

WASHINGTON

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*National Security Decision  
Directive Number*

MANAGING TERRORISM INCIDENTS

The United States is committed, as a matter of national policy, to oppose terrorism domestically and internationally. Efficient and effective management of terrorist incidents is crucial to this commitment. Successful management of terrorist incidents requires a rapid, effective response, immediate access to institutional expertise, and extensive prior planning. Because of these requirements, the management of terrorist incidents will be handled in the following manner:

- (1) Responsibilities. Terrorist Incidents will be considered Special Situations. Therefore, overall policy responsibility for managing terrorist incidents will be vested in the Special Situation Group (SSG) chaired by the Vice President or, in his absence the Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs.
- (2) The Lead Agency. The operational management of terrorist incidents will normally be the responsibility of the Lead Agency. The Lead Agency will be that agency with the most direct operational role in dealing with the particular terrorist incident at hand. It will coordinate all operational aspects of the incident including press and intelligence. The Lead Agency will normally be:
  - The State Department, for international terrorist incidents //
  - The FBI for domestic terrorist incidents
  - The FAA will be the supporting agency to the above Lead Agencies in airplane hijackings.

The Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs will resolve any uncertainty on the designation of the Lead Agency.

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(3) The Interdepartmental Group on Terrorism (IG/T), chaired by the Department of State, will be responsible for the development of overall US policy on terrorism, including, inter alia, policy directives, organizational issues, legislative initiatives, and training programs.

(4) The Terrorist Incident Working Group. To support the Special Situation Group and/or the Lead Agency, a Terrorist Incident Working Group (TIWG) will be established. This group will consist of representatives from State, DOD, FBI, and the NSC staff, with possible augmentation from other agencies represented on the Interdepartmental Group on Terrorism. The TIWG will be activated for the duration of the incident by the Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs. It will be chaired by a representative from the Lead Agency.

The purpose of the TIWG is to provide the SSG and/or Lead Agency with direct operational support, to ensure interagency coordination, and to provide advice and recommendations during an incident.

(5) White House Operations Group. The White House Operations Group, chaired by the White House Military Office, will have responsibility for issues relating to threats or acts of terrorism directed against the President. The NSC staff will effect liaison between this group and the IG/T and TIWG.

(6) Planning and Exercises. In order to ensure effective management of terrorism incidents, prior planning and exercise activity are essential. The Interdepartmental Group on Terrorism under the Chairmanship of the Department of State will be the primary mechanism within the US Government for planning and policy recommendations. To ensure the development of an effective, coordinated exercise program, the Chairman of the IG/T will appoint an Exercise Committee which will review all multiple agency counter-terrorism exercises. This committee will assure that the government's counter-terrorism capabilities are maintained in a high state of readiness and that duplication of exercises is avoided. No multiple agency exercise may be held without the recommendation of the IG/T and the approval of the Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs.

This National Security Decision Directive supersedes all previous directives and instructions on managing terrorism incidents.