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THE WHITE HOUSE
PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH

CHAPTER SIX: TRANSFORMING NATIONAL PREPAREDNESS

Hurricane Katrina was an extraordinary storm that caused destruction on a scale never before seen from a natural disaster in the United States. The continuing Federal response—the largest disaster relief and recovery effort in our Nation's history—likewise has been unprecedented and extraordinary. But what we owe the people of the Gulf Coast, and all Americans, is the best possible response.

We must expect more catastrophes like Hurricane Katrina—and possibly even worse. In fact, we will have compounded the tragedy if we fail to learn the lessons—good and bad—it has taught us and strengthen our system of preparedness and response. We cannot undo the mistakes of the past, but there is much we can do to learn from them and to be better prepared for the future. This is our duty.

The preceding chapter outlined in detail fourteen of the seventeen specific lessons the Federal government has learned from our response to Hurricane Katrina; the remaining three will be discussed more fully here. These seventeen lessons, and the 125 recommendations that flow from them, represent specific challenges for corrective action. But we also recognize that to overcome these challenges and fully accomplish the intent of the attendant recommendations, we require a *transformation* of our homeland security architecture.

In the aftermath of another American catastrophe—the terrorist attacks of September 11—we transformed our government architecture, policies, and strategies in a comprehensive effort to defeat terrorism and better protect and defend the homeland. With the creation of the Department of Homeland Security, the post of Director of National Intelligence, the passage of the USA PATRIOT Act, and the codification of both the National Counterterrorism Center and the National Counterproliferation Center, we have undertaken the most extensive reorganization of the Federal government since 1947¹. We have created top-level policy guidance through the *National Security Strategy*, the *National Strategy for Homeland Security* and the *National Strategy for Combating Terrorism*, all of which identify strategic objectives to secure the United States, its citizens and interests from terrorist attacks². Most important, we have pursued our policies and objectives through concrete action. In concert with our coalition partners, we have been on the offense, waging an unremitting campaign of direct and continuous action against our terrorist enemies and the deadly scourge of terror and intimidation more broadly. These actions, combined with an array of defensive measures at home and abroad, have enhanced the safety and security of the American people.

Preparedness is inextricably intertwined with our national security, counterterrorism, and homeland security strategies. As discussed throughout this report, we have taken essential steps over the past five years—through plans, policies, and guidelines such as the *National Response Plan*, the *National Incident Management System*, the *Interim National Infrastructure Protection Plan*, and the *Interim National Preparedness Goal*—to strengthen our ability to prepare for, protect against, respond to, and recover from the natural and man-made disasters that will occur.³

But we must go further. We must continue to build upon the foundation of national and homeland security we have established since 9/11 to improve our preparedness capabilities. Our response to Hurricane Katrina demonstrated the imperative to integrate and synchronize our policies, strategies, and plans—among all Federal, State, local, private sector, and community efforts and across all partners in the professions of prevention, protection, response, and recovery—into a unified system for homeland security. This unifying system will ensure *National Preparedness*.

National Preparedness involves a continuous cycle of activity to develop the elements (e.g., plans, procedures, policies, training, and equipment) necessary to maximize the capability to prevent, protect against, respond to, and recover from domestic incidents, especially major events that require coordination among an appropriate combination of Federal, State, local, tribal, private sector, and non-governmental entities, in order to minimize the impact on lives, property, and the economy.

—Interim National Preparedness Goal, March 2005⁴

Today there is a national consensus that we must be better prepared to respond to events like Hurricane Katrina. While we have constructed a system that effectively handles the demands of routine, limited natural and man-made disasters, our system clearly has structural flaws for addressing catastrophic incidents. But we as a Nation—Federal, State, and local governments; the private sector; as well as communities and individual citizens—have not developed

a shared vision of or commitment to *preparedness*: what we must do to prevent (when possible), protect against, respond to, and recover from the next catastrophe. Without a shared vision that is acted upon by all levels of our Nation and encompasses the full range of our preparedness and response capabilities, we will not achieve a truly transformational *national* state of preparedness.

There are two immediate priorities for this transformation:

1. Define and implement a comprehensive National Preparedness System; and
2. Foster a new, robust Culture of Preparedness.

A NATIONAL PREPAREDNESS SYSTEM

Shortfalls in the Federal response to Hurricane Katrina highlight that our current homeland security architecture—to include policies, authorities, plans, doctrine, operational concepts, and resources at the Federal, State, local, private sector, and community levels—must be strengthened and transformed. At the most fundamental level, the current system fails to define Federal responsibility for national preparedness in catastrophic events. Nor does it establish clear, comprehensive goals along with an integrated means to measure their progress and achievement. Instead, the United States currently has guidelines and individual plans, across multiple agencies and levels of government that do not yet constitute an *integrated* national system that ensures unity of effort.⁵

In addition, as described in the narrative section of this report, the response to Hurricane Katrina demonstrated that our current system is too reactive in orientation. Our decades-old system, built on the precepts of federalism, has been based on a model whereby local and State governments wait to reach their limits and exhaust their resources before requesting Federal assistance. Federal agencies could and did take steps to prepare to extend support and assistance, but tended to provide little without a prior and specific request. In other words, the system was biased toward requests and the concept of “pull” rather than toward anticipatory actions and the proactive “push” of Federal resources.

While this approach has worked well in the majority of disasters and emergencies, catastrophic events like Hurricane Katrina are a different matter. The current homeland security environment—with the continuing threat of mass casualty terrorism and the constant risk of natural disasters—now demands that the Federal government actively prepare and encourage the Nation as a whole to plan, equip, train, and cooperate for all types of future emergencies, including the most catastrophic.

A useful model for our approach to homeland security is the Nation’s approach to *national security*. Over the past six decades, we have created a highly successful national security system. This system is built on deliberate planning that assesses threats and risks, develops policies and strategies to manage them, identifies specific missions and supporting tasks, and matches the forces or capabilities to execute them. Operationally organized, it stresses the importance of unity of command from the President down to the commander in the field.

Perhaps most important, the national security system emphasizes feedback and periodic reassessment. Programs and forces are assessed for readiness and the degree to which they support their assigned missions and strategies on a continuing basis. Top level decision-makers periodically revisit their assessments of threats and risks, review their strategies and guidance, and revise their missions, plans, and budgets accordingly.⁶

This national security system was not created overnight. It has taken almost sixty years to build and refine. Beginning with the National Security Act of 1947-mandated creation of the Department of Defense, the Central Intelligence Agency, and the National Security Council (NSC), this system has evolved substantially through the years.⁷ It has taken time to create a strong NSC that has integrated interagency policies and efforts. Similarly, it took decades to build first the Office of the Secretary of Defense and then the Joint Staff as the central management elements for the Department of Defense. We did not accomplish the complete intent of the 1947 reforms for national security system until Congress passed the *Goldwater-Nichols* defense reorganization legislation in 1986, and the Federal government put those reforms in place in following years.⁸

The lessons of the national security system’s evolution will help us to transform our five-year old homeland security system. Of course, homeland security demands are complex. While responsibility for national security rests with the Federal government working with its international partners, the precepts of federalism make every level of government and region of the country both a contributor to, and responsible for, homeland security.

There are significant institutional and intergovernmental challenges to information and resource sharing as well as operational cooperation. These barriers stem from a multitude of factors—different cultures, lack of communication between departments and agencies, and varying procedures and working patterns among departments and agencies. Equally problematic, there is uneven coordination in pre-incident planning among State and local governments. For example, our States and territories developed fifty-six unique homeland security strategies, as have fifty high-threat, high-density urban areas.⁹ Although each State and territory certainly confronts unique challenges, without coordination this planning approach makes the identification of common or national solutions difficult. Furthermore, our current approach to response planning does not sufficiently acknowledge how adjoining communities and regions can and do support each other. For example, there is wide disparity in emergency

response capabilities across the country's many local jurisdictions. Yet we currently lack the means to assess and track what these disparities are and, consequently, how we must plan to account for them in a crisis.

The remainder of this section describes the key elements of the National Preparedness System. These include the guiding vision for preparedness as well as clarification of the Federal government's central role in organizing the national efforts of our homeland security partners. The section also explains the essential importance of building operational capabilities in the Federal government by: a) Strengthening the operational management capacity of the Department of Homeland Security and strengthening its field elements; b) Reinforcing the DHS role as incident manager for the Federal response; and c) Strengthening the response capabilities of other departments and agencies in the Federal government. This section also highlights the essential roles for training, education, and exercises as well as the importance of feedback—through readiness assessment and lessons learned—and processes for undertaking corrective actions. The section concludes with a discussion of the essential role of Congress in supporting the National Preparedness System and related transformation.

A Preparedness Vision

A National Preparedness System must begin with a common vision for preparedness—what end-state are we seeking to achieve and how do we plan to get there? In Homeland Security Presidential Directive 8 (HSPD-8), the President called for the creation of a comprehensive national preparedness system, starting with a “national domestic all-hazards preparedness goal.”¹⁰ This Goal was to outline key preparedness priorities, objectives, targets, and desired outcomes. In response to HSPD-8, DHS has developed an *Interim National Preparedness Goal* that reflects the Department's progress to date to develop each of those elements in coordination with other entities.¹¹ It will remain in effect until superseded by the final National Preparedness Goal, which awaits completion.

We must now translate this Goal into a robust preparedness system that includes integrated plans, procedures, policies, training, and capabilities at all levels of government. The System must also incorporate the private sector, non-governmental organizations, faith-based groups, and communities, including individual citizens. The desired end-state of our National Preparedness System must be to achieve and sustain risk-based target levels of capability to prevent, protect against, respond to, and recover from major events in order to minimize the impact on lives, property, and the economy.

The *Homeland Security Strategy* and HSPD-8 provide the framework for the National Preparedness System. From this guidance comes the requirement for risk-based capabilities at the Federal, State and local levels that must enable the Nation to respond to a range of disasters—both man-made and natural. The required capabilities determine readiness targets for organizations at all levels. A unified effort from all homeland security stakeholders to commit the requisite resources, training, and exercising must support these targets and asset requirements.

Our National Preparedness System must also have appropriate feedback and assessment mechanisms to ensure that progress is made and that our goals are being realized. As called for in the *Interim National Preparedness Goal*, we must establish a readiness baseline for capabilities at the Federal, State, and local levels. This baseline should include an inventory of our preparedness assets as well as a metrics-based assessment of current capabilities. Thereafter, we must assess the gap between our present and target levels of capability. Over time, we must track our progress in closing these gaps.

Finally, the National Preparedness System must emphasize preparedness for *all hazards*. Most of the capabilities necessary for responding to natural disasters are also vital for responding to terrorist incidents. Yet for a variety of reasons, much of the Federal government, Congress, and the Nation at large have continued to think about terrorism and natural disasters as if they are competing priorities rather than two elements of the larger homeland security challenge. The lessons of 9/11 and Hurricane Katrina are that we cannot choose one or the other type of disaster. We must be prepared for all hazards.

The Federal Government's Role in the “National” System

Building upon the President's *Homeland Security Strategy*, Homeland Security Presidential Directives, and the *Interim National Preparedness Goal*, the Federal government must clearly articulate national preparedness goals and objectives; it must create the infrastructure—through the definition of common strategies and interoperable capabilities—for ensuring unity of effort; and it must manage the system for measuring effectiveness and assessing preparedness at all levels of government. Put another way, the Federal government must develop common doctrine and ensure alignment of preparedness plans, budgets, grants, training, exercises, and equipment.

While each State will have its own strategy and a multitude of local capabilities to meet the needs of its citizens, the Federal government—through the Department of Homeland Security—must work with State, local, and regional entities to develop strategies and plans that define how each State manages disasters within their borders as well as regionally, beginning at the local level. DHS must also identify how State, local, regional, and private-sector preparedness activities support the national strategy.

Transformation Within the Federal Government: Building Operational Capability

The creation of an effective National Preparedness System will require the Federal government to transform the way it does business. The most important objective of this Federal transformation must be to build and integrate *operational capability*. Each Federal department or agency with homeland security responsibilities needs operational

capability—or the capacity to get things done—to translate executive management direction promptly into results on the ground. It includes the personnel to make and communicate decisions; organizational structures that are assigned, trained, and exercised for their missions; sufficient physical resources; and the command, control, and communication channels to make, monitor, and communicate decisions.

As described in the preceding narrative, the response to Hurricane Katrina required that the Federal government both support State and local efforts while conducting response operations in the field, in addition to making policy or implementing programs. With the exceptions of the Department of Defense and the Coast Guard—two organizations with considerable operational capabilities—the Federal government was at times slow and ineffective in responding to the massive operational demands of the catastrophe.

These shortfalls were not due to the absence of top level plans such as the *National Response Plan* and the *National Incident Management System*. Rather, the problem is that these plans lack clarity on key aspects and have operational gaps, as discussed in previous chapters, and have not been effectively integrated and translated into action. Prior training, exercising, and equipping proved inadequate to the task of effectively responding to Hurricane Katrina. There is a difference between a plan (saying “this is what we need to do”) and a trained, resourced set of defined missions (saying “this is what we are going to do, and this is how we are going to organize, train, exercise, and equip to do it”). For any plan to work, it must first be broken down into its component parts. Next, the plan’s requirements should be matched to the human and physical assets of each responsible department, agency, or organization.

The imperative, therefore, is to organize coherent, proactive management of responses to catastrophic events. Virtually all elements of the Federal government must be operational—to respond to catastrophic events with unified effort. There are three principal requirements to achieve this transformational goal:

1. Strengthening DHS institutions to manage the Federal response as well as enhancing DHS regional and field elements.
2. Reinforcing the Secretary of Homeland Security’s position as the President’s manager of the Federal response; and
3. Strengthening the response capabilities—management and field resources—of other Federal departments and agencies.

The Department of Homeland Security

Since the Department was created in January 2003, the management and personnel of the Department of Homeland Security have undertaken their responsibilities with energy and professionalism. Their courage and commitment to their mission have improved the security of all Americans.

But the Federal response to Hurricane Katrina demonstrated that the energy and professionalism of DHS personnel was not enough to support the Department’s role as the manager of the Federal response. In particular, DHS lacked both the requisite headquarters management institutions and sufficient field capabilities to organize a fully successful Federal response effort. Within the Department, therefore, it is essential to strengthen the DHS headquarters elements to *direct* the Federal response while also providing appropriate resources to DHS field elements so that they can make an impact on the ground.

In order to strengthen DHS’s operational management capabilities, we must structure the Department’s headquarters elements to support the Secretary’s incident management responsibilities. First and most important, Federal government response organizations must be co-located and strengthened to manage catastrophes in a new *National Operations Center (NOC)*. The mission of the NOC must be to coordinate and integrate the national response and provide a common operating picture for the entire Federal government. This interagency center should ensure National-level coordination of Federal, State, and local response to major domestic incidents. It must combine and co-locate the situational awareness mission of the Homeland Security Operations Center (HSOC), the operational mission of the National Response Coordination Center (NRCC), and the strategic role currently assigned to the Interagency Incident Management Group (IIMG). During an incident, all department and agency command centers, as well as the Joint Field Office (JFO) at the disaster site, must provide information to the NOC, which develops a National common operating picture capable of being exported in real time to other Federal operations centers.

The NOC must be staffed by an experienced, well-trained, and resourced cadre of personnel who are prepared to provide expert strategic and operational management of Federal responses to catastrophic incidents. For example, these personnel must include logistical experts with the management tools to track moving resources anywhere across the Nation and ensure timely delivery of aid to affected areas. This staff must also include operations experts who understand how to combine existing resources into effective response packages for any scenario. In addition to a robust permanent staff, the NOC must include a “battle roster” of personnel who will surge to expand and sustain the NOC’s capacity during a crisis.

The DHS headquarters must also possess a robust capability for deliberate operational planning. Rather than waiting for the next disaster, DHS planners must apply lessons learned as well as develop detailed operational plans that anticipate the requirements of future responses and what capabilities can be matched to them in what timeframe. Using these operational plans and capability inventories as baseline data, the Headquarters planning staff can

conduct national readiness assessments, highlighting priorities for subsequent preparedness investments, training, and exercising.

Below the headquarters level within DHS, we must build up the Department's regional structures. As noted above, the integration of State and local strategies and capabilities on a regional basis is a homeland security priority. Homeland security regional offices should be the means to foster State, local and private sector integration. Furthermore, DHS regional structures are ideally positioned to pre-identify, organize, train, and exercise future Principal Federal Officials and Joint Field Office staffs. Each DHS regional organization should possess the capacity to establish a self-sufficient, initial JFO on short notice anywhere in its region.

More broadly, the Department of Homeland Security must possess field personnel with the necessary resources, training, and national support. As a start, we must improve and emphasize plans that stress a proactive DHS role—in particular, the *Catastrophic Incident Annex* and *Catastrophic Incident Supplement* of the *NRP*. But DHS must also have available operational funds so that it can “lean forward” in future crises, to take anticipatory actions without budgetary concern or risk of subsequent criticism for a false alarm. In the event of a surprise contingency, battlefield commanders should not have to wait for the release of funds to execute their pre-assigned missions. The same flexibility should be afforded to our Federal homeland security responders.¹²

Managing the Interagency Process in Homeland Security Response

In order to create robust homeland security response capabilities, we must also transform our Federal interagency processes. Most important, we must eliminate the extraordinary red tape and resulting delays in the process of requests for assistance in response efforts. Too often during the Hurricane Katrina response we found that the Federal government did not effectively use assets at the ready because the necessary requests were being “coordinated” somewhere in the bureaucracy. The solution is to enshrine in the Federal government one of the central tenets of the *National Incident Management System*—Unified Command. We must transform our approach for catastrophic incidents from one of bureaucratic *coordination* to proactive unified command that creates true unity of effort. As set forth in *NIMS*, “In a [Unified Command] structure, the individuals designated by their jurisdictional authorities . . . must jointly determine objectives, strategies, plans, and priorities and work together to execute integrated incident operations and maximize the use of assigned resources.”¹³

Advantages of Using Unified Command¹³

- A single set of objectives is developed for the entire incident.
- A collective approach is used to develop strategies to achieve incident objectives.
- Information flow and coordination is improved between all jurisdictions and agencies involved in the incident
- All agencies with responsibility for the incident have an understanding of joint priorities and restrictions.
- No agency's legal authorities will be compromised or neglected.
- The combined efforts of all agencies are optimized as they perform their respective assignments under a single Incident Action Plan.

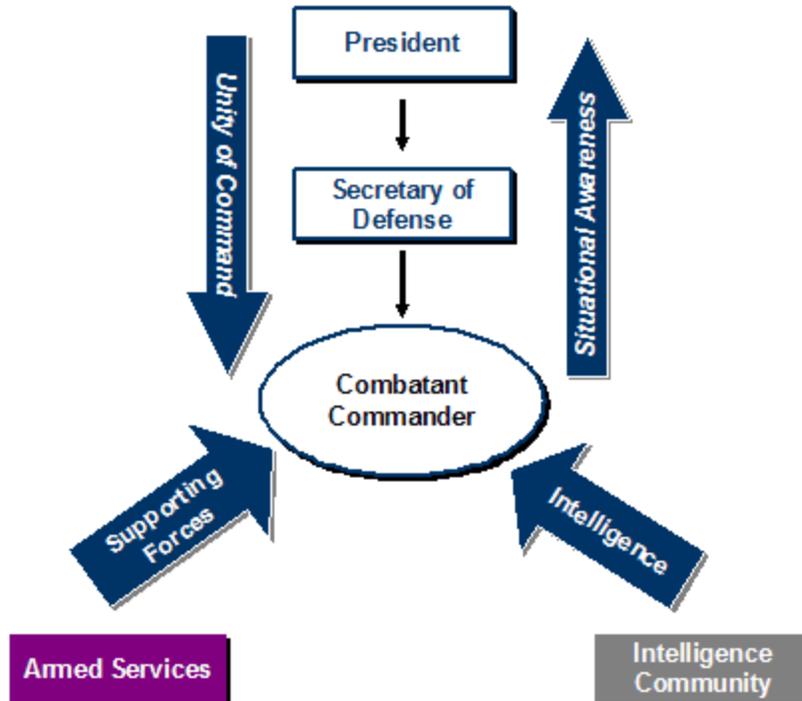
At the Federal level, the most urgent step in creating unity of effort will be to reinforce the Secretary of Homeland Security as the Federal government's preparedness and incident manager. In order to create unity of effort at the Federal level, the Department should manage and orchestrate the specialized efforts of other Federal departments and agencies within their core competencies. Although DHS by Presidential directive has this mission,¹⁴ its internal structures and relationships across the Federal government do not position it to fully succeed. The current arrangements are an awkward mix of the traditional, FEMA-led, approach to interagency coordination and the Homeland Security Act's creation of a powerful Department of Homeland Security.

One model for the command and control structure for the Federal response in the new National Preparedness System is our successful defense and national security statutory framework. In that framework, there is a clear line of authority that stretches from the President, through the Secretary of Defense, to the Combatant Commander in the field. When a contingency arises, the Combatant Commander in that region executes the missions assigned by the Secretary of Defense and the President. Although the Combatant Commander might not “own” or control forces on a day-to-day basis, during a military operation he controls all military forces in his theater: he exercises the command authority and has access to resources needed to affect outcomes on the ground.

Figure 6.1 portrays the structure for command and control of defense operations. Unity of command is established in a chain of command from the President through the Secretary of Defense to the Combatant Commander. The Combatant Commander possesses operational control over forces and resources provided by the armed services. The Intelligence Community additionally provides essential information—warning and situational awareness—to the commander in the field. The system makes a clear distinction between operations—in which the Combatant

Commander is the center of activity—and the provision of operational resources. In the latter case, the Armed Services are responsible for the training and equipping of forces.

Figure 6.1: Command and Control of Defense Operations



The model somewhat parallels the original conception of the Federal homeland security response. In particular, the President directs the Secretary of Homeland Security, who coordinates interagency actions at the senior level while supervising the field commander for the Federal response—the Principal Federal Official (PFO). The PFO, in turn, is supported with resources provided by DHS and other interagency departments and agencies.

As described in HSPD-5, Cabinet members are to support the Secretary of Homeland Security as the President's incident manager directing and coordinating the Federal response.¹⁵ At the PFO level, this can be accomplished by ensuring that the Federal Coordinating Officer (FCO)—who possesses authority over resources—works for the PFO.¹⁶

However, the comparison between the homeland security and defense operations models breaks down in two significant ways. First, the Federal commander only manages *Federal* resources in homeland security. In almost every circumstance, State and local governments maintain operational control over their own resources. Second, the Secretary of Homeland Security and the PFO must request Federal assets from other departments and agencies; they do not command the resources of other departments and agencies. HSPD-5 makes clear that one Cabinet member cannot alter or impede the ability to carry out the authorities of Federal departments and agencies to perform their responsibilities under law.¹⁷ Rather, HSPD-5 anticipates that future events will necessarily involve a joint approach given that several departments and agencies have distinct statutory authorities (e.g., the Attorney General for criminal investigation of terrorist acts, the Secretary of Defense for command over our military forces, and so forth).

In this vein, we must similarly transform the existing system of Emergency Support Functions (ESFs). A vestige of the 1992 *Federal Response Plan*,¹⁸ the precursor to the NRP, these capability-specific coordination mechanisms, at a minimum, must be reconciled to the NIMS as well as responsive to the orders of the Principal Federal Official. More fundamentally, we must examine whether we should reorganize and, in some cases, redefine the ESF structures, while building DHS command and control mechanisms.¹⁹

These interagency management changes recognize that Federal response to catastrophic events—potential or actual—must be both efficient and effective in meeting the needs of the victims. Without infringing upon the statutory responsibilities of the Cabinet departments and agencies, we must ensure that the President's incident manager is able to call upon the full range of the Federal government's response assets, and to aggressively orchestrate, lead, and coordinate their use in response operations.

Operational Capabilities in Other Federal Departments/Agencies

Beyond changes to DHS and the structure of Federal response, there is still a compelling need to strengthen operational capabilities across the Federal government. Those departments and agencies that have a responsibility

to participate in a catastrophic response must build up their crisis deployable capabilities as well as their effective operational management.

To start, all Federal departments and agencies should have operational command and control structures that comply with the *National Incident Management System*. Secretaries and directors throughout the government must operate jointly, using the same systems, doctrine, and terminology. Similarly, in support of crisis operational capability, each department and agency must develop a deliberate planning capability. Planning should include not only the response plans themselves but also, both personnel and funding to train professional planners.

With these new operational planning functions, Federal departments and agencies must build the detailed supporting plans, concepts, and staffing to execute their NRP and emergency response missions. During Hurricane Katrina, it became clear that most Federal departments and agencies had not developed—much less exercised—standard operating procedures for their response.

An additional imperative is for all Federal departments and agencies to develop “battle rosters” of trained personnel who should deploy when their organization is called upon to support a Federal response to a catastrophic event. The development of these rosters must coincide with the implementation of training certification programs that ensure that personnel are trained and skilled to a high, uniform standard.

Homeland Security Training, Education, and Exercising

An effective National Preparedness System requires that management and response personnel, especially those in the field, are well versed in their missions. At all levels of government, we must build a leadership corps that is fully educated, trained, and exercised in our plans and doctrine. Training is not nearly as costly as the mistakes made in a crisis. Equally important, this corps must be populated by *leaders* who are prepared to exhibit innovation and take the initiative during extremely trying circumstances.

As discussed in the narrative, the response to Hurricane Katrina revealed a lack of familiarity with incident management, the planning discipline, legal authorities, capabilities, and field-level crisis leadership. Many Federal, State, and local officials lacked a fundamental understanding of the *National Response Plan*, the *NIMS*, and State and local response plans. The first priority for training is to ensure that our emergency managers fully understand our preparedness and response plans and doctrine. To that end, we must train all emergency managers with responsibility for the Federal response in the *National Response Plan* and the *National Incident Management System*. At the same time, the Department of Homeland Security must continue to condition its State assistance grants on all relevant State and local emergency response personnel being *NIMS* and *NRP* trained and capable.²⁰ DHS and its Federal partners should develop and deploy mobile training teams to support this effort.

Beyond current plans and doctrine, we require a more systematic and institutional program for homeland security professional development and education. While such a program will center on the Department of Homeland Security, it should extend to personnel throughout all levels of government having responsibility for preventing, preparing for, responding to, and recovering from natural and man-made disasters. For example, DHS should establish a National Homeland Security University (NHSU)—analogous to the National Defense University—for senior homeland security personnel as the capstone for homeland security training and education opportunities.²¹ The NHSU, in turn, should integrate homeland security personnel from State and local jurisdictions as well as other Federal departments and agencies.

Over the long term, our professional development and education programs must break down interagency barriers to build a unified team across the Federal government. Just as the Department of Defense succeeded in building a joint leadership cadre, so the rest of the Federal government must make familiarity with other departments and agencies a requirement for career advancement.²² Where practicable, interagency and intergovernmental assignments for Federal personnel must build trust and familiarity among diverse homeland security professionals. These assignments will break down organizational stovepipes, advancing the exchange of ideas and practices. At a minimum, we should build joint training and educational institutions for our senior managers in homeland security-related departments and agencies.

LESSON LEARNED: The Department of Homeland Security should develop a comprehensive program for the professional development and education of the Nation’s homeland security personnel, including Federal, State and local employees as well as emergency management persons within the private sector, non-governmental organizations, as well as faith-based and community groups. This program should foster a “joint” Federal Interagency, State, local, and civilian team.

These Federal professional development and education programs must integrate participants from other homeland security partners—namely, State and local governments as well as the private sector, non-governmental organizations, and faith-based organizations. As in every homeland crisis, it is inevitable that Federal, State, and local homeland security officials will come together to respond, and so it is important that we recognize the value in the old military adage that we must “train as you fight; fight as you train.”

Pursuant to HSPD-8, the National Preparedness System should include a robust program of homeland security exercises at all levels of government and across all disciplines.²³ The Department of Homeland Security should serve as the President's executive agent in developing and managing a National Exercise and Evaluation Program (NEEP). The NEEP should consolidate all existing interagency homeland security-related exercise programs at the Federal level with existing DHS National Exercise Program and Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP) through common doctrine, objectives, and management.²⁴ The NEEP should sponsor an aggressive program of joint exercises that involve all levels of government, as well as problem-specific exercises at particular levels of government. NEEP planning, moreover, must be integrated with a robust national homeland security training program. Moreover, the Program must emphasize intelligence-driven, threat-based scenarios that stress the system. In particular, we should not shy away from exercising worst case scenarios that "break" our homeland security system. Arguably, those scenarios will provide us the most meaningful, if sobering, lessons.

Assessments, Lessons Learned, and Corrective Actions

The success of the National Preparedness System over time will depend upon the quality of its metrics-based assessment and feedback mechanisms. In particular, the System must possess the means to measure progress towards strategic goals and capability objectives. It must systematically identify best practices and lessons learned in order to share them with our homeland security partners throughout the Nation. It must also have an effective process for conducting corrective or remedial actions when a system challenge is identified.

With common goals and performance metrics, the new National Preparedness System must first provide us with the capacity to create a national preparedness baseline that, at a minimum, serves as an inventory of our capabilities. More importantly, the baseline will tell us how prepared we are *today* in each of our jurisdictions and nationally. Reviewed at the Federal level and compared against the National Preparedness Goal, the System must also identify gaps in our national capabilities. These gaps can then serve as the priority targets for the homeland security grant process. In turn, the grant process must be tied to performance metrics that assess progress toward meeting national objectives. The President's Management Agenda has proven an effective tool applied to Federal department and agency performance that has recently, as a result of this review, been extended to include State and local homeland security programs that are federally funded.²⁵

LESSON LEARNED: The Department of Homeland Security should establish specific requirements for training, exercise, and lessons learned programs linked through a comprehensive system and common supporting methodology throughout the Federal, State and local governments. Furthermore, assessments of training and exercises should be based on clear and consistent performance measures. DHS should require all Federal and State entities with operational homeland security responsibilities to have a lessons learned capability, and DHS should ensure all entities are accountable for the timely implementation of remedial actions in response to lessons learned.

Furthermore, this National Preparedness System must be dynamic. Like the national security system described above, we must routinely revisit our plans and reassess our capabilities in order to account for evolving risks, improvements in technological capabilities, and preparedness innovations.

An integrated National Preparedness System must identify and share lessons learned and best practices both within departments and agencies and across jurisdictions. We understand that for many aspects of homeland security there is no single, best way of doing business. Our National Preparedness organization should systematically investigate and seek out innovative approaches being applied in the various localities, States, departments, agencies, and the private sector. The system should circulate the most promising of these practices, as well as any lessons—positive *and* negative—on a continuous basis, so that we never stop improving our security.

Finally, we must ensure that problems identified in our training, exercises, and lessons learned programs are corrected. Too often, after-action reports for exercises and real-world incidents highlight the same problems that do not get fixed—the need for interoperable communications, for example. Thus, the circle of the National Preparedness System must be closed by a Remedial Action Management Program (RAMP) that is led by DHS and coordinated by the Homeland Security Council but is resident in and executed by individual departments and agencies. Department and agency RAMPs must translate findings of homeland security gaps and vulnerabilities into concrete programs for corrective action. Then the RAMPs must track that the appropriate corrective actions are fully implemented in a timely fashion.

The Role of Congress

The challenges of transformation are not limited to the Executive Branch of government. Despite previous calls for transformation from national commissions, the U.S. Congress has not fully transformed itself for homeland security.²⁶ The numerous congressional committees in both houses that authorize and appropriate funds for homeland security inevitably produce competing initiatives and requirements. For example, the Secretary of Homeland Security and his leadership team were required to testify at 166 hearings before 61 full committees and subcommittees in the Senate and House of Representatives and provided over 2,000 briefings during 2005 as of October 14, 2005.²⁷ At best, the

many priorities distract us from the true, *top priorities*. At worst, the many priorities and requirements can contradict each other.

Moreover, Congress has not yet embraced a purely risk-based funding approach to homeland security priorities. Although the U.S. House of Representatives and U.S. Senate have passed several forms of grant reform legislation that would permit DHS to increase the prioritization of homeland security spending on the basis of risk, the two bodies have failed to reconcile their differences.²⁸ Until we as a Nation agree to a solely risk-based approach, we are in danger of allocating our limited resources in ways that do not prioritize funding to meet national homeland security goals and objectives.

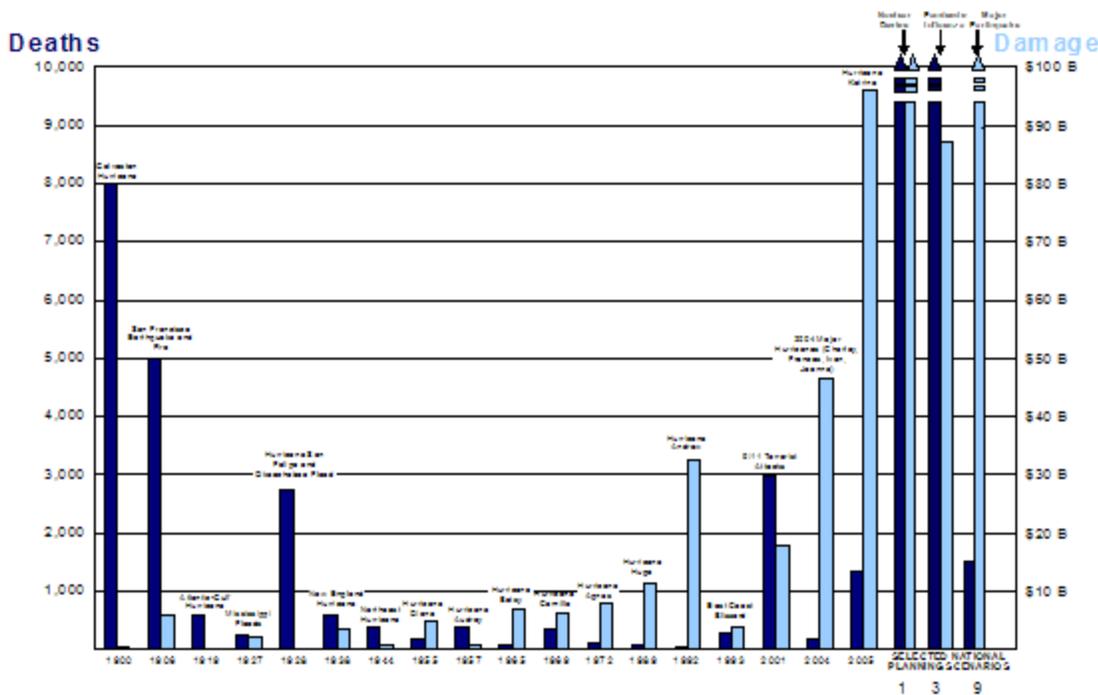
Finally, our experience in building an effective national security system demonstrates that Congress will be an essential partner as we continue to transform our homeland security system. Implementing the Goldwater-Nichols defense reform, for example, required legislation, and the durability of our homeland security reforms and the new National Preparedness System will require comparable support and participation from our Congressional partners.

How Much is Enough?

An age-old question for national security and, now, homeland security planning is *how much is enough?* In particular, at what level of preparedness do we feel confident that we have adequately accounted for the threats we face, our vulnerabilities, and the means we have to manage them? Recognizing that the future is uncertain and that we cannot anticipate every threat, we as a Nation must rely on a capabilities-based planning approach²⁹ to answering these questions: we must set levels of capabilities—at Federal, State, and local levels as among our other homeland security partners—that we conclude are appropriate to meet the range of risks that we may confront in the future.

In order to help identify the range of future plausible risks, the Department of Homeland Security has produced a set of fifteen *National Planning Scenarios* (see Figure 6.2). The Scenarios were designed to illustrate a myriad of tasks and capabilities that are required to prepare for and respond to a range of potential terrorist attacks and natural disasters that our Nation may confront. They identify the potential scale, scope, and complexity of fifteen incidents that would severely harm our Nation’s citizens, infrastructure, economy, and threaten our way of life. Examples include an outbreak of pandemic influenza on U.S. soil, a major earthquake in a U.S. city, and the detonation of a ten-kiloton nuclear device in a large U.S. metropolitan area. The Scenarios also include a Category 5 hurricane hitting a major metropolitan area.³⁰

Figure 6.2. U.S. Natural Disasters that Caused the Most Death and Damage to Property in Each Decade, 1900-2005, with 2004 Major Hurricanes, September 11th Terrorist Attacks, and Selected National Planning Scenarios³¹ Damage in Third Quarter 2005 dollars



The Scenarios, which were meant to be illustrative of a wide variety of hazards, generally do not specify a geographic location, and the impacts are meant to be scalable for a variety of population considerations. Ultimately, they give homeland security planners a tool that allows for the flexible and adaptive development of capabilities as well as the identification of needed capability levels to meet the National Preparedness Goal.

While the National Planning Scenarios have been effective tools for generating dialogue on response capabilities, they do not fully anticipate some of the worst disaster scenarios. Scenario 10, for example, depicts the effects of a

Category 5 hurricane hitting a major metropolitan area in the United States. However, in the Scenario, the Category 5 hurricane actually causes fewer deaths and less destruction than did Hurricane Katrina, a Category 3, because the Scenario only characterizes the destruction caused to a metropolitan area, while a storm like Hurricane Katrina may span three or more States. Further, although the Scenario acknowledges potential delays and difficulties in evacuation, realistic circumstances such as Katrina may be worse, where more than 100,000 residents did not evacuate.³²

Scenario 1, the detonation of a ten-kiloton nuclear device in an American city by a terrorist group, suffers from similar limitations and fails to fully challenge our plans and preparation skills. Although devastating in terms of both death and destruction, a ten-kiloton bomb is a relatively small nuclear device. Moreover, the Scenario does not anticipate one of the most demanding characteristics of past al-Qaida operations: multiple, simultaneous attacks. How much more taxing would it be to respond to multiple and simultaneous nuclear, chemical, or biological incidents? If the purpose of the National Planning Scenarios is to provide a foundation for identifying the capabilities required to meet all hazards, the Scenarios must press us to confront the most destructive challenges.

Hurricane Katrina severely stressed our current national response capabilities. However, as depicted in Figure 6.2, three other National Planning Scenarios—an act of nuclear terrorism (Scenario 1), an outbreak of pandemic influenza (Scenario 3), and a 7.5 magnitude earthquake striking a major city (Scenario 9)—are more daunting still. Compared with the deaths and economic chaos a nuclear detonation or influenza outbreak could unleash, Hurricane Katrina was small. But even these scenarios do not go far enough to challenge us to improve our level of preparedness. Until we can meet the standard set by the most demanding scenarios, we should not consider ourselves adequately prepared.

The most recent Top Officials (“TOPOFF”) exercise in April 2005 revealed the Federal government’s lack of progress in addressing a number of preparedness deficiencies, many of which had been identified in previous exercises. This lack of progress reflects, in part, the absence of a remedial action program to systematically address lessons learned from exercises. To ensure appropriate priority and accountability are being applied to address these continuing deficiencies, the Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism now annually conducts four Cabinet-level exercises with catastrophic scenarios. To date, a catastrophic exercise with a pandemic scenario was conducted in December 2005; the next exercise is scheduled for this March.

While the National Planning Scenarios represent a good start for our national process of capabilities-based planning for homeland security, we must orient the National Preparedness System towards still greater challenges. We must not shy away from creating planning scenarios that stress the current system of response to the breaking point and challenge our Nation in ways that we wish we did not have to imagine. To that end, we must revise the planning scenarios to make them more challenging. Among other characteristics, they must reflect both what we know and what we can imagine about the ways our enemies think—that they will not hit us hard just once, but that they will seek to cause us damage on significant scale in multiple locations simultaneously. We must not again find ourselves vulnerable to the charge that we suffered a “failure of imagination” and a mind-set that dismissed possibilities.”³³

Envisioning a National Preparedness System

Figure 6.3 provides an illustration of how our existing homeland security strategy, doctrine, and capabilities can be unified into a single National Preparedness System. The graphic ties together the priorities described throughout this section into a new transformational construct. The strengths of this System include first and foremost *integration* of strategy, doctrine, capabilities, response activities, and exercises, as well as assessment and evaluation. The graphic also highlights the feedback mechanisms that must be built into the System. In particular, as described above, the System must include routine reporting and assessment of program performance metrics, the readiness of particular capabilities, as well as best practices and lessons learned from exercises and activities. These assessments and findings must be reported back, as appropriate, to inform key components throughout the System.

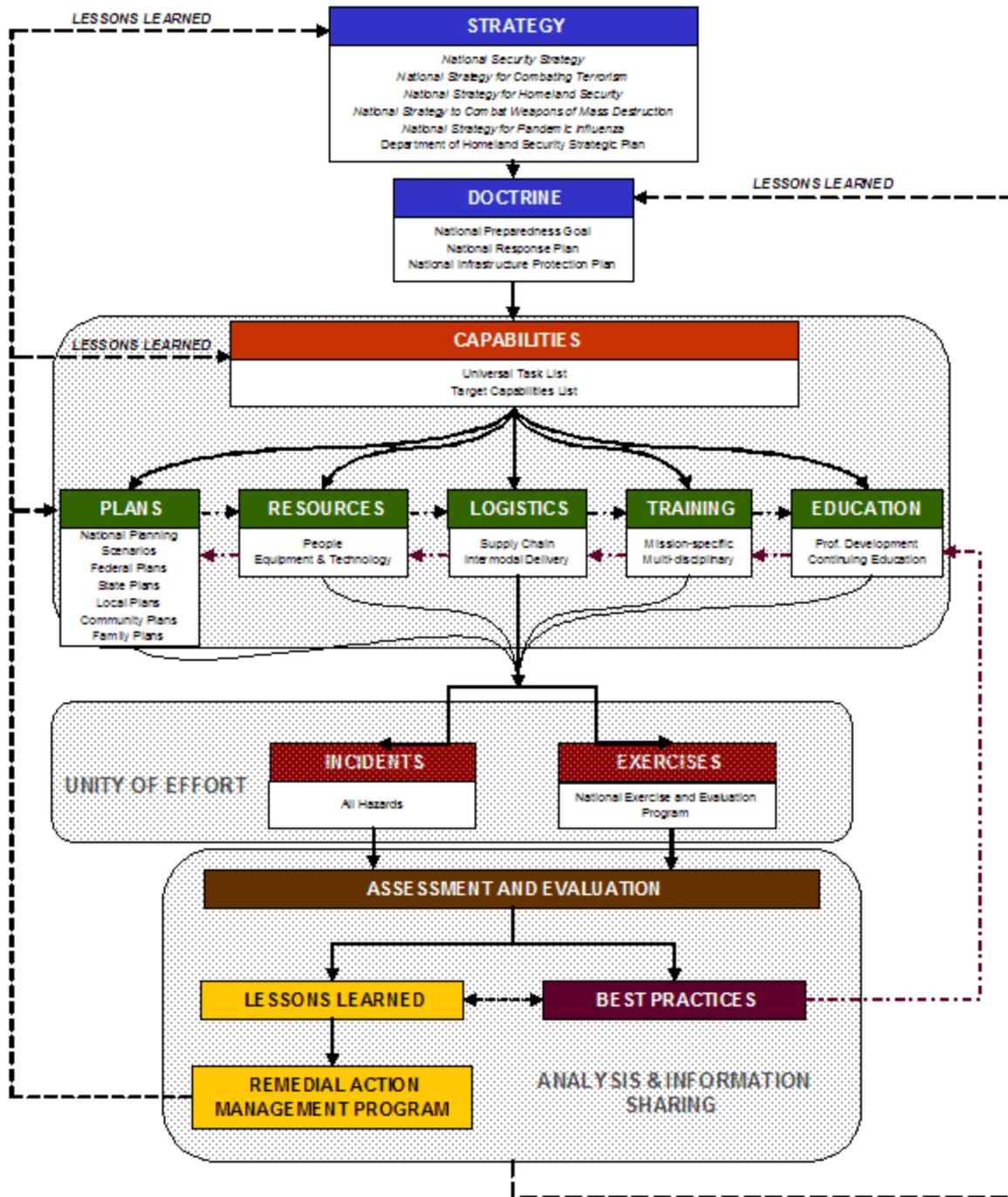
The National Preparedness System graphic additionally highlights the constituent elements of operational capabilities: deliberate planning, resources, logistics, training, and education. Moreover, the graphic notes the importance of unity of effort in exercises and the conduct of response activities in incidents.

As described above, the National Preparedness System must be dynamic, flexible, and responsive to new developments. Like our national security system, the strategy, doctrine, and capabilities of the System should be reviewed periodically to determine their continued relevance to current challenges. Similarly, periodic reviews must assess the continued internal consistency of the System—e.g., do the doctrine and capabilities support the strategy?

Key inputs to the System include the current national vision for preparedness, laws, and policies and the use of capability-based planning that prioritizes investments to fill gaps identified by needs assessments. An equally important input is the current assessment of risks—what threats does the Nation currently confront, what are our current vulnerabilities, and what are the consequences? Against the current assessment of risks, we must continually evaluate our capability to respond effectively.

Finally, our planning and operational documents should define the critical roles played by all of our homeland security partners in the Preparedness System. Federal, State, and local governments play prominent roles throughout the System—from strategy development to assessment and lessons learned. Additionally, the private sector, NGOs, faith-based groups, communities, and individuals play important roles in operational capabilities as well as response activities.

Figure 6.3: A Shared Vision of Preparedness



CREATING A CULTURE OF PREPAREDNESS

The second element of our continuing transformation for homeland security perhaps will be the most profound and enduring—the creation of a Culture of Preparedness. A new preparedness culture must emphasize that the entire Nation—Federal, State, and local governments; the private sector; communities; and individual citizens—shares common goals and responsibilities for homeland security. In other words, our homeland security is built upon a foundation of partnerships. And these partnerships must include shared understanding of at least four concepts:

- The certainty of future catastrophes;
- The importance of initiative;
- The roles of citizens and other homeland security stakeholders in preparedness; and
- The roles of each level of government and the private sector in creating a prepared Nation.

Future Challenges

The first principle for a Culture of Preparedness must be a shared acknowledgement that creating a prepared Nation will be a continuing challenge. Optimism is fundamental to the American character. While it always energizes us, it also grounds us in times of tragedy and loss. We must guard against our optimism leading us to a dangerous sense of complacency. Complacency of our citizens presents a great challenge. We are fortunate that, because of the courage and self-sacrifice of public servants across all levels of government, we have not suffered another terrorist attack on our homeland since 2001. But we are a Nation at war, and we have a responsibility to be prepared. We must temper our optimism with sober recognition of the certainty of future catastrophes. We cannot prevent natural disasters. And though we work tirelessly against them, we cannot anticipate nor prevent every type of terrorist attack against the homeland. As the Irish Republican Army once warned British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher after narrowly missing her in an assassination attempt: terrorists only need to be successful once; but we, their targets, must be successful everyday.³⁴ We know that our enemies plot further attacks against us. We must continue to prevent them and, if necessary, respond. Regrettably, lives will be lost, citizens displaced, and property destroyed.

The certainty of future challenges should inform our national expectations. As a Nation, we will prepare ourselves in the most effective ways we know. Our Culture of Preparedness, therefore, must emphasize the importance of flexibility and readiness to cope with an uncertain future. While we cannot predict the future to our satisfaction, we can build capabilities that prepare us for a broad range of challenges. Perhaps equally important, we can ensure that our preparedness plans, thinking, and “imagination” do not become so rigid that we cannot rapidly adapt to unforeseen challenges.³⁵

Initiative

Despite reforms that encourage a proactive, anticipatory approach to the management of incidents, the culture of our response community has a fundamental bias towards *reaction* rather than *initiative*. As a result, our national efforts too often emphasize response and clean-up efforts at the expense of potentially more cost-effective anticipatory actions that might prevent or mitigate damage.

The need for anticipatory response is a pillar of the National Response Plan. A list of Key Concepts in the *National Response Plan* places it second only to “systematic and coordinated incident management.” Specifically, the *NRP* calls for:

Proactive notification and deployment of Federal resources in anticipation of or in response to catastrophic events in coordination and collaboration with State, local, and tribal governments and private entities when possible.³⁶

Similarly, our Culture of Preparedness must stress initiative at all levels. Fundamentally, our Preparedness System and Culture must encourage and reward innovation. To do so, we must build a system and approach that better aligns authority and responsibility—those who are responsible for a mission or task must have the authority to act. In the same vein, an alignment of authority and responsibility provides us the ability to assess our performance—collectively and individually. Performance assessment and accountability, however, must not be *blame*.³⁷ Our current culture of blame threatens both individual and institutional initiative, resourcefulness, and enterprise across the homeland security, law enforcement, and intelligence fields. It is time that Congress, the Executive Branch, and all of our homeland security partners develop a consensus regarding a reasonable balance of accountability, responsibility, and authority at all levels. Otherwise, the culture of blame and its related acrimony will debilitate us.

Citizen Preparedness

Our preparedness culture must also emphasize the importance of citizen and community preparedness. Citizen and community preparedness are among the most effective means of preventing terrorist attacks as well as protecting against, mitigating, responding to, and recovering from all hazards.³⁸ For example, the Citizen Corps in Harris County, Texas, brought together over 50,000 volunteers to support American Red Cross efforts and staff evacuation centers throughout Houston. As a joint team, they created an actual working city (with its own zip code) for Hurricane Katrina victims sheltering in the Astrodome.³⁹

Thus, citizens and communities can help themselves by becoming more prepared. If every family maintained the resources to live in their homes without electricity and running water for three days, we could allocate more Federal, State, and local response resources to saving lives. Similarly, if every family developed their own emergency preparedness plan, they almost certainly would reduce the demand for outside emergency resources. As the 9/11 Commission Report states, “One clear lesson of September 11 is that individual civilians need to take responsibility for maximizing the probability that they will survive, should disaster strike.”⁴⁰

LESSON LEARNED: The Federal government, working with State, local, NGO, and private sector partners, should combine the various disparate citizen preparedness programs into a single national campaign to promote and strengthen citizen and community preparedness. This campaign should be developed in a manner that appeals to the American people, incorporates the endorsement and support of prominent national figures, focuses on the importance of individual and community responsibility for all-hazard disaster preparedness, provides meaningful and comprehensive education, training and exercise opportunities applicable to all facets of the

American population, and establishes specialized preparedness programs for those less able to provide for themselves during disasters such as children, the ill, the disabled, and the elderly.

Leadership at all levels will be essential in helping to transform citizen preparedness. First, responsible public officials at the Federal, State, and local levels as well as prominent national figures should begin a public dialogue that emphasizes common themes regarding the importance of citizen preparedness. DHS should continue to build upon those programs and institutions that already work, such as Department of Education elementary and secondary school programs; Citizen Corps; State and local government training programs; and Federal cooperation with the National Governors Association. Nongovernmental organizations can also play a key role in this area. DHS has made some important progress in this area with its *Ready.gov* initiative and its public service announcements program with the Ad Council.⁴¹ But more needs to be done. Encouraging preparedness awareness and activity is a shared responsibility across all levels of government that we must make a priority. Preparedness today will save lives tomorrow.

In addition, DHS and other Federal agencies should identify both the individual skills and capabilities that would help citizens in a disaster as well as the types of messages from trusted leaders that would encourage citizens to be better prepared. Public awareness messaging must shift to include more substantive information, as opposed to just telling our citizens that they need to “do something.” For example, the “Stop, Drop, and Roll” campaign used so successfully in fire safety as part of the “Learn Not to Burn”⁴² program provided citizens with specific steps to take. Other successful campaigns include the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration’s “Buckle Up America” campaign,⁴³ which prescribes proper use of seat belt and child safety seats. As with so many of these successful campaigns, the Nation’s children can help lead the way.⁴⁴

Other Homeland Security Stakeholders and Preparedness

We must build upon our initial successful efforts to partner with other homeland security stakeholders—namely the private sector, non-governmental organizations, and faith-based groups.⁴⁵ Each of these groups plays a critical role in preparedness. To the extent that we can incorporate them into the National effort, we will be reducing the burden on other response resources so that Federal, State, and local responders can concentrate our energies on those with the greatest need.

Private sector companies own and operate 85 percent of our Nation’s critical infrastructure.⁴⁶ Transportation, electricity, banking, telecommunications, food supply, and clean water are examples of services relying on infrastructure that have become basic aspects of our daily lives. Yet, these services are often only noticed when they are disrupted and when the American public expects speedy restoration. In fact, the Nation relies on “critical infrastructure” to maintain its defense, continuity of government, economic prosperity, and quality of life. The services provided by these interconnected systems are so vital that their disruption will have a debilitating impact on national security, the economy, or public health and safety.

Companies are responsible for protecting their systems, which comprise the majority of critical infrastructure. Because of this, private sector preparation and response is vital to mitigating the national impact of disasters. Government actions in response to a disaster can help or hamper private sector efforts. However, governments cannot plan to adequately respond unless the private sector helps them understand what infrastructure truly is critical. Likewise, businesses cannot develop contingency plans without understanding how governments will respond. To maximize the Nation’s preparedness, Federal, State, and local governments must join with the private sector to collaboratively develop plans to respond to major disasters. There are important initiatives in this area already underway by the Business Round Table (BRT) and Business Executives for National Security (BENS) project.⁴⁷ We must encourage and build upon these efforts. The private sector must be an explicit partner in and fully integrated across all levels of response—Federal, State, and local.

Non-governmental organizations play essential roles in preparedness by complementing and supporting preparedness efforts. In times of crisis, NGOs—especially community groups, faith-based organizations, places of worship, and relief organizations—provide essential human faces, helping hands, compassion, and comfort to all American people, whether or not they are victims of an incident. As such, they fill an essential need in the response system in ways far beyond the capacity of the Government. Thus, their contributions must be fully integrated at all levels—Federal, State, and local.

The Role of Each Level of Government in a Culture of Preparedness

Today, we operate under two guiding principles: a) that incident management should begin at the lowest jurisdictional level possible, and b) that, for most incidents, the Federal government will generally play a supporting role to State and local efforts.⁴⁸ While these principles suffice for the vast majority of incidents, they impede the Federal response to severe catastrophes. In a catastrophic scenario that overwhelms or incapacitates local and State incident command structures, the Federal government must be prepared to assume incident command and get assistance directly to those in need until State and local authorities are reconstituted.

The National Preparedness System must also recognize the role of the Federal government for monitoring and guiding national preparedness efforts. ; In particular, the system must ensure that the Federal government assesses

the preparedness of localities across the country with an eye towards identifying the Federal response requirement for each. In addition, Federal, State, local, and private sector partners must agree on a system in which the Federal government responds more actively and effectively while respecting the role of State and local governments.

The new culture of preparedness must stress *partnership* among all levels of government. Local governments will continue to have responsibility for providing the immediate response capabilities for the vast majority of incidents while State governors will continue to have sovereign responsibilities to protect their residents. Yet preparedness must emphasize the shared nature of these responsibilities in a catastrophic event. State governments must work with their local jurisdictions to ensure that they have developed plans and capabilities that are appropriate for the homeland security challenges confronting them. Both State and local governments must also reach out to their citizens, private sector, and community groups to promote their preparedness efforts.

Furthermore, in the new culture of preparedness, State and local governments must continually seek to work with their neighboring jurisdictions. Building upon the successes of interstate cooperation programs such as the Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC),⁴⁹ the Federal government must take an active role in encouraging and facilitating these partnerships. Regional collaboration at the State and local levels will help the Nation to reduce overlapping or redundant capabilities as well as to minimize capability gaps. Moreover, active regional collaboration will likewise be a means for identifying and sharing homeland security lessons learned and best practices.

Finally, in our new Culture of Preparedness, all required response assets and resources of the Federal government must integrate and synchronize to ensure an effective national response to a crisis. In practical terms, this entails stepping away from the bureaucratic view of a particular department or agency's institutional interests. Instead, we must continually build preparedness partnerships across the Federal government as well as with State and local governments.

FOSTERING TRANSFORMATION

Our continuing transformation is not a choice but an absolute necessity. We must begin a national dialogue on shared responsibilities and expectations for preparedness. As highlighted throughout this report, the American concept of federalism requires that any transformation must involve and accommodate all levels of government and communities across the Nation.

The objectives of this dialogue must be first to establish reasonable expectations of what government can and cannot do in response to catastrophes. Our citizens need to know what to expect from their government, in order to make sure they do everything possible at their level to protect themselves and their loved ones.

Second, this dialogue must develop a shared understanding of the need for active Federal management of the National Preparedness System, to include:

- Setting metrics for State, local, community, and individual preparedness;
- Developing and implementing a system to assess that preparedness as well as to establish clear responsibilities and accountability; and
- Identifying the circumstances under which the Federal government will push capabilities independent of request.

Finally, this dialogue must result in a shared understanding of roles and responsibilities in preparedness for catastrophic events, to include those of:

- The Federal government;
- State governments;
- Local governments;
- The private sector (including non-governmental organizations and faith-based organizations); and
- Communities and individual citizens.