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### 'Dirty Bomb' Plot **Focuses Attention on Emergency Planning**

**BYLINE:** Stephen Barr

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The Bush administration's report of a terrorist plot to detonate a radioactive "dirty bomb" has renewed fears among federal employees who believe that their agencies have not adequately advised them on what to do and where to go after a catastrophic event.

Administration officials involved in security planning privately acknowledge that some agencies need to do more to explain emergency and security plans to employees. But they also believe that the government has come a long way in emergency planning since the Sept. 11 attacks on the Pentagon and World Trade Center.

"Many agencies have revised and improved plans since September 11, and we will in the coming months be able to provide additional information to employees on specific actions that should be taken, based on what kind of crisis we might be facing," said Gordon Johndroe, the White House homeland security spokesman.

Officials from the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the General Services Administration and the Office of Personnel Management have been meeting with Washington area local governments to spell out evacuation plans for federal agencies. Those plans are nearing completion, officials said.

"Meetings continue to happen, and the plan is becoming more solid every day," Johndroe said. "This plan brings together all the various response plans that the different agencies in the national capital region have."

One official said the plan looks at evacuation planning from a regional perspective and would not apply to the closing of one or two federal buildings. It seeks to improve communications among local, state and federal agencies during a crisis, the official said.

Federal agencies, to a large degree, will rely on local emergency officials to manage the response to a catastrophic attack. Federal employees need to monitor announcements from local officials as well as understand the plans prepared by their agencies, the official said.

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F. Joseph Moravec, commissioner of GSA's Public Buildings Service, said every federal building has a "building security committee" or an "occupant emergency organization" that can tell employees about evacuation plans.

Many agencies have drawn up emergency handbooks that describe procedures for employees to follow in an evacuation, an early dismissal or an event such as a tornado or civil disturbance that requires workers to stay inside a building. Some plans tell employees where to assemble if they must leave the building.

Agencies also have drawn up "continuity of operations" plans so that critical personnel can keep an agency running during an emergency.

"If a federal employee is not aware of their occupant emergency organization or plan, they should find out. If there is no such plan, we should know about that," Moravec said.

Sen. Harry M. Reid (D-Nev.) and Rep. Michael Bilirakis (R-Fla.) will be honored by the Blinded American Veterans Foundation at the group's 17th annual congressional awards reception tomorrow.

The lawmakers will receive the 2002 George "Buck" Gillispie Congressional Award for Meritorious Service, named for the late World War II veteran who devoted more than 40 years to efforts to help visually impaired veterans.

A Flag Week observance scheduled for tomorrow -- the seventh Congressional Flag Day Celebration and Salute to Veterans and the Military -- will feature singer Lee Greenwood. The event, organized by the VA-National Medical Musical Group, will include patriotic readings by 14 members of Congress.

The creation of the Department of Homeland Security would be the largest government reorganization since World War II. Paul C. Light, director of governmental studies at the Brookings Institution, will take questions and comments on homeland security issues at noon today on Federal Diary Live at [www.washingtonpost.com](http://www.washingtonpost.com). Please join us.

Stephen Barr's e-mail address is [barrs@washpost.com](mailto:barrs@washpost.com).

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