

*Remarks for the  
MEMA Bioterrorism Exercise  
October 9, 2002*

Good morning. It is great to be here with you this morning, and I just want to take a few minutes to thank you for the good work you do in your cities and counties, and for the expertise you offer in providing safety and security to the people of our state.

The events of 9/11 changed the way we do things in Mississippi, and in America. We were forced to change our mindsets and our focus on how to deal with certain situations.

Our ability to take on the challenges presented to us by nature is enhanced by our level of preparedness for any situation, and we're ready for whatever comes our way.

After 9/11, we were one of the first states in the nation to implement an incident command system so that all emergency responders would be able to work together.

We hosted a summit on domestic terrorism last November to pull together resources from around the state to respond when needed to acts against our state and our people.

And, the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency is hosting bioterrorism exercises like this one today, so city and county officials are prepared to meet whatever situations may arise.

Over the past two weeks, with Tropical Storm Isidore and Hurricane Lili, we had the luxury of knowing what was heading our way and being able to get resources deployed to help the people.

With bioterrorism or other terrorist threats, we don't always have that luxury. That's why you're here today – to be able to respond quickly to protect the people of Mississippi.

That's a big responsibility and a big challenge, but I know you are up to the task and will serve us all well.

Thanks for the work you do.