



## "Scarlet Shield"

### SPF Holds Fourth Secretary of Defense Strategic Policy Forum ~ Exercise Summary ~

#### Overview

The Institute for National Strategic Studies' (INSS) National Strategic Gaming Center (NSGC) held the fourth in a series of Strategic Policy Forums on July 15, 2003 at the National Defense University (NDU).

These crisis-simulation exercises, an initiative of Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, are designed to give senior government officials insights into the nuances and complexities of policymaking in the current global security environment and to illuminate policy and organizational options. They also seek to improve dialogue between the Executive-Legislative branches of the Federal government on critical national security issues. Insights from the simulations are shared with key policymakers. Deputy Secretary of Defense Wolfowitz captured the essence of the program by the following, "We live in the real world, where painful choices have to be made - choices in terms of budgets, force size, deployments, the use of cutting-edge technology, even the way the Department of Defense is organized. And to make sure we make the right choices, we need to consider different possibilities."



*NDU President Lt Gen Michael Dunn  
welcomes Secretary of Defense  
Donald Rumsfeld*

Lt Gen Michael Dunn, USAF, NDU President, welcomed participants to the Strategic Policy Forum. Secretary Rumsfeld and Assistant Secretary for Public Health Emergency Preparedness at the Department of Health and Human Services, Jerry Hauer, opened the *Scarlet Shield* exercise, noting that interactions among federal, state, and local officials -- such as those afforded by the Forums -- are essential when addressing the complex security problems the nation confronts today. These challenges require us to prepare a variety of contingencies, many of them involving asymmetric threats on our National security.

Thirteen Members of Congress participated in the exercise along with senior Executive Branch officials including the Secretary of Defense and representatives from the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Homeland Defense and the Office of Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs; U.S. Northern Command; The Joint Staff; Federal Bureau of Investigation; the Department of Homeland Security - Emergency Preparedness and Response; and the Department of Health and Human Services - Public Health Emergency Preparedness and the U.S. Surgeon General. State and Local perspectives were provided by representatives from the State of Minnesota and New York City's Office of Emergency Management.



*Facilitated by Erik Kjonnerod, National Strategic Gaming Center, participants discuss challenges presented in **Scarlet Shield**.*

### The Threat of Bioterrorism and the Challenge of Health Response

*Scarlet Shield* opened with a review of the complexities of detection and prevention of a biological terrorism attack and the challenges of formulating national policy with ambiguous indications and warnings. Multiple releases of a biological agent allowed participants to evaluate the implications of a national security crisis requiring significant healthcare capacity. Exercise *Scarlet Shield* provided a forum for information exchange and decision-making in the context of such a major national security crisis. Participants examined the gravity, complexity, and difficulty inherent in responding to issues that would arise in a bioterror attack of national scope coincident with ongoing military operations and a large-scale contingency deployment of U.S. Armed Forces. They also assessed the economic effects of this notional incident, response options once the perpetrator had been identified, and the technological tools available to enabling early intervention.

Following the exercise conclusion, Members of Congress shared their insights and policy recommendations with Assistant Secretary of Defense for Homeland Defense Paul McHale and HHS Assistant Secretary for Public Health Emergency Preparedness Jerry Hauer. Participants were afforded a better understanding of the health care sector's critical role in national security and the subsequent impact of bioterrorism on military readiness and national defense. Participants shared the following insights:

The potential impact of certain bioterror weapons warrants significant investment in detection, prevention, and local preparedness.



*HHS Assistant Secretary Jerry Hauer shares insights with Congressional participants.*

Response to infectious disease outbreak would need to be immediate and aggressive. Public health and non-governmental medical care infrastructure have the primary response role; medical care surge capacity is required.

Preparedness at all levels is essential to contain disease spread, treat the ill, and prevent death. Response plans should be coordinated vertically and exercised. Individual preparedness also essential.

The exercise highlighted DoD's limited response role in bioterror attacks and the need to protect force health in order to sustain ongoing operations and project power.

A coherent public communications plan would be critical to calming the public, maintaining their confidence, and managing of the disease; the President's voice is key. Ambiguous public alerts could prove counterproductive by exacerbating panic and the worried well.

The concept of quarantine should be revisited. Movement restrictions should allow for provision of essential goods and services and consideration of the significant economic impact must be included in that decision process.

The exercise was enthusiastically received by the bipartisan group of Congressional Members with several suggesting that their Congressional colleagues should be encouraged to attend future Strategic Policy Forums.

### **Additional Information**

More Strategic Policy Forum exercises are being planned. For further information, please contact Col Chris Goggins, USAF, Director, at 202-685-4827 or e-mail at [gogginsc@ndu.edu](mailto:gogginsc@ndu.edu).