Civil-Military Cooperation in Responding to the Anthrax Attacks in 2001

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In October of 2001 at least four letters containing anthrax spores were mailed to various prominent figures in the United States government and media organizations. What followed is perhaps the largest bioterrorism investigation and public health response in U.S. history. Physicians and scientists from the United States Army Medical Research Institute of Infectious Diseases (USAMRIID) played an important role in responding to this public health emergency. This session will highlight the cooperation and lessons learned between civilian public health organizations and USAMRIID employees. We will also discuss what actions can be taken to improve cooperation and bioterrorism response plans in the future.

Keywords: anthrax; bioterrorism; civil-military cooperation; USAMRIID

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Chemical/Biological Threat

Co-operation in the European Union on Preparedness and Response to Biological and Chemical Agent Attacks (Health Security)

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The actions of the European Union (EU) relative to terrorism have been outlined in three communications issued by the European Commission: (1) November 2001, (2) June 2002, and (3) June 2003, that deal in detail with the health aspects of this action, (communication COM (2003) 320 final). Moreover, a joint programme of action for chemical, biological, and radio-nuclear threats was agreed by the EU Council of Ministers and the Commission on 20 December 2002, as requested by the European Council (heads of State and Government of the EU) in Ghent, Belgium in October 2001. This programme sets out the key objectives of action on CBRN threats across the policies and sectors of activities of the EU, and lists the legal instruments that can be used to counter such threats.

In the area of health, guidelines agreed upon at the Health Council of the EU on 15 November 2001, led to the drawing-up of the 25-action programme on health security, currently being implemented in close collaboration between the Commission and the EU Member States, which aims to contribute towards:
1. EU-wide capability for the timely detection and for the identification of biological and chemical agents in laboratories;
2. Rapid and reliable determination and diagnosis of human disease cases;
3. Availability of medicines;