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United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
Washington, DC 20240

IN REPLY REFER TO:
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April 17, 2012

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A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Melissa M. Allen".

Melissa M. Allen
Office of the Secretary
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NATIONAL LEVEL EXERCISE 2011 (NLE 2011)

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

NEW MADRID SEISMIC ZONE (NMSZ) AFTER ACTION REPORT (AAR)

MAY 27, 2011

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1. Introduction

National Level Exercise 2011 (NLE 2011) took place May 16-20, 2011. The purpose of the exercise was to prepare and coordinate a multiple-jurisdictional integrated response to a national catastrophic event. National level exercises (formerly known as the Top Officials exercise series or TOPOFF) are conducted in accordance with the National Exercise Program (NEP), which serves as the nation's overarching exercise program for planning, organizing, conducting and evaluating national level exercises. The NEP was established to provide the U.S. government, at all levels, exercise opportunities to prepare for catastrophic crises ranging from terrorism to natural disasters.

2. Exercise Focus and Scenario

NLE 2011 simulated the catastrophic nature of a major earthquake in the central United States region of the New Madrid Seismic Zone (NMSZ). NLE 2011 was the first National Level Exercise to simulate a natural hazard. NLE 2011 activities took place at command posts, emergency operation centers and other locations to include Federal facilities in the Washington D.C. area and Federal, regional, State, tribal, local and private sector facilities in the eight member States of the Central United States Earthquake Consortium (CUSEC). The eight member States of CUSEC encompass four different FEMA regions: Alabama, Kentucky, Mississippi, and Tennessee (FEMA Region IV); Illinois and Indiana (FEMA Region V); Arkansas (FEMA Region VI); and Missouri (FEMA Region VII). The Department of the Interior (DOI) elected to participate in NLE 2011 by providing Department personnel to staff ESF response desks and to conduct a Table Top Exercise (TTX) at its Headquarters on May 18, 2011.

The NMSZ is one of the most seismically active areas east of the Rockies. NLE 2011 will simulate a magnitude 7.7 earthquake along the southern segment of the New Madrid Fault, closely followed by a magnitude 6.0 earthquake in the Wabash Valley Seismic Zone (WVSZ). Since the 1811 earthquakes, the area around the NMSZ has experienced explosive growth in both population and infrastructure. Another series of earthquakes with the magnitude of the 1811-1812 earthquake series would prove catastrophic to the region.

3. Objectives

Through a comprehensive evaluation process, the NLE2011 will assess response and recovery capabilities both nationally and regionally. NLE 2011 was designed to exercise and validate the following capabilities:

- Communications
- Critical resource logistics and distribution
- Mass care (sheltering, feeding and related services)
- Medical surge
- Citizen evacuation and shelter-in-place
- Emergency public information and warning
- Emergency Operations Center

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DOI incorporated where applicable National level objectives into its TTX play. In addition the following DOI specific objectives were established for the TTX:

- Build awareness for USGS role in major earthquake response.
- Foster a greater understanding of the impact a catastrophic earthquake in the New Madrid Seismic Zone (NMSZ) would have on DOI personnel and critical assets.
- Review DOI's Emergency Support Function (ESF) roles in response to a NMSZ earthquake.

4. DOI Participation:

DOI participation in the interagency portion of the exercise included but was not limited to National Response Framework (NRF) Planners for Emergency Support Function (ESF) 4, ESF 9, ESF 13, US Geological Survey (USGS), and the Interior Operations Center (IOC) (participating as a response cell throughout the exercise). The Emergency Management Council (EMC) and NRF Principal Planners participated in a two hour facilitated Table Top Exercise (TTX) conducted on May 18, 2011 utilizing the NLE 2011 exercise scenario to discuss the objectives noted in paragraph 3 above.

DOI TTX participants included:

Dave Bortnem, USGS
Larry Broun, OEM
David Nelson, L3
Kerry Trojnar, OEM
Grant Sorensen, BOR
David Applegate, USGS
Tim Quinn, OCIO
Larry Emanuel, SOL
Jon Thomas, BLM
Joe Vercellone, L3
Rod Bloms, OWF
Jim Robison, OIG
LeaAnne Thorne, FWS
Rodney Walker, BLM
Dan Soper, IOC

Lisa Branum, OEM
Nick Chomycia, OHR
Jeff Waalkes, OLES
Jonathan House, PFM
Dean Ross, NPS
Greg Gray, IOC
Steve Hammond, USGS
Patrick Vacha, AS/IA
Joe Kovalchick, NBC
Jane Yagley, OEPC
Kim Prendergast, POB
Staci King, BOEMRE
Anna Fisher, FWS
Jim Witkop, ONRR
Rick Tinker, IOC

In addition to the TTX there were several activities that took place in conjunction with NLE 2011 that DOI's Senior Leadership participated in. They included:

- May 16, 2011 - Assistant Secretary- level Domestic Resilience Group (DRG) meeting at the White House.

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- May 17, 2011 – Deputy’s Committee meeting at the White House.
- May 19, 2011 - Assistant Secretary-level DRG Interagency Policy Group meeting at the White House.

5. National Level Exercise

As stated in paragraph 4 above DOI participated in the interagency portion of the exercise by exercising National Response Framework (NRF) Planners for Emergency Support Function (ESF) 4, ESF 9, ESF 13, US Geological Survey (USGS), and the Interior Operations Center (IOC) (participating as a response cell throughout the exercise).

National level issues identified at the Deputy’s Committee meeting include:

1. The declaration of a national emergency (not the Stafford Act) to activate reserve military units and individuals.
2. The need to establish 4 interagency working groups who will think strategically (long-term) about:
 - Economic issues;
 - Interagency operations;
 - Congressional affairs;
 - Restoration of critical services.
3. The establishment of a disaster relief fund and better coordination between Departments and Agencies (D/As) and Emergency Support Functions (ESFs).
4. International assistance: To identify who can make valuable contributions to the U.S. response efforts.

National level issues identified at the TTX

1. We need to do more outreach, awareness, education on preparedness and response to earthquakes;
2. Qualified and trained engineers and architects need to be put into the ROSS and positions need to be developed for the IQCS;
3. DOI needs to develop a DOI Emergency/disaster business practices book similar to the fire community Red Book

6. TTX Briefings and Discussions

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Ms. Lisa Branum, Assistant Director, Preparedness and Response Division, Office of Emergency Management (OEM) introduced Mr. Larry Broun, (Director, Office of Emergency Management) OEM who provided a welcome to the TTX participants and an overview of the TTX. He detailed how the DOI TTX fit into other national exercise events that were occurring simultaneously. These events included various White House level coordination meetings and a Deputy's Committee meeting that took place at the White House on May 17, 2011 which was attended by Secretary Salazar.

Briefings

DOI Interior Operations Center (IOC) - Current Situation Update

Mr. Rick Tinker, (Assistant Director, Operations Division) presented a current situation update. Mr. Tinker told participants that the IOC would be activated at an enhanced level throughout the exercise. Mr. Tinker then told participants that on May 16, 2011 the USGS reported that there was a 7.7 magnitude earthquake near Memphis, Tennessee, followed by a 6.0 magnitude earthquake near Mt. Carmel, Illinois.

FEMA's National Response Coordination Center (NRCC) has been activated to Level 1 and the Regional Response Coordination Centers (RRCC) were all activated and calling Emergency Support Function (ESF) coordinating and support agencies. There were refineries in the damaged area, but there were no serious leaks. The Arkansas Nuclear Power Plant did not have power, but was running on diesel fuel. Cellular telephone service in the area was out of service and landlines were down.

There were approximately 2500 DOI employees in the living or working in the affected area. The US Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) had reported 33 personnel dead and 34 injured. ESF #4, ESF #9, and ESF #11 have been activated.

United States Geological Survey (USGS)

Doctor David Applegate (Associate Director for Natural Hazards) reviewed USGS's role in a major earthquake response (Objective #1). His presentation covered USGS involvement in an earthquake and impact the earthquakes might have on the region.

The USGS mission is to develop and deliver rapid earthquake assessment and damage estimates. They would utilize the USGS "Shakemap" to pinpoint where the earthquake occurred, its intensity, and register aftershocks. Through the Prompt Assessment for Global Earthquakes for Response "PAGER" system, the USGS would be able provide a fast, first look at fatality and economic loss estimates following an earthquake. They would also be able to provide overlays for DOI lands and facilities at risk, mineral and energy resources, and environmental impact overlays.

Dr. Applegate explained how a large earthquake in the central U.S. is felt over a wider area due to the soil types and that the ground would shake more, in comparison to California. In addition, a large percentage of the buildings in the impacted area were not designed or built to resist earthquake motion. Multiple aftershocks would present a danger of levee damage, soil

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liquefaction, damage to utility infrastructure (sewer, gas, water, pipelines) and fire. The threat of aftershocks would also impact urban search & rescue efforts,

Discussions

For the TTX participants were to assume that they were now 3 days into the event and were to address the following issues:

1. What impact the exercise scenario was having on their bureau/office in the impacted area?
2. What impact the exercise scenario was having on their bureau/office headquarters (HQ)?
3. As emergency coordinators, what did they think would be the most common question they would receive from their leadership?
4. As emergency coordinators, what did they think would be the most common question they would receive from bureau/office personnel?

Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, Regulation and Enforcement (BOEMRE)

1. There would be no direct impact to BOEMRE field office or Headquarters in Washington, DC. However, close attention would be paid to possible environmental or flood impacts to the Mississippi River, tributaries and the Gulf of Mexico.
2. Their BOEMRE Headquarters would be ready to respond to media and response organization questions. BOEMNE would also reach out to the Department of Energy (DOE) to coordinate the ESF #12 (Energy) response.
3. BOEMRE Headquarters would be prepared to respond to Congressional inquiries about incident impact to fuel prices and off-shore oil production.

Office of Human Resources (OHR)

1. There would be no direct impact to the OHR office in Washington, DC. However, close attention would be paid to reporting of fatalities or injuries to Bureau or other office personnel in the impacted area.
2. In regards to DOI personnel outside the impacted area volunteering there are existing policies that cover employee volunteering and that OHR would reach out to the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) for additional guidance.
3. Recent large scale incident have demonstrated a need for a central point (Web page, Sharepoint site, etc.) that would provide DOI employees with a “one stop shop” for all HR related matters.

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Office of Continuity Programs, OEM

1. Office of Continuity Programs indicated that this event would not seriously affect continuity programs. This event would not prompt a Continuity of Government Condition (COGCON) level change, however it would affect how quickly they could respond.
2. The Office of Continuity Programs would maintain situational awareness and provide assistance as necessary.

Office of Natural Resources Revenue (ONRR)

1. ONRR indicated that there would be no immediate impact on office resources but that mines and wells in the area could be impacted. His office would work to develop and maintain situational awareness on mines and wells.
2. The impact of liquefaction on mines and natural gas/oil wells may require further study. Mr. Applegate from the USGS stated that there may be access or connection issues, but that the mines and wells themselves would not be greatly impacted.
3. ONRR expects the office would receive Congressional inquiries about the financial impact of the event and there would develop financial damage estimates as necessary.

Interior Operations Center (IOC)

1. The event would have no impact on the IOC offices in the Main Interior Building. The event would result in the IOC being activated to Level II.
2. Members of the Incident Support Team would be alerted as necessary to assist in managing information flow and reporting.
3. The IOC would coordinate with interagency partners and would alert DOI Offices and Bureaus concerning the incident through "SendWordNow."
4. There would be an increase in reporting requirements similar to the Deep Water Horizon oil spill. It is likely that a Daily Operations Conference call concerning the event would be scheduled .

National Parks Service (NPS)

1. NPS would have 11 units affected (National Battlefields, Parks, Cemeteries) by the incident. Two of them, Buffalo National River and Natchez Trace Parkway have major construction projects ongoing at this time.

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2. The impact would be minimal on NPS employees. The NPS Midwest Region would coordinate with the Washington Office for any required personnel or equipment resources.
3. NPS expects that the biggest question they would receive from leadership would be “What do people need?” The biggest question from NPS employees would be “How can I help?”
4. NPS stated that if necessary non-essential employees would likely be asked to telework or work from an alternate site. NPS believes that the event would cause a great amount of stress on employees and that stress management and clinical psychologists would be required to assist employees.

Bureau of Land Management (BLM)

1. BLM indicates that two of BLM regions would be affected, North Milwaukee and Southern Mississippi.
2. BLM would be prepared to respond to media or Congressional inquiries concerning royalties and revenue.
3. An expected problem would be in the exchange of information between offices and bureaus due to the increase in email volume and number/size of attachments. Development of a central location for the posting of reports, briefing, etc. and downloading of the same is necessary to prevent overwhelming the DOI network.

Office of Law Enforcement and Security (OLES)

1. OLES would coordinate with the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (ATF) to provide support for ESF #13 operations.
2. OLES is updating their response plan and coordinating with ATF to determine the process for deputizing Department Law Enforcement personnel.
3. OLES expects that a majority of leadership questions would concern whether or not DOI could perform the mission assignments they receive from ATF during the incident.
4. OLES is concerned about competing assignments with law enforcement and search and rescue. It may be difficult to perform both simultaneously.

Office of Environmental Policy and Compliance (OEPC)

1. OEPC would have a supporting role for ESF #10 “Oil and Hazardous Materials” and ESF #11 “Agriculture and Natural Resources” and ESF #7 “Logistics Management and Resource Support”.

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2. OEPC would also need to address National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) compliance questions and answer how the U.S. would meet them.
3. OEPC would coordinate with the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) for ESF #11. OEPC Region 6 would help FEMA with mapping and evaluating.
4. They would have a blanket mission assignment for ESF #7 “Logistics Management and Resource Support” and needed to define responsibilities and get resource advisors.
5. The stabilization and recovery of records from any damaged facilities would be essential.

Office of Wildland Fire Coordination (OWFC)

1. OWFC reviewed their role in supporting ESF #4 (Firefighting). Initial priorities would be identifying firefighting resources, assembling Strike Teams and Incident Management Teams, receiving mission assignments from the US Forest Service, and looking at safety issues.
2. OWFC would also look to the National Interagency Coordination Center (NICC) for resource support and OWFC would review requests for contracts for food, shelter, etc. FEMA’s NRCC would be responsible for situation reporting for ESF #4.
3. Request for aerial support would be de-conflicted by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and the FEMA NRCC.

Budget Office

1. Budget Office would monitor events and respond to questions they received from the Bureaus and Offices.
2. The Budget office would also issue guidance on tracking costs in the accounting system for response activities.
3. A recommendation was for the development of a “one- stop shop”, as was mentioned for Human Resources, such as a website or Sharepoint site where they can post all of their guidance and links.

Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS)

1. FWS stated that FWS would likely be the most impacted service in the exercise scenario and would have 2 regions, 25 facilities, and 130 employees in the impacted area.
2. FWS would initially need to look at their employee’s welfare and would need to bring employees from other regions to provide assistance. They would also work on mutual assistance agreements with the local populations.

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3. FWS would use regional offices to provide required ESF resources.
4. FWS expects that they would receive lots of questions from employees about worker's compensation and would require extensive HR support.

Search and Rescue (S&R)

1. NPS led the discussion on ESF #9 (Search and Rescue). NPS indicated that working under DOI authorities (not Stafford Act), he would estimate that they would set up 3 command centers and prepare for further mission assignments.
2. NPS estimated that DOI would be asked to provide about 500 personnel (out of a total of 15,000 of Federal personnel).
3. He estimated that they would require 2 fixed wing aircraft to move people and resources.
4. The Logistics Command would be responsible for pre-assembling food and water for rescuers.
5. DOI would need to leverage relationships with Tribal teams.
6. DOI would typically run a 5-7 day mission profile.
7. A question was raised about providing security for the Search and Rescue teams. NPS indicates that approximately 120-150 of the Search and Rescue team members would be sworn officers and EMS providers that could handle security.

Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA)

1. BIA indicated that no Bureau of Indian Affairs assets would be impacted and that they would coordinate with the Indian Health Service (IHS).
2. IA expects that a majority of questions from inside and outside the bureau would concern tribal injuries, fatalities and historical sites.
3. BIA did not expect that this incident would impact support to ESF #4 and ESF #13.

Bureau of Reclamation (BOR)

1. BOR stated that no bureau assets would be affected.
2. Bureau focus would be on short term recovery operations. Particularly on water treatment plants, bridges, and dams when supporting ESF #3 activities.

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Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO)

1. OCIO indicated that the incident would not impact their headquarters facilities.
2. OCIO stated that they had trouble with the Emergency Notification System (ENS) during the exercise and that it was reporting that some sites were down when they were up and vice-versa.
3. OCIO and OEM feel that there is a need to revisit DOI SATCOM requirements.

6. Exercise Wrap-Up

PRD invited all participants to speak openly about any other topics they wanted to discuss that had not been covered.

Mr. Broun briefed the exercise participants on topics that came up during the Principal's Meeting. He stated that Search and Rescue was one of the first topics to come up and everyone agreed that there was a real need for "Just in Time" training. DHS would coordinate funding requirements in a real-world event and may need training program templates. Critical shortfalls in transformers and responder credentialing were identified. International teams would need to address liability and licensure requirements before being asked for assistance.

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Annex A

Player Impressions of TTX

Players were asked to complete a seven question Critique Sheet prior to departing the TTX. The following is a summary of the responses that were submitted. Those that participated via teleconference did not submit Critique Sheets:

Question #1 - Do you feel as an Emergency Coordinator that you are now better prepared to respond to a catastrophic earthquake in the New Madrid Seismic Zone?

Yes - 11
No - 1

Question #2 – Have you gained a greater understanding of USGS’s role in preparing for and responding to a catastrophic earthquake?

Yes – 11
No - 0

Question #3 – Are you more cognizant of DOI’s role in providing ESF 3 (Public Works & Engineering), ESF 4 (Firefighting), ESF 9 (Search & Rescue), ESF 11 Subsection (Protection of NCH Properties) and ESF 13 (Public safety & Security) support under the National Response Framework (NRF) to a catastrophic earthquake?

Yes – 11
No - 0

Question #4 – Do you have a better grasp of your Bureaus critical assets that are located in the NMSZ?

Yes – 10
No - 0

Question #5 – Are current Bureau/office plans adequate to respond to an earthquake of this magnitude?

Yes - 6
No - 2
Not Sure – 3

Question #6 – Was the Reference Material (i.e. Player Reference Book) provided to you prior to the TTX useful in your preparation for and participation in the TTX?

Yes – 10
No - 0

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Question #7 – Would you deem the TTX a success?

Yes - 11

No - 0

The following are some of the written comments extracted from the Critique Sheets:

- More training and education on earthquake planning and response is needed.
- Make sure that architect and engineering assets are in the IQCS and ROSS.
- Regarding Question #5 we need to re-look/re-evaluate plans, both organizational and local, to make sure all needs are addressed.
- We are re-visiting our plans for the establishment of a clearinghouse for an event with such a large geographic extent.
- We are scheduling principals meetings to discuss employee accountability and responsibilities.
- Need to provide time at the end of the TTX to discuss the lessons we learned from the exercise.
- BLM needs to determine what earthquake plans, if any, are in our Northern and Southern Field Offices and all Western States. Alaska has plans.
- Use this scenario as the “It could happen to you”. Offices in traditional earthquake prone areas (AK & CA) address this scenario much better than the East Coast or the Gulf Coast offices. Action would be to raise awareness to all COOP Teams about the impact to communications and the national communications System’s Shared Resources High Frequency Radio program (SHARES) and other response services. Things you take for granted when deploying to alternate sites, 50-100 miles away from primary offices.
- The objectives set us up for a super EMC meeting so we’re pretty good at that aspect. The challenges came on Monday and Tuesday when we were expected to respond to taskers. It was difficult to determine if notional responses were acceptable.

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Annex B

Lessons Learned/Recommendations

The following lessons learned/recommendations resulted from DOIs participation in NLE 11:

1. Issue: There is a need for a website or Sharepoint site that would provide employees with a “one stop shop” for all HR and budget related matters with links for matters that pertain to the Bureaus and Offices.

Discussion:

Recommendation:

2. Issue During an event, there may be a capacity problem with the volume of emails and attachments. Several fixes were mentioned, including minimizing attachments by sending Blackberry readable “links” instead. OCIO is currently working on increasing DOI bandwidth capabilities.

Discussion:

Recommendation:

3. Issue: As many DOI employees as possible should have telework agreements in place before an event occurs.

Discussion:

Recommendation:

4. Issue: DOI needs to revisit their SATCOM requirements.

Discussion:

Recommendation:

5. Issue: There is a need to conduct more TTXs on an annual basis.

Discussion:

Recommendation:

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6. Issue: There is a need to prepare and distribute read ahead material (i.e. Reference Books) prior to short duration (2-3 hour) TTXs.

Discussion:

Recommendation:

7. Issue: Combining real world events (i.e. Mississippi Flooding) with the exercise scenario (earthquake) added realism to the TTX.

Discussion:

Recommendation:

8. Issue: Earthquake response plans need to be developed/reviewed at all DOI organizational levels.

Discussion:

Recommendation:

9. Issue: Development of a “One Stop-Shop” for information, guidance, reports and documents to minimize incident impact on DOI Inter/Intra net.

Discussion:

Recommendation:

10. DOI Emergency Support Function # 4 (Pending)

Issue:

Discussion:

Recommendation:

11. DOI Emergency Support Function # 9

Issue: Use of Parks or Refuges as refugee relocation center or mass burial sites during response/recovery from a large scale disaster.

Discussion: National Park Service is against the use of parks for refugee relocation or use as a mass burial site due to damage to lands and historic sites.

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Recommendation: National Park Service and ESF #9 position is this use of park lands should not be permitted.

Issue: Departmental guidance on emergency purchasing and contracting authority requires review and possible revision.

Discussion: The Department should revise its guidelines on emergency purchasing and contracting authority during a disaster of this magnitude. Guidelines should be simplified and emergency purchase and contracting authority devolved to the lowest level possible to speed response.

Recommendation: The Department should develop and implement simplified procurement guidelines and allow purchasing/contacting at the lowest level possible to expedite response operations.

13. DOI Emergency Support Function # 13

Issue: Deputation of Federal Law Enforcement officers.

Discussion: 6 years after Hurricane Katrina there is still no in place process for the deputation of Federal Law Enforcement officers

Recommendation: OLES coordinate with the Department of Justice to develop a procedure for the deputation of Federal Law Enforcement officers during disaster response/recovery operations.io

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Annex C

The Summary of Conclusions

In addition to the TTX Lessons Learned shown above there were two Summary of Conclusions resulting from the DRG Interagency Policy Group session held at the White House (Eisenhower Executive Office Building) on May 19, 2011 and attended by Deputy Assistant Secretary Kimberly Thorsen.

- 1. Departments and agencies will develop processes to account for and contact all personnel in a disaster area to include situations where there may not be electricity or an operable communications infrastructure.**

RECOMMENDATION:

Expedite the review of DOI employees accountability system and identify shortfalls to meet these expectations. Reach out to OC IO and OLES as may be needed to address provisions to report in communications-constrained environments.

- 2. The Department of Justice (DOJ) will develop an inventory and standardized training program for deployment of law enforcement personnel to a disaster area.**

RECOMMENDATION:

Generate an after action item for OLES to re-evaluate with the Law Enforcement Board of Advisors.

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Annex D

Other Action Items

In addition to the Lessons Learned listed above there were several other issues that surfaced during the TTX that require further investigation/action. They were:

- There is a need to have the capability to link individual employee locations into a geographic information system (GIS).
- Shake modeling done by USGS needs to be tied to potential damage to DOI facilities.
- There is a need to identify geospatial requirements among the bureaus ahead of time.
- It would be beneficial to have Blackberry friendly reports come out along with a link to greater/larger detail if necessary.
- The size of BLM's emails appears to have a bandwidth issue that requires investigation.
- The sharing of information both internally and externally continues to be a problem.
- Budget guidance is required on how and when to begin tracking costs when an event such as that portrayed in TTX scenario occurs.

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