Background Briefing

Wednesday, April 16, 1997 - 1 p.m. (EDT)

Subject: Domestic Preparedness

Captain Doubleday: Good afternoon.

Today's background briefing is to give you some information on a coordinated interagency program responding to the Nunn/Lugar/Domenici legislation in the FY97 Defense Authorization Bill. This legislation is designed to enhance the capability of federal, state, and local emergency response agencies to prevent and respond to domestic terrorist incidents involving weapons of mass destruction.

One DoD role in the interagency program is to develop a training program which marshals the federal expertise resident in a number of agencies including FEMA, DOE, HHS, EPA, Justice, and to use this to enhance local emergency responders' capabilities.

We have with us today two individuals from the Department who have been working on this program. For your information but not for reporting, these are the individuals, and I will now...

Senior Defense Official #1: Obviously, we understand the conundrum that we've got. Let me lay out what we have today, and then we'll see where we can go at a later time.

We must stress that this is an interagency effort, and we stress that up front for the very reasons that we've just all finished discussing right here. DoD has a crucial, important, supporting role to the other agencies that are involved, and for whatever reason, the funding flows through the Department of Defense. So in many ways, not only do we have the role to support via the expertise that we have, but it so happens that in the legislation the funding, at least for the initial years here, flows through the Department of Defense.

In a broad sense we're looking at 120 cities over three years. We're looking at 27 cities to be assessed in FY97, and training to be initiated in about nine of those 27.

We're looking at the emergency responder training aspects only of the legislation, and that's in Title 14, subtitle A. There are several paragraphs in that piece of the legislation on the requirement for emergency or first responder training, and that's what we're focusing on here today.

The funding for that slice in '97 is $42.6 million. In the President's budget for '98, it's $48.7 million.

Another key point that must be made here is that this must be a cooperative effort with the cities. It requires every step of the way city, and in some instances state officials to buy into this process. We have spent a lot of time deliberating top-down, bottom-up approaches. After much deliberation it's very clear that unless you have good, energetic city buy-in, this process is not going to work.
Finally, within the Department of Defense, once the Secretary was tasked with executing the appropriate portions of the law, we looked at who best to serve as the executive agent, and we decided to name the Secretary of the Army because he already handles a broad variety of other emergency support to state and local officials. We felt he had the best handle on designing a program that would serve to assist in emergency situations with state and local authorities in an interagency process.

I'm going to turn the prepared remarks portion over to Senior Defense Official #2, and then I think after we finish that we can both entertain some questions. Thank you.

Senior Defense Official #2: Good afternoon.

My duty is to reference the Nunn/Lugar Bill is the action agent for the Secretary of the Army, for the execution of the Nunn/Lugar II Program.

The Army does have significant portions of the bill. To improve not only the federal capability but to improve the local and state capability to respond to a weapons of mass destruction incident, or in the preparation to prevent that, if that so occurs.

DoD specifically has been tasked to provide assistance to the local and state government. That's expert advice or training or to advise them on the procurement of the appropriate type of equipment, to defend emergency responders in this type of environment. We'll do that by sending out assessment teams, establishing agreement with the city metropolitan area, and then once that's decided upon, then we'll provide training through an interagency training team.

It's made up of six federal agencies, and DoD is the lead for that assessment and training team. The other five agencies are FEMA, the FBI, Department of Energy, the EPA, and the Public Health Service.

We are also responsible to provide testing and exercises to validate the training that has been done in the city and also to test and evaluate the interagency as well as the local and state interoperability to respond to one of these incidents.

DoD is also tasked to develop a rapid response team. This is at the national level. We already have that capability throughout all of our services, but this will be a joint effort of the services and DoD to create a single team that has multiple capability. What's key to that task is that it is integrated into the local and state government capabilities so you have a federal requirement to enhance and improve that capability as well as the integration of that with the local and state level.

The other portion of that is to provide the other agencies with an inventory of assets that are available to local and state governments, and that is assets meaning units that can respond to this, as well as equipment, specialized equipment that you would need in one of these situations.

DoD will be creating a hotline and help line that will go across the United States of America to provide technical advice both in an emergency or a routine basis, and they will also create a web site, again, to help share this information with the local and state governments.

The Secretary of Defense fully supports this. He's given the Secretary of the Army specific guidance on the program, and we're executing that today. We're well on the way, we've been working on it for several months. We have an assessment team in Denver as we speak, with training tentatively to begin the end of this month or the beginning of May.

That concludes my remarks. I think now we're available for any questions you may have.
Q: Can I ask, number one, why Denver? Is it because of the trial or what?

A: Several reasons. One reason is we do have a requirement to provide assistance in the interagency, a DoD role anyway, in support of the G7 conference. It's nothing different than what we did for the inaugural, it's nothing different than what we did for the Atlanta Olympics. This is routine support that DoD participates in.

Number two, it's centrally located geographically in the United States, and it's tied into some of the other existing programs that we have ongoing where we can use some of the regional capabilities we have from the six agencies that we mentioned. So it's advantageous to use Denver for that reason.

Second, they were very enthusiastic about the assessment and training, to develop a capability in their city, their county and state, so they volunteered to be the pilot city.

Q: Have you got dates for these other cities yet? These 27 cities?

A: We're doing assessments in 27 cities this fiscal year, so before 30 September we will have completed assessments in the other 27 cities. We will only be able to accomplish baseline training in nine of those 27 this year, and that's due to the time that's left in the year as well as resources, the amount of teams that we can send out to do this properly.

Q: Have you identified the cities yet?

A: Those cities have been identified through an interagency process.

Q: Can you tell us...

A: We can give you a list of those cities.

Q: What kind of training are these teams going to be doing and generally where are they going to be doing it? Within a particular city, say within Denver.

A: The baseline training would be right there in Denver. We also will integrate the training in existing programs that are already in existence. For instance, the Environmental Protection Agency, FEMA, Public Health Service and DoD have existing chemical/biological defense training courses, and we'll integrate first responders from the city into those as well. So it's both local, and then we'll develop a program where they can then go to those other schools.

Keep in mind, this doesn't just happen in a short period of time. The baseline training at the city will happen, let's say, probably around two weeks time. But this program doesn't end. It's a continual sustainment program that goes on for years. So as the city develops their plan and how they sustain the capability, that will go on for quite some time.

Q: What do you mean by training?

A: We'll provide them basic training in agent identification, i.e., a chem or bio agent; protection, how to provide protection to your first responders; how to decontaminate; how to turn victims into casualties and evacuate chemical/biological casualties to emergency medical care without contaminating local hospitals. So as you can see, the training is tied from the first responders who may be firefighters, may be policemen, may be emergency medical personnel, to where let's say an ambulance picks up casualties, how you take a contaminated casualty to a hospital. Obviously, it's different than a normal casualty. How you train and receive, train the personnel on the reception of a
casualty into a local hospital when there's a situation like this from a chem/bio incident.

Q: Are they going to be doing this stuff on the street?

A: Low visibility is a key asset to any of the programs, obviously, because of inducing any kind of fear in the local populace. So people may interpret the training differently than what it is. It's good preventive training, obviously, because we want to be prepared; but I think there will be prudent measures taken on where the training is conducted. It may be in a military installation, it may be at a city or state owned property. I don't know. That's part of the assessment when a team goes in.

Q: What would happen this afternoon if an incident such as we're talking about occurred?

A: It depends on where.

Q: Denver.

A: Well Denver has a little more training than some of the other cities because they've been working on this for a little while. But what we rely on is DoD for the most case. We'd rely on DoD from, for instance, a chemical unit at Fort Carson; the National Guard where the Governor has the capability employ those assets as a Governor by law can; or DoD has several capabilities -- both regionally, out West, and we also have some from the East Coast here that would respond to this.

We do that and have been doing that over the years. If there's any kind of a warning that there's a problem, DoD has that capability and has supported other agencies in that role.

Q: What becomes different from what you're able to do now and what you will be able to do, what the cities will be able to do?

A: The key thing is that you provide, and this was the reason the Nunn/Lugar/Domenici Bill was produced. That is that first responders have a capability. In any kind of a chem/bio incident, time is a critical factor. Time is a critical factor. So it's imperative that within our own country we have some capability provided by the local government at a site where this may occur, because of the contamination of casualties, and of course protecting human life.

Q: A couple of different things, just to follow up. Are you also going to give them recommendations as to what kind of equipment they should buy?

A: Yes, we are.

Q: Do you actually fund the purchasing of equipment or...

A: The Nunn/Lugar II Bill does not write blank checks and give them to the cities. What we do is through this assessment process that I mentioned to you, we determine what capability that city has at the time. Then we'll determine what equipment they need to train with. We will purchase through Nunn/Lugar II a training kit that they will use to continue on the training once we leave. So it will be used for their initial training, and then that will be used for their sustainment training for years to come, because they obviously don't have that equipment. Now it will not be enough equipment, nor can we afford to buy, obviously, enough equipment with the funds available to outfit the entire city of first responders. But that's part of the partnership that the city has to buy into. They have to commit to a capability themselves, so it's a partnership established in order to do that.
Q: You mentioned, if I understood you correctly, a new DoD joint rapid response organization. Did I understand that right?

A: What we're going to do is combine the capabilities of the Army, Marine Corps, Air Force and Navy.

Q: Can you be more specific? Are you talking about Seabrit and...

A: Seabrit is the single DoD chem/bio unit. We'll combine the Seabrit with the existing Army elements, for instance out of Aberdeen...

Q: Tech escort?

A: Tech escort unit, that's correct. You have the Air Force Treaty lab. You have some Navy labs, for instance, in Bethesda. We will combine those capabilities for efficiencies. We will tier those to be able to respond depending on the situation.

So sometimes you would use maybe elements out of two of those services, but it will come under the leadership of the CBD Com Commander at Aberdeen. All of those resources will come under his command...

Q: CBD?

A: Chemical Biological Defense Command, which is located at Aberdeen.

Q: Could you explain, then, what the legal process is throughout all of this, to have legal authority for the military to step into domestic situations. Posse comitatus, but also under what I believe is the National Emergency Response Plan where there's...

A: We're part of the federal response plan FEMA is the lead for. We will not be violating posse comitatus. We are allowed to provide support by law to the other federal agencies This is no different than the support we provide on a daily basis for domestic support.

For instance, right now DoD is supporting North and South Dakota and Minnesota on floods. We're working that out of the office downstairs. This service is no different.

Q: So do you need some kind of federal declaration now to have this new joint military organization activated and sent into communities in an emergency?

A: We always work for a lead federal agency that's other than DoD. we're always in a support role. As long as we're in a support role and provide assistance and advice only, that's legal. If, for instance, we have to go beyond that, then posse comitatus would have to be waived. But we understand the limits that we're allowed to operate under.

Q: Could I follow through... So (inaudible) things like Seabrit then are now always under CBD command?

A: No, ma'am. It does not. Only in regards to the Nunn/Lugar II bill and our response capability. Remember, Seabrit is an Atlantic Command asset. There will be procedures that will be put into place to chop them to the command of CBD Com in reference to the Nunn/Lugar II program.
Q: Is there a name, now, for this new organization?

A: Chemical/Biological Quick Response Force.

Q: How many people do you think eventually it will consist of potentially being able to be chopped to it?

A: It could go up to around 500 if need be. But keep in mind when you have mass casualties, it takes quite a few people and decontamination/evacuation to handle that type of situation.

Q: Can you tell me what you see the threat being?

A: It's really an FBI question. I'm not trying to pass the buck, but that is their responsibility on the threat. You can imagine the possible threats. You know what happened in Tokyo with the sarin agent attack. So is it possible? Sure. Is there a known threat today? I don't think the FBI has announced that there is one. But the possibility, of course, is there. Consequently, we have this emergency preparedness that we're going through. We want to be prepared for that, just like we do for war.

Q: Do you use this as a response to an act of terrorism, or is this something that could come about from, if there's any kind of weapons that are being transported. You mentioned radiological here. Some other kind of...

A: We have procedures that we have had for years and years and years on response to an accident, a radiological response. We also over the last several years since we've had chemical munitions, we've had a response capability. That's in place. For instance, where we have chemical munitions that we're de-milling, as an example, Pine Bluff, Arkansas. There's an example. We have procedures in place tied into the local community to respond to an accident like that. So that's exactly correct. It may not be a terrorist act, it may be an accident, but those procedures have been in place for quite some time.

Q: How many people do you envision training, let's say by the end of the year or...

A: It's a monumental task. Over the next several years the goal is 120 cities, and I should say cities/metropolitan areas. For instance, if you took LA, you took LA County, you took Orange County, the population is larger in a lot of cases than the city itself. 120 cities with a population exceeding 500,000 is our goal over the next three years. That's a monumental task. That's why it takes an interagency effort, as you can imagine, to execute that program. It will not work unless the city buys into the program. They have to buy into it.

Q: Say they do. Can you train hundreds of people in the course of a year?

A: Remember now, our concept is to train the trainer. In other words, we train a cadre, just like you do in any military training. Then they go out and they train their own people. That's the only way we'll be able to do it, again, because of resources.

Keep in mind that all cities in the United States will have access to this technical advice assistance through the hotline, the help line and the web site. They'll be able to be sent CD ROM training materials or paper training materials or whatever, and 24 hours a day on a telephone, respond to any request. So all cities in the United States of America will have access to that part of the program.

Q: Is that also under CBD Com, what you just mentioned?
A: They are charged with, the program director, to put a help line/hotline into effect. That's correct.

Q: When you say a city has to buy in, what would that entail?

A: They just have to agree that they want the training. They may say I really don't want the training, or...

Q: Would they have to commit to put up some money or resources?

A: Keep in mind that their capability... We can only take their capability so far (inaudible). We only have so much resourcing that we can provide training kits and provide the time to train. We have a problem, obviously, if they don't buy in, for their sustainment in that city for years to come, so they have to buy into it. Most of the input now, of those that we've contacted, are very enthusiastic.

Q: What are the assessment teams going to assess, specifically?

A: We developed a set of performance objectives. The performance objectives are things like do you have a decontamination capability? Do you have a medical response capability that can take care of chemical/biological contaminated patients? Do you have the ability to decontaminate people? Do you have protective equipment? So that's a baseline of things you have to have, no matter what, in your city in order to develop any kind of a capability.

So when the assessment team goes in, the city already has those performance objectives, they've already discussed those with their emergency responders and emergency operations center. They look at that, they discuss with our interagency team what voids they have, where they need assistance. Some cities are quite advanced, compared to others. Atlanta, from the Olympics, had a jump start on the program; New York has had a lot of work done, as an example; Washington, D.C. has had work done because of the inaugural, for example. Some cities are further along than others. Every city is different, every city is unique, but there are some baseline standards that we use to start with, and then we develop from that.

Q: So that focuses mainly on equipment to react to an...

A: And training capability. Can your people use the equipment, do your people know how to decontaminate a victim.

Q: Will there be some focus on preventive efforts or...

A: Preventive efforts mainly, if you think about it, are the detection that the incident's going to take place. That's where you get into the law enforcement and the FBI realm more than the first responder reacted. Can he identify, there is some parts, to correct myself, for instance, can they identify a decide that may be a weapons of mass destruction? That may be it, yeah, if that's what you're leading to.

Q: I don't know. You've got wide open areas where people congregate. Could you break them up, or...

A: If you just took a metro system as an example. Sure, that is a likely location for a terrorist attack if it was going to take place. Some agents do better in confined areas than open areas, than it depends on the type of agent someone would use, or if there was an accident, the same thing.

Q: What's your policy? Would you be advising them on actually placing detection sensors similar to what the military has in its inventory in metropolitan interests?
A: No. The program's not set up for sensors within the cities. We're not set up for that.

Q: What if they ask you for advice on that? Are you simply precluded...

A: No, we're not precluded to give advice.

Q: ...capability.

A: It's very expensive. To monitor them, to keep them maintained is a heck of a challenge. I just know from the military it's not an easy task, and it's very expensive.

Q: What assurances, when this is reported on, there's always an element of the population that seems to panic. What assurances can you give to the American people that there is no cause to panic, even though you're going to such extremes to make sure that things will work in the event of an incident?

A: Speaking as a citizen myself, I would feel more at ease that I knew that we had a capability in the city I'm a part of than not having a capability. This is like having a well trained defense force or a fire department or a police force.

Q: ...your house to burn down.

A: I'd rather be prepared. I would have a good feeling because we're prepared.

Q: What level of preparedness do you hope to achieve by the end of all of this? On a federal level there's been a lot of criticism of shortcomings and federal response capability, so what do you hope to accomplish? What level do you hope to reach?

A: That's an interesting comment. I didn't know we had the criticism on the federal. Can you give me an example?

Q: Sitting in Senator Nunn's hearings last year, there was the sort of pass the buck from agency to agency and Seabrit only came on line not long ago...

A: Remember, Seabrit is one part of four services. None of them can work properly, depending on the situation, with all of DoD coming together to put this capability together.

I think the shortcomings are more the interagency cooperation. The interagency cooperation in Nunn/Lugar II is the best I've ever seen on any of the projects we've worked on, and I really mean that. It is superb cooperation between the agencies on this effort.

Q: Unless you need to get back to us later, could you identify the nine cities now, for practical purposes you expect to address before the end of the fiscal year.

A: The next five cities after Denver is New York, LA, Chicago, Houston and District of Columbia, are the next five. The next three are Kansas City, San Diego, Philadelphia.

Q: For all practical purposes, you expect to address those before the fiscal year is out.

A: Correct. Keep in mind, those cities now have not committed to the training this year. So let's say they do not commit. Then we go to the next city on the list.
Q: Have these cities been selected through some kind of vulnerability assessment?

A: That's correct. They were selected through an interagency assessment. That part was FBI-led through a threat, through population, the size of the city, obviously. That's where you would have the most impact if there was an incident. The geographical location, for instance Anchorage and Honolulu on the list of 27 because of where they're located, it's harder for the national response capability we have to get there. But those are the driving factors.

Q: Denver you say has already started. Is there some kind of an official start to this? Does it start this week officially, or...

A: This week the assessment has started in Denver. That's correct.

Q: So the team just arrived?

A: They arrived Monday.

Q: Could you tell us, just so we understand, what the event is that's going to take place later this week that will allow this to come out in the public arena that's just been referred to?

A: The event is to be sponsored by FEMA and it will bring together representatives from the Mayors offices and representatives from the appropriate state emergency management offices from the states that those cities are in...

A: The first 27 states to be assessed.

A: To what, essentially, is an information briefing and kickoff meeting, if you will, for those cities.

Q: Is this the Friday meeting at Dulles?

A: Correct.

Q: Do you know if it's open to media coverage?

A: I do not. Check with FEMA.

Q: How many people are in Denver as part of this assessment team this week?

A: The interagency assessment team? Six agencies, they all have around two to three personnel, but they're also going to tie into the regional capability. In other words, the regional Environmental Protection Agency, FEMA, Public Health Service that is in that region will also tie into the national team. So that will be the federal team that meets with the local and city...

A: I'd say around a dozen.

Q: As well as people from...

Q: ...all the state and city agencies?
A: That's correct. We went out, in fact, last month myself and the CBD Com commander, as an example, talked to the city officials at the invitation of the deputy mayor, and briefed them on what the program is about, and that's when they volunteered to be the pilot city. Now this assessment team is going in and rolling up their sleeves and getting down to business with the city officials.

Q: Did the McVeigh/Nichols trial have some role in choosing Denver?

A: Not really. That was already ongoing. Preparations for that were already ongoing. Obviously it ties in because we're there, but that was already ongoing.

Q: That was already ongoing...

A: In regards to what the city was prepared for. But they would be better to answer what they've done in preparation than I would be.

Q: Is there a separate chem/bio team there, aside from this assessment team?

A: We have provided training to Denver first responders last month, separate from Nunn/Lugar II.

Q: Because of the trial?

A: Because the city asked for it, and I think it was long term. The trial, maybe G7, just preparation. Denver is very enthusiastic about having the capability, so I'd had to say specifically it was on one point. I really feel they are very...

A: They have the second largest federal bureaucracy in the country.

A: Very enthusiastic, and because of their enthusiasm it was beneficial for us because of the time line we're on, to use them as a pilot city. It fit into place very nicely.

Q: Do you have any concerns about training the wrong kind of people? Is there any kind of screening process that people have to go through in order to... Do you have to be part of a legitimate organization, what...

A: They have to be a part of an organization that fits in the categories of firefighters and policemen and that.

Q: (inaudible)

A: Most of the firefighter response and that that we came in contact with so far, were not volunteers. That's not to say they wouldn't be, but that's the city, that's their responsibility to validate the credibility of the individuals being trained. Just looking at what Denver's doing, I think they have a pretty good handle on that.

Q: Why does Denver have the second largest federal bureaucracy in the country?

A: That I don't know. (Laughter)

A: It's the Western center for all kinds of stuff. I don't know why that is, but...

Q: What's your assessment of how taking on this additional mission impacts military readiness for military missions by these specialists?
A: The Secretary of Defense has six criteria before we do any of these type of missions to support domestically. They're in a DoD Directive 3025.15. But they're things like is it reimbursable? In other words, the funds are spent, can the military get reimbursed? Nunn/Lugar has money appropriated to it so it's a different situation, but let's just say normal support that we give. Like the Stafford Act, as an example, for FEMA, we have to be reimbursed. Is there another organization that can do it? Why does the military have to do it? If there is another organization that can do it, then we'd lean to the other organization and not use a military unit. Will it affect readiness? If it affects readiness, then the SecDef, again, would make a decision whether it's worth getting supported or not. Legal. If it's in a legal...

Q: Does this have to come out of the training schedules for CBD Com, for tech escort, for Seabrih, for...

A: Keep in mind, those units, part of their duty is to train. Train military and tie into response... We already have a requirement in the United States to respond to accidents, like your question, so actually it ties into that quite well. Right now, part of the Nunn/Lugar Initiative is, for instance, the Distant Learning Initiative in the National Guard, so we don't have to move soldiers from their home station to a training site because of the expense of travel, we do distance learning and video conferencing the training into those particular National Guard armories.

The first responders will be allowed to train with our soldiers, as an example, when it comes to chem/bio response to a terrorist act. So really, it's no additional...

Q: By video conferencing as opposed to on-site?

A: There's a lot of the classroom instruction you need, as well as boots on the ground. You need a combination of both, just like almost all military training, so there will be both. That's correct.

Q: But long distance as well.

A: That's right. Especially for sustainment. It really ties into citizen soldiers. In a lot of cases, like in Denver, I know several in the National Guard who are also in the Police Department, so we're actually taking care of both. They've got to be trained in the military for the chem/bio defense, as well as it ties into them as a policeman.

Q: Just to clarify, I think you covered this, but you're expanding, enlarging, altering the federal response team also?

A: Sure. We're getting situation awareness of that particular city, what capabilities they do not have that we would have to provide, and that's put in the database. Eventually, at the end of this, let's say that you're in Denver and you work in the emergency management center in Denver and there's some type of incident. You could punch up on your computer, and you'll know what federal assets are located near your city. You'll know. I can get certain pharmaceuticals from this base. We have protective garments that are located at Pueblo, as an example, Colorado. Public Health Service has a metro strike team within 30 minutes of downtown Denver. All that will be tied in on Internet. That's one of the programs that we're putting together on the asset inventory.

Q: If Albuquerque has an incident in six months, can they call on sort of a new federal response team?

A: The capabilities have always been there. We're just integrating them so they're more responsive. In other words, we have a Marine unit, we've always had an Army unit since the end of World War II, actually after World War I. We've always had the treaty labs that verify agents. The same labs we use overseas, we use in the States. We're just tying those capabilities now, within the United States. Instead of looking out overseas, we're also now looking inside our own country to protect our people, so we're tying it together now. I think it will be, after a could of years we'll have a heck of
a capability to provide to citizens of the country.

Q: You said this will come under the commandant at Aberdeen?

A: The commander, General George Friel. He's a major general, he's the commander of CBD Com. He is the program director. He's tied into the training. Lead on the training. His people are leading the interagency team in Denver right now.

Q: Is the web site or any of the hotlines up yet, and if not, do you know when...

A: We've done a concept analysis in that. We're looking at having those up by July. So even though the training in the cities won't be done until the fall, the first nine cities, there will be a capability in the United States, depending on how we tie everybody in to respond.

The expert advice the military does almost on a daily basis in regard to this. It's constant. So there's no change there, it's just a matter of getting it out quicker, people knowing how to get it, get the information. It's been on a constant basis.

Q: There was that incident up in New York, in a gentleman's home, they came in and they thought they found... Could you sort of run through... Would that be any different...

A: I can't because of the investigation going on.

Q: I'm not talking about that incident. I'm just saying in a case like that, say it were in Seattle and you've got your organization up and running, what would happen differently than what happened...

A: Nothing. Remember, that's an element out of that big organization. So we only would deploy what would be required for that particular incident.

Q: So maybe they wouldn't drive. (Laughter)

A: Yeah. But in Seattle it wouldn't come from Aberdeen, it would come out of Dugway Proving Grounds as an example. That's why you've got to tie together this regional and national capability. But that example's been going on for years. That's why Nunn/Lugar has to be tied into existing programs. There's a lot of stuff that's not new, it's just a matter of synchronizing it.

Q: G7 in June. Do you expect to have this up and running in Denver by the time it starts?

A: That's right.

Q: But again, Denver's a unique case because they've already been trained...

A: They've already had some training.

Q: And there's already a response team there.

A: They have their own capability now.

Q: But there's also some sort of a federal response team there, yes?
A: No. No. We would respond to it with the plans that we have established to respond to any city, and we have that capability on standby right now for Denver, the same as Albuquerque. We cannot commit for months on end a team sitting in a city because of the question you had on readiness. We cannot dedicate a team to sit for months and months while something goes on like a trial. We just can't do that.

Q: A team would go in for the G7, for example? As they did for the Olympics and the inauguration?

A: If it was requested for that specific event, specific time period, approved by the Secretary of Defense, yes. But it has to be requested by... The local government has to request it through the FBI. The assessment's made, that I mentioned to you, then we would move that team out for that particular... But that's the same in any city.

Q: So no request has come through to be there physically for this weekend, given all the confluence of anniversaries?

A: The FBI, I'm sure, is watching what's going on because of the anniversaries in the 19 April, if that's what you're referring to.

Q: But you haven't actually moved a response team there to be in position for this weekend?

A: No.

A: I'd like to comment on the posse comitatus issue because it always seems to come up and it seems, from where I'm sitting, a bit of a red herring.

We take the law very, very seriously. In each one of these instances, the DoD general counsel is consulted with and approves. Remember that the Act prohibits federal military personnel from acting in a law enforcement capacity. It does not prohibit them from providing advice and assistance, and technical assistance and other things.

So what it really means is federal people cannot execute laws, conduct searches, arrest, detain, and exercise command and control functions in the prosecution of law enforcement operations. It doesn't preclude the Department of Defense from giving technical advice, expertise, and capability to assist in the cleanup of an aftermath. So it would be useful if people made it very clear that it's the law enforcement functions, the arresting, the investigating, and those other functions, that are specifically focused on by the Act, and not the whole issue of support to law enforcement.

Press: Thank you.

- END -