



Preparedness News and Information

From FEMA's Office of National Preparedness

June 20, 2003

NATIONAL NEWS

Tech Industry Doubts about Focus on Cybersecurity Linger

GovExec, June 13, 2003

Many high-tech lobbyists continue to believe that cybersecurity issues are not a high priority within the Department of Homeland Security as the department's leaders work to morph 22 agencies into a working organization.

- [Homeland Security Network Poses Challenge](#), *NYTimes*, June 19

Bioterrorism Project Falls into Intelligence Gap

GovExec, June 16, 2003

Lawmakers are dismayed to discover that for Project BioShield, just a single staff member is working to assess the bioterror threat with a lack of access to certain top-secret information leaving a potentially grave weakness in homeland security, despite being a \$6 billion project.

TSA Modifies Screening Plan

Washington Post, June 14, 2003

The Transportation Security Administration has altered plans for a computerized passenger screening system, in part because of criticism that earlier proposals would have been overly intrusive, according to documents and interviews with government officials.

- [Air Marshals Seek a Flight Out of TSA to New Agency](#), *Washington Post*, June 19
- [CAPPS II Faces Scrutiny Before Funding](#), *Federal Computer Week*, June 19

Feds, Business Plan for Alerts

MSNBC, June 16, 2003

The federal Department of Homeland Security is making Washington state the hub of a pilot program to improve how regional government agencies and businesses communicate in the event of terrorist threats or other emergencies.

- [Disaster Survival Plan a Must for Companies](#), *Portland Press Herald*, June 20

Terror Plans Don't Serve Youth

CBS, June 17, 2003

The National Advisory Committee on Children and Terrorism said federal, state and local agencies should incorporate the unique needs and vulnerabilities of children into disaster plans at every stage of preparation and response.

FBI's Antiterror Focus doesn't Threaten Traditional Duties, Chief Says

GovExec, June 18, 2003

The FBI has not compromised its traditional law enforcement responsibilities by shifting more than 650 special agents from criminal investigations to counterterrorism and intelligence gathering, FBI Director Robert Mueller told lawmakers.

- [FBI's Threat Center Role Criticized](#), *Federal Computer Week*, June 18

CONGRESS

[House Puts its Stamp on Homeland, Military Construction Bills](#)

GovExec, June 17, 2003

The House Appropriations Committee approved a Homeland Security bill containing \$9 billion for border protection and related activities, \$4.4 billion for first responders, \$100 million for port security grants, and \$890 million for the "Bioshield" initiative.

- [House Panel Approves Homeland Budget](#), *Federal Computer Week*, June 18

[Lawmakers Cite Visa Loopholes](#)

Federal Computer Week, June 19 2003

Concerned lawmakers drilled intelligence officials June 18 about the reported lack of policies and procedures regarding visas, which could make it easier for terrorists to slip through immigration security and move about the country.

[Lengthy Homeland Security Fight Looms in Senate](#)

GovExec, June 18, 2003

The House is expected to debate homeland security funding on the floor as early as next week, but the fight over how much money to allocate for such initiatives in fiscal 2004 probably will continue until the budget crunch time of September according to a top Senate budget aide.

BILLS RECENTLY INTRODUCED

- **S.1275:** A bill to establish a comprehensive federal program to provide benefits to U.S. victims of international terrorism, and for other purposes, *Senate Foreign Relations Committee*, June 17
- **H.R.2512:** To establish a realistic, threat-based allocation of grant funds for first responders, *House Judiciary Committee*, June 18
- **S.1279:** A bill to amend the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act to authorize the President to carry out a program for the protection of the health and safety of residents, workers, volunteers, and others in a disaster area, *Senate Environment and Public Works Committee*, June 18

RECENT HEARINGS

- [Balancing Border Security and Commerce](#), Select Committee on Homeland Security, June 16

- [Response to Terrorism: How is DHS Improving Our Capabilities?](#), Select Committee on Homeland Security, June 19
- [Homeland Security: Field Hearing – Port Security and Critical Infrastructure Protection](#), Select Committee on Homeland Security, June 20

STATE AND LOCAL ACTIVITIES

Ten States to Get Additional Funds for First Responders

GovExec, June 13, 2003

The Homeland Security Department on Friday awarded nearly \$400 million in grants to 10 states to help improve the emergency response capabilities of firefighters, police, emergency medical personnel and state and local governments.

State Ends Drill in Agroterrorism

Topeka Capitol-Journal, June 20, 2003

A two-day agroterrorism drill dubbed "Exercise High Stakes," tested Kansas's foreign-animal disease preparedness, simulating an intentional introduction of foot-and-mouth disease to livestock in southwest Kansas

Official Outlines Intergovernmental Efforts to Bolster Security

GovExec, June 19, 2003

State and local governments will soon compete for demonstration projects that will explore uses of equipment and technologies to increase interoperability among the fire, law enforcement and emergency-medical-services communities according to Michael Brown, undersecretary for DHS's emergency preparedness and response directorate.

Loophole Poses Harbor Terror Threat

Newsday, June 16, 2003

Assemblyman Jeffrey Klein of the Bronx warned that 35 tugboat pilots are bringing huge ships into the Port of New York-New Jersey without being required to undergo even minimal background checks.

State Wish List: \$6M Homeland Security Boat

ABC7, June 15, 2003

New Haven, CT officials are petitioning the government for \$6 million for a homeland security boat to guard 850,000 barrels of the federal government's heating oil reserves along the New England coast that would likewise be equipped to fight fires, treat victims in a triage section and carry a search and rescue team.

Catastrophe Readiness Gets Boost

St. Petersburg Times, June 16, 2003

State officials initiated the Florida Emergency Mortuary Operations Response System, or FEMORS, under Governor Jeb Bush's disaster-preparedness plan in wake of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks.

Small Cities Finding 'Dual Purposes' for Federal Counterterrorism Aid

Jewish World Review, June 16, 2003

There isn't much anxiety about terrorism in Flagstaff, a mountain town of 53,000 where even City Hall doesn't have a metal detector, which is prompting some Washington bureaucrats to rethink their formulas for fighting terrorism at home.

Ex Sen. Hart to Speak on Emergency Readiness

The Coloradoan, June 17, 2003

The daylong event at the Denver Marriott Tech Center, will feature national and international experts who will discuss how businesses and residents can better prepare for a variety of emergencies, including another terrorist attack on the United States.

- [Emergency Preparedness Seminar Underway to Help Better Prepare Terrorist Attacks](#), *9News*, June 19

Emergency Center to Open

Loudoun County Times, June 17, 2003

One of the nation's first centers to train emergency fire, police and medical workers on how to respond to disasters will open June 23 on The George Washington University's campus in eastern Loudoun County.

Program in Alaska to Hand Out Emergency Preparedness Kits

KTVA, June 18, 2003

To make sure Anchorage's most vulnerable citizens are ready for the unexpected, the city's Aware with Care program is handing out 1500 free emergency preparedness kits as part of a \$300,000 Homeland Security Grant.

RELATED INFORMATION

RECENT REPORTS

- [Nuclear Nonproliferation: U.S. and International Assistance Efforts to Control Sealed Radioactive Sources Need Strengthening](#), GAO-03-638, May 2003
- [The Way Forward- Education and Jointness in Homeland Security—Learning From the Department of Defense](#), Anser, Journal of Homeland Security, May 2003
- [Homeland Security: Challenges Facing the Department of Homeland Security in Balancing its Border Security and Trade Facilitation Missions](#), GAO-03-902T, June 2003
- [Border Security: New Policies and Procedures Are Needed to Fill Gaps in the Visa Revocation Process](#), GAO-03-798, June 2003
- [FBI Reorganization: Progress Made in Efforts to Transform, but Major Challenges Continue](#), GAO-03-759T, June 2003

The information contained in this newsletter was collected from Internet sources. Opinions expressed do not necessarily represent the official position of the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Office of National Preparedness.