Provide an overview of TOPOFF National Counter Terrorism Exercise Series
TOPOFF: A BRIEF HISTORY
TOPOFF LEGISLATION

- Public Law 106-553 provides funding for TOPOFF, and Senate Report 106-404 outlines the concept.

- Responsibility for the TOPOFF Domestic Counterterrorism National Exercise Series transferred from the Department of Justice to the Department of Homeland Security on March 1, 2003 with transfer of the Office for Domestic Preparedness.

- A national, biennial Domestic Counter Terrorism Exercise Series.

- Two year planning endeavor, involving experts at all levels of government and the private sector.

The Top Official (TOPOFF) National Domestic Counterterrorism Exercise Series is the cornerstone of the Secretary of Homeland Security’s National Exercise Program.
• Congress directed conduct of a no notice exercise: “…with the participation of all key personnel who would participate in the consequence management of such an actual terrorist event.”

• TOPOFF 2000 was a single, full-scale exercise conducted over 10 days in three venues:
  - Denver, CO: Bioterrorism attack (Plague).
  - Portsmouth, NH: Chemical attack (Sulfur Mustard).

• Lessons from TOPOFF 2000 and September 11th steered T2 exercise goals and objectives.
TOPOFF 2 (T2) GOALS

- Improve the nation’s capacity to manage complex/extreme terrorism events.
- Create a broader operating framework of expert Federal, State, and local (FSL) integrated crisis/consequence incident management capability.
- Validate FSL authorities, strategies, plans, policies, procedures, protocols, and synchronized capabilities.
- Build a sustainable, systematic national exercise program to support national domestic preparedness objectives.

T2 focused on a limited number of critical federal, state, local and international crisis and consequence management objectives.
• A cycle of exercise activity that increases in complexity.
  – Focus on identifying and resolving acute issues before the full-scale exercise (FSE), observe performance during and after the series.
  – “Banks” learning after each exercise activity.

• All participants have access to the full exercise scenario and all exercise documentation.
  – Only the Master Scenario Events List (MSEL) and injects that shape the free play is closely held.
T2 CYCLE OF ACTIVITY

**Seminars**

- JUL - OCT 02
  - Large Scale Game
  - seminars 1, 2, 3
  - Addressed acute response issues.

**Direction and Control Seminar**

- DEC 02
  - Addressed intermediate & long-term consequences, remediation & recovery.

**Advanced Distance Learning Exercise**

- FEB 03
  - Addressed key response decisions; used distance learning methodologies to reach nationwide audience.

**Top Officials Seminar**

- MAY 03
  - Full-Scale Exercise
  - Top Officials preparation for Full-Scale Exercise.

**Performance-based Full-Scale Exercise**

- MAY 03
EXERCISE SCENARIO

• Scenario Considerations
  – Not a prediction of the future, or of a future opponent’s actions.
  – Not a statement of official policy.
  – Contains artificialities necessary to create conditions required to attain exercise goals and objectives.
  – Does not supplant existing intelligence estimates.
TOP OFFICIAL PARTICIPANTS

TOPOFF 2 Included Participation by:

• Key Cabinet officials
• Senior federal officials at the national and regional level
• Senior state and local officials
• Canadian key and senior officials
TOPOFF 3
TOPOFF 3: AN EXERCISE IN PARTNERSHIP

• The Partners:
  – Federal
  – New Jersey and Connecticut
  – Private Sector
  – International

• All participate in each T3 Development phase.
NEW IN T3

• Underlying Themes
  - Prevention
  - Private Sector
  - Recovery
  - Public Information

• Large Scale Game
T3 PARTNER BENEFITS

• Relationships
• Test existing plans, procedures, and policies
• Directly participate in the extensive T3 Building Block process
• Opportunity to better prepare for WMD event
• Learning experience; not “win or lose”
  – No “Softballs”
• Lessons Learned/Best Practices
• Intangibles
T3 RESPONSIBILITIES

• Memorandum of Agreement
  – Early in T3 process
  – Between ODP and State Partners
  – Defines ODP/State/Territory/Local responsibilities
  – Determines Level of Effort
  – Some Flexibility

• ODP will provide one Venue Director and Venue Support Team per State/Territory
T3 RESPONSIBILITIES (Continued)

• State provides Dedicated Exercise Development Team
  – Identify Primary/Alternate planners and other POC’s
  – Coordinate level of play
  – Confirm goals, issues, and objectives
  – Inform Top Officials

• All partners participate in each phase of the Exercise process

• Full Scale Exercise play at the highest levels
TOPOFF 3 FLEXIBILITY

• Allows for unforeseen catastrophic events
  – Natural Disasters
  – War
  – WMD or Terrorist events

• Joint decision to continue

• Schedule de-confliction
T3 PARTICIPANTS

- 27 Federal departments and agencies
- Connecticut: single venue, statewide impact
- New Jersey: statewide venue
- United Kingdom: Command Post Exercise (Home Office and Metro Police)
- Canada: Command Post Exercise
- Nongovernmental organizations
- Private sector participants: 156 organizations
T3 FULL SCALE EXERCISE

• April 4 – 8, 2005

• Excitement and Apprehension

• Challenges

• Rewards
• VNN and VNN.com – enabled top officials to practice dealing with the pressures of real-world media
T3 FULL SCALE EXERCISE VCC
T3 FULL SCALE EXERCISE
T3 FULL SCALE EXERCISE
T3 FULL SCALE EXERCISE
AFTER ACTION PROCESS
SUMMARY

• T3 was the largest and most complex WMD terrorist exercise ever undertaken by the U.S. government.
• The exercise was successful in stressing domestic and international response systems and the agencies.
• It was the most extensive test to date of the new National Incident Management System (NIMS) and NRP.
• The exercise was successful in meeting its four objectives
  - Incident management
  - Intelligence/investigation
  - Public information
  - Evaluation
TOPOFF’S ENDURING VALUE

• Hands-on training for thousands of participants
• Increased preparedness across agencies and jurisdictions
• A more unified and effective Homeland Security system

“A Nation prepared is a powerful deterrent.”

National Preparedness Goal (HSPD-8)
September 2004
TOPOFF: THE ROAD AHEAD

- Focus
- Push the envelope
- Lessons learned
- Flexible, open, and responsive
T4 PARTICIPANTS

• Guam, Arizona, and Oregon

• Observe and learn each phase of TOPOFF 3

• TOPOFF 2 representatives present to mentor during segments of T3 process
  - Also Available via phone/email

• T3 participants mentor T4 participants
CONCLUSION

• Realistic

• Complex Challenges: Planning and Execution

• Flexible, dynamic, & designed to benefit the widest audience

• Cornerstone of Department of Homeland Security’s Exercise Program
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• CT POC for TOPOFF 3

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• CT Hospital POC for TOPOFF 3

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