



# DomPrep Journal

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## Business Office

517 Benfield Road, Suite 303  
Severna Park, MD 21146 USA  
www.DomesticPreparedness.com  
(410) 518-6900

## Staff

Martin Masiuk  
Publisher  
mmasiuk@domprep.com

James D. Hessman  
Editor in Chief  
JamesD@domprep.com

John Morton  
Strategic Advisor  
jmorton@domprep.com

Susan Collins  
Creative Director  
scollins@domprep.com

Catherine Feinman  
Associate Editor  
cfeinman@domprep.com

Carole Parker  
Database Manager  
cparker@domprep.com

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## Editor's Notes

By James D. Hessman, Editor in Chief



Eleven articles, written by authors representing almost as many different professional disciplines, make up the all-star cast of contributors to this month's printable issue of DPJ. Seven articles focus on the rapid, and continuing, increase in the use of illegal drugs throughout the United States – and many other nations.

The bad news is that international drug cartels are winning, and their “margin of victory,” if it can be called that, is likely to climb higher, and higher again, in the foreseeable future. More Americans, some innocent bystanders, some drug addicts, and a growing number of law-enforcement personnel caught in the middle, are dying from drug-related crimes year after year. The financial cost to the United States alone is measured in tens of billions of dollars; the cost in human suffering, in lives wasted, in interdiction resources and legal costs, is incalculable.

It is not surprising, therefore, that Lieutenant General H Steven Blum, former chief of the U.S. National Guard, describes the massive increase in drug-trafficking over the past decade as the “most dangerous existential threat” currently facing the United States. As a highly decorated U.S. combat commander who led U.S. troops in numerous battles overseas, he is an expert in this field.

So is, Mark Coomer, who has been on the front lines of the drug-interdiction wars on active duty in the military, as a senior White House staffer, and in the private sector. His topic is “Plan Colombia,” which started in 1999 and still serves as a valuable lessons-learned template for today's much more complex, and immensely more dangerous, drug-interdiction battles. Michael S. Brewer and Lawrence E. O'Connell team up to describe how and why the counter-drug terrain has changed in the past 12 years; they also point out that the cartel chiefs and their murderous gangs have learned some useful lessons as well and are not quite as concerned about due process as are U.S. law-enforcement agencies.

Rodrigo Moscoso provides an insider's view of how improved IT systems are now tilting the tide of battle slightly in favor of law-enforcement agencies at all levels of government. Stephen Grainer analyzes the organizational and operational gains made, and others projected, by use of the Incident Command System of the federal government's National Incident Management System. Dawn R. Blanche discusses the encouraging growth in the number of U.S. colleges and other academic institutions that are now offering degrees in counterterrorism and other homeland-security majors. And Victor Welzant describes the tragic consequences that follow when counter-drug professionals themselves become addicts.

Rounding out the issue are articles by: Joseph Cahill, who describes how, and why, Massachusetts has authorized the use of a new drug “spray” that actually reduces the number of drug-related deaths in the commonwealth; Christina Spoons, who warns emergency-service professionals about the hidden, and frequently fatal, dangers of responding to fires or explosions in clandestine drug labs; Kate Rosenblatt, who discusses the tragic growth in the recent-year suicides of U.S. combat veterans, particularly those suffering from post-traumatic stress syndrome; and Sophia Paros, who reports from behind the scenes on the immediate and highly professional response by Pima County to the attempted murder of U.S. Representative Gabrielle Giffords last year in Tucson, Arizona. Six lives were lost, but many others were saved that might otherwise have been lost – which is the most important point to remember.

*About the Cover: Three iStock photos – the graffiti-laden wall of an abandoned building; a medical syringe and what seem to be illegal drugs; and an apparently homeless man – serve as the basic foundation of another Susan Collins creative masterpiece. But who is the homeless man? An addict? A so-called “street person”? Or perhaps, just perhaps, a narcotics agent in what seems to be a very good disguise?*

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## Contributors

### First Responders

Kay Goss  
Emergency Management

Joseph Cahill  
EMS

Glen Rudner  
Fire/HazMat

Stephen Grainer  
Fire/HazMat

Joseph Trindal  
Law Enforcement

Rodrigo (Roddy) Moscoso  
Law Enforcement

Richard Schoeberl  
Law Enforcement

### Medical Response

Raphael Barishansky  
Public Health

Bruce Clements  
Public Health

Craig DeAtley  
Public Health

Theodore (Ted) Tully  
Health Systems

### Government

Corey Ranslem  
Coast Guard

Dennis Schrader  
DRS International LLC

# The Most Dangerous Existential Threat: Illegal Drugs

By H Steven Blum, National Guard



Hurricane Katrina and the 9/11 terrorist attacks in the United States; urban warfare in Israel; tsunamis in Haiti and Japan; combat in Iraq and Afghanistan; peacekeeping missions in Kosovo, Sinai, and Bosnia; pandemic influenza, high-seas piracy, and cyber attacks around the world. In the past 375 years, the U.S. National Guard has been an integral part of the nation's protection and recovery efforts – both inside and outside the United States – for all types of both natural and manmade disasters. A great deal of time, money, and energy have been spent preparing for and responding to catastrophic threats and events, and yet there is one current threat that may be more destructive and more dangerous than any seen in the past – *Illegal Drugs*.

Although various “ripple” effects can be felt outside a disaster-struck area, only one current threat has the ability to touch every American citizen, reach every family, and adversely affect every household – including the White House. Nobody is completely immune, protected, insulated, or isolated from the effects of this scourge on society. Illegal drugs, and their second- and third-order effects, present what could arguably be described, accurately, as the most dangerous and clear existential threat to the United States and its citizens.

## Building a Drug Empire

In essence, illegal drug rings represent organizations that not only possess, and manage, their own production and supply chains, and use their own specialized lines of communication, but also whose operations have profound economic and governmental implications that affect the entire nation. These organizations truly operate as illegal and illicit businesses – but with an armed component: They are equipped with and protected by their own “terroristic” law enforcement (i.e., paramilitary) forces. Moreover, although hugely profitable to their owners and operators, drug empires have an absolutely debilitating effect on society at large – not only on the end users of the drugs, but also on the millions of other innocent victims who, in a military sense, fall under the category of second- and third-order collateral damage.

In short, the proliferation and use of illegal drugs have a universal, and universally harmful, effect on the nation at large and can lead to extremely dire consequences if not strictly controlled. It must be emphasized, though, that although the drug threat and accompanying violence are not isolated to the United States, they are nonetheless a very real national security concern. Moreover, as can be seen in such nations as Mexico and Colombia, the drug threat to the United States itself has gone beyond the normal control limits the government can impose on it.

## Protecting the Border Is the First & Highest Priority

The growing power of Mexican drug cartels in recent years has led, fortunately, to a compelling need for the investment of greater resources into border security.

However, the resolution of current problems cannot be the sole responsibility of either Mexico, or the United States itself, but, rather, a bi-national effort between both countries. As with any other business, the “target market” must be identified based on the principles normally used to determine the geographic and/or demographic area of “greatest profit.” In this case, the greatest demand and largest profit – for the drug cartels themselves – is found, not surprisingly, on the U.S. side of the border.

It should be remembered, of course, that the drug demand in other international markets does not diminish the interest in and the impact on North America as a whole – but particularly the United States. Therefore, in order to defeat or control the flow of illicit drugs, and/or illegal drug trafficking, between the two countries most directly involved (the United States and Mexico), it will take not only a spirit of mutual cooperation but also, and much more specifically, a joint, interagency, intergovernmental, and international effort.

The U.S. obligation in this type of cooperative effort will be, to begin with, increased demands on agencies such as U.S. Customs and Border Protection, the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration, and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, as well as on U.S. citizens – particularly those living in border states and/or the “end states” where the cartels distribute, wholesale, and retail their drugs. In larger cities, and even some rural areas, mayors and city commissioners, local and state police departments, and federal law enforcement agencies will all have to address, head-on, the first and most important issue of illegal and illicit drug trafficking as well as the second- and third-order effects that the now national drug problem causes within their communities – e.g., violence, crime, unemployment, school dropouts, and a broad spectrum of health problems. In short, almost every facet of society can be affected. Moreover, many if not all families living anywhere in the United States have loved ones or close friends who, either directly or indirectly, have been harmed and otherwise been affected by drugs and/or various drug-related criminal/violent activities.

*For more than three centuries, the National Guard has helped prepare for and respond to myriad threats and disasters, but none quite like the one currently facing the United States: Illegal Drugs, which may in many respects be the most dangerous threat to U.S. security the Guard has had to battle.*

The growing success in recent years of the Mexican drug cartels signals the likelihood of even greater challenges in the future for U.S. border security and counterdrug efforts, both along the U.S. southwest border with Mexico and on both sides of the border. However, that threat is not isolated to a particular geographic area. After crossing the border, drugs from the Mexican cartels are distributed through supply chains to anywhere, and everywhere, within the United States – particularly, of course, to the so-called “Lower 48.”

## **The National Guard Vs. Drugs: Reduction Is Only “The First Step”**

No single organization or government agency can solve this problem alone, but the National Guard plays a very important support role – in two ways: (a) promoting and enforcing drug-demand reduction measures in all U.S. states and territories; and (b) providing military support to local as well as national law enforcement agencies. The Guard is already heavily involved in school and other programs to reduce the demand for drugs by untold thousands of American citizens. Drug-demand reduction is the key to taking the profit out of drugs. Without the continuing demand from end users, there would be no drug cartels. Demand *reduction* is hugely important in itself, of course – but until the demand is gone entirely, there will always be a need for additional support to law-enforcement agencies.

The National Guard possesses significant military capabilities and capacities – which frequently have been extended in support of U.S. law enforcement at the state and federal levels as well as in some joint interagency task forces involved in the nation’s counterdrug programs. Members of the Guard provide significant analyst work, for example – and also operate counterdrug training centers, and share aviation assets that have been instrumental in the counterdrug successes of many civilian law enforcement agencies, at both the state and federal levels. The analysis and fusion skills provided by the National Guard have been very effective in supporting the legitimate authority of the state or federal law enforcement agency or organization that is primarily responsible for the counterdrug activities involved. The Guard

is therefore already one of the more important players on the “team of teams” needed not only to defeat the drug threat as a whole but also to further, promote, and support substance-abuse prevention activities and operations.

## **Future Challenges – Starting with Three “Major Hurdles”**

There are three major hurdles still blocking the way for protecting U.S. communities, and the nation as a whole, against drug-related disasters: (a) reducing the “power” of drugs; (b) enforcing counterdrug laws; and (c) inspiring a combined and true unity of effort. The first hurdle is the fact that the substance itself is so addictive to users and therefore so powerful in itself. The development of effective drug-reduction programs is therefore the most effective strategy for preventing, mitigating, and minimizing the still growing number of new users. Once addicted, it is very difficult even for someone who truly wants to stop using drugs to no longer demand the product. Drug addictions can also overshadow the protective and nurturing instincts of parents, and impair their judgment even in caring for their children. The end result, far too often, is that those children are not only neglected but also, far too often, highly susceptible to developing their own drug addictions – either biologically at birth, or behaviorally through association.

It is, obviously, a major challenge just to interdict illegal drugs and keep them out of the hands of current or potential users. It is a separate and considerably different challenge to enforce drug laws that can lead to the interception and elimination of supply chains and distribution channels. Moreover, counterdrug laws that realistically and effectively address the threat being faced are, to begin with, extremely difficult to enact, support, and/or enforce. Such laws also usually require drug screenings and personal-history assessments for potential hires in law-enforcement and other agencies, including all branches of the armed services – specifically including the National Guard. Here it should be noted that one obvious, and harmful, result of the increased flow of illegal drugs into American society as a whole is a correspondingly decreased pool of the “new hires” available to combat the still growing problem. In other words, any lack of “success” – however that word is defined – makes future successes even more unlikely.

Finally, the hurdle of achieving the unity of effort needed from the whole of society starts with individual citizens and their personal responsibilities. Then come families (the

basic building block of society and civil governance), Then, and only then, come schools, places of worship, social gatherings, workplaces, and all levels of government (local, state, and federal) with special focus on law enforcement agencies, the medical community, healthcare and rehab facilities, etc. Of course, drug interdiction and enforcement, even when carefully balanced with influencers and educators for demand reduction, may not automatically, quickly, and easily promote the unity of effort needed to defeat and destroy this very complex and sophisticated threat. Perhaps the greatest hurdle, therefore, is developing an effective strategy that unhinges the current uneven balance without itself destroying the society being protected.

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*Lieutenant General H Steven Blum, USA (Ret.), former Deputy Commander, United States Northern Command, was the first National Guard\* officer to serve as a Deputy U.S. Combatant Commander. His previous assignment was as Chief of the National Guard Bureau. In that post, he served as the principal adviser to the Secretary and Chief of Staff of the Army, and to the Secretary and Chief of Staff of the Air Force, on all National Guard issues. Prior to commanding the 29th Infantry Division (Light), General Blum served as Assistant Adjutant General for the Army, as Commanding General, Maryland Army National Guard, and as assistant Division Commander (Support), 29th Infantry Division (Light). He also previously served as the Commanding General for the Multinational Division (North) Stabilization Force 10 in Operation Joint Forge, Bosnia Herzegovina.*

*\*(The National Guard, which has its roots in the former Colonial militias, is therefore “older,” in one sense, than the United States itself.)*

### **Lt. Gen. H Steven Blum, USA (Ret.), Discussion Centered on The Nation’s Drug Threat**

Illegal drugs and their second- and third-order effects present what could arguably be the most dangerous and clear existential threat to the American people – more than any other horrific, catastrophic threat. With the ability to touch every citizen, reach every family, and affect every household, no one is completely immune, protected, insulated, or isolated from the effects of this scourge on society.

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# Drug Traffickers, Insurgents & Safe Havens – Lessons Learned from Plan Colombia

By Mark Coomer, Viewpoint



Plan Colombia was first proposed in 1999 during a hastily called press conference outside the Old Executive Office Building, just west of the White House. “Drug Czar” General Barry McCaffrey, USA (Ret.), Director of the Office of National Drug

Control Policy (ONDCP) under President Bill Clinton (1996-2001), surprised the Government of Colombia, official Washington, and many members of President Clinton’s own Cabinet by proposing a billion-dollar emergency supplemental to help rescue Colombia from the ravages of illicit drug trafficking, crime, and insurgency.

The proposal ignited a firestorm of controversy inside the U.S. government and among many public-interest groups, the media, and the more politically aware members of the public. To those on the left, Plan Colombia was seen as a symbol of oppression, human-rights abuse, and neo-imperialism – and might quickly lead to another Vietnam-like foreign-policy morass. According to those on the right, though, Plan Colombia would not only deny safe haven to terrorists and drug traffickers but also slow down if not completely stop the flood of illicit drug money flowing south and, quite possibly, destabilize other nations of Latin America. Today, Plan Colombia assessments continue to be colored by the 1999 policy debate and, depending on one’s point of view, offer either some valuable lessons learned or, on the other hand, a few cautionary tales of U.S. intervention.

By almost every measure, Plan Colombia has achieved solid successes since its inception some 12 years ago. In a report issued on 11 July 2011, the U.S. State Department released some encouraging statistics provided by the American Embassy in Bogota. Since 2000, for example: (a) an estimated 54,000 Colombian guerrillas and paramilitary personnel have been demobilized; (b) drug-related kidnappings in Colombia have fallen 90 percent, homicides 46 percent, and terrorist attacks 71 percent; (c) the Colombian economy is growing at a 5-percent annual rate, and the nation’s per-capita gross domestic product has doubled; and (d) Colombian cocaine production has declined by 57 percent. One helpful “endgame” result is that, beginning in 2007, the cocaine market in the United States has been significantly disrupted (with prices rising 104 percent) while, at the same time, the purity of the cocaine being market-

ed has decreased by 44 percent. Colombia still faces significant challenges but, with U.S. assistance, has made major progress in dealing with drug trafficking, crime, and insurgency.

For the first time in the post-Soviet era, the U.S. government had successfully combined all major elements of national power in a coherent plan to deny safe haven to terrorists, insurgents, and drug traffickers. This experience could have provided the U.S. government some powerful lessons learned in interagency contingency planning processes. Despite facing some controversial policy debates, the government was able to: (a) articulate a strategic vision; (b) align the various programs, budgets, and resources needed to achieve that vision; and (c) complete and execute the detailed interagency-combined planning needed to implement the vision.

Initially, the U.S. government did not learn from its Plan Colombia experiences. Perhaps, U.S. efforts to help stabilize Iraq and provide counterdrug assistance to Mexico could have benefited from a fuller appreciation of the lessons learned from planning and implementing assistance to Colombia.

## Plan Colombia & the Genesis of Future Problems

Between 1994 and 1999, in both Peru and Bolivia, successful drug-control programs decreased the coca crops of those two countries from 156,000 hectares (385,484 acres) to less than 50,000 hectares (123,553 acres). Although the counterdrug programs used were unique to each country, they shared several common aspects. Under an improved security umbrella, each nation’s central government established successful drug-control programs – i.e., alternative development, eradication, and interdiction – in the principal drug-producing regions of each country. The goal of these programs was to convince or, if necessary coerce, the coca labor force to stop growing coca.

However, while the coca crop was crashing in Peru and Bolivia, it was expanding rapidly in southern Colombia in growing regions under the control of FARC (the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, an insurgent and terrorist group). In a 2009 report titled “*FARC, ELN: Colombia’s Left-Wing Guerrillas*,” the Council on Foreign Relations (a highly respected private-sector think tank) said that FARC had benefited



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enormously from the cocaine economy – typically by taxing farmers for protective and social services, then moving vertically into cocaine production and trafficking. The CFR report estimated FARC’s annual revenue – which was being used primarily to buy arms, cadres, and political power – as somewhere between \$500 million and \$600 million.

By 1999, Colombia was a country already in deep trouble – its murder, kidnapping, and extortion rates were among the highest in the world; travel and tourism were unsafe. The resultant insecurity had pushed the Colombian economy into recession, and unemployment was moving above 15 percent. The “brain drain” and capital flight which followed took a heavy toll on the country’s stability. On the military side, whole battalions of the Colombian army were being decimated in open combat. The military was demoralized and, despite some very talented leadership, headed in the wrong direction. Meanwhile, right-wing illegal armed groups were committing massacres and assassinations with the same intensity that FARC was; and very powerful international trafficking organizations, such as the Cali Cartel, penetrated and corrupted many government institutions and contributed to the overall climate of lawlessness.

In response to this growing crisis, General McCaffrey proposed the billion-dollar emergency supplemental to support the Colombian government’s efforts to push into the FARC coca-growing regions and establish enough security to carry out credible counterdrug programs. Simultaneously, the plan would pursue government reform efforts to reestablish the rule of law, improve the administration of justice, safeguard human rights, and restore economic vitality. The next year, Congress appropriated \$1.3 billion to support these strategic U.S. goals in Colombia – i.e., Plan Colombia.

## **Two Prerequisites: A Comprehensive Advance Strategy and Detailed Planning**

When national policy touches on important national interests or affects the safety of U.S. allies, senior officials may demand more energy and coherence in planning and execution. A coherent strategy provides: (a) a problem assessment that clearly explains the nature of the challenge being faced; (b) a practical, and workable, guiding concept for dealing with that challenge; and (c) an equally workable set of the coherent actions needed to fully implement the policy. In short, an effective strategy should drive resources into programs and provide the framework needed for both an effective long-term campaign and the operational planning required to transform the strategy into reality.

Experience shows, though, that it is in fact very difficult to conduct interagency strategic planning that drives the allocation of resources required and the detailed operational planning. For example, the precursor to Plan Colombia was the 1997 Classified Annex to the U.S. National Drug Control Strategy. This document established the cocaine-source countries as the central focal point of U.S. international drug control efforts. The release of this Annex seems in retrospect to have had very little impact on interagency resources, planning, or operations. The policy process clearing the document engaged only the counterdrug policy offices of the U.S. bureaucracy but, significantly, did *not* directly involve the people who would be called upon to implement the document – State Department Desk Officers; U.S. Embassy Country Teams; the U.S. Defense Department’s combatant commands; and agency budget offices. In short, whatever its other merits, the Classified Annex lacked the power to coordinate budgets, people, and the other resources to accomplish new missions.

On the other hand, Plan Colombia was a true strategy that drove resources, planning, and operations. The skill of the planning staff contributed greatly to the initial coherence and the final success of Plan Colombia. The plan was assembled by an extremely skilled cadre of interagency planners who had been working together for years. This planning team was headed by a core of retired and active duty army colonels serving in the State Department. The members of this team managed three separate, but highly related, processes:

1. The U.S. planning staff met over a period of many months in 1999 with members of the Colombian interagency group, to develop the basic outlines of the strategy. These technical-level discussions helped senior policy officials determine: (a) if the bilateral interests were sufficiently aligned to sustain a strategic partnership; and (b) whether the partners had the capability, political will, and legitimacy required to accomplish a common strategic purpose.
2. The U.S. planning staff also identified the specific programs and resources needed to support the strategy. The central planning staff assessed requirements to accomplish the strategic objective, identified gaps in the host nation’s capabilities, and recommended the U.S. programs that could address the gaps. This work started in 1999 and continued through 2000 (while the funding legislation was still moving through Congress).

3. Finally, the U.S. planning staff supported combined campaign planning to determine how the programs would be stood up, sequenced, and integrated to accomplish the strategic purpose postulated. Because Plan Colombia envisioned a cooperative assistance program supporting a Colombian-led effort, campaign planning was the host nation's responsibility. Fortunately, the Government of Colombia recognized that conducting campaign planning as a combined activity would permit U.S. assistance to be more efficiently targeted and delivered. For Plan Colombia, U.S. State Department officials led an interagency planning team to Bogotá and, over a period of many months, met with members of the Colombian interagency team to support the campaign planning efforts of the two nations.

### **A Failure to Learn – And the Long-Term Consequences**

The planning structure that accomplished these three parallel tasks was completely ad hoc. Its success was not repeated because the next relatively similar interagency contingency-planning requirements were led by a different office with different people, and focused on different objectives. These subsequent interagency planning processes have proven to be inadequate, in several respects, both in post-invasion Iraq and in the initial efforts taken by the United States to assist the government of Mexico in its long-term fight against the drug cartels.

Over the last 5 years, the United States has attempted to institutionalize its planning capabilities for counterterrorism by creating a professional planning staff at the National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC). Although NCTC staff members have provided a significant upgrade in interagency planning capabilities, NCTC capabilities are limited by the following: (a) the staff's authority is limited to counterterrorism; (b) it also lacks the authority and/or processes needed to drive budgets and implement programs; (c) it is too "distant" in certain respects from the diplomatic level and for that reason not fully able to provide the cohesive framework needed for combined planning; (d) it lacks a clear mandate to conduct regional campaign or operational planning – which, as previously mentioned, necessarily involve DOD's combatant commands as well as the State Department's country teams and regional desks; and (e) its planning processes largely mirror the military planning process – which is not a major problem in itself, but

interagency planning and military planning are not really the same thing.

The Plan Colombia planning process provided a coherent strategy – forcefully executed – to address Colombia's interlocking drug, security, and socioeconomic problems. Over time, it seems increasingly obvious that Plan Colombia adopted the best strategy for the specific times and circumstances. Of course, not everyone agrees with that assessment. As Zhou Enlai, the first Premier of the People's Republic of China, supposedly quipped when asked, some two centuries later, to assess the results of the French Revolution, "It is too soon to say."

Nonetheless, with national elections approaching in both Mexico and the United States, *now* may be an excellent time to reexamine both the strategy involved in U.S. drug-control assistance to Mexico and the contingency planning processes that developed and implemented the strategy.

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*For additional information on:*

*The 13 July 2011 report on Bogota statistics by the U.S. State Department, visit <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/35754.htm>*

*FARC information provided by the Council on Foreign Relations (2009), visit <http://www.cfr.org/colombia/farc-eln-colombias-left-wing-guerrillas/p9272>*

*The 1997 National Drug Control Strategy, visit <http://druglibrary.org/schaffer/GOVPUBS/gao/pdf10.pdf>*

*The Central Intelligence Agency's "World Factbook" section on Colombia, visit <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/co.html>*

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*Colonel Mark Coomer, USA (Ret.), is Director of Government Relations Executive Agencies at ITT Exelis. Prior to joining ITT, he served as a member of the Senior Executive Service in the National Counterterrorism Center. While working in the Executive Office of the President, he: (a) coordinated the U.S. international drug control strategy and programs; (b) wrote the classified International Drug Control Strategy; (c) developed the Plan Colombia policy and funding proposals; (d) authored National Security Presidential Directive - 25 (International Drug Control); and (e) developed various intelligence initiatives for protection of the U.S. Southwest Border with Mexico. He has been directly involved in the National Security Council (NSC) interagency and intelligence community processes for almost 14 years, chairing numerous NSC workgroups and representing the Office of National Drug Control Policy within the U.S. intelligence community. As an Army officer, he led a task force of the 101st Airborne Division into Iraq during Operation Desert Storm, and in another assignment coordinated U.S. military operations in Latin America.*

# Addiction in Emergency Services: Coworkers Help, Denial Hurts

By Victor Welzant, Public Health

The past several months have been especially noteworthy because of the intense media attention on celebrities suffering from and, in some cases, dying from drug and alcohol addictions. It is difficult to turn on the television without seeing at least one news report, or “entertainment” program, covering, dramatizing, and/or intervening with some form of substance abuse. This public attention serves to educate the community about the existing dangers and treatments available.

In the emergency services professions, in contrast, addiction problems have historically been handled quietly, often interspersed with periods of denial and secrecy until the professional performance of a member becomes both public and problematic. In some cases – and with the best of intentions – the local “culture” of a police or fire department may enable a substance-abuse problem to remain unchecked for a considerable period of time.

Nonetheless, veteran emergency services personnel are often personally familiar with a department’s denial or at least non-recognition of the seriousness of the affected person’s behavior – both on and off the job.

## The High Cost of Addictions – In Time, Energy & Money

Addictions come at a very high cost – the most devastating of which is the suffering that many and probably most users (and those close to them) face as the disease progresses. Dependence is defined as developing a tolerance for a particular substance – typically, by going through a physical adaptation, consciously or non-consciously, that requires using more and more of the drug to achieve the same and increasingly addictive effect. Another non-monetary cost of addiction is the painful withdrawal symptoms that occur when the user tries to break the habit. With very few exceptions, those suffering from drug addictions will almost always go through the same cycle: spending considerable time, energy, and money on finding, using, and finally – if they are fortunate – recovering from the drug.

As the addiction progresses, the need and quest for the drug can become an overwhelming and all-consuming interest. Personal relationships quickly, and visibly, begin to show

the strain of an active addiction. Performance on the job – whatever that job is, and despite whatever responsibilities go with it – also becomes compromised and, if ignored, worsens. Serious health consequences start to emerge as well – frequently in the short term or early stages, and almost always in the long term.

Addiction also can negatively affect the course of other stress disorders and depressions – which already rank high in the less publicized dangers of the emergency-services profession. Not surprisingly, post-traumatic stress disorder is often associated with alcohol abuse, and that problem, if not addressed in the early stages of addiction, usually leads to a more difficult and longer recovery period.

Although the costs of untreated addiction are personally destructive, public safety agencies themselves also are negatively affected. It has been estimated by the Livengrin foundation that the cost of recruiting and training one law enforcement officer is greater than \$200,000. Obviously, though, the intangible losses – less experience and unit cohesion as well as lower morale – resulting from losing just one important team member to an addiction problem cannot be quantified in dollars and cents.

## Early Intervention, the Denial Syndrome, Care, and Compassion

Given the importance of addressing this problem, each member of a department can and should, insofar as possible, take an active role in helping to prevent addictions from going unchecked. Early intervention is one of the key factors in helping any addict recover from a substance abuse problem. Addiction is a progressive and insidious disease – which for practical purposes means that, as with other diseases, providing professional help in the early phases of an addiction is much more effective – less expensive as well – than waiting until a life and/or career are damaged.

Experience shows that the most effective programs for early intervention involve educating *all* personnel in a department about the warning signs. Among the most common behavioral changes that should be noticed are unusual mood swings and difficulties in getting along with colleagues. The more quantifiable changes are tardiness, absenteeism,



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and poor job performance. The most difficult problem to deal with, though – in most if not all cases – is the denial that a problem even exists. Here it should be emphasized that it is not always the addict who is in denial – coworkers, colleagues, friends, and supervisors can be just as guilty in this respect.

Supervisory personnel can receive specialized training in how to approach a person about substance issues in a caring and compassionate manner. The skills needed to make a referral can also be learned in such training. Because one major barrier to seeking help is the fear of a person’s career being damaged, perhaps beyond repair, departmental policies can be formulated, and officially implemented, to support the treatment needed without the person being treated having to fear stigmatization on the job – or, in worst-case situations, termination.

### **The Path to Recovery: Effective Programs Already Available**

Early treatment for substance abuse can be particularly effective in saving both lives and careers. To help ensure early treatment, first-line supervisors can and should solicit, and use, local, union, and agency resources for the treatment of substance abuse. Employee assistance programs can be an invaluable asset in seeking and encouraging treatment. Programs specifically designed for public safety personnel struggling with substance abuse issues already exist, fortunately, and are often facilitated by fellow public safety workers as well as mental health professionals.

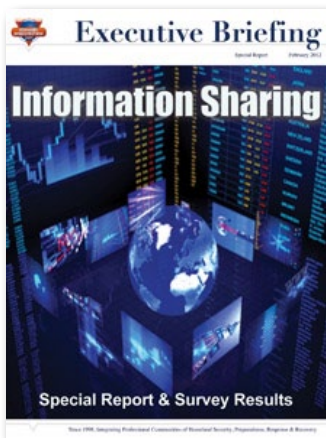
Of course, substance abuse treatment must be matched as closely as possible to the specific individual seeking help. Fortunately, that approach can be effective in a variety of settings, depending on the individual circumstances of the person needing treatment and the severity of his or her problem. In some cases, a medically supervised detoxification will be the first step – but very seldom the last one. In other situations, the individual employee, group, or a family counseling specialist can be a valuable resource. Also, several well-known “12-step” programs are available that not only provide a path to recovery but also include a much-needed support group to others (friends, relatives, and fellow employees) who might be tangentially affected.

Public safety professionals serve the public daily, usually without recognition, and sometimes at great personal cost. Knowing how to support a colleague in distress can be the all-important difference between early recognition and treatment vs. enduring problems that threaten the professional and personal life of a friend, colleague, or anyone else suffering from addiction.

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*Victor Welzant, PsyD, is the Director of Education and Training and a past member of the Board of Directors of the International Critical Incident Stress Foundation in Ellicott City, Maryland. He also maintains a private consulting and clinical practice in Towson, Md., and serves as: the Clinical Director for the Anne Arundel Fire Department’s Critical Incident Stress Management team; a consultant to the Harford County Maryland Sheriff’s Department’s Crisis Negotiation and Peer Support teams; a member of the adjunct faculty of Towson University in Psychology, Nursing, and Homeland Security; and a member of the editorial board of the International Journal of Emergency Mental Health.*

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# The “Big Business” of Drug Smuggling

By Michael S. Brewer & Lawrence O’Connell, Coast Guard

*“Smuggling was not just a cottage industry, but a national industry.”*  
– [Jim Sinclair](#)



Global cocaine sales reached \$88 billion in 2008, according to a 2010 report by the United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime. To put this statistic into perspective, the national budget for Colombia – the world’s leading cocaine producer – is approximately \$84.9 billion. When a criminal endeavor brings in more revenue than the annual national budget of one of the most heavily involved countries from which the criminals operate, solving the problem is certainly no small task.

Like any other large-scale enterprise, however, there are certain vulnerabilities in the international cocaine trade that can be exploited. For example, there are a number of operational and business-driven practices that make it easier for illegal drug smugglers to bring illicit products into U.S. markets. Among these practices is the use of well-developed and diverse distribution networks, and effective intelligence operations, as well as the dispersal of illicit products across a much broader network of transporters and routes – all of which reduces the adverse impact of any given loss.

In order to counter these factors, U.S. law enforcement, military, and intelligence agencies must become even more diligent, and more effective in: (a) uncovering intelligence penetrations; (b) intercepting a greater number of vessels and vehicles; and (c) disrupting and adversely affecting the land-based linchpin elements of the distribution networks themselves.

## More Seizures, But Fewer Confiscations

According to the U.S. Coast Guard, approximately 26 percent of the cocaine seized en route to the United States in recent years was being moved through maritime channels. In its annual summary of counternarcotic efforts, the Coast Guard also said that interceptions of smugglers and their vessels have increased substantially since 2006 – e.g., there were 43 more interceptions in 2011 than in 2006, and the numbers for 2009, in fact, were almost double those in 2006.

However, although such successes by the Coast Guard are both noteworthy and praiseworthy, in the past two years the

total reported quantity – i.e., “tonnage” – of drugs seized in the recent-year interdictions was dramatically lower. In the 107 seizures made in 2011, for example, the total amount of drugs seized by the Coast Guard was nearly 136,000 pounds less than in the 64 interdictions carried out in 2006.

An optimistic view might be, of course, that the cocaine supply itself is shrinking by a similar ratio – but it seems much more likely the Coast Guard and other agencies are correct in assessing the smugglers are revising their tactics and, as the United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime suggests, shipping the same quantities of drugs, or perhaps more, to a greater number of destinations and/or in somewhat smaller “packages.”

## Cutouts, Dangles, and Other Pawns

The use of “cutouts” – i.e., individuals and organizations without direct ties to the cartels and their leaders – to transport illicit drugs has become an increasingly common practice. These distributors are basically “for-hire” transporters who function independently and thereby insulate the cartels. Overall, therefore, a larger number of smugglers are in fact being employed, but smaller quantities of drugs are being shipped in any given load. This tactic mitigates the adverse effect of a single loss. Of perhaps greater importance, though, it is also a strong indication that the cartels’ distribution networks are not only large and robust, but also have the ability to sustain themselves despite the growing number of interdictions.

Even more disconcerting in many respects, though, is the drug cartels’ clever use of intelligence “dangles” and disinformation to ensure that a high percentage of the drug shipments sent out reach their intended markets. As demonstrated by the current efforts of the Obama Administration to reduce corruption by, among other tactics, rotating border patrol agents to new assignments, the drug cartels have become increasingly adept at using bribery and false information to increase their odds of success. James Tomscheck, Chief of Internal Affairs for the Department of Homeland Security’s Customs and Border Protection (CBP) agency, was quoted in the *Houston Chronicle* on 27 January 2012 that approximately 8,000 CBP agents – approximately one-fourth of the recruits for frontline positions with the agency – had been subjected



to relatively strict pre-hire screening processes (use of the polygraph, for example).

At least in part for that reason – and despite the fact that the U.S. government is taking several other important steps to mitigate the risks – the hiring of new CBP agents who have not been subjected to the same level of screening applied to “new hires” in several other federal agencies could make it much easier for the cartels to manipulate the DHS/CBP work force.

### **A Long & Winding Chain of Disinformation**

The cartels also can influence interdiction efforts in several other ways – through the use of so-called “Confidential Informants” (CIs) within U.S. law-enforcement agencies, to cite but one worrisome example. The CIs can and sometimes do act as double agents, providing inside information about drug shipments – thereby building the credibility of the CI source while the nation’s law-enforcement agencies are interdicting the shipments targeted. Even credible information may not be as accurate as it seems, therefore – or as helpful. The potential always exists for manipulation. For example, a trusted informant frequently is able to provide important details about competitors’ operations – or, when the occasion warrants, about relatively smaller and less important shipments of the CI’s own products. The goal here, of course, is to keep law enforcement agencies occupied and focused on relatively small shipments elsewhere, while larger and more important shipments slip through.

By using tactics such as bribery, blackmail, and other means of coercion, drug traffickers have developed effective means of both gathering and planting information. According to a 30 January 2012 *Newsweek* article by Aram Roston, Mexico’s Sinaloa cartel has been providing information to the U.S. government for more than 10 years, to the cartel’s apparent benefit. The cartel’s relationship with two other DHS agencies – the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) – has, however, come under greater scrutiny in recent months. According to one of Roston’s sources, ICE agents were aware that the information being provided to U.S. officials was coming directly from the Sinaloa cartel’s senior leadership. The net effect, though, as Professor Tony Payan of the University of Texas has charged, according to Roston, is that the Sinaloa cartel has been “duping U.S. agencies into fighting [the Sinaloa cartel’s] enemies.”



### **Tightening the Noose; Strangling the Cartels**

In combatting the growing threat of drugs, U.S. law-enforcement, military, and intelligence agencies are faced with what in many respects is an uphill battle. The combination of a huge and apparently growing demand in the United States and a ready supply of illegal drugs from countries such as Peru, Colombia, and Mexico, makes the task of interdicting illegal substances not only mandatory, and at the same time, much more difficult. Moreover, as effective pressure is applied in one area of operations, activities in another area quickly crop up to fill the void. There seems to be general agreement that, although the federal agencies, and agents, tasked with interdicting the cross-border shipments of drugs should be commended for their efforts to date, an even greater and more diversified effort is needed to achieve the much larger, and much more sustainable, long-term impact that is required.

Counteracting the threat posed by illegal drugs is an asymmetric battle against very well-funded, and highly determined, creative and adaptive groups functioning outside the bounds of legal and ethical conduct. Reducing the drug threat to the United States, not only in the short term but far into the future, requires the development and implementation of effective policies that not only tighten the noose around the cartels “where they live” – i.e., in their home countries – but also deny them both the manpower and the materiel, financial, and logistical support resources they now possess to continue their illegal and extremely harmful activities.

Both on the ground and on the sea, reducing the threat requires having an actionable tactical picture of the enemy and its methods of operation, if only to disrupt the flow of products

that fund the cartels. More specifically, what is needed are: (1) a smarter and more closely integrated use of resources and personnel; (2) the improved policies and methods of coordination required to achieve clearly defined and obtainable results across agency boundaries; and (3) adoption and use of a network-centric approach to disrupt and for practical purposes destroy the cartels themselves. Accurate predictive intelligence, high- and low-tech methods of operation and improved equipment, intensively screened and vetted personnel, and creative approaches to the problem are all keys to achieve the complete, effective, and enduring solution that must be the final goal.

For additional information on:

The 2010 report by the United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime, visit [http://www.unodc.org/documents/wdr/WDR\\_2010/World\\_Drug\\_Report\\_2010\\_lo-res.pdf](http://www.unodc.org/documents/wdr/WDR_2010/World_Drug_Report_2010_lo-res.pdf)

The 30 January 2012 Newsweek article, visit <http://www.thedailybeast.com/newsweek/2012/01/29/el-chapo-guzm-n-mexico-s-most-powerful-drug-lord.html>

James Tomscheck's comments to the Houston Chronicle, visit <http://www.chron.com/news/houston-texas/article/To-stop-corruption-changes-may-be-coming-to-2760158.php>

U.S. Coast Guard statistics cited in this article, visit <http://www.uscg.mil/hq/cg5/cg531/Drugs/stats.asp>  
[http://www.uscg.mil/hq/cg5/cg531/drug\\_interdiction.asp](http://www.uscg.mil/hq/cg5/cg531/drug_interdiction.asp)

Michael S. Brewer (pictured) is the CEO and Co-Founder of the International Maritime Security Corporation (IMSC), a service-disabled veteran-owned small business built upon the principle of protecting ships, their cargoes, and – most importantly – their crews from both piracy and terrorist threats. A former U.S. Army Special Operations soldier, he also has been, over the past 13 years, a subject matter expert on terrorism and piracy for numerous government agencies and private-sector businesses and organizations.

Lawrence E. O'Connell is the Executive Vice President and Chief Operations Officer of International Maritime Security Corporation, and a 26-year veteran of the U.S. intelligence community, with special expertise in counter-insurgency and counter-terror operations.



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# NIMS/ICS and Drug-Enforcement Operations – Yes and No

By Stephen Grainer, Fire/HazMat



*Author's Note: Drug-enforcement operations present a unique set of circumstances. The planning and execution of drug-interdiction operations – sometimes referred to as “busts” – frequently require not only intense intelligence generating, precision, and speed, but also stealth and secrecy. If an undercover law-enforcement agent is revealed or discovered, the result is all too often tragic. If a drug bust is suspected by a drug cartel, it will simply disappear and reestablish operations elsewhere under completely new circumstances. In both cases, the counterdrug agency's investments of time, effort, manpower, and money to conduct investigations and prepare for enforcement operations are almost instantly wiped out. What is worse, and increasingly more dangerous, is that some extremely brazen groups have taken to outright warfare on law enforcement, in operations that more often than not adversely affect the general public, as has happened in the increasing number of horrendous incidents that have occurred both in Mexico itself and on both sides of the Mexico-U.S. border – which is but one of the tragic consequences of drug operations gone awry. For that reason alone, almost all of the sources contacted for information related to such operations asked to remain anonymous. In addition, it also should be noted that, in discussing use of the federal government's Incident Command System (ICS) in drug-enforcement operations, the law-enforcement officers interviewed for this article were particularly careful not to reveal specific details of counterdrug operations in general, and the management of tactical operations in particular. For that reason, and in respect to those requests, the names of interviewees, and/or of other persons directly involved, or previously involved, in U.S. counterdrug operations are not provided in the following article.*

The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) has identified drug trafficking as one of the most significant means by which other illegal activities – including terrorism – are being funded both internationally and from within the United States itself. Illegal drug distribution and sales have in fact become a major source of funding in recent years not only for theoretically “local” drug dealers but also for transnational drug cartels. Numerous reports, such as the U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) agency's *Fiscal Year 2009–2014 Strategic Plan*, cite numerous suspected and/or confirmed links between various drug cartels and many terrorist organizations throughout the world.

The increased number and growing violence of confrontations between U.S. law-enforcement agencies and the international drug cartels – and/or individual drug traffickers – demonstrate the extent to which the drug trade has in recent years overshadowed older and more traditional methods of funding illegal activities. Consequently, local, state, and federal law enforcement authorities are being challenged both to: (a) reassess and refine

their own tactical and operational philosophies; and (b) maximize the techniques needed for managing the counterdrug operations required to disrupt, deter, and interdict drug trafficking.

Whether law enforcement should embrace and utilize the National Incident Management System's Incident Command System (NIMS-ICS) in order to command and manage drug-enforcement actions has met with mixed responses from various agencies. Uniformed agencies within the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) such as Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), Customs and Border Protection (CBP), as well as the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) have begun to embrace the incident command system (ICS) for incident operations management (although the extent to which agencies have “bought into” ICS as the standard for management is unknown); it seems obvious, though, that the U.S. Coast Guard has at all levels made good use of the ICS for many of its operational missions.

## Different Approaches in Name, But Often Just the Same

Although other federal agencies have also made significant strides in adopting and utilizing ICS, tradition and historically institutionalized concepts and management processes often present challenges for organizations trying to adopt or adapt the ICS for operational needs – e.g., in many law enforcement organizations. When asked if their agencies use the ICS “model” or “approach” for certain drug-enforcement actions or missions, most local and state authorities interviewed offered one of the following responses: (a) “Our agency uses ICS, *but* not the way the fire department does”; or (b) “Drug operations are different from fires and occur so rapidly that it is not practical to have all of the ICS positions that NIMS requires.” In both responses, law enforcement authorities seem to perceive ICS to be a “fire-centric” or similar system not applicable for certain law enforcement operations.

However, after further discussion it also became evident that, intentionally or not, many law enforcement activities closely mirror military command and management processes. In fact, the Department of Defense's own Command Management System (CMS) consists of the same core elements as postulated for ICS: Command, Operations, Planning, Logistics, and Finance/Administration – with “Intelligence” also being a major component of the military model that would be generally applicable to most if not quite all other management situations.

Those interviewed generally stated that their organizations could not or were not using ICS as framed in NIMS policies – but in actual operations they were in fact applying almost the same core elements. The distinction seems to be that they do not use the common nomenclature associated with ICS being taught to comply with NIMS. Indeed, this may be perceived by those who call themselves “ICS purists” as a violation of a cardinal rule. However, it should also be noted that another key management concept of ICS is its “flexibility.” Therefore, a case can be made that a “violation” of the common terminology rule does not necessarily negate the fundamentals of the system itself.

For example, according to Virginia State Police sources, when a significant (or even a lesser) operation is undertaken, a “command board” is typically established. (Unlike the command boards historically used by fire-service personnel to track operational assignments and resources, “command board” is typically used in this context to identify both the operational command function and the personnel who staff it.) That board may consist of possibly one or two – but sometimes more – senior law enforcement officials representing the agencies involved in planning and executing the action, and is tantamount to the incident command function. Because many drug-enforcement operations involve multiple law enforcement agencies, it is fundamentally the same as a Unified Command.

### **Aligning the MOUs with Common Sense and Basic Realities**

In some ways similar to the principles taught in ICS training, law-enforcement agencies at all levels of government prepare for multi-agency and multi-jurisdictional scenarios through pre-incident planning, practice, familiarization, and the development of Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs), all of which help provide a cohesive framework of policy, protocol, and overarching guidance. Once again, there is a close alignment with a basic tenet of ICS – namely, pre-incident planning and cooperation.

There also are, of course, certain unique situations that do not strictly conform to standing MOU conditions. For example, the command board established for a particular drug-enforcement action will usually focus first on developing an MOU for the incident being planned, then flesh it out and put it in writing so that all participating agencies know the same “rules of the road” for the particular operation being planned. Once again, this approach closely aligns with the activities that typically take place in the early stages of any incident. Those activities include but are not necessarily limited to the AA (agency administrator) briefing, an initial command meeting, an infor-

mation-sharing meeting, and an initial strategy meeting, all of which receive particular attention in the ICS “Planning P.”

Also, in ways similar to the core ICS principle of planning and assigning responsibilities during an initial unified command meeting, the primary responsibility for directing operational assignments is conferred on a selected representative of the agency with the greatest commitment of resources and operational involvement. (One example: In Virginia, if the operations are initiated by the State Police – but significantly assisted by the Drug Enforcement Administration, the FBI, and/or other federal or state agencies – the tactical operations will almost always be directed by a Virginia State Police supervisor.)

### **Other Similarities – But Special Considerations Also Involved**

Another similarity between ICS and drug-enforcement operations is the designation of a safety officer, who is typically someone who possesses intimate knowledge of the potential dangers and difficulties that may well be confronted during the incident – chemical, biological, or other hazards, for example, as well as various tactical problems. Whoever is designated, that person is responsible not only for developing a safety plan or framework but also for briefing senior-level commanders and obtaining the tactical resources needed before operations begin.

According to one interviewee, a high-ranking officer in one of the nation’s largest police departments, “We all know we need to establish command and control for every operation, but in most cases we don’t detail the ICS positions by the same names” [that are used in ICS]. “We have been doing these things the same way for so long,” he further noted, “that it has become institutionalized in our world.” As has often been the case in many other human endeavors, it is a major challenge to abruptly change several generations of training and “conditioning” in 10 years or less – i.e., the length of time, conveniently enough, in which the NIMS framework has been in existence.

As noted earlier, a key ICS principle is its operational flexibility. For that reason, and despite the fact that position titles may not strictly conform to ICS terminology, most functions are carried out in much the same manner – and generally with the same intended outcomes. Major drug-enforcement operations involving long-term, widespread, and/or multi-faceted operations are planned, for example, under closely guarded conditions from inception through planning and execution. If the principal players are all talking in the same terms, operating in much the same manner, and operating

under common protocols, a strong case can be made that they are, indeed, conforming to most if not quite all of the key ICS principles. It also should be remembered that ICS successes are predicated, at least in part, on the clarity of formal and informal communications – a common-sense practice that applies first and foremost to internal functions within the command organization. Outside sources who have no legitimate (i.e., operational) “need to know” should therefore not have access to information that could compromise either the planning or the operations that follow.

However, a challenge does sometimes arise when it is determined that a particular operation might require the involvement of other than law-enforcement resources. For example, when planning indicates the need for emergency medical services resources, either on-site or near-site, those “resources” – EMTs (emergency medical technicians) usually – must be briefed in reasonable detail and given a locational assignment that typically would not be visible from the target location, which would be a potential tip-off that something “unusual” is about to happen. The same briefing would provide the guidance needed for various communications protocols – the notification for activation, for example.

In other scenarios – e.g., carrying out a raid on a clandestine drug lab – health-department or environmental authorities may be solicited for help in the operation. In such cases, it becomes essential that an effective liaison is established, well ahead of time (if possible), between the primary command agency and the assisting agencies. Here it should be recognized that, because of the potential legal and operational complexities involved, law-enforcement agencies have historically faced some major challenges in establishing effective liaison with non-law-enforcement agencies. In today’s much more complex world, fortunately, major efforts are being made in and between the numerous agencies likely to be involved in counterdrug operations to inform and liaise with other agencies, at all levels of government, when their involvement is warranted.

## **Making a Federal Case Out of It: Often the Best Way to Go**

One key decision point that may significantly affect the establishment of command objectives is the determination of prosecution authority and/or prerogatives. For example, discussion by the command board or “Joint Task Force” (the military designation now used, as and when appropriate, to describe a joint federal/state/local command organization) might involve decisions regarding how a particular case will or should be prosecuted in court. If made in advance, that determination will often be a key factor in deciding not only: (a) who will serve as

the tactical operations leader (Operations Chief); but also (b) who will have responsibility for evidence collection and establishing and maintaining a legally defensible chain of custody; and, quite possibly (c) a number of other factors critical to the presentation, by prosecutors in court, of a sound legal case.

According to one knowledgeable official interviewed, the determination of a prosecuting authority is likely to be key to the agreement by senior officers on the probable long-term impact of the counterdrug case against the drug trafficking operation. For example, if a successful prosecution can have a significant disruptive impact on trafficking regionally – or perhaps even nationally – the operational planning and execution may be overseen by federal authorities. Criminal cases taken to federal courts, if successful, may and often do result in stronger and longer periods of incarceration – and for that reason alone, most and frequently all of the officials and authorities involved in a major counterdrug operation usually agree that federal authorities should take primary responsibility for the operation. In a number of other cases, though, certain complicating factors may, and do, make prosecution in state courts a more logical decision. Obviously, all of these and other decisions can significantly affect how a specific operation is managed.

In summary, ICS – as defined and described in NIMS – is not always formally used and/or described as such in drug-enforcement operations. For most practical purposes, though, ICS is simply another way of describing “management.” And, it is worth emphasizing, most drug-enforcement operations are or should be consistent with the basic principles and operational tenets of sound management – even when different terminology is used – so it can be safely surmised that the drug-enforcement efforts now being pursued in numerous locales throughout the United States are in fact consistent with ICS.

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*For additional information on:*

*FBI testimony on drug trafficking and terrorism, visit <http://www.fbi.gov/news/testimony/international-drug-trafficking-and-terrorism>*

*U.S. Customs and Border Protection’s Fiscal Year 2009–2014 Strategic Plan, visit [http://www.cbp.gov/linkhandler/cgov/about/mission/strategic\\_plan\\_09\\_14.ctt/strategic\\_plan\\_09\\_14.pdf](http://www.cbp.gov/linkhandler/cgov/about/mission/strategic_plan_09_14.ctt/strategic_plan_09_14.pdf)*

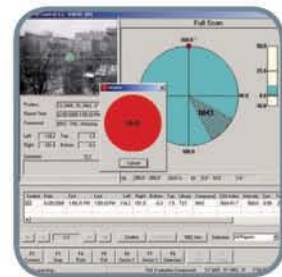
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*Stephen Grainer is the chief of IMS programs for the Virginia Department of Fire Programs (VDFP). He has served Virginia fire and emergency services and emergency management coordination since 1972 in assignments ranging from firefighter to chief officer. As a curriculum developer, content evaluator, and instructor, he currently is developing and managing VDFP programs to enable emergency responders and others to achieve NIMS compliance requirements for incident management. In 2010, he was elected President of the newly established All-Hazards Incident Management Teams Association.*

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# IT and the New Fight Against Drug Trafficking & Gangs

By Rodrigo (Roddy) Moscoso, Law Enforcement



As long as databases have been in existence, information technology (IT) has been used by law enforcement to fight the cartels, terrorist organizations, and criminal “gangs” that traffic in narcotics. Information on gang members involved in drug trafficking originally was entered into mainframe computers, which helped organize data – at a centralized location – that could be made accessible to multiple offices or agencies. The advent of localized client-server solutions in the 1990s revolutionized computing, providing public safety agencies the ability to invest in their own IT infrastructures and to document drug trafficking and gang activities at the local level. As databases grew in number, so did the volume of data captured.

This additional data becoming available directly supported local law enforcement agencies with drug- and gang-interdiction activities in their immediate areas of jurisdiction and facilitated better reporting and trend analyses. Not surprisingly, the primary challenge (and opportunity) quickly became data sharing across multiple systems in ways that are fully compliant with the legal requirements governing the sharing and use of intelligence information. Fortunately, the advent of robust commercial solutions, coupled with the development of more effective national data exchange standards, has created significant new opportunities for the wide-scale sharing of drug- and other gang-related data.

## HIDTA & the New Data Aggregators

Passage of the Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1998 authorized the High-Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas (HIDTA) program to assist local, tribal, state, and federal law enforcement agencies with combating drug trafficking in critical areas across the United States. Currently, 28 HIDTAs operate in 46 states, including the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. In October 2011, the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) designated seven additional counties to be enrolled in the HIDTA program, enabling them to receive more than \$10 million in financial assistance to target the networks of drug trafficking/gangs.

The growth of HIDTAs presented a unique opportunity to develop centralized gang and drug enforcement information. One example of this effort is the GangNet solution – run by SRA International – which started in California in the late 1990s and currently operates in 14 states and the District of Columbia. There are two main benefits for migrating to a regional solution that serves as an “aggregation point” for data from participating jurisdictions: (a) to access centralized data across a much wider geographic area; and (b) to reduce costs by not having to maintain as many individual systems.

In addition to the regional benefits, there is a need for exchange *across* these systems because both drug trafficking and gangs have proliferated on a national scale – not just locally or regionally. However, there are three main roadblocks for data sharing across systems:

1. The commercial systems on the market tend to be “nodal” in nature, and are not designed to interconnect with other out-of-the-box solutions;
2. The volume and types of data captured by and across individual installations can vary significantly from place to place; and
3. The use of such data to facilitate complementary analyses creates a number of both policy and technical challenges – for example, a search to determine the most violent drug trafficking gang in a state may require the merging of local/regional data with statewide arrest and booking information – an option that may not be possible because of policy, legal, and/or technological limitations.

## Data Standards to the Rescue

With funding support from the U.S. Department of Justice, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts successfully developed a National Information Exchange Model (NIEM/XML) gang data schema and Information Exchange Package Documentation (IEPD) that allow agencies in Massachusetts to both contribute to and access data from the statewide “MassGangs” database. This solution



enables additional agencies in Massachusetts, including the Department of Corrections and the State Police – which previously were unable to do so – to exchange data. This new capability not only facilitates access but also contributes to a major increase in analyses through and across agency systems – a helpful bonus that in turn lays the groundwork for national data sharing with other states as well as with the Federal Bureau of Investigation’s National Crime Information Center.

## **New Technology, New Rules of Engagement**

The growth in “connected” drug and gang databases is only one of several tools that are helping to identify and interdict drug traffickers. Several other new and/or emerging technologies are now available to help law enforcement with the development of the legal cases against suspects. Obviously, the use of these tools must be done within the established boundaries of existing laws and policies.

In November 2011, Richard Schoeberl, a former FBI agent and a “subject-matter” expert in this field, wrote an article – “Reasonable Search – Or Another “Big Brother” Situation?” – for the 23 November issue of *DomPrep Journal* about the then-pending Supreme Court decision in the landmark case of *Katz v. United States*.

The court was faced with determining whether the use of GPS technology for tracking the movements of a suspected drug dealer [Katz] was lawful, or a violation of the defendant’s constitutional rights. As Schoeberl pointed out, “the warrantless use of new GPS ... technologies raises a serious concern for privacy in the 21st century.” Last month (on 23 January), the Supreme Court issued its decision, ruling unanimously that the relatively long-term GPS tracking of the suspect constituted a “search” under the Fourth Amendment and, therefore, required a judicial warrant.

The still controversial case received major coverage in the U.S. print and broadcast media. Some law enforcement authorities already have suggested, though, that the warrant requirement will probably lead to tighter procedural requirements but may not restrict law enforcement investigations as seriously as had been originally feared. Nonetheless, the Court’s unanimous decision sent a clear message to the nation’s law enforcement community in general – namely, that the use of new technologies must be undertaken, and carried out, with due consideration for the numerous legal problems that might be encountered.

*IT has been and continues to be a key tool for combatting drug trafficking and gang activities. However, being able to share reliable data that can be upheld in court is a somewhat different but extremely important battle that law enforcement agencies must also be ready to fight.*

Today and for the foreseeable future, therefore, it should be taken for granted that the precarious balance between technology and operational use must be constantly adjusted – as and when the proliferation of new information-sharing systems and new technologies tip the balance back and forth between law enforcement prosecutors and public defenders (and/or, more often, private-sector lawyers). For that reason alone, federal agencies and other jurisdictions not only will have to ensure that they have a firm substantive case against drug traffickers but also to determine whether that case will stand up in court – which may be an added frustration for prosecutors, but would not necessarily be a total Mission Impossible for the nation as a whole.

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For additional information on:

High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas, visit <http://www.justice.gov/dea/programs/hidta.htm>

FBI Turns Off Thousands of GPS Devices After Supreme Court Ruling, visit <http://blogs.wsj.com/digits/2012/02/25/fbi-turns-off-thousands-of-gps-devices-after-supreme-court-ruling/>

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Rodrigo (Roddy) Moscoso currently serves as Communications Manager for the Capital Wireless Information Net (CapWIN) Program at the University of Maryland. Formerly with IBM Business Consulting Services, he has over 15 years of experience supporting large-scale IT implementation projects, and extensive experience in several related fields such as change management, business process reengineering, human resources, and communications.

# Narcan: The Spray That Saves

By Joseph Cahill, EMS



According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), approximately 100 people throughout the United States die from narcotics overdose *every single day*. This grim reality may be largely due to a climbing rate of prescription medication overdoses – a problem that requires a major public-policy, public-health, and public-safety decision.

On the patient-by-patient level, there is a ready solution – the use of Narcan (Alexon), which is the usual antidote to such narcotics as oxycodone, methadone, and heroin. For decades, Narcan has been carried by paramedic units, and almost always is given as an injection – by a trained professional. Thanks to the recent introduction of a spray version, the possibility of administration by nonmedical professionals has moved Narcan a somewhat-controversial step closer to the narcotics user.

In Massachusetts, a pilot project is already underway that allows the distribution – to persons other than emergency responders – of Narcan in a form that can be sprayed up the patient’s nose, where it is absorbed through the mucous membranes. Massachusetts’ state law currently allows the “ultimate user” of a medication to possess the medication. The novelty of this pilot program is that a new class of responder is being created to possess medications specifically intended for possible treatment of another person.

These responders may in fact be any person who is considered likely to encounter a narcotics overdose. Such persons can obtain the medication simply by requesting it through any participating public health or medical agency. Moreover, they can receive, along with the Narcan, training on not only the use of that medication, and recognition of an overdose, but also other lifesaving steps that should be taken – e.g., calling 9-1-1, and the administration of rescue-breathing techniques and equipment.

The Massachusetts program includes a protocol that gives the legal authority to possess the medication in much the same way a prescription would be, with directions for use. After the medication is used, there is a debriefing process required so that, when the user requests a replacement Narcan kit, the program organizers can collect the data needed to evaluate the program more fully and more effectively.

## A Clear Focus on The Primary Job: Saving Lives

Whether they will be carrying the medication themselves or simply have the potential of encountering it in the community, responders *should* receive the training available. Because EMS staff members are already familiar with Narcan, such “education” may simply mean a brief notification about the spray version being available to the public. Emergency responders who have Narcan entrusted to their care for the first time should also participate in more formal training sessions.

Recently, one large Massachusetts city, Gloucester, announced that their police and fire staffs both will be carrying the spray version of Narcan. That announcement represents the culmination of a cooperative effort by the city’s management to overcome a number of hurdles common to the introduction of new programs within the overall civil-service community. Fire and police responders already are required, to participate in such training, for example – with overtime costs being paid through the Board of Health.

It should be noted that these programs already have been successful in saving many people who would likely have died from overdose. Moreover, the same events offer an opportunity for entry into addiction treatment at a time when the patient has the most persuasive motivation possible: surviving a near-death experience. The bottom line, though, is that Spray Narcan distribution does not directly address the root cause of addiction or the ballooning abuse of prescription pain killers. As Gloucester Fire Chief Philip Dench points out, “Our job is saving lives” – and this program does that, without a doubt.

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For additional information on:

CDC Statistics, visit

<http://www.cdc.gov/HomeandRecreationalSafety/pdf/poison-issue-brief.pdf>

<http://www.cdc.gov/homeandrecreationalafety/rxbrief/>

Narcan programs, visit

<http://stopoverdose.org/narcan.htm#commonQ>

<http://harmreduction.org/downloads/North%20Carolina%20Naloxone%2007.pdf>

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*Joseph Cahill is a medicolegal investigator for the Massachusetts Office of the Chief Medical Examiner. He previously served as exercise and training coordinator for the Massachusetts Department of Public Health and emergency planner in the Westchester County (N.Y.) Office of Emergency Management. He served five years as the citywide advanced life support (ALS) coordinator for the FDNY – Bureau of EMS. Prior to that, he was the department’s Division 6 ALS coordinator, covering the South Bronx and Harlem.*



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# Emergency Responses to CDLs: The Hidden Dangers

By Christina Spoons, Fire/HazMat



Firefighters are called to respond to all types of emergencies – but not all of these calls for help end up being what they at first seem to be. Responding to a medical call, fire, or explosion, for example, at what turns out to be a clandestine drug lab (CDL) is becoming a more common problem – for which firefighters (and other responders) must prepare very, very carefully.

A CDL is any laboratory that manufactures illegal controlled drugs or substances. Such labs have been found in single and multiple family dwellings, motel rooms, campgrounds, mini-storage buildings, and even in the trunks of cars and/or other vehicles. Although CDLs are not new, they have become more widespread because of the easy availability of the chemicals and other supplies needed to make the drugs, as well as the ease of finding information on the Internet on how to produce or “cook” the drugs.

Although CDLs can be used to manufacture many varieties of illegal drugs, they are primarily used to manufacture different types of methamphetamines (meth). According to the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA), more than 99 percent of the illegal labs found in the United States itself in 2008 were involved in some way to meth production, and more than 6,700 meth-lab incidents were reported that same year.

“Street” methamphetamine is referred to by several names – the most common being “meth,” “speed,” and “chalk.” Methamphetamine hydrochloride – clear chunky crystals, resembling ice, that can be inhaled by smoking – is usually referred to as “ice,” “crystal,” or “glass.” Whatever its external appearance, meth is basically a central nervous system stimulant, similar to cocaine, used to achieve “highs” lasting from 6 to 14 hours. Addicted users can experience several altered levels of consciousness that lead directly to irritability, anxiety, paranoia, nervousness, and a broad range of erratic behavior.

*All emergency calls have inherent dangers, but what seems to be “routine” may be life-threatening to responders. Proper training to recognize signs of drug labs will prepare firefighters and other responders for the dangers posed by illegal and illicit activities.*

## CDLs: Ubiquitous, Innocent Looking & Sometimes Incendiary

Responses to CDLs are often reported as other types of incidents, such as, but not limited to: medical-aid calls complete with burn or smoke-inhalation victims; structure and/or trash fires; and even explosions. A December 2011 explosion in an apartment in Jacksonville, Florida, revealed the presence of an operational CDL. The explosion literally lifted the ceiling off the wall, blew out windows, and scorched a tree outside the building – a number of the building’s residents also reported seeing a person “on fire” running from the scene.

Firefighters and other first responders should keep in mind that some meth labs are portable enough to fit into a backpack or the trunk of a car; in November 2011, in fact, police did find a meth lab in the trunk of a car while they were investigating “a suspicious vehicle” in the parking lot of a Jacksonville shopping mall. Responders also should not be surprised to come upon these portable labs at any traffic crash or while carrying out an everyday response to a “family residence,” apartment building, or any other structure.

When responding to these types of incidents, responders must maintain a high level of alertness at all times and, of course, proceed with extreme caution. The meth

labs are extremely dangerous for a responder to approach without the proper equipment and training. Fire personnel must be particularly aware of the “common signs” and other evidence of a CDL: the burning and mixing together of the various chemicals used to manufacture meth create toxic gases that pose a potentially lethal threat to responders and anyone else living or working in the area close to the lab.

## Duct Tape, Coffee Filters, Aluminum Foil, and Other Trash

There are several telltale signs that should alert responders to the possible presence of a CDL – excessive amounts of trash, for example, particularly chemical containers; also,

large quantities of cold and/or allergy medications, coffee filters, pieces of red-stained cloth, rolls of duct tape. The fact that curtains are always drawn is another obvious clue, as are windows covered with aluminum foil, any signs of chemical waste or dumping, frequent visitors at unusual times of day (or night), and the use of extensive security measures.

Unusual odors also could be reason for concern.

Various chemicals that are used in or are by-products of methamphetamine production – e.g., phosphine, ether, ammonia, battery acid, and/or acetone – all have distinctive odors. Phosphine smells like garlic, for example, sulfur like rotten eggs, ammonia like cat urine, and acetone like nail polish remover.

Armed suspects who may be under the influence of methamphetamine (which creates an induced paranoia) may be present at the lab. Among the other potential hazards are: (a) explosive vapors (from the chemicals used to manufacture the drugs); and (b) the dangerous mixtures of chemical materials with the potential to cause fires, create toxic fumes, or cause explosions. Moreover, because those running the lab obviously want to remain hidden, they may set various types of booby traps and/or use chemical devices or trip wires to keep out unwanted visitors.

The inhaling of toxic fumes may not only harm those who mix the chemicals, but also pose a danger to emergency responders, hazardous-materials clean-up crews, and neighbors. Common injuries can include respiratory and eye irritation, headaches, dizziness, nausea, and shortness of breath.

Here it is worth noting that the U.S. Department of Justice has warned about a significant environmental impact from CDL operations – namely, that each pound of manufactured methamphetamine produces an estimated 5-6 pounds of hazardous waste – which frequently is dumped into the sewers, streams, and rivers most conveniently located near the lab.

## **All Deliberate Speed, Maybe – But Safety First Always**

Any time a scene appears to be suspicious, responders should take extra precautions to be sure that they themselves do not become victims. If the presence of a CDL is suspected, it should be approached from uphill,

upwind, and upstream – if at all possible. The use of proper protective equipment, specifically including respiratory protection gear, is essential to avoid inhaling and/or being otherwise exposed to any toxic substances at or close to the lab. Moreover, if there is no immediate need to enter the structure, fire personnel would be well advised to wait until law enforcement arrives to secure the scene – and should also keep in mind that they may have stumbled upon a crime scene.

If a CDL is found after entering the structure, responders should try first to back out without touching anything – being aware at the same time of possible booby traps or other devices set to deter law enforcement and/or other uninvited visitors. After the lab or other structure has been secured, moreover, all responders should decontaminate themselves, and their clothing, to remove any toxic substances they may have come in contact with – the standard operating procedures postulated by various response agencies also should be consulted for further operations at the lab scene.

CDLs are not an obvious or omnipresent danger that fire personnel would expect to encounter on a regular basis, so responders may not necessarily notice all of the danger signs when responding to a call for service. Clandestine labs are concealed for a very specific reason – namely, that those running or operating an illegal lab do not want to be noticed. Emergency personnel must always remember, therefore, to “take a moment” to evaluate each and every situation very carefully and look for possible signs of trouble – and of personal danger – before continuing to make their way inside a potentially dangerous structure or facility. This common-sense approach applies even, and perhaps especially, on seemingly routine calls.

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*Christina Spoons holds a Masters Degree in Public Administration, with a concentration in Homeland Security, and is currently completing her PhD in the same discipline with a concentration in Terrorism, Mediation, and Peace, both from Walden University. Her emergency services experience includes several years as a firefighter/EMT and instructor with the American Red Cross. She has been active in the development of firefighter curricula at both the state and national levels and also works with several National Fire Protection Association committees, including those focused on professional firefighter qualifications and electronic safety equipment. She teaches homeland security and public policy and administration courses at Ashford University, and fire-science courses at Columbia Southern University.*

# PTSD: The Front Lines of a New Conflict

By Kate Rosenblatt, DoD



The residents of Skyway, Washington, rang in the new year with a major tragedy. An argument over a gun led to the New Year's Day shooting and injury of four people at a private residence in Skyway, a relatively small community in the northwestern part of the state. After fleeing the scene, the suspect – rather than stopping at a Park Ranger checkpoint, instead opened fire on two rangers, mortally wounding one of them: Park Ranger Margaret Anderson. The ensuing manhunt and string of violence ended the next day when the body of Benjamin Colton Barnes – clothed with just a T-shirt, jeans, and one shoe – was found lying in an icy creek within the park. Two weapons were also recovered at the scene. Police reports state that the 24-year-old Iraq veteran might have been suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

Of course, not all veterans suffering from PTSD or Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) are prone to such violent acts but, given the growing number of men and women returning in recent years from the front lines in Afghanistan, Iraq, and other war zones who have been diagnosed with PTSD and/or TBI, that possibility is an issue that an increasing number of first responders may have to face on the job. Because there is now a more widespread understanding of how such conditions affect not only the veterans themselves but also their families, and others they encounter, several federal agencies as well as private and public groups are looking for, and finding, better ways to help returning soldiers reintegrate more easily into civilian life.

In a speech last year at the Suicide Prevention Conference in Washington, D.C., in early March, U.S. Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki pointed out that, “Of the more than 30 thousand suicides in this country each year, fully 20 percent of them are veteran suicides.”

“That means, on average,” he continued, “*eighteen veterans commit suicide each day* [emphasis added].” The VA (Veterans Administration) statistics on veteran suicides, or attempted suicides, of course, cover all veterans – not only those who have served in Iraq and/or Afghanistan, but also the millions of others who served in World War II, or the Korean War, or the War in Vietnam. However, the PTSD/TBI rates for veterans who have served in Iraq and/or Afghanistan have been increasing and are now (according to the latest VA statistics available) more than 100 suicides per year, and still growing.

## Gender Differences & an Unusual Definition of “Success”

Two additional points to remember: (a) In general, the suicide rates for veterans seem to follow national trends when it comes to gender – a higher percentage of women attempt suicide, but men have higher “success” rates and are more likely to use firearms as their method of choice. (b) Because of the apparent (but statistically unquantified) increase in incidents such as the Skyway shootings, there is a growing concern that a greater number of veterans may in the future attempt to end their lives by deliberately being “taken down” by law enforcement officers – committing “suicide by cop,” in other words.

Providing responders with the resources, tools, and training needed to prepare them for potentially dangerous and/or violent encounters with veterans suffering from PTSD and/or TBI can help mitigate negative outcomes. Established as a non-government group for sharing its resources, tools, and training, the HandsOn Network – with 250 locations in 16 nations – is the volunteer arm of the Points of Light Institute, which was created in 1990 by an independent, nonpartisan, nonprofit group focused on volunteering and community service. As a major component of the HandsOn Network, the Community Blueprint Network grew out of collaboration with the U.S. Department of Defense, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, and The Office of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and over 55 other organizations– and is guided by an advisory council that includes representatives from the Armed Forces Services Corporation, the National Military Families Association, and the American Legion Auxiliary.

The Community Blueprint Network is a national volunteer program in the United States designed to provide community leaders with the information and tools they need to better serve military personnel and their families. The Network focuses particular attention on eight interrelated areas of service issues – behavioral health, education and higher education, veteran and military spouse employment, family strength, financial management and legal assistance, housing stability and homelessness assistance, integration, and volunteerism.

It is, in short, therefore, a reliable multipurpose “starting place” for people “who want to do something, but are not really sure where to begin,” says Tricia Thompson, the Network’s Director of Military Initiatives. In practice, the Network offers information on a specific issue, connects users with other leaders within

the same community, and provides the various training tools needed to address the specific issue involved.

The training tools provided by The Community Blueprint Network are open access. By clicking the “Practices” tab on the network’s home page and downloading “Promising Practices,” emergency planners, responders, and receivers can, for example, either create a community action plan or find an additional resource for the training of police officers, emergency medical technicians, firefighters, and other first responders.

## **Volunteer Professionals to Help “Mitigate the Violence”**

One such resource is Give an Hour, a national network of 6,000-plus trained mental-health professionals who volunteer their services to military members and their families. These same professionals also offer healthcare providers and first responder communities the resources, tools, and training needed to prepare earlier and more effectively for potentially dangerous and/or violent encounters with veterans suffering from PTSD and/or TBI.

To mitigate the violence that may be, and is, sometimes exhibited by persons suffering from anxiety disorders such as PTSD, it is important that first responders gain a better understanding of how to interact with such individuals. According to Dr. Barbara Van Dahlen, a psychologist and founder of Give an Hour, situations that trigger an overwhelming stress event for a service person suffering from PTSD can rapidly escalate and lead to additional aggression from that person.

Although it may be “absolutely appropriate” for a police officer or other responder to “take a commanding in-your-face approach,” Van Dahlen says, she recommends, instead, that responders change their tactics when dealing with a person who may be suffering from post-traumatic stress. Simply by speaking to the veteran in a different tone of voice, the responder can help the veteran respond differently – i.e., less violently – when he or she feels threatened. When responders are faced with situations that are “confusing, stressful, and potentially dangerous,” Van Dahlen also points out, acquiring the awareness of mental health concerns can make “a tremendous difference.”

## **Some of the Same Things – Plus a Few Major Differences**

Another available resource to first responders is the Steptoe Group – a consulting firm that focuses on improving the access to and delivery of health, science, and educational services.

Chairman and CEO of the Group is Ronald Steptoe, a veteran himself, who relied on his own professional experience with healthcare advocacy and multicultural marketing to put together the Warrior-Patient Centric Healthcare Training Seminar Series – a training program used by the Department of Defense and the VA to: (a) educate providers about military and veteran culture; (b) facilitate better understanding; and (c) improve communications between patients and providers. “We realized,” Steptoe points out, “that not only are we seeing some of the same things we’ve seen with Vietnam [veterans], but we’re already starting to see some differences in people that were impacted [by PTSD]. . . . We try to act as the voice of the individual who is impacted, and speak on his/her behalf globally to say, ‘this is who I am, here are my issues’.”

To prevent repeats of tragedies such as the Skyway shootings, the development of better understanding of PTSD and its potential effects on individuals as well as their communities is crucial to managing the influx of returning soldiers and their re-adjustment into civilian life. Because a relatively high percentage of National Guard and Reserve personnel have served in active combat in recent years, all communities large and small throughout the nation – not just the “military-base towns” – would be well advised to address this fairly complex issue.

“If we educate those who touch our veterans and their families, we decrease the likelihood that [the veterans] . . . will need severe, significant, intensive treatment,” says Van Dahlen. “First responders are the ones who often get there first, see it first, and if they know what to do, how to respond, and have the compassion that comes with that knowledge [the incident is] . . . much more likely [to have] a positive resolution.”

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*For more information on:*

*Community Blueprint Network, visit [www.communityblueprintnetwork.org](http://www.communityblueprintnetwork.org)*

*Give an Hour, visit [www.giveanhour.org](http://www.giveanhour.org)*

*HandsOn Network, visit [www.HandsOnNetwork.org](http://www.HandsOnNetwork.org)*

*Veteran suicide statistics, visit [http://www.va.gov/opa/speeches/2010/10\\_0111hold.asp](http://www.va.gov/opa/speeches/2010/10_0111hold.asp) or [http://www.armytimes.com/news/2010/04/military\\_veterans\\_suicide\\_042210w/](http://www.armytimes.com/news/2010/04/military_veterans_suicide_042210w/)*

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*Kate Rosenblatt is a freelance writer based in the Baltimore-Washington, D.C., metropolitan area. She has a background in education reform, communications, and business development, and has written for a number of publications on a broad range of subjects ranging from finance to fashion to public safety and various related topics.*

# Lessons Learned: The Mass Shootings in Tucson

By Sophia Paros, Law Enforcement

On Saturday, 8 January 2011, at 10:10 a.m. Mountain Standard Time, a gunman opened fire on U.S. Representative Gabrielle Giffords and a group of “everyday citizens” attending her “Congress on Your Corner” gathering in front of a Safeway supermarket in Tucson, Arizona. The gunman fired 31 rounds, killing six people and wounding not only Giffords herself and 12 other persons. U.S. District Judge John Roll and Gabriel Zimmerman, a member of Giffords’ staff, were among those killed.

Several people in the crowd acted immediately to detain the gunman and keep him from shooting anyone else; meanwhile, members of Giffords’ congressional staff, and two doctors, who were shopping at the Safeway at the time of the incident, provided first aid to the victims. Pima County 911 operators received the first call from the incident scene at 10:11 a.m., and a deputy from the Pima County Sheriff’s Department (PCSD) arrived on site at 10:15 a.m. and detained the suspect. A second deputy arrived soon after and secured the shooter’s weapon. While the incident site was being secured, PCSD deputies used Individual First Aid Kits (IFAKs) to administer first aid to survivors of the shooting in the six minutes before local EMS (emergency medical services) personnel also entered the incident scene.

## Individual First Aid Kits (IFAKs)

The first several minutes of a mass shooting incident are almost always crucial to survival in such incidents. Fortunately, that critical truth had been addressed by the PCSD well in advance of the 8 January 2011 shootings – primarily through rigorous training and the distribution of a number of IFAKs, by July 2010, to PCSD units. As pointed out in an LLIS (*Lessons Learned Information Sharing*) report – Good Story, *Mass Casualty Incidents: The Pima County, Arizona, Sheriff’s Department’s Development and Use of Individual First Aid Kits* (available on [LLIS.gov](http://LLIS.gov)) – the Pima County Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) team started developing their IFAK kits by first evaluating off-the-shelf first-aid kits. The team then compared those kits with others, carried by U.S.

combat medics in war zones, and used the information gained to develop their own IFAKs.

The PCSD IFAKs, which are specifically “designed to enable deputies to treat blunt force and penetrating trauma usually associated with traumatic gunshot and stab wounds,” contain, among other equipment: one tactical black nylon tourniquet; two six-inch emergency military bandages (similar to one pioneered by the Israeli Army); one Asherman chest seal (which

not only fits over a wound but also is fitted with a valve that allows fluid to escape); one strip of Quick Clot combat gauze (which coagulates blood on contact); and one pair of emergency medical technician shears that can be used to slice victims’ clothing quickly and cleanly.

The contents of the IFAKs were researched in considerable detail to ensure that the combination of medical equipment and materials carried in the kits would enable PCSD deputies to “treat gunshot and stab wounds successfully.” The 8 January shootings proved that that goal had been met. An attending physician at the University of Arizona Medical Center who examined some of the survivors who had been treated with equipment carried in the IFAKs said that the use of IFAK chest seals had saved the lives of at least three people that day. The kits were so effective, in fact, that the PCSD has announced plans to provide each officer with an IFAK for placement in his or her personal vehicle so that the kit would

be immediately available to the department’s off-duty officers – many of whom self-deploy to incident scenes.

*The second week of January marked the one-year anniversary of the mass shootings that almost killed U.S. Representative Gabriel Giffords. The heroic efforts of first responders on the scene proved that the use of ICS and availability of IFAKs played crucial roles in keeping fatalities to a minimum.*

## Incident Command System Now Truly Combat-Tested

Response operations play a critical role at all times, of course, but are even more important in effectively managing public relations involving high-profile post-incident events that require federal, state, and local agency collaboration. Because of the politically sensitive nature of the 8 January shootings, the PCSD employed the Incident Command System (ICS) to



manage its own very heavy response phase operations. Use of the ICS helped the PCSD effectively manage such operations as securing the incident area and the triaging and transporting of victims; it also facilitated the massive task of information sharing between the incident command staff and area hospitals.

PCSD also used ICS to: (a) manage such high-profile post-incident events as the funerals and memorial services of those killed that day; and (b) provide security for later dignitary visits and other events that would undoubtedly be complicated by a heavy media presence. In short, according to an LLIS.gov Practice Note – *Incident Management: The Pima County, Arizona, Sheriff's Department Use of the Incident Command System During Post-Response Phase Operations After the January 8, 2011, Shootings* (also available on [LLIS.gov](http://LLIS.gov)) – “ICS enabled PCSD to successfully manage multiple simultaneous events in partnership with federal, state, and local agencies in an effective manner.”

The LLIS.gov Practice Note also points out that, in the weeks immediately following the shootings, detailed Incident Action Plans (IAPs) were developed for approximately 11 interrelated events, including funerals, a presidential visit, and the transfer of Representative Giffords from the University Medical Center to Davis-Monthan Air Force Base (also in Tucson). Use of the IAPs in conjunction with the ICS helped the PCSD to maintain full situational awareness while managing all of these and other post-shooting/high-profile events both effectively and efficiently.

Use of ICS in conjunction with the IAPs, according to PCSD Captain Frank Duarte, also “relieved the stress of having one person plan each event over the course of a week.” It should be noted, though, that although the IAPs were immensely effective, the PCSD said it plans on assigning additional personnel to its Operations Center Planning Section to further improve the use of ICS during the post-response phases of future operations and efforts.

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For additional information on:

Active shooter incidents, log into LLIS.gov at [www.llis.dhs.gov](http://www.llis.dhs.gov).

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*Sophia Paros, a contractor with SAIC, serves as the operations lead for Lessons Learned Information Sharing (LLIS.gov), the DHS/FEMA (Department of Homeland Security/Federal Emergency Management Agency) national online network of lessons learned, best practices, and innovative ideas for the nation's homeland-security and emergency management communities. Paros has received a dual bachelor's degree in Computer Information Systems and Business from the College of Notre Dame of Maryland, and is currently working on an M.S. in Information Assurance from The George Washington University.*

## Forensic Incident Responses & Security Preparedness

By Dawn R. Blanche, Cyber & IT



In today's cyber landscape, digital forensics – i.e., the investigation of digital or electronic evidence using standard processes, investigative methods, and evidence-handling techniques that can be used in legal proceedings – has become a critical aspect of incident response and disaster preparedness. Digital forensics not only plays a vital role in the investigation of virus outbreaks, network intrusions, and computer crime offenses, but also provides an organization with answers that can lead to the capture of perpetrators and to strengthening the overall U.S. network security architecture. For any organization, but particularly for high-profile companies, the ability to investigate the activities on a network is an essential component of the overall security architecture.

In the United States, public agencies as well as private-sector organizations and businesses are driving the need for additional cybersecurity training. In 1998, the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) established and put into operation a new Cyber Crime Center (DC3) to address the already recognized need for the nation's armed forces, as well as a broad section of defense agencies, to transition from boots-on-the-ground battles to intelligence gathering. As DC3 posted on its website, today, more than ever before, defense organizations “need to plan for the future as significant shifts in cyber operations accelerate globally.” In short, digital forensics is becoming increasingly more important, not only for national-security reasons but also for the security of the broad spectrum of technology networks on which national infrastructures, major corporations, small businesses, and individual citizens depend.

In 2011, DC3 launched a pilot program for outstanding academic institutions in the field of digital forensics education that works with colleges and universities to accredit programs that will meet DC3 standards and workforce needs. Eight U.S. academic institutions are now: (a) enrolled in the pilot program; and (b) have received the DC3 Center of Digital Forensics Academic Excellence (CDFAE) designation: Anne Arundel Community College, Howard County Community College, Stevenson University, and Johns Hopkins University in Maryland; Oklahoma State

University; Utica College in New York; Norwich University in Vermont; and the Air Force Institute of Technology (AFIT) in Ohio.

## Training Programs & New Digital Forensics Challenges

As an important new building block in the current nationally recognized cybersecurity curriculum, a digital forensics degree program emphasizes not only the proper handling of digital evidence and the tools and techniques used in forensics analysis but also the importance of proper documentation and report generation as well as the laws and ethics governing the handling of evidence. Topics discussed within the curriculum include but are not limited to the following: the proper collection and preservation of digital evidence; the retrieval of evidence from multiple environments, situations, and devices; the use of commercial forensics and open-source tools; manual recovery techniques; the analysis of collected information; and proper documentation and reporting.

In order to earn DC3 CDFAE accreditation, a digital forensics program must fully map to an extensive list of objectives in eight knowledge domains: (a) Legal and Ethics; (b) Investigative Processes; (c) Storage Media; (d) Mobile and Embedded Devices; (e) Network Forensics; (f) Program and Software Forensics; (g) Quality Assurance, Control, and Management; and (h) Lab and Forensic Operations. Students who complete an accredited program will therefore possess, as a minimum, the basic skills needed to enter the workforce as agents, analysts, consultants, technicians, and/or other specialized professionals in various working areas of digital forensics.

DC3 also has been collaborating in many other ways with academic institutions, industry partners, and the U.S. public in general to fill current and future workforce needs and create a base community of digital forensic professionals. One particular collaborative effort is DC3's own annual Digital Forensics Challenge, which serves as an open call to prospective civilian, commercial, government, military, and academic participants. The Challenge presents five levels of scenario-based exercises – scored by experts within DC3 – designed with the specific purpose of pioneering new investigative tools, techniques, and methodologies, as well as to generate and discover new talent in the field.

The 2011 Challenge attracted 1,147 teams and 1,791 individual participants from all 50 states and the District of Columbia; 52 other nations also participated in last year's Challenge. (The digital forensics team from Maryland's Anne Arundel Community College took first place in the community-college level of this rapidly expanding international competition.)

By focusing on a continued increase in the cyber course offerings, U.S. colleges and universities, and other institutions of higher learning, can earn official recognition and professional designations – and, not incidentally, help secure future grants to expand training opportunities for in-demand careers in various interrelated fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.

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*For additional information on:*

*The DoD's National Center of Digital Forensics Academic Excellence (CDFAE), visit [http://www.dc3.mil/cdfae/CDFAE\\_Fact\\_Sheet\\_83011.pdf](http://www.dc3.mil/cdfae/CDFAE_Fact_Sheet_83011.pdf)*

*The DoD's DC3 Challenge, visit <http://dc3.mil/challenge/2011/play/index.php>*

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*Dawn R. Blanche is an Instructional Specialist in cybersecurity at Anne Arundel Community College, Maryland, specifically concentrating in the development of the digital forensics program. She received a Bachelor of Science degree in Computer and Network Security from Wilmington University and performed her teaching certification coursework in Career and Technology Education at the University of Maryland Eastern Shore. She is currently pursuing a Master of Science in Cybersecurity/MBA dual degree from the University of Maryland University College.*

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