

military in operational functions, and their spokesmen have taken part in broadcast interviews — but purely at a factual operational level.

The major issues still under review include: (1) Who is telling me? and (2) Can I trust them? Authorities must face the “fright factors” and “media triggers” and be ready in advance. But, there is a danger in having off-the-shelf, pre-prepared material that does not cover the precise details of a particular disruptive incident. Better to have generic material that can be adapted and pre-arranged conduits that can accept material at a few hours’ notice.

Keywords: civil-military cooperation; command; communication; control; emergencies; government; information; preparedness; public; responsibility; United Kingdom;
Prehosp Disast Med 2003;18(s1)s14.

The Sagbata Project

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The Dutch and Swiss government and NATO Civil Emergency Planning have initiated the Sagbata Project. The Project supports the need to enhance the protection of population in NATO and EAPC member countries against attacks with Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) with chemical, biological, radiological, and/or nuclear (CBRN) agents. The Sagbata Project will result in the creation of a set of tools (awareness raising/training support/decision support) to be used in WMD incidents for use by policy advisors to the political level. The initial subject matter area for these decision-support tools will be biological incidents. The tools will contain cause-and-effect relationships about consequence management in the early, uncertain phase of a WMD event.

The Sagbata tools are (named after the African god of smallpox) can be used by policy advisors to political decision-makers to prepare for a WMD event. The tool will help to provide insight in the consequences of the possible decisions taken during the various stages of a WMD disaster. This decision-support tool will be developed for awareness raising and training purposes. The tool eventually may be developed further into an operational, decision-support tool.

Keywords: chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear (CBRN) agents; decision-makers; decision-support; NATO; planning; policy; Sagbata Project; tool; training; weapons of mass destruction (WMD)

Prehosp Disast Med 2003;18(s1)s14.

Development of an Operational Component in the International Committee of Military Medicine for Militaries to Support International Outbreak Alert and Response

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Since 1921, more than 100 military health services have participated in the International Committee of Military Medicine (ICMM). The objectives of ICMM include: (1) Providing technical resources; (2) Preparing responses to disasters; (3) Promoting the implementation of a network of experts; and (4) Participating in training in the field of

International Humanitarian Law. Currently, an agreement of cooperation exists between the ICMM and the World Health Organization (WHO). A main goal approved by the last General Assembly of ICMM is the fostering of International Civil-Military Cooperation in responding to disasters. The disasters included can be the consequence of natural or technological events or conflicts. They include physical, radiological, chemical, and biological hazards of natural, accidental, or deliberate origin. There is a very high impact associated with the use of biological weapons and the fact that terrorism must resort to attacks using such weapons to activate fear in the target population. In such a context, the use of biological weapons must be regarded as a true threat. Currently, the WHO is implementing a program to alert possible victims and develop responses to emerging diseases, including epidemics of deliberate origin. In Washington during September 2004, a draft of a standardized agreement will be proposed to the General Assembly of the ICMM, which, if approved, could be used by the WHO to negotiate with the government of each member state of the ICMM, for the participation of its Military Health Service in responding along with civilian responders to public health emergencies in the international arena.

Keywords: alert; biological weapons; civilian Military cooperation; international assistance; International Committee of Military Medicine (ICMM); public health emergencies; response, international; World Health Organization

Prehosp Disast Med 2003;18(s1)s14.

Civil Military Cooperation through the Laboratory Response Network

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The Laboratory Response Network (LRN) is a national system designed to link state and local public health laboratories with other advanced-capacity, clinical, military, veterinary, agricultural, water, and food-testing laboratories including those at the federal level. The LRN is a critical component of CDC’s public health mission, enhancing U.S. readiness to detect and respond to bioterrorism incidents. Operational in August, the LRN has the ability to detect and respond to agents that are released by a bioterrorist as well as those that occur naturally. There currently are 120 LRN reference laboratories in the U.S. and Canada, and further expansion is planned. In addition to bio-threat agents, the LRN is expanding to include the ability to detect chemical agents. The CDC’s role through the LRN is to support the public health infrastructure, which is defined by public health laboratory work. Standardized laboratory protocols are available for each agent through a secure web site. In addition, CDC is mandated to produce, validate, package, and ship reagents for most of these screening and confirmatory procedures. Training and a proficiency-testing program also are provided by the CDC. The LRN played a critical and successful role in the U.S. response to the bioterrorism-related anthrax incidents of 2001. The LRN laboratories, including those of the military, tested >125,000 clinical specimens and environmental samples involving approximately