

## **Terror Attacks: Are We Prepared?**

### **Bill Number:**

**Hearing Date:** July 22, 2004, 10:00 am

**Location:** SD-430

### **Witness:**

Andy Mitchell

Department of Homeland Security

Deputy Director Office for State and Local Government Coordination and Preparedness

### **Testimony**

Chairman Gregg, Ranking Member Kennedy and Members of the Committee, my name is Andy Mitchell, and I serve as the Deputy Director of the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) Office for Domestic Preparedness (ODP). As you know, the Secretary recently consolidated the Office for Domestic Preparedness and the Office for State and Local Government Coordination in order to move toward the 'one stop shop' that stakeholders have called for. On behalf of SLGCP Executive Director Sue Mencer and Secretary Ridge, it is my pleasure to appear before you today to discuss the current status of SLGCP and other issues of critical importance.

On behalf of all of us at DHS, I want to thank all the Members of the Committee for your ongoing support for the Department and for SLGCP. You and your colleagues have entrusted us with a great responsibility, and we are meeting that responsibility with the utmost diligence. I also want to thank you, Mr. Chairman, for your foresight and leadership in supporting and developing many of the programs that comprise SLGCP long before the September 2001 terrorist attacks.

As you are all aware, ODP within SLGCP is responsible for preparing our nation against terrorism by assisting states, local jurisdictions, regional authorities, and tribal governments with building their capacity to prepare for, prevent, and respond to acts of terrorism. Through its programs and activities, ODP equips, trains, exercises, and supports state and local homeland security personnel -- our nation's first responders -- who may be called upon to prevent and respond to terrorist attacks. We also will work with these entities to take into consideration the needs of unique groups in our emergency planning efforts, including those of people with disabilities.

Mr. Chairman, ODP has established an outstanding track record of capacity building at the state, local, territorial, and tribal levels, by combining subject matter expertise, grant-making know-how, and establishing strong and long-standing ties to the nation's public safety community. Since its creation in 1998, ODP has provided assistance to all 50 States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and the U.S. territories. Through its programs and initiatives ODP has trained over 550,000 emergency responders from more than 5,000 jurisdictions and conducted nearly 400 exercises. And,

by the end of Fiscal Year 2004, ODP will have provided states and localities with more than \$8.1 billion in assistance and direct support.

Our core mission is to address homeland security and terrorism preparedness issues on a very broad scale. This focus is on the nation, on regions, on states, cities and specific events such as the upcoming political conventions. Our programs are designed to provide a framework through which officials at the local and state levels of government may work together to identify their current capabilities, gaps and shortfalls. This approach allows jurisdictions to prioritize and to set goals.

ODP has a number of assistance programs. Two key programs include the State Homeland Security Grant Program (SHSGP) and the Urban Areas Security Initiatives (UASI) Program.

Through its Urban Areas Security Initiative (UASI) program, ODP requires states to work with communities selected according to classified criteria that include threat and risk, presence of critical infrastructure and population density. We require UASI participants to form inter-jurisdictional working groups who undertake assessments of local capabilities that are used to craft plans, or strategies, for that area's preparedness efforts. It is our goal to provide program participants with an over-arching strategy that may be used to advance their level of preparedness. These working groups have been used by other federal agencies, including the federal Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), to "access" these communities so that their specific area of expertise may be applied. We are pleased with this result and feel that we are well on our way to establishing a framework that is useful to states, localities and the federal government.

Our programs focus on the provision of planning tools, training, equipment acquisition and exercises. As you know Mr. Chairman, at your direction, we executed the congressionally-mandated Top Officials (TOPOFF) exercise program in the year 2000 and again in 2003. These exercises were designed to include all levels of government in simulated crisis through which best practices and lessons learned could be gleaned. These exercises included biological, chemical and radiological scenarios and have provided all levels of government with useful insight as we prepare for occasions such as the recent G-8 Summit in Sea Island, Georgia, and the upcoming Democratic and Republican National Conventions in Boston and New York, respectively.

These National Special Security Events (NSSE), as designated by the U.S. Secret Service, are high-profile events that would result in both symbolic and practical consequences should they be disrupted by terrorists. As such, these events require a greater than usual degree of support and participation from federal agencies, including the Department of Homeland Security.

ODP provides targeted assistance for designated NSSEs, to include training, technical assistance, and exercises. Our Training Division offers courses that are specifically targeted for an NSSE. ODP also provides technical assistance to facilitate the sharing of lessons learned and training from previous NSSEs. For example, during the planning for

the G-8 Summit in Georgia, representatives from the Royal Canadian Mounted Police were flown in to share lessons learned from the G-8 Summit hosted in Canada. ODP's Exercise and Evaluation Division provides a series of exercises that increase in scope and complexity. The first two exercises in this series, a Senior Leaders Seminar and Tabletop Exercise, are discussion-based activities. The exercise series culminates with the conduct of an operational Command Post Exercise which is a final test and check of communications and interoperability between the command centers (i.e, FBI's Joint Operations Center, Secret Service's Multi-Agency Coordination Center, etc.) before the actual NSSE. ODP is currently working with the DHS Integration Staff (as part of the Security Planning Initiative) to develop an annex that outlines the capabilities ODP can provide for special events that are not designated as NSSEs.

Throughout its history ODP has worked to improve how it serves its state and local constituents. For example, in Fiscal Year 2003, application materials for the Department's State Homeland Security Grant Program -- under both the Fiscal Year 2003 Omnibus Appropriations Bill, and the Fiscal Year 2003 Supplemental Appropriations Bill -- were made available to the states within two weeks of those bills becoming law. Further, over 90 percent of the grants made under that program were awarded within 14 days of ODP receiving the grant applications.

During Fiscal Year 2004, ODP's record of service to the nation's first responders continues. All of the 56 States and territories have received their Fiscal Year 2004 funding under the Homeland Security Grant Program. This includes funds to support state-wide preparedness efforts under the State Homeland Security Grant Program, the Law Enforcement Terrorism Prevention Program, and the Citizen Corps Program. These awards represent over \$ 2.1 Billion in direct assistance.

Further, 50 urban areas designated under the Fiscal Year 2004 Urban Areas Security Initiative have been awarded funding. This represents \$671 Million in support to high-density population centers with identifiable threats and critical infrastructure. In addition, the Department has identified 30 of the nation's most used urban transit systems and has provided \$49 Million to enhance the overall security of these systems. All 30 of these transit systems have received their Fiscal Year 2004 funds.

Much of how the states and territories distribute and utilize Homeland Security Grant Program funds is influenced by the results of the State Homeland Security Assessments and Strategies. As you know, each state, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and the territories were required to submit their assessments and strategies by January 31, 2004.

These assessments and strategies, Mr. Chairman, are critically important to both the states and the federal government. They provide a wealth of information regarding each state's vulnerabilities, capabilities, and future requirements, as well as each state's preparedness goals and objectives. They provide each state with a roadmap as to how current and future funding, exercise, training, and other preparedness resources should be directed and targeted, and they provide the federal government with a better

understanding of needs and capabilities. I am happy to report that all assessments and strategies have been received and reviewed by an intra-DHS review board comprised of representatives from major Department components and accepted by ODP.

During Fiscal Year 2005, ODP will continue to provide states and localities with the resources they require to ensure the safety of the American public. The funds requested by the President for Fiscal Year 2005 will allow ODP to continue to provide the training, equipment, exercises, technical assistance, and other support necessary to better prepare our communities.

DHS's mission is critical, its responsibilities are great, and its programs and activities impact communities across the nation. We will strive to fulfill our mission and meet our responsibilities in an effective and efficient manner. And we will, to the best of our abilities, continue to identify where and how we can improve. Part of our responsibility, part of the Department's responsibility, Mr. Chairman, is the recognition that we can always improve what we do and how we do it. And we can never be too safe or too secure.

This critical mission was recognized by the Congress with the passage of the Homeland Security Act of 2002, and the creation of the Department of Homeland Security. And since the Department's creation, we have worked continuously with the Congress to determine how better to fulfill our common goal of a more secure America.

Close coordination between states, localities, and regions, is critical to an effective and rational distribution of homeland security resources, and is consistent with currently existing ODP funding initiatives, such as the Urban Areas Security Initiative or UASI Program.

ODP is also continuing its efforts to develop preparedness standards and to establish clear methods for assessing state and local preparedness levels and progress. As you will recall Mr. Chairman, on December 17, 2003, the President issued "Homeland Security Presidential Directive (HSPD)-8." Through HSPD-8, the President tasked Secretary Ridge, in coordination with other Federal departments and state and local jurisdictions, to develop national preparedness goals, improve delivery of federal preparedness assistance to state and local jurisdictions, and strengthen the preparedness capabilities of Federal, state, territorial, tribal, and local governments. HSPD-8 is consistent with the broader goals and objectives established in the President's National Strategy for Homeland Security issued in July, 2002, which discussed the creation of a fully-integrated national emergency response capability. Inherent to the successful implementation of HSPD-8 is the development of clear and measurable standards for state and local preparedness capabilities.

The standards that will result from HSPD-8 implementation build on an existing body of standards and guidelines developed by ODP and other Federal agencies to guide and inform state and local preparedness efforts. Since its inception ODP has worked with Federal agencies and state and local jurisdictions to develop and disseminate information

to state and local agencies to assist them in making more informed preparedness decisions, including capability assessments, preparedness planning and strategies, and choices relating to training, equipment, and exercises.

Earlier this year, the Secretary delegated to ODP the responsibility for the implementation of HSPD-8. This designation by the Secretary is consistent with ODP mission, as provided under the provisions of the Homeland Security Act, to be the primary federal agency responsible for the preparedness of the United States for acts of terrorism. And ODP, together with Secretary Ridge, other Department components, Federal agencies, and state and local governments, firmly believe that the successful implementation of HSPD-8 is essential and critical to our Nation's ability to prevent, prepare for, and respond to acts of terrorism. In March, the Secretary approved these key items: first, a strategy for a better prepared America based on the requirements of HSPD-8; second, an integrated, intra- and inter- governmental structure to implement HSPD-8; and third, an aggressive timeline for achieving HSPD-8's goals and objectives. Implementation of HSPD-8 involves the participation of federal, state, and local agencies, and, among other things, will result in the development and dissemination of clear, precise, and measurable preparedness standards and goals addressing state, local, and federal prevention and response capabilities.

In closing Mr. Chairman, let me re-state Secretary Ridge's commitment to support the nation's state and local emergency response community, and to ensure that America's first responders receive the resources and support they require to do their jobs. This concludes my statement. I am happy to respond to any questions that you and the members of the Committee may have. Thank you.