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LESSON LEARNED

Fusion Center Processes: Establishing a Committee to Define Information Flow

SUMMARY

Fusion centers should consider establishing a committee to define the process flow of information during an incident and to outline end-user requirements for receipt and management of that information.

DESCRIPTION

The US Northern Command (NORTHCOM) and Joint Forces Command co-sponsored the Ardent Sentry exercise from May 7 to 18, 2007, in the US and Canada. Ardent Sentry consisted of five exercise components:

the National Guard full-scale exercise (FSE) Vigilant Guard, the Northern Edge FSE in Canada, the Hoosier Sentry combined functional and full-scale exercise in Indiana, the Alaska Shield combined functional and full-scale exercise in Alaska, and the HURREX tabletop exercise in Rhode Island. The main goal of Ardent Sentry was to demonstrate multi-agency, multi-jurisdictional unity of effort in support of a civilian-led response to a national crisis. Ardent Sentry simulated a Category 3 hurricane making landfall in New England, a nuclear detonation in Indiana, and several terrorist attacks on critical infrastructure in Alaska and waters along the western US – Canadian border. Ardent Sentry required the coordination of over 3,000 federal, state, and local responders and more than 2,000 active-duty personnel.

Canada served as a full partner in the Ardent Sentry exercise through the coordination of Canada Command and US military resources. Canada Command oversees the operations of Canadian forces and coordinates with NORTHCOM.

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NORTHCOM, the National Guard, the Indiana Department of Homeland Security, the Indiana National Guard, and the Indianapolis—Marion County Emergency Management Division co-sponsored the Hoosier Sentry combined functional and full-scale exercise from May 10 to 13, 2007, at 6 locations in south-central Indiana. Hoosier Sentry simulated the detonation of a 10-kiloton nuclear device by a terrorist cell in northeastern Indianapolis. Exercise objectives focused on integrating National Guard and active-duty military resources with emergency response operations. The combined exercise also evaluated federal and state abilities to support local responders during a weapon of mass destruction/hazardous materials incident. The exercise required emergency response and military teams to provide sheltering operations for over 77,000 notional civilians and to treat over 500 role-playing victims. Over 104 federal, state, and local agencies and 1,000 response personnel participated in the Hoosier Sentry exercise.

During the exercise, intelligence information flowed at minimal levels between the Indianapolis—Marion County Emergency Operations Center (EOC) and the Indiana Intelligence Fusion Center (IIFC) through the use of WebEOC. However, virtually none of this information reached the incident command post (ICP). According to the exercise after-action report (AAR), critical information regarding the terrorist attack should have flowed

regularly from the IIFC down to the EOC and ICP. The AAR notes that this process can occur through a direct path of information flow from the IIFC to the state EOC, then to county EOCs, then down to ICP and response agencies. An alternate process can utilize designated fusion center liaison officers, who can receive information directly from the IIFC. The AAR notes that when determining this process flow of information, agencies should address questions regarding clearances, authorities, and the handling of sensitive information.

Fusion centers should establish a committee to define the process flow of information during an incident and to outline end-user requirements for receipt and management of that information.

CITATION

Indianapolis, Marion County Emergency Management Division. *2007 Ardent Sentry Indiana Homeland Security District 5 After Action Report*. 16 Aug 2007.

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