


S A C I A

THE BUSINESS COUNCIL
of Southwestern Connecticut

“Combating Terrorism: Assessing First Responders’ Preparedness”

**Subcommittee on National Security, Emerging Threats, and International
Relations
Committee on Government Reform
Congressional Hearing
on
September 15, 2003**

Testimony of

**Christopher Bruhl
President and CEO
SACIA, The Business Council
Suite 230, One Landmark Square
Stamford, CT**

Since September 11, 2001, government and industry leaders have taken important steps to improve homeland security. While progress has been made, more needs to be done to secure the homeland.

SACIA has offered a regular program of leadership dialogues among corporate security and crisis management leaders. We’ve reached out to first responders, participated in regional readiness exercises, had a regular, formal exchange of corporate best practices, and conducted public sector advocacy on security issues.

So what have we learned over the past 24 months?

- Communication is key. Public officials, private sector leaders, and citizens need timely information upon which to base their actions.
- Homeland security is a shared responsibility requiring the coordinated action on the part of the federal, state, and local government; private sector; and public at large. The critical role of the private sector and the media as partners in disaster preparedness, response and recovery needs to be recognized and embraced by the public sector.
- A management structure understood and embraced by all first responders is essential.

You have asked us to focus our comments on the appropriate role of federal agencies in both crisis and consequence management and proposals to improve federal support of local and state emergency response activities. We see four important roles:

- A leadership role;
- A role as an educator;
- A facilitator role; and
- A role as financier.

In the federal government's leadership role, we believe it is critical to continue to develop the Homeland Security strategy or road map and to set benchmarks for local and state agencies. A critical step in this leadership role will be to adopt the Unified Command System as a National Best Practice. First responders need to utilize the same management framework as they manage critical incidents and disaster operations. The Incident Command System has been almost universally adopted by fire departments as a method of rapidly organizing a critical incident. Yet other first responders have different protocols or methods on how to handle an incident. These differences will cause confusion and inefficiency in the response as many agencies come together to manage the response. This management structure needs to be shared with the private sector!

In its role as Educator, we believe that an appropriate role is to highlight best practices and provide training resources to emergency management partners. This morning's exercise is an excellent example. Federal agencies need to encourage state and local agencies to see the private sector as important partner and to actively seek out their involvement as a best practice in emergency management planning. We understand that there may be some resistance to private sector inclusion in these activities, yet their inclusion and active collaboration is essential. With 85% of the critical infrastructure either owned or operated by the private sector and a significant proportion of the workforce employed by the private sector, states and local governments need to embrace a broad-based partnership between the private sector and government. The actions of the private sector must mesh with those of the public sector.

SACIA has actively sought out involvement in public sector activities and the effort has the respect and acceptance of key figures in our nation's homeland security leadership.

- Last October, participated in the Park City II exercise in Bridgeport, CT. We were the *only* private sector participants in the exercise.
- SACIA members and staff were the *only* private sector participants at a Homeland Security FEMA Region 1 war-gaming exercise at the U. S. Naval War College in Rhode Island, in August. Our team members gained access to and insights from 300 federal, state, regional and municipal safety, security, military, and emergency management personnel from all New England.

- Today, SACIA is co-hosting, with the City of Stamford and U.S. Department of Homeland Security, this regional “tabletop” exercise that explores response procedures and capabilities in the context of a specific event scenario.
- In October, SACIA members will take part in *Livewire* a five-day exercise intended to help develop and mature the National Cyber Attack Response System called for in *The National Strategy to Secure Cyberspace*. LIVEWIRE 03 will practice inter-organizational communication, coordination, and decision-making.

The only way to learn how to function as a team is by drilling and training together. Consider the role that the private sector plays, such as building managers of high-rise buildings and shopping malls, in emergency response. They have virtually been left out of the emergency training and drilling process. We believe that standard protocol should mandate invitations to participate.

An equally important role is that of a Facilitator. An important activity will be to facilitate collaboration between federal agencies, federal-state, and state-state relationships. Disasters do not respect state boundaries or jurisdictions. Federal agencies must better anticipate and resolve these issues. We still do not have a plan for mass evacuations from one state metropolitan area to another.

Finally, we cannot ignore the role as a Financier. It is essential that local and state governments receive timely funding to support needs beyond basic levels of local and state investment.