

WETA TV 26: Sesno Reports - Target Washington

Tuesday, February 24 at 8:00pm  
Encore Saturday 2/28 at 5:00pm  
READ THE PROGRAM TRANSCRIPT

In Target Washington, the premiere episode of the new public affairs series Sesno Reports, Frank Sesno – veteran journalist and George Mason University professor – considers the threat of terrorism in the National Capital Region. Sesno examines, from a practical point of view, how residents should manage their homes and families and what they can expect from schools and hospitals.

Among special guests scheduled to appear are Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge and D.C. Mayor Anthony Williams. Other participants include elected officials, medical experts and first responders, business leaders, educators and area residents.

The Sesno Reports series is designed to engage new voices, giving forum to fresh perspectives, and utilize creative storytelling to explore pressing issues, opportunities and challenges facing the Washington, D.C., region and the nation.

Major funding for Sesno Reports is provided by the Peterson Family Foundation; additional funding is provided by The Annenberg Foundation in support of the WETA Program Trust, Albert J. and Claire Dvoskin, the Bedford Falls Foundation and Edward H. and Marilyn D. Bersoff. Local funding for Sesno Reports is provided by Washington Area Subaru Dealers. Corporate funding for the premiere episode, "Sesno Reports: Target Washington," is provided by Accenture.

TOWN HALL MEETING ON THREAT OF TERRORISM, PREPAREDNESS AND THE  
CITIZEN ROLE IN NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION RECORDED FEBRUARY 24, 2004  
GUESTS:

TOM RIDGE, SECRETARY, DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY;  
ANTHONY A. WILLIAMS, MAYOR, DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA;  
DR. GLORIA ADDO-AYENSU, HEALTH DIRECTOR, FAIRFAX COUNTY;  
GERRY CONNOLLY, CHAIRMAN, FAIRFAX COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS;  
DOUGLAS DUNCAN, MONTGOMERY COUNTY EXECUTIVE;  
TERRANCE GAINER, POLICE CHIEF, US CAPITOL;  
DR. DAN HANFLING, DIRECTOR, EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AND DISASTER  
PREPAREDNESS, FAIRFAX INOVA HEALTH SYSTEM;  
JERRY HAUER, DIRECTOR, RESPONSE TO EMERGENCIES AND DISASTERS  
INSTITUTE, GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY;  
MARGRET KELLEMS, DEPUTY MAYOR, WASHINGTON, D.C. PUBLIC SAFETY AND  
JUSTICE; J. THOMAS MANGER, POLICE CHIEF, MONTGOMERY

COUNTY;

PATRICIA MCGINNIS, PRESIDENT AND CEO, COUNCIL FOR EXCELLENCE IN  
GOVERNMENT;  
DAVID ROBERTSON, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON COUNCIL  
OF GOVERNMENTS;  
JIM SCHWARTZ, DIRECTOR, EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT, ARLINGTON COUNTY;  
AMY SMITHSON, SENIOR FELLOW, CENTER FOR STRATEGIC AND INTERNATIONAL  
STUDIES;  
KEN WALL, ACTING DIRECTOR, DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY, NATIONAL

CAPITAL REGION;  
JERRY WEAST, SUPERINTENDENT, MONTGOMERY COUNTY SCHOOLS;  
RICHARD WHITE, CEO, WASHINGTON METROPOLITAN AREA TRANSIT AUTHORITY

FRANK SESNO: How many of you know, where you would go, who you would call, or what you would do in the event of another terrorist attack in the Washington area? How many of you would basically wing it? Most of you. Most of us would basically wing it. That's why we're here today to try to answer some of the questions about what we would do in the event of terrorism, and what is being done to prevent and deter terrorism. Because this is our community, these are our neighbors, and our friends, our kids, our schools, our jobs, the place we live and work.

We're very happy to have a very distinguished group of experts from across the region here with us today in the audience, and on the stage, and we'll be talking to all of them to include the Secretary of Homeland Security Tom Ridge. Here.

(SHOW OPEN ON VIDEOTAPE)

SESNO: Thank you very much. In the time we have today, we are going to start a conversation, a conversation that many citizens are not apart of though they need to be. It concerns our physical safety. It concerns how we deal with the threat of terrorism. And what we mean when we think we talk about homeland security. So, I'm going to start with you, if I may, and pick on your right up out of the audience. Standup for just a moment. What's your name?

AMY EDWARDS: Amy Edwards.

SESNO: Amy, when we think - when you think of homeland security, what does it mean to you?

EDWARDS: The security and protection of our local communities.

SESNO: Something you think about?

EDWARDS: Yes.

SESNO: A lot.

EDWARDS: On occasion.

SESNO: Enough to come here.

EDWARDS: Exactly.

SESNO: We're glad. How about you ma'am? Standup for us if you would. And what's your name?

MERRILL HUPNOB: I'm Merrill Hupnob.

SESNO: And what does homeland security mean to you?

HUPNOB: Homeland security, and I'm standing, because (INAUDIBLE). Homeland security means the ability to feel safe wherever I am, and know that I will have the information I need to do when I need to do it.

SESNO: Thank you very much. One more. Stand up if you would. Why are you here today?

UNIDENTIFIED PARTICIPANT: Just to be more informed about the state of our union and, I guess, the world is all.

SESNO: OK. Thank you very much. I suppose I could ask that question of this gentleman. Why are you here today?

TOM RIDGE, SECRETARY, DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY: I appreciate the invitation.

SESNO: Well, we're glad you're here.

RIDGE: I wanted to be here.

SESNO: We're going to ask you for all of the answers and invoke lots of the other folks who are in the crowd and on the stage, as well.

I want to start, if I can, with a question about our community from someone in it. We got questions from all of those who are in this room when they came in. And Jury Michael from Annandale asked a very straightforward question: is Washington at any greater risk of being a target of terrorist attack than other prominent U.S. cities such as Chicago or San Francisco?

RIDGE: Well, I think all of us who live in the region, and I now count myself one of the region's inhabitants, know that it's a special city. It's a special region. We are the nation's capital. We have been subject to an attack before. So, I guess if you take a look at the possibility is a little bit higher here than it might elsewhere?

SESNO: Just a little bit higher?

RIDGE: Yes, I think a little bit higher, because we really worry about protecting the entire nation, and particularly major urban areas that have both economic and governmental and symbolic significance. And Washington is at the top of the list, but there's a really significant list out there.

SESNO: But we have government buildings. We have national monuments. We have the CIA. We have bridges and tunnels and rivers. Just a little bit higher risk?

RIDGE: Well, I think the possibility - again, the nation's capital and given the uniqueness of who we are and what we do here, means that in - when we hear about the threats that we get every single day, Washington is up. But other major cities come up as well. And so, again, we are the nation's capital. We had been a target before. But these citizens understand that it's a special place. It's a great place to live and by the way, we may be a potential target. But we're probably doing as good a job protecting ourselves as any other region in the country.

SESNO: What do you think the three biggest most significant challenges for this region are?

RIDGE: Preparation. Preparation. Preparation. I mean I think the key

is to arm people, empower people. The three women that you just spoke to right now, said they're here. They're not going anywhere. There may be students here. Raising a family here. Everybody loves the region. We understand we're the nation's capital. We understand the possibility might be a little bit higher. We just want to be prepared in the unlikely but possible event that something occurs.

SESNO: Council for Excellence in Government recently conducted a pole. And they found that more than three quarters of Americans say that they believe that there is a serious threat of a major terrorist attack against the United States at home or abroad within the next several months. Are their fears justified? Are they right?

RIDGE: I don't like the reference to a particular timeframe. Because we need to deal with the possibility as well as the unpredictability of an attack against American interest here and broad. I'm not trying to be evasive. But we are concerned about this every day. I mean there's clearly a group, literally hundreds if not thousands of terrorists out there that have made America and our interest their primary target. But it's our job every single day to be smarter, and better prepared.

SESNO: Let me come back to the audience for just a minute. Show of hands. How many of you have in your homes a battery operated radio or television. You know, where it is. And you know it's working right now? Pretty prepared crowd. How many of you do not? Honest.

OK. So, you've got a pretty prepared crowd. What else do they need?  
RIDGE: Well I'd like to encourage them in addition to be prepared in their own right to make sure that they neighbors are, we have a goal this year, Frank, to try to get 50 percent of the country prepared. Because at the end of the day, our job is really to integrate the nation. And a citizen's preparedness is every bit as important as a community's preparedness in the business. So, volunteer. There's a citizen's corps. You've got seven councils in the region. Have a communication plan. Build that kit. Get involved and stay involved.  
SESNO: Why only 50 percent? Why not say we want everybody involved, we want everybody prepared?  
RIDGE: Well we're going to do our best to get 100 percent. If we get to 50 percent at the end of this year, we'll be pretty happy about that.  
SESNO: Washington also has bridges.  
RIDGE: We sure do.  
SESNO: Pretty vulnerable.  
RIDGE: I cross them every day.  
SESNO: Some fun. Where's Gerry Connolly, Fairfax County? We'll get to him in a minute about those bridges. But that's when they're working. What is they're a target? What happens in terms of getting people out, getting help in.  
RIDGE: One of the interesting things that we have done, and the community has done, and the region has done recognizing that we're unique, and we are the national capital region. And that since 9-11, we're not thinking in terms of a city or Maryland or Virginia, we're talking about people who live in all three jurisdictions, who cross those bridges back and forth on a daily basis in terms of - so now in terms of preparation and cooperation, it is an all time high. Police chiefs, fire chiefs, hospitals, everybody associated, we have - preserving our way of life around here has been engaged in protecting and preserving that since the days after September 11.  
SESNO: What's the most probable form of terrorism in your view or the one you're most concerned about?  
RIDGE: Well our job is to be as well prepared as we possibly can.  
SESNO: But there must be some that keep you up at night?  
RIDGE: Well if I told you I slept pretty well in the national capital region, would that be good?  
SESNO: That would be good.  
RIDGE: And I do sleep well, ladies and gentlemen, I just want you to know that. Professionally or within the department we prepare for everything. I think lingering in the back of our minds is the use of something that we may have in the community, a chemical set and the like. I think the one that probably concerns most of us, again a little bit more might be a bio terror attack.  
SESNO: A bio terror attack.  
RIDGE: Yes, I mean that's why early detection is so critically important because if you can detect whatever that pathogen is, whatever that agent might be, you'll be able to respond to it quicker and save lives.  
SESNO: OK. We're going to talk about that. I'm going to take your seat up with the rest of the panel. And we're going to come up and invoke the panel's discussion in just a minute.  
But I'm going to come down to here to Jerry Hauer, now, Jerry and ask you to stand up if you would. One of the many experts we have in our group. Jerry, you're with the Ready Institute over with the GW University. You're looking at these sorts of things, and you've been

in the terrorism business studying it, I should say, for quite some time.

JERRY HAUER, DIRECTOR, RESPONSE TO EMERGENCIES AND DISASTERS INSTITUTE, GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY: A lot of people would think that.

SESNO: Not on my payroll, but that's OK. You just heard the Sectary saying that Washington is a little bit more vulnerable to attack and faces some peculiar challenges, what do you make of that? And what's your reality check.

HAUER: Well I agree with the Secretary. I think that because of what Washington is, because of the symbolism of so many monuments. Just the nature of the city, the number of tourists that are attracted here, there's no question in mind that Washington is one of the greater targets.

SESNO: What are the chief challenges of this district?

HAUER: Well I think three things. Preparedness as the Secretary said. Coordination and communication. Preparedness obviously is something that's an ongoing challenge it never ends. You continue to prepare on an ongoing basis. You continue to work through issues, because there's always a series of evolving new issues as you try and prepare.

SESNO: OK. Jerry Hauer, we'll be back to you. Let me introduce the panel to you now. Up on stage, Tom Manger who's the Chief of Police from Montgomery County and was with Fairfax County before that. Welcome. Dr. Gloria Addo-Ayensu, she's Director of Health for Fairfax County. The Secretary of Homeland Security you have met. Jim Schwartz is Assistant Fire Chief for Arlington County. Helped fight the blaze at 9-11 at the Pentagon. Also Director for Emergency Management in Arlington County. Mayor Anthony Williams. Your honor, welcome to you, from the city of Washington. And Patricia McGinnis from the Council for Excellence in Government has been conducting some of these polls. And you've been also conducting some of these town halls across the countries. So, we'll be talking to you as

well.

Two people of special note I'd like to introduce from the audience before we begin. Gerry Connolly who is the Chair of the Board of Supervisors, Fairfax County, 1.1 million people or so, roughly. And Doug Duncan County Executive from Montgomery County. Thanks to you both. We have a great group of people gathered here.

Dr. Addo-Ayensu, let me start with you right off the bat. You're home at about 7:30 at night, Tuesday night, been kind of a rough early part of the week. But you're relaxing, cup of hot chocolate, I understand you like hot chocolate and your pager goes off. And you're asked to call in. You call in and you find out that there is a speaking of suspicious cases in several hospitals across Fairfax County. People coming in they say they've got a fever. They're coughing. Flu like symptoms. Maybe coughing blood. Forty to 50 people. What's the first thing you do?

DR. GLORIA ADDO-AYENSU, HEALTH DIRECTOR, FAIRFAX COUNTY: The first thing we do is to contact the regional epidemiologist to see if this something that's, you know, being reported across the region...

SESNO: From elsewhere.

ADDO-AYENSU: From elsewhere as well. And simultaneously we will have the disease investigated from a clinical disease unit. Contacting the hospitals. Usually going in there to sort of validate what's going on. We'll be on the phone with VDH which is Virginia Department of Health to alert them of what's going on. And

(INAUDIBLE) providing us with the guidelines and, you know, what we need to do in terms of specimen collection and so forth.

SESNO: So, you're on the phone right away. Now, this is in Fairfax County. Gerry Connolly, if I could ask you to stand up for just a moment. Is she calling you? Or how are you hearing about this?

GERRY CONNOLLY, CHAIRMAN, FAIRFAX COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS: Sure, I'm the first call she makes.

SESNO: You got that doc?

CONNOLLY: No, I think Gloria obviously has to do her job. And in the event of any emergency, the first thing, frankly the political leadership needs to do is get out of the way to allow experts to do their job. We come in a little bit later. Obviously, we're going to be consulted in terms of the nature of the crisis. In the scenario you've just described so far, she's monitoring a situation which may be the flu, or it may be something more serious. We don't know yet. And don't forget the incubation period for a biological attack is a lot longer than say chemical or something.

SESNO: So, this may have happened a couple of days ago.

CONNOLLY: Absolutely.

SESNO: All right. Arlington County, Jim Schwartz, what's going on? Anything?

JIM SCHWARTZ, DIRECTOR, EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT, ARLINGTON COUNTY: Well presumably I would have received - in Arlington County I would have received a call from the doctor's counterpart, Dr. Susan Alan our public health director in emergency management. And the role of emergency management is to ensure that there is some coordination from the very beginning of an incident which nowadays means as soon as we have the earliest indications, so that we can begin to put the systems in place and lean forward.

SESNO: What do you do with all of this?

SCHWARTZ: I'm beginning to contact - in Arlington County I'm contacting our county manager who is by statute our director of emergency services. I'm contacting the agency heads for public safety fire and police. And we are assisting the public health agency in standing up an infinite management system.

SESNO: So, the word is starting to spread out.

SCHWARTZ: Yes, exactly.

SESNO: Chief, Montgomery County. Are you on the phone with him?

J. THOMAS MANGER, POLICE CHIEF, MONTGOMERY COUNTY: Absolutely. The

...

SESNO: Is there a technology for that already?

MANGER: There is. But there's also the relationships have been built, and that's even more important in the technology. The relationships have been built. There's communication that has been going on regionally since September 11. It's been strengthened through a number of events that we've had since then. And so, the communication lines are and they're being used.

SESNO: So, is this a conference call that first responders are involved ?. Is the political structure involved in this yet? You said not, right, not yet. Probably not yet.

MANGER: There's probably a series of conference calls that are ongoing at this point. Public safety is having conference calls. The health department is having conference calls. But then after those conference calls are done, there is in at least in the two jurisdictions that I've worked for, there is a senior management group of folks, the health director of the police chief, the fire chief, all of those folks will then be talking to each other to make

sure that the plans are in place to address this.

SESNO: Mayor Williams you were planning a nice dinner out, OK. You're not having that dinner out right about now because you've been called back to the office. And within a short period of time, maybe it's the early of the hour of the morning, you're starting to hear that something's seriously wrong, and there's some fatality. Who's talking to the public, and what are you saying at this stage?

ANTHONY A. WILLIAMS, MAYOR, DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA: Well that's an excellent question because what you have in most places is you have your basic response plan that covers your protocol for most of your emergencies. And then you have responses for specific types of emergencies like health. And you recognize that while you're doing all of these risk assessments, you're doing this analysis. You're on the phone with the region. You're on the phone with homeland security. And in this case, HHS, you also recognize that basically you're dealing with a colander. I mean everything leaks in government like a colander. It's eventually going to get out in the press. And what you've got to do is be able to get out there sooner rather than later, and separate fact from rumor.

SESNO: How quickly do you have to get out there?

WILLIAMS: Sooner than you'd like.

SESNO: All right.

WILLIAMS: You can't wait for certainty there is no certainty.

SESNO: So, let's get a reality check. Jim Farley, WTOP is joining us here. You're on the air all of the time, right?

JIM FARLEY, VICE PRESIDENT OF NEWS AND PROGRAMMING, WTOP: Right.

SESNO: And you're one of the lead agencies that's going to spread this word. What do you do with this information as it starts to come to you? It's a leak. Maybe you know somebody who works at the hospital. You haven't got it confirmed. How quickly do you go with it? And what do you say?

FARLEY: At this point, we're in competition with every TV station in town, with the newspapers and the wire services. We're all trying to reach the PIO or a source that's going to give us the information. We're only to report what we know, but if they have information they want us to get out, we're willing to drop everything and give actionable information non stop.

SESNO: So, would you get on the air and say we're getting reports that there may be something seriously wrong in the region? People are unexpectedly getting sick.

FARLEY: We'd have to know more than that.

SESNO: OK. From an official source?

FARLEY: Yes.

SESNO: Tom Ridge, when is somebody going from the federal government to the Department of Homeland Security and telling people something's wrong.

RIDGE: Well first of all, we haven't determined yet, what the nature of the pathogen is, what it is that's got everybody stirred up. We haven't determined whether or not it's a terrorist incident, or something that just naturally occurred through nature. But I think one of the challenges that we all have is to give kindly and accurate information. And that does require some science to be involved. And you do your very best to avoid the kind of speculation that could lead to unnecessary concern even panic. So, again, we're going to - there will be a public face, a federal face as soon as we possibly can, preferably if it is - the notoriety of the incident is wide enough and some how it's out there in the public domain just to

let the public domain we're looking at it. We've got the scientists at bay and we'll be back to you as soon as we find out exactly what it is and what we need to do about it.

SESNO: One of the questions that the Council for Excellence in Government asked what do people fear or feel is the most worrisome scenario, one or two most worrisome scenarios. I'd like to take a look at it. Forty-eight percent say bioterrorism. By a significant margin bio terrorism is the most worrisome scenario. Chemical weapons below that. Nuclear weapons below that. And interestingly, suicide bombings which we've scene a fair bit, and plane hijackings relatively lower down on the list. Pat, what do you make of that?

PATRICIA MCGINNIS, PRESIDENT AND CEO, COUNCIL FOR EXCELLENCE IN GOVERNMENT: I think that people are afraid of the unknown. Anthrax, we're still trying to figure out what happened when we had the anthrax attack. And more than being afraid of the unknown, they're worried that they don't know what to do if this becomes a big problem. We've got lots of plans. But people around this community don't know exactly what they should do.

SESNO: We're going to drill down in to that. We actually, as you point out, we have had experience with some of these scenarios. This is not a discussion in a vacuum. It's not an academic exercise. Fairly recently, and more than once. Take a look.

(BEGIN VIDEOTAPE).

UNIDENTIFIED PARTICIPANT: It happened on Monday February second., traces of what appeared to be ricin a lethal toxin on Capital Hill shutting down three buildings for days, a reminder, as if we needed one of our vulnerability.

DR. DAN HANFLING, DIRECTOR, EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AND DISASTER PREPAREDNESS, FAIRFAX INOVA HEALTH SYSTEM: This was a very serious attack. And it highlighted again, that the national capital region is under attack. This is the third attack in two-and-a-half years. We were lucky in this instant in that nobody was harmed or injured.

UNIDENTIFIED PARTICIPANT: Dr. Dan Hanfling is Director of Emergency Management and Disaster Preparedness at Inova Health Systems. His recent experience illustrates an ongoing challenge. He believes he should have been notified of the ricin attack right away, but he didn't get a call for hours until after the first news reports.

DR. HANFLING: There really is no formal mechanism for coordination with the intelligence community, with the Department of Homeland Security. The health and medical community has to be viewed as part of the critical infrastructure.

UNIDENTIFIED PARTICIPANT: Dr. Hanfling knows the drill and the stakes. His staff at Inova Fairfax treated two inhalation anthrax victims back in 2001. Back then, no single authority was in charge. No official system existed for doctors to share information. No procedure was in place to agree on how to treat the people or the buildings. There's been progress, efforts to improve coordination and communication, \$2 billion from the feds to the states and D.C. to enhance their ability to respond to public health threats. But what if - what if a van spews invisible microbes from its tail pipe along K Street? What if viruses fly through the ventilation system at a local shopping mall? What if someone with smallpox passes through one of our airports?

SESNO: Doug Duncan, I'd like to ask you to stand and join us, and address that what if, that series of scary what if questions. Are you in Montgomery County 925,000 people set up to deal with those what if scenarios?

DOUGLAS DUNCAN, MONTGOMERY COUNTY EXECUTIVE: We're set up much better than we were September 11. We need to be even better prepared than we are today, and we're working towards that as is everyone in the region. But I think you have to look at the fact that we are working much better together - the region is than we ever have been before. We saw it in the aftermath of September 11 in the sniper shootings clearly showed that we can come together with a single mission just to put a stop to what was terrorizing us at the time. So, we are doing everything we can to work together. I think we are in a good situation to respond, and I think the communication is there. The health directors are talking to each other, the hospitals are talking to everyone else, and that communication is going to spread in the scenario you talked about, and we are going to get that message out to the public. And the public I think is not become immune to this, but they have come to understand that things are going to happen, and they need to wait to get some kind of official word that yes, it's terrorist attack or it isn't. I mean the ricin incident was handled very differently than the earlier anthrax one.

SESNO: I want to come back to the ricin issue. And that we - Dr. Hanfling is with us. Dr. Hanfling, I'm going to come over to you in just a minute. But Mayor Williams, one of the questions that's come up is if heaven forbid something like this were to happen, one of those what ifs, and a lot of people got sick, that our public health and our hospital structure isn't set up to absorb that. Surge capacity we call it, the ability of hospitals to have the beds to take care of the people who might be stricken.

Does the District of Columbia have the surge capacity to take care of a lot of people if they got sick?

WILLIAMS: My comeback to you is that - I would agree with Doug - we were much better at the region than we did before. The health directors working with one another, our regional emergency preparedness directors working with one another. And I think as a region we do have the capacity because I think we can look at any one element as the panacea or the silver bullet. It has to be a network response, and as a region I do think we are prepared.

SESNO: Dr. Hanfling, can I ask you to stand and join this conversation? You're troubled by some of what's taken place.

HANFLING: Well I would agree that this is a continuum, and that we are slowly improving our capabilities, but we're not there yet. And I think it's recognized all the panel members and those in the audience would agree, that this is a marathon. We're - and we're in the beginning of our efforts.

SESNO: And you said you weren't thrilled about getting word of the ricin business in the news.

HANFLING: Well, you know, what concerns me in the context of healthcare preparedness is that we have folks, for example, workers who were in the Dirksen Center office building that day who started calling the hospitals. Hey, you know, I work up there, and the Capitol police have closed the building down. What do I do? And ...

SESNO: What'd you tell them?

HANFLING: Well we didn't have anything to tell them because we didn't know what was going ...

SESNO: What should have happened?

HANFLING: I think that healthcare in the context of, you know, homeland security and emergency preparedness, healthcare needs to be brought into the continuum of emergency responders because we've got a lot of first responders, but the hospitals are going to be first

...

SESNO: So, you should be on that conference call, is that what you're saying, if there is one?

HANFLING: At some point I think that there are select members of the healthcare community, not the public health community, but the healthcare delivery community, the healthcare delivery systems that need to be brought into the ...

SESNO: Let me go across the aisle here to Chief Gainer - Terrance Gainer, Chief of Capitol Hill Police. You had to deal with that ricin attack.

TERRANCE GAINER, POLICE CHIEF, U.S. CAPITOL: Yes.

SESNO: Did you have the time to get healthcare officials on the phone?

GAINER: Well actually we did have healthcare officials involved early on. We had ...

SESNO: Dr. Hanfling was trying to get on the news.

GAINER: Well the difference we have to do is the context in which the information - everybody wants it quickly, and sometimes they want it before they need it. We had the office of the attending physician involved in this in the first hour, we were doing assessments on the extent of the danger so the people who needed to know did know.

SESNO: Others I've heard say we didn't hear from Gainer and company quick enough. Is there a way to accelerate that?

GAINER: I think we always have to look how do we improve communication. But I think part of what we do at a forum like this is develop some love and trust that everybody is doing what they're supposed to be.

SESNO: Love and trust, I - that's good. OK. Well anybody - let me go back to the audience and find some love and trust. I ...

UNIDENTIFIED PARTICIPANT: Love and trust is good.

SESNO: Sorry to pick on you, but stand up. All right, you're hearing this scenario unfold, you're hearing your officials trying to talk to one another. The news media says we're going to be careful, but as soon as we've got something, we're on all the time, we're going to get on the air. From your perspective as a citizen, tell us your name, and what's going through your mind at this point.

MARTIS CLINE : Hi, I'm Martis Cline . What's going through my mind is how is this affecting me? My ...

SESNO: What do you mean?

CLINE: Where is the attack if there is an attack? Is it isolated to the one area? I am a federal employee, so my concern is an attack on federal employees within the Washington metropolitan area. I also have a six-year-old daughter, and how far out in the region has it been received?

SESNO: Secretary Ridge, federal worker, federal government. A lot of people - hundreds of thousands work for the federal government. At what point does that get declared open, shut 9/11 they were sent home in the streets, it was a disaster.

RIDGE: I think the first determination - the scientific of medical determination is this - number one, is it toxic? Certainly ricin is. Is it contagious? No it's not. Are there any other locations where we found substances of a questionable nature? We did not. And I think it was very appropriate to - at least initially to keep that information exchange and build out a network so that ultimately those who were affected, particularly those in the building, got first notice, and then obviously once that's out, then it was very

important for the Capitol police come out, with I think Senator Frist , and with this medical experts explaining precisely what's going on.

And I think that's exactly what they did. I think it's very, very important in an incident like that I think one of the local elect officials said this before, sometimes it's very important for the elected officials get out of the way, and I believe that, so that the healthcare professionals can give the right kind of information that people can use and act upon.

SESNO: What is the right kind of information that people can use right now? What are citizens going to be hearing from those who are in charge?

RIDGE: Like - well again it depends on the agent. But I think it is - again it is very, very important for a medical expert or two, preferably local if you have them, at least initially that have some credibility in the community, go out and explain the nature of the agent, whatever it is, whether it's contagious, and if there are precautionary measures that need to be taken instantaneously. Again the circumstances will drive the public discussion, but you need the experts to lead the public discussion and to give that information out.

SESNO: We have a thing in the Washington area and entity called the Council of Governments, which attempts to bring together the many different governments and agencies. David Robertson is head of that, and joins us now, if I could ask you to stand up.

We have a question here that we got, an e-mail question, from Philip Penule of Silver Spring. He asks: what's the status of public notification during a crisis? Is there an all hazards warning system to provide immediate information to the public? What exists, what have you done as the Council of Governments working with Fairfax County, Montgomery County, District of Columbia, Capital Police, Metro Police, Fairfax Police, to get a single fast stream of information to the public?

DAVID ROBERTSON, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS: What we have done is to devise a system where those officials can get together quickly, called the RICCS, Regional Incident Communication and Coordination System, and we want to make sure that everybody is in a common message mini voice, that's sort of the approach that we've taken. Before you can communicate accurate information to the public, you have to be sure of what that accurate information is.

SESNO: So, you have a system in place ...

ROBERTSON: Exactly.

SESNO: ... and who becomes the voice?

ROBERTSON: The voice is really going to be the senior emergency official from that local jurisdiction ...

SESNO: So, Jim Schwartz or ...

ROBERTSON: ... it could be the mayor ...

SESNO: ... Tom ...

ROBERTSON: ... or the governors, or the senior administrators. They are the common voice for that community.

SESNO: Mayor or governors.

ROBERTSON: Could be ...

SESNO: All right, so let me step across the aisle here, back to Gerry Connolly, Doug Duncan, if I could ask you. Now Mayor Williams, Gerry Connolly, Doug Duncan, this is not like New York where Mayor Giuliani steps to the microphone, one big entity, one big spokesman.

You're all in charge, are you all speaking to your individual publics now? Are you coordinating amongst yourselves? Are you talking? Is there a conference call? How ...

WILLIAMS: I think it really depends - I think it really depends on the center gravity, the - where the incident occurred as a sector, we're saying that's going to drive the discussion and the location and scenario. So, for example with the sniper, all of us, governors, mayors, county executives, were there with Doug, Doug was the spokesman because that was perceived as the center of gravity of the incident.

SESNO: Is that what ...

DUNCAN: In the anthrax attacks it was the District of Columbia that took the lead ...

UNIDENTIFIED PARTICIPANT: Right.

DUNCAN: ... and we followed that lead, that's how we came together, that's how we gave information ...

UNIDENTIFIED PARTICIPANT: Right.

DUNCAN: ... to our public if something came into our jurisdiction, then we would speak for that. But we would follow the lead of the originating jurisdiction.

SESNO: If you're going to make progress in this regard over the next six, 12 months, what would you want to add, change?

CONNOLLY: Continue to test the systems, communication. Secretary Ridge said it well in terms of preparation, but the other two elements I'd add are coordination and cooperation, especially among ourselves and with the federal government, which is such a key player in this region.

SESNO: OK, back - go ahead.

DUNCAN: If I could - we had a great example during the sniper shootings of unprecedented cooperation. And I think this whole region saw how all levels of government, no matter if you were in the District or Maryland and Virginia, whatever county you were from, state and federal government came together and worked together and it worked well. So, we've proven that we can do it and do it well.

SESNO: OK. Tom Manger, you're at work in - hard at work in Montgomery County. And you got a friend who works down in the District, and you get a call. And he tells you that he's just heard a loud - it sounds like a loud explosion at 18th and K. What do you start doing?

MANGER: Well ...

SESNO: Does that concern you? You're on Montgomery County, maybe that's none of your business.

MANGER: Oh absolutely it concerns me.

SESNO: And so, what do you do?

MANGER: Well, there's two things we need to do. First we have the intelligence responsibilities, and we have the intelligence sections of all of the public safety agencies in the region, to talk together. That information should be shared among that network immediately, so we should get detailed information about what may be going on.

The second thing we need to do is determine if we have any responsibility in terms of first response. And we are working - I don't think it's seamlessly yet, but it - we're getting there - in this region in terms of assisting - jurisdictions assisting each other in first response as well as things down the line.

SESNO: All right, let me come on over here to Margaret Kellems, who

works in the District, and you're responsible for emergency management, among other things. That explosion's gone off in downtown Washington. Do your firefighters, police, do they have the proper gear all of them? Do they have radiation pagers so they can figure out whether this is a dirty bomb or not?

MARGARET KELLEMS, DEPUTY MAYOR, WASHINGTON, D.C. PUBLIC SAFETY AND JUSTICE: Well in the District we were very fortunate in post September 11 we actually got a lot of money from the federal government. So, our first responders, police officers, firefighters, emergency medical services folks actually have personal protective gear. They carry it around with them, they're required to have it at all times. I think there are still a lot of jurisdictions in the national capital region that are not where they want to be, but I think the District is.

SESNO: How are you doing in Arlington?

SCHWARTZ: In Arlington all of our first responders, police, fire and EMS are all outfitted with chemical suits, their own respirators. It's all interoperable so police can use the same items that fire is using. It's very easy to maintain, and it's a system that as a (INAUDIBLE) that we're trying to push out throughout the ...

SESNO: Interoperable, so one can use the other ...

SCHWARTZ: Correct.

SESNO: Go ahead.

MANGER: Same situation, we've got - we've got some gear, but what we don't have is enough gear to sustain an effort over a longer period of time, and that's one of the things that we need to work towards.

SESNO: Now you get a call from a friend who says, should I leave town? I'm hearing this is a dirty bomb. What do you tell them?

KELLEMS: Well the same thing I always tell people, which is the vast majority of the time the best thing is to stay where you are until you receive instructions to leave. We work through, as all of these folks have indicated, to get good information, a lot of what you hear on television may not be the correct answer, may not be the right information, it's coming from ...

SESNO: Yes, but I'm a citizen, I don't care whether it's right or not, I've got kids, I've got an elderly mother, I want to know what's right for me, and I'm not going to wait around for you to get it right.

KELLEMS: Well I - one of the - one of the challenges that we have here is to educate the public that they may be putting themselves in more danger if they're not waiting for someone to give them instruction. And the default position is stay where you are ...

SESNO: Right, let me - let me share with you some of the e-mail questions we got coming in here, several on - how many of you - think about this, whether you'd stay, leave, where you'd go, how you'd get there, a lot.

Steven Rutledge rather of Chantilly, Virginia: Are there any plans in place to conduct full scale evacuation drills of the District to work out the kinks to insure the plan, presumably an evacuation plan, works? Here's Steven Steward of Harrisonburg: What's the plan for handling an evacuation of D.C., to where?

Margaret Smith of Fairfax, Virginia - you'll appreciate this question: Mr. Mayor, should we have road signs to indicate routes in the event of evacuation? We do, I know, but apparently the residents don't. You - or some anyway don't. Tell us about that, what are the signs, and what is the District's position on whether and how you can - you can move a lot of people out fast?

WILLIAMS: You can't - I think it would be doing the public a disservice to say that here is the bright line rule on how we're going to handle evacuation, because it's really - and I know this is just beating a drum, but this is really circumstantial, it's going to be driven by the situation. And Margaret is exactly right, nine times out of 10 the best thing for people to do is to remain in place. I tell - I will tell you what we have done, I don't think the District or Montgomery for my purposes, Montgomery County or Fairfax or anybody else should be having a mass evacuation drill.

But what we do, regular drills will come from the government's regular drills in our own jurisdictions, we're the health entity, we're the non-profit. The goal of our protocol is to go over response, that we do on a regular basis. What we also do is we on a regular basis go out to citizens, train citizens, educate citizens, talk with a citizen corp., talk about citizen participation, and have put in place text messaging, rapid notification by telephone and by telecommunication to let thousands of people know at a time real information. And we are doing that.

SESNO: Let me ask you this, stand up and tell me your name.

UNIDENTIFIED PARTICIPANT: (INAUDIBLE).

SESNO: Do you know where you would go for information in an event such as this?

UNIDENTIFIED PARTICIPANT: Oh I think I would stay home if I were home and just watch the media and try to find information that way.

SESNO: OK. And if you had any further concerns, or questions, your kids are across town, you've got an elderly mother or relative.

UNIDENTIFIED PARTICIPANT: I think one of the things every citizen has to do is to be prepared, and that's one purpose of your show for example. And it's our responsibility to find out for ourselves beforehand what we would do in a case like that, so.

SESNO: (INAUDIBLE) if this is something you've been hearing across the country as you've traveled. Put this in perspective for us.

MCGINNIS: People do see a real communication gap here. There are a lot of plans, in fact I looked at the plans for Virginia, for Maryland, for this region, the wonderful regional plan. They stack up and look like a metropolitan phone book. But unless people around the community know about them, and know what they should do, they don't mean much.

SESNO: Secretary Ridge ...

(APPLAUSE)

SESNO: I guess we've gotten to one of those moments, so.

RIDGE: I don't think that was applause because you said Secretary Ridge.

SESNO: Hope springs eternal.

RIDGE: Yes.

SESNO: You've got your kids and your family here.

RIDGE: Sure.

SESNO: You're in the office, you're responsible for all of this. There's an explosion, and maybe what's worse in a scenario is a threat of another one. You don't know whether it's real or not. Are you really telling them to stay home?

RIDGE: Well I think that the preparedness experts, the emergency experts will tell you several critical elements for this. One there needs to be a massive education - public education campaign needs to occur before the incident occurs so people understand that under certain circumstances you do certain things, and the national

capital region is really moving as aggressively as they possibly can

on that. So, again to reiterate what several of the others have said, it is really situational, Frank, depending on the circumstances, but you can not simply inform and educate the public after the event. There has to be a massive public education campaign before the event.

SESNO: And that's one of the reasons we're here. And I want to mention, you'll see on the side Washingtonpost.com, our partner in this project has a preparedness guide on its Web site. So, if you go to Washingtonpost.com/fresnoreports , you can go and see a preparedness guide of what the school systems will do, what would happen in the event of a particular kind of incident, and where you might go if you could get there. But this is very much - this subject ...

RIDGE: Go to Ready.gov, not a bad place to start. It's an advertisement from the portal, it'll get you into a lot of that information.

SESNO: All right, your tax dollars at work, Ready.gov is another place to go for more information. We're going to come back to that and talk about what's out there and what's expected of citizens in a few minutes. But this issue of evacuation, of whether you leave town, how you leave town, where you go, who tells you is something that is very much on your mind, and it was the subject of a recent piece of WRC here in the nation's capitol and the national capitol region not very long ago. Tom Sherwood did a piece, we talked to them, we asked the folks at WRC if we could share that piece again with you now because it's got some very interesting information. Take a look.

UNIDENTIFIED PARTICIPANT: Every day commuting in the nation's capital is bad enough. Intersections turn into fortified blockades. The city can be a fortress of fear, heavily guarded metro stations. Hundreds of thousands of people zigzagging their way to work. With this daily mess, what chance does a city have to pull off an evacuation if there's a serious terrorism attack?

UNIDENTIFIED PARTICIPANT: If anybody in this room right now thinks that everything will be nice and orderly if something like this happens, you're only fooling yourself because it's going to be a little chaotic.

UNIDENTIFIED PARTICIPANT: A little chaotic. What about the city's tunnels of potential trouble, and its many bridges?

UNIDENTIFIED PARTICIPANT: We have bottlenecks that there's not a lot we can do about. The bridge system is a bottleneck for us.

UNIDENTIFIED PARTICIPANT: People ought to understand that if something major happens, there is going to be some disruption.

UNIDENTIFIED PARTICIPANT: How to evacuate Washington is an unresolved issue facing COG, the Council of Governments that represents 17 regional jurisdictions that must work together.

UNIDENTIFIED PARTICIPANT: If everyone tries to access the transportation system at one time, it's simply not going to work any better than it did on September 11th, 2001.

UNIDENTIFIED PARTICIPANT: Since the events of September 11th, local emergency plans are in far better shape with better communications and contingency plans. But that doesn't mean ready. Officials most fear that people will just rush and panic to get to families.

UNIDENTIFIED PARTICIPANT: Immediate reaction is always, I've got to go home, I've got to go get my child. The reality is that isn't

always the best thing to do.

UNIDENTIFIED PARTICIPANT: But that's exactly what many say they'll do, even with traffic jams.

UNIDENTIFIED PARTICIPANT: Family, I have a family to take care of, so I'll be with my family.

UNIDENTIFIED PARTICIPANT: My best interest will be to try to get out to the suburb to get to that common meeting place where my family and I have established.

UNIDENTIFIED PARTICIPANT: Another fear, federal government agencies will simply shut down and send employees streaming into the streets.

UNIDENTIFIED PARTICIPANT: It doesn't make any sense if your transportation plan says go up one street, and the police have corded that street off.

UNIDENTIFIED PARTICIPANT: Like on Capitol Hill where Capitol Police can instantly block Independence Avenue and other major roadways with new pop-up barriers. Officials worry that the Federal Department of Homeland Security still needs a plan to make certain Capitol Hill and federal agencies don't act independently and make things worse.

With evacuation so difficult, officials are launching efforts to persuade people to stay in place when an incident occurs, to get more information before striking out on their own. But it's a tough message to sell.

UNIDENTIFIED PARTICIPANT: I don't necessarily believe that the government would be able to broadcast the signals fast enough to inform me as to what was going on.

SESNO: All right, so we're here with Chief Gainer, Capitol Hill Police, we saw you referenced there. And again our thanks to Tom Sherwood , WRC , for sharing that piece. And David Snyder, former Mayor of Falls Church, and on the Transportation Subcommittee Council of Governments.

About those barriers, they just kind of go up when you've got a threat, and how are you coordinating? Are you coordinating to see whether that's going to get in the way of people trying to get out of town?

GAINER: We're very sensitive about the effect it could have on transportation in the city. We work closely with them, and it would not be just willy-nilly that we pop them up. Before we did that, there'd be a lot of conversations with the city, the police department command center, and the department of transportation.

SESNO: You'd pop them up if you felt there was an immediate physical threat to the ...

GAINER: I think if there's an emergency, then we have to take an emergency stance, just like you might close down the street if there was an individual house fire, it has to be done rationally, and for good reason.

DAVID SNYDER, CHAIRMAN, FALLS CHURCH CITY COUNCIL, COG

TRANSPORTATION PLANNING BOARD: Frank, you've already heard some common themes already. The first is that the public needs to be educated much better than they've been educated so far. We've got reams of information, but it really needs to be information that sits basically on an index card. And point number one in that education is stay put.

Secondly, during an incident, we need one source of information regionally to be put out in many ways. And third we need an agency, potentially a new one, that will assure that all the ripple effects, that all the regional effects are in fact dealt with and the systems

that we've talked about are used to the maximum. The reality is we're not there yet.

SESNO: Jim Schwartz, if people are trying to move quickly from the District, I mean all that public education is all well and good, but there are people - they actually may be instructed to leave town, right?

SCHWARTZ: Correct.

SESNO: If you get a question of cards, it's rush hour plus, are there procedures, technology in place to accommodate that?

SCWARTZ: Well speaking for Arlington, we do have a traffic management system that actually controls the green lights on all of the major arteries throughout Arlington, which presumably during an evacuation would be some of the first to be used for exit points. So, based on the volume of traffic or if we take over control of the traffic lights, we can stay on a green pattern in the outbound direction for a much longer period of time.

SESNO: So, they get to Fairfax County?

SCHWARTZ: Correct, and it's their problem.

SESNO: But I'll come back, but I couldn't - Gerry Connolly I couldn't - I couldn't miss this opportunity, I happen to live in Fairfax County, and I know the lights are all green all the time. So, what happens if you come speeding through Arlington County and

then you get to Fairfax County?

GERRY CONNOLLY, CHAIRMAN, FAIRFAX COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS: Well since you live in Fairfax of course you know that in Fairfax the state controls those lights, not Fairfax County. Well so we would hope that the Virginia Department of Transportation would coordinate with our friends in ...

SESNO: Wait, wait, wait. The state controls your traffic lights?

CONNOLLY: Yes.

SESNO: What does that mean?

CONNOLLY: The state controls - owns and maintains ...

SESNO: ... but that doesn't mean they make them green and red?

CONNOLLY: Well they can. And in fact on 9/11 it was a state responsibility once people hit the beltway getting ...

SESNO: ... so if people are evacuating you have to call up Richmond ...

CONNOLLY: ... well no. We are working closely with VDOT here in our county.

UNIDENTIFIED PARTICIPANT: (INAUDIBLE) ...

UNIDENTIFIED PARTICIPANT: ... Arlington controls its own roads. Fairfax, the state controls the roads.

WILLIAMS: No, there are a number of systems - and I don't want to belabor, bore everyone. But there a number of systems that have been put in place for instantaneous communication between all of these entities. It is not as if everyone is operating in a vacuum. For example we wouldn't - we can turn our lights- we wouldn't turn all of our lights green. Send everybody out to Arlington and Montgomery county and say good luck. You know, people are talking here.

DUNCAN: But the problem is that is what happened on September 11. They closed the bridges in Virginia. Everybody has to come through Maryland and go around the beltway to get to Fairfax ...

SESNO: ... but how will that ...

UNIDENTIFIED PARTICIPANT: ... that was a major problem.

SESNO: ... how will that be different next time? And who controls

it? The secretary ...

RIDGE: I think it's very important for this region to know that as part of the law that created the department, very appropriately there was established a national capital region.

And if you talk to any of these public officials today they will tell you that on a regular basis, face to face, communications by phone, email and the like. But there is an integrated plan to deal with surge capacity at hospitals, travel arrangements in the event of potential need for evacuation. I mean, you name it, this group of people within the national capital region have been working on it. And it is a dynamic process. They continue to make improvements everyday. Like the mayor said, there are systems of systems in place - we'll be testing them from time to time- this national capital region is excited. It's not a federal city that they are worried about, it's a federal region they're worried about. And every single day they make improvements to address ...

UNIDENTIFIED PARTICIPANT: ... and it's a very ...

UNIDENTIFIED PARTICIPANT: ... communication, traffic and the like.

SESNO: And it's a very, very complicated one. I want to take Gerry Connolly's point about the state controlling this and come over to somebody who happens to be from state. John Haeger, you're advisor to the Governor on Homeland Security, why can't Fairfax County control its own stoplight?

JOHN HAEGER: Well, it's a cooperative measure between Fairfax County and the state through the smart traffic center, which is located in northern Virginia. It's not the state in Richmond, it's the state functioning up here in northern Virginia.

SESNO: Would it be more efficient for Fairfax County to do it itself, or less? Because of this regional component we're talking about.

HAEGER: Well, you know, the whole idea of working together regionally is to communicate and coordinate. And I assure that Fairfax County's stoplight system is coordinated with what we're doing as a region in the event of any incidence. In fact we come together instantly on conference calls with Margaret and our counterparts in Maryland through the Office of the National Capital Region coordination at DHS. And they're right there in the operations center.

And so, we all come to joint decisions based on the facts.

CONNOLLY: Yes. But I want to make another point about evacuation. Remember in 9/11 we did not have evacuation. What we had was early release by the federal government. It was uncoordinated with local government...

UNIDENTIFIED PARTICIPANT: ... absolutely ...

UNIDENTIFIED PARTICIPANT: ... and it really overwhelmed us.

Evacuation is a whole different story.

UNIDENTIFIED PARTICIPANT: Presumably a little more orderly one

hopes.

UNIDENTIFIED PARTICIPANT: No, it's much more ...

UNIDENTIFIED PARTICIPANT: ... less ...

UNIDENTIFIED PARTICIPANT: ... much more difficult. I think a lot of people in this region will follow direction and look for guidance and direction. The schools are key because if my kid is going to be in lock down in school and I feel she's safe. Then I may make a different decision. But remember in 9/11, the human reaction was I want to get home to my loved one, and just hug them.

SESNO: Do you really think the human reaction will be that much

different next time?

UNIDENTIFIED PARTICIPANT: I think education is going to be key component.

SESNO: Does education work for you? I mean you've heard these officials say stay where you are. And you've been through it before. How many of you think - just off the top of your head - that that would fundamentally change the experience next time? More people would stay in place. How many think people will still try to evacuate, or self evacuate or leave?

Dick White I would like to call on your if I may. You are the Washington area Metro's person -- what's Metro's role in all of this? So, maybe people don't drive. They're asked and they don't drive. But they pour into your station. Or on your buses.

RICHARD WHITE, CEO, WASHINGTON METROPOLITAN AREA TRANSIT AUTHORITY: We're part of the transportation network. And we have capacity limitations. And so, long as we're being asked largely to take people home that we bring in in the morning, we're sized to do that.

SESNO: Could you handle a huge surge?

WHITE: No, we can't handle a huge surge.

SESNO: What happened on 9/11?

WHITE: Well basically people who used us to come into work in morning are the same ones who got on the Metro system and took it home. Other jumped in their cars and had a lot longer trip ...

SESNO: ... had long delays?

WHITE: Correct.

SESNO: And ...

WHITE: ... on the Metro system, no. We were prepared. And we were able to run back to back rush hours. Our work force was nimble and ready to respond ...

SESNO: ... if there were an event, what would happen differently next?

WHITE: Well, again, largely it's about when and where all this happens. And how well people communicate with one another. I need to reiterate the message that everybody else has said - the first thing that people have to think about is get information. Don't over react. Listen to what you're being told. And the two most important decisions that seem to drive everything else is what are the federal employees doing? And what are the schools doing?

SESNO: All right. I want to come to somebody whose voice you know well. And I'm going to come back into the audience and go to your questions. But Bob Marbourg is traffic reporter and has been for sometime with WTOP radio. And really appreciate every morning and evening you telling me how easy it is to get home.

Now are there sufficient alternate routes that with a disciplined population, and educated population, - that the city and the region could handle those who are trying to move and the emergency vehicles, be they law enforcement, fire, rescue, through these streets?

BOB MARBOURG: Absolutely not. There is no way. Our alternate routes are maxed out by people traveling everyday. That is the reality. And that assumes a rush hour that extends from anywhere from three to five hours in the morning, three to five hours in the evening all at once. You can't do it that way.

SESNO: Well, what would you be on the air telling people?

MARBOURG: Well it is the uncertainty, which is the terrorist

greatest weapon. Or that which is most unsettling to each of us.

What we need to do - as Mayor Williams said, you get out earlier than you would like with information. Perhaps less than perfect information. But we have to define the problem. We have to tell people where and what has happened. What you cannot do and then ultimately what you can do.

We have to shrink the universe of the people who were immediately affected.

SESNO: All right. Dan Tanjourney I would like to turn to you. District of (INAUDIBLE), Department of Transportation. You deal with people in cars and trains and everything else daily. What is this conversation suggest to you? And what do you say to the people who live and work in the District of Columbia?

DAN TANJOURNEY: Well, there are a couple of things. One is this point that the likelihood of an evacuation in the city is the lowest likelihood scenario. That having been said, we've taken that scenario, working with the region, working with VDOT, working with MDOT, - we developed 27 evacuation routes out of the city using the redundancy of the beltway. So, if we lose a bridge to our Virginia friends, since we can teach people how to go north to go south.

SESNO: How are people supposed to know where those routes are?

TANJOURNEY: They're on our web site. They're on a link from Washington Post dot com. What people need to do is begin to take some personal responsibility to educate themselves ...

UNIDENTIFIED PARTICIPANT: ... are we going to have drills or anything as one of the Miller suggestions ...

TANJOURNEY: ... we actually had a - we tend to do drills every time we have a snowstorm. We kind of do drills every time we ...

UNIDENTIFIED PARTICIPANT: ... we know what happens then.

TANJOURNEY: ... well ...

UNIDENTIFIED PARTICIPANT: ... took me three and half-hours to across town ...

TANJOURNEY: ... yes, that's exactly right. But we actually had that coordination - the communication with Virginia, with Maryland, - actually having the smart traveler and the chart center conversing with each other. So, we have that. We've built those links of communication that didn't exist ...

SESNO: ... before we move on. Questions from the audience on the subject of evacuation or movement or anything. I'm going to come up to this gentleman here. I'll come back and ask you be - tell us who you are. Be very brief with your question.

UNIDENTIFIED PARTICIPANT: My name is (INAUDIBLE) in George Mason University. And I'm happy I'm hear today because if I (INAUDIBLE) all this before coming I may have thought twice about coming to Washington. But the truth is that I didn't get any of this information (INAUDIBLE). I did not have to have radio with battery. And I have my wife and daughter here. I didn't know who call if there was an emergency. And I think that is important information for international students who are coming to Washington (INAUDIBLE). And I think that's why a number of them are here.

UNIDENTIFIED PARTICIPANT: For international student and other. Secretary Ridge, where's the best place for people to go to get information like this? Is there one place?

RIDGE: I would probably start - again it is a commercial but it's Ready.gov. And that's basically a portal that can get you into a lot of other state and local pieces of information. But again, I think the National Capital Region - you can access through Ready.gov. I'm

not 100 percent certain about that. But you know, I think I would Ready.gov because that talks some of the basics we've discussed today.

SESNO: Pat McGinnis.

MCGINNIS: I would say that the web sites that are available, Ready.gov - there are web sites for the District of Columbia for all the jurisdictions. And they are terrific if people go to them. I would say that we have to go beyond web site. And push this information out. Maybe through the schools and through the children in schools and through the workplaces. And through other methods of communication beside expecting people to come to web sites and get very specific ...

UNIDENTIFIED PARTICIPANT: ... I would agree with that.

SESNO: Dr. Jerry Weast. Dr. Weast is here from Montgomery County Schools. How do you use your distribution network? And what are parents supposed do?

JERRY WEAST, SUPERINTENDENT, MONTGOMERY COUNTY SCHOOLS: Their kids are in school. Something like this is going down. It's a very, very troubling moment.

UNIDENTIFIED PARTICIPANT: A very traumatic moment. Excuse me. That's why we need to increase our communication and we have. We're on an incident command structure. We're linked to the Montgomery Incident Command structure. And we're linked both on the Internet and audio phones - both those shut down. We have a third level of structure where we can get people out.

UNIDENTIFIED PARTICIPANT: Well, a lot of people are going to get in their cars and come to school.

SESNO: What are you doing with those students? To you go into lock down in the midst of situation? Or do you close schools early? How do you make that decision?

WEAST: Well, after the sniper and after 9/11 we got a lot of practice. And because we got a lot of practice about how to deal with that, we were able to get a grant from the government and try to make some training tapes with interagency cooperation, with our fire, our police and others government entities to develop some ways and procedures to help people understand what to do and how to do

it.

SESNO: Do you make the decision? Or does this guy sitting in front of you, Doug Duncan make the decision ...

WEAST: ... it goes all the way up to our incident command structure. First of all we've got good relationships. And it automatically flips over and it depends on the situation. If it's a school situation, I'll make. If it gets to be a disaster situation, it goes to the county all the way up to the federal government. So, we're all linked together.

SESNO: Want to come over here. Ken Wall with the Department of Homeland Security. And your job at the moment is to try to oversee the national capital region using incredibly complicated relationships, jurisdiction - and is there a place for people to go for all this information beside washingtonpost.com? I'll plug it again. The personal preparedness guide has a lot of it. Ready.gov has a lot of it. But it's very germane and specific to this region.

KEN WALL, ACTING DIRECTOR, DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY, NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION: I think there is a lot of places. I think all the jurisdictions have put out there their preparedness guides. I know the District has. Arlington County has. Ready.gov is another source of information. So, right now there's a lot of places to go. There

is not just one place to go. And I think the point that Dan Tangereny made that there has to be some personal responsibility. That citizens take it onto themselves to go and seek that information. Because it is out there and available in a lot of places.

The other thing that I would like to point out, is that, you know, the need for a comprehensive regional information campaign and strategy has been recognized. Some of the resources that are coming into the region, the decision makers at the state and local level have agreed that we need a comprehensive campaign to really take the education to the citizens is the next level.

SESNO: One of the groups we haven't heard invoked yet today, - thanks very much - is the private sector. We've talked about citizens. We've talked about government. We've talked about first responders. We've talked about political leaders. But the private sector. George Radenberg, you work with the council of Governments - I had a conversation not very long ago with somebody from Northern Virginia and said - you know, I represent a lot of businesses. I know a lot of businesses. We don't know who we would call? What number we would dial? Or what we would do in the event of a terrorist attack? Is that a common sense?

GEORGE RADENBERG: I think among non-critical infrastructure industries and sectors, the business community doesn't know exactly what is expected of them.

SESNO: What should be expected of them?

RADENBERG: Well, I think we have - we have now since the 9/11, gotten business and the non-profit sector into the emergency preparedness council with all of these government biases ...

SESNO: ... to do what?

RADENBERG: Basically to plan and design the system that you've heard described to assure that the business perspectives and resources are brought to bear. But what we haven't done yet, is brought to bear all of the assets of the business community and the distribution to our work force in terms of information and education ...

SESNO: ... assets such as?

RADENBERG: Such as kitchen facilities, mass care facilities, parking lots, cranes, trucks, - we have in the business community an enormous variety of assets that could be both inventoried and brought to bare to help the public sector in times of a mass incident.

We also have a work force that we communicate with every single day and where we can get information to them in a much more controlled environment. And way that perhaps permits adoption rates to pick up as opposed to just talking to people. And yet still having them not know how to get the information even though it's there. You know, there's a lot of colleges and universities and lot of businesses in this community. And a lot of non-profit agencies in this community that speak to their people everyday.

SESNO: Patricia McGinnis, you actually have a business. I'm going to come over here to a question in just a moment. In fact if we can move a microphone down to the second row here, I'll come over in just a second to take your question.

But you actually run a business. I mean you're located ...

MCGINNIS: ... well it's a non-profit but ...

SESNO: ... it's a non-profit, OK ...

MCGINNIS: ... yes ...

SESNO: ... point well taken. In the District, all right ...

MCGINNIS: ... yes ...

SESNO: ... do you know what to do? Are you in constant touch with people? Do your employees know where they would go? What your responsibility is? What the building management would do in the event of?

MCGINNIS: The building management has provided plans and instructions. And we've shared those with our employees. I think that going beyond - a lot of what's happening with building owners, building managers which has been terrific - from my perspective it would be great if I had something that I could hang on our employee bulletin board that said in ten simply steps, you know. The things you need to know. The things you need to do in case of an emergency. Perhaps with the evacuation routes. With a telephone number, contact numbers, et cetera. In addition to more extensive plans that the leadership would be more familiar with.

WILLIAMS: One of the things we've tried to encourage in our neighborhoods and in some cases in our workplaces is really getting people involved in something called emergency response team, citizens emergency response teams. Because often - think about it. In a real emergency the first responders maybe people on your block. It maybe people in your workplace. In my dream there would be these kinds of response teams around the region. And if you want information, go to the member of your response team. And get that information. And use that person as a liaison, and for guidance in an emergency.

MCGINNIS: The problem with that now is that so few people are even aware of that possibility much less getting trained. I look for example at a survey, a citizen course survey. Only eight percent of the people in the country even know what that is. You know, much less this particular program. So, we've got a lot of work to do to in lists those volunteers and get them trained if that scenario can work.

SESNO: Secretary ...

RIDGE: I think it's very important to underscore that there is an enormous volume of information about different kinds of events that are available across the country. But we really do need to engage the educators -and superintendent I applaud that effort. I suspect that the parents of the kids going to your schools - there is protocol that they understand. And you took the initiative to do that. The county executives do that. The business community has both an opportunity and I think a responsibility to do that. And I think what we're seeing nationally is that more and more groups and organizations are taking it upon themselves to be part of that public information campaign.

You won't be able to get everything from this TV special. You'll be able to pick it all out of portal. But it needs to be a constant, constant exchange of information. We'll have to set priorities. I mean there is just wealth of information out there. Each region sets its own priorities. Knows what their needs are. Around here they're talking about evacuation. Around here they're talking information sharing. We know what we need to do. But we also need citizens and groups, businesses, non-profits, and academic institution to help us get that information out.

SESNO: Well, let me turn that question to audience. And I've got a question here and I'll come to you in just a minute. I promise. How many of your realistically would volunteer your time on the subject of homeland security, to help with homeland security? Realistically?

How many of you would spend two hours a week working outside your home on homeland security? How many of you are doing that now? Now those of you who work at homeland security, it doesn't count. Put your hands down. You cannot double dip, sorry.

Let me be very precise here. How many of you who don't work in the homeland security, first responders sector, now volunteer your time with respect to homeland security. What do you do?

Police reserve officer. He doesn't have a mike over there. So, let me just talk - what do you do? Louder - American Red Cross. How about somebody up top? Scream loud. What do you do? Another American Red Cross. What do you do?

UNIDENTIFIED PARTICIPANT: ... CERT team at George Mason University.

UNIDENTIFIED PARTICIPANT: ... CERT team at George Mason University.

UNIDENTIFIED PARTICIPANT: What do you do with the CERT team? Why don't you stand up. Tell us your name.

DORIS FELON: I'm Doris Felon with the CERT team ...

SESNO: ... what do you do with the CERT ...

FELON: ... university.

UNIDENTIFIED PARTICIPANT: ... what do you do with the CERT team?

FELON: The search team is - it guess the first response to an emergency at the university.

SESNO: So, what do you actually do? I mean what are you trained to do?

FELON: We're trained to recon - to go into - be aware of what's happening in the building. Do some search and rescue. And basic triage and first aid.

SESNO: So, you want more of that across the country?

RIDGE: I mean it seems like there are a lot of people here who - well let's first of all I think - I've told you before this is an unique place. I think people understand their place, their role, and the possibility of subsequent attack. So, everybody has embodied this. It's pretty clear that you've got a high level of individual citizen and organizational participation. We need that to be spread across the country. It is to be applauded but it's also to be applied.

SESNO: Tom Manger, can this be applied in Montgomery County? You got a bunch of people, you know, 100,000 ...

MANGER: ... absolutely. But it requires time, effort and money to get that organized and have it in such forum that when they're needed, there's a very formal, organized fashion to get them ...

SESNO: ... have you got that time and money to do that?

MANGER: We're working on it. But It's going require time and more money.

SESNO: Is that a no?

MANGER: No that's a yes. It's a yes. OK. Here we go. Thank you.

DUNCAN: We have certsearch teams working the county now. We've been doing this for some time. (INAUDIBLE).

SESNO: How many people would say?

MANGER: I don't have the numbers, but we have teams set up that are doing this and they are a part of our emergency response.

SESNO: These are neighborhood organized. How are these set up?

MANGER: We are training neighborhood people to respond, to be the eyes and ears for us, to reach out to their neighbors ...

SESNO: ... somebody lives in Montgomery County and they hear this and they want to participate. Who do they call? How do they do ...

MANGER: ... they go on Montgomery County MD.gov and look up how to

apply and how to get involved in the program. Or they say call our volunteer center. They call the police department. They call the fire and rescue service.

SESNO: Question over here.

ROBERT BRANDOM: I think the Mayor and the District Governor needs to be commended for what this education program for community emergency preparedness in the education of the District of Columbia. I think the Mayor has taken the lead of that. And I think the information management that he has put out and these offices of emergency management put out is a benchmark to other jurisdictions should follow. Question for - I'm not on that payroll. Question for Secretary Ridge - my name is Robert Brandom [BRANNON?]. I'm from north capital neighborhood development. We operator community development programs and the north capital main street program. Wouldn't it be very effective use of federal resources if you are trying to reach the community if federal government would send more resources to local community development organizations that are knee deep in the community?

RIDGE: Well the federal government is sending \$8 billion to state and local governments to date. And by the end of this year, it will be in excess of 10. And so, the federal government has made the commitment to the states and locals. If they'd make that as part of their strategic plan in terms of sharing information, getting people involved in citizens' core and the like. There is plenty of money to do that. It's a matter of communities and states setting their own priorities. The federal government has distributed, has available for distribution that kind of support. (INAUDIBLE).

SESNO: I'm sorry, Dr. (INAUDIBLE), your answer. If people wanted to contribute as they did in Montgomery county and presumably in Fairfax county and elsewhere, can they do it in the hospitals, can they do it in the public health system? Is there a need for that?

AYENSU: Yes there is.

SESNO: What could people do?

AYENSU: People can volunteer. We do have what we call our bio-terrorism medical action team, which was put in place prior to the medical reserve core. It is basically the same thing. We've been recruiting since 2002. We currently have 5700 volunteers ...

SESNO: ... 5700 volunteers.

AYENSU: That's right.

SESNO: In Fairfax County alone?

AYENSU: Yes.

SESNO: What are they doing?

AYENSU: We have physicians, we have nurses. But we need more nurses. We actually are on our way to put out a mass recruitment effort for our nurses. But we have non-medical volunteers for clinic support. And that we approach the school system for that. We got about 4500 people from the school system to volunteer for that. And there have been training sessions that have gone on for the physicians. We've also done one session with the school system. And we plan to do

more.

We're looking at web based systems for example. Because as the numbers grow it makes it more difficult for us to have these individualized training's.

SESNO: Gerry Connolly do you want to pop in here?

CONNOLLY: Just to follow up on that. For example one of the uses of that - the television the video showed a little while ago - what about the introduction of smallpox. In Fairfax county, we have a

plan to inoculate every many woman and child in our county within 72 hours by commandeering the schools and using that volunteer force to make sure everybody gets inoculated.

SESNO: OK. Jerry Hauer. ??? [notes show Schwartz spoke next]

SCHWARTZ: If I could please. Many of these programs are in existence in a lot of places. And we do have community involvement in a lot of places. What we are really missing is an opportunity, to sort of measure some best practices and export them to other communities. And that I believe is an area that Homeland Security can really help us with by attaching some of the funding to some best practices. When we identify things like citizen core and CERT? and medical reserve core which are all at work in Arlington County. And we know that they are of value in other communities. We should be saying that the only way that you're going to getting funding from the federal government is have some of these particular components of a response system in your community.

SESNO: So, you're asking that fellow next to you for more money.

SCHWARTZ: No I'm not. Because here's the problem that we're having right now. A lot of the money that we have, we are restricted in how we can use it. We are going to reach a point where we cannot use the money any more, we can't buy any more toys. There is no more equipment that needs to be purchased. It takes people to manage a lot of these systems. And in many cases we cannot get the people with this funding to be able to go out into the community and do more citizen education. Establish citizen core, train CERT?, that is on the back of the locals. Where we are now currently diverting resources from within our own budgets to address some of those ...

SESNO: ... we've put a lot of emphasis here on what citizens might do within the context of Sert , government, or within the hospitals. I want to talk for a moment about what they do to protect themselves. Amy Smithson is with us. She's with the Center for Strategic and International Studies. You are an expert in bio-terrorism and other things. What about people going out and buying their own Cipro. Or buying gas masks. Preparing their own chemical suits. Do you have thoughts on that? I mean would that be a smart thing to do? I can have a gas mask in my house. There are easy to get aren't they?

AMY SMITHSON, SENIOR FELLOW, CENTER FOR STRATEGIC AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES: But you don't have your gas mask here do you. And if the incident has occurred here, that gas mask is going to do no good. And if the gas mask doesn't have the proper filters it's not going to do you any good. If it's not fitted and you don't have it with you, again you have a nice piece of equipment sitting somewhere that will not help you in an emergency.

SESNO: Well, you're very smart about all these things.

SMITHSON: Thank you.

SESNO: What should we do?

SMITHSON: By the way, you blew up my office building in your scenario a little while ago.

SESNO: Oh, well. NOW's your chance for renovation.

SMITHSON: Well, if we were in here and for example one of our speakers killed over. I would worry that they were having a seizure or perhaps heart attack. But two or more of our esteemed guests killed over, I would know that perhaps there is a toxic (INAUDIBLE) in the area. And we all need to get out. I would be putting this in front of mouth and I would be getting outside and then I would just forget modesty. That's the time to shuck your clothes. Because

getting your clothes off of you, you're going to get rid of at least 80 percent of the contamination hazard.

And I'm going to be looking for water. Because I need to wash my skin, my hair, my face, anything else that might be exposed. And some where along the line, I hopefully would have called 911 and informed local rescuers that there is a possible toxic event going on.

SESNO: OK. Thank you very much. Very practical information. You are with Verizon, one of our major infrastructure companies, right. Because you call out the phones. Tell us who you are and what you do there.

KATHERINE LEWIS: I'm Katherine Lewis and I'm head of the crisis communication team for the Washington area.

SESNO: So, in any of these scenarios, I assume, because it happened on 9/11 right? Everybody jump on their telephones and their cell phones. And Verizon can that system handle it? Will we be able to communicate with one another? One of the things you say is have a family plan right? Know where people are? People are going to get on the phone to figure that out. What happens?

KATHERINE LEWIS: Well after 9/11 and also when the power went down, the black out and Isabel, our network was strained. In those incidences we took almost double the amount of traffic that we normally would take. And since then, some of the things that we've learned is: one, we've expanded capacity. The other thing that we've learned is that we need to educate the public about being judicious in their use of the network immediately following some kind of accident like that. So, the network has been expanded. We are confident that we can carry the traffic. But at the same time we need the help of the public to be educated about how to use the network following.

SESNO: OK. Thank you very much. I would like to take two or three questions from the audience now directed right to the panel. Ma'am if I can do that for you very quickly. You name and your question.

UNIDENTIFIED PARTICIPANT: My name is (INAUDIBLE). My question is concerning the gentlemen over there. There are shots. I'm a victim of the DPT shot. But I have to have another shot. I might not make it. What in the medical field is going to protect me and people who are victims or DPT shot?

SESNO: Dr. Addo-Ayensu, you want to try that?

ADDO-AYENSU: I didn't hear the question. What?

UNIDENTIFIED PARTICIPANT: That was very difficult to hear, Frank.

SESNO: I'm sorry. I didn't realize that was ...

UNIDENTIFIED PARTICIPANT: ... the DPT shots that I was given July 30th, 1949. I had a bad reaction to that.

SESNO: So, the DPT shot that she had might get in the way of other inoculations she might have. I might even broaden the question out. People will have particular and peculiar medical conditions. They maybe very personal. If you're as we heard in Fairfax County trying to immunize an entire county, a million people for smallpox - how will people be able to get the information quickly enough to know whether that is danger or threat to them?

UNIDENTIFIED PARTICIPANT: (INAUDIBLE).

ADDO-AYENSU: Again this goes to the up public education. I think that correctly so, there are contra indication to medications, to vaccines and so on. And it's not for everyone. And well have to make that available to the public. Again at the dispensing sites, there's a process to screen people and to see if they are really are

appropriate for them to take either the medication or vaccine.

SESNO: Question from that side of the room. Right there. Sir.

JOE ODO: Joe Odo. I just wanted to ask- the lady over there said that the gas mask would do no good. What you suggest? Is there anything we can do? Or just forget the whole idea.

SESNO: Why don't you stand and answer that yourself.

SMITHSON: The gas mask is going to do you good if it has proper filter. Is fitted. And you have it with you when you need it. And which case it's going to come in right handy. But I don't see anybody in here carrying around gas masks. So, the best thing you have to help you there is your head. And what I gave you was the receipt for how to get out of the building quickly. And take measures to increase your chances of surviving a toxic event. And I can reverse that scenario and tell you what to do from the outside in too.

SESNO: Dr. Hanfling.

HANFLING: You know, when we studied the use of civilian gas mask in the Israeli Gulf war back in the early 90's, it was pointed out that there was more civilian deaths from in appropriate use of gas mask than there were from the Scud missiles. And that's a very important point to take home. And again part of the public education that's so important to share with our, you know, with nation.

SESNO: (INAUDIBLE) you work up there on Capitol Hill. Last I read, you have gas masks available.

GAINER: But I do think we always have to keep this in context where the threat is. I mean we have to be careful that we're not spreading panic. So, one of the good things that are going on is the intelligence community is working very hard. And the law enforcement in all their brethren are doing that. So, not everyone needs to carry a gas mask. It has very limited use under a very limited set of circumstances. So, if the threat is low, those aren't the type of things you're suppose do.

SESNO: But you didn't yours with you here.

UNIDENTIFIED PARTICIPANT: I did not because it's not needed here.

SESNO: That's reassuring. Thank you very much. I appreciate the comments. Because it's important point. And let me see if we can go over - right on the aisle here. This gentleman here. If you can stand. Give us your name. A very brief question, please.

MICHAEL WILLINGHAM: Michael Willingham - my comment is in relation to personal responsibility. I think one of the greatest barriers to personal responsibility is the lack of clear signals regarding the nature of threats. Yellow, yellow elevated, yellow and half. Most of the public doesn't know what the implications are for them. How these decisions are being made. And I think if people had a clear understanding, they would have much more - much greater willingness to take personal responsibility.

SESNO: Doug Duncan, what do you when it goes to code orange in your county?

DUNCAN: We make sure that we've got all of the emergency people that they can be called in at a moment's notice. That we've got contact numbers. That they know that it's a state of a higher alert.

SESNO: Do you know what it means?

DUNCAN: It means that...

SESNO: I mean is there an immediate threat to you in the county?

DUNCAN: No. It means that there's sort of a general threat, an elevated threat level throughout the country. It's not specific to any particular area. We hope we never go to a code red. But it means

that we are ready to respond in a moment's notice.

SESNO: Arlington County, what's Arlington County doing. It's Orange now.

SCHWARTZ: Very similar. We've making sure that our emergency responders are prepared. We're checking our gear perhaps a little bit more closely. We actually in the last go around of code orange, we did what we call a reverse 911 call to every home in the county, encouraging them to subscribe to our Arlington alert system.

SESNO: You called out to every home in the county.

SCHWARTZ: We have reverse 911. We called every home in the county and encouraged them to sign up for our Arlington Alert.

SESNO: Does the District of Columbia have that ability?

WILLIAMS: Yes, we do.

SESNO: So, do you do that as well?

WILLIAMS: What we basically do is go through the same measures that they're talking about as you move to code orange. It's essentially keeping people at a higher state of readiness and preparedness.

SESNO: Jerry Hauer, is this common technology? And is this something that every - anybody here gotten a reverse 911 call? A few of you?

HAUER: No, Frank, the technology is easy as the Mayor said. It's available. A lot of communities have not engaged it. But it's readily available. It's not that expensive. And we've seen a couple models of this region.

SESNO: We have talked a lot today folks about what citizens can do, what businesses can or should do or might want. One of the things that hasn't come up, is something that didn't come up - how many students and others from the George Mason University community here? A lot. On the university campus, and President Merten is here with us, we know that it's a very diverse community. And with some of the students, the young people we were talking with, we asked them what homeland security meant to them, Secretary Ridge, and they said not much. They said not much.

They said they don't think about it much. But what did come up was a concern that they or their friends might have to be compromised in their own freedom and their own liberty. In particular, the Islamic students we had in the class. And we asked them to go out and talk to some people they knew so we could hear that perspective. And I'd like you to take a look at that now.

(BEGIN VIDEOTAPE).

UNIDENTIFIED PARTICIPANT: Muslims in this country are in a crisis situation right now because September 11th, has caused a lot of negative attention to be placed on the Muslim community. And there's a confusion about whether or not American Muslims will sympathize with the aims and objectives of some of their more extreme co-religion that's outside of the country.

UNIDENTIFIED PARTICIPANT: There have been a few times where I've felt looked upon as being anti American. This is the way I was born. This is the way I was raised. I'm American. Just because I made a personal decision regarding faith, it doesn't make me a bad person. It doesn't make me any less an American.

UNIDENTIFIED PARTICIPANT: When my children watch on television and say that's school, or to say those are my friends who's homes were raided, these are individuals that I know who are some of the best citizens in America, who are being treated as if somehow rather they are combatant aliens.

UNIDENTIFIED PARTICIPANT: You know, (INAUDIBLE) these days thinking that someone's listening to my phone calls or reading my e-mails.

UNIDENTIFIED PARTICIPANT: Muslims believe that if they don't give charity and they have wealth that Allah will punish them. Instead of by check and credit card, they're doing it in cash and they're doing in secret. They know if they write a check that the government will subpoena the records of the legal 501 (c ) 3 not for profit that obeys the law and keeps the record of all of its donors that that person is going to come up now on a watch list.

UNIDENTIFIED PARTICIPANT: The question from Muslim Americans today is to what extent they are Americans who happen to be Muslim or Muslims who happen to be American.

(END VIDEOTAPE).

SESNO: Alan Merten, President of George Mason University. Are these sentiments that you hear a lot from your very diverse population

her?

ALAN MERTEN: I look back at 9-11, and I remember two things. One seeing all of our Muslim students on campus, and then again seeing all of our students who either were employed in the Pentagon or who's parents were employed in the Pentagon. The kinds of issues that our students have raised are real. As was said in the piece. They're Americans. They're Muslims. And there's some concern as how are they looked at in the context of homeland security and beyond.

SESNO: From the context of running a university, recruiting students, bringing people in from overseas, exchange students, that kind of thing, things changed a lot?

MERTEN: Things have changed, and it bothers all of us in higher education. One of the strengths of the United States is our ability to attract students from around the world. And it's one of the ways that the world finds out about this great country. And all of a sudden it's more difficult to get students from around the world in to our universities, particularly there's some concerns of students coming to the greater Washington area. Be they come to the schools in the district in Maryland or in Virginia.

SESNO: Mr. Secretary, this is something you've heard across the country, I know. And I'd like to give you an opportunity here to respond. And tell us how you balance the real need for additional security, when in fact, these attacks have come from the Muslim world? And the ability to protect the rights and the freedoms of every Muslim or Muslim American in this country?

RIDGE: Well I believe that throughout the department, but more importantly throughout this country, we have to understand the kind of nation that we are. And that we are open. And we are welcoming. And we are diverse. And at every level of government, and in every opportunity we have to publicly condemn the stereotyping of individuals. Because literally we have millions of Muslim Americans contributing to the educational, the cultural, the social, the economic diversity of this country.

We have a vision statement that says we need to first preserve our freedoms, then protect America. You can't defend freedom and individual liberty and then forsake it. And so, every single day within the Department of Homeland Security as we go out to even consider an initiative to make us more secure and safer. At the same time, we consider whether or not we're infringing on anybody's individual rights in the process. We can't afford to do that. The terrorists win if...

SESNO: Who else wants to jump in on this part of conversation? Anybody? Tom Manger go ahead.

MANGER: It is a balancing act. It's a very difficult balancing act,

because I think that the American public certainly has - wants the law enforcement community to be very aggressive in terms of preventing another attack on this country. And I agree with everything the Secretary said.

While we have to be very aggressive to try and identify those that would do us harm, we need to also make sure that we're protecting the rights of everybody in this country. And it's not an easy one size fits all formula to do that.

SESNO: Question or comment from...

ALLEN VEJDANI: Allen Vejdani, President of the Council of Civic Associations for the city of Fairfax. I was born in Iran. I was raised a Muslim. I think most of the problem is the appearance. Because I deal with the people, and if I would have a turban on my head, most likely people some of them resent that. And there will be some prejudices. But I myself, very active in the community, and I don't see any of these prejudices after 9-11 or before 9-11.

SESNO: OK. Anybody else? No. I'd like to shift, if I may, we've got one other here. No.

I want to shift in the final part of our conversation to ask those of you in the audience to help our panelists and our elected leaders and our first responders whom you've heard here throughout this conversation. Maybe something's occurred to you, a suggestion, an idea, a recommendation, something you'd like to volunteer for. Or something you'd like to put on their radar screen? An opportunity for Mayor Williams, County Executive Duncan, Chairman Connolly just say so, to hear from you, although I know you do it all of the time, hear from people all of the time.

So, let me start back all the way in the back in the corner, we'll let Brian get over to you with a microphone. And I'd like to ask you to keep these short and sweet, so that we can hear from several of you.

DOUG HANSON: I'm Doug Hanson, Fairfax County Department of Transportation. One thing that is of concern to us we talk about moving traffic out of Washington DC and through the county, but if the traffic signal systems do not have emergency power backup because power is likely to go out in a devastating attack. We think that money should be dedicated so that we can get back up power to the traffic signals to keep the traffic moving.

SESNO: Backup power to the traffic signals.

UNIDENTIFIED PARTICIPANT: An excellent point.

SESNO: Serious problem?

UNIDENTIFIED PARTICIPANT: Excellent point.

SESNO: Do you have backup power?

UNIDENTIFIED PARTICIPANT: No. We found that in the Hurricane Isabel we had a problem with many intersections getting power.

UNIDENTIFIED PARTICIPANT: After Hurricane Andrew, we had hundreds of intersections without power.

UNIDENTIFIED PARTICIPANT: Right.

UNIDENTIFIED PARTICIPANT: It took up to a week, almost, to get that back at all of the intersections. That's something's we're working with Pat. We've got backup power in some of them. We're looking at putting it in others. And we're (INAUDIBLE) for emergency restoration efforts.

SESNO: What would it take? And how much would cost to do that, do you think?

UNIDENTIFIED PARTICIPANT: I don't have the numbers for each intersection, but it's a lot of money per intersection.

SESNO: Is that money that comes from...

UNIDENTIFIED PARTICIPANT: It would take - if you have 1,000 signal intersections, it would take 1,000 generators. And that requires somebody to house them, maintain them, and deliver them where they're needed. It's not an easy proposition.

SESNO: But you're working - we're working - go ahead...

UNIDENTIFIED PARTICIPANT: Like I said, it's not on (INAUDIBLE) water backup, in Fairfax County we lost our water for a little bit of time. To provide back up generators for that will cost \$50 million.

SESNO: Pocket change, right. A lot of money. Ma'am, thought, suggestion or comment.

UNIDENTIFIED PARTICIPANT: I live in Arlington very near the Pentagon. And when 9-11 happened, my neighbors went out in the street and started directing traffic. So, there is an alternate for the power backup. I think we need to be trained. I think we need to feel empowered to do it. And the Arlington Emergency has been wonderful in terms of the Internet information that I get on a regular basis in my community.

SESNO: How about training people to direct traffic?

UNIDENTIFIED PARTICIPANT: I think that's part of - once our citizens who elect to go through CERT training go through the CERT training modules. We do an add on for traffic management to teach them to direct traffic.

SESNO: Another thought here. Ma'am, why don't you come out to the end here. While you do that, I want to ask Thomas here who's with the critical infrastructure protection project at the university here. You heard this conversation, two or three suggestions, ideas come to mine?

THOMAS: Yes. One of the things that we heard, we did a small study on Hurricane Isabel, and we heard that there was a need for better coordination among the communication. That meant at the emergency operations centers. Basically, getting a standard process where the industry had representatives and a common theme message was happening during a casualty. That would be one.

And I think the other would be, we do need more research. We need more studies done to determine really what backup requirements are, not just to go out and buy all of the generators we think we might need.

SESNO: OK. A thousand generators is a lot of generators. Very quickly, ma'am.

UNIDENTIFIED PARTICIPANT: I think we've talked a lot about communication that that's the key and beyond that trust. The trust - and I'm taking this to a personal level. I read recently that there was an order signed by the President that - I mean historically CDC and NIH had been organization, if I didn't trust any other of the government, I trusted them. He has made an order that all of their information has to be funneled through the White House. That leaves me feeling betrayed.

SESNO: Is true Mr. Secretary? I - do you want to comment on that? All of the information funneled through the White House.

RIDGE: That's not accurate. I'm quite - I don't know the context within which you made the statement, or frankly it's very difficult to respond to it, but our mission and within our department, we have accessed information that is generated around the federal government. And part of our mission is to get that information down

to the state and local governments. Today, the Mayor and I

introduced a system that by the end of the year, we'll get access to - will take us to 50 states, and the 50 largest urban area and first responders, so we can share information.

The most important thing we can do at any level of government whether it's in - and I said preparation, preparation, preparation, is share information so people can act on it. That's what we need to do. It's not a matter of the President restricting information. He is in fact seeing to it that it is out and to be delivered around the country. I don't know the context. I really don't know what you're talking about.

SESNO: OK. We are going to Mr. Secretary use those comments about information to take this part of the conversation and say that it has been a thorough, and complete, provocative. We have seen areas where more work needs to be done. We've heard from citizens who want to be doing more themselves. Businesses that want to be more involved. So, in the end, it's up to all of us as citizens to be more informed, to know what to do, to know whether gas masks work or are a waste of our time and money. To know whom to contact to get information. Again, I've mentioned WashingtonPost.com, and also the Ready.gov at preparedness guides, and very user friendly citizen information. It's a start to this conversation.

It's going to go on for quite some time. Unfortunately, because we do remain Target Washington. Thanks for joining us. And we wish you all the best.

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