



**THIRD ANNUAL USAWC RESERVE COMPONENT WORKSHOP**

**Responding to the Unthinkable**



*Biological Event*



*Radiological Dispersal  
Device Event*



*Nuclear Detonation  
Event*

***The Role(s) of the Military***

*By LTC Jeffery McNary*

**BACKGROUND**

The Third Annual USAWC Reserve Component Workshop was held 28 – 30 September 2004 at the Collins Center, Carlisle Barracks Pennsylvania. There were 106 participants from local, state, and federal civilian agencies as well as a number of leaders from the Active and Reserve (Army National Guard and the Army Reserve) military components.

This workshop series, initiated to explore issues regarding the Army's Reserve Components and their role in National Security as portrayed in Army wargames and exercises, focused on responding to a Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, or High-yield Explosive (CBRNE) attack on the Homeland. Previous workshops<sup>2</sup> framed general issues of strategic concern for the Army National Guard and the Army Reserve while also examining how well those issues had or had not been represented in key Army simulation exercises. This year's workshop represented a narrowing of focus to cover a specific area of significant concern – the possibility of “the unthinkable” happening within the next few years, but at the same time it also widened the scope by focusing on an issue that involves the Reserve Components but is not Reserve Component centric.

For many of the world's security specialists it is no longer a question of if, but only when, terrorists will successfully strike an internal American target with a weapon of mass destruction. Accordingly, the purpose of the workshop was to review the possible roles of Army Active Component and Reserve Component forces – acting along with local, state, and federal responders from critical agencies throughout government – to react following CBRNE attacks inside the United States of America. Participants were tasked to consider the potential expansion of the military's role in the National Response Plan and to look for planning, policy, and procedural improvements that would enhance and synchronize CBRNE responses.

As with all the workshops in this series, a primary purpose always remains to identify key Reserve Component issues and areas of concern and ensure their valid portrayal in the future in Department of Defense (DOD) senior service school classrooms, wargames or exercises, and in future Reserve Component workshops.

**WORKSHOP CONTENT**

The workshop was conducted over the course of three days. Presentations by subject matter experts on the first day provided information and critical insights regarding effects of and potential responses to Nuclear, Dirty Bomb, or Biological attack. Additionally, the participants received a presentation on the updated National Response Plan (which was still in draft) and a presentation addressing the command and control structures utilized for force protection during the Republican National Convention

<sup>1</sup> In collaboration with Professor James Kievit, Professor Michael Pasquarett, LTC John Tanzi, and Professor Bert Tussing.

<sup>2</sup> “Portraying the Army Reserve Components in Army Wargames and Exercises,” 2002; “Rebalancing the Force: Weighing the Roles of the Components,” 2003.

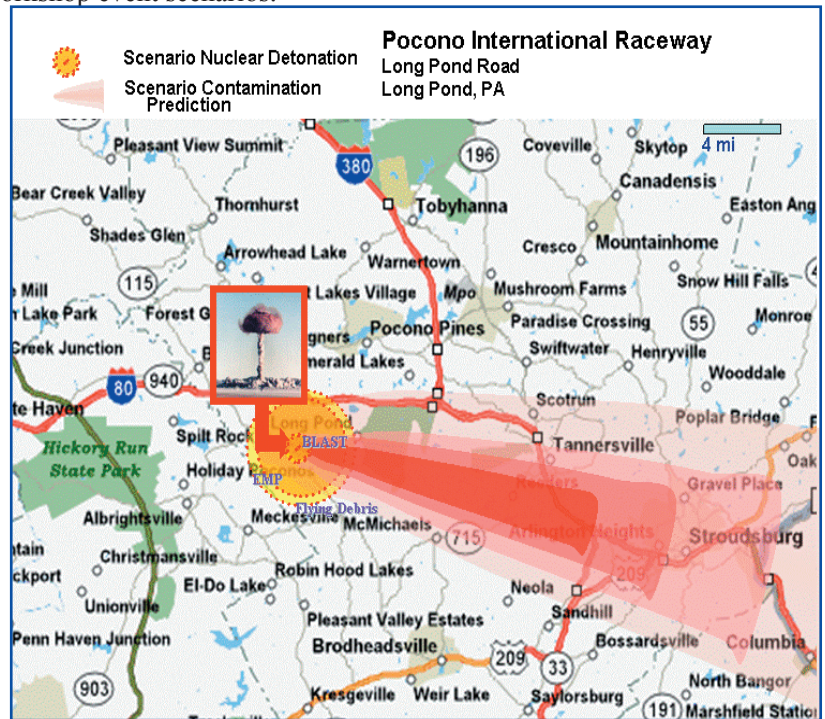
and the 30th G8 summit. Together, all these briefings set the stage for the small group breakout sessions examining each particular event. The three individual breakout groups each had a different scenario (nuclear attack, dirty bomb attack, or biological event) and the direction to each group was to analyze the consequence management issues dealing with that particular event.

The third day of the workshop was devoted to back briefs to a blue ribbon panel by each of the breakout groups. Each briefing covered observations and insights gained during breakout discussions and recommendations for further exploration.

The following is a brief description of each of the workshop event scenarios:

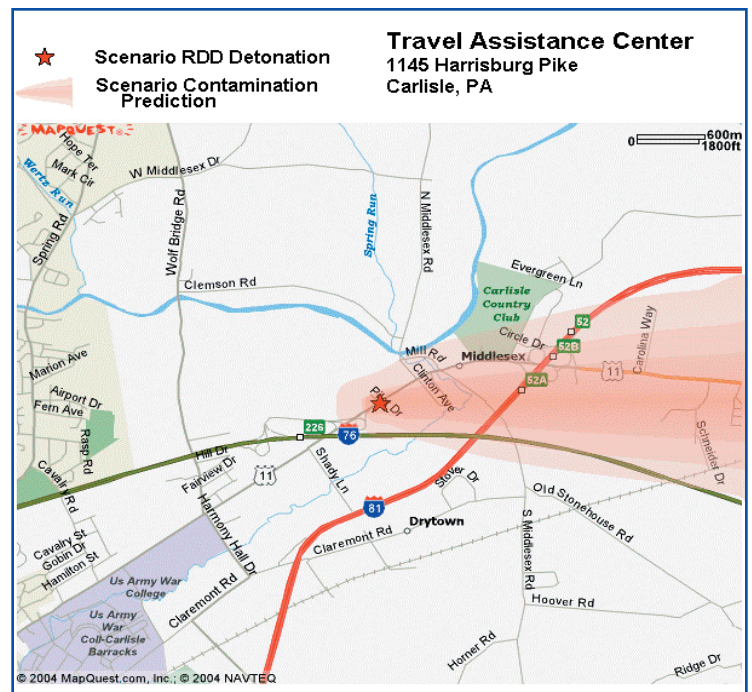
### ***The Nuclear Detonation Scenario***

The nuclear weapon attack scenario portrayed terrorists detonating an approximately 10KT nuclear device concealed in a recreational vehicle parked near the grandstands during a major NASCAR event at the Pocono International Raceway located in Monroe County Pennsylvania. More than 100,000 people were in the immediate vicinity of the detonation, many of them transients from out-of-state. Blast and heat immediately destroyed or severely damaged most structures within 1000 meters of the detonation. An electromagnetic pulse damaged many electronic devices within about 5 kilometers (~3 miles). Injuries from flying debris occurred out to 6 kilometers (~3.7 miles). Temporary flash-blindness contributed to innumerable traffic accidents on nearby highways, including multi-vehicle pile-ups in both directions on nearby Interstate-80. Radioactive fallout drifting east-southeast directly threatened the Stroudsburg, PA area (pop. approx. 30,000), and potentially areas in New Jersey as far as Newark.



### ***The Radiological Dispersal Device Scenario***

The radiological dispersal device (RDD) scenario portrayed detonation of a large-scale “dirty bomb”<sup>3</sup> at a prominent central Pennsylvania Travel Assistance Center (truck stop) between Harrisburg and Carlisle near the entrance to the Pennsylvania Turnpike (Interstate Highway 76) and approximately one mile from Interstate Highway 81. The RDD was concealed in a rental truck strategically parked among tanker trucks carrying chemicals and fuel. Over two hundred people were either in the building closest to the blast, which included a fast-food restaurant, or were in the parking lot when the blast occurred. The explosion and fire left a crater over thirty feet wide within a larger 200-foot combined RDD/tanker blast radius, and gave an initial impression that the destruction was caused by a tanker accident. Hazardous radioactive materials forced the closure of a major commercial transportation nexus for the Northeastern United States servicing an estimated 20,000 tractor-trailers weekly and eventually, carried by eight mph winds, sections of Interstate Highways 76 and 81, U.S. Highway 11, and several other large commercial freight company distribution terminals and transportation warehousing and support structures nearby. Overall, the potentially affected area had approximately a half million residents, many of whom still recalled the Three Mile Island nuclear reactor incident of March 28, 1979.



### ***The Biological Event Scenario***

The biological event scenario consisted of a pandemic influenza outbreak that was transmitted to residents of Johnstown, Penn-

<sup>3</sup> In this particular case 100 kilograms of C-4 plastic explosive that dispersed 50 grams of cesium Cs-137, a highly radioactive beta emitter, and a small element of the even more hazardous plutonium Pu-239 alpha radiator.

sylvania, by a young boy who acquired a pandemic virus during a family vacation in Japan. The outbreak originated in a small village in southern China and two months later further outbreaks began to appear in Hong Kong, Singapore, South Korea, and Japan. The Center for Disease Control reported the virus had been isolated from ill airline passengers arriving in four major US cities from Hong Kong and Tokyo. Within weeks, focal outbreaks were reported throughout the United States, as rates of absenteeism in schools and businesses began to rise. Hospitals became overwhelmed and short-staffed as staff members became ill. Institutions such as schools and workplaces closed because a large percentage of students and employees fell sick. A large array of essential services (fire, sanitation, electricity, water treatment, and other general services) was similarly affected.

## INSIGHTS

The workshop groups worked independently to identify what they believed to be issues and recommendations. After analysis of the three individual breakout group results, the following represent common issues, recommendations, findings, and conclusions which were identified:

1. In each scenario, “First Responders” (local Fire, Hazmat, Emergency Medical, Law Enforcement), Municipal & County Emergency Management Centers, State & Federal Law Enforcement, State and Federal Emergency Management Agencies, the Department Of Energy, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), the Emergency Support Functions lead agencies, and private contractors were all key entities with which the military would have to interact.

- State and local governments have only restricted access to federal resources prior to an actual event, as well as only a limited ability to participate in federal contingency planning efforts prior to events. Developing an extensive network of Memorandums of Understanding among and across the various organizations is encouraged as one means to ameliorate these deficiencies.
- Improving data collection from and dissemination among the multiple participating organizations may require the creation of a DOD and DHS common-operating picture system for Homeland Security/Homeland Defense.
- Greater common standards for decision tools and aids between DOD and local/state/federal civilian agencies must be developed to avoid both policy and legal issues that otherwise will have to be resolved by incident commanders at the time of the incident [or, even worse, by courts after the fact].

2. Under many circumstances any individual CBRNE attack may overwhelm local, state, and regional emergency response organizations.<sup>4</sup>

- Unless exceptionally well-trained, many of the initial responders could become victims themselves.
- Mass casualties will overload local and state capabilities; federal assets cannot deploy within the time window to provide effective aid. Possible mitigating measures include triage, self-aid education, and identifying a medical Quick Reaction Force.

3. Particularly in the case of either a nuclear or a successful biological attack, federal agencies can be anticipated to aggressively respond to the event.<sup>5</sup>

- The capabilities of the organizations responding and various state laws and regulations will significantly influence the ability to provide effective assistance. Most likely, however, a federal emergency disaster order will be issued quickly to eliminate many of the legal constraints.
- There may be a potentially unrealistic expectation on the part of the American public of what the government should be able to do to respond. This demands proactive public affairs activities to manage expectations during the event and perhaps a broad-based pre-attack educational campaign and/or civil defense program.
- Public fear will need to be dealt with through numerous media sources. It is absolutely essential that a “credible source” person be identified early to “be seen” and heard by the public. This can go a long way in helping to alleviate fears and get the message out as quickly as possible. The truly credible source may not be a public affairs person routinely used for daily events but rather someone well known and respected by the community for their expertise with the type of issues these incidents involve or, perhaps more importantly, simply for their integrity.

4. The U.S. military needs a broad spectrum of capabilities and training to support local and state officials in protecting the Nation’s citizens.

- The Reserve Components force mix is rather cumbersome for domestic support and will need to be redesigned if it is to meet warfighting, Homeland Defense, and Combat Service Support missions.

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<sup>4</sup>This workshop was not designed to directly consider the circumstance of multiple simultaneous or near-simultaneous attacks, although many participants raised implications arising from that potential situation at different points during the workshop. CSL is considering whether to hold another workshop to examine a multiple CBRNE attack scenario, either within a single state or in multiple states.

<sup>5</sup>Not only due to the greater potential for material destruction, but also because of the immediate nation-wide public affairs/psychological impacts of these particular forms of attack.

- Shortage of hospital bed spaces may lead to the tasking of DOD hospital resources to offset the shortfall. The DOD will need to be part of the plan to effectively allocate scarce hospital-based resources among incoming patients.
  - Every consequence management mission identified led to concerns relating to the logistics and medical support required for a long-term, complicated response.
5. A key learning point for state and federal players is that they will almost always be in support to the local authorities, who may or may not want or know how to use a formal incident command system and/or utilize a unified command approach for command and control.
- For the military responders, a single, dual-hatted<sup>6</sup> command and control (C2) structure exercising Joint Task Force C2 over Title 10 forces and tactical control (TACON) and/or coordinating authority over Title 32 and State Active Duty forces is recommended.
  - Soldiers, regardless of status, must have the right training and equipment to respond to homeland attacks and work with multiple federal, state, and local governmental jurisdictions.
6. Many current exercises do not currently stress participants adequately, since they do not replicate the potential duration of the real requirement for sustaining force commitment and response.

## CONCLUSIONS

The threat of a CBRNE weapon attack within the borders of the United States requires rethinking many aspects of defending the homeland. Any attack with a CBRNE device will lead to devastating political, economic, and psychological damage. Participants overwhelmingly recommended further exploration of the associated issues and that all levels of responders continue to be included in future workshops.

The Center for Strategic Leadership intends to take the relevant findings and recommendations and incorporate them into the simulation exercises conducted by the Center.

All of DOD's Senior Service Schools should enhance their treatment of CBRNE consequence management within their curricula and wargames. Both private and governmental Senior Leader Education Programs must include both academic and greater experiential learning opportunities in this topic area. The Center for Strategic Leadership is prepared to assist in those endeavors as appropriate.

The degree to which today's and tomorrow's leaders are educated and trained on this new reality, and public and private sector vigilance and preparation are enhanced, will significantly impact the safety and security of our Nation's future generations.

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<sup>6</sup>Such as that used for the Republican National Convention and the 30th G8 Summit.

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In addition to this paper, an individual issue paper has been written addressing each individual scenario of the workshop in slightly greater detail. These may be found on the USAWC/CSL web site at <http://www.carlisle.army.mil/usacsl/IPapers.asp>.

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The views expressed in this report are those of the participants and do not necessarily reflect official policy or position of the United States Army War College, the Department of the Army, the Department of Defense, or any other Department or Agency within the U.S. Government. Further, these views do not reflect uniform agreement among exercise participants. This report is cleared for public release; distribution is unlimited.

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RESERVE COMPONENT  
WORKSHOP:  
THE ROLE(S) OF THE  
MILITARY**

OFFICIAL BUSINESS

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