

**The Bill Blackwood
Law Enforcement Management Institute of Texas**

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**Terrorism/Weapons of Mass Destruction
And Effects on Small Police Departments**

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**An Administrative Research Paper
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Abstract

In the world's complex societies, in which we live, there exist deep ethnic divisions, which cause individuals and formalized groups to act using horrific attempts to make a statement. The terrorist mission is to terrorize mass groups of people with threats, following through with the act. In Japan, terrorists used serin gas in a subway causing death and injury to hundreds of innocent human beings. The age of the people involved was not of interest to the terrorists. The fact that women, children and men were killed and injured was of interest to those who caused this act of terrorism.

There is little research to date concerning "terrorism/weapons of mass destruction and effects on small police departments." By utilizing research conducted in large urban areas it may be possible to begin the development of a communication procedure to alert federal agencies of a localized terrorist threat or event. It is vital that small town police departments around the country develop methods of communication with each other as well as with federal agencies in the event of an act of terrorism by a group using weapons of mass destruction.

The research material in this study includes publications of data compiled since the Sept. 11 terrorist attack. Also presented is a review of policy and procedures compiled by cities and agencies across the United States for the detection of terrorism by first responders.

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Introduction

September 11, 2001, ushered in an era of war that Americans could not conceive. To use the historic utterance of President Franklin D. Roosevelt, it was “a day that will live in infamy.” The terrorist attack of 9-11 has become a war in every sense of the word. It is a war brought to American soil by Muslim fanatics with only one mission: Destroy the American way of life by penetrating U.S. security defenses. It is now known that security was lax. With false documents, the infamous 19 terrorists were allowed to enter this country undetected, blend in with American society, learn how to fly (take off and navigate only), then carry out their mission of destruction undetected until the last moment ... too late.

Enter homeland security. Homeland security is designed for metropolitan areas. Small communities are left vulnerable for terrorists to employ their weapons of mass destruction (WMD) be they biological, chemical or radiological (a dirty nuclear device). The purpose of this research is to document the answer to the question: Will small police departments, even with proper training and equipment, be able to cope with the magnitude of devastation caused by weapons of mass destruction?.

This study will examine terrorism/weapons destruction concerning small towns with a population of 5,000 or less. What will the effects be on small police departments if weapons of mass destruction are used by terrorists? What may the most probable weapon of mass destruction be that a terrorist would use on a small town in order to devastate life and property?

Methods of inquiry for study include interviews with chiefs of police as well as books, training manuals, government documents and Internet web sites related to

terrorism and weapons of mass destruction will be researched. Police chiefs in towns with less than 5,000 population, employing 10 officers or less, will be interviewed to determine their readiness. It is anticipated that the findings will support: Police departments with less than 10 officers are unprepared for catastrophies of this nature. Small departments will be unable to effectively respond and adequately perform functions to protect the community. Officers will be forced to wait for emergency management teams to arrive, which could be anywhere from 12 to 24 hours. By this time damage will have been done.

Small law enforcement agencies will have to train together and pool their resources i.e. personnel and equipment to cope with an act of terrorism or mass destruction attack. The findings will implicate the need for small town police chiefs to put aside their egos and work together. Small departments in rural areas need to train together, which will greatly improve their inter-agency communications and increase their pool of resources to survive an attack. It has been estimated that the probability of an act of terrorism using weapons of mass destruction occurring at some location in the United States is extremely high. There is no guarantee it will happen in a metropolitan area. Small towns and their police departments must be prepared.

Review of Literature

Upon researching the topic of terrorism/weapons of mass destruction and effects on small police departments, it is essential to know what a terrorist is as well as what he or she is capable of doing. According to Olin (2002), "A terrorist kills civilians incidentally and attempts to destroy the society of his or her target (p. 28). Weapons of mass destruction may be silent killers, nondiscriminatory and extremely effective on

congregated populations. This lethal device may be as simple as a virus, which will spread illness or death to all organisms that come in contact with it, whether they are microbial or human.

The Bookings Institution did come out with one particular study that said you need an additional \$7 billion to \$9 billion ... to properly defend the homeland. Experts seem to agree with these statistics and yet between Congress and Every police agency will need funds to purchase equipment for use by the first responder to an act of terrorism. Then a decision is needed on who will disperse those funds and how. Small towns of 5,000 residents or less will need to find a way to qualify for funding prior to an event happening. Ashcroft (2003) reports that, "to qualify for funding, states, territories and the District of Columbia must conduct a comprehensive assessment of risk, capabilities and needs related to a potential terrorist attack, and develop a multiyear statewide domestic preparedness strategy. States will guide their spending of the federal grants according to their qualifications" (p. 24). International editor Fareed Zakaria says that many local agencies have requested funding. The administration, funding is not there.

Most reports, interviews and studies indicate the possibility and probability of a terrorist attack occurring in a city of high risk. This means any city with a metropolitan population greater than 20,000. Although these findings are for cities with large populations, law enforcement in small towns must take heed, drop the ego feeding of each police chief, and learn to promote cooperation and communication with local, state and federal counterparts to form a welcome and powerful resource in the battle against terrorism.

Olin (2002) has noted, “We must recognize that there is a fundamental shift in the roles and responsibilities of law enforcement officers in our society. While a traditional law enforcement response alone will not impact modern terrorist threats, new training combined with our knowledge of our community, interactions with citizens, and networking with others such as postal workers, street crews, utility and sanitation employees give the local law enforcement officer access to important information. Integrating these sources into a useful appraisal of the threat improves the security of all of us” (p. 30).

It would be wise to educate our citizens to remember that now anything may be a target. Terrorists will attack anything, with anything they can, to create mass hysteria or anything that will affect our local or state economy. It would be unwise to believe that residing in a small community becomes a barrier or shield from the effects of a disaster. Many terrorists will seek out soft targets. Places considered soft targets can include schools, Christian churches as well as temples belonging to other faiths in our country. Many law enforcement officials have been issued material from the Federal Bureau of Investigation reviewing methods used by al-Qaida. Whether soft target or not, local police must also prepare for poisonous gas, biological agent or radiological event which may be released in a confined space. One example is a subway or tunnel. There are tunnels all over the United States in rural areas as well as urban areas.

Chief of Fire and Rescue Services William Jenaway (2003) has offered an argument for funding: “At bare minimum, every firefighter, police officer and emergency medical provider should be trained in the basics of an attack involving a weapon of mass destruction. Such training should not leave smaller municipalities out. There have been

millions of dollars allocated for the training, equipping and exercising of response teams in our largest cities; however, little has reached rural and suburban America where the threats are as real and as dangerous.” These non-metropolitan areas are where our water supplies reside, our basic industry and food production lie, and where much of our electrical power and natural resources are.

Much of the federal funds slated for first responders should also be used to purchase basic equipment such as gas masks, chemical and biological protection suits and decontamination equipment. Other equipment needs include: explosive mitigation devices, including bomb suits and containment vessels, chemical and biological threat detection equipment to accurately sample and monitor the environment, and specialized vehicles for transporting personnel and equipment into and through contaminated areas.

While much of the \$3.5 billion White House officials have earmarked for the first responders will surely be spent on equipment, much of it should also go toward training. Federal specialists should establish the training standards. Any such training programs should also have follow-up activities so that first responders retain what they have learned.

Methodology

Will small town police departments, even with proper training and equipment, be able to cope with the magnitude of devastation caused by weapons of mass destruction? It is hypothesized that most small town police departments in the state of Texas are not prepared, nor do many chiefs of police believe they will ever be prepared. The research is predicted to support this hypothesis. The method of inquiry utilized was personal interviews with police chiefs.

The research consisted of 23 chiefs of police, who were contacted by phone, in order to make an appointment for an interview. Along with interviews, a search of the Internet was conducted. Further academic research on the subject included geo-technical, environmental and socioeconomic studies of towns whose population is less than 5,000. An example of socioeconomic issues including training costs, costs of overtime, as well as a lack of adequate staffing to provide basic patrolling of the city. Environmental issues included protection and treatment of first responders as well as for civilians to a radiological, poisonous gas and any explosive or incendiary device.

Findings

Information was gathered by interviews and Internet access in order to obtain a reasonable deduction which shows governmental agencies provide little to protect the towns and villages across the United States from terrorism. Each police chief interviewed voiced a concern that their officers are not prepared as first responders to a terrorist attack. Most chiefs refused the interview process. Their fear was possible retaliation by city managers. Only five chiefs out of the 23 contacted would consent to an interview. Others did offer opinions and voiced problems that were unanimous with most chiefs. The populace of northeast Texas consists of small towns with as few as 35 people residing within the city limits. Within these small towns of less than 5,000 residents, people are close knit and hesitate to verbalize what they really think.

Small town police departments have their own sense of urgency to produce exercises, policies and training for all first responders. It was discovered, during an interview, that one small town discussed a possible scenario with the Centers for Disease Control about a smallpox epidemic. This meeting was conducted because the (CDC)

considered this town to be at risk due to the targets available for destruction by terrorists. Targets considered are the water treatment plants, sewer plants, as well as the numerous food processing plants in this rural area. Rail systems flood this area with a multitude of tracks running north, south, east and west. To assist monitoring the town, for terrorists/weapons of mass destruction, local business people and citizens are asked to call law enforcement if they spot suspicious vehicles or suspicious persons. Police officers did voice complaints to the officials of the (CDC) that most of the information provided was extremely vague.

In the event of a smallpox epidemic, affected persons would be asked to go to high schools in two specific counties. Professional medical staff, comprised of medical doctors and registered nurses, would determine eligibility for inoculation. Eligible people would proceed to school buses in alphabetical order. Once loaded, the buses would proceed to the civic center in one county. There, doctors and nurses would administer the inoculations.

The police officers from each town would take turns providing security to the high schools and civic center. Only school buses would be permitted to park at the civic center. All other vehicles would be turned away.

The discussion with the (CDC) continued with police officers asking how they would get the staff and money to pay new officers to provide this security. Also discussed was handling of trespassers and rioters. Another problem that could arise is if a family of illegal aliens, whose last name begins with 'A,' gets the vaccination before the American citizens whose last name begins with 'S.' Some people in this particular area have very narrow minds, and would perform violence if they felt it was necessary in order to put

their legal families first. The officials from the (CDC) sat in their seats while looking at the officers with no answer to their question. (See appendix.)

Communication between the public and officials through the media should be constant and often. This continuity of essential communication should assist in preventing panic in the general public. The (CDC) has been working on methods to develop communication with first responders. The first responders are physicians, nurses, epidemiologists, laboratory technicians, emergency medical services, police officers and other people who may arrive on the scene of a terrorist attack.

Discussions/Conclusions

While researching this subject it became evident that every chief of police should take steps to place safeguards for their officers in dealing with terrorism and make those provisions available to their police officers no matter how small the department.

According to L. Fleet, chief of police in Lone Star, Texas, "My department of four full time officers and two reserve officers does not have the luxury of a large tax base for reserve money. The government has set aside billions of dollars for homeland security, with the small agencies getting scraps, if that. We, in our city, have filled out countless amounts of applications for the emergency management funds. The paperwork is countless and the response is virtually non-existent. After the 9-11 attacks in New York City and all the anthrax scares, as well as reports, I learned that if you do not have a population of at least one million you are not given any response by the FBI or any other governmental agency," Chief Fleet said. "We had at least three reported cases, by citizens, of white powder either by mail or in goods received at businesses. During these encounters I contacted the FBI and they said, 'We don't want them, send them to Dallas.'

In other accounts, a phone card had been stolen from a citizen and \$950 of calls made to Pakistan. Again the FBI was contacted and they did not want to do anything with it. My question to the Homeland Security is: What about the little guy?"

"On Feb. 1, 2003, the shuttle Columbia went down in East Texas. I was paged out to assist in the recovery effort. Upon arrival, in my words, it was 'a cluster.' The first 24-48 hours were spent arguing about who was in charge. The people arguing were federal agencies. The grunts as I call them, the local law enforcement, fire departments and citizens did the work. It is a shame that the federal agencies talk a good talk, but when it comes time to act, they can't. They can't act due to trying to figure out who is going to get credit for the act," Chief Fleet said.

In another interview, Chief Kennedy of Hughes Springs, Texas, voiced that his answers were confined to his agency's preparedness level and that is 'we are not prepared.' Many similar shortfalls in preparedness or lack of preparedness were a constant. It is concluded that most small departments have the same limitations. Limitations include a lack of available manpower. Small departments have no personnel currently trained to deal with hazardous materials. There is no explosive ordinance or equipment to handle contamination. Towns are unable to provide adequate secured shelters for the populace. Supplies and materials, which are readily obtainable for extended periods of time for cities with a population of less than 5,000, are not available.

The problem is that small town police departments, even with proper training and equipment are not able to cope with the magnitude of devastation caused by weapons of mass destruction. The purpose of this study is to confirm the fact there is not research available to begin a plan to cope with terrorist/weapons of mass destruction for a small

town police department with the city population of 5,000 or less. It was hypothesized that most small town police departments in the state of Texas are not prepared. The limitations on viable interviews for fear of repercussion from city managers and other authorities, has made it impossible to have enough for comparison and contrast. Internet materials as well as journals do not have articles for the small town law enforcement agencies to gain insight on how to prepare for the event of terrorist/weapons of mass destruction. Therefore, there is need for developing further research to further substantiate the hypothesis.

Lastly, our police officers and highway patrol officers are expected to continue to carry out their duties to protect and serve the public. Citizens continue to feel a sense of safety while their officers are patrolling their neighborhoods each and every day and night. The civilian population expects police officers to ensure their communities are protected with the most up-to-date security measures possible to protect them from the formidable. This includes teens driving with excessively loud music, a minor infraction, all the way through a catastrophic event. It is difficult for our police officers not to charge in during any disaster. At one time, fire department personnel used to call SWAT teams blue canaries. This was referring to the caged canaries that miners used to take underground, and whose death warned of poisonous gases which accumulated in areas of the mine. This gave miners time to evacuate the mine and save their lives. Today, it could prove to be a fatal mistake for law enforcement officers to charge in to rescue others from a terrorist attack, event of terrorism/weapons of mass destruction, and everything that fits in between. This researcher predicts the answers will come too late.

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Appendix

Post – Event Mass Smallpox Vaccination Clinic Planning: Camp, Morris, Titus
and Upshur Counties

March 10, 2003

Pilgrim Bank Meeting Room

200 Lafayette St., Pittsburg

Smallpox Virus

- Smallpox is a disease caused by a virus,
- Viruses are not susceptible to antibiotics,
- Cannot grow on non-living media,
- Must be inside a living cell to reproduce,
- Host species is human
- One of the largest of all virus particles.

Incubation Period

- Interval of time between exposure to the disease and the appearance of the disease is the incubation period,
- Smallpox has an incubation period of 7-19 days,
- The average incubation period is 12 days.

Modes of Transmission

- Coughing, sneezing, talking,
- Airborne transmission in hospital setting,
- Contact with the linens of infected patients by laundry workers in hospitals,

- Contact with infected scab material,
- Contact with lesions.

Mode of Protection (Vaccine)

- The smallpox vaccine does not contain smallpox virus particles,
- The vaccine contains live Vaccinia virus particles,
- Since these are live Vaccinia organisms, it is possible to transfer virus particles to other parts of the body.

Health and Medical

- 400 Personnel,
- Medical Screeners,
- Physicians Evaluators,
- Registered Nurse Vaccinators,
- Emergency Personnel.

Law Enforcement

- 200 Personnel,
- Traffic and Crowd Control,
- Vaccine Security,
- City, County and State Officers.

Other Professional and Technical Support

- Social Workers,
- Translators,
- Chaplains and Ministers,
- Rest Area Site Workers,

- Screening Site Managers,
- TDH Personnel.