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First Responder Protocol:
Protecting the University Police Officer

**A
Policy Research Project
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of the Requirements for the Professional Designation
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Abstract

The purpose of this research was to identify the need for a policy on weapons of mass destruction at West Texas A&M University. The research determined that there is an increasing need for developing this policy based on the recent uses of these weapons. WTAMU currently does not have a policy on how to respond to threats or events of this kind, which leaves the university very vulnerable to these threats. Several departments were contacted and it was discovered that knowledge of these types of weapons is lacking and, because of that, many departments do not have policies in place. This research identified aspects of training and some equipment, which could be utilized, relatively inexpensively, to respond to these threats and increase the level of service provided by WTAMU. Based on this research, it is recommended that WTAMU adopt a policy that establishes training standards as well as response protocols to address this inadequacy. If a policy were adopted, the university and surrounding community would benefit from a heightened security and response mechanism, hopefully diminishing the likelihood of a successful attack or at least reducing the number of casualties.

Introduction

Biological threats are becoming the threat of the new millenium. What was once only reserved for the military battlefield is now being used as a tool by domestic terrorists. Terrorists, both organized and independent, are using these weapons as a means of intimidation and extortion. It is difficult to respond to the threat because there is no easy way to determine the credibility of a threatened attack without tremendous time, effort and expense. These threats are on the rise for several reasons. The primary reason these weapons are becoming more popular is because they are more accessible than conventional weapons, cheaper to obtain and are often legal to possess in their component forms. Another reason they are being developed is because they can be delivered covertly without having the threat or problem of confrontation. They also have the potential of producing mass casualties and overloading the medical system, which is something terrorists use to gain attention to their cause. Since West Texas A&M University (WTAMU) has a large number of international students and is in close proximity to a major nuclear storage facility, it allows terrorists both the means of residence and targets of dense population and military significance. It has also been found that hate groups are recruiting college age students to build their memberships at alarming rates.

Law enforcement has always been depended upon to respond to any threat and this is no different. The purpose of this research is to develop a protocol for first responders to these threats at WTAMU. These incidents typically require a large response from several agencies, including police, fire departments, medical personnel, hazardous material teams and federal law enforcement, if linked to terrorism. Manpower

and available resources often limit universities and small departments; therefore, this protocol will be designed with this in mind. The federal government has established a protocol for federal agencies to respond, which makes federal resources available to local law enforcement, but there is no uniform plan that will work for all agencies. In many cases, a federal response may be hours away at a time when seconds save lives.

This research will be used to convince university officials as well as city and county commissioners to support and fund this type of training and preparation. Since WTAMU is incorporated into the city of Canyon and Randall County, it will require all three agencies to work together to effectively deal with any incident of this type without simply shifting the affected people somewhere else.

This paper will research protocols and policies already in place in other jurisdictions in order to find components that will allow us to custom build one that is suitable for our jurisdiction. The plan must be reasonable and capable of implementation in order to be effective. This paper will also research the current biological weapons that are present so that the audience is properly informed in their possible use and effects. This will be essential in developing the first responder protocol in order to prevent as many casualties as possible, including the responding police, EMS and fire units.

The goal of this research will be to design a plan to compliment and utilize all available resources, local and federal, in Randall County while providing the first responders with the training and knowledge needed to prevent as many casualties as possible. The final goal will be the implementation of a biological weapons protocol and policy that is effective, efficient, and adaptable for WTAMU.

Historical Perspectives

Biological weapons are almost as old as warfare. As far back as 2000 BC, toxic fumes were used in India to defeat enemies (Falkenrath et al. 74). In 400 BC, the Spartans reportedly used wood saturated with pitch and sulfur during sieges to choke city defenders. In 1346, at Kaffa (now Fedossia, Ukraine), bodies of Tartar soldiers who succumbed to plague were catapulted over the walls and into the besieged city causing their enemy to flee for fear of contracting the plague (Falkenrath et al. 74).

According to DeGeneste et al, the urge to kill more effectively and efficiently led to the development of more sophisticated weapons. In April 1915, chlorine gas was deployed against British troops, quickly producing necrotizing effects in the lining of the bronchial tubes and air sacs of the lung, with the net result of massive pulmonary edema, denying oxygen to the body. An estimated 5,000 were killed and 10,000 wounded. In December 1915, phosgene was introduced to battle. Eighteen more times powerful than chlorine, phosgene inhalation also results in pulmonary edema, although its appearance is often delayed by several days. Since then, 68 chemical warfare agents have been identified and over 2,000 more hazardous materials are listed as civilian dangers (DeGeneste et al. 74)

The first major use of biological weapons was in World War I. During this time, several countries developed and used biological weapons. The Germans introduced mustard gas during this time (DeGeneste et al. 74). Mustard gas is a blistering agent that attacks the eyes and skin when dispersed as liquid droplets or a fine powder. When inhaled, it causes pulmonary edema. At the same time, the French were developing hydrogen cyanide. Hydrogen cyanide is used as a vapor. It rapidly blocks the ability of

blood cells to take in oxygen, producing convulsions, coma and death. Its rapid nature precludes first-aid measures. Zyklon B, a hydrogen cyanide derivative, is infamous for its role in Nazi death camps. (DeGeneste et al. 74-5)

The race for the ultimate weapon continued. In the 50s, nerve agents were developed. These include tabun (GA), sarin (GB), soman (GD) and VX. VX, which epitomizes the V-series nerve agents, is a viscous liquid with a consistency similar to that of motor oil. It does not evaporate and can be converted to a droplet weapon. Extraordinarily toxic, VX can penetrate the skin, causing almost immediate death by respiratory failure. The G-agents tabun and sarin are synthetic organophosphates similar to pesticides. Both agents are immediately fatal if inhaled. They can also be slowly absorbed through the skin. Immediate symptoms are difficulty in breathing, drooling, nausea, convulsions, impaired vision, and death. Sarin was used by Iraq to quell Kurdish civilians along the border in northern Iraq. Sarin was also the substance used in the Tokyo subway attack. Soman is a heavier, more toxic and persistent relative of sarin. No battlefield use has been reported using soman (DeGeneste et al. 75).

Eventually, nations began to realize that the continued development of these weapons would only lead to casualties never before comprehended (Falkenrath et al. 15). These weapons were so awesome, that they were formally banned in 1972 by the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC). The BWC is an unverified agreement that has been ratified by 140 nations. However, several of the nations that signed the agreement are known or suspected of having biological weapons programs after that date, including Russia, Iraq, Libya, North Korea, Taiwan, Syria, Israel, Iran, China, and Egypt (Falkenrath et al. 15). Even though the U.S. ended its offensive biological weapons

development in 1969, it continues to work on defensive measures and antidotes for the weapons possessed by other nations (Falkenrath et al. 15).

As DeGeneste noted, the event that brought biological weapons to the forefront was the Tokyo Sarin Disaster of 1995. After several failed attempts of mass destruction, members of Aum Shinrikyo placed five chemical canisters disguised as lunch boxes and soft drink containers on the busy Tokyo subway. These simply binary bombs ultimately affected three subway lines exposing 5,000 to 6,000 people and killing 12. Medical response was poor in that it took over two hours before the cause was identified. Medical teams were overwhelmed and no decontamination occurred. Instead, the victims were delivered to local hospitals, possibly infecting more victims (DeGeneste et al. 70).

The growing concern is the propensity of terrorists to use these weapons, not as mass casualty tools, but rather as extortion devices by way of threat. Many larger cities have already experienced the problems related to these threats and the costs incurred to respond. These threats are also being used to disrupt the normal service of abortion clinics (Richards 24). It is not uncommon for more than 100 health and safety personnel to respond to every incident. This stresses the public health and safety agencies required to respond as well as inconveniencing hundreds of people who are alleged to have been exposed. This often means that people are detained for hours, given urgent doses of antibiotics, and even ordered to scrub themselves in makeshift showers set up in parking lots by the authorities responding. This trend has forced many agencies to confront this issue and begin writing protocols and policies on how to effectively respond (Richards 24).

Review of Literature or Practice

Biological weapons have become the center of attention because of their recent use in Tokyo and threats in the U.S. As the authors of *America's Achilles's Heel* noted, the likelihood of covert NBC attacks against the United States may still be low today, but it is not zero (2). They say it is growing greater with time, for three reasons: first, NBC weapons are becoming more accessible to a wider range of groups; second, the predominance of US military forces and the virtual invincibility of the U.S. homeland to direct military attack leave America's international adversaries with few options other than unconventional threats, including covert attacks with weapons of mass destruction; and third, the nature of violence is changing in a way that strongly suggests rising NBC risks (Falkenrath et al. 2-3).

The authors go on to suggest that in the event of a biological attack, seven general types of consequences are likely: massive casualties, contamination, panic, degraded response capabilities, economic damage, loss of strategic position, and social-psychological damage and political change. The deep dilemma of the covert CB threat is that, while the severity of its potential consequences calls for preventive efforts and preparedness that are characteristic of a national security response, its latency and domestic character suggest that the more restrained law enforcement approach is in order (5-9).

As Larry Medford points out, local law enforcement officers probably will be the first responders to any chemical or biological incident. As such, they are responsible for verifying the threat, evacuating affected areas, and attempting to prevent detonation of the CB weapon, if possible (23). If detonation occurs, local authorities must cope with

the immediate results of the incident, known as consequence management. This includes saving lives, providing medical treatment to the injured, housing and feeding evacuated citizens, and decontaminating affected areas. Local and state authorities, however, often do not possess expertise in dealing with CB weapons, which originally were developed by and for the military. Therefore, additional assistance might be needed (23).

Police protocols seem to vary depending on the size of the agency and the resources they have available. Many agencies are scrambling to put together policies as this paper is written. The departments surrounding WTAMU that might be involved if an incident occurred were contacted, as well as a larger department, to see their response protocol. The Austin Police Department is much larger than any city in the panhandle and has a large resource base to pull from so their first responder protocol is very brief with the majority of the response given to the fire department and hazardous material divisions. Austin uses their patrol officers to establish a perimeter and then has their bomb squad as a primary responder since many of these devices can include explosives. Austin does not address in their policy or their practice how they train street officers regarding these threats.

The Amarillo Police Department operates in much the same way except they have no written policy specifically for incidents involving weapons of mass destruction. They include them in their disaster protocol, but have no training for their street officers addressing the dangers of responding improperly. The Canyon Police Department also has no written policy addressing this issue. Canyon does not have the resources available to larger cities such as Amarillo and Austin. They rely on their local fire department, but they, too, fail to address training.

FEMA has a policy and protocol for responding to these threats, but they must be contacted in order to activate their response. Although the FBI is the primary federal agency responsible for any terrorist activity, they are only secondary responders as well because they, too, must be notified when an event has occurred. That means that the University Police Department will have to handle the situation until federal assistance can arrive.

Discussion of Relevant Issues

As DeGeneste and his colleagues point out, the first step to be taken in mitigating the threat of CB terrorism is to forge linkages between the police, fire and emergency medical services (78). Because of the potential for mass casualties, medical response efforts must also be strengthened. EMS personnel should receive joint training with the police and fire services for chemical as well as biological incidents (78).

Interaction between the police and intelligence services is also essential. Warning of potential attacks and tracking movements of groups with the capability and intentions to utilize exotic modes of attack—particularly when these criminals cross intra- and international borders—is key to preventing CB terrorism. As such, cooperation between the intelligence and police services must be bolstered. Intelligence gathering and analysis at all levels must focus on interdicting and preventing CB incidents (as well as conventional acts of terrorism) before they occur. Such countermeasures must include the use of warning systems to achieve maximum effectiveness. This requires a commitment to develop and share technology (DeGeneste et al. 78)

Finally, training and exercises are essential. Practical efforts to build response and investigative skills must be undertaken, including thorough education and integration

of firefighters, police and other counter disaster personnel into a comprehensive emergency response system. This system would embrace the command, control and intelligence infrastructure necessary to sustain crisis decision making and rapid, coordinated field management efforts among a variety of disciplines (DeGeneste et al. 80).

A recommended policy approach for WTAMU would be to include many of the things these authors suggested. Take the initiative to get the proper training so that we could train personnel on site. When doing this, local EMS and Fire department should be included so that everyone is uniformly trained and operating from the same set of guidelines. A mutual aid agreement is already in place with the agencies in this county, which will allow the utilization of their manpower and resources, if needed. The policy should stress the safety of the responders as well as the safety of the possible victims. If the first responders are not properly trained, they will surely perish and therefore not be able to help the victims.

As part of the policy research, commercially available suits were researched in order to provide our primary responders with adequate protection. The Chemical Weapons Improved Response Program at the Soldier and Biological Chemical Command at the Aberdeen Proving Ground in Maryland conducted some tests of five suits. The Tyvek ProTech F protective suit was rated the best by the test participants and costs approximately \$45. It gives the officer 43 more times the protection than being unprepared in any way (SBCCOM 10). While relatively inexpensive, they provide increased levels of protection, with some being far more superior. The minimal cost of this equipment is far outweighed by the benefits. For approximately \$100 per officer, we

can provide not only our officers with more confidence in responding, but the public as well. The training costs would be minimal since the WTAMU personnel could be taught on site after sending someone to the proper training. As part of that training, the university community would be informed as to how to respond to these threats as well. This concentration on education would be small in cost, but great in raising overall awareness of this problem and its possible consequences. The greatest costs would be in failing to adequately prepare for these events. If a building were contaminated, it could be months before it was decontaminated to the point to allow people back inside. This cost does not account for any loss of life. No matter the number, one life is too much to lose for lack of preparation.

Conclusion

The purpose of this research is to develop a protocol or policy for first responders at WTAMU. The threat of biological and chemical incidents is increasing as technology and the desire for mass casualties increases. WTAMU is a prime target since we are host to a dense population, have a large international student population, and are in close proximity to a nuclear storage facility. The current dilemma with CB incidents is how to effectively deal with them with limited casualties and cost. Since there are no early warning systems, it is very dangerous and difficult to determine the real incidents from the threats. The problem is that since WTAMU does not have a current policy that addresses this issue, it is extremely vulnerable to the most serious of consequences. If an event of any magnitude were to occur, the chaos that would ensue would surely cost more lives than it would save. To effectively deal with these threats, the response must be thoroughly thought out and adequate preparations made.

This research concludes that a policy on the response to chemical and biological threats should be adopted by the University Police Department at West Texas A&M University with the support of the University Administration. Adoption of this policy will allow the university police officers to be prepared for the possibility of an attack and to minimize casualties if such an attack were to occur.

With the adoption of this policy and the required training, the university will reap the benefits of a well-trained police department that provides an additional service to the university community. The additional training in this area will surely increase the peace of mind felt by all members of the university. The most important benefit from this policy and its subsequent training will be the added safety that is given to the university in this area, thereby preventing the university from suffering a debilitating injury to its operation or workforce.

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