



CBRNE Response Measures for the 2009 Presidential Inauguration

By Major Jeremy J. DiGioia and Captain Jonathan Ebbert

“The Secretary of Defense shall provide military support to civil authorities for domestic incidents as directed by the President or when consistent with military readiness and appropriate under the circumstances and the law.”

—Homeland Security Presidential Directive (HSPD)-5¹

Mission of the JFHQ-NCR and MDW

The Joint Force Headquarters (JFHQ)–National Capital Region (NCR) plans, coordinates, maintains situational awareness and, when directed, employs forces for homeland defense and defense support to civil authorities in the NCR joint operations area to safeguard the Nation’s capital.

The U.S. Army Military District of Washington (MDW) serves as the Army force component and core staff element of the JFHQ-NCR for conducting operations that deter, prevent, and respond to threats aimed at the NCR and for conducting world-class ceremonial, musical, and special events in support of our Nation’s leadership.

The importance of the JFHQ-NCR/MDW mission cannot be overstated. After all, “the complexity and importance of the [NCR], combined with the changing and uncertain security requirement and man-made and natural disasters, create unique homeland security and preparedness challenges. The geographic area encompasses counties in Virginia and Maryland, as well as the District of Columbia. It is the epicenter of all three branches of government, 231 federal departments and agencies, and more than 7,000 political, social, and humanitarian nonprofit organizations.”²

Transition to the JTF-NCR

On 10 January 2009, the JFHQ-NCR transitioned to the Joint Task Force (JTF)–NCR to provide Department of Defense

(DOD) support and execute missions within the NCR joint operations area.

The symbolism of the 2009 Presidential Inauguration, coupled with the concentration of our Nation’s leadership in one place, provided a very lucrative target set for our adversaries. Therefore, significant measures were necessary to protect the safety of all participants and to ensure that our government could continue to function in the event of an attack.

The Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security designated the 2009 Presidential Inauguration as a national special security event (NSSE). This NSSE status, which covered the swearing-in ceremony at the U.S. Capitol, was also extended to the inaugural opening ceremony, the inaugural parade, the official White House reviewing stand on Pennsylvania Avenue, and associated inaugural balls. Extending NSSE status to these additional events allowed the full force of the federal government to develop event security and subsequent consequence management (CM) activities.

JTF-NCR DST

One of the essential tasks assigned to the JTF-NCR during the inaugural period was to provide CM response support following an incident. During ongoing mission analysis of the JTF-NCR supporting plan, certain scenarios emerged that would likely involve JTF-NCR response forces despite an undefined

and ambiguous threat. The planning approach focused on CM response planning for the most likely scenarios.

Within the framework of the commander’s vision, JTF capabilities that could be arrayed against each scenario were analyzed and a learning mechanism for assessing and responding to each scenario was developed. The resulting NSSE decision support template (DST) is shown in Figure 1. This DST provided a succinct snapshot of scenarios and response capabilities and proved invaluable in summarizing the complex CM planning for senior leadership inside and outside the command.

At the action officer level, work continued as each DST scenario was analyzed to determine an effective series of decision points for the JTF-NCR commander. These decision points were arrayed by function across a postincident timeline to provide a rough estimate of when the decisions would be made in relation to the incident and in temporal relation to each other. Figure 2, page 46, illustrates the first-priority scenario (an incident involving chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and high-yield explosives [CBRNE]), the timeline, eleven decision points, and applicable response forces.

Each of the eleven decision points was further parsed, eliciting a series of questions that the joint operations center and crisis action team used to develop scenario-specific situational awareness (What happened?) and situational understanding (How does it impact the JTF?). These questions were cross-referenced against existing JTF-NCR commander’s critical information requirements to facilitate the implementation and execution of DSTs. Figure 3, page 46, illustrates Decision Point 1-2 of the CBRNE scenario. This decision point revealed a gap in response capabilities; notification of this shortcoming was forwarded to the U.S. Northern Command for sourcing.

Development of the CBRNE Response Plan

Capability gaps were identified through the analysis of the NSSE DST. These gaps were the impetus for the CBRNE response plan for the inauguration. And multiple requests for assistance from the U.S. Secret Service (USSS) (the primary federal agency for the 2009 Presidential Inauguration) aided in the development of the plan.

To address these capability gaps and fully comply with the USSS requests for assistance, the JFHQ-NCR and MDW held weekly CBRNE working group meetings with subordinate units, interagency partners, and Title 32³ representatives. During these meetings, participants detailed their CBRNE capabilities.

In addition to the CBRNE working groups, the USSS chaired multiple subcommittees (crisis management, infrastructure protection), during which potential CBRNE response capabilities were often the most important discussion point. Our interagency partners were elated to learn that the DOD—specifically, the JFHQ-NCR and MDW—was taking a very proactive approach in planning for potential CBRNE response activities.

Concept of CBRNE Response Operations: “An Aid to Good Behavior”

The JTF-NCR commander continually emphasized to his staff that, in addition to providing world-class ceremonial support during the inauguration, DOD forces could be called upon to execute any number of missions, ranging from civil disturbance assistance to all-hazard CM. In any event, the JTF-NCR would be prepared to support the primary federal agency, as requested, and ultimately serve as “an aid to good behavior.”

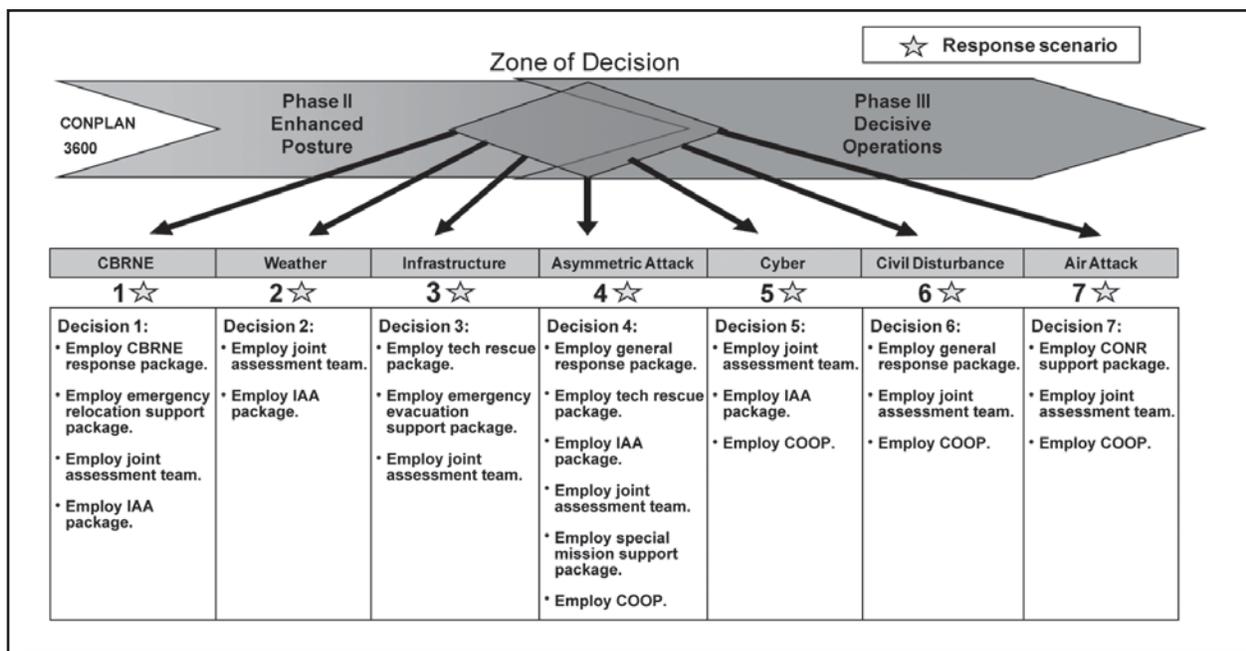


Figure 1. NSSE DST

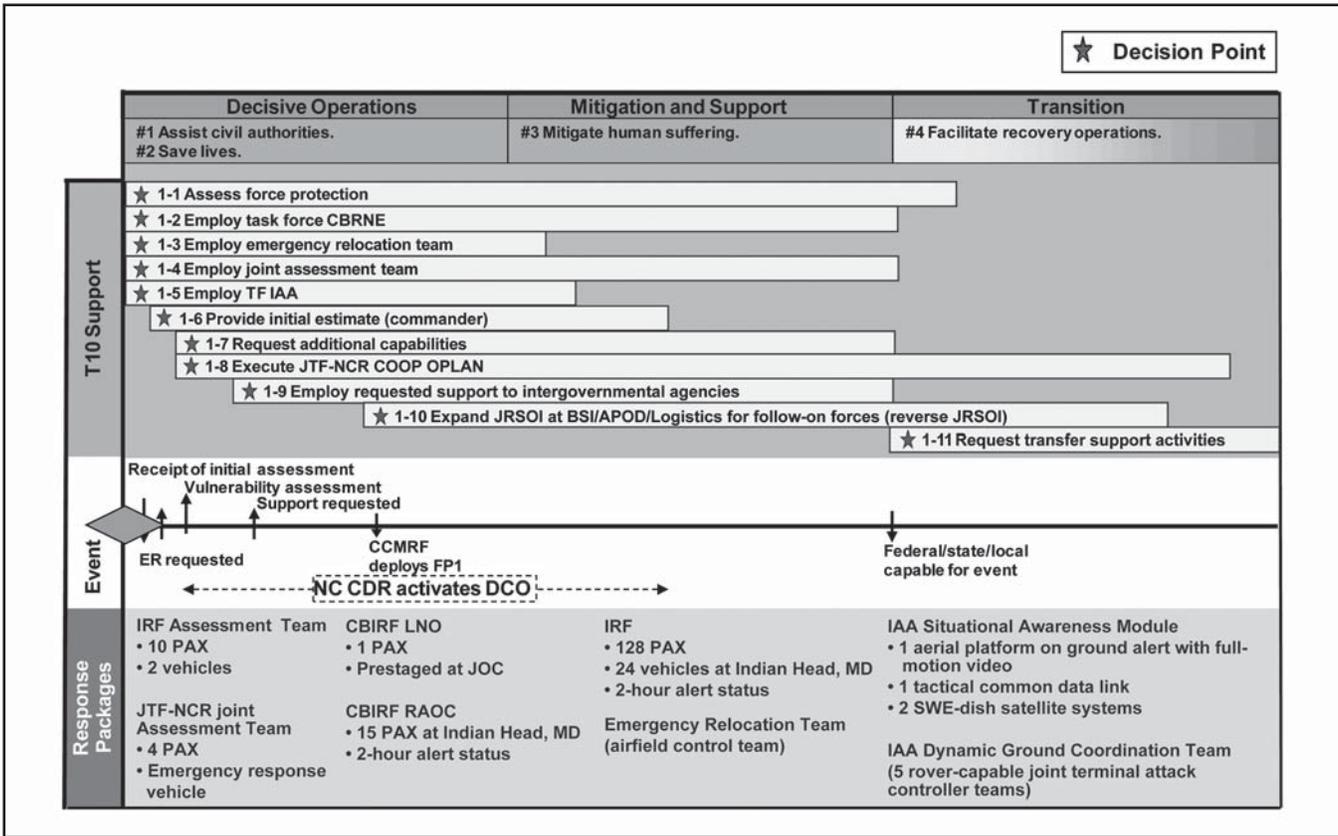


Figure 2. Commander's CBRNE DST-1

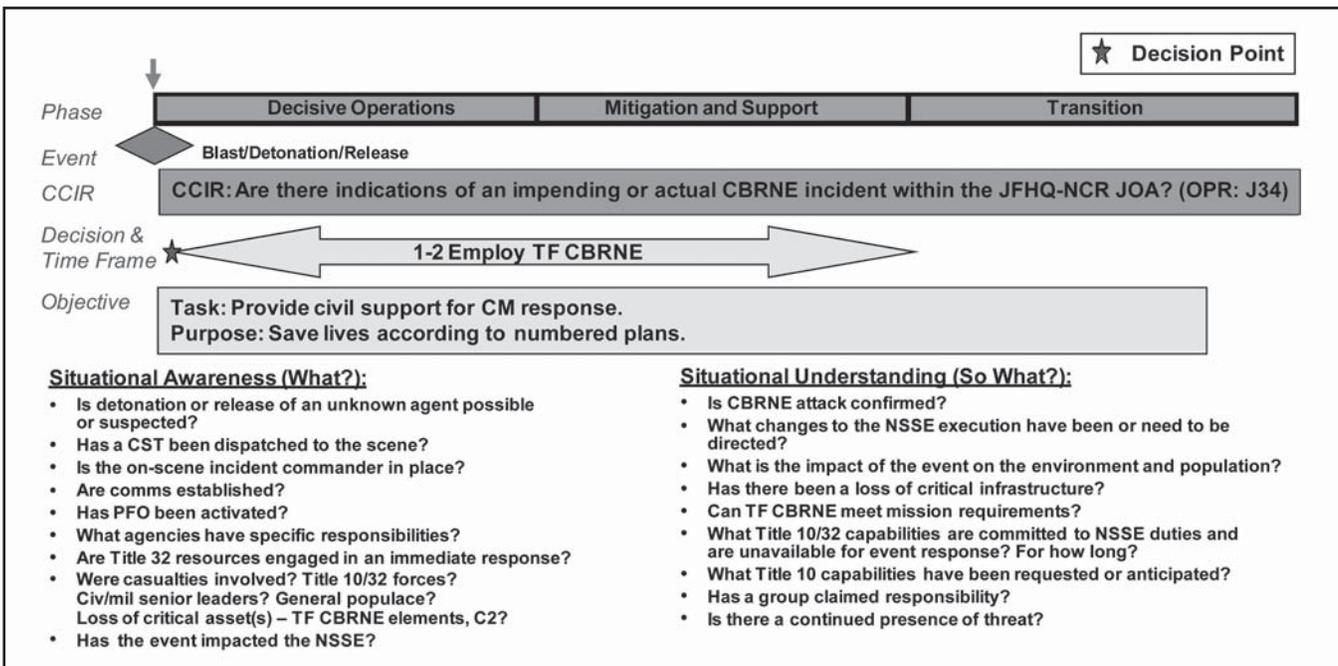


Figure 3. Commander's Decision Point 1-2

Though local, state, and federal emergency first responders were the centerpiece of any response or recovery effort necessary during the inaugural period, a multitude of Title 10⁴ and Title 32 DOD CBRNE assets were available to respond if necessary.

Title 10 CBRNE Forces

The following active duty CBRNE CM response capabilities were positioned at intermediate staging bases to facilitate a rapid DOD response:

- **U.S. Marine Corps chemical-biological incident response force (CBIRF).** A special-purpose incident response force was staged on the National Mall for immediate response activities (extraction, decontamination). A second incident response force was preloaded on a landing craft, air cushion (LCAC) located at the home station.
- **Defense Threat Reduction Agency consequence management advisory team (CMAT).** This team provided hazard prediction modeling, reachback capabilities, and subject matter expertise.
- **20th Support Command (CBRNE) weapons of mass destruction (WMD) coordination element.** This element provided subject matter expertise and assistance with the integration of CBRNE CM assets into current and future plans.
- **JTF–Civil Support joint planning and augmentation cell.** This cell provided a future operations planning (branches, sequels) capability.

Title 32 CBRN Forces

To meet the chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear (CBRN) and CM requirements of local and federal agency partners and to facilitate a rapid DOD and interagency response, the District of Columbia National Guard established a Task Force (TF)–CBRN headquarters and developed a rapid detection team (RDT) concept of operations comprised of the following:

- **TF-CBRN headquarters.** This headquarters was established to provide command and control, communications, and intelligence information in support of the mission. TF-CBRN was staffed by the Command, Operations, Communications, and Medical components of the 31st WMD–Civil Support Team (CST), Delaware; 32d WMD-CST, Maryland; 33d WMD-CST, District of Columbia; and 34th WMD-CST, Virginia.
- **Four mobile RDTs.** Each RDT was comprised of three CST personnel and interagency personnel from the District of Columbia Fire and Emergency Medical Services, Metropolitan Police Department, U.S. Department of Energy, and Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). RDTs were located throughout the National Mall for rapid response, identification, and subsequent assessment and analysis.
- **Two Rapid Support Teams (RSTs).** Each RST was comprised of technical decontamination teams, the Analytical Laboratory Suite, and a command and control element. The RSTs were positioned on the National Mall to support RDT elements.

- **The 31st WMD-CST.** The 31st WMD-CST provided biological agent detection support on the National Mall.
- **35th WMD-CST, West Virginia.** The 35th WMD-CST was pre-positioned in Alexandria, Virginia, in a reserve capacity.
- **Virginia Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, and High-Yield Explosives Enhanced Response Force Package (CERFP).** The Virginia CERFP was pre-positioned at Fort A. P. Hill, Virginia.
- **West Virginia CERFP.** The West Virginia CERFP was staged at Martinsburg, West Virginia.
- **Pennsylvania CERFP.** The Pennsylvania CERFP was staged at Fort Indiantown Gap, Pennsylvania.

Synchronization of Response Capabilities

Due to the size, scope, and complexity of the CBRNE response forces for the inauguration (Title 10, Title 32, interagency), the synchronization of response capabilities proved to be a difficult task; however, the JTF-NCR understood its importance. Synchronization was accomplished via a series of detailed, in-depth tabletop exercises involving participants from every major interagency partner within the NCR. DOD and interagency CBRNE capabilities were discussed during these tabletop exercises, and the construct facilitated the true joint and interagency synergy required for mission accomplishment during the inaugural period.

Conclusion

The 2009 Presidential Inauguration was an incredibly unique event with challenges at every step. Developing a successful CBRNE response plan required ingenuity, detailed planning, and determination. In the end, the inauguration was executed without incident—a testament to interagency teamwork and top-to-bottom vigilance. If a CBRNE CM event had occurred, the DOD was postured and ready to provide defense support to civil authorities to mitigate the circumstances to prevent conditions. 

Endnotes:

¹HSPD-5, *Management of Domestic Incidents*, 28 February 2003.

²JFHQ-NCR/MDW Strategic Plan, February 2008.

³United States Code (USC), Title 32, *National Guard*.

⁴USC, Title 10, *Armed Forces*.

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