



**This Issue:**

**Words and Bullets: Al Qaeda's Textbook for Terror**

An alarming discovery in Manchester, England, gives Western intelligence and counterterrorism agencies a Muslim insider's view of what it takes to fight a Holy War against the United States and its allies.  
By Neil Livingstone  
Global Options, Page 1

**Aftermath of a Hurricane: The Hard Part Comes Next**

An analysis of what went right and wrong in the preparation for and response to Hurricane Katrina. The authors' recommendation: Stop the blame game, and appoint a national commission that can salvage some long-term gains out of a massive disaster.  
By James Hessman and Martin Masiuk  
Editor in Chief, and Publisher, Page 1

**Interview: Kurt J. Nagle, President & CEO of the American Association of Port Authorities**

His association's views on what is needed to meet Coast Guard/MTSA requirements, and the case for more Port Security Grant funding.  
By John Morton  
Interviews, Page 3

**Public Health at the End of the World**

The nation's public-health professionals played a major support role during and immediately after Katrina hit land - and will continue to do so long after most other first responders have gone home.  
By Joseph Cahill  
Emergency Medicine, Page 8

**States of Preparedness**

Virginia creates new VCISS bulletin board for the state's police website. Kentucky becomes first to complete the NIMS Capability Assessment Support Tool. And Missouri response exercise combines lethal explosions with a toxic crash.  
By Adam McLaughlin  
State Homeland News, Page 10

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**Words and Bullets: Al Qaeda's Textbook for Terror**

**By Neil Livingstone**

Global Options

A police search of an Al Qaeda member's home in Manchester, England, yielded a large manual in Arabic on a computer. It is this manual, which includes detailed instructions on how terrorist operatives should go about their daily lives so as to preserve secrecy and not call attention to themselves, that may provide important clues as to how the four young suicide bombers who attacked the London subway and bus systems in early July apparently slipped under the radar of suspicion. Not only did they escape notice by the authorities but even their closest friends and relatives claimed to have been flabbergasted that the four seemingly ordinary young men could have carried out the deadly attacks that killed 52 (plus the suicide bombers themselves) and left more than 700 injured.

This is not the first terrorist manual of its type that has been discovered. The Marxist Japanese Red Army, which held the world in thrall in the 1970s because of the group's viciousness, composed a similar manual – which advised Red Army cadres living undercover how to dress, behave, and conduct secret operations. They should come and go at the same time each day, the manual said, as though they had regular employment. They were told to dress conservatively, and cohabitating couples were admonished not to hold hands because that was not characteristic of married couples.

*Continued on the Next Page*

**Aftermath of a Hurricane: The Hard Part Comes Next**

**By James Hessman and Martin Masiuk**

Editor in Chief, and Publisher

The greatest natural disaster in U.S. history. A major region of the country – the Gulf Coast – and one of the nation's most important cities, New Orleans, shattered. Economic damage initially estimated at \$25 -30 billion but probably much more than that in the long term. More than a million people displaced from their jobs and their homes – many of them never to return. An estimated three million citizens without potable water and/or electric power. A loss of life that, when all the bodies are counted, may well exceed that of Pearl Harbor and 9/11 combined.

*Continued on Page 5*

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The Al Qaeda manual, however, is the most complete terrorist manual ever to come to light. In its preamble recruits are told that Islamic governments “have never and will never be established through peaceful solutions and cooperative councils. They are established as they [always] have been, by pen and gun, by word and bullet, by tongue and teeth.” The manual rails at the “apostate rulers” of most Muslim countries and says that true Muslims know that an Islamic government “would never be established except by the bomb and rifle. Islam does not coincide or make a truce with unbelief, but rather confronts it.”

***Qualifications and Principles***

Members of Al Qaeda must, first and foremost, be Moslems, according to the manual. They also must be intelligent, in good health, and patient, able to accept military discipline, and ready to sacrifice their lives and undergo martyrdom. In addition, they should be able to keep secrets and to exercise caution and prudence. All of the organization’s cells should be organized along military lines, the manual states, and operatives must obey their respective commanders and advisory councils.

Lesson Three of the manual focuses on counterfeit currency and forged documents. Key operatives are told to have more than one identity card and passport. To reduce suspicion, “The photograph of the brother in these documents should be without a beard. ... If he already has one [document] showing a photograph with a beard, he should replace it.” Then, the manual advises, stating the obvious, “When using an identity document in different names, no more than one such document should be carried at one time.”

With respect to apartments and hiding places, the manual provides the following tips:

- (1) Choose the apartment carefully with respect to its location and its size (which should be big enough for the work necessary – e.g., meetings, the storage of arms and other materials, providing shelter for fugitives, and work preparation);
- (2) It is preferable to rent apartments on the ground floor (to facilitate escape and the digging of trenches);
- (3) Prepare secret locations in the apartment for securing documents, records, arms, and other important items; and
- (4) Prepare ways and means (e.g., the building or purchase of stands and/or wooden ladders) of vacating the apartment in case of a surprise attack.

*Continued on the Next Page*

The manual goes on to add that apartments should be leased using false (non-Moslem) names, should not be near police stations or other security installations, and "under no circumstances should anyone know about the apartment except those who use it." Care should be taken, the manual continues, to ensure that the apartment is not under surveillance, and special knocks and other signals should be developed to identify comrades. Special signals also should be developed to warn other members if the place is under surveillance and/or if there is any other problem of operational significance. According to the manual, "Such signs include hanging out a towel, opening a curtain, placing a cushion in a special way, etc." Telephone calls should "be answered in an agreed-upon manner," the manual also advises.

Communications between undercover operatives is broken down into three categories: "common communication" for everyday purposes, standby communication "when one of the two parties is unable to communicate with the other for some reason," and "alarm communication" for emergencies. There also is a chapter on "Secret Writing and Ciphers and Codes." Formulas for making secret ink are provided to the reader, as well as ciphers that substitute letters with numbers; that leave out the numbers 8, 9, and 0; that use the numbers 8, 9, and 0 as separators; that use symbols; and that are based on various keys (such as descending-ascending tables). While none of the ciphers would provide much a challenge to NSA, they would be quite effective in disguising communications between operatives that had not come under a high degree of suspicion by authorities.

Meetings and transportation methods are also carefully choreographed, with all of the care and precision of various Cold War protocols developed by the CIA and KGB. "When public transportation is used," the manual explains, "one should alight at some distance from the meeting location and continue on foot. In the case of a private vehicle one should park it far away or in a secure place so as to be able to maneuver it quickly at any time." In one proffered piece of tradecraft that runs counter to the general rules developed by some of the world's intelligence agencies, the manual says that,

**Interview: Kurt J. Nagle,  
President & CEO of the  
American Association of Port  
Authorities**



Pointing to the recently released AAPA manual on port security best practices and lessons learned, Mr. Nagle gives his association's view on what is needed to meet Coast Guard/MTSA requirements and presents the reasons both for expanding port eligibility for Port Security Grant funding and for finalizing a uniform standard for the Transportation Workers Identity Card.

To get the complete audio download of the interview, please visit  
[www.DomesticPreparedness.com](http://www.DomesticPreparedness.com)

"The meeting should not be held in a crowded place because that would allow the security personnel to hide and monitor those who meet." By contrast to the advice in the manual, brush passes and many other meetings with agents and operatives are held in crowded places – both to mask the activity and to make it more difficult to distinguish the various players.

Among the tips offered by the manual to detect surveillance are the following:

- (a) Walking down a dead-end street and observing who is walking behind you. Beware of traps.
- (b) Casually dropping something out of your pocket and observing who will pick it up.
- (c) Walking fast – then stopping suddenly at a corner and observing who will be affected.

*Continued on the Next Page*

- (d) Stopping in front of store windows and observing who is watching you.
- (e) Getting on a bus, then getting off after it departs and observing who will be affected.

### ***Interrogations and Assassinations***

The manual includes a whole chapter on espionage, focusing both on open-source material as well as information that is gathered covertly. As the manual notes, "Spying on the enemy is permitted and may even be a duty in the case of war between Moslems and others. Winning the battle is dependent on knowing the enemy's secrets, movements, and plans. The prophet – Allah bless and keep him – used that method. He would send spies and informants." The same chapter goes into considerable detail answering questions about how a Muslim spy "can live among enemies if he maintains his Islamic characteristics" and how he "can ... perform his duties to Allah and not want to appear Muslim." Basically, the manual asserts that "a Muslim in combat or [a] godless area" can be given a certain degree of latitude, in terms of behavior and appearance, if it furthers his goals and permits him to learn his adversaries' secrets.

The manual even has a particularly chilling section entitled, "Guidelines for Beating and Killing Hostages." That section explains that it is acceptable "to interrogate the hostage for the purpose of obtaining information." Then, in a clear sanctioning of torture, it continues as follows: "It is permitted to strike the nonbeliever who has no covenant until he reveals the news, information, and secrets of his people." An entire section of the manual is devoted to interrogation techniques, including both physical and psychological methods of torture. Among the physical methods of torture recommended in the manual are "whipping and beating with sticks and twisted rubber belts," "pulling out nails and hair," "throwing [the person being interrogated] in a septic tank," "burning with fire," and "shocking with electrical current."

With respect to the murder of hostages, the reader is told that "religious scholars have also permitted the killing of a hostage if he insists on withholding

information from Moslems." Hostages also can be exchanged for "money, services, and expertise," the manual notes, "as well as the secrets of the enemy's army, plans, and numbers."

Detailed directions, complete with illustrations, are provided on how to assassinate enemies – surreptitiously, if possible. The manual's readers are provided detailed information on the "lethal parts of the body," and case studies are used to describe the pros and cons of various types of physical hits – each of which is carefully dissected with textbook thoroughness. Even missteps are delineated, such as "The Errors which Hassan and Mahmoud Committed."

Bombs and other types of explosives receive considerable attention as well. According to the introduction to this section: "Explosives are believed to be the safest weapon for the Mujahideen [sic]. ... [The use of explosives] allows them to get away from enemy personnel and to avoid being arrested." The making and use of various types of explosives, blasting caps, fuses, switches, timing devices, booby traps – cars and television sets, for example – and similar information is provided to the reader. The chapter closes with comments on assassinations committed by "cold steel" (knives), blunt objects, poisons (ricin, pure nicotine, and various alkalines), and strangulation.

Lesson Eighteen, the final one included in the manual, is a list of instructions on how to survive captivity in prisons and detention camps, focusing particular attention on a prisoner's rights – specifically including the right to an attorney – and instructing members on how to "complain [to the court] of mistreatment while in prison." It was the recommendations in this chapter, of course, that led to the exaggerated complaints and resulting international uproar over the alleged U.S. mistreatment of prisoners at the naval base in Guantanamo Bay – complaints which, not surprisingly, were so enthusiastically embraced by Amnesty International and America's enemies around the world. ▼

## Aftermath of a Hurricane: The Hard Part Comes Next

*Continued from Page 1*

That is a brief executive summary of the destruction wrought by Hurricane Katrina, and the breaking of the levees protecting New Orleans, in the last three days of August and the first week of September. As of the evening of 6 September the situations in Biloxi, Gulfport, Bay St. Louis, and other towns and cities in Southern Mississippi – which actually was hit harder by Katrina than New Orleans was – had more or less stabilized, a number of relief and repair crews were already on the scene, with more on the way, and the months-long process of repair, rebuilding, and recuperation had started. How long it would take for the area to get back to normal, though, however that nebulous word is defined, was anyone's guess. Possibly the only thing certain was that the death toll would continue to climb as police and other first responders continued their grim house-by-house search for survivors, or for corpses. Eventually, though, later if not sooner, power would be restored, roads would reopen, and life would go on almost – but not quite – as before.

In New Orleans, the so-called City that Care Forgot, the situation was much worse. It would take several months, at least, before the levees could be fully repaired and the now highly contaminated flood waters could be pumped out of the stricken metropolis. And that would be the easy part. The difficult part would be the bulldozing of the hundreds of thousands of homes, businesses, and public buildings that were damaged beyond repair, the hauling away of possibly millions of tons of rubble, and then – possibly – the rebuilding of a storied city unlike any other in America.

### ***The Clash of Opposing Realities***

The courageous statements of New Orleans's citizens and their political leaders notwithstanding, it still is by no means clear that the city can, should, and will be rebuilt. It certainly should not, and will not, be rebuilt as a carbon copy of the city destroyed by Katrina and the flood waters. Stronger and higher levees would be mandatory, as would be more, and more powerful, fail-

safe pumping stations. Homes, churches, and businesses of all types as well as schools and other public buildings would have to be made of sturdier stuff and, insofar as possible, be able to withstand high winds and rising waters.

Even if that basic blueprint were followed to the letter it might not be enough to ensure the survivability of a "new" New Orleans. Engineers, geologists, and other hardnosed realists had been predicting for many years prior to Katrina that the city, much of which sits 10 feet or more below sea level, would eventually and inevitably succumb to the forces of nature. "A disaster waiting to happen" was the description frequently used. Meteorologists agree, and point out that global weather patterns of recent years indicate that more, and more violent, hurricanes are likely for the foreseeable future.

Those who are sentimentally attached to the Crescent City, and/or who have strong economic or political interests to protect, have a powerful counter-argument to offer – namely, that if New Orleans itself ceased to exist, a port of similar capacity and capability would have to be built to replace it. Almost 60 percent of all U.S. grain exports are shipped overseas through ports along the Gulf of Mexico, including 83.8 million tons shipped through the port of New Orleans in 2003 – which in 2001 generated \$13.4 billion in revenue. (Data provided by the Financial Times, the Army Corps of Engineers, and the American Association of Port Authorities, and reported in the 5 September issue of the Washington Post.)

There also is an important albeit unquantifiable intangible factor to consider: Americans of all sizes, shapes, colors, and creeds simply do not like to surrender or to give in, particularly to the malevolent forces of either man or nature. When San Francisco was destroyed by an earthquake in 1906 the citizens of that great city took for granted, as did their countrymen, that their only choice was to rebuild. The same was true of Chicago after the Great Fire, and of Johnstown after the flood.

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The same collective mindset united Americans after the terrorist attacks of 9/11 and infused the national decision to repair and restore the Pentagon as soon as possible and, in New York City, to erect new and safer structures that would not replace the World Trade Center towers but serve as a living and fully operational memorial to them.

The building of new and more survivable U.S. embassies in Nairobi, Kenya, and Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania, to replace the embassies bombed by terrorists was a political and diplomatic necessity, perhaps, but the decision to rebuild was approved by the vast majority of U.S. citizens. So were the repair and rebuilding of the guided-missile destroyer USS Cole after it was attacked, and almost sunk, during an October 2000 refueling stop in Aden, Yemen. A less proud and less determined Navy, and nation, might well have written off the severely damaged Cole as too costly to repair. Not so the U.S. Navy – which could safely assume in that time of distress that the executive and legislative branches of government, and the American people, would fully support the decision to rebuild.

### ***Blame, Glory, and Consequences***

One of the first and least helpful results of what was, after all, a long-expected natural disaster was the attempt – at all levels of government, and by the media – to point the finger of blame, always at someone else, not only for the alleged lack of foresight and preparation but also for the supposed failure (also at all levels of government) to respond quickly enough and with a massive flow of emergency supplies, consumables, and repair equipment. As First Responder in Chief, President Bush was an obvious target, as were DHS (Department of Homeland Security) Secretary Michael Chertoff and FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) Director Michael D. Brown. Louisiana Governor Kathleen Blanco and New Orleans Mayor Ray Nagin both demonstrated remarkable leadership qualities during the long ordeal (still not over), but the initial evidence suggests that neither the city of New Orleans nor the state of Louisiana was any better prepared to cope with Katrina than the federal government was.

The blame game undoubtedly will go on nonetheless, and may eventually result in some changes for the better. In any event, the obvious deficiencies in preparation and response should be measured against the many things that did *not* go wrong and against the truly heroic achievements of not hundreds but thousands of first responders and ad hoc volunteers who risked their own lives to save others and who kept the nation's greatest catastrophe of modern times from becoming much worse than it was. The courageous young men and women of the U.S. Coast Guard, to take perhaps the most prominent example, proved again and again the validity of that gallant service's reputation as the world's premier lifesaving service.

Other agencies, public and private, responded in similar fashion. The American Red Cross covered itself in glory, as did the FEMA crews quickly assembled from throughout the country and deployed into the catastrophe's treacherous heart of darkness. Law-enforcement, firefighting, and EMS (emergency medical services) agencies and individuals throughout Alabama, Louisiana, and Mississippi – augmented by their counterparts, and by utility crews, from many other states – worked prodigiously, and with admirable skill, to save their fellow citizens and restore order. (Adam McLaughlin, the T.I.P.S. Channel Master for State Homeland News, is a member of the assistance team deployed to New Orleans by the Port of New York/New Jersey.)

Other organizations and agencies, and millions of everyday citizens, from across the nation, joined the effort – as Americans always do in times of disaster – by donating goods, services, and money. Thousands of families opened up their homes to those who had been evacuated from the disaster area. Grade schools, high schools, colleges, and universities opened their doors to accommodate new students whose schools had been destroyed, and private businesses offered immediate employment to thousands of workers who were suddenly without jobs. It was, in those and certain other respects, the American version of England's "finest hour."

*Continued on the Next Page*

All of which ameliorates but does not change the fact that the United States was once again – as on 9/11 and, before that, on 7 December 1941 and many other times both before and since – struck a major blow for which it should have been much better prepared. The economic and human losses from Hurricane Katrina will continue to mount for the foreseeable future. It will be a long time, if ever, before the price of gasoline falls back to the pre-Katrina levels. The prices of other goods and consumables also are likely to rise. Many of those who fled New Orleans, Biloxi, Gulfport, and other cities are likely never to return. If a new New Orleans is built in the next decade or so, it may be a better, more secure, and perhaps even more important city (and port) than the old New Orleans. But it will never be the same city. The one that disappeared last week is truly, in Margaret Mitchell's famous words, literally Gone With the Wind.

### ***What Happens Next? A Few Recommendations***

The deaths and destruction caused by Hurricane Katrina and the flooding of New Orleans will be remembered for many years as one of the greatest tragedies in American history. An even greater tragedy, though, would be not to use the lessons learned from Katrina to avoid similar, and perhaps worse, disasters in the future.

In the next several weeks and months there will be numerous authoritative reports and studies – and a few TV specials as well – dissecting the anatomy of Hurricane Katrina and detailing what happened when, where, how, and why, and in what sequence. Many of these lessons-learned analyses will be well-balanced and objective. Others will be politically partisan and tilted in favor of, or against, various types of remedial actions. All, or almost all, will prove useful in one way or another.

Katrina was a *national* tragedy of immense consequence, though, and must be considered in that light. To be as objective, as comprehensive, as useful, and as non-partisan as possible, therefore, requires a truly national approach. A good start, as Sen. Hillary Clinton has

suggested, might be for the president to appoint a national commission such as that appointed to investigate the 9/11 terrorist attacks. To ensure objectivity the president might want to ask former Presidents Bush and Clinton to co-chair the new commission in the same bipartisan way they did the national and international fundraising effort to help the victims of last year's tsunami.

The commission's charter should not, however, be limited to determining the particulars of what happened before, during, and after Hurricane Katrina made landfall (near Buras, La., shortly after 6:00 a.m. on Monday, 29 August). That approach, as sensible as it might seem at first glance, would help the nation prepare for the next hurricane. But a much broader brush is needed. The commission's goal should be more generic in nature and seek how to cope not only with the next Katrina but also with the next earthquake in California or Alaska and/or a massive tsunami engulfing Hawaii or Guam.

The development of workable – which also means affordable – contingency plans to prepare for and respond to natural disasters would be only half the task. The other half, which might be of exponentially greater importance, would entail the development of plans to prevent, prepare for, and/or respond to manmade disasters – terrorist attacks, in other words. After the 9/11 attacks President Bush requested, and Congress provided, billions and billions of dollars to prevent new terrorist attacks involving the use of commercial aircraft. The safeguarding of U.S. ports and waterways, which are arguably much more vulnerable both to terrorist attacks and to natural disasters, was sorely neglected, though, and FEMA has been seriously under-funded for many years – which is one reason that undermanned and overburdened agency was perhaps less responsive than it might otherwise have been.

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In the final analysis, what happens next will be up to the American people as a whole. Presidents, senators, and congressmen, governors, mayors, and county executives, and other elected officials at all levels of government are willing to lead, and usually *will* lead – if they are permitted to by their constituents. But the leaders of any group, business, organization, or nation can do only so much on their own initiative. Anything beyond that requires the support of those who follow. ▼

## Public Health at the End of the World

By Joseph Cahill

Emergency Medicine

It is inconceivable that there is anyone in this country who is unaware of the events that have overtaken the communities where the Mississippi River empties into the Gulf of Mexico. Much of the response is being carried out by firemen, EMS (emergency medical services) personnel, and policemen, as well as the U.S. military, specifically including the U.S. Coast Guard. However, there is still much to be done on the public-health front. When all of the fires have been extinguished, all remaining survivors have been rescued, and the looters either imprisoned or chased away, what remains will be largely a public-health incident – on a scale that has not existed anywhere in the United States since the end of World War II.

The magnitude of this disaster is tremendous; one look at the aerial photos on any news site will show that. However, what the photos do not show is the inherent difficulties in keeping the population of a major city alive when all major sources of drinkable water have been contaminated by benzene and saltwater (not to mention other, and worse, contaminants). How can first responders and public officials provide food and shelter for tens of thousands of people – many of them ailing or injured or both? How do the thousands of first responders on the scene stay alive in the same life-threatening conditions?

Until the supply lines are completely set up, those working in a disaster area must sustain their operations

with what they personally carried in on their backs, supplemented if possible by what they can scavenge on the scene. The first responders are vulnerable to many of the same hazards as those unfortunate citizens they are trying to help, and as a result could be considered a secondary drain on the almost always scarce resources available.

One of the major differences between the scale of Hurricane Katrina, and the flooding that followed, and other recent massive disasters is the almost total disruption of the infrastructure along the Gulf Coast and in the city of New Orleans. As horrible as the attacks of 11 September 2001 were, those involved in the post-attack response operation were able to go home at night to warm, clean, and dry beds. Some chose not to, of course, but in New Orleans tonight, and for many nights to come, that will not be an option.

## *Sanitation – the Key to Continued Survival*

The states most immediately affected by the hurricane and follow-on flooding made early requests for assistance to their counterparts in other states. One of the more important things they asked for was people with sanitation experience. At first blush that wording might bring up images of staff members familiar with the business end of a scrubber, but in the public-health community sanitarians represent the pointy end of several important sticks.

The National Environmental Health Association defines environmental health and protection as protection “against environmental factors that may adversely impact human health or the ecological balances essential to long-term human health and environmental quality, whether in the natural or man-made environment.” With that definition in mind, it becomes obvious that the purviews of public-health sanitarians in a disaster of the Katrina scale are many and varied – and extremely important. It should be kept in mind that, in this context, *long term* starts early in the morning and continues through the completion of recovery and usually well beyond.

*Continued on the Next Page*



It also is important to understand that, although these issues come under the jurisdiction of the public-health community, many other agencies and disciplines will be working on the same issues and problems. However, the public-health community and its agencies will be working on the issues for months and perhaps years to come, whereas most of the other agencies involved will not be. Following is a brief summary of some, but by no means all, of the major public-health issues and problems the public-health community is working on in New Orleans and other communities along the Gulf Coast.

***Hazardous Materials (HazMat).*** Many news outlets have carried photos of large areas of water covered with a rainbow sheen of petroleum products. These chemicals – most of which are in fact the leaching out of the accoutrements of daily life – are spilling from the submerged tanks of gas stations and chemical-production facilities, leaking from the thousands of cars, trucks, and other vehicles that are still underwater, or simply escaping from the millions of places where chemicals are stored in most modern households. Making them even more toxic is that all of these chemicals are now mixed in a sludge of bacteria and waste flushed out of the sewer system.

What does the public-health community have to do with HazMat? This is a question that even seasoned responders often do not know how to answer. Fire-based HazMat teams are the typical first responders of the HazMat world, but it is the public-health environmental-hazard community that tracks the long-range health effects of chemicals in the modern world. It is the job of public-health personnel to work on the human effects of the HazMat.

The Superdome – a poured-concrete structure far enough away and well above the likely sources of flooding – initially seemed an inspired choice to shelter the masses of those New Orleans citizens who could not get far enough out of the city. What changed it from an ideal shelter to one that eventually had to be abandoned was infrastructure – or, more specifically, the loss of infrastructure.

***Drinking Water Protection.*** Maintaining a continued supply of potable water and protecting the principal sources of clean water are always major public-health undertakings. As previously mentioned, the amount of chemicals washed into the standing water in and around the areas hit by Hurricane Katrina is staggering – however, the risks associated with the sewage that has contaminated the surface water in those areas is an even greater hazard.

Adding to the non-availability of enough clean water is the presence of bodies, both human and animal, also contaminating the environment, particularly in standing water. These bodies not only pose a major risk to physical health but also lead to mental health stress, as well as emotional distress, that affects survivors and rescuers alike.

***Food Safety.*** In the day-to-day world, public-health professionals inspect food preparation facilities as part of the licensing and approval process. However, in the face of a major disaster such inspections often are set aside because of the greater necessity to manage the feeding of large masses of overwhelmed evacuees.

***Disease Monitoring and Prevention.*** Another routine task assigned to public-health agencies is to track “reportable” diseases – i.e., those diseases that by law or regulation must be reported to the local or state Department of Health or Board of Health. Once such reporting has started, the public-health epidemiologists study the flow of the disease to identify both its origin and its spread. During any major natural disaster the same epidemiologic tools can be brought to bear on illnesses, such as dysentery, that are not usually reported to the health department.

In a disaster of Katrina’s scope the disease-monitoring staff can identify the causes and contributing factors involved in the spread of an illness such as the aforementioned dysentery, which – because of the inadequate hygienic facilities available – could quickly sweep through an evacuation center or decimate a team of rescuers. By isolating the cause and identifying the contributing factors, the spread of such illnesses can be checked.

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***Sustained Medical and Hospital Resources.*** One of the major focuses of the current response operation is on hospitals and their patients as well as the medical staff and their families. Many of the more alarming reports coming through the media on a daily basis for the last two weeks have been about hospitals that are being evacuated and/or are sending distress messages requesting assistance in maintaining power and basic food and water supplies as well as medical supplies and equipment.

As one of the main interfaces between the hospital community and the response community public-health personnel should be in position to assist in organizing and reporting a hospital's surge capacity.

***Naval/Military Support.*** One of the more encouraging reports received during the last week was that the Military Sealift Command's Navy hospital ship USS Comfort was deployed on short notice to the Gulf of Mexico to aid in the efforts to respond to the Hurricane Katrina disaster. This is the same ship that proceeded at flank speed to New York City in the wake of the 11 September 2001 attack on the World Trade Center towers.

In short, although the nation's public-health professionals will not be putting out fires or stopping the looting in New Orleans, their role in the response-and-recovery efforts following Hurricane Katrina will be, as in so many other major disasters, key to the continued good health and welfare of the hundreds of thousands of residents directly affected. ▼

## **States of Preparedness**

**By Adam McLaughlin**

State Homeland News

### **Virginia**

#### ***Introduces Terrorism-Related Bulletin Board on State Police Website***

The Virginia State Police have created the Virginia Critical Information Shared System (VCISS), a bulletin board within the State Police Website that

provides the user with information on terrorism-related topics such as awareness, security measures, and preparedness tips. The intent is to provide Virginia's citizens with information that could help the state's law-enforcement community protect them better.

"The public are the eyes and ears that provide law-enforcement agencies with leads," said Lt. Steve Lambert, who oversees the VCISS for the state police. Lambert said that the bulletin-board concept was created from lessons learned during the September 11 terrorist attacks and other events – more specifically, the ability of law-enforcement agencies to share information in a structured fashion for enhanced situational awareness.

Most of the information available from the VCISS requires access clearance. The state police have created a six-tiered access-control system that ranges from the governor's office at tier one, with access to the most sensitive intelligence, to the general public at tier six. All levels except tier six require a user ID and password.

### **Kentucky**

#### ***Becomes First State to Complete NIMS Assessment Tool***

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has informed the Kentucky Office of Homeland Security that Kentucky was the first state in the nation to complete the National Incident Management System (NIMS) Capability Assessment Support Tool, or NIMCAST. The NIMCAST is a web-based self-assessment tool designed to help state, local, and tribal organizations and jurisdictions determine their ability to effectively prepare for, prevent, respond to, and/or recover from domestic incidents, regardless of their cause, size, or complexity. Completion of the NIMCAST (in early August) was the first step in the NIMS compliance process, which is one of the prerequisites that all fifty states will have to meet, starting in fiscal year 2007, in order to be eligible to receive most federal preparedness funding.

*Continued on the Next Page*

“Our office understands the tremendous efforts so many local agencies and officials made to meet this NIMS compliance benchmark,” said Major Alecia Webb-Eddington, interim director of the Kentucky Office of Homeland Security. “I want ... to encourage all of the commonwealth’s local officials, responders, care providers, and support agencies to continue to meet all NIMS compliance requirements to ensure Kentucky remains at the forefront of this important homeland security initiative.”

Emergency personnel representing over 2,280 local agencies throughout Kentucky’s 120 counties were instrumental in conducting the self-assessment, officials said. During the past several months, the Kentucky Office of Homeland Security, including Kentucky’s 15 Area Development Districts and the Kentucky Division of Emergency Management, has partnered with various federal and other agencies to complete the NIMCAST.

#### **Missouri**

##### ***Conducts a Terrorist Attack Response Exercise***

The Kansas City (Mo.) Office of Emergency Management has successfully completed a simulation exercise in the city’s Emergency Operations Center (EOC) to test the ability of city and emergency management officials to handle multiple terrorist attacks occurring almost simultaneously. Emergency and Disaster Management Teams from St. Louis and Jefferson City also participated in the exercise, which simulated the detonation in Kauffman Stadium of an explosive device packed with radioactive material.

The exercise, carried out on 11 August, also simulated several explosions in St. Louis, and the crash of a truck carrying toxic chemicals on Interstate 70 just east of downtown Kansas City.

The exercise was designed to test communications, information sharing, resource management, and effective planning in the coordination of response efforts. One of the first lessons participants learned was the limitation of the EOC’s virtual tracking system, which is designed to allow users to track multiple events, and response activities. “We found

that events were happening so hard and furious, due to the complexity of the scenario, that the system had a difficult time tracking everything,” said D.A. Christian, Kansas City’s director of emergency management. ▼

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