



CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF THE PRESIDENCY AND CONGRESS

CRISIS LEADERSHIP: SECURING SOCIETIES, PROTECTING HOMELANDS

MARCH 19, 2007

The Center for the Study of the Presidency hosted the second seminar of its *Crisis Leadership: Securing Societies, Protecting Homelands* series on March 19, 2007 in the U.S. Capitol Building. Seminar participants examined transatlantic and private sector institutional structures and response systems for crisis. This event built upon the conclusions of the first seminar, which delineated methods for decision-making in crisis, communications in crisis, and navigating the politics of crisis leadership.

During the first seminar of this series, participants discussed how defenses within society can be improved by building resilience and flexibility from the bottom-up. While vulnerabilities remain, the U.S. and its allies (both in government and the private sector) may increase preparedness by building a culture of security throughout all sectors of society. Training and education are the best tools available to achieve this goal.

The March 19th dialogue examined how various institutions responded in times of crisis in order to identify ways in which the U.S. may increase the resilience of its preparedness system and thus gain greater flexibility in response to a disaster. At this seminar, Jesper Gronvall, Senior Analyst for Homeland Security at the Swedish Institute of International Affairs, presented an issue paper entitled “Building Capacity for Enhanced Societal Security Through Crisis Management Training,” co-authored by Bengt Sundelius, Chief Scientist for the Swedish Emergency Management Agency. In this paper, Gronvall and Sundelius present an excellent discussion of the decision-making skills necessary for a leader in crisis and highlight the need for mandatory training for all managers of crisis events. Gronvall and Sundelius’ original paper, in combination with knowledge gained from the Crisis Leadership seminar series, will guide the Center for the Study of the Presidency in development a range of strategic recommendations for the next President-elect as a part of our over-arching project, Agenda 2008. The issue paper follows this report.

The conclusions of this seminar will serve as a platform to discuss guidelines for training effective decision-makers during crisis. The Center will take the lessons from this two-part seminar, and collaborate with research from a range of institutions on requirements for leadership in crisis. The goal of this series is to apply both the experiences and preparations of other nations in order to better prepare for the next disaster, both in leadership under extreme political, emotional, and physical stress and in logistics in an effort to better secure our society as a whole.

Transatlantic Systems of Crisis Response

During the first panel, **Dr. Mark Rhinard**, Senior Researcher at the Swedish Institute of International Affairs, reviewed the conclusions of a paper he published with the European Policy Centre on the role of the European Union in crisis management. Rhinard asserted that the EU was shocked by the attacks on 9/11 because the Union had recently become its own “Center of Modern Security” as a newly allied continent. Changes, such as the creation of internal markets,

increased the power and leverage of member nations over non-member nations of the EU, but this unification also made member nations more vulnerable as borders became virtually porous. Suddenly, the EU faced greater responsibility for a range of security issues.

Because lingering problems of national sovereignty complicate the European Union's management and response to crisis, bureaucratic turf-battles break out between EU Headquarters in Brussels and member states. The physical presence and traditional security mandate of NATO further deepens the problem of stove-piping in Brussels. Moreover, member states find it difficult to commit politically to the European Union, and thus the EU continues to maintain little leverage in the event of a crisis. In both the attacks on July 7, 2005 and the "Mad Cow" crisis, the U.K. responded without requesting assistance from or coordinating with the EU. Though the Mad Cow crisis stoked the EU into regulating trade better, the EU failed to prepare a strategy for such a crisis before it occurred. Instead, the U.K. and other member states simply closed their borders. While certain intricacies and lessons of the EU-member state relationship may be relevant only to the European Continent, the U.S. can learn valuable lessons about the importance of interoperability and partnership among federal, state, and local government officials.

Rhinard noted that the EU is organized in four stages to maintain societal security: prevention (warning systems), preparation, response, and restoration. He also noted that it is extremely difficult to measure security capacities of the EU, which has not managed well the response to flooding and heat waves in member countries. Disadvantaged from the start, the EU preparedness and response roles remain poorly defined and its competencies incomplete, at best.

Seminar moderator **Dr. Gregory Saathoff**, Executive Director of the University of Virginia Critical Incident Analysis Group, asked Rhinard whether non-EU nations should seek to cooperate with independent countries or the EU as a whole. Rhinard replied that a foreign nation should communicate with both. In the case of Hurricane Katrina, the U.S. chose to communicate with independent nations rather than the EU, and this choice likely complicated the aid process.

Alan Charlton, Deputy Chief of Mission at the British Embassy, spoke about the high priority currently placed on crisis leadership in the United Kingdom. In July 2001, the British government established the Civil Contingency Secretariat (CCS) in order to build up resilience (the ability to detect and prevent crises) by partnering with government departments and key stakeholders to enhance the preparation for, response to, and recovery from emergencies.¹ It is located at the highest level in the Cabinet Offices, with direct access to the Prime Minister.

Within the CCS, the Horizon Scanning and Response Team assesses circumstances that may precipitate an emergency, communicate such assessments to the key decisionmakers and other parts of CCS, and assist in developing an integrated response. The Horizon Scanning and Response Team is comprised of five specialist desks that cover a full range of possible scenarios.² During emergencies, the Team produces frequent and immediate assessments of how a particular crisis is developing in order to brief the Cabinet Office and the CCS Co-ordination

¹ www.ukresilience.info/ccs.aspx

² Ibid.

Centre that work together to deliver a complete and integrated government response to the public.

Michael Thielmann, the first Liaison between Canada and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, described how “Public Safety Canada,” that nation’s emergency management agency, differs from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security in that no equivalent such as the Federal Emergency Management Agency exists. This forces much greater responsibility upon the Canadian provinces when crises occur, and is an important organizational requirement for implementing societal security. This decentralized structure forces the localities to be more proactive in preparation for crisis before one occurs, and is a model that may be helpful to the U.S.

In order to ensure preparedness in the event of a crisis, Public Safety Canada employs experts to research and develop solutions in the following four areas: corrections, crime prevention, emergency management, and law enforcement. Under emergency management, researchers focus primarily on disaster mitigation, emergency response, and situational awareness. The panic that some leaders and the public will experience when faced with making critical decisions under rigorous time restraints can be reduced by developing research-based plans before a crisis situation occurs.

Furthermore, Canada’s Department of Public Safety has developed a “National Emergency Response System.” Within this system, the Canadian government has created the Government of Canada Operation Center (GOC) to bring together different agencies in order to deal with complex emergencies. In 2006, the GOC took control of the evacuation of nearly 17,000 Canadian citizens from Lebanon when conflict erupted.

Thielmann noted that while the evacuation was successful, Canadian leadership fell into traditional response and communication patterns to manage the victims of the crisis in Lebanon once they arrived in Canada. Canada’s government was not prepared to consider the evacuation as both an international and domestic emergency. Since that crisis, Canada has set two main priorities to improve their national crisis management strategy: solidify the domestic crisis response system and strengthen the partnership with the United States for quicker communications in crisis.

To make this partnership possible, the U.S. must also be willing to bolster the relationship with Canada. Canada provided the United States with aid during the 9/11 attacks and Hurricane Katrina. During 9/11, Canada accepted 1500 airplanes diverted from the U.S. and provided food, water, and shelter for the displaced passengers, but during Hurricane Katrina, Canada could only provide assistance on an ad hoc basis.

The U.S. System in Crisis

Casey Long, Director of Intergovernmental Affairs and Acting Director of International Affairs at the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), discussed a variety of reasons for FEMA’s highly criticized and ineffective response to the Katrina disaster. Following a series of “gap analyses,” Long described impending institutional and structural changes within the organization to improve precision and preparedness, placing particular emphasis on the

implementation of a “leaning forward” strategy. This strategy will allow governors to request pre-positioned supplies at the borders of states near the site of an imminent disaster (assuming that advance warning is possible). FEMA instituted this strategy in order to reduce response to disaster from 72 hours to 48 hours.

In agreement with **David Paulison**, Director of FEMA, Mr. Long articulated that FEMA’s greatest shortcoming during its response to Katrina was a breakdown in communication. Currently, Governors must first request aid from FEMA and the larger U.S. government before it can be delivered, delaying the response time. Thus, a “leaning forward” strategy may better facilitate the distribution process for applicants through the creation of a single, unified assistance application. In addition to this strategy, FEMA plans to increase its employees by 4,000 and add a department dedicated solely to operational planning – which was never a practice before Katrina.

All of the participants agreed that FEMA personnel must have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities and how they fit into the wider political landscape. Without proper training and education, FEMA risks quickly becoming overwhelmed by the next emergency because it will not have tested procedures, validated plans, or developed staff competencies.

In his keynote address, **Ambassador Cresencio Arcos**, Former Assistant Secretary for International Affairs at the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS), spoke on the international dimension of homeland security. He cited this dimension as an immense hurdle that faced the Department as it began work in late 2002. As the Department matured, its leadership realized that “closely knitted partnerships with foreign governments” were required to safeguard the U.S. borders. Such relationships are crucial to developing effective homeland security policies.

Complicating this gap, the U.S. State Department erected barriers against DHS in effort to protect bureaucratic turf. Moreover, DHS lacked the ability to create treaties. To rectify this problem, Arcos created the practice of establishing Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) with foreign governments. Many MOUs are still being established today, and will continue to shape the success of the policies of the Department of Homeland Security.

Managing Non-Governmental and International Aid

Sean Reilly, President of the Outdoor Division of Lamar Advertising Corporation, relayed his experience as a Corporate Executive during the Hurricane Katrina crisis. He emphasized the need for government leadership to articulate safety and protection in its messages to victims and the public, “that everything is going to be alright and that someone dependable is in charge.” Such reassuring, regular communication between government and the public did not occur during the Katrina crisis. He cited the point of fact that Louisiana suffered nearly 80% of the disaster, but that communications were more strained because of the political climate of that state, in comparison with Mississippi.

Furthermore, the executives of the Lamar Corporation were forced to assume a leadership role in response to the crisis by offering the business facility as a staging point and by providing food, water, and shelter to victims in the absence of government assistance. As an outdoor

advertising firm, Lamar was able to provide the unique donation of unused vinyl advertising signs to homeless victims for use as temporary roofing. While Lamar was successful in its relief efforts, Reilly explained that the Federal Emergency Management Agency refused similar attempts to provide assistance by thousands of nongovernmental organizations.

Prior to hurricane Katrina, FEMA had not designed a protocol to receive international aid, thus making it difficult to accept assistance from non-governmental medical professionals who faced liability issues or had unconformable medical credentials. In order to utilize and coordinate the distribution of all available resources offered by foreign countries, Casey Long, director of Intergovernmental Affairs and Acting Director of International Affairs of FEMA, recommended that the United States begin to implement training systems with partner countries to better collaborate emergency response. During Katrina, FEMA also lacked a network that was able to trace exactly where aid was sent and who received it. Thus, the agency is working to increase its Total Asset Visibility (TAV) by employing tracking systems already in use by the private sector. Currently, FEMA technologies are twenty years behind the private sector. Compounding this problem is the fact that FEMA has only recently begun to engage in operational planning – a key step toward better preparedness.

Anne Richard observed a similar phenomenon as Vice President for Government Relations and Advocacy at the International Rescue Committee. As a Fellow of the Johns Hopkins University Center for Transatlantic Studies, Richard completed a study of foreign assistance during Hurricane Katrina. In the study, she concluded that nations enjoying preexisting relationships with the U.S. were more successful in breaking through bureaucratic red tape. Just as the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has worked to improve existing partnerships and to form new international linkages to promote intelligence sharing and counterterrorism measures, Mrs. Richard recommended that the U.S. improve its relationships with counterparts in foreign governments and alliances before the next crisis.

Reilly emphasized the “longevity of crisis,” and the need to build in accountability. He rejected use of the word, “response” during a crisis and instead encouraged response personnel to employ the words “relief and rescue.” Furthermore, the set of skills needed to rebuild is different than those skills needed to assist in rescue and relief efforts. Reilly lamented that FEMA’s mandate hinders the recovery process because it is charged with only restoring physical structures to their previous state rather than rebuilding more resistant, safer buildings and homes. Many of the buildings destroyed in Hurricane Katrina were over 30 years old, and original construction costs were far less than the cost to build at today’s standards. Thus, communities are doomed to undergo an incomplete recovery. In this environment, Reilly argued that pushing authority down to the lowest level is the most effective way to manage rebuilding efforts. The lack of continuity among FEMA employees only hinders this process.

The Concept of “Lessons-Observed”

Michael Thielmann, Canadian Liaison to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, introduced the Canadian practice of determining “Lessons Observed” after crisis, in contrast to the American “Lessons Learned” system which assumes without basis that failures have been corrected. Throughout the seminar, participants used the term and praised the Canadian practice for its nuance and practicality.

Thielmann asserted that the most crucial “Lesson Observed” by Canadian officials in recent crises is the need to develop better coordination and interface between federal departments, agencies, and the provinces. This is an observation constantly reiterated in the U.S. and Europe. Furthermore, Canada could benefit from improved federal interface with NGOs and critical infrastructure, while dually improving leadership in crisis. Lastly, Thielmann suggested that better interface needs to occur with the United States.

Conclusions

While the U.S. will never achieve inviolability, officials can reduce the negative impact that a mismanaged crisis may produce by educating leaders about how to effectively approach and control crisis situations. All too often, disaster and continuity plans address tactical responses. Few provide specific approaches for decision-making and actions to effectively protect America’s threatened core assets. These strategic decisions are at the heart of how a leader will respond to high risk and high consequence situations, but must be made in the midst of chaotic and rapid, non-transparent conditions.

Building Capacity for Enhanced Societal Security through Crisis Management Training¹

Abstract:

What can crisis management training provide?

Societal security is an emerging concept developed from the legacy of the total defence system that was employed by the Nordic countries and other European nations during the cold war.

Societal security is an all-hazards *plus* approach for managing severe strains on society that go beyond everyday “normal accidents” in peacetime. A severe strain on society can be defined as a situation that arises suddenly with little warning, which threatens citizens’ life, fundamental societal functions and values and demands swift and coordinated consequence management.¹ Such events can in a worst-case scenario, lead to a breakdown of the rule of law and other institutions that guard the principles of democracy. An integral part is a strong emphasis on preparedness of which training is a key instrument.

Crises present decision-makers with critical choices; poor decisions may yield severe consequences in terms of loss of life, health, financial values and credibility. The complexity, urgency, uncertainty, and unpredictability of crises and their consequences demand greater organizational and mental preparedness for decision-makers, to manage crises effectively and legitimately.

Building preparedness and improving societal capacity for crisis management needs to be a balanced effort where resources are invested in both technical and human infrastructure. Too heavy reliance on technical systems and/or hasty organizational reform may only offer a false sense of safety and security. People-- *human infrastructure*-- will make and implement critical decisions, and therefore they need high-quality, continuous, training.

This paper will discuss training of generic crisis decision-making skills for public leaders and business executives working on a strategic level.

¹ This paper brings together the lesson learned about best training practices acquired during our tenures at Crismart (Center for Crisis Management Research and Training) at the Swedish National Defence College. Bengt Sundelius was the founding Director and Jesper Grönvall was the co-director of Training before moving to their current positions. More information on Crismart can be found at www.crismart.org

Introduction

In recent years, there has been a wide range of crises where decision-makers had to make critical decisions to protect and safeguard human life, preserve and maintain political, economic and social structures; and uphold values such as the freedom of movement and freedom of the press. The terror attacks of 9/11/01 against the US homeland, as well as attacks in London, Madrid, Beslan, and Bali painfully exposed vulnerabilities to international terrorism. The cascading effects of power outages in North America and Europe in 2003 displayed the dependency on tightly coupled critical infrastructure systems within and between countries. The tsunami in South-East Asia in 2004 showed the power of natural disasters where a local disaster scene often has transnational consequences. The SARS virus in 2003, provided an example of the formidable speed a disease can spread around the globe. The anthrax attacks in the US in 2001 and the following hoaxes around the world showed how easy it was to instill fear in a society. The SoBig.F computer virus in 2003 caused havoc when it raced through global computer networks and caused millions of dollars in losses.

These events are not historic irregularities; crises are part of our open, complex and interconnected societies. As crises tend to spill over jurisdictional, sectoral and geographical borders splendid isolation will not be a possible strategy for any nation. The capacity for prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery needs to be high within and between nations. The public will hold public leaders accountable for their performance in such high-stakes situations. Crisis management capacity is emerging as an expected criteria for modern good governance.

*“Being an effective crisis manager is rarely at the top of the mental checklists that voters use to evaluate candidates for high office, but many political executive will find out during the course of their tenure that it is a crucial quality they must possess if that want to stay in office and remain effective”.*²

It has also been shown in the corporate domain that effective decision-making is rewarded with higher shareholder value after a well-managed crisis.³ An investment in crisis management capacity can insure the protection and even enhancement of the brand name.

It is impossible to predict the exact nature and course of future crises, but it is possible to provide decision-makers with better skill-sets to manage crises more effectively and more legitimately through crisis management education and training.

What is a crisis?

Many definitions of crises are being used. The definition of crisis in this paper highlights three criteria, “A crisis is a situation in which the central decision-makers interpret the situation as [there is]...”,

- A **threat** to core values, e.g. protection of human lives, preserving and maintaining political, economic and social structures, up-holding basic principles of society such as freedom of movement.
- Limited **time** is available. The events in combination with an increased pressure from the media, the citizens and other actors limit the amount of time that is available. There is a need to make critical decisions, and that there is no time for politics, business or research ‘as usual,’ with a wait and see attitude.
- The situation is cloaked in **uncertainty**. There is often a lack of information or a surplus of information which makes it hard to determine what is happening, what should be done, who should be involved etc.⁴

Sitting in the hot seat of crises often creates high stress levels for decision-makers. Up to a certain degree stress often have positive effects, as it heightens awareness, but if prolonged it can deteriorate the quality of the decision-making process. It can also lead to psychological effects such as wishful thinking and groupthink, all with a negative effect on decision-making. What adds to a high stress level is the knowledge that the consequence of a decision (or non-decision) is higher than during “normal” times. The media, other stakeholders, and the public will observe what actions are taken or not taken.

Crises bring occasions for decisions, often with dilemmas that challenge the decision-maker. Some of these dilemmas will be tragic choices, thorny decisions that offer a choice, as a Swedish saying goes, “between plague and cholera.” One example is on 9/11 when the US president and his advisors had to wrestle with the decision to shoot down any other hijacked

commercial airliners. Another example can be illustrated by the need to choose who would receive limited resources, which arose with the unexpected flu vaccine shortage in the US in 2004. Decision-makers will need to be prepared for the burden of making critical decisions.

However, if investments are made to prepare decision-makers through training, a crisis can serve as an opportunity. If prepared, an organization can emerge from challenging situation with an intact or a higher degree of perceived legitimacy and credibility. As a crisis is often an opportunity for reform and change, the organization that is prepared can be a *driver* of that change, rather than being in a position to merely *experience* change.

Rehearsal for the future

Crisis management is a difficult task. Decision-makers need to be prepared for unknown problems with unforeseen consequences. Events often happen unexpectedly. If decision-makers are not mentally and organizationally prepared through previous experience (where lessons have been learned and not only observed) and/or education and training it may turn out to be more of chaos management rather than crisis management. The kind of training that will be discussed in this paper is for generic crisis decision-making skills aimed at decision-makers primarily on a strategic level.

In contrast to more procedural crisis decision-making education (e.g. first responders learn and practice steps to extinguish a certain type of fire or for medical personnel to execute complicated medical procedures), crises at a more strategic level seldom follow a predetermined scheme. Such crises demand outside-the-box decision-making, i.e. creative and flexible decision-making. It requires more than procedural knowledge, where one step follows after another. For the most part there will not be “one” correct solution to an unfolding event.

There is a need to accomplish a shift in thinking about training, especially at the senior strategic level as they will have central roles in managing a crisis. A culture of systematic and continual education and training should be present at all levels in an organization. A

commitment from the strategic level sends a strong message within an organization that education and training is important and valued. Inspiration should be taken from the military and first-responder communities such as the fire services and police organizations that traditionally have a more developed and institutionalized culture of training.

Historically it has been difficult to involve top leadership in taking part in training activities. Reasons could be an underestimation of its importance or a fear of exposing themselves in front of their peers and staff. Decision-makers need to be aware that-- new technologies come into play; new threats emerge, legislation changes; organizations die, reorganize, or are born; or new research knowledge becomes available.

Training critical decision-making skills

What may work under “normal” conditions will not be sufficient in crises marked by complexity, urgency, uncertainty, and unpredictability. Public leaders and company executives are not confronted by crises frequently; some may not even encounter one in their whole career. However, it is necessary to take steps before decision-makers are thrown into the hot seat of acute and reactive crisis management.

Critical decision-making skills can be provided by or enhanced through education and training modules.⁵ The purpose can for example be to gain experience of crisis management in general or of a particular situation that occurs with such low frequency that decision-making skills do not exist. It is especially vital that training involves a high degree of psychological fidelity so that decision-makers can experience stress. This has been found to be more important than physical fidelity in a training simulation. By engaging in training processes there will be opportunities to try and evaluate different strategies and decision-making styles in “safe” and “forgiving” environments. Eventual mistakes cause no real-world consequences and can be eye-opening and valuable lessons for the future.

Several education and training tools that can be used to build skill-sets;

- Lectures on general crisis decision-making theory and principles
- Presentations and analyses of crisis management cases

- Case exercises
- Simulation exercises
- Computer-based tools/educational (serious) games

The traditional way of transferring knowledge is through lectures, which can provide generic knowledge and will give a framework to better understand the idiosyncrasies and commonalities of crises. Researchers and practitioners have valuable insights. The scientific communities' research-based knowledge combined with practitioners' real-world experience usually provides a very fruitful combination. A more interactive educational and training method is case-exercises. These include a scenario based on real or fictive event, and are a very useful method of transferring knowledge. The most interactive and ambitious format is to construct and implement an interactive simulation where the organization, in whole or in part, is involved.

A new and potentially useful tool for teaching crisis decision-making can be computer-based educational (serious) games. These have been used in more procedural training, or at least more highly specialized and narrow expertise areas, e.g. flight simulators and medical training tools. But the potential of educational computer games should be explored further as they offer several interesting possibilities for transferring decision-making skills as a complement to other modules mentioned above. This tool should also be useful for providing just-in-time-training that can be delivered irrespective of geographical proximity, available time frame, and at low cost. The digital promise seems to hold many benefits for crisis management education and training methods.

Although several of these modules of education and training can be seen as stand-alone, it is preferable that all or a good number of modules are included in a continuous education and training program. Participants are often at a different stage of knowledge, naturally influenced by previous education, training, and experience. To improve the ground for learning, training activities should be preceded by educational lectures and/or seminars to place all participants at a level playing field. By doing so it will facilitate establishing a common goal and commitment to learning where all participants feel that they can contribute to an exercise without having to camouflage their eventual factual or emotional

uncertainties. Motivation to engage and commit to do well has been found to be of vital importance to create grounds for learning.⁶

Benefits of crisis management training

There are numerous benefits of utilizing different education and training tools, as practice makes perfect.

1. **Activities can contribute to awareness.** Although it will not be possible to know exactly what future crises will bring, an awareness of generic vulnerabilities and dilemmas of crisis decision-making is important. Which are the dilemmas, the tragic choices that can emerge during a crisis management process?

2. **Acquiring skills:** Skills that are central to crisis decision-making can be acquired or enhanced through education and training. For example; how can group dynamics be kept positive; leadership skills; how can decisions be made and communicated; how can information be collected, analyzed, and distributed; how can experts be used in the decision-making process; and how can communication be established with the media and other stakeholders.

3. **Horizon scanning:** It can be used for horizon scanning to have updated threat assessments and to be aware of possible future challenges. Scenarios do have an expiration date. Rules and regulations and existing networks and relations to other actors (both within and outside the organization change constantly. It is imperative to have innovative, multiple-source threat assessments to prepare for and understand future risks. What are the trends, what are the recent events that have happened in the sector nationally and internationally and what implications does that bring forward for the ability to manage crises. There is truth in the logic that your neighbor's history can be your future. Research based knowledge should be used to provide the real-life dilemmas and facts that is the nuts and bolts of a good scenario. It also serves the purpose of making educational and training experiences engaging by being realistic and credible. Naturally scenarios should include a sprinkle of imagination, as future crises will most likely contain unthought-of components and consequences.

4. Planning tool: activities can be used as a planning tool for a crisis plan. However, it should be stressed that it is not possible to plan for every aspect of a crisis, or contingency, as they by definition avoid an easy label. A too detailed plan can be deceptive as it can give a false sense of security. Plans rarely meet the demands of the real world. To quote Dwight D. Eisenhower, “In preparing for battle I have always found that plans are useless, but planning is indispensable”.⁷ Decision-makers who need to be creative and flexible in a crisis may risk becoming static by following a detailed plan. However, by having crafted a generic plan including some guidelines it will ease the process of initiating crisis management activities and should help avoiding simplistic mistakes. The absolute key point is having a continuous planning process, as it will keep information fresh in the plan and in the heads of the decision-makers.

Having a plan but not practicing it on a regular basis will be deceptive. Discouraging statistics can be found in the AMA (American Management Association) 2004 survey on crisis management issues in that 61 % of its membership companies have a crisis plan, which is rather low figure, but only 44 % of them have conducted crisis drills or simulations.⁸ Another major survey from of 240 executives in companies all over the globe displayed that more than a third of the companies did not have a business continuity plan and few of the companies that had plans did actually practice their plans at any regular interval, which shows that there is room for improvement.⁹

5. Network Building: It has been shown that actors who normally have contact are those who work together in crises as well. Depending on the type of crisis, however, it may be necessary to expand the involved actors. Training occasions is one way to gather actors from across the spectrum to discuss generic crisis situations and touch upon vital questions such as who is responsible and who is in charge. Future crisis will demand other constellations of actors than today. An example of such a situation is in a bio-terrorism scenario, which demands involvement from the public health, law enforcement and the military communities. There is a need to facilitate an understanding of other communities’ cultures as well as their legislative reality, available resources, norms and working traditions to be able to

work effectively. Perhaps most importantly, *trust* between the involved decision-makers and their organizations should be in place before a crisis in real life.

It should be remembered that the underlying motive for performing training programs is to transfer and increase knowledge, to improve individual and organizational capacity by creating awareness of strengths and weaknesses. This is made possible by having clear learning objectives with education and training sessions, carefully crafting a realistic and credible scenario for exercises and having a carefully prepared de-briefing session. All stages are important but the de-briefing process is especially important. A skilled de-briefer can facilitate reflection among the participants on their experiences and draw lessons for the future. It is an excellent opportunity to drill deep into the decision-process; what happened, why, how can a better decision-process be structured, what changes need to be done to a structure, a plan or which skills are lacking or need to be improved. Such an exchange of lessons learned and the way forward can be enhanced by having seasoned practitioners, subject matter experts as well as academics to observe and offer their outside view of what to bring from a training experience.¹⁰

Mandatory training for enhanced crisis management performance

The crises of the future are likely to have consequences that spill over functional, jurisdictional and geographical borders. Vulnerabilities are amplified by globalization, interconnected technological systems, and an ever faster pace of innovation and evolution of science and technology. In essence what is happening is a merger of the domestic and the international arenas.

To prepare, stronger ties should be built prior to crises between relevant stakeholders, e.g. between the government and corporate, the civil and military, and the national and international divide. To be able to accomplish a coordinated inter-agency approach steps need to be taken to achieve a higher degree of interoperability in the mental, legal, organizational, and technical spheres. Training for coping with the unexpected and the consequential is obligatory for advancements in the military sphere, why not for leaders in public service and industry executives?

Training should not be compartmentalized to one sector or nation; cross-sectoral and international training should become more common than it is. There is a growing dependency between the public-private sectors; in the US it is estimated that the private sector owns or runs 85% of what is defined as critical infrastructure. The public and private domains need to realize that their decisions in each organization or company can have consequences in society. To be able to understand each other's opportunities and constraints it is important to engage in shared activities that can build and sustain necessary trust.

The aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, coupled with the devastating collapse of the levees in New Orleans, displayed difficulties to offer and receive assistance between international partners. Most European Union countries quickly offered assistance to the U.S. to ease the plight of the people in the region, but the lack of experience of receiving assistance meant that there were no plans in place. Sweden had similar difficulties in 2005 when asking for international help after being hit by a devastating wind-storm.

Individual and organizational preparedness cannot be created in a day, but should instead be viewed as part of a continuous learning process. The various training tools utilized—lectures, seminars, case teaching, simulations and computer tools—can together create the kind of environment necessary for long-term learning. Hopefully then, the next crisis that arises will not only be managed differently, if need be, but better.

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