2009 INAUGURATION REVIEW

Executive Summary of Findings:

Multi-Agency Response to Concerns Raised by the Joint Congressional Committee on Inaugural Ceremonies for the 56th Presidential Inauguration

March 20, 2009

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The report entitled Multi-Agency Response to Concerns Raised by the Joint Congressional Committee on Inaugural Ceremonies for the 56th Presidential Inauguration, dated March 17, 2009, represents a collective and collaborative effort of the principally-involved agencies to compile an assessment of the planning, execution and operational shortfalls of the Inaugural event in terms of security and crowd management. That report reflects the blending of viewpoints and perspectives fundamental to the multi-agency planning process that supports such an event.

Some readers may find the level of detail, intricacy of the perspective or reference to industry protocols less distinguishable than perhaps they should be. In an effort to overcome that challenge and at the same time offer a full comprehensive examination as directed, the Inaugural Review Team offers this summary of findings.

As with the full report, this summary should be considered two-phased, with consideration to planning and background, and execution of the plan with findings and recommendations.

COMMENTS ON THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT: It cannot go unsaid that the unprecedented dimensions of this event compelled veteran successful planners to craft solutions to potential issues with which no one had any historical experience in terms of scope or scale; that is to say that the benchmarks for planning were based on the best abilities of planners to forecast future eventualities multiplied by an unknown factor based on past experience, which must be acknowledged as an inexact science.

REGARDING THE PLANNING PROCESS ITSELF: Overall, the scope and scale of the planning process, while grounded in past Inaugural events and premised on the similarity between past and future experience, required an integrated and cogent approach by the planners on the Executive Steering Committee.

The following is a summary of our findings and recommendations:

1. *The Executive Steering Committee (ESC) planning procedure must be clearly delineated in terms of process and reporting relationships. No material planning decision should be made other than through this process. Each subcommittee should present a formal plan or a final presentation to the ESC. It should be the responsibility of the ESC to review each plan and de-conflict any issues which might affect the plans of other subcommittees. The ESC should approve any plans or maps to be used by law enforcement agencies to eliminate conflicting information.*

2. *The ESC must be staffed with executives from each represented agency at a level commensurate with this decision-making authority. Any conflicts that cannot be resolved should be brought to the attention of the head of the lead federal agency for discussion with other involved agency leaders.*

3. *The United States Secret Service (USSS) and the United States Capitol Police (USCP) must work diligently to reconcile every facet of their interagency coordination that could remotely be in conflict: as an example, overall responsibility for access verification and security screening at each access point (which is shared by both agencies), must be assigned to a single identified senior command officer on the ground who shall be vested with decision-making authority in advance.*

4. *There should be direct communication between the governing bodies (Joint*

Congressional Committee on Inaugural Ceremonies (JCCIC), Presidential Inaugural Committee (PIC), and the Armed Forces Inaugural Committee (AFIC)) and the ESC.

5. *The ESC should authorize the creation and management of an Internet-based Inaugural website, designed to provide the most accurate and up-to-date information available. This website should be utilized by the security planners to disseminate information to the public, both in advance of and during the Inauguration. The website should also provide the general public with a means of posting any issue relevant to the event and reporting any security-related concerns, such as crowd build-ups and suspicious activity.*

6. *A dedicated website and toll free telephone number should be listed on the ticket, ensuring that ticketholders have access to up-to-date information concerning screening checkpoints and reporting directions.*

7. *Tickets should be printed later in the planning process and only after being properly vetted through the appropriate subcommittees, once the security plan is approved. This will ensure that printed tickets contain correct information that is consistent with the finalized security plan that is shared with the public.*

8. *The capacity of all viewing areas should be based on the Federal Emergency Management Agency crowd management standard of five square feet per person. This standard takes into account crowd anomalies, surges and retreats.*

9. *A Crowd Management Subcommittee should be established for future Inaugurations. This subcommittee would be tasked with establishing and de-conflicting issues such as pedestrian routes, entry gate queuing and comprehensive signage for the entire city. This subcommittee should provide solutions which take into consideration larger than expected crowds.*

10. *The appropriate level of magnetometer screening for future events should be predicated on the existing threat level at that time.*

11. *Planning processes which forecast flow rates for magnetometer screening should continue to be based upon recommendations by the USSS, in accordance with their experience with screening and managing crowds at large venues (i.e., national conventions, Olympics and presidential campaigns).*

12. *Planners included resources such as civilian volunteers and made maximum use of federal, state and local law enforcement officers from across the country. National Guard units were deployed, in greater numbers than in past Inaugurals, to assist with crowd management due to the anticipated number of visitors to the National Capital Region. The Inaugural Review Team (IRT) recommends that future planners explore and coordinate the utilization of additional civilian volunteers with JCCIC and PIC.*

13. *For the Third Street tunnel and Third Street crossover, planners of the 56th Presidential Inauguration did address concerns regarding their utilization. However, as the problems that arose in these areas demonstrate, future security planners have to be aware that geographic anomalies such as these present unique challenges. Therefore, their function, responsibility and management must be clearly established.*

14. *Planning for each access point must be conducted to ensure that all guests have adequate infrastructure, e.g. Metro stations, streets, sidewalks, etc., sufficient to accommodate larger than expected crowds. Planners should study placement of magnetometers and take into account location, adequate space for queuing, access to power, space for spectators and accessibility to viewing areas.*

REGARDING THE EXECUTION OF THE PLAN: It is clear that flaws and shortcomings in the planning process manifested themselves in the operational execution of the plan. The challenges we confronted or later discovered included the human factor and adequacy of numbers, employment of information technology, unified decision-making, having the right resource utilization and crowd management methodologies.

The following is a summary of our findings and recommendations:

Crowd Management

In general, crowd management difficulties stemmed not just from the sheer volume of attendees, but due to the fact that spectators arrived before police officers were posted and because non-ticketed guests co-mingled with ticketed guests at the screening points. These enormous crowds of ticketed and non-ticketed guests funneled to the blue, purple and silver ticket prescreening gates and essentially rendered the established queuing lines ineffective.

Recommendations

1. *All Presidential Inauguration guests, both ticketed and non-ticketed, should be provided with accurate information and directions to route them to their designated Metro station and entry point via a more extensive use of media outlets to include print, radio, television and the Internet.*

2. *As referenced above, a Crowd Management Subcommittee should be established for future Inaugurations. This subcommittee would be tasked with establishing and de-conflicting issues such as pedestrian routes, entry gate queuing and comprehensive signage for the entire city. This subcommittee should ensure the following:*

    - *Signage should not only provide adequate directions to ticketed viewing areas for the swearing-in ceremonies at the U.S. Capitol and reviewing stands, but also provide direction to non-ticketed guests to public viewing points along the parade route and National Mall. This signage, to include banner-bridge and variable message boards, should contain precise instructions for ticketed and non-ticketed guests.*

    - *This signage should be placed at major visitor arrival sites such as Metro stations, Union Station and bus drop-off locations, both inside the stations as well as at their exits. These visual cues should be placed high enough so that they are visible above a crowd and at as many points as practicable throughout the National Mall and around the U.S. Capitol.*

    - *Queuing should take into consideration both vehicular and pedestrian traffic flow.*

    - *Additional reporting directions should be accomplished by utilizing personnel to include "way finders," volunteer staff and law enforcement officials equipped with loud speaker capability at established informational kiosks. These informational kiosks should be identified with appropriate signage that is posted at least 10 feet above the kiosks and situated at key visitor arrival sites such as Metro stops, Union Station and bus drop-off points.*

Pre-screening

Although the exact numbers that would attend the 56th Presidential Inauguration could not be known, the ESC anticipated a much higher invited guest turnout as compared with years

past. This committee planned for much larger crowds in general and specifically for larger numbers of ticketed guests. Based on these assumptions, the committee felt that the 56th Presidential Inauguration security plan was sufficient to screen every one of the invited guests if they all decided to attend. This committee also felt there was sufficient personnel and equipment at each checkpoint to allow all the ticketed guests to be properly screened within the allotted time period.

Despite these preparations, the number of non-ticketed guests who migrated from Metro stations, bus drop-off points and the National Mall into the security screening checkpoints was drastically underestimated by planners. These crowds included non-ticketed guests, guests with commemorative PIC invitations, guests with wrong-colored tickets and guests attempting to enter with their Metro fare cards. So many people attempted to access the entry gates that they severely clogged queuing lines. At one point, crowds became so dense that police officers at the purple gate had to briefly restrict the flow of ticketholders in order to move the bike rack fencing that had been pushed in front of the entry gate, effectively closing off the entrance temporarily. In effect, overcrowding caused pre-screeners to sort through thousands of non-ticketed guests, which severely hindered the screening process, caused unforeseen delays and ultimately prevented many congressional guests from being screened in time to see the swearing-in ceremonies.

Recommendations

1. *The number of non-ticketed and ticketed guests co-mingled in the screening areas must be minimized. Access to the queuing lines must be strictly limited to guests holding the appropriate color-coded tickets. Pre-screeners should query guests upon entering the queuing lines and randomly along the queuing lines to ensure they possess the appropriate color-coded ticket.*

2. *To avoid excessive congestion at the screening checkpoints, the number of lanes making up a queuing line should correlate to the number of guests that can be prescreened simultaneously at an access gate. Queued guests not possessing the correct color-coded tickets should be diverted away from the checkpoints through egress paths separated by suitable fencing. Persons not in line should not be allowed to congregate at the checkpoints and should be directed to the appropriate locations based upon their ticketing status.*

3. *Flexibility at each screening checkpoint, whereby multiple/alternate entry gates are incorporated into the security fencing, should be considered to accommodate larger than expected crowds.*

4. *Ticket checking in the future should be the function of the host committee, not a function of law enforcement officials. This would allow law enforcement officials to perform security and crowd management duties. Accepted protective methodology calls for law enforcement officers to pre-screen for threats at points farthest from the entry gates.*

5. *Once inside the security screening buffer zone, the host committee should provide staff to direct ticketed guests to utilize each of the magnetometers.*

6. *The IRT suggests an in-depth study be conducted to determine the feasibility of combining magnetometer checkpoints on the north and south sides of the U.S. Capitol. There could be one bank of magnetometers on the north side of the U.S. Capitol for yellow and purple ticketholders, and one bank of magnetometers on the south side of the U.S. Capitol for orange and blue ticketholders. Ticketholders would then be segregated and directed to their respective viewing areas once inside the magnetometer checkpoint much like the system used at arenas and stadiums.*

7. *The issue of the silver ticket screening checkpoint should be addressed independently by future planners.*

8. *Once guests have passed through magnetometer screening and have entered their respective viewing area, the host committee should have the flexibility to direct these guests from one viewing area to another, i.e., orange to yellow, if one side appears to be more full than the other. The same consideration should be given to the purple and blue viewing areas.*

9. *Future security planners should examine the possibility of opening the screening gates at an earlier hour in order to allow for more screening time. It should be noted, however, that doing so is not without costs. Earlier opening times will require the entire security perimeter, both the U.S. Capitol and the parade route, to be swept and secured earlier. In addition, opening earlier would pose concerns regarding having restroom facilities opened and medical support available for guests at an earlier hour.*

10. *Fencing all screening gates is vital. It provides stand-off distance for the security screening process, prevents the magnetometers from being overrun and allows law enforcement officials to more effectively pre-screen for threats.*

11. *A public address system should be installed outside of the entry gates. Although police officers had megaphones available, they proved insufficient for the task at hand. A robust public address system would allow police officers to provide directions to the crowds and aid in separating non-ticketed and ticketed guests.*

12. *Although additional bike rack fencing is an option, it is not recommended. Studies on crowd management do not currently recommend the use of bike rack fencing for queuing lines, as they can create crushing hazards. The use of well-staffed rope lines should be explored as an option to create queuing.*

13. *A review of the National Mall Fourth Street crossover and its impact on the Seventh Street crossover should be conducted by future planners.*

Global Fencing

The fencing plan was developed with the concept of concentric rings of security. The five-foot and eight-foot barrier fence (global fence) served as the primary pedestrian barrier between secure and unsecure areas and was never breached. The 16 foot-wide gates through which all pre-screened guests passed were of a sufficient size to provide passage for all invited guests. However, crowd density prevented ticketholders from reaching these gates.

Bike rack fencing and snow fencing served as pedestrian controls to guide pedestrians inside and outside of the perimeter. The snow fencing was trampled in the silver viewing areas and the bike rack fencing was easily moved by the large crowds. However, civil disturbance platoons were diverted to this area to prevent a breach of the hard security perimeter.

Recommendations

1. *Fencing plans should be reviewed and de-conflicted by the Crowd Management Subcommittee.*

2. *The IRT makes no recommendation concerning the appropriate level of fencing for future events. This decision should be predicated on the existing threat level at that time.*

Third Street Tunnel

Crowds formed a line in the tunnel believing they could access the purple entry gate through Exit 9, the First and C Streets spur. Although it was reserved for emergency vehicles, pedestrians unexpectedly utilized the northbound tube of the Third Street tunnel as a queuing area. The people who entered this line were in the tunnel for several hours in a line that did not progress. The following were contributing factors:

- Extreme overcrowding in the purple staging area that forced crowds west onto D Street, NW.
- No signs or barricades prohibiting pedestrians from utilizing the northbound tube of the tunnel entrance at Second and D Streets, NW.
- A limited law enforcement presence in the northbound tunnel.
- Uniformed officers directed people into the northbound tube of the tunnel to ease a dangerous overcrowding situation.

Recommendations

1. *Future planners should consider allowing for pedestrian use of both Third Street tunnel tubes for ease of pedestrian north-south movement and as an overflow for crowd management. This could be accomplished with proper signage, police presence in both tubes, real time surveillance camera coverage and definitive separators (bike rack fencing, cones, barrels, barriers, etc.) for authorized vehicle and pedestrian movements.*

2. *Coordination between all agencies must be developed with respect to major thoroughfares, such as the Third Street tunnel and their impact on crowd management and traffic flow.*

Third Street Crossover

There were conflicting plans regarding the use of the Third Street crossover. The National Security Special Event (NSSE) map conflicted with the site specific map utilized by the U.S. Capitol Subcommittee. The NSSE map indicated that Third Street would be utilized as a pedestrian crossover and parade route access point, while the U.S. Capitol Subcommittee map indicated it would be closed.

Although the U.S. Capitol Subcommittee never intended for this gate to be an access point for silver ticketholders, a joint decision was made on the morning of January 20, 2009, that an accommodation could be made for designated groups of silver ticketholders if they were escorted. Upon request from the MPD to relieve congestion, initial steps were taken to escort a large group of silver ticketholders from Third and C Streets, NW to their viewing area; however, a miscommunication prevented this from occurring.

Planners believed that sharing a ticketed screening checkpoint with a screening checkpoint for non-ticketed guests would pose significant challenges, especially once the parade route closed.

Recommendations

1. *Future planners should examine other options to facilitate crowd management to include the use of walkways, portable bridges and tunnels.*

2. *Law enforcement stakeholders must improve planning, situational awareness, communication and execution in order to maximize crowd flow.*

Multi-Agency Communications Center (MACC)

The NSSE command and control structure is centralized, with each agency retaining its statutorily mandated authority. To coordinate communication, all participating agencies are represented by key command personnel in the MACC. These representatives are instructed to monitor developments within their jurisdictional control or agency and document any event that may impact the Inauguration events. Furthermore, these representatives are instructed to forward this information to the USSS MACC supervisors via incident reporting sheets. Additional coordination occurs at the various interagency command and coordination centers to include the USCP Command Center and MPD JOC.

When the MACC receives accurate and timely information, the MACC structure operates effectively. Individual agency representatives assigned to the MACC were able to coordinate and communicate with other law enforcement agencies and quickly resolve issues brought to their attention.

With respect to issues raised about the Third Street tunnel, several telephone calls from frustrated ticketholders were received in the MACC. However, these callers never articulated that they were "stuck" in the northbound tube of the tunnel. When the calls were relayed to command center officials, they determined that the tunnel (southbound) was still open and crowds were flowing. Because the information was not specific, agency representatives considered that the calls were referencing the southbound tube of the tunnel since it was intended for pedestrian use.

Recommendations

1. *A review should be conducted by the USSS to ensure that the flow of information is timely and accurate. The USSS should ensure that the Incident Reporting Format is adequate to ensure that all incidents are documented, tracked and brought to a satisfactory conclusion.*

2. *During the 56th Presidential Inauguration, the MACC was not situated in the immediate vicinity of the event, nor should it be in the future. Future planners should continue to locate the MACC outside of the immediate area so as not to be adversely affected in the event an emergency situation occurs.*

3. *The IRT noted that on Inauguration Day, many people posted observations and concerns on the Internet in real time. It is recommended that for future Presidential Inaugurations, the Joint Information Center (JIC) further monitor Internet-based websites such as Twitter and Facebook, in order to track potential problems as they develop. Subsequently, the JIC can forward relevant information to the MACC for multi-agency distribution.*

SUMMARY

On January 20, 2009, an estimated 1.8 million people converged on Washington, D.C., the U.S. Capitol grounds and the National Mall area to witness President Barack Obama take the oath of office. Despite these unprecedented numbers, there was not one major security incident, arrest, or injury reported. In the months and weeks leading up to this event, all participating law enforcement agencies and public safety officials worked tirelessly to keep all of the 2009 Presidential Inauguration NSSEs safe. In this regard, the security plan was successful.

The IRT recognizes the collaborative effort among all principally-involved federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies, public safety officials, and representatives of JCCIC, PIC and AFIC, in ensuring the safety of the participants, public, and citizens of Washington, D.C. during these

Inaugural events. As the lead agency of NSSEs, the USSS is dependant upon these partnerships for the highest possible level of success.

All participants in the planning and execution of the 56th Presidential Inauguration realize how important attendance at this monumental event was to so many people. In order to witness this historic event, many people traveled from all across the country, endured financial difficulties, and waited in long lines in very cold weather to observe the orderly transfer of power of the United States government. All planners and involved law enforcement personnel regret that so many of these travelers were unable to view the swearing-in ceremony. This committee has attempted to analyze the 56th Presidential Inauguration security plan, identify the deficiencies that caused so many people to be denied access to the event and make recommendations for the future.

It is the hope that all future security planners will benefit from this report and will be better able to effectively meet the many challenges, old and new, that will emerge during the next Presidential Inauguration in 2013.