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Homeland Security Affairs (October 2006), v.2 no.3

<http://hdl.handle.net/10945/25076>

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“Learning” Homeland Security – How One Executive Education Program Engages State and Local Officials

Glen Woodbury

INTRODUCTION

Homeland security is in a pre-paradigm phase. We understand this to mean that unlike medicine, law, engineering, and other professional disciplines, there is no general conceptual agreement about the range of topics that constitute homeland security as a field of study. Consequently there is not a dominant approach to teaching homeland security. We happen to think this is a good thing.¹

Whether one defines “homeland security” as a discipline, activity, programmatic approach, or a national security objective, “learning” homeland security is a new endeavor.² The scope of the task is particularly daunting when added to the “normal” responsibilities borne by senior state and local officials. Not only must they address the tactical and operational components of what we are calling homeland security, but they must master the more complex policy, strategy, and organizational design issues as well. Further, the relative infancy of homeland security as a public policy issue, and its constant and rapid evolution in concept and implementation, is a significant complicating factor.

How can senior state and local leaders learn the basics of an evolving doctrine and strategy, and how can they apply it in their own jurisdictions? The *National Strategy for Homeland Security* clearly states that homeland security is a “shared responsibility” between states, localities, and the private sector.³ It further sets the stage by posing four critical questions: (1) What is “homeland security” and what missions does it entail? (2) What do we seek to accomplish, and what are the most important goals of homeland security? (3) What is the federal executive branch doing now to accomplish these goals and what should it do in the future? (4) What should non-federal governments, the private sector, and citizens do to help secure the homeland?⁴

These are the questions governors, mayors, councilmen, legislators, commissioners, fire chiefs, police chiefs, and others should be asking the national leadership, themselves, and their organizations. More critically, nearly five years after the attacks of 9/11 and four years after the *National Strategy*’s publication, state and local governments should be well on the way to having clear answers to these questions, as well as having organized to implement the solutions. Some have, some have not, and many are still struggling with the questions, let alone the answers.

The intent of this article is to discuss one means of moving from the questions posed above to specific actions that will ultimately achieve better safety and security in the face of twenty-first-century terrorist threats. Does this approach help move senior leaders from the exploratory analysis of "what is homeland security" to a state where politically, organizationally, and socially acceptable programs and processes better protect and secure their constituencies? The purpose of this essay is not to study, graph and compare what the nation's states and cities have achieved in "homeland security." Nor is it to analyze potential methodologies for providing executive level education. This article describes and discusses the Executive Education Program developed by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the Naval Postgraduate School's Center for Homeland Defense and Security (NPS/CHDS.) It will discuss the need for an executive education program for senior state and local officials; the methodology used by DHS and NPS/CHDS to present concepts and subjects for discussion to this audience; and an anecdotal assessment of what has been learned since the program's inception in January 2003. But before this discussion begins, it is important to provide a very brief overview of the program.

TYPES OF EXECUTIVE EDUCATION SESSIONS

The NPS/CHDS program provides three types of sessions, differing mostly by topic or by audience. The program was first tasked by the Department of Homeland Security to deliver policy and strategic level seminars to governors and their cabinets or homeland security "teams." The original purpose was to prepare state officials to take on the new policy, strategy, and organizational design issues that homeland security presented. These sessions are commonly referred to as "state" METs. (MET is an acronym for Mobile Education Team.) While the content of these METs has evolved over time, their overriding focus continues to be the prevention of terrorist attacks, the policies of homeland security (both federal and state), and the issues that would arise with the response and recovery to catastrophic events.

The second type of session is provided to leaders in major urban areas; thus while similar in content to the sessions held for states, their audience composition and themes for discussion differ. The audience composition in major urban areas varies from city to city; some include many elected officials and minimal staff, while others may have one or two elected officials and more department heads. An urban area seminar may also take either a "wide" or a "deep" approach. The wide approach is one where the multiple jurisdictions that make up the greater urban area are represented; the deeper approach is more focused on the agencies and disciplines within the core city or county. Those jurisdictions choosing width in their focus have a greater *intergovernmental* discussion while those selecting depth generally focus more heavily on the details of *interagency* challenges and opportunities.

The third type of executive education session, the topical MET, is focused on a single issue or is delivered to a non-jurisdictional entity such as a national association. These events are designed to explore the policy, strategic, and organizational infrastructures as they might apply to a specific hazard (e.g. pandemic flu), an existing or evolving national policy or strategy (e.g. fusion

centers), or a single topic for further exploration and/or resolution (e.g. public and private sector interfaces). These events tend to vary greatly, both in audience composition and intended objectives, compared to the state and major urban area seminars.

THE NEED

*We are "...building an airplane [while] in flight."*⁵

Creating a new government program is not a simple task; such programs are often fraught with volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity. Add a fear of death and destruction on a national scale should the program falter or fail, and we have the basic environment that leaders face in achieving homeland security. Repetition of the mantra, "it's not a matter of if, but when terrorists will strike again," is not conducive to an atmosphere in which officials must deliberately and thoughtfully create an effective and efficient government program. But the difficulties of the organizational development environment do not negate the necessity of what remains to be done.

The federal government's homeland security challenge consists of much more than simply drawing boxes and lines in a new organizational chart. For current homeland security leaders, under fire for trying to "build the tail section while soaring at 30,000 feet," this is not breaking news. And state and local leaders do not get a "pass" while federal agencies struggle to create a pristine organization that all agree is both effective and efficient. Elected and appointed leaders in the nation's urban, suburban, and rural areas are also expected to achieve a safer and more secure world. With respect to homeland security, they are in unique positions of responsibility, accountability, and ownership of resources where they can do more to secure the homeland than all of the federal agencies combined.

Consider the following statements: "All disasters are local;" "The next attack will be stopped by a cop on the street;" "Governors have a unique constitutional responsibility;" and, "The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the states, are reserved to the states respectively, or to the people."⁶ These familiar refrains apply to homeland security. States and localities play a significant role, but that role is still being defined and is far from fully-developed. State and local officials have been asked to partner in this national endeavor, but without a clearly defined road map or any precedent processes in place, especially for the *prevention* of terrorist acts.

The purpose of the MET seminars is to clarify the most important and essential questions and truths confronting elected leaders responsible for homeland security and then figure out how to answer those questions, in accordance with the truths. How are decisions made when the disaster far outstrips the resources to address it? Is intelligence fusion possible? Federal priorities are inherently different from state and local priorities: Who's in charge? How can state and local leaders be provided with assistance for their part in the construction of homeland security? One way is to simply tell them what to do and then fund them to do it. This assumes someone knows how to "do it," and that

the activities can be accomplished in an ever-changing, often-decreasing funding environment. But adequate financial resources are only a part of the solution; the rest involves policy development, organizational designs, strategic planning, commitment, and – most importantly – leadership. Educational assistance at the senior state and local levels is required. This is not to suggest that state and local officials do not know how to accomplish these *types* of tasks. It is rather that, in the area of *homeland security*, policy, organizational structure, and strategic thinking are either little known or under-developed. Additionally, the concept of “training” or “how to do it” assumes that there is a right way and a wrong way; “education” teaches people how to think critically, analyze problems and develop their own solutions and options. These seminars are not intended to be “training.”

Take prevention as an example of the inherent educational challenge. Systems of prevention are far more difficult to implement than systems of response; the prevention of a terrorist act is not a normal or “routine” function of state and local governments. When they are asked to “share responsibility” to stop the next attack, there is an implication that an infrastructure and methodology is already in place. But in the vast majority of jurisdictions, plans to *prevent* terrorist attacks are non-existent, incomplete, untested, or immature. It is impossible to “train” to a standard, practice, or precedent that does not exist. But “education” can be provided to assist in a critical analysis of a problem, the options for solving it, and an increased awareness of its importance relative to other priorities.

Prevention is not the only area that requires deliberative discussions, policy-making, and resource commitments. When the subject is terrorism, public communications, protection of critical infrastructures, continuity of essential services, catastrophic response actions, and interagency and multi-jurisdictional coordination all present issues and problems not solved by “normal” disaster preparedness. These are the challenges explored during an Executive Education Program seminar. This is why the need for these seminars exists.

THE APPROACH

The basic objective of the MET seminar is *to identify the critical homeland security issues that challenge state and local leaders*. The seminar team and elected/appointed leaders collectively define and prioritize these challenges and analyze their specific experiences, limitations, and capabilities. They also discuss the challenges common to jurisdictions throughout the nation, with a view to beginning or advancing strategic initiatives focused upon prevention of, preparedness for, response to, and recovery from a terrorist act. It would be inaccurate to describe a MET as a presentation, evaluation, assessment, tactical training event, table-top exercise, or policy direction handed down from the federal government. Nor does a seminar in and of itself solve the complex issues attendant upon instituting homeland security. Instead, these sessions are designed to be provocative, non-attributive, candid discussions and debates about the homeland security issues facing state and local jurisdictional leaders. The program’s objectives, the composition of the audiences, and the curriculum content are all key elements in the overall success of the program.

Objectives

The purpose and objectives of the Executive Education Program are to:

- Assist the jurisdictions' executive leadership to build on their existing successes in Homeland Security preparedness and strengthen capacity to prevent and defeat terrorism.
- Identify and examine homeland security concepts, challenges, and opportunities at the policy, strategy, and organizational design level.
- Discuss opportunities, expectations, and challenges of elected officials and other senior leaders in implementing homeland security objectives.

Within these explicit goals are also implicit and more explanatory intentions. The program, through an open, candid, and sometimes provocative discourse, also attempts to achieve these unstated objectives:

- Make senior officials aware of their responsibilities as well as opportunities to participate in the prevention of terrorist attacks.
- Clarify why they should care about homeland security, the local, state and federal homeland security systems, and the expectations of partners when something happens – i.e. who is in charge?
- Enable jurisdictions' senior leaders to talk collaboratively about their roles, responsibilities, and expectations in their pursuit of homeland security success.
- Discover the more controversial, and often neglected, issues inherent in the response and recovery to catastrophic disasters, and share either "smart practices"⁷ observed elsewhere or more information on why these issues are so difficult.
- Help the jurisdiction, and thereby the nation, "move the ball downfield" in their homeland security efforts by identifying the priority issues they need to tackle next in their efforts to protect and serve their citizens.

The session results vary and are often unpredictable. In some sessions, the key finding for participants is a better awareness (though the lack of awareness may be unacknowledged by all participants beforehand) of what they already have in place. In other sessions, the outcome is a clear statement of priorities that the jurisdiction must address in near, short, and/or long term efforts. Typically, results include a bit of each of the above, plus the important designation of who in the room has the responsibility for accomplishing the most significant tasks.

In some cases, just the fact that the program brought the particular participants together to discuss these issues at length *for the first time* marks an "advance of the ball." Occasionally, there is the "aha!" or "Kodak[®] moment"⁸ when not only is a challenging issue identified but the participants also outline and commit to the issues' resolution. Successful moments have included the realization and commitment to form state intelligence fusion centers, the

agreement to pursue elected official councils on homeland security, and the idea to use unofficial spokespeople to help advance preparedness and response messages.

Audience Composition

Who is "doing" homeland security? While the question depends heavily on how "homeland security" is defined, some believe the people conducting the day-to-day management and administration of homeland security should be those most involved in the executive seminars. However, underlying the program is the concept that "management attends to the realism of what is. Leadership looks toward what could be, what "should" be.⁹ Consequently, the program requires that the jurisdiction's executive leadership participate in the MET seminars, whether or not they are intimately familiar with or involved in the execution of homeland security activities. For example, the governor and key members of his or her cabinet are expected to attend state level sessions. In order to fulfill and promote homeland security objectives, the presence and involvement of leadership is essential. While management can keep the initiatives and programs running, only leaders can provide executive commitment, vision, strategic priorities, and resources. The "bosses" must be in the room and party to the discussion, especially the discussion of who is in charge and the potential assignment of responsibility for various aspects of the homeland security endeavor.

The program also attempts to underscore the importance of involving non-traditional partners in achieving homeland security objectives. Homeland security is about much more than just law enforcement, firefighting, and emergency management. It is also about public health, agriculture, public affairs, economics, tourism, business, tribes, legislators, judges, general services, and much more. The program typically strives for a balanced mix of these areas and an attendance limit of approximately thirty-five participants. The program generally works with a multi-disciplinary group, limited in number to promote an open discourse.

The program utilizes a team of Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) to achieve its explicit and implicit objectives. The SMEs use a variety of engagement methods. They provide expertise, both from their personal areas of experience as well as from their exposure to lessons from other jurisdictions in previous sessions. They are provocateurs, challenging current strategies and concepts at both the national and jurisdictional levels. They coach and constructively criticize, offering insights and advice on how the jurisdiction might solve or think differently about a current challenge. For the most part, but not exclusively, the SMEs are selected from the ranks of former senior officials in order to provide an environment of candid and open dialogue without fear on their part of deviating from or contradicting any institution's current policy positions.

Again, the goal is to have an open exchange of views about homeland security. The size and composition of the audience is intentionally designed to promote discussion. Speeches, prepared presentations, and recitations of tactical plans are discouraged. Debate and questioning are encouraged, not avoided or stifled. The underlying premise is that we have not yet figured out homeland security, but

through honest and frank conversation among professionals and responsible officials, we can improve the policies and practices.

Curriculum

The curriculum is designed to provide a guideline for discussion that will identify a range of potential inquiries during the executive education seminars. These "interrogatories" are intended to stimulate discussions that will identify and clarify the policy and strategic issues and challenges faced by each client group. While the questions posed seemingly invite "yes" or "no" responses or explanations, the primary goal is to use them to promote a lively policy and issue-identification dialogue. Sometimes the facilitator will shift the focus of a particular topic by asking "What is your expectation of..." rather than "how do you..." in order to elicit desired results rather than statements of current status.

The desired interrogatories are inserted into an outline based upon the overall themes and direction that any particular client requires or requests. Simulated video news stories, "Crossfire"-type commentaries, and expert views in video clips are used to help highlight the issues as well as provide a dynamic context to the sessions.

The topic areas are intended to focus on the policy and organizational issues surrounding the multi-governmental, multi-agency, and multi-disciplinary environment in which jurisdictions are operating in order to accomplish homeland security objectives. Below are examples of the topic areas and questions utilized by the program to stimulate discussion. Not all of these questions are used in every session and many other topics arise that are not listed here. The intent is to cultivate an agile discussion tailored to the issues relevant to the particular jurisdiction.

SAMPLE OUTLINE TEMPLATE

Inter-governmental Management and Policy Development

- How are policies and strategies for homeland security developed, vetted, and approved? At what point are chief elected officials involved and what is expected of them?
- What hampers or hinders cross-government agreement on goals, objectives, and directions for homeland security? What has been done to overcome these barriers?
- How are the multiple chief elected officials, elected councils, appointed district executives and inter-jurisdictional disciplines engaged in policy setting?
- How are essential and traditional government objectives balanced with those of this new demand for homeland security? How are they discussed and debated across jurisdictional boundaries?
- How are trade-offs between prevention and response investments discussed and decided? How are homeland security efforts, particularly

prevention activities, effectively measured? Is there a way to measure them?

Prevention

THREAT IDENTIFICATION

- Who is responsible for threat identification – federal, state, or local governments? The private sector? Who is involved and who is excluded and why?
- Are all existing data bases and systems being utilized for surveillance and monitoring – e.g. police reports, driver licenses, fire inspections, welfare roles, health surveillance, etc? What are the barriers and is it worth it to overcome them? Are there any legal challenges or policy positions associated with Threat Identification? If so, how are they being addressed?
- What is the mechanism for integrating threat identification efforts across jurisdictional boundaries and among local, state, private, and multiple federal efforts?

VULNERABILITY ASSESSMENT AND CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE PROTECTION

- Who identifies what is critical infrastructure? How is this process working? What are the key vital infrastructures and how are their proponents and/or owners included in the assessment process?
- How is protection prioritization accomplished? Where resource decisions are made for additional protection measures? How are the “trade-offs” analyzed and delivered to decision makers? How is this handled in a multi-jurisdictional environment?

INTELLIGENCE/INFORMATION ANALYSIS AND FUSION

- What is the vision for a process to collect, fuse, analyze, and disseminate intelligence and information products? What is the status of intelligence and information fusion efforts?
- Are all disciplines involved? How are public health, agriculture, ports, transportation, and other entities incorporated into the area’s intelligence collection, analysis/fusion, dissemination, and feedback process? Who drives or determines the end products of the fusion process?
- What role does the private sector play in intelligence strategies?
- What are the issues regarding legal authority/statutory limitations on gathering and sharing intelligence – e.g. open meeting/disclosure laws, etc.? Is there any legislation and/or ordinance pending? What are the pros and cons? Are legislative remedies needed?

PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS FOR PREVENTION

- How is the public engaged to help with prevention and to manage uneasiness/fear? How is prevention information communicated to the public?
- How do you deal with special populations in the prevention phase (cultural/language/ethnic, schools, elderly and homebound citizens)?
- How do you talk about your prevention efforts?

Preparedness

- How do your priorities match up with the National Preparedness Priorities? Do you have other priorities? To address prevention as a priority, how would the area's allocation of resources and staffing need to be adjusted *or* is it appropriate?
- How much risk is the jurisdiction willing to accept in preventing/preparing for terrorist attacks? What type of risk calculation is incorporated into the resource allocation decision-making?
- What is your strategy for enlisting the public's support in both preparing for and preventing a terrorist attack?

Catastrophic Response/Recovery

- How would a major and catastrophic incident be managed and coordinated? What role will the various elected officials have in this management?
- Does the city, county, or state have the authority or the need for authority to compel vaccination or treatment? Can the state or local authorities *direct* health care providers to exam, monitor, or treat?
- Who has the authority to seize/use facilities or property? Who has the authority to quarantine a high rise building? Who has enforcement responsibility and authority? Who has the authority to force closure of facilities? Malls, schools, transportation centers?
- How will state and federal military resources be requested and engaged in a catastrophic, terrorist incident? Is there a policy on the "use of force?"

Continuity of Services

- What are the jurisdictional legal obligations and responsibilities for COOP (Continuity of Operations) and COG (Continuity of Government) planning? How have the essential functions of the governments in the urban area been identified?
- What would the public identify as the essential responsibilities and functions of government in the event of a disaster? Given that many essential services and functions for citizens are handled by diverse

local, state, federal, and private levels, how is the continuance of these services planned and coordinated?

- How many of your agencies have identified their essential functions? Has this information been consolidated into a comprehensive plan and strategy?
- What are some of the unique policy issues that will either help or hinder effective COOP and COG in the area?

Risk Communications

- What information would be released to the public? Who decides? What type of discussion occurs when deciding what to say and who will say it?
- How will the media react? What should governors, mayors, commissioners, etc. expect? What media strategies should officials employ? How should officials communicate with the public to manage fear during an event?
- At what point would federal, state, and local governments confirm to the public that an event is terrorist in nature? How will this message be coordinated?
- What would be the public's expectations for information and guidance? Before, during, and after?

Strategic Planning and Budgeting

- What is the long term (multi-year) strategy for guiding and directing homeland security goals and objectives? Is this an individual jurisdictional strategy or regional?
- How will resource efforts be sustained if federal funding decreases or ends? Where do homeland security efforts and costs rank in the overall budget priority process?
- How should the jurisdiction tie its strategy to other regional, state, and federal plans? Or should it?
- How will the success of the strategic plan and consequent budget allocations be measured?

While this is just a sample of the questions that might appear in a seminar outline, they show the level and flavor of the discussion prompts. The goal is to solicit discussion at the policy and strategy level and to avoid the operational or tactical details. The initial response(s) to any of these prompts helps lead the discussion towards a better clarification of the issues and sometimes towards potential paths for resolution.

THE LESSONS (so far)¹⁰

The Executive Education Program has conducted sixty-nine sessions at the time of this writing, beginning with a state MET in New Hampshire on January 29, 2003 and most recently, a topical MET for the Council of State Government's Henry Toll Fellowship Program on July 12, 2006. There have been thirty-seven state METs, eleven for major urban areas, and twenty-one topical METs (the appendix contains a complete list of completed sessions as of July 17, 2006). The program has covered the United States geographically from Guam to Puerto Rico, Seattle to Miami and from New Hampshire to Los Angeles and Long Beach.

So what? Has anything been learned? Are we "evolving" homeland security or are we constantly revisiting the same ground time and time again? Is the ball being moved forward? An analysis of seminar summary reports conducted in December 2005¹¹ found that the top five topics discussed were: (1) Intelligence/Fusion Centers, (2) Public Information/Outreach, (3) Private Sector, (4) Federal Partnership, and (5) Media and Public Health/Medical Surge (tie.)¹² The following comments represent the prevalent themes and trends observed over the last three and a half years' delivery of the executive education series. Because they are generalizations, many of these comments do not apply equally to every place the program has been presented. This article looks at five areas critical to the execution of homeland security objectives: organization, prevention, preparedness, risk communications, and catastrophic response and recovery.

Organizing for Homeland Security

States have approached their organizational designs for homeland security activities in a variety of ways. There is no predominant organizational chart indicating a consistent approach from state to state. Some have established agencies, or groups of agencies called "homeland security," while others have appointed individual executives to oversee efforts. Leadership or primary points of contact vary by discipline and agency. This lack of consistency should not necessarily be seen as a negative, however. First, many (if not most) other state agencies vary in composition, roles, and responsibilities from state to state; therefore, it is not surprising that homeland security structural evolutions do so as well. Second, states are still experimenting with their structures. Many states visited by the team are employing a second or third organizational construct as they attempt to satisfy both efficiency and political requirements.

Finally, it does not appear that any particular organizational template leads to successful homeland security efforts. What appear to be the more important criteria for an effective state effort are the strength of the personal relationships among the players; the establishment of openly agreed-upon goals, objectives, roles, and responsibilities; and the commitment and involvement of the state's governor. The presence of these three elements, regardless of the organizational structure, appears to be paramount in achieving homeland security goals.

Urban areas, also varying in organizational structure, generally rely upon their law enforcement agencies to lead homeland security efforts. The differences among the urban areas we work with are mostly in the degree to which other jurisdictions, agencies, and disciplines are included in the overall effort. While at one end of the spectrum there is an almost exclusive law enforcement endeavor,

there are other instances where multi-jurisdictional, multi-disciplinary approaches are the rule. There are pros and cons to both approaches. The former ensures centralized decision-making and expediency in moving to action, at least within the areas controlled by law enforcement. But this approach excludes other important players, which in turn limits valuable input from and collaboration with other disciplines and other partner jurisdictions. The latter approach provides much broader collaboration and diversity, but presents challenges of consensus building, conflicting political demands, and a time-consuming decision-making process.

So is organizational design important or irrelevant? It is important to organize; less important are the specific constructs upon which that organization is built. Organizational backbones are critical for the institutionalization of efforts. One constant of senior government leadership is that individuals will retire, be promoted, transition in an election, transfer, or be voted out of office. Also important, in the particular activity of homeland security, is that senior officials might be killed, wounded, or otherwise absent from the community of leadership. Deputies and subordinates can more easily step up to fill a designated organizational slot than they can to fill a position based solely on an established personal relationship.

However, it is difficult to point to any single successful organizational design that does not have an unsuccessful twin somewhere else. For example, in one state, the placement of the emergency management organization under the adjutant general, who also serves as the homeland security advisor, appears effective and efficient. Yet, across the state line an identical construct is ineffective. In other examples, the emergency manager and homeland security official is the same person, yet effectiveness can vary significantly. How individuals lead and how they relate to one another are very important – more important than hierarchical, static diagrams of responsibility. While states and local governments may reach the point in homeland security evolution where a smart organizational practice becomes a best practice, we are not there yet. How can form consistently follow function when the latter is constantly in flux?

Why do states and cities organize differently? There are at least three significant reasons organizational constructs and assignments of homeland security leadership may differ between states and localities: resource opportunities, proximity to the front lines, and perceived defaults of responsibility.

Resource Opportunities. In general, states have more government agencies and larger staffs than do cities and local governments. Responsibility for the range of state-level homeland security activities could arguably fit in any number of boxes. In practice, the options include assignment of homeland security to the adjutant general, the emergency management director, the lieutenant governor, the public safety director, the attorney general, the state police leader, or the creation of a new agency or position. There are advantages to any of these choices. Cities and other local governments simply do not have these options or staff resources; generally, though not exclusively, local law enforcement is the more robust agency for homeland security leadership, from a resource point of view.

Proximity to the Front Lines. For the most part, state agencies are not predominantly comprised of first responders or first preventers. States have an enormous role to play in homeland security, but the roles of "boots on the ground" prevention and response activities rest largely with the localities. Therefore, the decision regarding the assignment of homeland security leadership at the state level can be more discretionary, as opposed to a municipality where intelligence, protection, surveillance, first response, and other counter-criminal activities reside mostly in one discipline.

Perceived Defaults of Responsibility. Who owns homeland security? One could argue that a state's responsibility for homeland security is predominantly counter-criminal, emergency response, military, general public safety, or an issue of executive policy: The default is not clear at the state level. But in a local setting, where homeland security is perceived in terms of "stop the terrorist and if not, get the lights and sirens moving," the perceived default of responsibility most often falls on either the law enforcement or emergency management community.

To conclude and summarize the lessons we have learned with regard to organizing homeland security: (1) There is not yet a convincing argument for any one organizational design for homeland security; (2) Good personal relationships, agreed upon roles and responsibilities amongst the leaders and players in homeland security, and executive commitment contribute significantly to effectiveness; and (3) States and local governments are going to organize their homeland security function differently, for a variety of reasons.

Prevention

As stated earlier, the MET sessions purposely focus on the prevention elements of homeland security. These discussions walk participants through risk analysis factors (threat, vulnerability, and consequence), intelligence processes, preparedness for prevention, and protection/threat response. At times this portion of the seminar can be tedious and non-participatory. Why? As mentioned in the introduction, suddenly to become responsible and accountable for the prevention of terrorist attacks is a novelty for state and local governments. Getting senior executives to talk about something outside their comfort and experience zone is not always easy. But in this case, it is *the* issue. One governor, in one of our first seminars, stated in effect that he never wanted to have to deal with the catastrophic destruction resulting from a terrorist attack; his priority was to stop an attack from happening in the first place. State and local governments are all trying to discover how to "do" prevention without precedent or experience.

Prevention as a doctrine, strategy, and infrastructural effort is just beginning to grow what might be called institutional "roots." The establishment of information and intelligence fusion centers has been increasing over the past few years, but these centers are still not prevalent or consciously designed as comprehensive networks. Allowing the fusion-process effort to evolve naturally (or without institutional guidance) is not necessarily a bad outcome for the long term; it will simply take time. Most states and many urban centers have

acknowledged the importance of some type of multi-disciplinary, multi-jurisdictional process to "put the pieces of the puzzle together." The primary challenges faced by state and local governments in this area appear to be in providing resources for these infrastructures, responding to civil liberty issues, and justifying the investment of resources in the absence of attacks. Other challenges faced by state and local governments include the lack of full participation on the part of many non-traditional players in intelligence and prevention efforts. This includes a lack of representation from the health, agricultural, emergency management, business (both infrastructure and economic aspects), tourism, and even environmental disciplines. Efforts to include these groups have been successful in too few cases.

While much criticism is directed at the federal government for little (or one-way) information and intelligence flow, no level of government has solved this problem. Local governments often have similar complaints about state efforts, first responders accuse parent agencies of a lack of communication, and non-law enforcement disciplines feel out of the loop at all levels. There are a few shining examples that address pieces of this overall challenge, but a complete and comprehensive "enterprise approach" to information sharing has not yet been observed. On a positive note, state and urban area fusion centers are continuing to multiply and evolve and in some cases beginning to interconnect with each other. The future of fusion centers is unclear in the absence of a terrorist attack; justifying the staff and expense of an endeavor where success is judged by the *absence* of disaster is politically difficult. It is especially difficult when this particular prevention endeavor is perceived as impinging on civil liberties. Success in the further proliferation and capability of fusion centers may rest largely on the ability to show "two-fer" (two for the cost of one) benefits – e.g. that fusion centers can be a benefit in the battle against all crimes, or even all hazards, not just terrorism.

Finally, looking at the entire system or model for prevention, from risk analysis to threat response and all of the sub-elements, one would be hard-pressed to find a state or local effort that has tied it all together in some type of enterprise approach (i.e. established a joint and unified effort across multiple agencies, levels of government, and the private sector, all contributing resources and taking responsibility for connected pieces of the overall methodology). While this may be an unrealistic expectation, the vision is there to be pursued. Good public arguments for prevention investments at the state and local government levels must be found and delivered. As in the case of fusion centers, overall prevention efforts may suffer from budget and political disinterest in the face of unprovable success.

Preparedness

While the seven national preparedness priorities were published only in the last year or so, observations from the MET sessions suggest two conclusions. First, the priorities are, and have been, consistent with the priorities of state and local efforts. Second, each jurisdiction may place greater weight or effort on one priority or another. To a large extent, the seven priorities for homeland security have been validated by the state and urban-area participants. From the

perspectives of individual agencies and disciplines, however, traditional priorities remain the same (e.g. fire fighters fight fires, police officers patrol and arrest, etc.). Balancing traditional governmental priorities with the new priorities of homeland security appears to be the great challenge. This is not to say there is an aversion to the new priorities (some would say they are not even new); it is more a question of how to effectively accomplish both the new and traditional at the same time, even with additional federal funding.

Another observation revolves around the need to practice and prepare to prevent. How do you exercise prevention? What does a fusion center tabletop exercise look like? What are the capital and equipment needs for prevention?

Risk Communications

The focus of risk communications discussions appears to be on incident public information or "how we talk to the media and the public" during an emergency. The MET seminars also reveal a need for methods and guidelines for pre-event risk communications. Effectively informing the public of prevention and preparedness efforts, their role, and the engagement of the media in preparedness phases are important efforts that require training, tools, and further education. The consensus is that the management of both public fear and the media is most effectively done well before an event occurs. An element of political risk is recognized here, along with an awareness that such a program must be carefully implemented. Publicly talking about the bad things that could happen, even accompanied with information on how these things can be avoided or resolved, is not a welcome activity to elected officials and their subordinates. Jurisdictions also appear to acknowledge that in cases of pandemic flu, bio-terrorism, and other events of mass disruption, much of the response effort is dedicated to managing the reactions of those unaffected by the emergency, not just those who are infected, injured, or killed.

Participants see a possible advantage in utilizing unofficial spokespeople and preparedness advocates whose words will resonate more strongly with the public than those of elected and senior government officials. Communications from church and community leaders, celebrities, and educators may have a greater public impact, with respect to both preparedness messages and emergency action recommendations, than those delivered by public sector officials. The combination and coordination of official and unofficial methods of delivery could be the most effective course of action. However, this potential improvement will challenge those in charge of the ongoing effort towards unified message development and delivery. Most jurisdictions attending the METs seminars have accepted, possess, or are implementing Joint Information Systems and Centers (JIS/JIC.) But these efforts and structures primarily address single or geographically-limited incidents and primarily only in the emergency response phase. Consistent messaging to the public is important in the preparedness and imminent-threat phase as well, and to a wider geographical audience. But current employments of JIS/JICs cannot solve this issue; they are designed and used for tactical and operational responses rather than strategic messaging.

Response and Recovery

The post-Katrina and pre-Pandemic Flu environment has significantly increased the desire to discuss the more difficult policy and strategic issues that arise during the occurrence of catastrophic events. The seminars and sessions purposely steer away from those issues that are traditional and, for the most part, already solved. (Senior executives do not need the MET team to have a discussion of the jurisdiction's standard procedures for their emergency response system.) The executive education program presents and solicits discussion on some of the harder, if not impossible, issues that emerge during a catastrophic scenario. Examples of the topics discussed by the participants include: rules of engagement for the enforcement of quarantine, seizure of private property, lines of succession, and use of force in an evacuation.

The most challenging – and most often unresolved – of these is the use of force and rules of engagement for public health or general peace and order events. Most jurisdictions acknowledge that, in cases of isolation or quarantine, discussions have occurred between health and law enforcement agencies pertaining to the importance of coordination. But when the first layer of the onion is peeled away, there has been little policy development regarding *how* isolation or quarantine will be enforced. How much force is appropriate and who makes this policy? If state police or National Guard forces become engaged, do they know, acknowledge, and adhere to a local jurisdiction's policies? Should they? What about federal forces sent in to supplement state and local efforts? What about actions on international borders? This particular policy issue desperately needs further national discussion. Most, if not all, catastrophic-level scenarios will present this decision requirement, yet the issue's *pre*-disaster analysis, debate, and option development appears to be minimal at all levels of government.

Most jurisdictional senior executives attending the METs seminars appear to be well prepared for the vast majority of disasters (and the inherent policy issues) they can reasonably expect to face. It is the catastrophic event, the rare but possible calamity that presents policy issues that have never been discussed or involve inadequate or non-existent analyses and options. For example, attacks with weapons of mass destruction combine unknown technical variables with unprecedented public fear to create decision-making environments that are rarely experienced or exercised by senior executives. Preparedness for the social, as opposed to the medical, impact of a public health disaster are just now being debated, discussed, and planned for. A recommendation made by several jurisdictions is to provide exercises for officials that focus more on the *catastrophic* realm of possibilities.

CONCLUSION

The comments and observations related here merely skim the surface of the discussions and recommendations that have emerged from the sixty-nine MET seminars held to date. The results of 266 hours of discussion, with over 2,000 officials over three years, resulted in a much longer list of recommendations and concerns than described above. Another observer of these sessions may, and should, stress other findings, trends, and perspectives. Frankly, an article could be written on each of these areas.

Nevertheless, two critical points can be made: (1) learning is needed; and (2) learning is occurring. Education is the key to success for senior officials at this stage of our homeland security evolution. Every administration leaves its mark by advancing the evolution of policies and strategies a bit more. Education helps those involved to define the policies and strategic issues to focus upon and presents options and approaches for further analysis. The Executive Education Program's sessions have demonstrated that the method utilized by the Department of Homeland Security and Naval Postgraduate School's Center for Homeland Defense and Security is one promising approach to satisfying the need to educate senior officials in this new endeavor we call homeland security.

The ball is being moved downfield. States, local governments, federal agencies, and the private sector have all been engaged in this effort. The greatest challenge appears to be that the road to homeland security "success" must be built while these public officials are sprinting down the pavement. This is the primary value of the Executive Education Program's sessions: it provides a break point in this journey, allowing these officials to evaluate where they have been and to hopefully plot out their next steps. It also helps to "institutionalize" homeland security efforts and provides a resource for new leaders and administrations.

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Appendix

Executive Education Program
State METs
Urban Area METs
Executive Education Topical Seminars
As of July 17, 2006

(Author's Note: While exact attendance figures were not kept for all events, an estimate of 32 attendees per event is appropriate.)

STATE METS

State	MET Conducted
1. New Hampshire	January 29, 2003
2. South Carolina	May 8, 2003
3. Alabama	July 1, 2003
4. Georgia	August 1, 2003
5. Iowa	August 26, 2003
6. Wisconsin	September 12, 2003
7. Tennessee	October 15, 2003
8. North Dakota	November 4, 2003
9. Indiana	December 10, 2003
10. Illinois	April 16, 2004
11. Maine	May 18, 2004
12. Connecticut	June 8, 2004
13. NGA/Seattle	July 19, 2004
14. New Jersey	August 17, 2004
15. Pennsylvania	August 23, 2004
16. Colorado	September 20, 2004
17. Pacific Basin, Honolulu, HI (Governors and officials from Hawaii, Guam, America Samoa, and Northern Marianas)	September 27, 2004
18. Ohio	October 8, 2004
19. Wyoming	October 20, 2004
20. Arkansas	December 14, 2004
21. Iowa 2	December 16, 2004
22. Oklahoma	March 4, 2005
23. Connecticut 2	March 16, 2005
24. Arizona	April 16, 2005
25. Washington State	May 9, 2005
26. Utah	June 20, 2005

27. Pacific Basin HS - Kona, HI (Governors and officials from HI, Guam, America Samoa, and Northern Marianas)	August 11-12, 2005
28. Washington State – Operationalizing Policy at the Agency Level	August 24, 2005
29. California	September 9, 2005
30. Puerto Rico	September 15, 2005
31. Georgia – Private and Public Sector Focus	October 6, 2005
32. North Carolina	March 15, 2006
33. California 2	April 20, 2006
34. Louisiana (Hurricane)	May 16, 2006
35. Ohio (Bio - Pan Flu)	June 13, 2006
36. Arizona Governor’s Public-Private Sector	June 24, 2006
37. Guam	July 6, 2006

URBAN AREA METS

State	MET Conducted
1. Seattle, WA	April 25, 2005
2. National Capital Region, Washington, DC	June 1, 2005
3. Phoenix, AZ	June 16, 2005
4. Atlanta, GA	November 14, 2005
5. Salt Lake City, UT	December 7, 2005
6. Jacksonville, FL	February 9, 2006
7. Los Angeles and Long Beach, CA	February 22, 2006
8. Cincinnati, OH	March 9, 2006
9. New Haven, CT	March 21, 2006
10. San Francisco, CA	April 19, 2006
11. Cleveland, OH	May 11, 2006

TOPICAL SEMINARS

Topic	Location	MET Conducted
1. Continuity of Operations Planning & Continuity of Government (COOP/COG)	Des Moines, Iowa	January 8, 2004
2. HS in Rural America	Somerset, KY	March 8, 2004
3. Intelligence and Information Sharing	Hartford, CT (HS directors and officials from the Northeast)	November 10, 2004
4. “Pacific Cloud” Hollywood	Hollywood, CA (Sec. Ridge and Federal and Los Angeles)	December 15, 2004

	Officials and Hollywood Executives – Academy Awards Exercise)	
5. Nat'l Assoc for Attorney Generals – Public Health Legal Authorities	Lansing, MI	April 20, 2005
6. Nat'l HS Consortium (State HS directors and officials from national public safety and governmental associations)	Monterey, CA	May 24, 2005
7. Council of State Governments - Executive Council and Public Safety Committee leaders	Lake Tahoe, CA	June 6, 2005
8. National Sheriffs Association	Louisville, KY	June 29, 2005
9. CA Dept. of Food & Agriculture – Agro-T	Sacramento, CA	September 8, 2005
10. National Sheriffs Association	Miami, FL	November 6, 2005
11. CHDS Katrina Review	Washington, DC	November 8, 2005
12. Multi-State Agro-Terrorism Seminar with Univ. of Minnesota	Chicago, IL (10 states participated)	November 15, 2005
13. Pandemic Flu Preparedness Forum with Univ. of Texas	Houston, TX	November 28, 2005
14. Homeland Security Consortium (State HS directors and officials from national public safety and governmental associations)	Phoenix, AZ	December 2, 2005
15. U.S. Chamber of Commerce, Public/Private Partnerships	Washington, DC	January 24-25, 2006
16. Nat'l Lt. Governors Association	Washington DC	February 6, 2006

17. NEMA Public Affairs Roundtable Session	Washington, DC	February 13, 2006
18. MT Governor's Conference - Elected Officials MET	Billings, MT	May 23, 2006
19. Pacific Basin Governors (Info/Intel Sharing Focus)	Lanai, Hawaii	June 20, 2006
20. Guam Risk Communications and Health Emergencies	Hagatna, Guam	July 5, 2006
21. CSG Henry Toll Fellowship	Lexington, KY	July 12, 2006

¹ Christopher Bellavita and Ellen M. Gordon, "Changing Homeland Security: Teaching the Core," *Homeland Security Affairs* II, no. 1 (April 2006). <http://www.hsaj.org/?article=2.1.1>

² Fiol and Lyles define learning as "the development of insights, knowledge, and associations between past actions, the effectiveness of those actions, and future actions." See C. Marlene Fiol and Marjorie A. Lyles, "Organizational Learning," *Academy of Management Review* 10 (1985): 803-813. According to Amy K. Donahue and Robert V. Tuohy, learning is multi-dimensional: it has cognitive, behavioral, and emotional components, each of which is susceptible to particular instructional or educational approaches. See "Lessons We Don't Learn: A Study of the Lessons of Disasters, Why We Repeat Them, and How We Can Learn Them," *Homeland Security Affairs*, Volume II, Issue 2 (July 2006).

³ U.S. Office of Homeland Security, *National Strategy for Homeland Security*, July 2002. "Letter from the President."

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Charlie Savage, "Ridge to leave post as first U.S. director of homeland security," *Boston Globe*, December 1, 2004. In the article, this phrase is attributed to Frank Cillufo, Director of the Homeland Security Policy Institute at George Washington University but this author has heard the term repeated by Department of Homeland Security staff as well when describing the challenge of creating "homeland security." http://www.boston.com/news/nation/articles/2004/12/01/ridge_to_leave_post_as_first_us_director_of_homeland_security/.

⁶ *The Bill of Rights; Amendments I – X of the United States Constitution*, Amendment X. From <http://usinfo.state.gov/usa/infousa/facts/funddocs/billeng.htm>. Last accessed on 7/18/06.

⁷ I advocate the term "smart practices" versus "best practices," the latter implying some type of evaluative and comparative analysis. Homeland security is not yet at a point at which what works in some places can be objectively ranked and ordered into what is "best" for everyone.

⁸ Deputy Chief Clark Kimerer, Seattle Police Department, in comment to author. While he did not originate the phrase, Chief Kimerer deserves credit for applying it effectively to this program.

⁹ Christopher Bellavita, in initial draft of article, "What Should Homeland Security Leaders be Talking About?" Reviewed on July 10, 2006.

¹⁰ The following section on what the program has discovered so far is not the result of a formal analysis or necessarily held in consensus by the program's leadership. It is the author's attempt to capture the trends he has collected by attending a majority of the seminars, as well as from a review of the session summaries completed to date. Credit goes to Wendy Walsh, homeland defense and security coordinator, Naval Postgraduate School, who conducted an analysis of the executive education seminar summary reports completed from 2003-2005. Sample size for her analysis was 24 reports (11 states, 4 urban areas, and 9 topical METs.)

¹¹ Wendy Walsh, "MET Analysis – December 2005," Center for Homeland Defense and Security, Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, CA.

¹² But it is important to acknowledge that these are the top issues discussed primarily because that is how the curriculum is designed, not necessarily because they are the top overall issues of the participants outside the context of the seminars.