

How FEMA ran the scare at Three Mile Island

Without fanfare—and without a word of coverage in the national media—the Carter administration used the occasion of the March 28 “disaster” at the Three Mile Island nuclear power plant as a test run for their crisis management dictatorship within the White House and the National Security Council. All evidence points to the conclusion that FEMA was the command and control channel through which Schlesinger, Brzezinski, and others organized the sabotage of the nuclear power plant near Harrisburg, Pa., “managed” the crisis that followed, and buried the evidence pointing to the specific agencies and individuals responsible.

The FEMA field crew, several of whom were manning an evacuation command post in Harrisburg, was headed by Barry Evenchick of the Federal Disaster Assistance Administration, now a component of FEMA. In 1976, Evenchick was a member of

the National Advisory Committee on Criminal Justice Standards and Goals, Task Force on Disorders and Terrorism. That committee, working closely with Richard Thornburgh, who then headed the Criminal Division of the Justice Department, issued a lengthy report which spelled out a series of RAND Corporation scenarios for largescale civil disorders and terrorist extravaganzas. He then drew the conclusion that complete crisis management powers had to be instituted to deal with the increasing likelihood of “high-technology” disasters.

From Harrisburg, Evenchick maintained a minute-to-minute liaison with another FDAA official, Bill Wilcox. Wilcox, in turn, operated directly out of the NSC. This command structure, according to both eyewitness accounts and reports in both the *Baltimore Sun* and *Associated Press*, maintained total control over all information and manufactured what the U.S. population was told about the events at Three-Mile.

Had the sabotage scenario carried through to the mass evacuations mooted by the then-governor of Pennsylvania, Thornburgh, and the press, FEMA would have superseded all other federal, state, and local governmental bodies—with the exception of the governor’s office—and assumed dictatorial control throughout the duration of the crisis.

The division must report to Carter by June 30 on how good the plans are, and formulate better ones.

We have all the expertise for this and we are going to apply it, to see that the situation you had at TMI doesn’t repeat itself, where people and agencies were milling around with no coordination. We intend to use our planning expertise from the military sphere to coordinate all this. For example, if we must vent a radioactive gas cloud from the core, the DOE will have to deploy mobility to keep track of the cloud, to warn and evacuate people in the areas all across its path, to tell the Red Cross when to set up evacuation of hospitals, mobilize ambulances. We’re already doing exercises on this, to set up in advance who does what to whom.

Next, we’re going to be addressing the future economic impact of this, but it’s not very far advanced at this stage. Of course the Emergency Electric Power Agency is working on what would happen to surrounding industry if an area lost its electricity supply but that would be covered by the national electricity grid pretty much...

We have a full program to evaluate the evacuation plans of every city where there is an operating nuclear

plant, both the city’s plans and our plans, and then upgrade. We have come up with a list of criteria, and we have 150 FEMA people around the country with long-standing expertise on nuclear war and we’re diverting them to these localities to help the local governments develop these plans on a local level.

Q: What about the energy crisis resulting from a Mideast war?

A: Yes, our next priority is planning for an energy shortage. We don’t care if the Persian Gulf shut down or if every oil field in the U.S. shuts down. We’re going to show the DOE how to run a rationing program. They don’t have the staff, as I said before, on the field level to coordinate such a thing with local officials. We have the expertise. We have already worked out the plans for an oil blockade in case of general war. The fundamental decision has been made that rationing will depend on state and local agencies and the DOE can’t coordinate this. Rationing will totally depend on our coordination of local programs, and it will be total rationing, disaster rationing. We would convey the federal plans to the state and local level.