

Counter Terrorism Commission
Public Report to Governor Geringer

November 21, 2001

Wyoming's Readiness and Response to Terrorism

Terrorism has been defined as the unlawful use or threatened use of force or violence against persons or property to intimidate or coerce a government or civilian population in furtherance of political or social objectives. Not all terrorists are foreign nationals; not all foreign nationals are terrorists.

Counter Terrorism Commission & Subcommittees

On October 3, 2001 Executive Order 2001-5 created the Counter Terrorism Commission. The Commission is composed of the attorney general, as chairman, the adjutant general, and the directors of the departments of health and transportation. The Commission is charged to report to the governor within forty-five (45) days concerning:

1. the disaster preparedness of state and local government, including the National Guard, to ensure that Wyoming's disaster planning includes specific contingencies for detection of and response to acts of terrorism, and
2. the disaster preparedness obligations of state and local government to ensure that there is adequate cooperation with the federal government, other state governments, and the private sector in the event of acts of terrorism. The Commission shall examine the obstacles or impediments to effective prevention of or response to acts of terrorism.

The Commission appointed four subcommittees: (1) Threats, Targets & Vulnerabilities, (2) Prevention & Intelligence, (3) Consequence Management & Recovery, and (4) Legislation. The subcommittees were composed of individuals from various state agencies including, the Wyoming Emergency Management Agency, departments of Agriculture, Environmental Quality, Health and Transportation, Wyoming Highway Patrol, the Division of Criminal Investigation, and the State Fire Marshal.

The subcommittees met and conducted discussions with persons in local government, the federal government and the private sector. Also, subcommittees have compiled information, reports and plans previously developed. This Counter Terrorism Commission report is the product of hours of labor expended by many dedicated public servants and private citizens.

It is our conclusion that Wyoming has less to fear from foreign terrorists than do many

other jurisdictions; Wyoming is better prepared today to respond to a terrorist event than five years ago. We have a number of advantages over other jurisdictions. Nevertheless, there are things which can and should be done to make us better prepared. Enhancing our resources, systems, and plans for terrorist threats will increase our preparedness and response capacity for natural and man made disasters.

Wyoming Emergency Planning

In 1951 Wyoming enacted the Wyoming Civil Defense Act. The Act covered both natural and man made disasters, including those from enemy attack or terrorism. In 1998 the Act was amended and renamed the Wyoming Emergency Management Act. The original model which recognized the importance of first response by local authorities, receiving necessary support and assistance by state and federal officials, is still valid.

Every disaster is a local disaster even when a nationally recognized site such as the Pentagon or the World Trade Towers is involved. The emphasis is on protecting the lives and property of those persons nearest to the center of the event. It is critical that local first responders to any disaster be well prepared and equipped. The role and mission of federal and state emergency planning should be to support and assist those local first responders. Assistance should be in the form of planning, training, equipment and exercises.

Since the first World Trade Center bombing in 1993 and the bombing of the Joseph P. Murrah building in Oklahoma City in 1995, significant national attention has been given to the threat of terrorism. Several important studies were produced for the President and Congress by the *Advisory Panel to Assess Domestic Response Capabilities for Terrorism Involving Weapons of Mass Destruction*. These studies required participation and assessment by state and local emergency response agencies. Before September 11, 2001, the lessons of those reports were already being addressed in the form of state and federal legislation and appropriations for emergency management planning and operations. The events of September 11, 2001, and thereafter have increased the urgency of activities at all levels of government.

The following is a list of some of the plans and studies conducted in Wyoming over just the last four years:

- C *State Event Management Plan*, WEMA (revised 2001)
- C *White Paper on Domestic Preparedness for Acts of Terrorism*, WEMA (revised Sept. 2001)
- C *Wyoming Terrorist Target and Capability Assessment*, WEMA (1998)
- C *Survey on Biological Terrorist Threats to Wyoming and Local Jurisdictions' Ability to Respond to Biological Incidents*, M. Dalrymple (Jan.1999)
- C *All Hazards Plan*, Dept. Health (draft 2001)
- C *Animal Emergency Management & Operations Plan*, Livestock Board (draft 2001)

On September 18-21, 2001, the BULLWHIP (Building Unified Leadership Levels With Hazard Incident Planning) conference was held in Lander, Wyoming. These and other measures

were well underway by September 11, 2001. On October 17, 2001, Executive Order 2001-6 enhanced the State Emergency Response Commission (SERC) as created by Executive Order 1987-3. The SERC is now composed of state and local public officials, industry and private sector representatives. The SERC has broad based authority and responsibility concerning the handling, use and transportation of hazardous materials within Wyoming.

Wyoming's Potential for Terrorist Activities

Wyoming is a less likely target for international terrorists than certain other locales. We are not the symbolic target rich environment of New York City or Washington, D.C. However, not all terrorists are foreign nationals. Nor are we without potential targets for domestic or foreign terrorists. Wyoming's energy based industries are of both regional and national importance. Wyoming is at the cross road for several interstate transportation and communications routes. Wyoming is a next door neighbor for the 2002 Winter Olympics. Wyoming cannot ignore the possibilities of domestic or foreign terrorism.

Recommendations

1. Emphasize Training, Equipment & Preparedness of Local First Responders

With fewer than 500,000 citizens and occupying nearly 100,000 square miles, the challenges in Wyoming are obvious. Wyoming has 23 counties and 98 cities and towns. All planning for the prevention or consequence management and recovery from acts of terrorism must take into account the unique attributes of our state, our population and our way of life. Most fire service personnel in Wyoming are volunteers. There is a wide variation in the capacity, preparation and resources available in fire service, emergency medical response, law enforcement agencies and hospitals across the state. Enhancing and coordinating the training, preparation and equipment of our first responders must be a priority.

2. Improve Communications & Planning - All Levels of Government

Communications and planning among local, state and federal agencies in law enforcement and emergency management must be strengthened. We must continue to examine our vulnerabilities and allocate our resources accordingly. Appropriate recognition should be given to local governments for their mission as first responders, with appropriate support and assistance from state and federal counterparts. Our planning and exercises must take into account the fact that Federal missions for our National Guard will take precedence over state missions and could reduce or deplete that resource in times of greatest need. Current and future federal and state funding for counter terrorism and related needs must be fully coordinated to maximize preparedness.

Wyoming needs a state wide public safety communications system which insures that all local first responders and state officials can communicate in a timely and secure manner in times of emergency.

3. Build Partnerships with Private Sector - Employ Technologies

Enhanced partnerships with private enterprise should be explored. These collaborations

should include technology, such as Geographical Information Systems (GIS), infrastructure security, and the medical and laboratory sectors. Legislative funding and authorization for such partnerships may be necessary. Concerned citizens and businesses across our state and region are volunteering their talents and energies to further Wyoming's counter terrorism initiatives. These partnerships should be pursued.

4. Codify Mutual Aid Authority in Statutes

Cooperation is a means to maximize the use of scarce public resources. Mutual aid in law enforcement and emergency management both within Wyoming and across state lines, in times of emergency, should be facilitated by legislative enactments. Wyoming should consider adoption of the model Emergency Management Assistance Compact. The State Emergency Response Commission created by executive order and authorized by federal legislation should be codified in Wyoming statutes and given appropriate funding to monitor and manage the storage, use and transportation of hazardous materials.

5. Protect Security-Sensitive Government Records & Information

Information gathering, analysis and dissemination must be cooperative and timely at the federal, state and local levels, including state interagency processes. The sensitivity and security of certain government information must be examined. Information practices in the computer age must be reevaluated in light of the threat of terrorism. The Public Records Act exemptions for law enforcement and security documents should be clarified and strengthened. We must make ourselves less vulnerable, while insuring that our citizens have the right information at the right time.

6. Re-establish Counter Terrorism Commission with Broader Participation

The Counter Terrorism Commission should be continued. State level membership could be expanded to include the departments of Environmental Quality and of Agriculture. Membership should be expanded to include appropriate participation by local government, law enforcement and the fire service. No more than nine members are recommended.

The Commission should oversee and coordinate all state level activities relative to domestic security and terrorism. The Commission should prepare a three year strategy for domestic preparedness against acts of terrorism, including legislation, funding and the use of technology. The Commission should meet as necessary and report to the governor every three months, or as directed, on progress toward meeting specific objectives.

The Commission should answer directly to the governor. There is no need for a new cabinet level position or new state agency. The governor should designate a member of his staff as state security coordinator, who would be liaison to the Commission, as well as federal, state, and local government and private entities.

Conclusion

While not every terrorist attack can be prevented, we can be better prepared. We owe it to those citizens most likely to respond first to any disaster to ensure they are well prepared and equipped to meet new threats and vulnerabilities as they are identified. The state's role is one of support and assistance. Wyoming has a long and distinguished tradition of emergency management. We can build upon existing plans and preparations to meet our objective of making Wyoming more prepared and safer for its citizens.