

## A Guest's Glance

Since 1995, the United States has allocated enormous resources to combating Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) terrorism. Numerous government programs have been created in an effort to prevent and deter terrorism or to mitigate the effects of a major attack should it occur.

These efforts have focused largely on enhancing the ability of local first responders to decontaminate and treat survivors, augmented by additional capabilities at the state and federal levels. But analysts have criticized the significant overlap and redundancy among various federal counter terrorism programs, as well as the lack of a clear strategy for integrating these diverse elements into a coherent whole.

Despite the problems associated with dealing with a coordinated approach one thing is clear, providing the right tools in the hands of the right people makes a difference. Over the last several years a lot of products have been introduced to the market to aid First Responders in accomplishment of consequence management as a result of commercial and industrial chemical accidents and incidents. With the ever looming prospect of terrorism and because of a number of developments over the past decade, the threat that terrorists might resort to chemical, biological, radiological, or nuclear weapons of mass destruction (WMD) has received increased attention from U.S. Policymakers, the news media, academic analysts and corporate America.

The continued partnership between Governments at all levels and the private sector have demonstrated a determined willingness to produce the tools that responders need to mitigate multi-tiered and complex accidents and incidents from a minor to a major scale. One such tool is the Palmtop Emergency Action for Chemicals, trade name "PEAC" developed by AristaTek, Inc. With 20 years of service to the Armed Forces and having served in units responsible for responding to WMD events, I've seen a number of recourses, some good and other not so good.

One thing will always be paramount in responding to any event and that is time and information. Managing time and receiving critical information allows for decisive plan execution. PEAC has been one of the most useful tools I've ever used. Its extensive database on protective equipment, substance analysis and protective action distance modeling capability, merges both time and information at the forward edge of any response," the tip of the spear". PEAC, not only deals with commercial/industrial substances, but also has incorporated military significant chemical warfare agents and explosives. PEAC has quickly become the tool of choice for many response organizations from Fire Departments to Specialized Military response units like the NGB Weapons of Mass Destruction Civil Support Teams, CBRIF and the U.S. Army Technical Escort Unit.

AristaTek has developed one of the premier tools to the responder community. I am pleased to endorse its use and would recommend it to any and all response organizations. Words that in the not-too-distant past were obscure and seldom heard -- anthrax, smallpox, sarin -- have now become impossible to avoid. As we continue to prepare our country for dealing with the possible worst, we will continue to count on partnerships between government and private industry to work together in providing the right tools that make a difference in America's future.

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