**ARES Preparedness – Mind Games**

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We ARES are a nongovernmental agency whose goal is to furnish back up radio communications in case of disaster

We are involved in all three aspects of emergency or disaster: preparedness, response, and recovery.

We cannot respond unless we prepare.

Preparation involves how to use radios, overcome problems, technical, propagation, modes and or otherwise.

But preparedness is dependent also upon pre-planning. And preplanning depends on this vital question: what if??

What a mind can imagine, another one can put in practice.

What if the Russians wanted to retaliate against sanctions by hacking our communications? From Emergency standpoint, without communications you have no first responders, no emergency management, hospitals are paralyzed. Response is greatly compromised.

And if regular communications go down or are impaired, whose door are authorities come and knock on? Ours. We need to pay attention at what happens around us and play the “What If” game.

For those who think this is an exaggeration, I encourage them to take a trip in our past.

Two days before the Twin Towers went down, an author was promoting a book in which he imagined the Twin Towers going down by planes. Many may have thought it was bad taste or sheer fantasy. But in 48 hours …

Chamberlain, Prime Minister of England, came back from a talk with Hitler saying “peace has been achieved in our times.” He chastised Winston Churchill who called instead for Disaster. He called him exaggerated and said Churchill predictions were false. We know the answer of history to that.

Thankfully, the Allied forces listened to Churchill when he planned D Day on the coasts of Normandy. Churchill foresaw the great loss of human lives, all heroes to whom we owe our freedom.

Now then, switch hats for a moment and put in the hat of the Germans and Hitler. Thank God they protected any beach and front they had, but the Normandy beaches because, you guessed it, they said “they will never attack here.”

“They never will,” or “it will never happen” provoked more preventable disasters and defeats than anything else.

It never will happen, they never do it is like the famous unloaded gun. Unloaded guns have shot more people than loaded ones. Let’s be mindful of that.

So, thinking ahead in an emergency for us in ARES, and for all who are listening, is prepare for disaster no matter how remote the disaster might look like. Sometimes reality is seen like through the rear side mirror if a car: objects are closer than what they appear to be.

Moving our attention on natural disaster, when we did the first multi county SKYWARN net for SKYWARN Day, Tim Stevens and I thought of it, planned it within few hours in the two days preceding it. You say “that was not too bad. That was rather fast.” A solar flare can mess everything up on earth including communications with less than 10 minutes notice. In comparison few hours in a couple of day sounds like eternity.

So, my plea to all who listen and especially us ARES members and enthusiasts is: let’s play the mind game of what if. Bring your scenarios to our knowledge. Let’s plan for it. Hopefully we will never use it. But if we have to, we are ready or readier than doing nothing and live life until someone or something hits us in the gut.

Let’s not be Chamberlain or Hitler at the beginning and end of WWII. Let’s be Winston Churchill. If we or anyone can think of it, someone can and will make it happen. Especially evil.

Our County will knock on our doors if communications go down. Let’s ready to step up. Besides mind games, whatever we do for fun, DXing, contesting, Winlinking, and experimenting with antennas and modes, etc. we are honing our skills and using weapons and tools vital for preparedness. Let’s always think how we can apply what we learn into emergency or disaster. Like Julia KI5LNM trained us once, train like you fight, so you will fight like you train.

Oh ,and one more thing. Don’t say or feel depressed by this. Feel challenged and fortunate to be on the good team that can make a difference between life and death, preservation of property and destruction. A team that is ahead of any natural or man-made evil, and will prevail over it. That is why we serve.