The Emergency Management Stakeholder Environment as an Open System
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It is important to note that not all stakeholders are equal. While it is important to recognize all stakeholders, it is also important to determine which ones do the “heavy lifting” and are thus “more equal”, to borrow one of my favorite euphemisms coined by the great writer George Orwell. The weight, or importance attributed to a stakeholder is also situational. In a post-incident consequence management environment, FEMA would likely be more equal than most other agencies. In contrast, in an ongoing investigation of a terrorist cell in the U.S., the FBI would likely be the more equal stakeholder.
The criminal justice / emergency management stakeholder environment is so large and diverse, that it needs to be open and ever-changing. While the core stakeholders remain the same (law enforcement, fire-rescue, hospitals, etc.) other stakeholders remain on the periphery and are various times may be considered as part of the system, or part of a distinct outside system that may occasionally interact with one another. For example, the public school system is usually not thought of as a regular stakeholder in the emergency management community. However, incidents such as the Columbine shootings and the Beslan siege in Russia would involve the public school administrators as key stakeholders.
Another contributing factor to the emergency management community being viewed as an open system is the fact that it is continuously evolving. For example, the United States Department of Homeland Security (DHS) is a relatively new player and obviously did not exist prior to September 11.
As Major Warren is learning, the stakeholder environment for the upcoming Democratic-Republican National Convention is going to be a very complex one. If he is going to be successful, he is going to have to get his arms around the entire thing and understand how all these moving parts work together. It’s truly a complex situation, but as the principal planner for the event, it’s his job to simplify it so that others can understand it. A one-page stakeholder map will help everyone to better conceptualize the stakeholder environment.