



“Global Tempest”

SPF Hosts U.S. Members of Congress, Executive Branch Officials to Discuss Challenges Posed by Avian Influenza

—EXERCISE SUMMARY—

Members of Congress met with senior-level Executive Branch officials on Tuesday, February 6, 2007, to discuss the domestic and international challenges still posed by the deadly H5N1 avian influenza virus. In *Global Tempest*, a table-top exercise hosted by the Strategic Policy Forum (SPF), participants explored the critical national security issues associated with this potential U.S. public health crisis in a not-for-attribution setting at National Defense University’s Institute for National Strategic Studies—the first in a series of SPF events scheduled for 2007.



Acting-ASD Pete Verga stresses bird flu’s unique threat to U.S. preparations. He also delivered closing remarks.

Over the course of the morning exercise, Representatives from geographically-diverse constituencies across the United States grappled with the domestic demands of disease surveillance, vaccine and antiviral dissemination, and healthcare capacity. The complexity of the global security environment became clear as the Members contemplated how their decisions at home would affect relations abroad. To be sure, none of the participants left *Global Tempest* with the feeling that simple solutions would resolve an avian influenza pandemic upon reaching U.S. shores.

The Honorable Ryan Henry, Principal Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, opened the morning’s events with an address that highlighted nine key observations about this particular national security threat. Mr. Henry—who also participated in a recent state-level iteration of the *Global Tempest* exercise in Honolulu, Hawaii, and was in attendance for the exercise’s first Washington, D.C. execution—highlighted the need to find innovative ways to communicate the government’s actions and to question previously held assumptions about the threat posed by this unique, potentially global disease. Mr. Henry remarked also that public-private cooperation will be absolutely essential.

Several Members of the House of Representatives took part in this forum, joined by Federal participants from various departments including Defense, State, Treasury, and Agriculture. Subject matter experts from the National Institutes of Health, the Centers for Disease Control, USAID, and other Federal offices offered their individual perspectives and expertise, oftentimes simply highlighting the unpredictable nature of a mutating and rapidly-spreading contagion.

It remains clear that pandemic influenza will continue to challenge the international community, U.S. government, and American people for the foreseeable future. Emergence of a new flu virus with any resemblance to the one that devastated the world in 1918 would have significant implications for the United States. The *Global Tempest* scenario sought to capture the pressure of time and scarcity of accurate information policy-makers would likely face if the actual human-to-human flu strain were to arrive in the U.S.



Maj Gen Joseph Kelley contributes his expertise on resource deployment during a public health crisis at SPF's *Global Tempest*.

In a plenary, “hot wash” discussion immediately following the exercise, a number of attendees remarked that *Global Tempest* brought new information to their attention, and combined it with a realistic portrayal of the effects a catastrophic public health emergency would have on domestic resources. Mr. Peter F. Verga, Acting Assistant Secretary of Defense for Homeland Defense and America’s Security Affairs, and LtGen Frances C. Wilson, President, NDU, delivered the closing remarks. Both observed that the strongest way forward is with continued vigilance and cooperation across all levels of government.

This iteration of *Global Tempest* marks the nineteenth in a series of Strategic Policy Forum events. These crisis-simulation exercises are designed to give Members of Congress and senior government officials insights into the complexity of policymaking in the current global security environment. In addition, they serve to illuminate policy and organizational options for enhancing national security and the pursuit of U.S. interests. More than one hundred twenty Members of Congress have participated, with many taking part in several exercises.

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