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EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS AND CRISIS MANAGEMENT
SHARING BEST PRACTICES ACROSS THE ATLANTIC
3rd Workshop on Homeland Security
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The Five Lessons

Intervention of:

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Department of Homeland Security

Thank you for your introduction, Steven (Breyen, Finmeccanica President), and welcome Mr Ambassador (His Excellency Giulio Terzi di Sant'Agata, Ambassador of Italy to the United States), and Ing Grossi (CEO SELEX SI), please welcome you as well, I'm delighted particularly at the joint US-Italian sponsorship of this event. We have had a terrific relationship over the years that I was Secretary for Homeland Security, and previously when I was head of the Criminal Division at the Department of Justice, we worked really closely with our Italian counterpart, and there was a very strong and warm relationship. I have to observe in particularly your current Foreign Minister Franco Frattini is a good friend, I worked with him when he was in the European Commission for a long period of time.

This year is a particularly interesting year to serve as a backup for the themes of this Conference, because in the last years, slightly more in the last year, I think we have seen an illustration of two important dimensions which are highlighted by the Conference. One is the fact that emergencies come in all flavours and in all different shapes and sizes, some of them being natural disasters that we have seen, some of them being natural disasters or threats that are unusual, and then some actually being insensate man-made acts of terror. And on the same time I think what has been illustrated is how global emergencies and threats are, touching people around the world and also requiring a coordinated response on a multinational basis.

Let me give three examples that come to mind over the past year.

Three examples



The first obviously is the earthquake we just talked about, that occurred in Italy but because of the fact of the G8 Summit that was soon to follow, it did touch other Nations, resulting in a change of plans, in the way that they had to be organized and executed, but also calls for responses of systems all around the world.

Of course earthquakes and disasters are with us year and year out, but as we see increased growth and development, particularly in those parts of the world where natural disasters are more common and where there is a greater vulnerability, namely along the coastlines and in earthquake-prone areas, the impact of this kind of natural disasters has continued to increase and thereby raised a greater global issue for everybody in the world.

earthquake and G8 Summit in Italy

But the second, less common natural threat that emerged in the last years was the pandemic flu, H1N1. For the time being the mortality rate associated with this flu is not significantly greater, or is just a little bit different of what we have seen for the traditional seasonal flu, but certainly this was the first pandemic, cross-over flu we have seen in many years, and it raised the spectrum of the kind of impact we may see with an avian flu, and this again shows the global nature of this emergency. It developed very rapidly, it immediately became a global problem, had a huge impact on travel, has required preparations across national boundaries. And although the consequences were not as great as feared, even as we speak we need to continue to refine our preparedness and our response capability to this kind of global emergency in the health field.



pandemic flu, H1N1



And of course the third event in the last years is the Mumbai terror attack. That attack took place last year (on 26th November 2008), the first anniversary was a few days ago, and here again there is an emergency which has a significant international dimension. Although the investigations are still under way, there are at least some preliminary indications that some of the planning and financing for the attack in Mumbai took place not only in south Asia, that is to say in Pakistan, but also occurred perhaps in the US and in Italy as well, where we had recently a couple of arrests associated with allegations that some financing may have come from Italy.

Mumbai terror attack

So, what this illustrates again is there is a new kind of challenge, the challenge of terrorism, which is both global and also is continuing to be persistent with us, as it has been over the last decade and more.

What does all it say about Homeland Security? Well, I agree with Dr Bryen's observation we need to reformulate our doctrine of Homeland Security. I think we are entering in a new stage of conflict and a new stage of emergency, something the 21st Century is different from the 20th Century. In the 20th Century everything was very binary, I'd like to call it an age of "digital" security.

There really appeared to be two types of security threats you face as a Government official, one was the traditional war, a military threat dealt by the Department of Defense, and typically involving conflicts between or among States, where a unique set doctrine, rules and laws will apply. The second approach was the law enforcement approach, we had crimes, sometimes global crimes including organized crimes; that was a police matter which was dealt with under a different sets of rules, doctrines and laws.

The "binary model"

And where we approach security issues we have simply to look which of the two binary categories the issue fell into: was it a military war issue, which is dealt with by the Defense Department, or was it a law enforcement, police issue, or domestic disturbance or emergency issue which is dealt with through the traditional police, fire-fighters or emergency responders?

But I'd like to argue if you look at the three examples I have just given, and particularly Mumbai, that this binary model does not apply in the 21st Century.

We threats we face do not longer divide themselves neatly into this two very simple sort of categories. Rather what we see is a spectrum of threats, and a circumstance where a particular adversary moves along the scale, back and forth, from posing the kind of threat which customarily was seen in a military setting to what was customarily seen in a purely domestic setting.

That's why I think the 21st Century is an era of what I call a "quantum" style security, and I take this phrase "quantum style" from a propositions in physics that talks about the fact that under modern physics theory, a particular particle does not exist in any one place, but rather it exists, under quantum mechanics, in an infinite number of places, where it can be at any given point in time. And I think that's what security threats are now: they exist in an infinite number of places, and the same person, the same adversary, the same challenge can manifest itself simultaneously through a military type of endeavour, or a traditional criminal style of endeavour, or something that partakes of both.

The "quantum model"

If you look at Mumbai, what you see is what appears to be a traditional, military style of commando operation, at multiple locations in the coast of the city, which appears to be launched and guided from another country, and yet not one that was directed by the Government of that other Country, or that was launched by the military forces of that other country (I'm talking about Pakistan). So here we have something that seems to straddle in both the military tactics we are accustomed to see on the battlefield, but a non-State actor, a non-war state type of setting, that we are accustomed to see in a criminal dimension.

The significance of this is not only theoretical: rather what we saw in Mumbai is a kind of paralysis the police officials and the military officials encountered, because they did not have a doctrine and a set of rules to apply in this era of quantum-type threats, and quantum-type security.

You sense a bit of the feel of "who goes first"? "Whose domain is that falling into"? "Which of the binary categories applies"? And it is that particular hesitation and uncertainty which I think explains some of the sense of inaction which perhaps is part of the tragedy we saw in Mumbai; and that makes more and more urgent to rethink and re-conceptualise the way we think about our doctrine of Homeland Security, which I will argue spans the military domain, the police domain and also includes domains that belong to neither, may be emergency, fire-fighting and public health.

It is truly a requirement of an integrated approach, to deal with what is no longer a problem that can be boxed in a binary fashion. What does this mean in practical terms?

I think there are five lessons I take from this new type of challenge we face, the challenge of a quantum-focussed Homeland Security doctrine.

Five Lessons

The **first** is that *we need to be able to coordinate* and bring to bear the elements of national, state and local powers, in a way that we are not accustomed to doing. In a neutral domain obviously we work with the theory of Command and Control, where the military commander has total authority over the actors in his domain, either the ones he is commanding directly or the ones he is imposing his will through force. That is not working in the civilian arena. In the civilian arena you have not only a clear division among agencies, but even between levels of Government. In our own Country you know the Federal, State and Local Authorities are

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be able to coordinate

very divided in terms of the powers they exercise; and what that means is, and it surprises a lot of people, that even the President of the United States does not have the ability to control many of the tools that are delegated by the Constitution to the Governor or to the Local Officials in a particular part of the United States.

So the concept of being able to coordinate as many Agencies as necessary, to bring everybody at the table in one place, to give them a common operating picture, and to be able to come to an agreed upon course of action to be executed, but without having any single person who has the complete authority simply to order it, that discipline is one which I think we are still getting accustomed to, but it is very much one I think is going to characterize the way we deal with all emergencies in the 21st Century.

The **second** lesson I take, which flows from the first, because I think it is indispensable to achieve a coordination among different Agencies and different levels of Government, is the *need for planning*. It is often that I have found in my experience to be true that nobody's plans survives the first contact with the enemy, but it is also true that if you do not have a battle plan, your contact with the enemy is going to be rougher than if you have a plan from which you can adapt. And over and over again what you see in emergencies when things do not work well, is that a failure principally lies in the fact that nobody actually planned for the event.

And this is particularly a deficiency in the civilian domain, because unlike the military, civilian Agencies are not accustomed to planning both within and among each other for complicated operational activities. When we formed the department of Homeland Security in 2003, one of the urgent needs was to **develop capabilities for planning**, and I think one of the deficiencies that we saw with hurricane Katrina in 2005 was that that planning process had not really been launched effectively in the first 18 months of the Department, and frankly it never existed seriously in previous handling of emergencies.

What we did do, from 2005 to 2008, was to build a very robust interagency planning process, and that was focussed to the Department of Homeland Security, but involved as many Agencies as you have in the Federal Government: the Department of Defense, the other Departments, State and Local Governments. And you saw the fruit of that planning in separate occurrences in 2008 and 2009. In 2008, when we had hurricane Gustav, which was another hurricane heading right toward New Orleans, which required an emergency evacuation, all the planning that had taken place over the prior three years was put into play, and allowed a coordinated, Federal, State and Local response that actually evacuated everybody that needed to leave the city, before the storm hit.

The second example of the harvest, of the fruit of this planning, is what you saw this year with respect to the H1N1 execution of the plans that have been put into place. The ability to have people in the public health arena, as well as in the Homeland Security arena, at the Border and at the other Agencies that deal with infrastructures, to be able to execute against the threat that at least for a period of time was quite serious in terms of the impact of the Nation's health and economy.

The **third** lesson I think flows from the first two, *coordination and planning, is capability building*. When you plan, what you discover pretty quickly is that there are certain tools you need, and you find out that if you do not have them, all the planning in the world is not going to work, and so the first thing to do is start to build the capability. If I can use the example of Mumbai, I will go straight to the point. My perception is there was a lack of planning for the possibility for this kind of an attack, this rolling, dynamic, point-to-point commando style attack that took place.

As a consequence, not only was there no planning as to who would take the responsibility, and what their matter of operation would be. But the tools that you will need to be able to ascertain where the terrorist were, what was going on in the hotels, and the ability to move your commandos from where they were stationed in one part of the country to where they needed to be, those capabilities had not been built, because there was not a plan, because nobody thought about the need to be able to deploy those capabilities in this kind of an emergency. That's why the planning which flows from the need to coordinate gives you the impulse to build the capabilities that you will need.

The **fourth** lesson, that flows from the first three, is the need for *integration of all the elements*. Very few Agencies that deal with emergency preparedness would have the capability to operate across the entire spectrum. The Department of Homeland Security actually has about as broad a capability as any Agency, because it covers not only a prevention and police enforcement activity, but also has a military capability to the Coast Guard and has a response capability to FEMA.

But even there, consider the fact that many of the tools you need in an emergency will require Department of Defense assets, including boots on the ground, a public health expertise, the ability to handle a transportation through the Department of Defense potential, a knowledge of the kinds of impact you can have on animals and on agriculture, which gets at the Department of Agriculture, so you see that as you build your plans and your capability, the need to bring all the different Agencies together operationally becomes a paramount concern. And that's the fourth lesson that I draw from the experiences we have had.

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*need for
planning*

3

*capability
building*

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*integration
of all the
elements*

And the final (**fifth**) one is the one which I think probably has the greatest significance for me, because I held the responsibility to have to be the decision maker.

And that is the need, when you have all those other pieces in place, to act decisively to deal with the crisis. This is a psychological issue, and not a technical issue. It requires people to have the ability to understand when an emergency heads; that requires all the elements and all the resources to be brought into play.

In my observations over the years, people, more often than not, underestimated the dimensions and the significance of a crisis, and the resources to be deployed to respond.

Why did they do that? Because there is a kind of disbelief or shock that settles in, or because people do not feel to be over-reactive, because it looks a little hysterical.

But time again I've heard people say in an emergency "do we really need to do that?", "It is not going too far?", and in my observations I have participated in numerous crisis and emergencies going back prior to September 11, it is more often than not you regret having done too little, than you regret having done too much.

So, once you have got the tools, and the plans and the coordination and the jointness, you require only the leadership, and leadership is, in my view, means decisiveness and recognition of the fact that you don't get second chances.

So it's always better you bringing too much to the challenge, than you bringing too little.

*In conjunction with The George Washington University and Finmeccanica North America, **SELEX Sistemi Integrati** has organized a workshop in line with the recent declarations of Secretary Janet Napolitano, looking for an "international approach to the security", and "seeking to access the true nature of the challenge" recommending potential practical responses.*

*The workshop "**Emergency Preparedness and Crisis Management**" is the third that SELEX SI has organized in the US and is one of a series of Workshops we titled "**Share Best Practices across the Atlantic**". The purpose of these workshops is to highlight and find commonalities across the Atlantic in response to Homeland Security issues: there are mutual benefits in sharing approaches, technologies and solutions.*

The Workshop involved as speakers prominent representatives of Italian and U.S. Government organizations involved in the matter (Department of Homeland Security and Department of Civil Protection), academia and industry.

