

November 2006



## **Regional Public-Private Partnerships: The Next Wave in Homeland Security**

As Hurricane Katrina showed so dramatically, government alone cannot secure the nation or respond to major disasters. It needs the vast resources and expertise of the business community. Business needs government, too. Individual businesses do heroic things in times of crisis, but they know they could do much more working in concert with government.

Within hours after the levees broke in New Orleans, one company offered to donate mobile telecommunications trailers and the staff to run them, so that first responders could talk to one another. Government agencies could not accept the offer, but instead purchased the trailers after several critical days had passed. In another instance, the State of Louisiana requested forklifts from out-of-state, when local companies might have met the need had they only known whom to contact. And several major retailers delivered truckloads of critical supplies to the Gulf from across the country, but drivers had to stop at multiple check points set up by frustrated law enforcement officials who were trying to help protect citizens, yet slowed down the relief effort.

Katrina may have been the biggest natural disaster in American history, but government and business face similar challenges in smaller disasters... and Katrina's devastation would be eclipsed by a 1918-scale flu pandemic or a nuclear attack at one of our major ports.

Most public-private homeland security initiatives focus on critical infrastructure protection and business continuity – how to keep individual businesses and industry sectors up and running during a crisis. This is essential, but it's not enough. Businesses also have a stake in maintaining the continuity of their communities. If the community isn't functioning and maintaining critical supplies and services, individual businesses cannot survive – even with the best business continuity plan.

Since 9/11, and especially since Katrina, many experts have called for more effective public-private partnerships to prepare for and respond to catastrophic events. No one disagrees, yet because business and government have different incentives and cultures and often don't trust each other, partnerships tend to be a low priority. Business and government know they need to build strong teams and practice before a crisis hits, but they've had few playbooks to draw from.

Business Executives for National Security (BENS, [www.bens.org](http://www.bens.org)) has been working since shortly after 9/11 to build these teams through a model it calls the BENS Business Force – regional public-private partnerships that connect business and government to fill gaps in security and emergency preparedness that neither government nor business can address alone. These partnerships turn modest investments into exponential growth in regional homeland security and disaster response capability.

## November 2006

Recognizing the importance of regional partnerships, the White House report, *Katrina: Lessons Learned*, singled out and encouraged expansion of the BENS Business Force model (see [www.whitehouse.gov/reports/katrina-lessons-learned](http://www.whitehouse.gov/reports/katrina-lessons-learned)). Similarly, other post-Katrina reports issued by the U.S. House of Representatives, the U.S Senate, the General Accounting Office and several think tanks each highlighted the need for more business-government collaboration, yet most were short on detail on how to do it.

To better define the role of business in catastrophic events, Congress invited BENS to convene a panel of business leaders to take on the task. BENS answered this call by creating the Business Response Task Force, which produced its report in the fall of 2006 entitled *Getting Down to Business: An Action Plan for Public-Private Disaster Response Coordination*. The report provides detailed recommendations on how federal, state and local governments can fully integrate business into the nation's emergency response system. The report's recommendations fall into three substantive categories: public-private collaboration; surge capacity/supply chain management; and legal & regulatory environment (see [www.bens.org](http://www.bens.org)). These recommendations extend beyond regional homeland security partnerships, but partnerships are fundamental to integrating business and government, and tapping the vast resources and expertise of the private sector.

Regional homeland security partnerships can save lives and get communities back up and running following a catastrophic event. They are becoming the next wave in homeland security, turning modest investments into exponential growth in preparedness and response capability.

### **What Are Regional Partnerships?**

Regional homeland security partnerships have begun to take root in many parts of the country, and they have taken many forms. Since early 2002, BENS has built or facilitated partnerships in seven regions with very different economic and political characteristics.

The New Jersey Business Force launched in February 2003, following a year-long design and development effort. This partnership has 30 charter members, including most New Jersey-based Fortune 500 companies, but like all BENS regions, its programs reach businesses large and small throughout the state. New Jersey programs include:

- Creating web-based registries of business resources at the county and state levels that can be called upon by emergency managers in a catastrophic event (over \$300 million in resources have been registered to date); and
- Improving information sharing by a) providing targeted alerts about local incidents and threats via custom software provided pro bono by a member company, and b) piloting a satellite datacasting system developed by the state's public television and radio affiliate that provides a secure, alternate channel of communication in emergencies.

## November 2006

The Georgia Business Force followed New Jersey in 2004 and now has 20 charter members, including most global firms based in Atlanta, and several smaller ones. Among other initiatives, Georgia is pioneering two programs that have been cited as national models:

- ❑ A “Business Operations Center” that connects businesses across industry sectors to the state’s Emergency Operations Center (EOC), including formal seats in the EOC for business representatives that serve as coordinators and analysts; and a virtual team of a few dozen representatives from leading regional businesses and trade organizations that convene via teleconference during catastrophic events; and
- ❑ Mobilizing businesses to help state and local public health agencies with mass dispensing of medications from the Strategic National Stockpile in the event of a pandemic or terrorist attack.

The MidAmerica Business Force, anchored by ten leading companies in the Metro Kansas City region, also started in 2004 and serves Missouri and Kansas. MidAmerica programs include:

- ❑ Co-developing the charter for the region’s information fusion center known as TEW (Threat Early Warning), and formally engaging the business community in the implementation of this new information sharing apparatus; and
- ❑ Creating a program called Operation Resilient Guard, a series of seminars and exercises designed to both alert and educate senior business leaders and the public about a wide range of potential threats, both natural and man-made.

In Southern California, BENS is facilitating a public-private partnership called the Homeland Security Advisory Council – Region One (HSAC) covering Los Angeles and Orange Counties. HSAC includes 80 business, government and academic leaders and was formed in 2003 to provide business advice to the County Sheriffs, who have primary responsibility for emergency management. In 2005, HSAC asked BENS to provide management support for this partnership. HSAC’s first initiative was a series of public service announcements urging residents to prepare for emergencies. These PSAs aired on more than 30 radio stations reaching over 15 million people during National Preparedness Month in September 2006.

In Iowa, BENS joined with the Iowa Business Council (IBC) in 2006 to launch a statewide partnership. The IBC includes the top executives from 24 of the state’s largest businesses, hospital systems, and public universities and it provides the partnership’s institutional leadership for business partners. BENS employs the partnership’s executive director, provides management oversight, and delivers subject matter expertise. Iowa will implement programs similar to those outlined above, including integrating business into the state’s EOC, and a private sector resource registry. In addition, partners have agreed to work together on emergency planning, exercises and training, as well as improving communication between business and government during emergencies.

In Massachusetts, BENS worked with the state's emergency management agency to build and rapidly deploy a web-based registry of business resources prior to the 2004 Democratic National Convention in Boston. Resources worth an estimated \$300 million were registered during this effort. The state has developed and expanded its own partnership, known as "ESF 18", and is engaging the state's business community in several initiatives that improve regional collaboration and information sharing.

## What Regional Partnerships Do

Each partnership develops an array of tools and plans that can apply to multiple hazards. The partnerships combine an "all hazards" approach – preparing for both natural and man-made catastrophes – with a focus on the hazards that pose the greatest risk to each region (e.g., hurricanes in the Southeast and earthquakes on the West Coast). To be successful, regional partnerships must deliver tangible new capabilities. The programs outlined above in each region illustrate the kinds of capabilities that have been valuable to both business and government. So far, programs have fallen into six general categories. These are by no means exhaustive; they're just scratching the surface of what regional partnerships can deliver.

1. Getting Organized: Communicating Clearly with Business Operations Centers. When catastrophe strikes, business and government need a mechanism to ensure quick and reliable communication. Businesses need to link to one another, and to state and local government emergency operations centers (EOCs) before, during and after the event to identify threats, minimize bureaucratic roadblocks, and get the right resources to the right places faster. The Georgia "Business Operations Center" (BOC) provides this mechanism and BENS is planning similar BOC efforts in other regions.

The BOC model includes two key elements. The first is a group of representatives from leading companies and trade organizations across critical infrastructure sectors. The representatives convene via teleconference and the web at first, and evaluate over time whether to convene a physical location as well. The second element is the creation of a few business "seats" at the state EOC for a BOC manager and a couple of BOC analysts. The BOC manager facilitates communication between the teleconference and the state EOC, and the BOC analysts help determine disaster needs and develop response solutions to communicate to the BOC representatives. The BOC representatives are then responsible for communicating with the broader business community.

In addition to piloting the BOC in Georgia, BENS is working with state and local partners to better define how business collaborates with the federal agencies through FEMA regions and DHS regional coordinating centers called Joint Field Offices that "stand up" during national emergencies.

2. Supply Chain Management: Getting the Right Resources to the Right Places at the Right Time. Emergency managers need quick, reliable access to private sector resources, ranging from equipment and supplies to specially trained personnel. Business Force partnerships are cataloging, in advance, business resources that can be made available on a pro bono or for-sale basis during a major catastrophe ([www.businessresponsenetwork.org](http://www.businessresponsenetwork.org)). BENS

has implemented regional registries in New Jersey and Massachusetts, and is developing similar models in Los Angeles County and the State of Missouri. In New Jersey and Massachusetts, over \$600 million in pro bono business resources have been pledged.

BENS has focused initially on registering pro bono resources that are typically not for sale (e.g., trucks, warehouse space, skilled volunteers), but it is beginning to register resources that would be provided at cost or at market price as well. BENS also recommends that emergency managers continue to expand contingency contracts for disaster resources that they would expect to be in short supply. Finally, “reverse auction” systems should be implemented that would enable real-time posting of needs by emergency managers and real-time proposals by business donors and vendors. FEMA has already begun piloting such a system, which if successful, should be adopted by states and regions.

Resource registries can improve the disaster supply chain in a single state, but for large scale disasters like Katrina that overwhelm that state’s ability to respond, a mutual aid system between states can provide significant additional capacity by adapting a process similar, and perhaps parallel to the state mutual aid system known as EMAC (Emergency Management Assistance Compact). BENS is working with the National Emergency Management Association (NEMA) to explore the creation of a business version of EMAC to improve supply chain management for business donations and for goods and services purchased by government first responders (see Exhibit 2). A business version of EMAC could be an important compliment to the existing EMAC and to FEMA’s growing supply chain capabilities.

3. Supply Chain Management: Mobilizing Business for Mass Dispensing of Medications. Public health officials need private sector support to prepare for and respond to the threats of bioterrorism or a disease pandemic. For example, if there were an aerosolized anthrax attack in Atlanta, the public health system would likely have less than ten percent of the staff needed to treat the region’s nearly five million residents in four days. BENS is mobilizing businesses to use their corporate facilities as dispensing sites and to provide volunteers to assist public health staff at schools and other government sites.

BENS worked with state and county public health officials in Metro Atlanta and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to create a model for mobilizing business volunteers and using business facilities as dispensing sites, and then recruited 1,200 volunteers to participate in a full-scale aerosolized anthrax exercise (see Exhibit 3). BENS has also facilitated bioterrorism tabletop exercises in New Jersey. A flu pandemic would present similar logistical and resource challenges that could be mitigated by Business Force partnerships.

4. On-going Information Sharing: Integrating Business into State and Local Fusion Centers. Many states are creating fusion centers to synthesize and analyze information and intelligence from multiple public and private sources and to communicate “fused” information to appropriate government and business stakeholders. Most fusion centers have focused on increasing intelligence sharing among relevant local, state and federal agencies, and most need greater private sector participation.

Meanwhile, the private sector seeks more actionable intelligence from government, and more clarity about the information sharing process. The Business Force partnership in Metro Kansas City is assisting with fusion center design, increasing business participation, and exploring ways to enhance the use of web-based information sharing tools such as DHS' U.S. Public-Private Partnership website.

5. Critical Infrastructure Protection: Improving Risk Assessment. Federal, state and local governments perform risk assessments that identify critical infrastructure sites, and then estimate the threats to each site, the vulnerability of each site if it were attacked, and the criticality/consequence of an attack (i.e., the casualties and economic damage). These assessments can help allocate government and business security resources more rationally.

An estimated 85 percent of the nation's critical infrastructure is privately held or operated, and government often lacks sufficient information about these facilities to accurately assess risk. Meanwhile, many businesses are concerned about disclosing confidential data to government that might be disclosed to other parties. Business Force partnerships are in the early stages of facilitating business participation in government critical infrastructure risk assessment initiatives in ways that do not compromise the confidentiality of business data.

6. Exercising to Identify Gaps and Test New Programs. Each Business Force partnership is committed to performing two types of exercises on a regular basis. The first identifies security gaps that need to be filled. For example, a pandemic flu tabletop exercise with 20 or 30 business and government leaders in a given state or urban area can help these leaders understand what they need to do to prepare their own organizations and how they will need to work together in such a crisis. These exercises produce impressive lists of potential business-government initiatives that would improve security. Too often, however, there is little follow through after these exercises, and when the exercise is repeated a year or two later, it produces a similar list of needs and remedies. The partnership must turn these exercises into programs that produce real results.

The second type of exercise tests an actual business-government program that a regional partnership has started to implement – like a Business Operations Center or mass dispensing of medications – to make sure the program really works, and to find opportunities for improvement. Each of these programs must be exercised – not once, but on a regular basis.

On a larger scale, BENS has been an ongoing partner of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) by helping integrate business into the biennial national terrorism exercises known as TOPOFF (short for Top Officials). Large-scale exercises can both identify gaps and test new programs.

In addition to identifying gaps and testing programs that address them, exercises help build trusted relationships between business and government. These relationships in turn enable business and government to work more effectively “on the fly” in all kinds of scenarios. Katrina helped drive home the lesson that building teams in advance is better than exchanging business cards during a crisis.

Business and government leaders familiar with continuous improvement models will recognize the process BENS uses in its Business Force partnerships: 1) identify gaps, 2) create programs to fill the gaps, 3) test the programs and 4) institutionalize them. The U.S. military has been honing continuous improvement models for about two hundred years. Business operations consulting pioneers Demming and Juran created their own continuous improvement frameworks in the 1960s, as have many others since. This process isn't new, but the players are.

A key difference between regional homeland security partnerships and most continuous improvement efforts is that most require collaboration across organizations that are forced to work together – within a business (sales and shipping), between businesses (manufacturers and their suppliers), within a military service (logistics and special forces), and across services (Air Force and Army). In homeland security regional partnerships, however, business and government have to decide they want to work together. Analogies can be found in the social sector, like businesses partnering with local schools to improve education, but in homeland security, we've been plowing new ground. Homeland security as we now know it did not exist prior to 9/11, and with the exception of states like Florida and California, business and government saw little need to work together to prepare for catastrophic events.

## Lessons Learned

What can we start to harvest from these new seeds we're planting? What lessons have we learned? BENS's Business Force experience has shown that while each region will develop a unique character and strategy, successful partnerships share several common attributes.

### 1. Make it Regional.

The federal government should support, not manage regional public-private partnerships because business-government partnerships require a level of trust and agility that is most easily achieved at the local level. Relationships of trust are strengthened as partners work together on a regular basis to achieve a common objective. Regional partnerships make it possible for business and government leaders to work together for the welfare of their communities – not once, but on an ongoing basis across many initiatives.

Regions should be defined based on natural economic and political boundaries, which could be a state, part of a state or multiple states. Businesses and trade organizations across industry sectors should participate, and state and local government agency partners should include emergency management, law enforcement, public health, National Guard and homeland security. Each region should decide what to do and how to do it – one size doesn't fit all. Regions should share best practices and precautions (see below), but should leave plenty of room for customization.

Regional partnerships let business and government leaders:

- Design their own initiatives, while drawing upon best practices from other regions;
- Coordinate requests from multiple government agencies;
- Rank initiatives according to their needs and priorities;
- Develop and implement a coherent plan; and

- Work with complementary non-profit and trade organizations to build on regional strengths and avoid duplication of effort.

Catastrophic events that are national in scope will require significant federal government support. However, strong regional partnerships – and strong links between them - will delay the need for federal intervention, and they will make federal support more effective when it is needed.

## **2. Get Political and Business Leaders on Board**

The formal endorsement and buy-in of a few prominent CEOs and a senior elected official in the region (e.g., governor or mayor) is a prerequisite to getting business and government organizations to devote the time necessary to make the partnership successful.

## **3. Build from a Local Institutional Base**

Regional partnerships are easiest to build from a strong base of support with an existing organization in the region. In Georgia, Kansas City, New Jersey and the San Francisco Bay Area, Business Force partnerships were built from an existing BENS regional office. In Iowa, Massachusetts and Southern California, BENS helped an existing organization build the partnership. The Iowa partnership is led by the Iowa Business Council, whose members are the CEOs of 24 of the state's largest employers. In Massachusetts, the state created the partnership within their emergency management agency. And in Southern California, the partnership was created by the Los Angeles and Orange County Sheriffs and a business leader in each county, and then BENS was asked to provide management support.

Other regional partnerships have been spawned by business organizations such as chambers of commerce or business councils, state or local governments, and regional economic development organizations made up of government and business leaders. Any of these can work as long as the lead organization has a strong base of business and government support in the region. A lead organization can accelerate the partnership's start-up and provide the institutional strength to sustain commitment and funding over time. Long-term sustainability is tempting to ignore during the partnership's start-up phase, but it shouldn't be ignored because the CEOs and government leaders who help launch the partnership will inevitably move on.

A lead organization must have credibility and influence with government and business leaders in the region, and a commitment to improving security and emergency preparedness. If no organization with these characteristics is available, starting from scratch may be the only option. Starting from scratch is more of a challenge, but it is possible with a critical mass of business and government leadership and capable full-time staff.

## **4. Engage Organizational Partners and Avoid Duplication**

Whether the regional partnership is a stand-alone entity or built from within an existing organization, it is important to engage other organizations to add both expertise and resources, and to avoid duplication of effort.



At the regional level, partners can include trade organizations (e.g., Chamber of Commerce, business council or a local financial services group), non-profits (e.g., Red Cross, Voluntary Organizations Assisting in Disasters or Hands On Network), or government-led partnerships (e.g., state or local intelligence fusion centers).

Whether or not they're engaged in homeland security initiatives, each of these organizations can offer specific expertise and resources if they have the capacity to participate in a given region. If they are already engaged in homeland security initiatives, all the more reason to invite them to participate in a broad-based regional partnership. Few regions can support multiple homeland security partnerships, and businesses will lose interest if they're asked to participate in overlapping initiatives. It may not be possible to coordinate every security-related initiative under one regional partnership, but each regional partnership should seek to coordinate as many related initiatives as possible.

Regional partnerships can engage consulting firms to assist in implementing specific programs. For example, BENS has received support from management consultants in implementing the Business Operations Center, mass dispensing and information sharing programs. This consulting support has come pro bono (for smaller-scale programs) and through commercial contracts (for larger-scale ones).

At the national level, regional partnerships will benefit from working closely with federal government agencies that have a stake in homeland security, including DHS, CDC and FBI.

Regional partnerships can also consider seeking support from a national organization or consulting firm in building, managing the partnership and learning from best practices in other regions. BENS has provided this support on an ongoing basis in Southern California and Iowa, including the use of its 501(c)(3) status to employ regional partnership staff. Some regions may see this as less complex than employing staff within a lead organization or starting a new 501(c)(3), while others may prefer to build their partnership independently.

## **5. Put the Partners to Work**

Civic-minded companies with executive-level volunteers are the core of the regional partnership, providing both governance and operating support. BENS-facilitated partnerships are governed and supported by three member "teams." The first is an Advisory Council that sets strategic direction and is comprised of CEOs and the directors of key state or local agencies. This team keeps its members' organizations committed and reviews results on a semi-annual or annual basis. The second is an Operating Council, comprised of business and state agency senior managers, and leaders of non-governmental organizations. The Operating Council meets approximately every two months and is charged with program implementation. The third is a set of program working groups, each of which is charged with implementing a specific program. The working groups meet as often as needed to execute their plans.

Each of these teams engages members based on their seniority, expertise, time availability and passion. Sustaining commitment from a broad cross section of members on an on-going basis is critical to the success of the partnership.

## **6. Staff It**

Regional partnerships should commit to hiring full-time staff with senior management experience. Partnership staff can recruit and motivate business and government partners, hire and oversee consultants as needed, implement programs and exercises, and provide the follow-through and accountability often lacking in all-volunteer partnerships. They also provide subject matter expertise to business and government organizations, and serve on regional committees, panels and working groups. Building a sturdy partnership takes focused, sustained effort from experienced staff on the ground in the region. Each regional director and support staff should have experience and relationships that are relevant to their region. For example, BENS employs one to three staff in each region, and regional leaders have extensive management experience. BENS partnership staff includes former Army and National Guard Colonels, a Red Cross Chapter CEO, an entrepreneur/investment banker, high tech and biotech sales executives and a former senior counsel to the speaker of a state legislature.

## **7. Share the Bill**

Partnerships need funding to hire staff and consultants, and the funding should come from a balance of public and private sources. Businesses have been willing to donate resources, people, information and cash to regional partnerships, but their commitment is strained if the partnership is too one-sided. Government should provide a share of operating funds to accelerate start-ups in new regions and keep business at the table over the long haul. Given the budget constraints of state and local governments, the federal government is the most likely source of government funding, especially DHS and CDC. Congress should ensure that funds are available for regional homeland security partnerships, including more training and exercises that engage both business and government.

Most of the programs outlined above can be delivered by Business Force staff and partner volunteers. However, some, like the mass dispensing program, require far more effort than a small staff and volunteers can provide. In these cases, the partnership should tap vendors with subject matter expertise and secure additional government funding. For the mass dispensing exercises BENS is facilitating, funding is provided by the CDC.

## **8. Write a Plan**

The lead organization and/or individuals that recruit partners and staff should start building consensus around initial programs during the recruiting process. Once the partnership has governing councils, funding and staffing in place, it should write a plan with a few specific programs and deliverables for the first year.

To date, BENS programs have focused more on preparedness and response than prevention and long-term recovery because the partners have judged these programs to have the best

combination of value and feasibility. Program selection is not a scientific process, but a deliberative one that results in programs that are perceived as high value to all partners, and feasible to implement quickly with limited resources. Partnerships should consider starting with broad-based programs like the Business Operating Center and the business version of EMAC because they form a foundation on which other programs can be built. A more comprehensive outline of potential programs was recently produced by The Infrastructure Security Partnership (TISP) and can be found at [www.tisp.org](http://www.tisp.org).

## **9. Deliver Results, Fast**

The best way to build support for the partnership is to deliver tangible results quickly. The first programs should be at least piloted during the first year. This means avoiding programs that are valuable but hard to implement, and it means quickly building the program working groups, including members, partner organizations and consultants, if needed. The Business Force programs described above have enabled BENS's regional partnerships to deliver new capabilities in months, not years. If significant roadblocks are encountered during implementation, the partnership should consider postponing the program and replacing it with a more feasible one.

## **10. Practice, Practice, Practice**

Many homeland security partnerships produce recommendations and plans and declare victory without delivering tangible results. Successful regional partnerships won't stop there; they'll conduct exercises to test and improve each program. Many emergency response plans existed pre-Katrina, but not enough involved the private sector, and businesses were often left out of the exercises. Exercising programs makes them real, and exercising on an ongoing basis across many initiatives raises awareness, builds strong relationships and prepares the partners for any catastrophe.

## **11. Tell Your Story**

A thoughtful communications effort will tell target audiences about the importance of the regional partnership and recognize the partnership's success, including the contributions of key partners in each program. Each partnership should try to recruit a communications/public relations firm to their team who can help with message development, target audiences and media placement. Recognizing success motivates partners and builds build community support. And of course, making sure the partnership is real and producing tangible results before embarking on media campaigns will build credibility.

## **12. Learn and Teach**

Regional partnerships should learn from one another. The most comprehensive source of regional partnership information is the DHS Lessons Learned Information Sharing web site ([www.llis.gov](http://www.llis.gov)). It includes a Best Practice series that provides information and guidelines for developing public-private partnerships for emergency preparedness at the state and local level, and provides numerous references to regional partnerships and related resources. The DHS

Private Sector Office is another excellent resource for those interested in starting partnerships, and the BENS website provides an overview of its partnerships at [www.bensbusinessforce.org](http://www.bensbusinessforce.org). Sharing best practices early can pay off by avoiding implementation “land mines” and identifying breakthrough methods.

### **13. Grow**

Regional partnerships invariably identify more important work than can be accomplished, at least in the short term. They find endless opportunities to expand programs, geography and impact. Regional partnerships should not shy away from growth, but manage it wisely, in order to sustain the viability and efficacy of the partnership.

### **Conclusion**

When the next catastrophe strikes, regional public-private partnerships will give us a different picture than we saw after Katrina. Long-time partners from business and government will come together in cities and states across the country to save lives, care for the sick and injured, and put people back to work. Courageous citizens will be better organized and find more ways to help. Communities, businesses and families will get back on their feet faster, and with more hope for the future. The BENS Business Force regional partnership model can help the country paint this picture.

### **About BENS**

For about a quarter century, Business Executives for National Security has been the primary channel through which American business leaders can contribute their special experience and talent to help build a more secure nation.

Founded in 1982 by business executive and entrepreneur Stanley A. Weiss, BENS is guided by the simple notion that America’s security is everybody’s business. Led by President and CEO General Charles G. Boyd, U.S. Air Force (Ret.), BENS is a highly respected national, non-partisan non-profit organization of senior executives dedicated to enhancing our national security using the successful models of the private sector.

The innovative business-government partnerships that BENS has fostered over the past two decades to help save the Defense Department billions of dollars are now uniquely positioned to help meet the new challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. BENS is expanding these public-private partnerships into all aspects of homeland security – helping to prepare state and local governments to deal with catastrophic events or terrorist attacks, guard against cyber attack, track terrorists’ financial assets, and secure the nation’s ports.

As the United States confronts threats of terrorism, pandemics and natural disasters, BENS is more important than ever before ([www.bens.org](http://www.bens.org)).