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From: L. J. Wolfson (NAVEDTECHCEN) VW 12/10/86  
To: R. Nelson (DOE/NVO)

Re: b) EXERCISE MIGHTY DERRINGER

As a planner and an O-Conus site monitor for exercise Mighty Derringer I've had a broad perspective from which to observe the exercise. The following points/issues are acknowledged to be rather pointed but provide my real impressions and are being documented for consideration in whatever more general assessment of the exercise is made. Specific personal references are deliberately avoided.

a. Planning

(1) The overall planning was quite good considering the scope and the complexity of the exercise. Key to the success of the exercise was both interactions between the agencies and realistic and logically continuous technical/scenario play. To a great extent this was accomplished, but in several areas we could have done a much better job:

(a) Actors. The overall actor play was excellent and added a degree of realism that was a positive ingredient in the exercise. Of most significance was the actor play by EI, etc. and the President of Monterey during the key meetings when the senior representative of OOD, DOE, and ODS were present (the interactions and lively discussions were considered of exceptional value for both the players and the observer/controllers).

(b) Site Accommodations/Support. The sleeping accommodations were quite adequate, as were the bath facilities. The food was nothing less than excellent. Logistic support by the NTS/DOE staff was excellent in all areas: safety, security, vehicles, materials, etc.

(c) Device Site. The coordination of the "literal" terrorist actions and the setup of the access problem was not as well coordinated as it should have been. We should have had, as planned, only players at the site -- not a multitude of "vested" controllers continuously at the site. The access controllers, other controllers, and "monitor visitors" provided too much activity and visibility; this altered the play of the exercise (modified site information; EST play, etc.)

(d) Device

(b) (1), (b) (3)

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2 The flow of evidence and intelligence information from the planners and from "found" at the site was not as well done as it might have been.

b. Play.

(1) EST/Pre-Assault. EST appeared well coordinated and effective but the presence of controllers at the device site altered the successfulness of their activities.

(2) Assault. Well organized and conducted with the expected military discipline and preciseness. The play which included live fire at mannikins provided no real assessment of the interactions that might occur during a real "terrorist opposed" assault. Also, the assault team commanded and directed EO (which deployed with limited EOD assets and no technical comm link) to complete the majority of the access problem prior to turning over the site for NEST/EOD control; this practice needs to be reviewed and considered. Very good coordination existed between DODJ and EOD and DOE. In practice/coordination, problems existed with the EST and need to be considered.

(3) Site Control/Access. The access accomplished during the assault phase went well despite a considerable departure from the deliberate access methodology normally expected. This was the consequence of the access problem being very simple and involving only minor penalty devices (a constraint of the assault team). Site security was done well but caused a problem with player movement near the device. I consider this to be real world. In general, as much time was available for working around the device, but very little of the time was effectively used.

(4) Diagnostic

(b) (1)

(5) Assessment/Intelligence. The EST, DODJ, and DOE elements all independently did well, but coordination and detailed exchange of information precluded some critical information from being available to essential player for long periods of time. The DOE assessment team did a superb job of coming in on the device design as soon as even fragmentary real diagnostics became available. Intelligence play was altered by the lack of all details being available to all players -- slight changes in details alters considerable motivational assessments and implications.

(6) Mitigation.

(b) (1)

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(7) Command and Control.

(a) Who is in control of different activities during the IS/DODJ phase?

(b) Does DOE and DOD work for the DOS or should DOD/EOD work for JO?

(c) Does DODJ have the knowledge and the technical IND countermeasures perspective to unilaterally direct access operations?

(8) General.

(a) Safety of personnel near a potentially detonating nuclear bomb was not played -- too many players were at the forward staging area; no fallback of personnel occurred during more hazardous operations; no detailed evacuation of CP/TOC was planned/implemented prior to disablement, etc.

(b) DODJ.

(b)(1)

If one were to "end game" the situation, the DODJ might be able to provide the same end result, but in a very quick and effective manner. Speed may be the essence of a real operation. The probability of success may not be too different than that obtainable from a complete DOE/EOD N ST operation.

(b)(1)

(d) Deployment/Notification. Headquarters deployment methods for DOD/EOD and DOE could be improved.

(e) Logistics. It appears that too much emphasis and player numbers are devoted to logistics versus the essential technical activities; I'm not sure of the essential value in much of the logistics.

(f) Technical.

1 Efforts tend to be overburdened by peripheral calculations and discussions. We may be trying to do too much "theoretical" and other unessential work in the field.

(b)(3)

4 It is essential that Working Point procedures be refined for disablement, diagnostics, and ~~access~~ personnel discipline, setup methods, etc. need attention).

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(7) Disablement. Good disablement planning and analysis. Home laboratory explosive tests and analysis were conducted. Significant organizational/personal interface problems occurred.

(b)(1)

It is essential that reliable calculations and tests be conducted to document conclusively the differing technical options.

(8) Commo. Effective and provided the necessary support.

(9) Command. Very good decision making, leadership, and management of the individual organizational elements, and the overall operation. DOS, DOD/EOD, DODJ, EST, DOS were all exceptionally and professionally directed.

c. Lessons Learned/Issues for Considerations.

(1) Security. Deployment in the U.S. or overseas must incorporate substantial security elements for both control of classified material and for site security. Host government personnel or FBI personnel are not considered either appropriate or of sufficient number to accomplish the role.

(2) DOD Command. After an assault a DOD General officer must be in command of the DOD assets at the incident site -- unless it is formally agreed/directed that DOD/EOD will report/work to the DOE OSC.

(3) EOD. Currently, EOD interfaces with DOE elements, but works for the senior DOD commander and through him reports to the DOS or FBI.

(4) Personalities/Stress. Interpersonal relationship problems were drawn into focus by the interactions of several of the key players. Significant considerations should be made relative to who can successfully "play" in the large field organization typical of an IND incident, and who might not be good choices.

(5) Personnel Numbers. The entire operation was slowed and overburdened by the number of personnel involved. More could be accomplished, and probably accomplished as well, with many fewer players. Many fewer non-productive/useless conflicts in direction, coordination, decisions, etc. would result. Quicker implementation of activities would occur. (Too many people tended to overburden actual accomplishment of activities.) In all organizations small, "skeleton" teams for each technical/support element might provide a superior field organization.

(6) Intelligence. There is too great a prevalence to believe what might, and probably is, very inconclusive intelligence information:

(a) Can we believe a calendar marked -- 10 December -- as positive indication of device functioning time?

(b) Can we derive detailed technical implications from gross "weights" of containers obtained from third level sources?

(c) How much credence should be placed on debriefs of locals?

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