Foreword

Read this book to gain insight into subjects no-one wishes to discuss: disasters that are catastrophic in nature with consequences unbearable to comprehend. They can and will happen. Cities must be prepared to thwart the high-impact event, mitigate the catastrophe once it begins and respond appropriately after the calamity takes place. This timely, well-thought-out book is the answer to world cities grappling with how to protect their citizens, infrastructure and information in today's threat environment. It additionally provides valuable insight into how cities should spend their limited funds to secure these assets. I highly recommend it to leaders such as those on city councils, managers, security planners and first responders.

I served as the US security representative to the Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, with the State Department's Diplomatic Security Service. In that role, I was leading many of the crisis management exercises sponsored by the US Government and an active participant in the Government of Brazil's crisis exercises during which we sought to plan for every contingency that could affect not only the Olympic Games, but also the city of Rio de Janeiro. This book delves into many of the problem sets we planned for to ensure a safe and secure Olympics.

Though the book focuses on the most challenging of urban environments, megacities, its insights apply to urban areas of any size and, in fact, contingencies beyond urban bounds as well. The interconnectedness of the world's megacities with one another, their nations and their immediate surroundings means disaster-readiness serves not only the millions in a stricken urban area but also many tens of millions beyond. Preparing for sudden disasters of any type—pandemic, hurricane, earthquake, war, terrorism or another—goes far in being ready for those due to other causes. In short, urban disasters of any sort offer lessons of value regardless of their origin. As such, the pages of this book will be of value to organisations and leaders helping Ukraine's urban areas as they rebuild no less than

those who will confront future crises. Climate change, including sea-level rise, will continue to threaten many of the planet's urban millions for decades to come via both direct impacts and magnifying the effects of other events. The pages herein make clear that readiness for tomorrow's disasters necessitates considering and taking steps to mitigate climate change's influences today. Urban preparedness is an alpha to omega (or A to Z) process. Preparing for, responding to and recovering from a megacity disaster will be more effective if all three are considered parts of a single preparedness whole (system?) rather than pieces in isolation. Every urban area is unique in terms of its social makeup, political influences and threat profile, but with a bit of well-considered contemplation, lessons from virtually any megacity crisis have value for others yet to come. First responders and those whose responsibilities include urban preparedness and response are invaluable. But we must not overlook the crucial role of the man and woman on the street when readying for and later dealing with ill fortune's visits. The unfortunate truth is that urban catastrophes are inevitable. This is the case whether they are due to nature's vagaries, mismanagement that exacerbates a natural phenomenon or humankind's malevolence. The offering here is a step forward in identifying what leaders and other citizens can do to reduce the harm when disaster calls.

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