

JULY 2, 2002

SCHAKOWSKY'S CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEE CONVENES CHICAGO FIELD HEARING ON INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION TO COMBAT TERRORISM

"HOMELAND SECURITY MUST BEGIN WITH INPUT FROM THOSE ON THE FRONT LINE"

CHICAGO, IL - Following a request by ranking Democratic member U.S. Representative Jan Schakowsky (D-IL), the Government Reform Subcommittee on Government Efficiency, Financial Management and Intergovernmental Relations held a field hearing today in Chicago on homeland security and preparedness in case of terrorist attacks. The full Government Reform Committee has primary jurisdiction over the creation of a massive new government agency, The Department of Homeland Security. Hearings are scheduled next week on Capitol Hill.

"I requested this hearing for a very important reason: I believe that hometown security equals homeland security. A successful blueprint for homeland security must begin with input from those on the front line," Schakowsky said.

The hearing was entitled *"How Effectively is the Federal Government Assisting State and Local Governments in Preparing for a Biological, Chemical or Nuclear Attack?"*

"The FBI's latest warning of possible attacks over the 4th of July Holiday begs the question: Are we prepared?" she added. "Without adequate and appropriate information, direction and resources flowing from the federal government to the local and state authorities, Illinois, Chicago, and other cities across the state cannot be expected to contribute the resources necessary to prevent and respond to terrorist attacks."

Witnesses who testified at today's hearing included:

- Dr. John Wilhelm, Commissioner, Chicago Dept. of Public Health;

- Dr. John Lumpkin, Director, Illinois Department of Public Health;

- Patrick J. Daly, Assistant Special Agent in Charge, Chicago Division, FBI;

- Captain Ray Seebald, Coast Guard Captain of the Port accompanied by Commander Gail Kulisch, Commanding Officer Atlantic Area Strike Team;

- Edward G. Buikema, Director, Region 5, Federal Emergency Management Agency;

- JayEtta Z. Hecker, Director, Physical Infrastructure Issues, U.S. General Accounting Office;

- Dr. Arthur Schneider, Professor of Medicine, Chief of the Endocrinology Section, University of Illinois;

- David Kraft, Director, Nuclear Energy Information Service;

- Dr. Quentin Young, Chair, Health and Medicine Policy Research Group, Hyde Park Associates in Medicine.

- Dennis Nillson, Commander, Field Operations Division, City of Evanston

- John Wilkinson, Fire Chief, City of Evanston

Below is Schakowsky's full statement from today's hearing.

**STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE JAN SCHAKOWSKY
AT THE CHICAGO FIELD HEARING ON
INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION TO COMBAT TERRORISM
JULY 2, 2002**

Mr. Chairman, welcome to Chicago. I want to thank you for your help in arranging today's hearing. I also want to extend a warm welcome to all of our witnesses, especially our state, and local witnesses. We value your input and very much appreciate your taking the time to share your views with us today.

I requested this hearing for a very important reason: I believe that hometown security equals homeland security. Without adequate and appropriate information, direction and resources flowing from the federal government to the local and state authorities, Illinois, Chicago and other cities across the state cannot be expected to contribute the resources necessary to prevent and respond to terrorist attacks.

Today's hearing is extremely timely. The FBI's latest warning of possible attacks over the 4th of July Holiday begs the question: Are we prepared?

Have Chicagoland authorities received the necessary information, cooperation, and direction from the federal government to guarantee public safety or, at the very least, to minimize public risk?

Has the state of Illinois been provided with what it needs from the federal government to develop and implement a comprehensive emergency preparedness plan? And, in turn, are those resources making it to local law enforcement and emergency responders who are on the front lines in the effort to prevent and respond to terrorist threats?

We're here to find out the answers to those important questions.

We are in Chicago today to hear the voices of local officials and to make sure their message is heard in Washington, DC. A successful blueprint for homeland security must begin with input from those on the front line. They are the ones who will assure that our 4th of July celebrations are safe and secure. They are the ones who will respond first to any incident. We cannot secure our nation without their input and expertise.

Since September 11, the way we conduct the business of national security in this country has changed. Today our federal, state, and local authorities are even more aware of potential threats. Additional steps are being taken to protect a more alert and concerned public. For most Americans, the thought of biological, chemical or nuclear terrorism is, for the first time, a real possibility. This is our new normal.

In Washington, we are deliberating over the President's plan to create a massive new government agency, The Department of Homeland Security. The full Government Reform Committee has primary jurisdiction over the creation of that department and hearings are scheduled next week on Capitol Hill. At each step of the way, we will continue to ask important questions, including whether this plan will make us safer. We must also determine whether critical non-security functions of agencies like the Coast Guard, FEMA, and the INS will be compromised under that plan. We need input from the local level to make sure that this is done right.

Today, we are focusing on the possibility of chemical, biological, or nuclear terrorist attacks. Illinois has more nuclear power facilities than any other state. We need to be sure adequate security and contingency plans are in place to deal with possible attacks on those facilities. The federal government has offered considerable resources and information to help with that effort and we will need an assessment as to how the coordination process on that front is progressing.

Biological terrorism has already occurred. The anthrax attacks that were delivered through the mail were a wake-up call for us to check the state of our public health infrastructure.

As many of our witnesses today will explain, our public health system would be challenged in responding to a large scale disaster either natural or man made. The

capacity of our public and private hospitals is strained each year during flu season. A disaster with 10,000 injuries that required hospitalization would be very difficult for that system to handle.

The front line of response in most disasters is local government. We see this again and again as hurricanes, tornadoes, and heat waves strike cities. Local firefighters, police officers, and emergency medical personnel are the first there to tend to those in need. Any response we make now must keep in mind that fact. Training, resources, and communications are key to disaster response, and should be the centerpiece of our investment. The majority of that investment should be made at the local level.

Past experiences have shown that our public health system is also on the front line. Once the disaster scene is surveyed, the injured are moved to hospitals. It is often the case that the hospital capacity is reduced by the same disaster. We have taken our public health system for granted for some time now, and it has suffered as a result. We must invest in personnel, planning and reserve capacity.

Again, I would like to thank each of you for taking time from your busy schedules to be with us today, and I look forward to your testimony.