Written Exercise 8 - DRNC National Political Convention Assignment

This scenario corresponds with Course Objective G (see below).

Objective G: Demonstrate the ability to work alongside other Medicolegal professionals such as pathologists, medical examiners, doctors, forensic nurses, and other death investigators in a professional and competent manner in such a way as to be a viable part of the Medicolegal death investigation team. And to demonstrate an understanding of general death investigation and criminal death investigation in an adequate manner as to be considered a peer of the interdisciplinary Medicolegal forensic team.

The following story is a fictional account of planning and preparation leading up to the mythical Democratic-Republican National Convention (DRNC) event in Miami, Florida. The story is loosely based on an amalgamation of real life occurrences in the lead up to the Free Trade Area of the Americas conference in Miami, Florida in 2003. The names of all the characters in the story are fictional.

Background

For the DRNC event, Miami-Dade County has formed a Host Committee, similar to the model used for the Super Bowl Host Committees of the past. The Host Committee is a small group of 15 appointed personnel from various county and municipal agencies, as well as the private sector. Miami-Dade Police Department Director Melanie Duncan is one of the committee members. The Host Committee is chaired by Mr. Horace Copeland, a long-time assistant to the County Manager, Miguel Herrera. The purpose of the Host Committee is to plan for the overall event. As such, they are responsible for recommending policy, but not for enacting policy. The enactment of policy remains the ultimate responsibility of the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC).

The Democratic-Republican National Party (DRNP) has designated Ms. Cassandra Armand as its chair of the DRNC’s Committee on Arrangements (COA). The COA is the main organizer from the DRNP for this event. Ms. Armand and Mr. Copeland from the Host Committee work hand-in-hand to plan this event and their recommendations to the BOCC carry considerable weight for policy formulation.

Miami-Dade Police has been designated as the lead local agency and lead operational planner for the event security. This policy differs significantly from the 2003 FTAA in which the City of Miami was designated as the lead local agency.

Since this event meets the criteria of a National Special Security Event (NSSE), the U.S. Secret Service has been designated as the lead coordinating agency with overarching statutory authority for the planning and execution of the event. Supervisory Special Agent Samantha Salerno has been appointed as the lead agent in-charge for the event.

Neither the Miami Police Department (MPD), nor Miami-Dade Police Department (MDPD) have the forensic assets adequate to handle such a large-scale event by themselves. It would take some degree of shared responsibility between MPD and MDPD, as well as some of the 30+ other incorporated areas such as Miami Beach, Hialeah, and Coral Gables. Due to the influx of tens of thousands of delegates, visitors, and protestors, it is expected that the forensic processing and evidence retention for a mass number of assaults, larcenies and other crimes will increase considerably during the week of the event. It is clear that a multi-agency approach such as the ones used for the 2003 FTAA Conference, the 2004 Presidential Debates, and the Super Bowls of 2007 and 2010 must be employed for this large-scale special event as well.

Organization charts of the Security & Public Safety Subcommittee, as well as from the 2007 Super Bowl are provided for your reference.

Assignment Instructions
For the purpose of this assignment, you are playing the role of **Major Susan Barker**, the commander of the Crime Scene Investigations Bureau of the Miami-Dade Police Department (MDPD). MDPD Director Melanie Duncan has appointed you as the chairperson of the Crime Scene Investigations Workgroup under the Security & Public Safety Subcommittee in preparation for the DRNC special event. You have selected nine members to your Crime Scene Investigations Workgroup committee, to include supervisors from the Miami-Dade Police Crime Lab, the Broward County Sheriff’s Office Crime Scene Investigations Bureau, the City of Miami PD Crime Scene Section, Jackson Memorial Hospital, the FBI’s Hazardous Material Response Unit, the Miami-Dade Police Bomb Squad, the Miami-Dade Medical Examiner’s Office, the 44th Civil Support Team of the Florida National Guard, and Miami-Dade Fire Rescue’s Urban Search & Rescue Team (see the DRNC Crime Scene Investigations Workgroup Org Chart provided).

The first meeting of the Workgroup was held five months prior to the DRNC event. Going into the meeting, Major Barker had a general idea of how she wanted to approach the planning of this Workgroup’s mission, but first she wanted to open the agenda to the ideas and concerns of all the participants. As such, she planned the meeting with a very general agenda, devoid of any specific information. She wanted to ensure the free flow of ideas and was careful not to unduly influence the others with her own preconceptions. All that she provided to the Workgroup members was a very general mission statement that said, “The mission of this Workgroup is to create a multi-agency, inter-disciplinary task force that will provide crime scene and forensic laboratory services on a region-wide basis for the duration of the DRNC special event.”

The first meeting of the Workgroup was more of a brainstorming session than a planning session. In essence, the Workgroup would define its own mission… and its own deliverables. One of the first issues that was brought up had to do with concerns of whether the local, state, and federal agencies participating in the Workgroup had the capacity to handle a mass casualty incident during the DRNC. A mass casualty incident is defined as:

> “an incident that has produced more casualties than a customary response assignment can handle. Types of incidents that can produce mass casualties include, but are not limited to multiple vehicle collision(s), building collapse, mass transit accidents, Hazmat incidents, WMD, multiple shooting victims, and chemical exposures” (Thomas, n.d.).

After considerable discussion on the topic of mass casualty incidents, the consensus of the Workgroup members was that they thought that the existing regional resources would be heavily taxed by a large-scale mass casualty incident, or by a combination of several smaller incidents occurring within the same time frame. Since mass casualty incidents do not happen often, it is difficult to predict how well the different components would work, and how the tasks and workload would be allocated to ensure an optimal and sustained response. At the meeting, the members of the Workgroup agreed to hold a **tabletop exercise** at the next meeting so that they could simulate as best as possible the likeliest scenarios that the Workgroup task force would encounter during the DRNC, as well as a worst-case scenario.

For this assignment, your job is to plan and organize a simulated tabletop exercise that will test the response capability of the **Crime Scene Investigations Task Force**. You will need to design a simulated exercise that will test the response capability of the Task Force to scenarios that are likely, as well as those that are less likely, yet highly consequential (in other words, a “worst case scenario).

The tabletop exercise plan should include the following:

- Statement of the purpose of the exercise
- Participating entities and their roles
- Regional crime scene and forensic capabilities tested
- Timeline scripts for **two** realistic mass casualty scenarios
  - A likely scenario
  - A less likely “worst case” scenario

As a general guideline, your written product (tabletop exercise) should range between 1,000 and 2,000 words.
Your work will be graded on the following criteria:

- The student clearly stated the purpose of the tabletop exercise.
- The student identified and clearly stated the roles of the participating agencies.
- The student identified and clearly explained the regional crime scene and forensic capabilities that are tested by the tabletop exercise.
- Provided a timeline script of a realistic mass casualty scenario that is likely to occur.
- Provided a timeline script of a “worst case” mass casualty scenario that is less likely to occur.

**Resources:** (click each link below to access)

- [DRNC Crime Scene Investigations Workgroup Organization Chart](#)
- [DRNC Host Committee Task Force Organization Charts](#)
- [2007 Super Bowl Organization Charts](#)
- [Tabletop Exercise Script - Sample](#)

Reference