

AS WE GO TO PRESS—OPEC has announced that, due to Y2K problems, it may reduce oil shipments by 25%. This alone could cause serious business and financial problems in Europe and America.

Y2K: DECEMBER 1 UPDATE

WARNING: READ THIS CAREFULLY

You would not want me to have been silent on this matter, would you? Your best friends are those who give you the information you need.

Reprinted below are two news reports. We first learned of this from a friend who heard a snatch of it on the radio. Then another friend, across the continent, phoned and said he had heard about it and was trying to track it down.

Now, from one source, we finally have it. We will place key points in bold print.

PART ONE

PANIC IN THE YEAR ZERO:

EMERGENCY AGENCY EXPECTS THE WORST

Y2K could be more than the government can handle

The federal government is expecting the Y2K computer bug to cause more than just a few minor inconveniences, according to training materials for emergency managers.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has been conducting regional Y2K workshops for federal agency officials who will be dealing with Y2K-related problems.

Under "Planning Assumptions," the document details conditions emergency managers are expected to encounter during the period now called "Day One" by federal officials—Dec. 28 through Jan. 3.

"Most federal/state mission critical emergency response systems will be Y2K compliant," the document states. **Since not all mission critical systems will be compliant, and because other less critical systems have not been repaired, the ability for emergency staff to respond to Y2K disruptions could be seriously impaired.**

Those attending any of the 10 workshops were told that repairs could be made as soon as problems became known "on the fly."

"Y2K disruptions, like natural disasters, may temporarily interfere with normal life," the FEMA training document warned. "Individuals should maintain emergency supplies for a reasonable period consistent with normal preparedness measures."

FEMA has been firmly warning federal, state, and local emergency planners that there will be so many simultaneous Y2K problems throughout the country, that the federal government cannot be expected to assist with them all. The maximum number of Y2K disruptions that FEMA can handle at once has been set as 56, according to the training materials.

"The federal government may experience temporary shortages of critical response resources, leading to resource allocation and adjudication among states," the document states. "Resource allocation" is a form of rationing of available resources, according to one source who attended the training. "Adjudication" is a form of triage in which each reported Y2K disruption will be judged and prioritized.

The documents also warn agencies not to plan on help from the military.

"Certain DOD (Department of Defense) assets may not be available for response to domestic Y2K disruptions," the training documents warn. That is consistent with earlier statements by John Hamre, deputy secretary of Defense. **Hamre has ordered military commanders to only respond to requests for help from civil agencies if they involve immediate threats to life and damage to property.**

The Federal Emergency Management Agency is so concerned that federal resources may be stretched to the limit that it has asked state and local civil agencies to use all their resources before they come to FEMA for help with Y2K emergencies.

"Immediate response to Y2K consequences should be addressed by local and state jurisdictions prior to requesting federal assistance," according to FEMA.

A presidential [declaration of] “emergency”—rather than “major disaster” declaration will be made if Y2K disruptions exceed state/local response resources. [Instead of announcing a “disaster,” the president would issue the Presidential Emergency Executive Orders.]

Except in life-saving situations, federal response resources may not be deployed until an initial nationwide needs analysis has been conducted, the emergency planners were told at the training session.

The national FEMA emergency support team will be activated on full level one alert status from Dec. 28 through Jan. 4, according to the training documents. The team will be supported by the 10 FEMA regional operations centers, the FEMA liaison in each state, and a special network of emergency communications systems.

The documents state that the FEMA emergency support team will be prepared to handle a “potential of 56 declaration requests,” involving that many simultaneous Y2K disruptions in different locations throughout the country.

When the president declares a national emergency, the FEMA state liaisons will be elevated to the position of deputy federal coordinating officer, according to the plans given at the training sessions.

In the event normal telephone communications fail **FEMA has prepared a number of alternative communications systems.** These systems include:

- FEMA Switched Network
- Fixed/mobile KuBand satellite systems
- National Warning System
- American Mobile Satellite Corporation SkyCell voice, data, and radio dispatch service
- FEMA National Radio System
- Land Mobile Radio Systems
- Low Earth Orbit satellite data service
- Shared Resources (SHARES) HF [high frequency] radio program

FEMA has bought and paid for several satellite phones for every state emergency operations center. The phones will operate over the American Mobile Satellite system and will be used if normal telephone systems fail. FEMA will pay for the use of the phones through the end of March; after that time the equipment will be returned, according to the instructions given out at the training meeting.

The cost of response to Y2K disruptions will be shared, 75 percent federal and 25 percent local; this is the same formula the government uses for all disasters in which FEMA becomes involved. FEMA claims it is prepared to process Y2K-related

requests on an expedited basis.

State governors may request the declaration of an emergency in their states under specific guidelines FEMA has issued to each state. The determination of the need for an emergency declaration on a state level will be evaluated based on the “threat to life, health, or safety,” according to the training documents. **Special populations, critical facilities, and large-scale disruptions of normal community functions will also be a part of the decision.**

The press will not be permitted in the President’s Council on the Year 2000 Conversion Information Communication Center, where all Y2K federal response will be coordinated, **A public affairs officer will “issue news releases and background information as appropriate,”** according to the documents.

FEMA makes it clear, in its training documents, that it will “not provide funding to fix computers.” The types of help FEMA plans to provide include:

- Food, water, medicine, and emergency assistance
- Emergency communications, emergency access, and emergency public transportation
- Shelters, emergency care, and temporary housing
- Debris removal and emergency repairs/demolition
- Search and rescue
- Health and safety hazard removal

The FEMA emergency support team will issue an initial nationwide needs analysis between 12 and 18 hours after the start of the New Year, the documents state.

—*World Net Daily, November 29, 1999.*

Plans include an option to extend the date if the national emergency continues. Virtually all federal employees, including FBI and members of the military, have had vacation time canceled to enable them to be ready for action if needed. Civil agencies all across the country have issued similar restrictions for police, fire, and other vital services to be on call or on duty.

The emergency management community may be facing a potential disruption scenario that it has not dealt with before: simultaneous disruptions in all 50 States and six territories that may require federal emergency declarations.

PART TWO

PANIC IN THE YEAR ZERO:

CLINTON SET TO DECLARE NATIONAL EMERGENCY

More than 50 simultaneous Y2K crises expected, stretching resources to limit

President Clinton has already made plans to declare a national emergency because of expected disruptions caused by the Y2K computer problem, according to Federal Emergency Management Agency documents.

A final training session, followed by a mock Y2K disaster exercise, will include the actual disruptions and problems that Y2K emergency planners believe will take place during the change to the New Year.

Plans for the emergency declaration were made known to Federal Emergency Management Agency officials and other federal employees, in preparation for use of the Information Coordination Center that has been set up by the President's Council on the Year 2000 conversion. The plans were also given to the Senate Committee on the Year 2000 Technology Problem.

The staff on hand, at the Information Coordination Center, have been told to expect a presidential declaration of a national emergency. FEMA staff who will run the regional emergency operation centers have also been told the same thing.

"Should it become necessary, a presidential 'emergency' rather than a 'major disaster' will be declared, and **assistance will be focused on addressing threats to life, health, safety, and property,**" the Senate committee was told in a report from Lacy E. Suiter from the Response and Recovery Directorate of FEMA.

A national emergency will be declared because FEMA officials have concluded that there will be more than 50 simultaneous Y2K-related

Although emergency planners may be planning for the worst, their Y2K preparation materials provided to the public do not suggest that the general public take the same precautions. The Federal Emergency and Management Agency and Red Cross Y2K disaster planning guides recommend preparations that, in effect, advise the public to have a 72-hour kit similar to what would be needed for a winter storm.

disruptions, throughout the country, which will stretch the nation's local, state, and national emergency resources to the limit.

The Department of Defense is so concerned about the fact that the deputy secretary of defense, John J. Hamre, has issued a memorandum to commanders in the field to be very cautious about using the military to assist civil agencies. Hamre said local requests for help might seem appropriate, but he warned local commanders to be cautious about using the military to help with Y2K disruptions.

"Immediate responses that appear rational from a local perspective, but could collectively undermine the department's ability to execute operational missions" should be ruled out, said Hamre.

Hamre has ordered commanders to **avoid using the military for Y2K problems unless there is a threat to life or damage to property.** The warning applies to domestic as well as international requests for help.

The anticipation of a multitude of simultaneous problems that would stretch the ability of the government to respond is the driving force behind the plans for declaration of a national emergency.

Sen. Robert Bennett, R-Utah, said **there is a very real fear that the enemies of the United States could conduct domestic terrorist attacks because they will expect the country to be weakened due to the military's having to deal with Y2K disruptions.** He said **there is also a possibility that cyber-terrorism attacks might even try to sabotage computers, to create what appear to be Y2K computer failures, in order to enhance opportunities for terrorists to conduct further attacks on U.S. cities.**

Suiter says many small, localized disruptions are expected to occur. Response should come from local and state agencies "to the maximum extent possible," he said. **FEMA has been conducting training for local police and fire officials** in an effort to help them be better prepared for Y2K emergencies and reduce the need for federal assistance.

FEMA officials who attended training in each of the 10 FEMA regions were told a major disaster declaration was ruled out because the Y2K problems will not "involve a natural disaster," according to the presentation materials used.

"A presidential 'emergency' rather than 'major disaster' declaration will be made if Y2K consequences exceed state/local response resources," FEMA staff and other federal agencies were told at the regional meetings.

Peter Kind of the Information Coordination Center sent a memorandum to staff members, to guide

them in preparations for **final training exercises Dec. 6 to 9. He wants the exercises to be as real as possible**, and asked for recommendations on what Y2K problems are actually expected.

Although Suiter claims "no one knows for sure what will happen following rollover to January 1," those who will staff the Information Coordination Center have been asked by Kind to submit a list of the most likely Y2K disruptions for use in the final Y2K disaster training and exercise.

"We want to exercise the rollover sequence with special emphasis on what could happen when, as midnight and subsequent critical periods such as business hours, opening of financial markets, etc., follow the timeline westward. We invite you to help identify **the high probability and high-risk items that might occur**, by time zone, both for use in the exercise and to help prepare us all," requested Kind.

Past exercises conducted by FEMA and other emergency organizations have always stressed that they do not know what problems to expect when the New Year begins.

"In order to make the December exercise as realistic as possible, we ask that you provide your ICC core staff contact with your best estimates of possible incidents, anomalies or other systems operation events most likely to be seen during the Millennium Rollover. **Receipt of this type of information by November 24 will ensure that it will be incorporated into the exercise scenarios** when and where appropriate," said the instructions to ICC staff.

"We are hoping for the best, but taking necessary and prudent steps to prepare for any contingencies," said Suiter.

Although emergency planners may be planning for the worst, their Y2K preparation materials provided to the public do not suggest that the general public take the same precautions. The Federal Emergency and Management Agency and Red Cross Y2K disaster planning guides recommend preparations that, in effect, **advise the public to have a 72-hour kit similar to what would be needed for a winter storm.**

The Information Coordination Center is scheduled to be staffed 24 hours a day, beginning Dec. 28 and continuing at least until Jan. 7. **Plans include an option to extend the date if the national emergency continues. Virtually all federal employees, including FBI and members of the military, have had vacation time canceled to enable them to be ready for action if needed. Civil agen-**

cies all across the country have issued similar restrictions for police, fire, and other vital services to be on call or on duty.

"The emergency management community may be facing a potential disruption scenario that it has not dealt with before: simultaneous disruptions in all 50 States and six territories that may require federal emergency declarations. In addition, we may have numerous weather-related major disaster declarations to address during this time frame," explained Suiter.

John Koskinen, head of the President's Council on the Year 2000 Conversion, is concerned there may be problems caused inadvertently. He is warning people not to pick up the phone just after the start of the New Year and make a call "just to see if it works." He said too many attempts to make calls all at the same time would shut down the entire phone system.

He also warned that the public may be fooled by normal failures and think they are caused by the Y2K computer bug. ATM cash machines, phone service, and electric services all have localized failures on a regular basis. One of those types of failures may happen right on Jan. 1 and create a mistaken belief that a Y2K failure has occurred when it really has not.

"The presumption is to blame all failures on Y2K that weekend," Koskinen said, and Bennett agreed. He said the public must help to reduce the demand on the system at a difficult time.

A computer hacker was able to alter the web site run by the Commerce Department recently. A message was displayed that said: "Run for your lives! Hit your computer's power button and never turn it on again." The hacker was reported to be making a statement about potential Y2K problems and trying to illustrate weaknesses in the government computer system that would permit a computer terrorist access to government systems. The hacker identified himself only as "ComdexOr."

Koskinen said there are many such attacks on government computers all the time. He said hackers would be easily detected during the Y2K rollover period because there will be tighter security at that time. Koskinen asked "recreational hackers" to stay away during the date change rather than complicate what is anticipated to be a difficult time for government agencies. "This is not the best time to do that," Koskinen said.

—*World Net Daily, November 29, 1999.*