Homeland Security

National Response Plan and National Incident Management System Review and Revision Process Stakeholders Meeting

Wednesday, October 25, 2006

NATIONAL RESPONSE PLAN (NRP) KEY REVISION ISSUES - BACKGROUND

Note: The topics under each issue are not a finite list, but a sampling of comments pertaining to the issues.

1) Clarify Roles and Responsibilities of Key Structures/Positions/Levels of Government

- **Principal Federal Officer (PFO)/Federal Coordinating Officer (FCO) Relationship and Roles**
  - Suggestions in various After Action Reports (AARs) recommend reexamining the role of the PFO to give the PFO operational authority during an incident. The NRP currently states that the PFO has no authority over other Federal, State or local partners.
  - The Homeland Security Council (HSC) AAR also recommends that the Secretary of Homeland Security or the FEMA Director delegate their authority to oversee the FCO to the PFO; however, the NRP specifies that the PFO does not direct the FCO.

- **Non-Governmental Agencies (Volunteer/Faith-Based)**
  - NGOs and faith-based organizations provided tremendous support during Katrina; however, they were not adequately integrated into the Katrina response effort.
  - As the HSC AAR noted, considerations for improvements within the NRP to assist in the coordination of NGOs, include:
    - Improving communication of requirements from the incident site;
    - Pre-identifying and cataloging non-governmental goods and building a process to deploy these goods to specific regions in response to catastrophic events;
    - Developing a statewide support function for volunteers (both pre-trained and spontaneous) in each State to assist local emergency managers and NGOs prepare for, respond to, and recover from disasters;
    - Recruiting, training, and identifying National Incident Management System (NIMS) trained volunteers;
    - Incorporating NGOs into the planning, training, and exercising process;
    - Ensuring there is a mechanism to coordinate spontaneous, unaffiliated volunteers.

2) Review Joint Field Office (JFO) structure and operations

- In June 2006, the JFO Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) was released, which has aided in clarifying certain roles and processes. Nevertheless, the JFO construct, as the primary field-level Federal response multi-agency coordinating structure, still needs to be reviewed.

  - **Realign to NIMS Structure in JFO**
    - Although the NRP base plan was predicated on the NIMS incident command system, the Emergency Support Functions (ESFs) were taken from the old Federal Response Plan and were not adequately realigned to fit within the NIMS structure.
    - Rather than having each ESF function independently by undertaking common functions (i.e., operations, planning, logistics, finance/administration), the ESF structure should be realigned
    - The JFO SOP currently states this new concept and for the 2006 hurricane season, exercises and training have been advocating this concept.

  - **Review Infrastructure Liaison and Cell roles**
    - The Infrastructure Liaison is designated by the DHS/Office of Infrastructure Protection, to serve as the principal advisor to the JFO Coordination Group regarding all national and regional level critical infrastructure and key resource incident-related issues.
    - The HSC AAR recommends that this role be more clearly defined, and have greater responsibility.
    - One recommendation is that the expanded Infrastructure Liaison group will incorporate the Private Sector Liaisons to ensure unity of effort.

3) Strengthen role of States and Private Sector under the NRP

- The NRP is applicable to Federal departments and agencies that may be requested to provide assistance or conduct operations in an Incident of National Significance or when requested by the Secretary of Homeland Security. State and local authorities as well as the private sector have been encouraged to make their incident management plans conform to the NRP, but there is no requirement.
- The Federal government provides support to State and local authorities and works with these jurisdictions to ensure that requirements are understood and met.
- The private sector is also an important stakeholder, as 85% of the nation's infrastructure is privately owned.
- There are currently mechanisms in the NRP for participation by State, local and private sector entities. Within the JFO Coordination Group, there is a position for a State representative, and there is an Infrastructure Liaison in the JFO Coordination Staff.
- These roles need to be examined to ensure the maximum coordination between the Federal government and these stakeholders.

4) Strengthen External Affairs (ESF #15) and the Public Affairs Annexes

- The key to effective public messaging is a coordinated message. DHS Public Affairs is responsible for ensuring the streamlining of communications. The NRP contains an ESF for External Affairs as well as a Public Affairs Annex.
- These annexes should be reviewed to ensure that there is a clear structure for a fully coordinated, integrated, and synchronized public communications strategy, across the Federal government and with State and locals, to include delineating when National and Incident Joint Information Centers (JICs) should be required to be activated and deactivated.

5) Refine the Catastrophic Incident Supplement to include the review of a possible increased DOD responsibility

- While DOD provides support to the Federal government under the concept of Defense Support of Civil Authorities, there has been discussions of having DOD assume the role of HSPD-5 during events of "extraordinary scope and nature."
- The HSC has directed DOD and DHS to develop recommendations for revision of the NRP to delineate the circumstances, objectives, and limitations of when DOD might temporarily assume the lead for the Federal response to a catastrophic incident.
- The NRP Notice of Change clarified that DOD Joint Task Force Commanders should be collocated with the JFO Coordination Group.

6) Ensure consistency between NRP and new National Emergency Communications Strategy (NECP)

- At the time the NRP was developed, a NECP did not exist. Since then, one has been developed, and its concepts should be appropriately incorporated into the NRP, specifically, ESF #2 – *Communications*.
- The NECP provides a preliminary strategic "plan for integrating communications for all levels of crisis in light of evolving threats and new and converging technologies, and for organizational and policy changes."
- During emergencies, ESF-2 must have the authority to implement, resource, and restore communications.

7) Review Public Safety and Security roles and missions

- ESF #13 – *Public Safety and Security* initially designated DHS and DOJ as the co-coordinators and primary agencies.
- The NRP Notice of Change removed DHS as a coordinator and primary agency and left the responsibility for managing the ESF with DOJ. However, that was the extent of the changes to that particular ESF.
- Sources to include the HSC and congressional committees believe that the NRP needs to provide for a more effective coordination of the law enforcement response to a disaster by clarifying and expanding the role and mission of the Public Safety and Security support function and the Senior Federal Law Enforcement Officer.

8) Review coordinating and supporting agencies for all annexes

- Each ESF, Support and Incident Annex has coordinating and supporting agencies.
- All of the annexes should be reviewed to ensure that the equities of all Federal partners are properly associated with the various annexes. For example, there have been recommendations to add DOD and USDA as support agencies to the International Coordination Support Annex. More importantly, there have been suggestions to reassign the coordinating responsibility for certain areas such temporary housing and mass care.

9) Improve process for identifying and accepting donated goods

- During Katrina, the HSC AAR noted that FEMA could neither efficiently accept nor manage the deluge of charitable donations.
- Private sector companies also encountered problems when attempting to donate their goods and services to FEMA for Hurricane Katrina response efforts.
- The NRP, in particular, the Volunteer and Donations Support Annex, needs to be reviewed regarding its use during emergency response operations. This process should include the following: Pre-arranged and contingency contracting; provision of requirements estimates to NGOs and private sector organizations that are willing to provide resources during catastrophic events; and consistent, accurate, and timely messaging of resource needs to NGOs.

10) Ensure the integration of all Federal search and rescue assets

- Search and rescue efforts revealed the need for greater coordination between the two constituent components of search and rescue, i.e., Urban Search and Rescue (US&R) and civil search and rescue (SAR).
- The scope of ESF #9 currently includes only urban search and rescue
- There are additional Federal search and rescue assets that should be included as part of ESF #9.
- ESF #9 should include linkages to the National Search and Rescue Plan.

11) Clarification of international support mechanisms

- During Hurricane Katrina, there were numerous offers of foreign assistance, yet no proper mechanisms for processing those offers. The International Coordination Support Annex to the NRP does not contain enough detail.
- Additionally, in improving their strategies for providing faster information and assistance to American citizens, Federal, State, and local emergency management officials should also include provisions covering the needs of affected foreign nationals.

12) Incorporation of companion animal emergency management issues

- Issues arose during Katrina regarding the Federal government's assistance to State and local authorities for the sheltering and evacuation of pets. In particular, Federal regulations prohibit pets from residing in shelters with their owners. This led to a problem with human rescues, as people did not want to leave their pets.
- The NRP does not currently discuss Federal assistance pertaining to companion animals, only wildlife and livestock.

13) Integration of NIMS concepts, principles, terminology, and organizational processes into the revised NRP

- The DRG is advocating combining the NRP and NIMS into a single document. The recommendation is to have NIMS be an annex of the NRP.
- The NRP is a specific application of NIMS.
- While NIMS is tied to funding and authorities, and is applicable to all levels of government, there is no funding associated with the NRP and it is only applicable to Federal partners.

14) Proactive planning for incidents that render State and local Governments incapable of an effective response

- Even though the NRP contains a Catastrophic Incident Annex and Supplement, the HSC AAR states that the NRP does not adequately anticipate that the Federal government may need to assume temporarily some inherently State and local responsibilities and augment State and local incident command staff during a catastrophic incident.
- The HSC report recommended that the Federal government develop plans to build and temporarily command the ICS until the local or State authorities are able to recover from the initial impact of the catastrophic incident and perform their roles under ICS.
- The HSC report also recommended that DHS pre-identify and catalog non-governmental goods and build a process to deploy these goods to specific regions for catastrophic events. The Catastrophic Incident Supplement, which identifies these packages, was recently released through the HSC.