

Editorial Note: Edition 4 - Summer, 2007

While Project White Horse research/ writing to date has been centered around the issues faced by decision makers in time critical response with intent to provide varied aspects for consideration, this edition was planned with purpose to broaden the perspective to include the notion of the public becoming their own first responders. While the question persists “ are we any better off , more secure, after expenditure of over \$250 billion dollars since 9/11,” maybe the query should be are we any more safe than our forefather frontiersmen, who crossed the Atlantic, Appalachians, Rockies, and Death Valley to build this nation? Indeed, is any nation any more secure than in 1636 when the Treaty of Westphalia provided the basis from which nation-states derived? For all our technology, communications, global economy, and sophistication have we lost sight that the four horsemen still traverse this planet? Of course now, they test our vulnerabilities even more as efforts are coordinated via cell phone and world-wide-web. Indeed, are we resilient enough, adaptable enough to survive in this age of terror - with pandemics and “Mother” in close hot pursuit?

The attack at Virginia Tech, with the obvious issue of time critical decision making, rather than causing a change in plans, served to highlight the value of the offerings of this edition’s writers. Indeed, the only change has been the addition of a second article by John Giduck, senior consultant and training instructor for the Archangel Group.

The original lead article, Giduck’s ” Our Worst Has Got To Be Better Than Their Best” was and still is intended to get the reader to recognize what the attack on Beslan School #1 portends and to emphasize the need to learn more about the threats to our society. John Giduck went to Beslan, with professional connections good enough to be able to write an in depth analysis, *Terror at Beslan; a Russian Tragedy with Lessons for America’s Schools*. With the same operational mind set, shortly after the Virginia Tech attacks, John and two senior law enforcement officers with 50 years combined experience traveled to Blacksburg to obtain as much information as possible on the tactical situation confronted there, and on the operation ultimately launched. Their intent, so that all law enforcement might be better prepared for attacks that are yet to come, was to assess the totality of circumstances with which the responders were confronted, to evaluate the tactical response, and ultimately, to determine as many lessons to be learned as possible. Given the negative nature of unsubstantiated reports on how the Blacksburg and Campus Police responded, the team decided to publish preliminary findings. That report is now this edition’s lead article, with Part One of the article stemming from Beslan following.

Each of the other four articles focuses on elements that are on point consistent with the words of featured books authors, Brian Michael Jenkins and Irwin Redlener. (*Unconquerable Nation; Knowing Our Enemy, Strengthening Ourselves and Americans at Risk; Why We Are Not Prepared for Megadisasters and What We Can Do Now*) These articles provide deeper context for understanding the threats to society and approach to solutions, and are directly applicable to formulating enlightened response to events such as those at Beslan and Virginia Tech. The offerings stretch from a recommendation for what we should read to better understand the needs of homeland security and defense from a senior member of the Naval Post Graduate School Center for Homeland Defense and Security; to the need for improvised responses that exhibit “swarm intelligence” – the ability of a community, even an ad hoc one, to demonstrate a higher level of collective behavior than could be predicted from the capabilities of individual members; to use of knowledge management tools to aid decision makers in a complex OODA cycle: to finally, evidence, examples and tools on teaching **adaptability** for those who must make time critical decisions in the worst of situations.

New documents in the Reference Library include a Power Point presentation summarizing Army processes that compliment the adaptability education article, and in line with the articles on the

Beslan and Virginia Tech incidents, both the FBI and Secret Service findings on “school shooter” incidents.

The Forum offers several inputs that should be of interest, including discussion on the 1966 Texas Tower sniper attack drawn from the writer’s personal experience, comments on education needs in light of globalization and current outsourcing practices, and discussion of “Red Fridays” by Southwest Airlines, an ongoing effort to recognize the sacrifices of our military personnel.

For the future, Project White Horse 084640 will be aired on a quarterly basis, with intent for at least one special focus edition per year. Subject matter will continue to address time critical crisis and disaster decision making, and will endeavor to provide information that heightens understanding of the threat environment, that explores multiple aspects of how organizations respond, and that provides new approaches to learning.

As in Edition #3, offerings entitled “DaVinci’s Horse” will continue as Director’s Comments with intent to bring to light multiple perspectives that interlace to form a single integrated point of comprehension on decision making in the 21st Century.

As a final note, as in the past, this edition continues the practice of “recommending” key books out of the White Horse library, selected generally on reflecting the overall theme of decision making in crisis and disaster, and particularly on highlighting the edition’s specific thread. Rather than the normal three, it appeared most appropriate for this edition to add two more - five books most highly recommended for your consideration.

The selection of the fifth book by a previous author, Robert Coram, (*Boyd: The Fighter Pilot Who Changed the Art of War*) provides a bookend to the dedication at the front of this Project White Horse 084640 edition and honors the bravery of Liviu Librescu, holocaust survivor and protector of his students. Together, they reflect on the cost of living in a free society. *American Patriot: The Life and Wars of Colonel Bud Day* is not only the story of a Vietnam Prisoner of War, but of a man wearing the Medal of Honor whose every action portrayed the notion, that in the final analysis, it is our people, that make us an *unconquerable nation*.