

***Before the Boom:***

***Expect the Unexpected***

**A Strategic Planning Guide to Effectively Manage & Respond to Multiple-Coordinated Terrorism Scenarios**

**NPLI Cohort 14 Team Members**

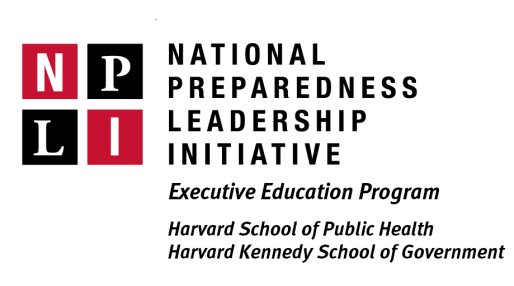
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***Before the Boom: Expect the Unexpected***

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**Abstract:**

The coordinated and simultaneous attacks which occurred in Paris, France on November 13, 2015 and Brussels, Belgium on March 22, 2016 are the most recent alarming examples of how certain terrorist groups, determined to kill and critically injure as many innocent people as possible, will relentlessly plan and train to accomplish their destructive objectives. In the Paris attacks 130 people were tragically killed and more than 360 seriously injured at six separate locations throughout the historic city including a music venue, a café and a restaurant. In Brussels, coordinated attacks at an airport and within the subway system killed 32 innocent victims, and injured over 300 people.

The ultimate goal of the terrorists in these types of multi-coordinated attacks is to not only instill considerable long lasting fear, that ultimately extends across continents, but to also cripple the immediate and initial response of public safety first responders during the initial operational period which occurs during the first 15-30 minutes. These recent coordinated attacks were strikingly similar to a series of attacks that occurred almost seven years prior on November 26, 2008 in Mumbai, India where 164 individuals were killed and over 300 injured by a team of 10 terrorists at 12 separate similar soft target public area locations.

Since local public safety departments including police, fire, EMS, and communications personnel will respond directly to all of these types of attacks in progress, the coordination and cooperation of the initial and primary response is absolutely critical. Based on the current state of preparedness in most small to mid-size municipalities as well as some large cities, we have learned that there is a lack of cross-sector intra-jurisdictional training among the various disciplines as well as a similar lack of regional pre-planning to address these types of attacks resulting in a significant gap in a state of readiness.

1. **Problem Statement:**

Terrorism continues to be an ever present, and continually evolving problem in our global society. In recent years, we continue to see the shift of these malicious attacks for the single pointed, large-scale, weapons of mass destruction attack, to a more complex style, utilizing more simplistic weapon choices, but enhanced by carrying out multiple attacks, simultaneously, in relatively small geographic areas. While our current incident management and response systems in the United States account for addressing multiple incidents, our public safety culture has not fully evolved to meet and address the needs and concerns of response to multiple, simultaneous acts of terrorism. The ad hoc, reactive approach to planning and preparedness decisions leaves dangerous gaps in the safety of first responders, as well as their ability to swiftly and efficiently respond to these incidents, thereby increasing the serious and significant risk to life and property.

An Incident Command System (ICS) type response is based on the premise of coordinating and deploying all available personnel resources and emergency equipment to address either a mid-level to large scale pre-planned event or to effectively manage an emergent incident that involves an imminent threat to public safety including loss of life.  The capacity of what otherwise can be a somewhat effective and efficient operating system to address singular contained incidents can become quickly overwhelmed, overloaded and in short order deemed to be totally inoperable when two or more large scale incidents involving imminent violent attacks occur simultaneously in a given jurisdiction. It is during this new type of terror phenomenon when the increasing demand for personnel resources and available equipment as well as the inter-operability of the emergency communications system quickly exceeds the capacity to effectively handle and address the simultaneous emergencies resulting in potential increases in loss of life as well as serious disabling injuries. The stakes could not be higher at this point in time and therefore we feel it is imperative that we are adequately prepared to respond for what ultimately may occur in the future in any of our regions across the country.

1. **Solution:**

Our team is hopeful that our NPLI Meta-leadership Project will have significant utility beyond our assigned course work at Harvard University. It is our goal to develop what we believe will be a possible industry best practice in responding to multi-coordinated active shooter attacks and optimizing the use of effective preplanning, training and the utilization of well-coordinated mutual aid response for the line level first responding officers.

“*Before the Boom*” is a comprehensive Strategic Planning Guide for the Agency Executive to implement a collaborative process of creating cross-disciplinary terrorism response plans within the community. “*Before the Boom*” will assist the Agency Executive in implementing meta-leadership principles to engage not only down to subordinates, but across and beyond his/her own agency to properly prepare for such incidents, as well as to inform their respective jurisdictional leaders. “*Before the Boom*” is intended to spark the necessary cultural paradigm shift in public safety planning and preparedness by leveraging and enhancing existing best practices, with a primary focus on multiple, simultaneous coordinated acts of terrorism.

1. **Primary and Secondary Stakeholders:**

The reality is that the public safety officials alone can never do the job of keeping a community completely safe and secure by their isolated actions. This pertains to acts of terrorism, active shooters or other individuals predisposed to commit violent acts. Therefore, the role of the public safety Meta-Leader should recognize this shortcoming and continually work to empower the entire community to not only create a sense of awareness as it pertains to these real threats but to also pre-plan on how to respond should such a dangerous situation occur.

Maintaining an efficient and effective well-coordinated response protocol is essential for any community to be adequately prepared for any type of active shooter scenario. This begins with identifying the primary and secondary stakeholders who are directly impacted by such an occurrence. Once these individuals are identified it is imperative that public safety officials enlist the advanced support and direct participation of these stakeholders. These interactions between the primary and secondary stakeholders should occur well in advance of any crisis.

The primary stakeholders shall always include the responding entities charged with the responsibility of moving in the direction of the emergent incident. These include, police, fire, EMS and communications personnel. This group may also include private security personnel who have certain public safety responsibilities especially in the school and corporate environments.

The group of secondary stakeholders includes what is referred to the entire “community” of which such categories can essentially be endless. This group includes everyone from formal to informal leaders, elected and appointed government officials, the business community – corporate to “Mom & Pop” Stores, all schools public and private, faith-based organizations, community based organizations, and the media.

1. **Performance to Date:**

We have conducted extensive research on this important subject. Our group utilized the credible and reliable literature below which assisted us in formulating a Strategic Planning Guide for the public safety agency executive in considering these types of multi-coordinated attacks:

* Critical Issues in Policing Series: *The Police Response to Active Shooter Incidents*; Police Executive Research Forum (March 2014)
* Naval Post Graduate School, Monterey, CA: Thesis – Active Shooters*: Is Law Enforcement Ready for a Mumbai Style Attack,* Joel Justice (2013)
* USDOJ FBI: A Study of Active Shooter Incidents in the US between 2000-2013 (2013)
* Interagency Security Committee: Planning and Response to an Active Shooter (2015)
* *The Coming Storm* Video: The FBI

In addition, we contracted the services of a local production company to shoot a 5-minute Awareness Video designed for the target audience of the public safety agency executive. Funding the for the video was made available by the Office of Emergency Management for the City of Boston via the Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) which includes the cities of Boston, Chelsea, Everett, Somerville, Cambridge, Winthrop, Revere, Brookline and Quincy. The purpose of the video is to demonstrate to the agency executive the significant gaps that currently exists as it pertains to the current state of preparedness regarding multiple coordinated simultaneous attacks in small to mid-size cities/towns across the country.

1. **Accomplishments:**

"*Before the Boom*" is a comprehensive Strategic Planning Guide for the Agency Executive to implement a collaborative process of creating cross-disciplinary active shooter response plans within the community.  "*Before the Boom*" will help the Agency Executive in implementing meta-leadership principles to engage not only down to subordinates but across and beyond his/her own agency to properly prepare for active shooter incidents as well as up to respective government leaders.  "*Before the Boom*" shall be more advanced than existing best practices as it has as its primary focus on multiple coordinated active shooter incidents occurring simultaneously in a given jurisdiction with the goal to reduce the loss of life and increase the survivability rate within the initial stages of the attacks.  This Planning Guide will also provide a sample model policy and suggested deployment plans carefully crafted by the project group, and validated through in depth research of best practices and lessons learned globally on this particular subject matter.

We have disseminated a comprehensive survey to the Massachusetts Police Chiefs in order to get a sense of where they feel that they are as an agency in terms of being prepared to address a multi-coordinated attack involving several active shooters during the first operation period and what challenges and obstacles that they face. Not surprisingly, the vast majority were either *not adequately prepared* or only *somewhat prepared.*

**Recommended Best Practice:** Strategic Meta-Leadership collaborative approach to addressing the following critical issues:

1. First responder initial response during the first operational phase (from first call to 30 minutes):
   1. Including a public safety regionalized response (via established Written Inter-Jurisdictional Mutual Aid MOUs)
   2. Including an intra-jurisdictional cross-sector response (Police, Fire, Emergency Medical Service, Communications, Emergency Management, etc.)
      1. An anticipated result to identify and immediately neutralize all the threats in the hot zones,
2. Cooperative/collaborative approach with Fire Department and Emergency Medical Services to treat critically injured victims in the warm zone(s)
   1. Which is accomplished by having the proper equipment pursuant to past practices (patrol rifles, tactical vests – PD & FD, tourniquets, AEDs, occlusive dressings, first aid kits, GPS in all Cruisers to allow for rapid deployment to any jurisdiction)
   2. To establish and Inter-Agency Incident Action Plan for Response to AS/MCIs which include any IED or terrorist related attack resulting in numerous victims with trauma requiring hemorrhage control.
      1. The overall operational mission is described in the acronym **THREAT:** **T**hreat Suppression – **H**emorrhage **C**ontrol – **R**apid **E**xtrication of victims – **A**ssessment by EMS – **T**ransport.
      2. LE/FIRE/EMS shall operate under the National Incident Management System as established by FEMA with the tactical priorities of RESCUE, INCIDENT STABILIZATION AND PROPERTY (SCENE) CONSERVATION.
      3. LE and Fire/EMS shall deploy per the operational and tactical guidelines as established within each departments specific Standard Operating Guidelines for AS/MCIs. Those agency specific details are purposely omitted from this document.
3. Creating clear and concise Action Plans that incorporate continuous ongoing regionalized cross sector training involving Police, Fire, EMS and Communications, etc from the same jurisdiction training together and then branching out that training model to neighboring jurisdictions so that the entire region has a clear and unambiguous understanding of the specific objectives that are necessary to accomplish the overall goal of increasing the survivability rate during these types of attacks.
4. Coordination of Interoperable Communications
   1. All agencies in the same defined region should have the ability to communicate with all the other agencies on their respective main channel on their portable radios as well as in the cruisers
   2. Plans should be developed in advance to discuss the utilization and operability of these channels,
   3. Radio brevity should be emphasized,
   4. Possible utilization of a Regionalized Channel (i.e., [BAPERN](http://www.radioreference.com/apps/db/?aid=3499) (4) to alleviate some congestion of the radio traffic should be discussed
5. Strengthening of awareness training of the public at large including the schools, business community, local officials, residents, and the clergy regarding the established best practice of the simplistic yet powerfully effective Run/Hide/Fight Model (RHF) so that community members understand their important role in this Action Plan
   1. Within this training model in addition to the RHF awareness training should be the recommendation to conduct regular drills to practice the Run and Hide components in a controlled environment where subsequent debriefs can be conducted with the goal of increasing efficiency which translates to saving lives.
   2. This is extremely important in the school environment
6. Aggressive engagement and integration with sectors outside the public safety realm (i.e. private sector, educational institutions, faith-based organizations) to ensure that these sectors understand the current threat perspective and are undertaking the appropriate steps to ensure preparedness (i.e. organizational planning, staff training). Additionally, this will assist public safety professionals in understanding other resources outside of their jurisdictional control, which may be leveraged to assist in the preparedness, response, and recovery from such incidents.
7. **Challenges Encountered:**

As our group approached this complex problem of analyzing the capabilities of current incident management and response systems, in correlation with multiple, simultaneously occurring acts of terrorism, we understood there would be two great challenges that would affect our project, information management and validation as well as stakeholder recognition and acceptance of the problem.

As we began our investigation for existing resources that would enrich our understanding of the issue and the steps being taken, and in some cases not being taken, we confirmed our assumption there would be a wealth of information available related to the topic, as well as some reluctance from stakeholders to fully embrace and commit to addressing the problem. Through open source searches, dialogue with colleagues within our own agencies, and networking with colleagues in the public and private, we were able to obtain a significant amount of information. While the information obtained varied in terms of content and purpose, generally all materials fell into four core categories: (1) Professional Opinion, (2) Academic Research, (3) Training/Educational Materials, and (4) Operational Strategies/Best Practices.

By obtaining a substantial amount of information, our group was able to constructively, and objectively, examine existing information to further our mission to raise awareness and influence change towards the growing problem of multiple, simultaneous attacks. As we obtained this information and validated its value within our group, we also applied meta-leadership principles by sharing this same information with superiors and subordinates within our own organizations, as well as branching out to trusted colleagues, who ultimately are also significant stakeholders. In many cases, this information was well-received and enlightening to the problem, whether the stakeholder had previously recognized the issue or not.

The adage of “*knowledge is power*” proved true in heightening the level of awareness and concern related to the problem. While a considerable amount of time and effort was leveraged to better inform our own understanding of the problem, we were able to apply concepts of meta-leadership to pass our increased knowledgebase up, down, across, and beyond. Although we identified information management and validation and stakeholder recognition and acceptance as “challenges,” the level of effort put towards addressing each, has reaped significant benefits as we have already seen an increased interest in further developing our response systems to address the evolving world of terrorism.

1. **Factors Encouraging/Discouraging Leadership Effectiveness**

This project has clearly engaged the tenets of Meta-Leadership in its formulation and implementation. The team dynamic was open, respectful and engaging. Each member took to his role and adjusted accordingly when it was time to take the lead and when to subordinate. This team approach has been instrumental in the success and has directly led to leadership effectiveness.

There are many inherent factors in our project that encourage leadership effectiveness. The clear sense of urgency surrounding the basis for the project resonates in the team and thus gets conveyed to the stakeholders; multiple, simultaneous attacks in a jurisdiction, lack of proper preparedness, but there is a plan. When discussing the needs of the project this premise lends itself to spur people to action in support of our goals. We have established leaders on the team that work in agencies that are in complete support of the endeavor. They are situated within the various communities and have accomplished backgrounds which leads to credibility. Especially important are the collaborations already in place that facilitate planning. A significant factor also is that the subject matter sits at the forefront of the national discussion, particularly in the preparedness arena. When the process was initiated to create a video, all of these mentioned factors were instrumental in its success.

There have been factors however that have discouraged leadership effectiveness. We are still haunted by jurisdictional and turf sensitive leadership. There is some reluctance to relinquish the sense of sovereignty within a jurisdiction. Additionally, the idea that any proposal will require more work can be a barrier. We are challenging the norm, forcing political and public safety leaders to think outside of the box. As collaboration is a factor encouraging leadership effectiveness, it can be a discouragement for city leaders not familiar with it because it requires effort, trust and vision.

1. **Projected Future Impact of the Project:**

The probability of a city/town in the United States, including a target right within our own jurisdictions, experiencing a similar military style *multi-coordinated simultaneous attack* remains a serious concern to all public safety officials. Public safety officials including local law enforcement personnel, firefighters, and EMS personnel as trained first responders, would bear the burden and major responsibility of responding to any such attacks and therefore must be in a constant state of readiness to immediately neutralize these serious threat(s) while providing the requisite emergency medical care to those victims that injured, most being life threatening. A deficient and/or delayed response to a multi-coordinated level including placing the safety and security of all first responders at a significant risk.

While a low probability, high consequence incident such as a “*Mumbai-Paris Style Attack*” is extremely unpredictable and obviously difficult to prevent, local public safety officials need to be both physically and mentally prepared for such an incident well in advance. Therefore, the frequency and quality of the regionalized cross-sector public safety training, the initial response tactics including eliminating the threat in the hot zones and treating the victims in the warm zones, the cross-departmental (police, fire, EMS) and jurisdictional communications interoperability, and the deployment of the appropriate equipment to all responding personnel (e.g., Patrol Rifles, Tactical Vests, GPS Devices, Tourniquets, etc.) will determine how successful the first responding personnel will be in the initial operating phase in the quick resolution of these emerging and unpredictable high consequence incidents.

It is our intention to make our initial presentation outside of our Cohort at NPLI. Our Massachusetts group members will take the lead in presenting to the Urban Area Security Initiative Joint Points of Contact at an upcoming JPOC meeting. The JPOCs are comprised of a combined group of both Police and Fire Chiefs from Boston and the bordering jurisdictions of Brookline, Cambridge, Chelsea, Everett, Revere, Somerville, Quincy and Winthrop. From there we plan to address the 35 Police Departments of the Massachusetts Major City Police Chiefs Association followed by the 370 police departments that make up the Massachusetts Chiefs of Police Association. We are also going to make presentations to the various Law Enforcement Councils throughout the state (NEMLEC, SEMLEC, & MetroLEC) as well as the Fire Chiefs Association of Massachusetts. Our New York/New Jersey member will make background materials and our presentation available to agency executives within his organization to raise awareness and champion regional action. The densely populated New York/New Jersey area, coupled with a large number of public safety agencies makes creating uniformity even more difficult. It is our hope to create a model and best practice that will be implemented by this important influential group of stakeholders. We anticipate to continue to collaborate as a group to support and influence change in our regions, share new information and intelligence, best practices, as well as collaborate with one another on how new issues and challenges can be resolved effectively and efficiently.

1. **Conclusion:**

Public safety executives will always occupy the “top box” of their respective organizational chart. While always being accountable and leading up to the Chief Executive Officer of the given municipality (i.e., Mayor, City Manager, or Town Manager/Administrator) they vertically manage their own departments by leading down to their subordinates to accomplish various critical tasks. It is also extremely important to note that they also have leadership duties and responsibilities to ensure horizontal collaboration and cooperation by leading across with other intra-jurisdictional agencies (cross-sector collaboration) and leading beyond their jurisdiction to other regions in order to effectively plan, train and eventually address serious incidents such as active shooter events when they occur. Therefore, it is imperative that executive leaders from various disciplines and other neighboring regions constantly depend and rely on each other to effectively mitigate multiple simultaneous active shooter type events in order to increase the survivability rate of those victimized.

It is vital that local law enforcement agencies collaborate and foster meaningful relationships with their partnering fire departments, emergency medical services, emergency management professionals, communications personnel, as well as with private sector stakeholders. By doing so, these partnerships will strength the capabilities of all stakeholders to identify regional threats, share intelligence, and work constructively to update and develop strategies to respond in a more efficient and coordinated manner should a large scale attack occur at multiple locations, simultaneously. It is our hope that our strategic planning guide will lead to these important conversations.