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To: Robert M. Nelson, Jr., Exercise Nighty Derringer Controller

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LESSONS LEARNED

1. EST/JSOC^/NEST/ODD Security Issue (discussed in a separate document).
2. Effectiveness of Command Structure

Observation: The EST/JSOC^/NEST advance party took less than 24 hours to get acquainted and to develop a smooth working relationship with one another and with the Montev government. At no time was there any evidence of "turf boundary," sensitivity or lack of appreciation of the assets and responsibilities of the other key players.

Lesson Learned: There is no substitute for skill and experience. Adams/Clark/Steiner each have both in abundant supply and we can expect that if this were a real incident they would have provided equally effective leadership. One cannot be equally sanguine about other agencies that might be involved until the individual leaders have been tested under realistic conditions.

3. Size of the NEST Contingent

Observation: At one point the NEST OSC was informed that there were 306 NEST players on site. Ambassador Adams, General Steiner, and El Presidente often made comments about the size of the group, usually with a mixture of surprise and consternation. (Steiner: "You have enough people here to mount your own assault.")

Lesson Learned: The size of the NEST contingent has grown considerably over the years, without any very obvious linear increase in our capability to handle terrorist situations. Perhaps it is an appropriate time to take a look at what is lean, mean muscle and what is fat.

4. "Unreal" Attitude Toward Nuclear Threat and Effects

Observation: We have a nuclear terrorist threat in a foreign country to which U.S. assets are directed to respond. EST/JSOC^/NEST/CIA/host government all get involved and there is lots of activity up to the point where ^ does their thing. Then everybody goes home and it's ho-hum time while NEST addresses the nuclear issues.

In a real world situation, completion of the ^ activity very likely would be only a preliminary to a sharply rising level of activity and fear about the nuclear problems. Nobody would be likely to show the kind of complacency shown in these exercises.

Lesson Learned: These NEST exercises are not even close to being realistic in developing players' attitudes towards the specified threats. Missing are real penalties associated with making a mistake or missing a deadline, and fear -- either for one's personal well being, or for the team, or for the populace. Unless

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these elements can be supplied, we may well be kidding ourselves as
~~can be supplied we may well be kidding ourselves as to the~~
effectiveness of our NEST resources.

5. Unreal Playing Conditions Present when Montrev is Within the Boundaries of HTS.

Observation: We have a nuclear terrorist threat in the foreign state of Montrev, which happens to be a small country completely surrounded by HTS turf. The NEST team responds, and the on-scene commander not only runs HTS, he owns Montrev, and all its citizens work for him. No part of the environment is foreign to him -- even though the "natives" all speak spanish -- and he knows exactly what local resources are available to him to carry out his response functions.

Lesson Learned: Having an exercise at HTS severely limits the stress placed on players in unfamiliar surroundings, dealing with strangers, and relying on untested sources of support. These are not minor elements in determining the staying power -- and even the success -- of the NEST activities. Use of HTS should therefore be considered for these exercises only as a very last resort, and then only with the clear understanding that the exercises may well turn out to be more of a game than a serious test of all facets of the NEST capabilities.

NOTE: As a direct measure of the validity of this lesson, Tom Clark's comparison of his experience at HTS with what he runs into in Indianapolis should be illuminating.

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