists regardless of organizational origin. (NEST has always done this.)

Some difficulties in communicating seem to exist between law enforcement and public health interests at all levels; local, state and federal.

The intermingling of unclassified and classified documentation, and cleared and uncleared personnel, in the same exercise creates procedural problems. These are compounded in some cases by poorly-understood, sensitive information levels such as UCNI or "law enforcement secret", and by the use of secure communications gear for privacy only.

State capabilities for radiological emergencies vary widely, generally depending on the extent of their nuclear power facilities. Integrated interstate responses were not planned or played even though the scenario provided for it.

There appeared to be widespread agreement that the objectives of the exercise were met. However, some lessons were learned about the conduct of such complex events, and about the confusion arising from simulations and constraints, that are worth noting.

Maximum free play was allowed, but that makes control more difficult. Different agencies take different views on the appropriate balance.

The DOE hazards and effects directorate was overstaffed for the pre-planned extent of the consequence play. Apparently the limited amount of number-crunching required

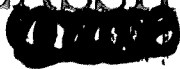
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to meet the objectives of a CPX was not understood initially.

The terrorists conducted some imaginative negotiations, including the unexpected offer to confirm their possession of a device with a camera and instruments. However, they may not have been provided with enough of the data base beforehand to keep the negotiations rolling consistently.

A limited amount of coaching helps significantly in smoothing out artificialities.

This quick look has emphasized the issues and the lessons learned as opposed to describing the many excellent interactions between agencies and the individual expertise and spirit of the players. That was intentional, for brevity, with the hope that the later reports will provide a better balance.

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