



National Volunteer Fire Council

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**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE
MILITARY PROCUREMENT SUBCOMMITTEE
OF THE
HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
ON
TERRORISM PREPAREDNESS AND CRISIS RESPONSE
MARCH 5, 2002
BY
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KING OF PRUSSIA, PENNSYLVANIA
ON BEHALF OF
THE NATIONAL VOLUNTEER FIRE COUNCIL**

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, my name is William Jenaway and I am testifying today on behalf of the National Volunteer Fire Council (NVFC). The NVFC represents the interests of the nation's nearly 800,000 volunteer firefighters, who staff over 90% of America's fire departments.

I have served in the volunteer fire service for over 30 years and am currently serving as Chief of the King of Prussia Volunteer Fire Company, as well as Chairman of the municipality's Fire and Rescue Services Board. The King of Prussia Volunteer Fire Company, located outside of Philadelphia, is one of the largest all-volunteer departments in Pennsylvania. I have had experiences in all phases of the first responder community, including chemical and hazardous materials incidents, auto extrication, EMS, search and rescue, and fire.

I hold the Certified Fire Officer (CFO) designation and am a Certified Fire Protection Specialist (CFPS) by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA). I am currently Chairman of the Risk Management Standard for the NFPA, President of the Congressional Fire Services Institute, and am a member of the distinguished "Gilmore Commission" appointed by the President, which is studying the readiness of the U.S. to deal with domestic terrorism involving weapons of mass destruction. My full-time job is as Executive Vice President of Volunteer Fireman's Insurance Services (VFIS), and the CEO of their Education, Training, and Consulting subsidiary Emergency Services Education and Consulting Group (ESECG).

On behalf of the America's volunteer fire service, I appreciate the opportunity to comment on the requirements of the volunteer fire service to effectively respond to incidents of domestic terrorism, especially in the wake of the September 11th tragedies in New York, Arlington, Virginia and Southwestern Pennsylvania. America's fire and emergency services are in need of your assistance and you, as Members of Congress, can make a difference by partnering with the fire service to give America's domestic defenders the tools they need to help fight this new war.

A few years before I was born, the United States had just completed involvement in a World War, been a part of a military action in the Far East, and was deathly afraid of the potential for attack by a foreign country. As a child, growing up in southwestern Pennsylvania, the periodic sounds of air raid warning sirens, the picture of fallout shelter signs on buildings, the training to kneel beneath our school desks and have preparations at home in a "safe shelter", and most importantly the Civil Defense helmets and equipment used by my uncles and my dad; are all memories of a time I thought had passed by.

In the recent months however, I find myself buying chemical and biological masks, training firefighters about terrorist impacts and precautions to take, educating myself and others about anthrax, sarin gas, and a myriad of other biologics and chemicals; as well as teaching MY children some of the same lessons I learned as a child – to protect ourselves from the arbitrary aggression of others.

Even though I reside in suburbia, the threat and reality of terrorist activity abounds. As we all have come to learn, there is probably a terrorist at work in our suburban and rural

communities right now; plotting, scheming, preparing. Yet rural and suburban volunteer fire and EMS agencies have been restricted in the training, equipment, and support to prepare for terrorist events.

If you are like many, you will say, “nonsense; our rural and suburban communities are just like Pleasantville or Ozzie- and Harriet-ville; terrorism just doesn’t happen in these communities, so why prepare?” Why?

- Ask the fire department that arrived at an apartment building fire to find the spare bedroom full of explosives, harbored by a “closet individual terrorist minded U.S. citizen;”
- or the children who started running for their lives when a classmate started shooting a gun, in a rural community.
- How safe are the residents of a rural county where a pipe bomber has kept the public at bay for over a year by planting 20 bombs, some of which have exploded?
- or the people who were sickened by contaminated foods in an attempt to sway a local election?
- Ask the 50 people who were overcome in a public building by an unknown product that attacks the respiratory system?
- Or maybe the people of a townhouse complex who were evacuated because a resident became distraught over the events of 9-11 and began shooting from the bedroom window with a rifle.

“Not in your town, not in rural or suburban America?” – Don’t kid yourself. It is occurring every day, and the one constant is that if an act of terrorism occurs, – the local fire and emergency medical services would be asked to respond.

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.

The terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001 have become a defining moment for the future of the United States and the rest of the civilized world. They have challenged us to define the future in managing the protection of our country. Our country has mobilized to deal with this situation. While some ask why so late; others comment why not more; and still others ask when will we know it is enough? Our question and your challenge is how to assure we are able to adequately respond outside of the major cities in the U.S.? You’ll recall 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.

So what can Congress do? First and foremost, Congress needs to fully fund the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program. Thanks to your leadership Mr. Chairman, and the leadership of many of your colleagues in both Houses and on both sides of the aisle, Congress took a giant step in addressing the needs of America’s fire service by creating this grant program and funding it at the \$100 million level in FY 2001. Every fire department across the country was eligible for funding

for safety and firefighting equipment, apparatus, training, prevention, and wellness and fitness programs.

In the first year of the program, the U.S. Fire Administration (USFA) and FEMA received 31,295 grant applications from 18,915 fire departments totaling \$2.99 billion in requests. In the end, USFA/FEMA awarded 1,855 competitive grants to local fire departments, including 1,375 to volunteer and combination fire departments. In addition, 1,379 grants totaling \$55,377,798 were awarded in communities with populations below 20,000 people. Many of these were rural volunteer fire departments that struggle the most to provide their members with adequate protective gear, safety devices and training to protect their communities.

The funding for the program was increased to a total of \$360 million in fiscal year 2002 and the application period opened on March 1. This increase in funding has allowed FEMA to add fire department based emergency medical services (EMS) as an eligible category this year. EMS calls continue to be the fastest growing burden on local fire departments and these new grants will help to ease that burden and prepare local departments for a terrorist event. Late last year, Congress also passed a reauthorization of the FEMA Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program for \$900 million for each of the fiscal years 2002 through 2004.

This direct grant program has proved to be the most effective program to date in providing local volunteer and career fire departments not only with the tools they need to perform their day-to-day duties, but it has also enhanced their ability to respond to large disasters as well. As we move to prepare for terrorist incidents at home, we must first make sure that local fire departments have the basic tools they need to do their jobs on a daily basis, before we can ask them to be fully prepared to respond to terrorist incidents. In addition, this program has been successful because it is the only federal program that provides funding directly to fire departments. Far too often federal funds intended to aid fire departments are diverted to other uses by state and local officials.

Although the fire service is very pleased that the President's fiscal year 2003 budget request includes over \$3.5 billion to assist our nation's first responders, we are concerned that the budget recommendation would negatively impact the Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program. The administration has proposed to consolidate grant program initiative into a completely new state-based block grant initiative called the First Responder Initiative.

We wholeheartedly appreciate the Administration's commitment to provide training, equipment, and planning to the nation's firefighters through the new First Responder program. We look forward to working with the Administration to assure that this new counter-terrorism initiative is successful and positively impacts local fire departments in suburban and rural communities. However, we believe that it would be counterproductive for the new First Responder program to replace the valuable and proven Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program.

Therefore, on behalf of America's volunteer fire service, I strongly urge Congress to fully fund the vital Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program at the full authorized level of \$900 million and keep it as a distinct program under the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

The challenges and response demands are increasing and we in suburbia and rural America are in a dilemma with limited opportunity and availability to increase our level of preparedness. In addition, the public now expects that an extraordinary rescue effort will occur after any terrorist incident.

To validate this, I'll refer you to the Third Report of The Advisory Panel to Assess Domestic Response Capability for Terrorism Involving Weapons of Mass Destruction (a/k/a the Gilmore Commission); which includes a study on local level preparedness conducted by the RAND Organization. The study of 1,687 organizations found:

- “the domestic preparedness program is clearly valued by state and local responders”
- “training and equipment programs did not or does not train or equip an adequate number of personnel to respond to a moderately sized WMD event”
- “the limiting factor for participation in government programs is a lack of awareness of these programs”
- “just under one-half to almost three-quarters of local and state organizations polled reported lack of awareness of Federal programs as a reason they do not participate in them”
- “state and local organizations tend to think that Federal programs to improve local responder WMD preparedness are not well organized”
- “they also strongly feel that such programs should be better coordinated between the Federal government and local response organizations”
- “as a general rule, state agencies receive more funding, resources and training than local level agencies.”

Specifically, all agencies suggested the most important way that the Federal government can support the efforts of local organizations to improve WMD preparedness, would be via direct financial support and training/training aids. The agencies also suggest that the most important way that the Federal Government can support the efforts of state organizations to improve WMD preparedness is via direct financial support and equipment procurement. Public health officials suggest that enhancements to surveillance systems and related communication capabilities are the most important way that the Federal Government can help.

The Panel also recommended among other items:

- “Federal preparedness programs must be designed and scheduled so that local organizations, particularly volunteer-based organizations can participate.”
- “We recommend that Federal agencies design related training and equipment programs as part of all-hazards preparedness.”

- “We recommend that Federal agencies with related funding and grant programs for States and localities coordinate those programs through states.”
- “We recommend that Federal military response assets be configured to support and reinforce existing State and local organizational structures and emergency response systems.”

(refer to Appendix 2 for complete list of recommendations)

Please keep in mind, that while the long-term response and resolution may be handled by government resources, the initial response is not in the government’s hands. It is in the hands of first responders, many rural and suburban, mostly volunteer, who will be called first and who will be expected to take action; yet do not have the appropriate training and resources to effect the job.

We commend the members of the Legislative and Executive branches for their initiatives to date and in appointing Governor Tom Ridge to the role of Director of Homeland Security. We stand ready to assist in the effort to integrate this group into a functioning team with a constructive integrated role in homeland security.

Planning initiatives, equipment initiatives, training initiatives, and exercise initiatives included as part of the proposed First Responder Initiative are a positive step to increasing the support that can be provided by rural and suburban organizations to develop comprehensive plans to prepare for and respond to a terrorist attack; purchase a wide range of equipment needed to respond effectively to a terrorist attack, including personal protective equipment, chemical and biological detection systems and interoperable communication gear; to train firefighters, police officers, and emergency medical technicians to respond and operate in a chemical or biological environment; and coordinated regular exercise programs to improve response capabilities, practice mutual aid, and assess operational improvements and deficiencies. However, as I stated earlier, we must make sure that this initiative does not take the place of the FEMA FIRE Grant Program and that this funding does not get held up in state bureaucracies without the actual first responders seeing anything.

As I have worked to enhance the skills, knowledge and equipment in my community, I have encouraged my officers to understand and consider the following:

- Acknowledge that we are in an insecure world and that you may be exposed to potential acts of terrorism.
- Identify and complete an appropriate level of training to meet the level of response your organization will be expected to provide.
- Obtain the necessary equipment to support your level of response.
- Complete a periodic drill to assure you can properly respond to the incident.
- The same activities you would need to perform for routine fire department operations.

We ask you to remember from our past, and assist us. Experience has taught us that all such attacks—and responses—are always “local,” at first. Therefore, the approach to

planning, as well as response, should always be “bottom-up”. Preparations must be built on existing “all-hazards” capabilities. “Major” attacks will always require outside help.

There are a few other observations that I would like to make to the committee. First, there is a great sensitivity about an over-bearing federal government “taking charge,” thus establishing, practicing and understanding Unified Incident Command is critical. In addition, it is crucial to have access to unique detection and response resources. Also, intelligence and information sharing is critical and public health and medical entities cannot be overlooked. Finally, all affected entities at all levels must be partners in planning, training, exercises, and execution and the Federal response role is not the most important. All of these things require funding for training, equipping, and exercising our LOCAL rural, suburban and metropolitan fire, EMS, and law enforcement personnel.

As I think about my current role as a volunteer fire chief in a large suburban community, I can’t help but recall of my childhood when my Uncle was the head of the local Civil Defense unit, my dad was a volunteer chief fire officer and another Uncle was a county sheriff. I remember going to meetings with my dad and marveling over the Civil Defense’s new ambulance, rescue truck and fancy geiger counters, protective suits and hydraulic tools. Little did I realize I would be part of the next civil defense system of the country – this time one built of firefighters, medics, and police. After all, who ever thought the fire department would be so excited about a little bit of white powder?

Please keep in mind that – somebody out there, right now, in suburban or rural America or in a foreign country, is probably planning an event that could be considered terroristic, and local fire and emergency medical staff would have to respond. They may NOT be prepared and need additional assistance.

Mr. Chairman, I thank you and the Committee for your time and your attention to the views of America's fire service, and I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

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ATTACHMENT 1

THIRD ANNUAL REPORT OF THE ADVISORY PANEL TO ASSESS DOMESTIC RESPONSE CAPABILITIES FOR TERRORISM INVOLVING WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION

QUOTED EXCERPTS FROM STATE AND LOCAL RESPONDER CHAPTER....

“Be aware that all WMD events are local events with national ramifications, They can be most successfully addressed by local responders who are properly trained and equipped and who deal with hazardous chemical, explosives, biological outbreaks (flu)...federal resources can assist them in their efforts, but never supplant them.”

- A state EMS survey respondent

“The Federal WMD funding is going to many non-state (chem/emergency response/bomb) teams duplicating much of the current state response systems. States have been left out of the MMRS and 120 cities program making for a difficult response network with no one leading the effort... Many of the federal training programs are the same whing with a different name, created by different contractors...state and local government have been left out of the process... We have asked for technical assistance and are yet to see any help!”

- A State emergency management office

“Our state is very densely populated and yet has had no Nunn-Lugar funding, as no NDMS, no HHS-MMRS, no full-time WMD-CST (NGB). As a result, we are years behind our neighbor states with respect to planning and resources for WMD preparedness. Doesn't anyone at the federal level care about our state?”

- A state public health official

“Generally, numerous federal efforts need to be consolidated and centrally coordinated”

- A regional EMS organization

“A total lack of coordination and control exists at the federal level”

- A local emergency management office

“The only WMD training I have heard about is from other local agencies. Let us know what is available.”

- A law enforcement official

“We are unaware of most of the Federal programs mentioned. Perhaps they are dealing with our state health department, or perhaps only with larger jurisdictions. At any rate, some outreach to inform us of their functions and resources would be helpful”.

- A local public health department official

“Unaware of any of the programs mentioned (in the survey)”

- A hospital official

“Presently, the Federal grant application process is laborious and cumbersome.”

- A fire department

“Federal grant applications are usually complicated and too time consuming to complete, especially when the grants are generally awarded to much larger agencies...”

- A law enforcement organization

“There appears to be an alphabet soup of Federal organizations that offer grants, each grant having different rules. We need one Federal Agency to be in charge of all grants and they need to be funneled through the states”

- A local OEM official

“The Equipment Procurement Grant has been too narrowly focused, again, ignoring the state’s attempts to develop a statewide response capability.”

- A state OEM official

ATTACHMENT 2

THIRD ANNUAL REPORT OF THE ADVISORY PANEL TO ASSESS DOMESTIC RESPONSE CAPABILITIES FOR TERRORISM INVOLVING WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION

RECOMMENDATIONS EXCERPTED FROM STATE AND LOCAL RESPONDER CHAPTER...

1. We recommend that the new office in the White House serve as a clearing house for information about Federal programs, assets, and agencies with responsibilities for combating terrorism.
2. We recommend that related Federal training and equipment programs be redesigned to include sustainment components.
3. Federal preparedness programs must be designed and scheduled so that local organizations, particularly volunteer-based organizations can participate.
4. We recommend that Federal agencies design related training and equipment programs as part of all-hazards preparedness.
5. We recommend that information and application procedures for Federal grant programs for terrorism be consolidated in the new office of the White House.
6. We recommend that Federal agencies with related funding and grant programs for States and localities coordinate those programs through states.
7. We recommend that Federal military response assets be configured to support and reinforce existing State and local organizational structures and emergency response systems.

Dr. William F. Jenaway, CFO, CFPS

Dr. William F. Jenaway, CFO, CFPS has over 30 years of fire service experience, and is currently Chief of the King of Prussia Volunteer Fire Company, one of the largest all volunteer departments in Pennsylvania; as well as chairman of the municipality's Fire and Rescue Services Board. King of Prussia was the first all-volunteer fire department to receive accreditation from the Commission on Fire Accreditation International.

Bill holds the CFO (Certified Fire Officer) designation and is a Certified Fire Protection Specialist (CFPS) by the National Fire Protection Association. In 2001 he was named "Volunteer Fire Chief of the Year" by *Fire Chief* magazine at the annual conference of the International Association of Fire Chiefs.

Among Bill's many affiliations are Chairman of the Risk Management Standard for the National Fire Protection Association, President of the Congressional Fire Services Institute, sitting on the Underwriters Laboratories Casualty Council, and a member of the distinguished "Gilmore Commission" appointed by the President, which is studying the readiness of the US to deal with domestic terrorism involving weapons of mass destruction.

The author of more than 100 articles on fire, safety and management-related topics, Bill has also written six texts on fire and safety discipline and four children's books. He has also testified numerous times before local, state, and federal legislative bodies.

Dr. Jenaway is employed as the Executive Vice President of VFIS, and the CEO of their Education, Training, and Consulting subsidiary Emergency Services Education and Consulting Group (ESECG).

Bill's free time is managed by his wife Joan and daughters Kelsey, Katie, and Lizzie.