



# Preparedness News and Information

From FEMA's Preparedness Division

June 4, 2004

## NATIONAL NEWS

### [Anticipating the Unfathomable: A Major Terrorist Attack Appears Imminent, but No One can Say Where, How, or Even When](#)

*U.S. News and World Report*, June 1, 2004

Ever since al-Qaeda followers caused havoc on the Madrid subway in March, exploding 10 bombs and killing 191, the FBI's top counterterrorism agents have grown increasingly anxious. Reports here at home have mounted of suspicious characters surveilling train platforms and subway cars. Overseas eavesdropping has shown spikes in "chatter" among al-Qaeda operatives. And, al-Qaeda's own Web pages boast that preparations for a U.S. attack are 90 percent complete.

### [US Capitol Prepares For Possible Terrorist Attack](#)

*Roll Call*, June 1, 2004

"In the wake of Justice Department and FBI warnings about the heightened threat of election-year terrorist attacks, Congressional officials acknowledged last week that the Capitol remains a likely target and said security measures have increased in recent months." Capitol Police Chief Terrance Gainer said, "We have more security measures in place today than we did six months ago, and than we did 12 months ago...Given the fact that the summer and fall seem to be very attractive to the terrorists, we have geared up."

### [Concerns Rise over Chemicals as Targets](#)

*Boston Globe*, June 1, 2004

Homeland Security watchdogs call them "pre-positioned weapons of mass destruction" for terrorists: huge tanks of concentrated deadly gases that the chemical industry stores near densely populated areas and that railroads bring through cities en route to somewhere else. The United States harbors more than 100 chemical facilities where an accident would put more than a million people at risk, according to documents filed with the Environmental Protection Agency. A chemical distributor in Boston acknowledged in its filing that in a worst-case scenario if a tank holding 180,000 pounds of vinyl acetate, a highly flammable liquid, ruptured, it would send a 4.9-mile-long toxic cloud through the city.

### ['It Looks Like a War Zone:' Officials Begin Assessing Damage: National Guard Called on to Help](#)

*Charleston, WV Daily Mail*, June 1, 2004

Gov. Bob Wise today was touring southern West Virginia counties devastated by flooding, while National Guard personnel started helping residents clean up after heavy rains damaged hundreds of homes and contributed to the death of at least one resident.

## CONGRESS

### HEARINGS

- [Senate Judiciary Committee](#)  
(SD-226): To hold an oversight hearing on the activities of the Department of Justice, focusing on terrorism and other related topics, June 8, 2004
- [Select Committee on Homeland Security](#)  
Entire committee hearing on [moving] "Towards a National Biodefense Strategy," June 3, 2004

## STATE AND LOCAL ACTIVITIES

### [Evacuation Planning Overcomes Obstacle: 'Contraflow' in Mississippi a Last Resort](#)

*New Orleans Times-Picayune*, May 31, 2004

Louisiana and Mississippi officials have removed a major obstacle from New Orleans area residents planning to evacuate eastward in advance of a major hurricane. In 2002, former Mississippi Gov. Ronnie Musgrove made it clear he didn't want Louisiana evacuees using both sides of Interstate 59 to go into his state, citing concerns of Mississippi's coastal residents that the Louisiana traffic would block their own escape route.

### [FEMA to Visit Lexington-Fayette Storm Damage](#)

*WKYT.com*, June 1, 2004

Representatives from FEMA are visiting Masterson Station Tuesday to get a first hand look at the extensive storm damage there from last week's storms in Kentucky. Most of the homes that were heavily damaged have been marked uninhabitable, while homeowners stay with their homes, hoping for relief from the federal government.

### [Emergency Funds Spent To Replace Beach Sand](#)

*Washington Post*, May 30, 2004

The morning after Hurricane Isabel hit last September, Town Manager Frank A. Rush Jr. reported, "The town of Emerald Isle was extremely fortunate and sustained very little damage." Rush wrote on Sept. 19 to town officials, "Beach erosion . . . is minimal." Yet Emerald Isle turned to the government for help. After the beach resort was declared part of a federal natural disaster area, the Federal Emergency Management Agency awarded the town nearly \$1.5 million for street signs, tennis court lights and sand for the resort's carefully manicured beaches.

### [MARTA Stepping up Security in Face of Terrorism Warnings](#)

*Associated Press*, June 1, 2004

Officials of Atlanta's transit system say they've stepped up efforts to protect passengers in response to warnings of potential terrorist attacks in the United States this summer. MARTA Police Chief Gene Wilson said the authority's experience with the 1996 Summer Olympics helped in planning a response to the threats. "We're the people who went through the Olympics and the bombing at Centennial Olympic Park," Wilson said from Baltimore, where he was attending an anti-terrorism training conference. "We learned a lot." MARTA is relocating some trashcans and has stepped up regular patrols with its four bomb-sniffing dogs.

### [Hurricane Aftermath Spurs Insurance Regulation Changes](#)

*The Virginian-Pilot*, June 1, 2004

When Isabel tore through Hampton Roads last September, it left behind more than downed trees, punctured roofs and flooded garages. In its wake were battalions of angry policyholders. Some expressed surprise that their homeowners' policies included hefty deductibles for windstorm damage. Instead of absorbing a routine deductible of \$250 or \$500, they had to pay thousands of dollars for Isabel-related repairs before their insurance coverage kicked in. Other homeowners learned that their policies didn't cover damage from flooding, and many who understood the terms of their policies had to battle adjusters for months to collect on their claims for storm damage.

### [Hundreds of Homes Destroyed in Kentucky Flooding](#)

*WKYT.com*, June 1, 2004

Governor Fletcher has declared a state of emergency in Martin County in far eastern Kentucky after weekend storms cause heavy flooding. High water destroyed 400 homes, leaving about one thousand people homeless. County leaders say it's the worst flooding in Martin County since 1963.

## RELATED INFORMATION

### OPINION

[Faster, Smarter First Responder Funding](#), *The Hill*, May 19, 2004 (posted week of June 1)

### ARTICLES OF INTEREST

[U.S. Lacks Plan to Stop Mass Spread of Diseases](#), *Detroit News*, May 30, 2004

[Reporters to Get Tutorial on Terrorism](#), *Washington Times*, May 31, 2004

### SPOTLIGHT WEBSITES

[Responding to Incidents of National Consequence](#), *DHS/FEMA Publications*

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The information contained in this newsletter was collected from Internet sources. Opinions expressed do not necessarily represent the official position of the Department of Homeland Security or FEMA's Preparedness Division.