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COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY**

**SUBCOMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC SECURITY,  
INFRASTRUCTURE PROTECTION AND  
CYBERSECURITY**

**TESTIMONY REGARDING THE LONDON BOMBINGS:  
PROTECTING CIVILIAN TARGETS FROM TERRORIST  
ATTACKS**

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Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Sanchez, and Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for having me here to discuss this important subject. My name is Joe Madsen and I am the Director of Safety and Risk Management for Spokane Public Schools in Spokane, Washington.

I am before you today to discuss school safety and how the federal government can be more proactive in protecting our school children, teachers, and staff from a wide variety of threats and emergencies. Following 9/11, the federal government focused its efforts on improving security around airports, transit systems, and public facilities, the so called "hard targets." Today I'd like to talk about one of our nation's most valuable assets, our children, and a successful program begun in Washington State that combines old fashion relationship-building, interagency cooperation, and state-of-the art technology to protect our schools against terrorist attacks and other emergencies.

We have more than 47 million children enrolled in educational facilities across the U.S. Because schools typically contain large numbers of students in a single location, they represent an appealing target for terrorists seeking the maximum emotional impact for their cowardly acts. Domestically we've already experienced a form of terrorism, and schools like West Paducah in Kentucky; Springfield in Oregon; Columbine in Colorado; and Red Lake in Minnesota stir emotion in the hearts of parents and dispel the feeling "that it couldn't happen here." On the international side, it's even more disturbing. In Beslan, Russia last year, terrorists took more than 1,100 hostages at a local school. More than 330 students and staff were killed and another 700 people were seriously injured. A similar incident occurred this June when terrorists attacked an international school in Cambodia and took over 70 children and staff hostage.

I know first hand the damage a terrorist attack can do at a school. At 11:30 am on September 22, 2003 a student with a 9mm handgun entered one of my schools, Lewis and Clark High School, in Spokane. It was the lunch hour and the school was packed with more than 2,000 students eating lunch in the hallways, a tradition at this school.

Normally, chaos would break out at this point. But in Spokane, the police, fire, school staff, and students are well trained on how to respond to emergencies. Just prior to the incident, Washington State had begun deployment of a statewide crisis management system (CMS) for protection of critical public infrastructure. Using this new system, the Spokane Police Department, the Spokane Fire Department, the Washington State Patrol, and school district officials implemented pre-determined tactical response plans and quickly responded to the school. Detailed information about the school building in the CMS system allowed police to isolate the gunman in just 12 minutes, evacuate more than 2,000 students to a pre-established family re-unification center, and immobilize the gunman. The students were spared the trauma of having to witness the incident and were able to return to their school the very next day.

This situation, and it would be no different if it had been an organized terrorist incident, a fire, a hazmat spill, or a hurricane, was successfully mitigated because the first responders in Spokane have developed an excellent system for emergency response, involving training, relationship building, implementation of FEMA's National Incident Management System (NIMS) protocols, and use of state-of-the art CMS technology that makes critical facility information accessible to all responding agencies. How this incident was handled, and the systems put in place to mitigate such events, could well serve as a model for other school districts across the nation.

I'd like to take a few minutes to talk about this incident in greater detail, because the story exemplifies many of the issues facing police and fire today in responding to a wide variety of emergencies.

To provide you with some background: In 2003 the State of Washington funded development of a statewide crisis management system for critical infrastructure. The computer-based system provides first responders with instant access to critical information, including fire and police tactical preplans and more than 300 data points including facility emergency plans, satellite images, interior and exterior photos, floor plans, evacuation routes, utility shut-offs, hazardous materials locations and more. The simple, easy-to-use software is designed to allow emergency response personnel to act quickly, decisively, and safely during any facility-related emergency incident. The system combines data that used to be kept in three-ring binders at a variety of locations into a single, master database. It also provides all responding agencies with equal access to critical infrastructure data. Equally important, facility owners can quickly update information about changes at their facilities via the Web, ensuring that first responders are basing their decisions on the most current data available.

This system was implemented at Lewis and Clark High School in August 2003, just two weeks before the actual shooting incident. An integral part of the implementation is a series of planning sessions where school officials meet with their local police and fire representatives to pre-plan how each agency will respond to various emergency scenarios. This process establishes working relationships between first responders from various agencies and is the basis for development of trust and cooperation. The system is also compliant with FEMA's National Incident Management System (NIMS) and the Incident Command System (ICS). ICS, a subset of NIMS, is a standardized on-scene incident management protocol designed to allow responders to adopt an integrated organizational structure equal to the complexity and demands of any single incident or multiple incidents without being hindered by jurisdictional boundaries.

The crisis management system adopted by Washington State melds well with the approach advocated by many of our nation's police and fire departments emphasizing the primary role local public safety agencies play in emergency response:

1. Local responders need to have venue specific information available to them in order to plan, prepare, and mitigate acts of terrorism and other emergencies (both man-made and natural).
2. While not frequently addressed in national anti-terrorism policy, schools represent perhaps our community's most sensitive venues.

3. Local, tribal, state, and federal public safety providers need to have affordable, reliable, scalable, and extensible data system(s) to manage this information.
4. Development of “information silos” creates interoperability issues at local, regional, and federal levels. The goal would be development of a standardized national interface.
5. First responders need to have simple and reliable access to information in order to act swiftly and decisively.
6. Disaster mitigation requires interagency cooperation and common access to information in a standardized form.

### **The Lewis and Clark High School Shooting Incident**

Now, let’s go back and look at how this combination of interagency cooperation, preplanning, use of the Incident Command System protocols, and implementation of a crisis management system helped us successfully mitigate a potentially dangerous shooting incident at Lewis and Clark High School. It is important to remember that during this type of incident, many things are happening concurrently and involving a wide number of public safety agencies and other stakeholders.

As gunfire rang out in the school, the principal and the school resource officer (SRO) immediately responded to the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor to evaluate the situation and determine the exact location of the gunman. In a shooting incident, the standard operating procedure calls for a school lockdown, but in this situation there were thousands of students out in the hallways eating lunch. After a short discussion, they realized the quickest way to evacuate the students was to pull the fire alarm. Lewis and Clark students go through numerous fire drills during the school year and were quick to respond.

At the same time, a SRO at another school had pulled up the crisis management system on his laptop and was relaying information about the gunman’s location and the school layout directly to police dispatch, which in turn passed the information on to responding officers.

Local patrol officers arrived at the school within four minutes and initiated what is known as an “active shooter response” to contain the suspect. This means that they immediately entered the school and moved directly towards the gunman, not waiting for a SWAT team to arrive and deploy.

During the Columbine incident, it took more than five hours before officers responding from multiple police agencies coordinated their efforts and entered the building.

Fire, police, and school security quickly set up a command post in a pre-determined location and accessed the crisis management program on a nearby computer. The program can be accessed via laptop computers, Internet connected computers, or by thumbnail-sized USB devices carried by SROs and first responders. A SRO initially assumed the role of Incident Commander per the ICS protocol. Police, fire, and emergency services in the Spokane area all adhere to ICS, whereby responders play pre-determined roles during an emergency, independent of their rank or agency. This high level of coordination made a world of difference in their ability to quickly respond and mitigate the critical situation at the high school.

The SWAT team, taking over from the active shooter team, positioned themselves in a nearby stairwell outside of Room 307 where the gunman was barricaded. They were puzzled when he popped his head out of three different doorways along the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor hallway. Officials at the command post accessed the floor plan via the CMS system and told them that Room 307 and Room 305 were connected by an internal doorway.

As a hostage negotiator began talking with the gunman, officials in the command post noticed that the corner room he occupied had unobstructed views of the grassy field where the students had been evacuated, and to eight lanes of traffic on the adjacent Interstate 90 freeway. Officials viewed aerial photos of the site and decided to move the students under the overhead freeway where they would be out of the line of fire. Using phone contacts listed in CMS, I called our transportation contractor, Laidlaw Educational Services, and asked them to immediately send 20 buses to relocate the students to an alternative site. Since the school district transportation department had participated in the preplanning sessions, they immediately understood what was needed. At the same time, a list of pre-determined roadblocks from the CMS was sent to the Spokane City Streets Department to block access to the school. Another list was sent to the Washington State Patrol to block access to the eight lanes of Interstate 90, which were exposed to the gunman's line of fire from the corner classroom. In both instances, valuable time was saved because all the roadblocks were determined during the pre-planning sessions with school officials, police, fire, and State Patrol that are part of the CMS implementation.

As news of the incident spread to parents via cell phone calls from their kids, it became important to discourage parents from driving towards the school and blocking local access routes for emergency vehicles. PIOs from both the school district and the police departments worked together to provide ongoing information to parents and the general public regarding the evolving situation.

Another problem developed when the gunman asked the police negotiator for matches. Fire officials knew from the CMS that Room 307 was a science lab, and as such, had a number of natural gas outlets. The concern was the gunman may be suicidal. In addition, there was always the potential for an explosion caused by any errant gunfire. Officials in the command post called the local gas company, which dispatched the nearest crew to help shut off the gas. Unfortunately, the crew was used to working on residential facilities and wasn't familiar with commercial installations.

Using the CMS, officials printed out photos of the utility shut-off valves and their location. A police officer escorted the utility crew and the gas was quickly shut-off. Fire officials also used the CMS to print out a list of all chemicals stored in Room 307. The printout listed the type of chemicals, their location, quantity, and Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) that profiled the chemical's characteristics and safety precautions.

With all the students safely evacuated, the roads blocked off, and the gunman isolated to a single location, it became a waiting game between the police and the gunman. Unfortunately, the gunman chose to provoke the SWAT team who were forced to fire in self-defense. The wounded

student was quickly evacuated by waiting paramedics to a nearby hospital where he eventually survived his wounds.

What was learned as a result of this incident that is pertinent to terrorism incidents and other emergencies? First, schools are highly vulnerable to a terrorist type attack. They need to be considered by DHS for both increased funding and protection. Secondly, in any such incident, local responders always will be the first on the scene. In even a minor emergency, these responders will represent multiple agencies with overlapping and sometimes divergent priorities. It is absolutely critical that these agencies establish trusted, working relationships with each other prior to a major event. Facility owners (schools, court houses, businesses, etc.) also need to sit down with public safety officials to talk about how they will respond to a wide variety of emergencies, and how they will work with other agencies to mitigate the situation. Third, agencies need access to common, pre-established communications channels during emergencies. Last week's rescue operations following Hurricane Katrina emphasize the problems when public safety and other responders cannot communicate with each other during rescue and recovery operations. And lastly, all first responders need access to detailed, up-to-date building and site information, such as that provided by a crisis management system.

### **The Problem of Protecting Students on School Buses**

I've talked about the procedures for protecting students in school buildings, but we also need to consider the problem of protecting students on school buses, an often neglected area in emergency plans. Spokane Public Schools serve 31,000 students in 55 different facilities, including six high schools, six middle schools, 35 elementary schools and a variety of special schools located in jails, hospitals and contracted agencies. Seven thousand of these students ride school buses to get to and from their local school. These 167 buses, carrying between 44 and 72 students each, travel 9,000 miles each day, the equivalent of going from Spokane to New York City and back 180 times a year. Along the way, they stop at thousands of bus stops to pick up children.

To give you an idea of the scope of the problem, there are more than 47 million students in any given day attending our nation's schools. Of these, 25 million ride in 440,000 yellow school buses that travel 8.8 billion trips each year. This is in comparison to public transit systems that serve 5.2 billion unlinked passenger trips each year in the U.S.

It is now easy to understand why protecting students on all these buses is a gargantuan task. Imagine this frightening scenario: One of the Spokane School District buses does not show up at its school of destination after picking up its 58 students. It takes 12 minutes until a phone call is made from the school to the transportation department. They in turn call the bus contractor who attempts, without success, to contact the bus by radio. After another 15 minutes, the school district's security department and the Spokane Police Department are notified. In a city of more than 150 big, yellow school buses, it is next to impossible to check each one to see if they are the missing school bus.

Meanwhile in Miami, Florida; San Francisco, California; Dallas, Texas; Tupelo, Mississippi; and Mt. Lebanon, Pennsylvania the same scenario is unfolding. Each local jurisdiction is dealing

with a crisis of a missing bus full of children. It isn't until an hour later that a connection is made by a national AP reporter who ties together news reports of three of the instances. Thirty minutes later, now two hours into the incident, it is confirmed by an anonymous phone call to the FBI that what was a series of localized emergencies is now a national terrorist crisis.

While it would be impractical to provide armed escorts for the thousands of school buses on our nation's roads each day, we can use technology, training, and communications tools to better protect these children. One solution, being implemented in Spokane Public Schools, is to do "security mapping" of school buses and incorporate this information, along with tactical response plans, into a CMS system. A similar approach could be taken with our metropolitan transit authorities nationwide, many of whom provide transportation services for school children.

### **Constant Shifting of Priorities Jeopardizes National Security – A Study of HVAs**

Another issue effecting national security is how Hazard Vulnerability Analysis (HVA) information is "siloes" and not shared with other agencies. HVAs have been and continue to be a vital means of studying and prioritizing local community, state, and national areas of concern regarding natural disasters, emergencies, and security crises. There is no question that HVAs should be conducted at the local, state, and national levels. That said, local agencies, including emergency responders such as police, fire, medical, and EMS, as well as the institutions they serve (school districts, businesses, hospitals, etc.) should be held responsible for response planning, training, facilities security improvements, etc.

Equally important is that the HVAs utilize an "all hazards" approach. I feel HVAs should not focus solely on security issues at the expense of fire prevention, medical services, or hazardous chemical exposures. As Hurricane Katrina has shown us in the past week, whether it is a terrorist incident, a hurricane, a flood or any other type of disaster, the emergency response is similar in all cases. Emergency agencies, as well as businesses and institutions, should support the cooperative sharing of HVAs through communication and joint planning.

The root of this problem is that agencies often operate within a vacuum of their own priorities, frequently at the detriment of other agencies or service providers. Nationally, we seem to be bouncing from one priority to another (air transportation to subways to trains, etc.) with little coordination between agencies, first responders or those affected. HVAs certainly help to set department goals, budgets, training, etc., but if done without consultation with other responder agencies, it creates a system of individual priorities, and often, conflicting priorities. As a result, decisions about finance, training, personnel, equipment, policies, and response procedures are made without dovetailing into a national priority. It is easy to get caught up in MY needs and priorities when in an emergency; WE will need to work and act together as a system.

### **The Importance of Sustainability of Programs**

Often the sustainability of a program is only thought of in regard to the funding of the program. Sustainability should be tied to local community priorities, or decisions regarding the determination of HVAs made by all stakeholder organizations. It is only through this joint

decision-making that long term support of a program can be ensured. Most federal grants now require the signatures of many different service agencies or end users. These signatures by themselves, however, do not ensure long term cooperation.

Another aspect of sustainability is the continued “silo effect” that permeates many agencies based on their specific goals or mission. While these missions are important to those they serve, they do not necessarily meet the needs of a common good. Take for example the Department of Justice, the Department of Homeland Security, and the Department of Education. Each of these agencies offers grants designed to serve the needs of states and local agencies. It is rare, however, that these agencies coordinate their efforts and require these funds to be used jointly or leveraged to serve a common good.

One of the final indignities regarding sustainability of programs is that if a program is effective, the funds are cut! Why would you not reward and promote programs that have been successful, thereby enabling the programs (with a requirement in future funding) to help other agencies or service providers, both public and private. Agencies invest time, energy, and limited funding into these programs. To not support the outcomes and take advantage of their successes is poor fiscal planning in my opinion.

Lastly, the sun-setting of grant funding creates an unmet need for newly created programs. In many programs, services are established or programs developed that then create service expectations in the local community. When the local entity cannot fiscally support these services due to grant money drying up, the program goes away leaving recipients empty handed and not served. Having the money to start up well meaning programs is great and serves to fill a short-term need. A more effective approach would be to tie grant funding to longer timelines for providing services and ensure that the written assurances of agencies supporting the grant application are, in fact, not just signatures but collaborative commitments. And by working with grant recipients in their local communities, rather than having them attend planning and training sessions in Washington, DC, you would go a long way to ensure the long term success of the programs.

### **Federal Direction and Support for Communications Systems**

Currently, the various response agencies and those they support in Spokane have the following means of communications available for use in emergencies: “push to talk” radios, such as Nextel<sup>®</sup>, UHF radios, VHF radios, 900 MHz radios, cellular phones, PDA’s, Smart Phones, cell phones, laptop computers with a variety of communications software platforms, personal recreation radios, and PC-based Internet e-mail. As you can see, we are not lacking in the means of communicating; we are in fact buried in it.

Due to the number of divergent systems in place, we are less able today to communicate with other agencies and even within our own organizations. As an example, even the local branch of the U.S. Postal Service has its own internal PDA communications system. They have a wonderful means of communicating with their fellow members of the U.S. Postal Service, but it does not allow for communications with other agencies or those emergency responders who might be providing services to them.



The ability to communicate is essential in an emergency. From the advent of the NIMS system in the 1970s, the result of disastrous wildfires that occurred due in part to a lack of common communications systems, to the recent 9/11 tragedy in New York City where fire and police could not communicate, communication continues to be a critical issue. Common radio frequencies or communications methods are an important part of an essential communications system. Again, the breakdown of communication between first responders during Hurricane Katrina exemplifies this point.

Functional radio communication is one part of the solution, and human communication is another. Having agencies and end users meeting, planning, and training prior to an incident is critical to reducing response time and saving lives. Sitting down together and conducting pre-plan tactical exercises allows: 1) relationship building, 2) establishment of trust; 3) an understanding of the other agency's or business' needs during an emergency; and 4) the development of a common plan of action.

In Spokane, we use a crisis management program that facilitates collaborative pre-planning sessions and collection of critical data about key facilities. In addition to providing a common platform for data collection (including photos, organizational charts, floor plans, site plans, hazard chemical listings, etc.), it provides the necessary forum for the pre-incident planning. In my experience, this approach is critical in breaking down communication barriers and building trust between first responder agencies and the organizations they serve.

One of the benefits of the crisis management system developed by the State of Washington is that it is a statewide program. In Washington, all first responders, including police, fire, State Patrol, and others all have access to the same master database of information. The Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs is responsible for the crisis management system, assuring that there is a common platform for data collection, training, procedures, response policies, and data security between local, county, and state first responders and their recipients.

If each local fire, police, and emergency management agency chose to use a different system, a coordinated response would be difficult.

Establishing a standardized statewide system is certainly not without its difficulties, especially those issues concerning "turf," budgets, and political concerns. But once agencies begin to use the system in actual emergencies, most of these issues resolve themselves and the agencies begin to see the inherent value of such a system. In our case, the CMS approach has truly served as a catalyst for collaboration and problem resolution. This type of program fosters communication, collaboration, and helps to build trusted relationships, all of which are critical factors during an actual emergency situation when lives and property are on the line.

### **Suggestions and Recommendations**

1. Facilitate relationship-building between agencies at the local, state and national level, both within individual disciplines and between different types of agencies and organizations. Providing for training, in-services, and product conferences where

planning, response, resolution and recovery conversations could be facilitated to establish common ground and exchange key information.

2. Provide for sustainable funding of model programs based on the requirement that agencies share their expertise and experience with others in their industry. The funding would be broad-based in that it would come from various agencies and serve to establish and maintain collaboration between local agencies and those they serve. It would encourage local investment of time, talent, and funding to create joint planning and response.
3. Develop and adopt communication models that can be implemented on a local or statewide basis. Support programs that facilitate pre-incident data collection and pre-plan tactical exercises, and encourage relationship-building between emergency responders and those they serve.
4. Support the development of an “all hazards” approach to emergencies, disasters and crises by providing all first responders with the basics in response protocols, communication, and incident response. Encourage adoption of NIMS / ICS protocols. Provide ICS training not only for police and fire services, but also for other emergency responders, including those in the public and private sector who will be responsible for ensuring their own employees’ safety during the early stages of a crisis.
5. Establish model plans for response to various emergencies, disasters and crises. Select a lead federal agency in each area that would become the “go-to” agency. This would reduce competition between agencies, create efficiencies at the Federal level, and reduce confusion on the part of local agencies regarding direction.

Once again, I appreciate the opportunity to come before this subcommittee to share my views on these subjects.

I will be available for any questions.

Thank you.

# A Collaborative Model for Providing Prevention, Intervention, Emergency Response and Recovery Services

