

Is the prospect of urban refugees in America real?

Can rural law enforcement meet the challenge?

by

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This Command College Independent Study Project is a FUTURES study of a particular emerging issue in law enforcement. Its purpose is NOT to predict the future, but rather to project a number of possible scenarios for strategic planning consideration.

Defining the future differs from analyzing the past because the future has not yet happened. In this project, useful alternatives have been formulated systematically so that the planner can respond to a range of possible future environments.

Managing the future means influencing the future--creating it, constraining it, adapting to it. A futures study points the way.

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Is the prospect of urban refugees in America real? Can rural law enforcement meet the challenge?

By: Michael Downey, Undersheriff Humboldt County Sheriff's Office

Much like December 7, 1941, it is a quiet day in your corner of America. The last thing on your mind is an attack on a metropolitan or urban area within a few hours of your slice of heaven. The rural community you live and work in is home to many hard working people who have sacrificed to live there and enjoy a slower pace of life. Yes, life is good; a low crime rate, clean air, good neighbors and a true sense of community. Who could ask for more? Then, an event occurs that will dramatically change this piece of paradise you call home. In a large metropolitan area 200 miles to the south, a device is detonated and the early reports indicate mass destruction and loss of life.

The major concern appears to be the amount of radiation and toxic debris that is released into the environment, rendering the area uninhabitable. As the day unfolds, you begin to realize that large numbers of urban residents have now become refugees. Early reports indicate most refugees are fleeing north and south out of the city and it is only a matter of a few short hours before the first of them arrive in your county. More importantly, the arrival of refugees could last for weeks or months, significantly increasing the population of your once quiet, rural community.

The circumstances exist today for future events, which could result in a refugee situation within the borders of the United States. It is imperative that the subject of refugees in America is considered and action is taken because once it does occur it will be too late to plan for. The mechanisms that must be in place are complex and time sensitive, requiring foresight and not hindsight. The purpose of this article is to begin the process in developing those mechanisms necessary to deal with events, which would result in refugees.

Complacency in the Face of Terrorism

A terrorist attack of the magnitude of September 11, 2001 could easily result in a forced mass exodus to affected areas. Much as was seen in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, those displaced persons could leave for months or years, and in some cases, never return to their homes. The big question for rural areas receiving this influx of migration would be the response capacity of their local government. As policing and social service agencies might fail to provide basic safety and security needs, the terrorists would have accomplished their desired goal: disruption of the American way of life:

In reality Americans have become complacent; the threat of another attack has diminished greatly since 2001. Most Americans believe another attack will not occur on our shores. By July 2003, only eight percent of Americans ranked terrorism as there

primary concern mainly because no terrorist attacks have occurred since 9-11.¹ If we have truly become complacent about a possible attack, why would the average American be concerned with preparing for one? Are we just days or weeks away from another “unthinkable” incident? Is there a clear threat of additional attacks on American soil, similar to those of September 11, 2001? All one needs to do is search the Internet and you will find a vast amount of information regarding the fear of future terrorist events or activity at home and abroad. The other indicator is the amount of sites dealing with the preparation for future terrorist events and precautions to be taken.

Let’s assume a terrorist attack involving radiological material is carried out in a large metropolitan or urban area, which results in a disruption of basic services, destruction of dwellings and contamination of the air and water. In the event of such an attack, what contingencies are in place to adequately deal with displacement of those who reside in an affected area? Are local, state and federal agencies adequately prepared to house, clothe, feed and provide basic services to those who may not be able to return home for some time? Finally, where do these refugees go to receive these services and reside until they are able to return to their communities?

Preparing for the Refugees

If it were conceivable that additional terrorist attacks can occur in America, then the prudent thing would be to prepare for all the possibilities associated with such an attack. America can become complacent, as she did prior to the attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941. Even though the country was in disbelief that this horrific attack occurred it took all the might of the United States to rebuild and meet the threat with appropriate force. In response to such events, every community across the nation will be required to respond and thoroughly examine areas of vulnerability and strength will be identified.

Is rural America a logical alternative for people to seek refuge in the event of a terrorist attack or natural disaster and if so can rural America support those seeking refuge? We have in recent years experienced catastrophic incidents that have lead to a massive relocation of people. The most recent occurred on August 29, 2005 and devastated the gulf coast region of the United States, particularly the New Orleans area. This single event resulted in over 1800 deaths and an estimated \$81.2 billion in damages.² It also caused a mass relocation of the populace particularly from the city of New Orleans. Urban refugees were evacuated to locations throughout the country with evacuation centers activated in states as far away as Oregon and California, as depicted in the chart below. A number of these communities are still feeling the effects of the refugee situation, due to many refugees not willing to return to their homes.

¹Special Report/ Transportation and the Terrorist Threat: The Strom Thurmond Institute 2003, (online) Page 10, Accessed March 11, 2006 available: <http://www.strom.clemson.edu>

²Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia, (online) Hurricane Katrina, section 1 Storm History accessed November 27, 2006 available: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/hurricane_katrina



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People did relocate due to the amount of destruction to the City of New Orleans and the surrounding area. In that single event citizens found that they were unable to continue to live in their homes and could not rely on the local government to meet their basic needs for survival. So a large majority of the citizens of New Orleans relocated and the burden for their survival suddenly shifted to other communities.

If this relocation of people could occur due to a weather-related incident, then it would also be conceivable it would occur in the event of a terrorist attack. Rural communities could become a desirable destination for displaced people especially if they are attempting to reach a place of safety, which would also be a less likely target for future terrorist activity.

Threat Assessment

A terrorist attack on America could come in many forms; from groups supported by foreign governments like Hamas or Al Qaeda, fundamentalist organization's attempting to further their religious ideology or an organization within the borders of the United States comprised of U.S. citizens with a determined agenda of animal right, environmental concerns or other issues of social concern. The most important consideration in any terrorist attack is the political and psychological impact it would have on the populace.

In August of 2006, the Rand Corporation, Center for Terrorism Risk Management Policy, published a technical report entitled, "*Considering the Effects of a Catastrophic Terrorist Attack*" by Charles Meade and Roger C. Molander. In this report, the scenario was based

³ BBC News, (online) Accessed January 14, 2007. Available <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/shared/spl/hi/americas/05/katrina/html/evacuation.stm>

upon a hypothetical detonation of a 10 Kiloton nuclear bomb concealed in a shipping container by terrorist. The concealed device was detonated after the container was unloaded in the Port of Long Beach, California. The target in this case is both U.S. economic infrastructure and a critical global shipping center, the Port of Long Beach. Within the first 72 hours, the attack would devastate a vast portion of the Los Angeles metropolitan area. Because ground-burst explosions generate particularly large amounts of highly radioactive debris, fallout from the blast would cause much of the destruction. The following describes some of the most dramatic possible outcomes:

- Sixty thousand people might die instantly from the blast itself or quickly thereafter from radiation poisoning.
- One-hundred-fifty thousand more might be exposed to hazardous levels of radioactive water and sediment from the port, requiring emergency medical treatment.
- The blast and subsequent fires might completely destroy the entire infrastructure and all ships in the Port of Long Beach and the adjoining Port of Los Angeles.
- Six million people might try to evacuate the Los Angeles region.
- Two to three million people might need relocation because fallout will have contaminated a 500-km² area.
- Gasoline supplies might run critically short across the entire region because of the loss of Long Beach's refineries—responsible for one-third of the gas west of the Rockies.⁴

Mass casualties are one of the major goals of a terrorist attack and greatly contribute to the psychological duress⁵. According to a May 2006 article in the Washington Post, terrorists are now looking toward “Soft Targets” due to the increased security around the more conventional targets. Soft Targets consist of shopping malls, sports arenas, hotels, restaurants, bars, nightclubs, movie theaters, and housing complexes.⁶ This is why the World Trade Center was so desirable from both the perspective of psychological effect and the potential of casualties. Homeland Security specialists have identified the following as being high on the list of high profile for terrorists.⁷

1. Nuclear power plants
2. Water systems for large cities
3. Bio-Chemical attacks on large populations
4. Large sport venues
5. Large shopping malls
6. High profile Federal and State government buildings
7. Commercial high rises
8. High profile national monuments

⁴ Technical Report/ Rand Corporation Center for Terrorism Risk Management Policy August 2006. (online) page 18, Accessed January 21, 2007 available: <http://www.trb.org/safety/RAND-Aug-2006.pdf>

⁵ Special Report/ Transportation and the Terrorist Threat: The Strom Thurmond Institute 2003, (online) Page 3, Accessed March 11, 2006 available: <http://www.strom.clemson.edu>

⁶The Washington Post May 7, 2006 (online) Pg. BO4, accessed January 22, 2007 Available: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/05/05/AR2006050501754.html>

⁷ Special Report/ Transportation and the Terrorist Threat: The Strom Thurmond Institute 2003, (online) Page 7, Accessed March 11, 2006 available: <http://www.strom.clemson.edu>

9. Power systems for large cities
10. Communication systems
11. Large oil refineries

These listed targets are associated with large population based communities to satisfy the desired goal of the terrorist; mass casualties. Four of the listed events are regarded as “catastrophic events” due to their potential for wide scale disruption to a resident population across a broad geographic area. They are; (1) Nuclear power plant, (2) Water systems for large cities, (3) Bio-Chemical attacks on large populations, (9) Power systems for large cities. Each one of these events could lead to a mass exodus of population, which could lead to a refugee crisis. An attack on a nuclear power plant could result in the massive release of radioactive material. One has only to consider a recent example of such devastation and associated evacuation in a Russian town called Chernobyl.

Chernobyl

An example of a recent catastrophic event occurred in 1986 in the Ukraine at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant. On April 26, 1986 a fire started in reactor number four, resulting in a melt down of the reactor and a release of massive amounts of radioactivity into the environment. The “meltdown” a melting of the nuclear fuel in the reactor through its protective container into the general environment, is catastrophic when dealing with even small amounts of toxic materials. Nuclear reactors use large quantities of such materials, and these events can cause lasting damage. Unfortunately, the term has been loosely applied to refer to any case of fuel melting, however minor.

In the Three Mile Island 2 and Chernobyl events there was significant fuel melting. Only in the case of Chernobyl, however, were there significant offsite releases.⁸ In fact, the World Health Organization (WHO) found that the radiation release from the Chernobyl accident was 200 times that of the radiation release from Hiroshima and Nagasaki nuclear bombs combined. The immediate death toll was 30 lives; many of were workers trying to put out the graphite fire and were lost from radiation poisoning. According to the Ukrainian Radiological Institute, over 2500 deaths resulted from the Chernobyl incident.⁹

After the accident access within an 18-mile radius of the plant was denied and 135,000 people were evacuated from the surrounding area.¹⁰ The incident eventually resulted in the evacuation and resettlement of 350,400 people, which caused a profound social

⁸ The Virtual Nuclear Tourist, Accessed January 14, 2007 (online) Available <http://www.nucleartourist.com/events/meltdown.htm>

⁹ Think Quest 98 / Nuclear Disasters and Accidents, Accessed January 14, 2007 (online) Available http://library.thinkquest.org/17940/texts/nuclear_disasters/nuclear_disasters.html

¹⁰ U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission / Fact Sheet on the Accident at the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant, Accessed March 18, 2006 (online) Available <http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/doc-collections/fact-sheets/fschernobyl.html>

impact on the following three countries; Belarus, Russia and Ukraine. Many of these regions have yet to recover 20 years after the incident.¹¹

A catastrophic event, similar to that of Chernobyl, would necessitate evacuation or force a refugee situation due to the area becoming uninhabitable, much like the scenario of the incident at the Port of Long Beach. In the case of a nuclear or bio-chemical incident, the environment would become incapable of sustaining human life. An attack on a regional power system or destroying the power grid would force people to search for locations that could provide basic power requirements. Also in the event of an attack on a water system for a large city, potable water would become a necessity of life and require the population to move to an area that could provide potable water.

Demographics

The United States is a large country in regards to both land mass and population, resulting in diverse groups of people and places. For example, the State of California is the most populated state in the United States and with its diversity, large economy and broad geographic areas provides an excellent model for the purpose of this discussion.

The state of California consists of deserts, rich farmland, alpine mountains and hundreds of miles of coastline. There are fifty-eight counties in the state. According to the California State Rural Health Association, only three of those fifty-eight California Counties are considered primarily urban. The remaining fifty-five counties have large enough rural areas to be counted in the rural category based on population concentrations.¹² Twenty-nine of California's counties, covering about 75 percent of the total California landmass of 156,000 square miles,¹³ are defined as "rural counties."

Based upon the demographics and population concentrations, primary targets could arguably be within the three so-called urban counties (San Diego, Los Angeles and Orange) as identified by the Department of Homeland Security.¹⁴ This does not necessarily minimize the possibility of attacks to other highly populated desirable locations, such as San Francisco, Sacramento, large San Francisco bay area cities or other large cities within the State. It does, though, provide a basis to explore the possible outcomes regarding refugee migration should an incident occur in an urban area.

A refugee population will overwhelm most rural areas in the state of California in a very small amount of time. If terrorist attacks occur in the large metropolitan areas of Los Angeles, Orange or San Diego counties, then neighboring counties within a 100 to 200 mile radius would begin to experience a refugee population within a short period of time.

¹¹ Chernobyl Info. Accessed January 14, 2007 (online) Available

<http://www.chernobyl.info/index.php?userhash=12693462&navID=38&IID=2#>

¹² California State Rural Health Association, Fact Sheet (online) accessed March 11, 2006 available: <http://www.csrha.org/factsheet.html#geography>

¹³ California State Rural Health Association, Fact Sheet (online) accessed March 11, 2006 available: <http://www.csrha.org/factsheet.html#geography>

¹⁴ Cities at High Risk for Terror/Department of Homeland Security (online) accessed January 22, 2007 Available:

<http://hosted.ap.org/specials/interactives/wdc/terror/index.html?SITE=YAHOO&SECTION=HOME>

These areas would consist of both rural and urban with the greatest impact on those with the most services. This scenario would be true for the short term, but as time passes and the likelihood of refugees returning home diminishes, they would then look to friends and family throughout the state and nation.¹⁵

In the Port of Long Beach Scenario the projection is for a mass exodus of up to five million people within the first two hours. The evacuation would be severely hampered due to clogged freeways resulting in a large number of individuals abandoning their vehicles and attempting to leave the area on foot. Due to all the confusion and anxiety violence would breakout with dozens of motorists being shot,¹⁶ due to the severe conditions and fear associated with a disastrous event.

Local law enforcement in the Los Angeles basin would begin to restore some semblance of order and would be able to ease the gridlock on the freeways exiting the city. Within 24 hours refugees would begin to arrive in locations as far away as Northern California, Nevada and Arizona, numbering in the hundreds of thousands.¹⁷ These are projections based upon a scenario with known facts and circumstances. In reality, there could be thousands more if an actual attack surprises planners in its scope or methodology. This is why a strategic plan for such events is essential.

Refugee Impact

Rural populations have a long history of resiliency and can often deal with most any kind of event for an extended period of time with little outside assistance, but how would rural areas cope with an increased refugee population?

A realistic approach for such a plan would be to identify those strategic areas, throughout the state, region or county and begin to implement specific strategic plans for such events. Each state in the nation has been planning for terrorist activity since September 11, 2001. A key component of those plans would be how to help the survivors: how to provide for them - feed them and deliver basic needs for survival. Local and state agencies must be able to handle an unanticipated population migration in an orderly manner to minimize the impact on the populace. The affected population must have confidence and trust that the situation is stable, due to the combined efforts of disaster relief agencies. Local agencies must also keep in mind that an increased demand on resources could result in a need for increased assistance to meet those demands

Once an incident occurs, strategic plans should be implemented as well as the activation of the Incident Command System (ICS). Resources will then need to be gathered and

¹⁵ What Would be the Impact of Urban Disaster Refugees on Rural Law Enforcement, POST Command College research project, October 2006, by Michael T. Downey

¹⁶ Technical Report/ Rand Corporation Center for Terrorism Risk Management Policy August 2006. (online) page 45, Accessed January 30, 2007 available: <http://www.trb.org/safety/RAND-Aug-2006.pdf>

¹⁷ Technical Report/ Rand Corporation Center for Terrorism Risk Management Policy August 2006. (online) page 50, Accessed January 30, 2007 available: <http://www.trb.org/safety/RAND-Aug-2006.pdf>

appropriately distributed in the operational area with oversight and accountability through the ICS. Decisions regarding the operational period will be made by the incident commanders with input from all levels within the command structure; including planning, logistics, operations and finance. Provisions for the distribution of information will also need to be made with the appointment of a public information officer (PIO). All control of the incident should lie with the incident command.

Health care personnel would have to deal with refugees who maybe already infected and sick, due to a biological or nuclear attack. Rural health care systems will be overwhelmed and unable to deal with the large demand on the system. California is home to 35 million people, plus millions of visitors from around the world. If a large scale event were to occur, California's health care system would be hard pressed to provide medical care to all those in need.¹⁸

If the state agencies experience difficulty delivering health care services in the event of a catastrophic event, then problems in local jurisdictions would be multiplied. Local EMS systems could also have difficulty in delivering adequate services to refugees and full time residents. Emergency response may have to be prioritized, based upon the most significant needs.

There are a multitude of agencies available to assist with training, coordination, equipment and funding to assist local jurisdictions. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the American Red Cross, Salvation Army and Department of Homeland Security (DHS) have specific programs that assist local agencies in all phases of their hazard mitigation plans. Volumes of information dealing with planning, grants, training and plan implementation are available on the FEMA web site at, <http://www.fema.gov/about/index.shtm>

Disruption in the communication infrastructure such as downed transmission lines, cellular towers and the destruction of communication delivery systems in the large metropolitan areas would occur. Law enforcement would have to rely on older, simpler systems of communication, such as enforcement HAM radio operators.

The transportation infrastructure could be impacted, much like was experienced post 9-11 with the grounding of all commercial aircraft. Other modes of transportation could also be impacted in the form of congested traffic, inadequate highways for traffic volume, fuel shortage, and the failure of municipal transit systems. Along with transportation, there is the concern of the transportation of goods and services. If the highway infrastructure were significantly disrupted those resources needed to sustain a refugee population would not be available.

Potable water and food distribution could be disrupted to the point of health concerns for a refugee population. The populace would have to rely on local stores of water and food

¹⁸ Enhancement Plan For California / Initiative three Strengthen Medical Surge and Mass Prophylaxis Capabilities. Page 10 Available (online) <https://odp.esportals.com/index.cfm>

to sustain them. This could lead to confrontations with the local populace, which would result in law enforcement involvement to ensure proper, safe distribution.

In the area of natural gas and electrical utilities, the United States is the largest consumer. A disruption in the delivery of either of these utilities would severely hamper relief efforts, especially during winter months when infants and the elderly are most susceptible to adverse conditions. This is one area in which local law enforcement or relief agencies may have little control and alternate sources to supply power will need to be developed in the form of gas or diesel powered generators.

Rural areas could also expect an increased number of evacuees that have been displaced from areas all over the country. Like the terrorist act described earlier, large-scale natural disasters have a similar impact with regard to displacement of populations. One of the most catastrophic is also the most recent; Hurricane Katrina. The impact of refugees, the crime and social impacts and lingering issues are all examples of the real-life cost of population displacement.

The Impact of Hurricane Katrina

In Bossier City Louisiana, Police Chief Mike Halphen reported a 13% increase in the overall crime rate since the arrival of Hurricane Katrina and Rita evacuees began to arrive. Halphen stated, "Whenever you have an increase in population, as we did with the tremendous influx of visitors due to Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, crime will increase as well."¹⁹

Houston, TX, which received the largest number of refugees from New Orleans, has also noticed a rise in violent crime since evacuee arrival. Houston police reported an increase of in their homicide rate of 20% and an influx in gang rivalry. Due to the increase in crime, the Houston police department has asked FEMA for almost ten million dollars to help pay for officer overtime. The police department could then increase police presence in neighborhoods with a high concentration of evacuees. Many Houstonians feel that Hurricane Katrina and Rita evacuees have worn out their welcome.^{20/21}

Hurricane Katrina may have devastated the gulf coast region and New Orleans, but it also provided emergency response systems with a comprehensive model for future major events or incidents. The lessons learned in that single event will provide volumes of information in regards to response; equipment, supplies, personnel and funding that may be required for the preservation of life and property. Rural counties and jurisdictions are already benefiting from programs and grants designed to properly train and equip their emergency response agencies. Information regarding these opportunities is available online through DHS, FEMA and other disaster response organizations.

¹⁹Policeone news / La. Police chief says crime spike due to hurricane evacuees available (online) accessed March 19, 2006 <http://www.policeone.com/copnews/122303/>

²⁰ KATC3/News Channel/ Houston Crime Increase, posted (online) January 30, 2006 Available <http://www.katc.com/Global/story.asp?S=4417180>

²¹City Journal, Katrina Refugees Shoot up Houston, by Nicole Gelinas, Posted (online) January 4, 2006 Available <http://www.city-journal.org/html/eon2006-01-04ng.html>

Strategic plan

Law enforcement agencies will need to develop a strategic plan to deal with regional issues as well as issues relevant to each individual agency involved in an incident. Rural communities and law enforcement must also look beyond their local resources and seek assistance and resources from state and federal agencies.

Realistic goals are an important factor in developing a successful strategic plan. These goals should be identified to all the stakeholders and a consensus should be established prior to implementation. The goals should include;

- Commitment by law enforcement to maintain peace.
- Maintain a sense of security and confidence within the populace, for both the local governmental body and law enforcement.
- Protection of personal property and property rights.
- Provide a healthy environment for both the refugee population and local residents.
- Establishment of a cache of resources and supplies.
- A trained staff of professionals to deal with the situations associated with a disaster.

To attain these goals, objectives would include the coordination of local health and medical services providers. There should also be an establishment of a unified central command within the rural community. This would most likely be, in the case of California, the Office of Emergency Services (OES), which is usually under the control of the county sheriff. The Office of Emergency Services (OES) derives its authority from the State of California's government code section 8585 and its defining sub-sections.

Most agencies have already developed contingency plans to deal with emergencies and emergency relief protocol. The Humboldt County Sheriff's Office, for instance, has developed general orders to give clear direction for response to emergency situations and identify response protocol through an Emergency Management Plan Manual. The manual provides direction for all county employees regarding the appropriate response for a variety of disaster incidents.²²

In the event of an incident, which would result in a refugee problem, Humboldt County could become a destination for urban refugees. The county is semi-rural, but accessible to those seeking refuge from areas such as Sacramento and the San Francisco bay area. The county is far enough away from both Sacramento and San Francisco, making it a desirable destination. Refugees would be able to reach Humboldt County with a single tank of fuel and it is situated on Hwy 101, which is a major coastal highway linking California, Oregon and Washington.

Humboldt County has developed contingency plans for displaced county residents and works closely with the local chapter of the American Red Cross. During a major earthquake in April, 1991 many areas of the county were inaccessible due to numerous road closures. The local Office of Emergency Services (OES) was activated and with

²²Humboldt County Sheriff's Office Policy Manual, section 206 (Disaster Plan) page 17

assistance from the Red Cross, state OES and other relief agencies basic needs for those displaced were met.

The lessons learned during that event have helped in the development of contingencies for future events that could either isolate county residents or produce refugees from outside the area. Keep in mind local resources could be depleted in a matter of days, based upon the number of refugees, but enough resources are on hand to supply basic needs until state and federal agencies are able to respond with additional aid.

The Humboldt County Office of Emergency Services, under the direction of the Sheriff, has applied for and been the recipient of numerous state and federal grants, which have allowed for the purchase of disaster related equipment. The funding is intended to support a variety of agencies including law enforcement, fire, emergency medical, mental health and volunteer organizations. A steering committee consisting of five individuals, who represent emergency relief agencies, has been established. This Committee is responsible for funding the purchase of strategic resources and equipment that will benefit all disaster relief agencies within the county.

Rural communities will also want to establish agreements with private relief organizations such as the Red Cross. These agreements would identify the resources available from each private organization and their limitations. Some organizations may be limited by law or internal regulations as to how much they may contribute and participate in such incidents.

The Department of Homeland Security has developed The National Response Plan, last updated May 25, 2006, which establishes a comprehensive all-hazards approach to enhance the ability of the United States to manage domestic incidents. The plan incorporates best practices and procedures from incident management disciplines — homeland security, emergency management, law enforcement, firefighting, public works, public health, responder and recovery worker health and safety, emergency medical services, and the private sector — and integrates them into a unified structure. It forms the basis of how the federal government coordinates with state, local, and tribal governments and the private sector during incidents. It establishes protocols to help

- Save lives and protect the health and safety of the public, responders, and recovery workers;
- Ensure security of the homeland;
- Prevent an imminent incident, including acts of terrorism, from occurring;
- Protect and restore critical infrastructure and key resources;
- Conduct law enforcement investigations to resolve the incident, apprehend the perpetrators, and collect and preserve evidence for prosecution and/or attribution;
- Protect property and mitigate damages and impacts to individuals, communities, and the environment; and

- Facilitate recovery of individuals, families, businesses, governments, and the environment.²³

Law enforcement must be one of the major participants in all the aspects of planning and the ultimate implementation of those plans. Every aspect of a disaster, terrorist attack or pandemic would impact law enforcement, due to their mandate of keeping the peace and providing security. In any event, law enforcement will be the first to respond to an incident and the last to stand down.

Implementation

Implementation is the next step in the development of a strategic plan. In this case the issue is how law enforcement will deal with a refugee population, due to terrorist attack, natural disaster or pandemic type flu. The implementation of such a plan will depend on the level of cooperation and resources dedicated by all the stakeholders. The level of cooperation will vary from agency to agency, depending upon the agencies overall role in the event.

Another concern is where to house a refugee population and how to adequately provide protection for both residents and refugees. The need for personal protection is vital in this case due to those who are opportunistic and would take advantage in a time of need or calamity. In this case, law enforcement agencies would need to establish clear lines of responsibility and command for those involved.

In regards to housing of refugees, the concern would be over acceptance by the permanent residents of a county. Permanent residents may view refugees as intruders and may, after a period of time, feel as though they have worn out their welcome. It is important to do everything possible to minimize that sentiment and this could be achieved in two possible ways. One would be to segregate the refugees in specified areas with some type of security for their protection. The other solution would be to involve the community in relief efforts to assist in providing for the basic needs of the refugees.

As stated earlier, Houston Texas received the largest number of Hurricane Katrina refugees, and within two months the City realized a large increase in crime and the community became disillusioned with the refugees.²⁴ This is one reason why it is important to gain the support of the community in a refugee situation and continue to monitor that support.

Evaluation of the implementation of this plan depends on how well agencies are able to interact with each other and the level of cooperation each displays. There can be no independent players. Each agency or department must agree to work toward the same

²³U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Accessed January 14, 2007 (online) Available http://www.dhs.gov/xprepresp/committees/editorial_0566.shtm

²⁴ City Journal, Katrina Refugees Shoot up Houston, by Nicole Gelinas, Posted (online) January 4, 2006 Available <http://www.city-journal.org/html/eon2006-01-04ng.html>

common goal of providing a safe, hospitable environment to refugees, which impact the county or region.

Furthermore, the following benchmarks would be an indicator as to the successful implementation of the strategic plan.²⁵

- Countywide agreement among stakeholders as to responsibility and commitment of resources.
- Establishment of caches of supplies and a plan for monitoring the condition of the perishable resources.
- An enhanced communication system that would ensure communications locally as well as with state and federal agencies. (Interoperability)
- Comprehensive and ongoing training, both formalized and scenario based.
- Implementation of NIMS (National Incident Command System)
- Coordination of volunteer relief agencies.

Conclusion

America has always continually reached out to help others across the globe, but how do we respond to other fellow Americans in the event they become refugees. Will we as a nation, with our different communities, reach out to a domestic refugee population and continue to provide assistance even if the situation continues for an extended period of time? Or will we as a people grow weary and become disenchanting? Whatever the outcome of this debate, it is clear, based upon past incidents, a refugee situation within the borders of the United States is possible.

In the event of a catastrophic disaster, attack or pandemic, a shift in population could occur which will trigger a response from local law enforcement. Local agencies must be prepared to cope with such an event and adapt to a population that is in need of the basics to sustain life.

²⁵What Would be the Impact of Urban Disaster Refugees on Rural Law Enforcement, POST Command College research project, October 2006, by Michael T. Downey