



U.S. AGENCY FOR
INTERNATIONAL
DEVELOPMENT

The Administrator

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Roger P. Winter, AA/DCHA
FROM: The Administrator *Andrew S. Watsios*
Subject: Administrator's OFDA mandate

Background

In the course of this year, you and I commissioned an assessment of the performance of our Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART) in Iraq and other OFDA operations, which was recently completed. It was based on widespread research and consultations as well as a consensus-building process in the DCHA Bureau, and particularly within OFDA, as well as with others.

The DART/Iraq experience, in tandem with patterns we have detected in our major disaster response operations that became manifest at least in the late-1990s, if not earlier, have surfaced the need for more definitive policy guidance and a number of directive decisions for OFDA and, in certain respects, for DCHA as a whole. In part, doubts and debates about the mandate and identity of OFDA which have encumbered the office for some time need to be definitively laid to rest.

The guidance and decisions conveyed herein, summarized in eighteen topics, do not address all aspects of OFDA's operations. But they do address the most important issues that past experience in major disasters suggests need clarification. They comprise performance requirements for OFDA and DCHA which set forth this Administration's specific expectations for future activities.

Given the importance attached to this mandate, the Office of the General Counsel, the Office of Acquisition and Assistance and the Office of Financial Management should actively assist OFDA in its implementation. The mandate will remain in effect until amended or withdrawn by the Office of the Administrator.

1. OFDA's disaster response responsibilities and the duration of its activities

DART operations in Iraq and elsewhere suggest that OFDA requires definite guidance concerning its role and responsibility in post-life-saving rehabilitation operations. Lack of clarity on this issue has encumbered OFDA's effectiveness in the "relief to reconstruction" transition for many years.

OFDA should remain proactively involved in both immediate economic reactivation and initial infrastructure rehabilitation during both the emergency period and during the "relief to reconstruction" transition, normally a period of six to eighteen months following life-saving activities until reconstruction activities become operational. Such efforts should be implemented with the affected country's and USAID Mission's long-range development strategy in mind. When rehabilitation efforts are required for more than eighteen months, responsibility for their implementation should be transferred from OFDA to the USAID Mission or other appropriate organization. OFDA's involvement should be concluded as the emergency and "ramp-up to reconstruction" phases come to an end.

2. OFDA's identity as part of the U. S. Government foreign policy family of agencies

Within USAID, OFDA, which falls within the DCHA Bureau, is strategically important, not only to our agency, but to the United States Government as a whole. OFDA may be one of this agency's most important offices. Its field teams and resources often represent the first point of contact between the American people and disaster victims at moments in their lives when they are the most vulnerable and in the greatest need of assistance and reassurance.

These disasters often take place in parts of the world that are of strategic importance to the USG foreign policy interests which our agency serves. Our disaster responses need not only to be effective, but also must convey to disaster victims the humanitarian sentiments and concerns of the American people that motivate them. Aspects of the DART/Iraq and other experiences suggest that OFDA's identity as part of the U. S. Government's family of foreign policy agencies needs to be reinforced.

DCHA, including its OFDA component, should raise awareness in its personnel recruiting and training process, of OFDA's position as part of USAID and as a member of the U.S. Government foreign affairs family of offices and agencies. These processes should emphasize that to accept a staff or contract position in DCHA and OFDA is to accept and to be committed to proactively pursuing the USG's objectives in a manner consistent with its legislative mandate, current USG policy and well-established ethics and principles of humanitarian assistance.

3. OFDA's mandate to alleviate the economic impact of disasters

OFDA's legislative mandate requires it to "save lives, reduce suffering *and alleviate the economic impact of disasters.*" OFDA's responsibility for the first two elements of the mandate has been clear and its performance effective. The economic dimension of OFDA's legislative mandate has been given too little attention, particularly in major disasters. It must be addressed more vigorously.

In relief operations, market and cash interventions, and short-term cash employment (often in this context non-sustainable) have proven in some instances to be a more rapid and cost-effective means to address relief challenges than the more traditional distribution of commodities

OFDA has encouraged commodity distribution, including seeds and tools, and even at times livestock replenishment, as means to achieve relief goals. Cash employment has had profound positive impacts in emergency and post-emergency programs but has not been used by OFDA sufficiently to initiate "relief to reconstruction transition" economic reactivation in response to disasters for which it has primary responsibility. Labor may be used to conduct large-scale urban refuse removal, to re-open transportation routes and to repair productive rural infrastructure such as roads and irrigation systems.

The cash employment contemplated here would be efforts in which at least 70% of program funds are disbursed for cash salaries for short-term workers. Where possible, projects should be selected in coordination with local communities. They need *not* be sustainable. Nonetheless they should be substantive, not make-work, activities and should receive a measure of technical assistance and supervision sufficient to maximize their utility and durability. OFDA must identify the most effective and economical means of implementing such efforts, preferably through local organizations with management and accounting capabilities and otherwise through our traditional partners.

USAID as a whole has considerable experience in such approaches in Haiti, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Gaza/West Bank, Guatemala and elsewhere, and with related approaches in Bosnia and Honduras. They have been conducted in most cases with both speed and near-flawless accountability.

Even where DCHA and OFDA are not called upon to *implement* such efforts, their team leaders must be prepared to provide expertise and timely advice to USAID Missions and others concerning their desirability and to describe alternative implementation models.

The Assistant Administrator of DCHA should coordinate OFDA and Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI) cash employment efforts to preclude duplication of effort in this activity. DCHA should take the lead in developing a series of summaries of the model cash employment approaches described above to serve as templates for similar efforts which USAID Missions and offices, including OFDA and OTI, may conduct in future. The expertise and support of the Chief of the USAID Office of Acquisition and Assistance should be sought in the development of these templates.

4. OFDA's responsibility for protection matters

A relief strategy aimed at saving lives and relieving suffering in complex emergencies must, in part, be based on assessment and analysis of the protection dimensions of these problems. For the internally displaced and other affected populations for which OFDA is principally responsible, the historical root causes of the conflicts which create the suffering, and security and human rights developments on the ground which bear on them, must be understood and addressed if relief operations are to be effective and durable solutions achieved.

In complex emergencies, DART teams must maintain an awareness of historical root causes, protection and security dimensions of the problem; and must monitor and include protection incidents and trends in their routine reporting. They should be prepared, in coordination with OTI and where appropriate PRM, to support project activities which include protection-related dimensions.

In its assessment and analysis of the security, protection and background political dimensions of these complex challenges, DCHA should insure that DART field reporting is taking an objective and balanced view of the situation on the ground, factoring in the historical antecedents and describing and addressing the competing perceptions that feed their dynamics.

5. Administrator's approval of major disaster strategy

The complexity and importance of some major natural and conflict disasters requires that the Administrator directly approve OFDA's strategy for post-life-saving operations. This requirement applies to disasters which involve either large-scale mortality or devastation, complex humanitarian or political factors (including, for example, a combination of Congressional, State Department and other Administration interest and media attention), and the importance of the affected country to USG foreign policy interests. Recent examples would include Hurricane Mitch (Central America), Bosnia, Kosovo, Afghanistan, Iraq, Rwanda, the DRC and Sudan.

When the AA/DCHA determines that a major disaster meets the foregoing criteria, OFDA, through and with the approval of the DCHA Bureau to which it reports, should submit for the Administrator's consideration, at a time when immediate life-saving operations are concluding, a Decision Memorandum. This memorandum will set forth a comprehensive set of options for OFDA involvement beyond life-saving activities, to include the "relief to reconstruction" (rehabilitation) ramp-up phase described earlier. For each level of potential OFDA activity in this phase, the advantages and disadvantages of the option, and the anticipated strategic impacts, will be described. The implications for continued DART (or, alternatively, other OFDA) activity will be described, including the implications for DART phase-out target dates.

For major disasters which, in the judgment of the AA/DCHA, do not reach the threshold requiring the Administrator's personal approval, a similar decision memorandum should be prepared by OFDA for AA/DCHA approval.

6. Internal DCHA coordination

Major challenges increasingly require responses conducted by multi-office DARTs comprising OFDA, the Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI), Food for Peace (FFP) and other USAID representatives, as well as State Department Population, Refugee and Migration (PRM) Affairs Bureau personnel. Multi-office DCHA DART Team Leaders will report to the DCHA Assistant Administrator. Part of their responsibility is to insure that such teams operate as an integrated, multi-faceted unit and not simply as a collection of offices with disparate missions.

It is rare that OFDA gets an opportunity to plan for specific disaster operations, as it did in the case of Iraq. But when this is possible, OFDA should take a leadership role in internal USG coordination. The new State Department Office of Reconstruction and Stabilization will offer USAID as a whole an opportunity for broader coordinated USG policy planning.

Whenever humanitarian operations planning for disasters is possible, DCHA through OFDA should take the lead, inviting the participation of State Department, military and other governmental counterparts. OFDA, alongside PRM where appropriate, should be the principal interface with the non-governmental organizations and international organizations. When seconding staff to planning bodies for specific operations, OFDA is encouraged to second the staff members who will be responsible for leading and managing the respective field operations.

For major disasters and particularly in the post-life-saving "relief to reconstruction ramp-up" phase, DCHA must develop a coordinated Bureau-wide strategy to guide and insure a maximum strategic impact for its interventions. Such strategies *must* be based on true extensive ground-based needs assessment and analysis conducted directly for DCHA. They must take into account the methodically-collected views of intended beneficiaries as a substantive input and guide. Such views should not simply serve as a validation of strategies and project ideas developed externally in advance.

This "strategic impact" approach is preferred to a more traditional or passive approach in which OFDA relies principally on receiving and evaluating externally-generated proposals. Even in the life-saving phase, OFDA should develop a coherent set of specific, easily-understood strategic objectives -- where possible and appropriate quantifiable -- which meet the most vital unmet relief needs and should mobilize its resources to those ends.

DCHA should encourage, and DART Team Leaders should facilitate and support, the use of outside experts who can concentrate on the development of these strategic approaches. The DART Team Leader's responsibilities normally permit him/her neither the ability to personally conduct wide-ranging time-consuming methodical consultations with prospective beneficiaries nor sufficient time to concentrate on longer-range strategy development. The DART Team Leader needs to manage and support this process, not conduct it personally.

Once its field-driven strategic goals are clear, the Bureau should mobilize its offices and partner resources, through contracts, cooperative agreements, Annual Program Statement (APS) grants; or perhaps in coordination with civil affairs units when appropriate. When such organizations are not present or are not in an appropriate position to effectively address urgent humanitarian priorities, OFDA must be prepared to undertake activities in an operational manner, using cash, commodities and other services, in direct relationships with the intended beneficiaries, committees which represent them, local officials or through the most appropriate available local mechanisms.

7. OFDA and DART reporting relationships and coordination in the field

The DART/Iraq experience highlighted a lack of clarity concerning reporting lines and relationships for DART teams in the field, a handicap which can be resolved with a clear series of directives as follows: the DART has a dual reporting relationship, to the President's representative (who could be the U.S. Chief of Mission or the senior USG representative) in-country, on the one hand, and to the DCHA and USAID leadership on the other. Problems concerning DART activities that arise in-country which cannot be resolved between the DART team and its U. S. Mission counterparts should be referred to USAID Washington for resolution.

In the country of operations, the OFDA (or DCHA) DART team reports to the President's representative. The DART is an integral part of the U.S. Government's presence in that country. The DART cooperates fully and vigorously with the Country Team, always adhering to OFDA's (and sister offices') Congressional mandate(s), the principles which govern humanitarian assistance, the mandate described herein and the best practices it has developed. DART teams actively and frequently seek and receive from (and provide to) their Proactively networking and coordinating with U.S. Embassy and USAID Mission counterparts is an essential function of the DART leadership. Establishing close, professional relationships, and the trust on which such relationships are based, is a top priority. DART teams must offer timely, frequent and thorough briefings on their plans, assessment findings and program strategies to Chiefs of Mission and USAID Mission Directors.

At minimum, the DART Team Leader must identify individuals within these organizations with responsibility for and/or interest in DART activities and keep them fully informed in the same manner. These counterparts should be briefed on evolving assessment conclusions, analysis and program activities in at least as timely a manner as reported to USAID Washington.

Close cooperation with our U.S. military colleagues has been a crucial part of DART team success in some previous disasters but needs to be strengthened. OFDA and DART teams need to work closely as advisors on humanitarian matters to senior commanders and on field operations with civil affairs counterparts and particularly with civil affairs field units. Such contacts accrue to our mutual advantage and help DART teams to more effectively contribute to joint USG objectives. DART teams should attend coordination meetings, actively share assessments and exchange advice with them. Humanitarian needs identified by civil affairs units should be given due consideration for OFDA support, which may be mobilized through local civil society organizations, OFDA's traditional partners or, if other options are not available, with active civil affairs assistance.

DART military counterparts have sought out, valued and welcomed the experience and expertise which DART teams offer. Nonetheless, USAID's humanitarian agenda, programs and partner activities must never be subordinated to military objectives or screening; and the principles and ethics governing the use of humanitarian aid must be observed. Life-saving and other relief aid must be provided, and target areas for relief selected, *solely* on the basis of objective humanitarian requirements. The DART teams are not subordinate to the military or the military decision-making process.

Coordinating with its UN and other multilateral counterparts is an essential part of the DART team's job. In OFDA's areas of responsibility, it must support UN efforts to bring strategic clarity to humanitarian challenges, to coordinate organizations and resources, and to engage with them programmatically when appropriate. DART Team Leaders must insure that the UN family is fully engaged and performing the strategic and coordination roles for which they are mandated.

When the UN is not adequately fulfilling its mandate, DART teams must engage with the UN and advocate, when appropriate in coordination with PRM, to strengthen UN efforts. Where the UN family is not present in a manner which permits its effective involvement, OFDA and its DART teams need to step in to identify alternative coordination mechanisms or, in the ultimate instance, must themselves perform the coordination function.

8. Reporting

The DART/Iraq assessment revealed that OFDA did not routinely keep track of key indicators concerning its objectives and achievements. This type of information is increasingly vital both to obtain supplementary funding to achieve life-saving and other aims and to monitor achievements. Such indicators should not be excessively complex or unduly encumber or bureaucratize field operations. These could be estimates of malnutrition or crude mortality rates, of children receiving supplementary or therapeutic feeding, numbers of beneficiaries of emergency water provision, a basic list of health inputs, the number of water systems rehabilitated, or person-weeks of temporary employment generated.

The DART team's top priority is to achieve its humanitarian objectives, specifically in strategically planning and mobilizing operations which save lives, relieve suffering and alleviate the economic impact of disasters. A close but nonetheless second priority is to provide information to USAID Washington on field developments. The Response Management Team (RMT) should filter and coordinate Washington-generated information requests to ensure that they do not unduly interfere with the Team's ability to put in place field activities which save lives.

9. OFDA DART communications rules

Day-to-day routine communications generated in the field by larger DART teams must flow promptly to Washington. The DART team leadership cannot clear every message dispatched from the field. The DART Team Leader and the RMT in Washington must receive copies of all communications.

However, if a potential message from a DART field team member contains information which is likely to receive wider attention, or alters previous analysis on a key issue in a way which bears on policy and strategy, or is otherwise important, DART members – regardless of their office of origin – must clear the content in advance with the DART Team Leader.

10. Personnel issues

In hiring its personnel, OFDA has emphasized Master's degree academic preparation and a familiarity with USAID. But it has not as often required on-the-ground field experience in needs assessment, analysis, emergency relief program operations and particularly post-emergency rehabilitation aid. This has adversely affected OFDA's disaster response capabilities.

In OFDA hiring, operational field experience in needs assessment, analysis, emergency relief program operations and particularly in post-emergency rehabilitation aid should be added as qualification criteria and given greater proportional weight than academic qualifications and USAID-related knowledge in the selection process.

Staffing major DART teams has been a challenge for DCHA and OFDA. OFDA has relied heavily in recent disasters on its in-house direct-hire and personal services contractor (PSC) staff (and other resource personnel), who are able to serve overseas for weeks, or even up to three months, but not longer. This has resulted in limited time horizons for OFDA's DART operations and, at times, a churning of OFDA personnel every few weeks. This disruptive staffing pattern inhibits sustainable networking and credibility with its counterparts and partners, and prevents the accumulation of experience and continuity in program administration. It may have contributed to neglect of some elements of OFDA's legislative mandate.

OFDA will increasingly rely for its personnel on the newly-created Foreign Service Officer Backstop, the Crisis and Recovery Officer (backstop-76). This new backstop will provide stability and breadth to the pool of personnel available to the Agency. These officers will be generalists with a broad set of competencies in the areas of humanitarian and transition assistance, including natural disasters, complex emergencies, conflict mitigation and food security, as well as democracy and governance.

Crisis and Recovery Officers will be able to work effectively in stressful, rapidly changing, politically charged environments where lives are often at stake. In these areas of growing importance to the Agency, the new backstop will reflect cross-training, flexibility and coordination within the DCHA Bureau and with other Bureaus.

OFDA, and most of DCHA, will also continue to utilize PSC or institutional contract experts available for periods of six to eighteen months of continuous overseas service to staff its DART and other operations.

At times, OFDA has relied on such contract personnel with great success. But it has demonstrated inadequate commitment to developing and maintaining a cadre of such individuals who can be available when required for emergencies. Instead, it has opportunistically contracted them. But when the short-term emergency requirement for them has lapsed, OFDA has not shown the creativity or commitment to utilize them for other required functions; or to invest in them to increase their capabilities so that they are available and better-trained when needed. Often, the most promising and committed field staff have been obliged to leave OFDA to take up less stressful opportunities in other USAID offices, in its partner organizations or in the private sector.

OFDA must develop, train and retain a cadre of contract personnel prepared to address the increasingly complex disaster challenges of the coming decade and to serve overseas for prolonged periods in dangerous and deprived circumstances. A cadre of two dozen DART Team Leaders and senior-level DART managers must be identified and prepared for these responsibilities.

The DCHA and OFDA DART Team Leader must be expert in all aspects of post-disaster and post-conflict activities and must also be the repository of practical field experience, acquired through a combination of personal experience and training, in the dozens of major disasters which have occurred during the past decades. The DART leader must understand and have the ability to operationalize the kinds of routine programs which fall within OFDA's mandate. But s/he must also be broad-gauged and possess expertise in related areas which fall outside that mandate (for example, combatant demobilization) so that in the immediate post-disaster period s/he can advise the Country Team on these issues.

Attracting and retaining such personnel requires, among other measures, four steps to adjust the way in which they are supported:

- OFDA should look for creative ways to recognize and where possible compensate for or reward the special risks and stressful conditions to which DART members and overseas staff are exposed. It should make obligatory participation in individual exit conference counseling and rigorous examinations by tropical (or other appropriate) medical specialists on completion of assignments where the physical environment to which they have been exposed warrants.
- When such contract personnel are not being used for disaster emergencies, OFDA should utilize them for tasks such as after-action and program evaluations; cross-assignments with other DCHA, USAID and State Department offices which require assistance; and field research, assessment and analysis jobs for OFDA. These will strengthen their skills and keep them available for the more stressful and demanding emergency assignments often faced by OFDA.
- Routinely invite their participation in briefings, seminars and other events which expose them to additional experiences.
- At present, many of the hiring mechanisms available to OFDA make no contribution to retirement funds and an inadequate contribution to their health insurance arrangements – a flaw that is particularly detrimental in light of the unusual health risks to which they are exposed. OFDA and the Office of Acquisition and Assistance should explore ways in which these deficits may be mitigated.

11. Training

The scope of OFDA's training program must be adjusted to prepare OFDA personnel for the substantially more complex challenges and performance requirements of the coming decade and to carry out this mandate. OFDA's current training program focuses on a sectoral approach to aspects of its objectives to save lives and relieve suffering. Recently a useful additional component – security-related training – was added.

For both its direct-hire (including Backstop 76) and contract staff, additional, more intensive training needs to be added for entry-level as well as mid-level and *senior* personnel.

A continuous, off-site six-week training program, involving scores of outside U. S. and international experts, offering a variety of sometimes-conflicting outlooks, should be established by OFDA to achieve this objective. The new training elements would include:

- A case-method approach to understanding and analyzing the political, ethnic, relief, rehabilitation, reconstruction, demobilization and operational dynamics of the dozen major natural and complex emergency disasters which OFDA (and USAID as a whole) have faced during the past two decades. These would include the southern Africa drought, northern Iraq, northern Uganda, Hurricane Mitch, post-Dayton Bosnia, Kosovo, the Great Lakes (Rwanda/Burundi/DRC), Afghanistan, Iraq, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Darfur.
- A case-method approach to the economic dimension of disaster relief and rehabilitation, including short-term economic reactivation, market interventions, cash employment, livelihood and other experiences of OFDA and USAID in general would be an additional focus of the six-week program.
- A case-method approach to raising awareness of the physical and international protection dimensions of complex emergencies; methods for monitoring, reporting and providing assistance, in coordination with OTI and where appropriate PRM, which addresses this issue. This component should stress methods for understanding and reporting on the competing perceptions which contribute to the fundamental dynamics of these conflicts.

Participation in this training program should be made available to other DCHA staff and, if feasible, to PRM and other State Department personnel.

In addition, to the type of course envisioned above, OFDA must also provide concerted, obligatory on-the-job training which heightens staff awareness and knowledge of the mission and operating procedures of sister offices within USAID and the USG. It must provide leadership training and field mentoring. OFDA should provide and require obligatory on-the-job training, as follows:

- Short-term cross-assignments, in Washington and in the field, with other DCHA, USAID and State Department offices.
- Training in leadership, management and briefing skills for prospective Team Leaders and senior DART managers.
- A system of *obligatory* field mentoring in which, for example, mid-level personnel are routinely attached to experienced DART Team Leaders and overseas Senior Advisors for the principal purpose of learning their skills.

12. Delegation to DART Team Leaders and Senior Field Advisors

OFDA's previous practice of delegating considerable authority over their teams and activities to its DART Team Leaders yielded its most effective disaster responses. This type of delegation, for all major DART teams, should be routinely authorized once again. USAID/W should be guided by the results of direct field assessments and analyses of our most senior field representative, the DART Team Leader. DCHA and OFDA should extend to the DART Team Leader wide latitude in approval over the selection and deployment of team personnel, decisions over security practices, and influence on strategy and program decisions.

The Rapid Response Fund, used with great success in Bosnia, has not been utilized since. Authority over this fund was delegated to the DART Team Leader. A budget was provided to the DART by OFDA within which the Team Leader could approve individual grant actions of up to \$100,000. Upon deployment to the field, DART Team Leaders should automatically be vested with decision-making authority over the Rapid Response Fund, adjusted to the level of \$150,000 per grant or local procurement action.

In addition to DART teams, DCHA maintains, through OFDA (and at considerable expense), a number of regional field offices throughout the world. In principle and in practice, the usefulness of these offices is a function of the level of authority delegated to them. These offices should have the principal authority and responsibility for supervising and overseeing OFDA activities in the field. In most cases, the authority these offices should exercise, and which in some cases they were intended to exercise when established, has not been delegated to them.

OFDA should either delegate authority or at least defer to its regional field offices in respect of approval of OFDA activities in the field. Authority over a Rapid Response Fund and over local procurements identical to that vested in DART Team Leaders should be vested in the Senior Advisors in these offices.

13. Attitude toward contractors

In DCHA and OFDA's emergency and disaster-related activities, it is unthinkable that PSC and institutional contractors might be treated other than as the equals of the direct-hire staff with whom they share the health risks, the security dangers and the burdensome working conditions of these challenges. They must be permitted to ride in DART team vehicles, share its meals and its tents. During emergency operations, legal technicalities must not be permitted to infringe on this principle.

PSC and institutional contractors may not be discriminated against. A working environment free of discrimination of any kind among the men and women of our DART and other DCHA teams is an uncompromisable principle which is the direct responsibility of the OFDA Director to insure.

14. Procurement

As one of the cutting edge organizations in U.S. foreign policy, DCHA in general, and OFDA in particular, operate in highly stressful, time-sensitive environments in which they must address numerous disasters at once in a series of continuous events from which there is rarely relief. OFDA is called upon to save lives, relieve suffering and address the economic impact of major disasters, often in countries central to U. S. foreign policy interests. The Congress and the Executive Branch demand that OFDA respond with agility and speed in environments in which emergency and post-emergency operations are extremely difficult. Acknowledging this reality, Congress granted to OFDA a "notwithstanding authority" which was designed to eliminate the red tape that encumbers swift responses or which handicaps OFDA's ability to establish an organization that can respond in a sustained, agile manner.

OFDA has, correctly, been prudent in its use of the "notwithstanding authority." Without reaching the need to use this provision, however, OFDA requires and deserves as much understanding, flexibility and prompt attention on procurement, legal and personnel actions as USAID can provide. The burden of day-to-day OFDA operations needs to be lifted as much as possible so that this (still relatively small) organization is not exhausted by meeting its routine obligation to address an unrelenting series of emergencies.

The Office of Acquisition and Assistance, the Office of the General Counsel and the Office of Financial Management should provide prompt, vigorous aid to OFDA to quickly achieve a few key reforms, which include:

- Conveyance to Contracting Officers within OFDA of warrants for grants, contracts, personal services and procurement, with authority up to \$3 million. Such authority would mirror the authority delegated by the Office of Acquisition and Assistance to these officers during recent field operations in Iraq.
- Establishment for each major disaster of a procedure which automatically vests authority in a DCHA DART Team Leader in the field over the Rapid Response Fund (along the Bosnia model), specifically to approve individual grants as well as local commodity procurements of \$150,000 per action. These authority levels should be adjusted each two years to reflect inflation and other cost increases. OFDA should provide for a budget for each major disaster that enables the Team Leader to make use of this authority.

- Establishment in advance of a system under which, for each major disaster, the Team Leader will dispose of a capability and appropriate procedures to deliver cash to the field for emergency operations.

15. Operational support platform

OFDA, OTI and other DCHA offices, faced with their unusual challenges, have each devised operational support mechanisms designed to expedite and accelerate their field programs. Some of these mechanisms have produced exceptional results. This is precisely the kind of governmental creativity that should be supported and rewarded. These mechanisms continue to be needed primarily by their sponsoring offices.

The demonstrated success of these mechanisms has been noticed by other offices within DCHA, which would like to take advantage of them by being permitted, on a fair cost-sharing basis, to utilize the facilities they offer. Officials in some of these offices have resisted the sharing of these resources or conveyed attitudes which appear not to acknowledge that, in the end, these are USG taxpayer-funded assets which should be used to the best advantage of all within DCHA and USAID as a whole.

DCHA should establish a committee charged with implementing amicable, flexible, reciprocal sharing of their operational support mechanisms. Each DCHA office will be responsible for compensating the host office for the costs incurred in such sharing arrangements. The Chief of the USAID Office of Acquisition and Assistance should lend his expertise and good offices to this Committee to insure rapid, agile and equitable implementation of this mandate.

Arrangements should be swiftly established to permit OFDA to make at least temporary use of OTI's Swift II contract and to permit OTI to make use of OFDA's surge capacity (Macfadden contract) in preparing paperwork for contracts and grants. OFDA's vehicles, communications, information and other resources must likewise be shared in a collaborative manner.

16. Security

The security environments in which DART and other DCHA teams operate -- even, in some cases, in natural disaster responses -- are increasingly complex and dangerous. As OFDA approaches its legislative mandates and its primary objectives of saving lives, reducing suffering and addressing the economic impact of disasters, it must safeguard its field workers while assuring and permitting them the latitude necessary to achieve their objectives. DART members must recognize that there are inherent risks in their activities, which often must be conducted in remote areas where they, largely unassisted, must be guided by conditions in the field and their own judgment.

While keeping field personnel safe, the USAID/Washington system must not complicate or bureaucratize security procedures and requirements in a manner which encumbers the ability of experienced field personnel to do their job. DART personnel have, historically, used excellent judgment in the field, and that is where the locus of decision-making should remain.

OFDA should ensure the safety of its field personnel in these conditions primarily through training aimed at heightening their individual awareness of risks and strengthening their individual abilities to assess those risks and make their own prudent day-to-day decisions on travel and accommodation. OFDA should find a way to allow the tips accumulated by its scores of experienced field personnel for "best field security practices" to be methodically collected and shared among all DCHA field workers.

The Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear and Explosive (CBRNE) awareness training initiated on a full-scale basis in connection with the DART/Iraq should be an obligatory pre-overseas deployment requirement for all DART personnel.

In the field, DCHA must rely primarily on local drivers, and should permit self-driving of vehicles by expatriate staff only as an absolute last resort. For such contingencies, the counter-terrorism and tactical driving training initiated for the DART/Iraq raises the confidence level of field personnel and should be institutionalized.

Decisions about local security issues in the field should be delegated by the DART Team Leader and field office Senior Advisors to the lowest competent level in the field. Less experienced field personnel should be attached to more experienced personnel for purposes of day-to-day security guidance.

DART Team Leaders and OFDA Senior Advisors will seek the counsel of and agree on security arrangements with USG Regional Security Officers, where they are present. These arrangements will be adhered to by DART field staff. Within the DART team, the Team Leader will have the final authority on day-to-day security-related matters. The Team Leader's judgment will determine whether and for what period of time specialized security officers are required on a DART team in order to assist in addressing this issue.

17. Waiving provisions of this mandate

The Assistant Administrator of DCHA is hereby delegated the authority to waive any provision of this mandate when warranted for any major disaster through an internal DCHA decision memorandum, a copy of which should be shared with the Administrator's office.

18. Distribution of this document

A printed copy of this document will be distributed to every OFDA direct hire, personal service contractor and institutional contract staff, in Washington, D.C. and in the field. In addition, a printed copy will be distributed to each member of future DART teams before each deployment.