



# ***Emerald Express 06-1 (EE 06-1) Military Support in Humanitarian Assistance/Disaster Relief: Assessment Report Insights and Observations***

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## **INTRODUCTION**

*Emerald Express 06-1 (EE 06-1)*, Military Support in Humanitarian Assistance/Disaster Relief, was conducted 14-15 February 2006 at Quantico, Virginia. The purpose of *EE 06-1* was to review recent operational experience in humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HA/DR) efforts to derive insights and enhance military proficiency in supporting these types of operations. Key participating organizations included the US Services, US Joint Forces Command, Department of Defense, Joint Staff, Department of State, US Agency for International Development (USAID), Department of Homeland Security, Coast Guard, National Defense University, Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences, state and local governments, First Responders, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and several multinational partners.

The *Emerald Express* Program is a core component of the Small Wars Center of Excellence (SWCOE), managed within the Wargaming Division of the Marine Corps Warfighting Laboratory (MCWL). Please refer to [www.smallwars.quantico.usmc.mil](http://www.smallwars.quantico.usmc.mil) for a detailed discussion of the purpose, scope, mission and functions, and programs of the SWCOE. Moreover, *EE 06-1*, as with previous specific *Emerald Express* conferences, additionally served as a key Pathway Event for the Homeland Security / Homeland Defense component of *Joint Urban Warrior 06*. *Joint Urban Warrior (JUW)* is a recurring program cosponsored by the US Marine Corps (USMC) and US Joint Forces Command (USJFCOM) that is designed to address and improve joint and combined urban operations concept development and experimentation (CD&E). *JUW 06* will leverage the insights from recent operational experience to explore,

develop, and assess innovative approaches to the conduct of complex Three Block War urban operations across a broad spectrum of core focus areas. Urban operations wargaming and exploratory efforts have appreciated the key importance of HLS/HLD operations, both in expanding insights and capabilities regarding the conduct of urban operations broadly, and in addressing particularly the dimensions and complexities of the employment of military forces and equipment in support of civil authority in the same. Key among these are the critical importance of interagency cooperation and coordination, as well as the centrality of operational, policy, legal, command and control, and force capabilities development issues. As with *JUW 06* writ large, this component is intended to provide a vehicle for communicating and integrating the activities of the different Services and agencies that are addressing the various dimensions of military support to HLS/HLD operations.

This assessment is intended to provide a stand-alone overview of major findings and issues addressed in *EE 06-1*. Its contents are necessarily selective and focus only on those items deemed sufficiently significant.

## **BACKGROUND**

*Emerald Express* is a long-standing program designed to garner critical insights and observations from real-world military operations, distribute them to as wide an audience as possible for use in future similar employments, advance the mission of the SWCOE, and inform and shape larger wargaming programs as appropriate. It is modeled on the *Emerald Express* exercise conducted by the Commanding General, I Marine Expeditionary Force in 1995. That event was the first of several large-scale exercises that addressed operations from a comprehensive military and interagency perspective. The *Emerald Express* approach, which is inherently joint and interagency and has become increasingly multi-national in nature, is particularly relevant to urban operations. These operations often require the simultaneous conduct of combat, stability, and humanitarian assistance operations as well as interagency and coalition coordination, integration, and interoperability. Past Marine Corps Wargaming *Emerald Express* efforts have examined joint, combined and, interagency operations in Kosovo, Albania, Bosnia, Turkey, East Timor/Indonesia, Iraq, and Afghanistan.

Since the military is likely to play a significant role in responding to such disasters for the foreseeable future, *EE 06-1* addressed observations and insights from several recent HA/DR efforts significantly supported by military forces. It focused on relief operations in response to the Asian Tsunami, 26 December 2004, and Hurricane Katrina, 29 August 2005, though military response to the devastation caused by a series of tropical storms in the Philippines in early December 2004 and to the Pakistani earthquake, 8 October 2005, figured prominently in the briefings and discussions. Moreover, participants addressed additional operations, such as the noncombatant evacuation from Albania in March 1997, the peacekeeping effort in East Timor in September 1999, the reaction to the 9/11 attack on the Pentagon in September 2001, and the response to a helicopter crash in Japan in August 2004, all of which expanded findings and insights regarding HA/DR operations. *EE 06-1* brought together key subject matter experts, including commanders, staff, and interagency and nongovernmental organization (NGO) representatives, who participated in the various assistance and relief efforts, to provide briefings on their experiences and hold follow-on structured discussions and question and answer periods sessions. *EE 06-1* results will be made available to units preparing to conduct HA/DR operations, both domestically and outside the United States.

## **AREAS OF INTEREST**

Areas of interest addressed for *EE 06-1* included, but were not limited to:

- DOD's relationships with federal, state, local, and tribal governments and organizations.
- The role of the US Marine Corps in domestic operations, including the capabilities and training of the MARFORNORTH staff in HA/DR
- The next steps in implementing the various lessons learned by the forces participating in HA/DR operations.

## **KEY FINDINGS AND ISSUES**

*EE 06-1* addressed a broad array of issues related to humanitarian assistance and disaster relief. Discussions highlighted operational, organizational, and technological considerations across the full spectrum of joint and combined urban operations. The key findings and issues are organized

into three general groups: those relevant solely to international HA/DR; those relevant solely to domestic HA/DR; and those relevant to both.

## **OPERATION UNIFIED ASSISTANCE (TSUNAMI RELIEF)**

### **Operational Overview**

At 0100 on 26 December 2004, an earthquake of 9.0 on the Richter Scale struck off the west coast of Northern Sumatra in the Indian Ocean. This earthquake resulted in a tsunami that devastated the shores of Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Thailand, India, Malaysia and other countries as far west as the Eastern shores of Africa. With little or no forewarning, the earthquake and the tsunami killed more than 289,000 people and displaced over 1.1 million. Thousands of miles of homes and infrastructure were destroyed. The international response was compassionate and swift. More than 12,600 US military personnel joined in the international relief effort that included 33 foreign governments, the USAID Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (USAID/OFDA), the United Nations' (UN) World Food Program (WFP), World Health Organization (WHO), Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), and Joint Logistics Center (UNJLC), and over 150 NGOs. Two days after the initial devastation, Joint Task Force 536 (JTF 536) was established and deployed the forward element to Utapao, Thailand. Commanded by Lieutenant General Robert R. Blackman, Jr., then Commanding General (CG) III Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF), the mission of JTF 536 designated by United States Pacific Command (USPACOM) was to "provide assistance to the governments of Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Thailand and other affected nations to mitigate the effects of the recent earthquake and tsunami in the Indian Ocean. The conduct of these HA/DR operations was in support of the US government lead agency, and in coordination with international organizations, NGOs and partner nations. The intent was for the host nation to provide the lead in the effort". On 29 December 2005 the JTF assessment teams began arriving in Thailand, Sri Lanka and Indonesia in time to accept the initial delivery of relief supplies.

Due to political sensitivity and the significance of the name, the JTF was renamed a Combined Support Force (CSF 536) on 3 January 2005. Three Combined Support Groups (CSG) were established regionally from the JTF assessment teams in Phuket, Thailand (CSG TH), Galle, Sri Lanka (CSG SL), and Medan, Indonesia (CSG ID) by 30 December 2004 to continue

coordination of hasty assessments with other international agencies. The time-critical nature of this mission demanded that planning, assessing, execution, transition, deployment and redeployment take place simultaneously. Flight operations commenced from the *USS Abraham Lincoln* Carrier Strike Group (CSG) on 1 January 2005. The US contributed 45 of the 137 airplanes, 57 of the 161 helicopters, and 25 of the 127 ships that were deployed by 21 governments. US Navy ships from the *Lincoln* CSG and *USS Bon Homme Richard* Expeditionary Strike Group (ESG) with over 2,100 U.S. Marines assigned to the 15<sup>th</sup> Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) were utilized to deliver 24.5 million pounds of relief supplies. Six ships from the Maritime Preposition Squadron (MPSRON-3) in Guam deployed primarily to produce and deliver potable water. Specific USMC assets included equipment and Marines from the 3<sup>rd</sup> Force Service Support Group (FSSG), Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron (HMH) 362, Marine Aviation Logistics Squadron (MALS) 24, aircraft from the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Marine Aircraft Wing (MAW), the MV Westpac Express, and 9<sup>th</sup> Communications Battalion. Over 15,000 US troops were deployed or in direct support of Operation Unified Assistance. The CSGs relief operations in Thailand were completed on 22 January 2005, in Sri Lanka on 29 January 2005 and Indonesia on 10 February 2005. Though CSF 536 was disestablished on 23 February 2005, the *USNS Mercy* continued humanitarian assistance operations until 16 March 2005. The US military provided relief of immediate suffering, lent support to the host nation and USAID, and allowed national and international civil relief efforts time to organize their long term response.

## **International Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief**

### ***Cultural Awareness***

A sound understanding of the culture and perspective of the Host Nation (HN) is critical for military forces engaged in international HA/DR. US military forces responding to the 2005 Pakistani earthquake discerned quickly the important political, tribal, and cultural sensitivities and proceeded in a culturally sensitive fashion. Language skills contributed significantly to success in this area; interpreters were very valuable. US forces in Pakistan utilized interpreters and worked closely with the local police to maximize the effectiveness of the HA/DR effort. Embassy staffs have invaluable cultural expertise to assist all operations.

Effective operators must look at the situation through “host nation’s eyes.” For example, in establishing refugee camps to care for displaced persons, conflicts can occur between differing ethnic groups that are not historically friendly or familiar to living in close proximity, a key point of cultural knowledge. By utilizing HN representatives, the military’s impact in the crisis could have a long term impact, though the military may only be directly involved for a short duration. This requirement for cultural awareness was multiplied many fold in the Asian Tsunami relief effort by the number of different countries that were impacted.

### ***International Coordination***

International HA/DR operations require coordination with both the host nation and other international partners in the relief effort. The military should always be in a supporting role to the host nation’s needs in HA/DR operations. It is therefore important to listen to the concerns of the host nation and the local population. One way to ensure that their concerns are addressed is to include them in both planning and conducting operations. Improving HN capacity (e.g., by rebuilding and refurbishing a local hospital) rather than temporarily importing supplemental capacity (e.g., by bringing in a field hospital) will contribute more to HN long-term recovery and also demonstrate that those providing the assistance have the host nation’s interests in mind.

In addition to working with the host nation, US forces may also have to coordinate with other countries participating in the HA/DR effort. Existing bilateral and multilateral security relationships can facilitate this coordination. The Asia-Pacific Area Network (APAN) and the Multinational Planning Augmentation Team (MPAT) sponsored by Pacific Command (PACOM) were vital to the coordination of the multinational response to the Asian Tsunami. APAN is a World Wide Web portal ([www.apan.net](http://www.apan.net)) offering information resources and a collaborative planning environment to foster greater interaction, confidence-building, and enhanced security cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region. Members of the multinational coalition responding to the tsunami used APAN to share information amongst themselves and with local officials in the affected countries.

The MPAT program is a cooperative multinational effort to facilitate the rapid and effective establishment and/or augmentation of a multinational task force headquarters. MPAT has

developed expertise and standard operating procedures to facilitate responsive multinational crisis action planning. It also contributed to the establishment of the Combined Coordination Centers (CCC), which provided the sole venue for regional coordination of interagency, UN/NGO, and multinational military efforts during *Operation Unified Assistance*. The personal relationships formed through the process of planning for multinational operations provided the necessary foundation for MPAT to stand up and operate the CCC, one of which fell under each of the three regional CSGs. The CCC provided a “seat at the table” for all the multinational military and interagency liaison officers without giving the impression that they were part of the combined military HA/DR effort. It provided a central place for all to meet without overtly pushing US leadership. The CCC also provided a forum for the combined military HA/DR effort to coordinate and socialize its plans for transition and redeployment.

### ***Interagency Coordination***

International HA/DR requires extensive coordination with not only international partners but also with other US government agencies. One common hurdle to interagency coordination for international HA/DR is a lack of clarity regarding who is the lead agency for command and control of the US government’s efforts. In the absence of a U.S. government foreign disaster response plan, the country ambassador and embassy staffs act as the U.S. government lead and official conduit to the host nation’s government leadership. During HA/DR operations, United States Agency for International Development/Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (USAID/OFDA) is a critical link for planning and coordination between the US Departments of State and Defense.

In HA/DR situations, the country ambassador, chief of mission, or the Assistant Secretary of State for the affected region declares a disaster in a particular country. The embassy staffs possess invaluable knowledge of local culture and conditions. USAID/OFDA will deploy Disaster Assistance Response Teams (DART) to assist the ambassador in coordination among the HN, military and other responders. During *Operation Unified Assistance*, the US military commander of the Combined Support Force coordinated with the ambassadors in the three host nations every day.

Complicating interagency coordination for international HA/DR are the very different cultures and perspectives of the US military and other government agencies. For example, there is no culture of command in organizations like the Department of State and USAID. Instead, their emphasis is on coordination. Because information flows back to Washington slowly, the most effective coordination takes place in the field at lower levels. Military liaison officers are needed to work with the US embassy and USAID. People previously acquainted during an earlier crisis or through MPAT training, enhanced the effectiveness of the multinational and interagency coordination at the CCCs.

Participants also cited a number of other mechanisms to promote deliberate interagency coordination instead of independent crisis action planning. At the tactical level, they included employment of the CCCs during the tsunami and disaster assistance centers (DAC) during the Pakistani earthquake, and web-based, unclassified planning and operations networks like those used during the Asian Tsunami relief effort; adherence to minimum standards, such as the ones for water, sanitation, food, shelter, and health outlined by the Sphere Project;<sup>1</sup> and the adoption of basic guidelines, such as those contained in OFDA's Field Operations Guide (FOG) for Disaster Assessment and Response. The CCC was inclusive of all agencies involved in the response. The centers were managed by the CSGs and proved to be an effective tool to streamline all relief operations as well as tailor the response to the country requirements. The centers managed requests for assistance (RFAs) from the host nation and NGOs, tracking of the progress of the requests and utilizing the APAN to post reliable updates.

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<sup>1</sup> The Sphere Project, Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response, <http://www.sphereproject.org>. The Sphere Project is a program of the Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response (SCHR) and InterAction with VOICE and ICVA. The project was launched in 1997 to develop a set of universal minimum standards in core areas of humanitarian assistance. The aim of the project is to improve the quality of assistance provided to people affected by disasters, and to enhance the accountability of the humanitarian system in disaster response. The humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response is the product of the collective experience of many people and agencies. They should not therefore be seen as representing the views of any one agency.

### ***Coordination with Non-Governmental Organizations***

As was the case with the interagency process, profound differences in organizational culture can complicate coordination between NGOs and the military. NGOs emphasize independence and decentralized authority. They rarely use field manuals and instead rely on on-the-job training. Because they were usually operating in the affected country or region before the disaster and will continue to do so after relief efforts have ended, they have a longer-term perspective. In contrast, the military is highly disciplined and employs a hierarchical command structure. Military culture emphasizes the value of formal training and military organizations produce volumes of doctrinal publications. Since they plan on leaving once the crisis is resolved, the military planners tend to employ an end-state approach.

Given the cultural differences between NGOs and the military, there is likely to be a diversity of attitudes toward the military among NGOs. Some will resist working with the military because they perceive it as a violation of their core values. They fear military domination of humanitarian assistance and a subsequent loss of the visibility they depend on to raise funds. They fear being used to collect intelligence. It may not be possible to allay those fears entirely. Other NGOs, however, may be more willing to work with the military, which should identify the key personnel in the relevant organizations and seek to build bridges and coordinate in advance where possible.

NGOs that are willing to coordinate with the military typically want information briefings on recent events and local security, convoy support, access to remote areas, ports, and airfields, security services and technical assistance. The technical aid consists largely of engineering assistance and some medical services. To maximize each organization's comparative advantage, the military should capitalize on its strengths in areas like security, logistics, transportation, communications, and intelligence while allowing the NGOs to apply their local knowledge and extensive experience in aid and support to local villages.

### ***Force Protection***

Openly carrying weapons may interfere with the goals of HA/DR operations by raising doubts about the intent of military forces. The multinational forces responding to the Asian Tsunami

entered countries that were unfamiliar and distrustful of westerners. Some regions affected by active conflict and civil unrest prior to the tsunami's devastation magnified the force protection concerns for commanders. Force protection was the Commander's top priority. The Combined Support Force was always mindful that Indonesia, Sri Lanka, and Thailand are sovereign Nations who requested the support they received and in doing so accepted responsibility for the protection of participating forces. Risk to U.S. forces was mitigated in a number of ways:

- Host Nation military provided armed force protection; well-coordinated at CSG "CCC" meetings.
- All relief actions were focused on the people in an unbiased and apolitical manner; trust was built that established the relief effort as purely humanitarian.
- The CSF established sound intelligence sharing processes with the U.S. Country Team and Host Nations.
- The CSF kept the footprint ashore in Indonesia, especially at night, to an absolute minimum.

### International HA / DR Operations: Key Take Aways

- Cultural knowledge is critical to effectively interacting with host nations (HNs) and Multinational (MN) partners.
- HN should, in fact and perception, be leading the HA / DR operation.
- U.S. government's goal should be improved HN relief capabilities; NOT long-term relief by assisting nations.
- MN interaction and effectiveness is critical.
- Make maximum use of accessible web-based communications and unclassified information; e.g., APAN, MPAT.
- Military forces function in a supporting role to Ambassador / Country Team.
- Military - NGO relationships should stress complimentary, not competing roles and capabilities.
- An effective public affairs plan is essential to success.

## **JOINT TASK FORCE (JTF) KATRINA**

### **Operational Overview**

On 29 August 2005, Hurricane Katrina made landfall near Buras, Louisiana, 60 miles southeast of downtown New Orleans. It was a Category 4 hurricane with winds speeds of 145 mph affecting a wide swath of the United States Gulf Coast. Hardest hit were the coasts of Alabama, Mississippi and Louisiana where storm damage was extensive. Flooding in New Orleans, caused by breaches in the levee system that separates Lake Pontchartrain from the city, left over 80% of the city up to 20 feet underwater. All of St. Bernard Parish and portions of St. Tammany Parish and Plaquemines Parish were flooded. By 7 September 2005, one week later, 60% of the city remained underwater. The breaches in the levees were remedied by 13 September 2005 and the flood waters receded by approximately one foot per day thereafter. This widespread and unprecedented flooding in New Orleans magnified the needed emergency response operations as well as limiting search and rescue (SAR) operations to helicopters and boats in large sections of the city. In a city with approximately 1.3 million pre-hurricane residents, an estimated 1.2 million evacuated, leaving behind an estimated 120,000 people. The extensive flooding in New Orleans overshadowed the damage attributed directly to the hurricane. An estimated 984 persons died as 280,880 dwellings were damaged and 319,677 dwellings were destroyed. The estimated cost of the damage ranges from 77 – 112 billion dollars.

Though the focus of military support to relief operations centered on New Orleans, it is critical to acknowledge the efforts of active duty military personnel, national guardsmen, and others in recovery operations throughout the entire Katrina impact area. For example, in less populated areas throughout Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida 737,940 persons were displaced and an additional 1.0 million persons evacuated. Damage is assessed between 8 – 12 billion dollars with 33,253 dwellings destroyed and 29,218 homes damaged. Hurricane Katrina took an additional 265 lives as well. Over 1,300 people still remain missing and the official death toll, combining those who died directly and indirectly, has reached 1,422. If all 1,300 missing were to be confirmed dead, Katrina would surpass the Okeechobee Hurricane of 1928 as the second deadliest storm in US history, and the deadliest in a century.

The United States Northern Command (NORTHCOM) established Joint Task Force (JTF) Katrina based at Camp Shelby, Mississippi, to act as the military's on-the-scene command on Sunday, 28 August 2005. Lieutenant General Russel Honoré of the US First Army in Fort Gillem, Georgia, was designated Commander (CJTF Katrina). President Bush declared a disaster area of 90,000 square miles, and on 3 September 2005 ordered 7,200 active duty troops to New Orleans. The first priority was to save lives, then sustain lives by ensuring adequate food, water, shelter, and medical supplies for survivors and dislocated citizens, and lastly to execute a comprehensive recovery effort. The active duty military arrived by 6 September 2005 to conduct hasty SAR and HA operations. By the end of the deployment of the military forces, close to 70,000 personnel were evacuated by JTF Katrina forces. 110 million meals ready to eat (MREs) and 506 thousand gallons of fuel were delivered. A total of 175 helicopters, 12 US naval ships and 6 U.S. Coast Guard ships were utilized in the operations. The Department of Defense's response to Hurricane Katrina was the largest military deployment within the United States since the Civil War. At the peak of the deployment, there were more than 20,000 active duty personnel and more than 50,000 National Guard personnel from 50 states, Washington D.C. and 3 territories in the JTF Katrina Joint Operational Area (JOA). 130 foreign nations and international organizations offered unprecedented support totaling over 668 million dollars in cash and supplies.

The Marine Component of JTF Katrina, Marine Forces (MARFOR) Katrina, was commanded by Major General Douglas O'Dell, CG of 4<sup>th</sup> Marine Division. His forces were comprised of elements of the 11<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> MEU and Marine Aircraft Group (MAG) 42. These forces comprised the Special Purpose Marine Air Ground Task Force (SPMAGTF), and worked in coordination with National Guard Forces to conduct HA/DR in order to assist local authorities with recovery and stabilization efforts to save lives and mitigate human suffering. 24<sup>th</sup> MEU forces worked to support efforts in St. Bernard parish while 11<sup>th</sup> MEU supported efforts in Slidell, LA. The aviation support element carried over 5, 000 passengers, rescued 446, evacuated over 1,400 and carried over one million pounds of cargo in 745 sorties. The ground forces evacuated over 150, transported close to two million pounds of cargo, delivered 1,000 gallons of fuel and recovered 23 remains.

## **Domestic Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HA/DR)**

### ***Background***

Responding to domestic crises and disasters is not new for US military forces. In accordance with the National Response Plan (NRP), the Department of Defense provides support to civilian agencies when it is requested as long as it does not interfere with other missions. In the past, DOD has responded to many domestic HA/DR situations such as hurricanes, floods, and fires. For example, in September 1989, and again in August 1992, DOD assisted in the disaster cleanup caused by Hurricanes Hugo and Andrew. DOD has also assisted in fighting fire in the western United States in states such as Idaho and California. The one question that always seems to come up is: “Who’s in charge?” The easy part of the answer is that the military is never in charge. The rest has proven more complex.

When local responders are overwhelmed by the disaster and require external support, they will request assistance from surrounding communities and ultimately the state by exercising their MOUs (Memorandums of Understanding). And when the amount of assistance requested is not sufficient to mitigate the crisis, the state will request federal assistance. This assistance may be in the form of military forces, DOD civilians and/or contract personnel. Military forces are requested through the Office of the Secretary of Defense. If approved, a combatant commander will be designated for their employment.

DOD forces are governed by Title 10 of the United States Code and are not authorized to command and/or control civilian forces. In addition, the Posse Comitatus Act prevents DOD forces from enforcing and participating in law enforcement issues. NORTHCOM monitors potentially disastrous events, such as hurricanes and fires, just in case military forces are to be requested. To be better prepared to work “side by side” with their civilian counterparts, military personnel leading domestic HA/DR missions need to be familiar with the National Incident Management System (NIMS).

NIMS applies incident command principles that have been long used by First Responders to the larger problem of national disasters. NIMS provides a standardized yet flexible process and system for emergency services to utilize in the event of a national disaster. NIMS is “intended to

provide a consistent framework for incident management at all jurisdictional levels and to define the roles and responsibilities of federal, state, and local governments, and various First Responder disciplines at each level during an emergency event.”

### ***Role of the USMC in Domestic HA/DR Operations***

In the case of Hurricane Katrina, Marines were the force of choice. The Special Purpose Marine Air Ground Task Force (SPMAGTF) was the right size force for the mission due to its set of unique capabilities. The Assault Amphibian Vehicles (AAVs), aviation assets, and motor transport capabilities proved to be key enablers. They were able to deliver Marines to the scene and get them to work quickly. They provided excellent mobility and were able to operate well out of their assigned areas. The Marine helicopters also proved invaluable, although they had to be based very close to the disaster area because of range limitations.

Additional critical capabilities were the presence of military lawyers to translate the laws, rules, and guidelines concerning military participation in civil matters for the operating forces, and Civil Affairs officers who proved to be important liaisons with local representatives. These military liaison officers can help local government officials make the best use of government resources by providing a planning process, methodology, and task list. Major HA/DR operations can quickly increase in size and Marine forces, as well as other components, will need no less than a General Officer with a small staff to lead them.

Since domestic HA/DR requires operational integration and interoperability, both among the Services and at the interagency level, the Marine Corps should look into training and exercises that are sufficient to provide the necessary integration and interoperability at local, state and federal levels. Domestic HA/DR exercises should be more frequent, more rigorous, more focused on an “All-hazards approach” instead of just natural disasters and terrorism. Large-scale exercises may be difficult given current military operating tempo, but even additional tabletop planning exercises (e.g., war games) can be beneficial. Included in any expanded training program should be exercises focused on developing integrated, joint, interagency headquarters for domestic operations that would incorporate representatives from both Title 10 and Title 32 forces.

Since NIMS is relatively new to the military, the Secretary of Defense has directed the military services to implement their own procedures consistent with NIMS. This system will assist military commanders to integrate much more quickly with civilian responders when they are called upon to provide support. To become more familiar with NIMS and incident response from the civilian perspective, military services need to incorporate it into doctrine, training, and exercises. In addition, US Northern Command (NORTHCOM) and the Marine Forces component, (MARFORNORTH), must establish command relationships and responsibilities early and continue to clarify any issues that may prevent military forces from working closely with first responders.

In addition to becoming more familiar with NIMS, military forces need to explore concepts that would allow the “push” of necessary equipment and supplies to the disaster zone instead of waiting to be asked. An exception to the rule is when there is immediate need to save lives or stop further destruction. The military can react immediately but they will NOT be in charge. An additional issue that must be reviewed is improving the effectiveness of domestic HA/DR operations when utilizing both Title 10 (active duty military) and Title 32 (National Guard serving in their state role) forces. This reexamination must look at the allocation of the roles, missions, and laws governing Title 10 and Title 32. Currently, any Title 10 forces in the “immediate vicinity” of a disaster can provide unique capabilities to local authorities. The United States Coast Guard, a Title 14 force, falls under the cognizance of the Department of Homeland Security and can be quickly deployed to immediately move into a disaster area when needed without much “paperwork.” The experience of Hurricane Katrina suggests that it may be necessary to expand the military’s role so that forces located farther away are able and ready to respond immediately. The same is true for Title 32 forces but their deployment would depend upon the State’s governors communicating the need prior to the disaster. Pre-staging of both Title 10 and Title 32 forces is critical when responding to a disaster. Domestic HA/DR is a viable secondary mission for Title 10 forces, though under existing law the military cannot be the lead federal agency (LFA) in such situations.

### Domestic HA / DR Operations: Key Take Aways

- Need to maximize the level and scope of military support in Defense Support to Civil Authority (DSCA) situations within existing constraints; e.g., Titles 10, 14, 32, etc.
- Military forces are always in support per *Posse Comitatus*.
- Military brings major capabilities to domestic HA/DR operations; e.g., security, logistics, communications.
- Essential that military train to an "all hazards" scope of incidents; e.g., chemical, biological, etc. as well as natural disasters.
- Military training should emphasize interoperability at local, state, and federal levels.
- Effective, accessible web-based communications are critical to success.
- Sea-based operations proved highly effective, as did MAGTF organization and capabilities.
- An effective public affairs plan is critical to success.

### **Common Elements for Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief**

There were several issues raised during *EE 06-1* that applied to both international and domestic HA/DR operations. They included coordination and communications, assessment, logistics, public affairs, medical and leadership.

#### ***Coordination and Communications***

Participants agreed that providing the communications backbone is one of the most important contributions the military can make to HA/DR operations. Linking to other government agencies, local authorities, and NGOs can be a challenge. Two things that can ease the situation, however, are emphasizing web-based communications networks and relying primarily on unclassified information. As noted earlier, APAN, a web-based communications system, proved invaluable during the response to the Asian Tsunami. APAN was an unclassified network with unrestricted accessibility. Unlimited sharing of information during the tsunami relief efforts facilitated international coordination and enhanced cooperation. Rules for posting information

were established early and advertised. US forces, classified force protection information only. During the relief efforts in New Orleans, an unclassified network was established on the NORTHCOM website. But this website was accessible to .mil domains only, and thus did not prove useful as an information sharing tool. For example, it could not be utilized universally as firewalls even prevented access to National Guard units. A JTF website that had universal access would have proved of greater utility.

Stated by participants both subtly and explicitly, the military's "command and control" or C2 converts to "coordinate and communicate" during HA/DR operations. Liaison officers (LNOs) are essential in facilitating a coordinated effort with different organizations. During the tsunami, LNOs were in place with the host nations, U.S. embassies and the UN. During Katrina, the weekly change in the Marine Forces Reserve LNOs diminished their effectiveness at coordinating tasks. It was noted in both operations, that members of civilian relief organizations are not accustomed and often do not follow the process to request assistance. As interagencies and NGOs are apt to utilize informal or personal channels for requests, a constant LNO presence proved essential to ensure an orderly request process was maintained. Cell phone communications proved to be the most reliable means in New Orleans, though coverage varied with each provider. During the tsunami, cell phones were relied upon less as commercial sources, radio data teams and other reliable means were available. The New Orleans mayor's office utilized its working internal communication equipment for command of first responders, while National Guard communication assets and personnel were utilized by the mayor's office to provide reliable communication between the office and the military. Video teleconferences drove the daily rhythm during the tsunami relief efforts whereas twice daily conference calls with the JTF were utilized to coordinate operations in New Orleans.

### ***Assessment***

Numerous participants emphasized the importance of early, frequent, and accurate assessment. Early reconnaissance of the actual conditions on the ground by the commander or his staff is vital. It allows the commander to provide broad planning guidance to the troops at an early stage and to identify likely axes of operation, bases, and key logistics resources.

Ideally, HA/DR needs assessments should be performed by and experienced personnel. Given the likelihood of continued military involvement in HA/DR operations, some participants stated the military should seek assessment training opportunities with OFDA, Red Cross, and Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). In addition the military should keep track of who has been trained in a centralized database. Other participants stated that it is preferable to let personnel in the field – representatives of the host nation or the regional NGO community – complete the needs assessments. These personnel have a greater level of experience in completing needs assessments and will be sure to include important culturally sensitive information. These assessments should also be tied to a set of standards such as the previously discussed Sphere Project standards. Accurate and swift needs assessments can establish a benchmark during the operational assessment when scoping the fulfillment of requirements.

Unfortunately, there is often little capability to conduct thorough assessments quickly after a major disaster. Moreover, those who are identifying needs and formulating requirements may not know what items and equipment are available to relieve the human suffering. These facts support the need for tracking the assessments; or viewing the needs assessment as the first part of a continuing process. As the HA/DR operation unfolds, needs will be met and additional needs will be identified. During the tsunami relief operations, assigning and tracking operations was fulfilled through the request for assistance, RFA, process established and managed by the CCC within each CSG. Basically, the host country, NGO or IO submitted an RFA; it was prioritized before one of the military organizations took the request. The CCC tracked and posted progress of the request on the APAN. In New Orleans, a centralized and coordinated RFA process was not established. Military commanders utilized their LNOs and coordinated the needs as identified by the parish president. Often, Marine forces had to dig for requirements by asking numerous questions and making estimates as well as de-conflict operations with the National Guard unit assigned to their parish during daily meetings.

As prioritizing and filling RFAs may be leveraged in evaluating progress towards a transition plan, so too can detailed metrics and use of situation reports (SITREPS). Though quantitative measures may not describe the accomplishment of a mission, accounting for and cataloging of the military's efforts can prove helpful for future commanders. By contrast, clear metrics were

established and followed during the tsunami operations for capturing the detailed data from the military operators. Clear metrics were not identified, established or adhered to during the relief efforts in New Orleans. The guidance for metrics and situation reports changed often as did the military's command structure. Results of the military's work were compiled at parish meetings rather than forwarded and combined in a data base at the JTF headquarters.

### ***Logistics***

USAID/OFDA, UNHCR, host nation, or local government will anticipate requirements for essential life saving supplies. These supplies will be delivered to port facilities and stock piled while awaiting transportation to the affected area. Participants agreed that logistics assistance was another of the critical capabilities the military can contribute to HA/DR operations. There was some disagreement, however, about whether the military should push supplies and equipment into theater ahead of any determination of requirements or wait for the requirements to pull in the right supplies and capabilities. Some participants noted that the initial response to a disaster is always local; the military is rarely on the scene immediately. Consequently, it is important to bring in the right supplies, equipment, and capabilities. Inefficiencies may also occur when bringing in units if they are not completely self sufficient, as their presence may utilize resources that would have been used to relieve the suffering of the local population. Other participants noted that the formulation of requirements may take a long time when a rapid response is needed. Pushing supplies and equipments into the countries affected by the Asian Tsunami was inefficient but effective.

In either case, participants agreed that getting supplies and equipment to the affected area is not the biggest challenge; distributing them is. It is important to have the distribution capability in place early. The military can play a key role in distributing food, water, and fuel.

### ***Medical***

Participants observed that the focus of HA/DR operations on public health runs counter to the traditional emphasis of military medicine on force health. The military medical community is not used to focusing on the health of the affected people, rather than that of the responders. Members of the military medical community with a public health background have more

experience in this area, but the organic public health capabilities of the Navy medical personnel supporting the Marine Corps are scant. It is thus important to know and understand the other services' medical capabilities. It may be necessary to draw on civilian capabilities to supplement the military.

The military medical community also needs to retain its focus on preventive medicine and force health. Navy doctors provided important information on basic health conditions in Louisiana and the necessary precautions before Marine forces deployed in response to Katrina. They also conducted post deployment follow-up examinations to identify and treat any physical or psychological aftereffects from the Marines' participation in HA/DR operations.

Stress management is an expected medical need arising from HA/DR operations that spans traditional distinctions between public and force health. Large-scale disasters typically produce tremendous human suffering, the psychological effects of which are important and cannot be ignored. The military medical community and the chaplain corps may need to provide counseling to the local population, NGOs, and military personnel responding to the disaster. Assessing the appropriate medical specialists to augment units will improve the efficiency of the operation.

### ***Public Affairs***

Public affairs is another critical element of HA/DR operations, both at home and abroad. There is always a requirement to explain to the affected populations what the military is doing, why it is doing it, and why it is important. How the United States' message is presented matters. The multinational coalition responding to the Asian Tsunami was initially called Joint Task Force (JTF) 536. It soon became clear, however, that "JTF" was not the right term for the organization. A JTF is a warfighting organization and typically includes only a single nation's military effort. The name was changed to Combined Support Force, CSF, in order to more accurately reflect the purpose of the operation. Similarly, the name Combined Coordination Center, CCC, was used rather than Civil Military Operations Center in order to reflect the multinational character of the operation and the emphasis on coordination rather than command. The diminution of the military role in HA/DR operations was described as a transition rather

than a disengagement to indicate that relief and assistance efforts would not end but that other organizations would assume more responsibility for them.

Participants argued that the basic elements of an effective public affairs message were missing during the early stages of the Katrina response. No physical Joint Information Center (JIC) was established, and an Incident JIC was established late. There was also no trusted or credible spokesperson to inform, guide, and assure the public nor any media guidance for the military forces participating in the effort. The commanding officer of the SPMAGTF thus had to sit down with his Public Affairs Officer (PAO) and identify the themes they wanted to emphasize and how they planned to get their message out. Participants recommended revising the NRP to address public affairs and communications strategies more fully. They also suggested creating deployable public affairs teams.

Participants involved in the Asian Tsunami agreed that a joint/combined public affairs augmentation team was one of the critical missing pieces of the relief effort. The existing public affairs organization for III MEF, which formed the core of the CSF public affairs organization, was not prepared for the intensity and level of media interest. The CSF also needed a joint/combined visitor's bureau to handle high level visitors.

In contrast, the Joint Public Affairs Support Element (JPASE) provided the commander of the relief effort for the Pakistani earthquake with an expeditionary public affairs capability that enabled him to develop a joint civil-military communications plan early in the process. The plan laid out the US Government's message, identified the key events to communicate the message, and explained how they supported the message. A liaison officer was placed in the US embassy to coordinate the message with the Department of State and other agencies. The communications plan helped shape the message in Pakistan, in the region more broadly, and at home and was critical to the overall success of the HA/DR effort.

### ***Leadership***

Finally several participants who had led HA/DR efforts contributed observations regarding leadership. HA/DR is a muddy boots business. It requires hands-on leadership, face to face

communication, and close coordination. The speed of response is important. Civilian decision-making at the local, state, national, and international levels may be slow, but it is critical to stay on the offensive by acting quickly and decisively, even if the initial action is not the most efficient one. For example, rapid action in response to the Asian Tsunami, particularly the provision of clean water, forestalled serious health problems. Utilizing pre-staged amphibious vehicles to rescue citizens while the force of the hurricane Katrina moved through Gulfport, Mississippi was an aggressive and effective response.

### Additional Key Take-Aways for HA/DR Operations

- C2 = "Coordinate and Communicate" for HA / DR operations.
- Early, frequent, and accurate assessments by trained personnel are essential to success.
- Distribution is the greatest logistics problem in HA/DR operations.
- An effective public affairs plan is critical to success.

## CONCLUSION

The responses to the Asian Tsunami and Hurricane Katrina, although conducted in very different environments, were both complex urban operations. They necessitated extensive interagency coordination and close interaction with local governments, whether domestic or international. The Tsunami relief effort highlighted issues relating to multinational operations while the response to Katrina addressed a myriad of complexities associated with domestic military operations. Support to civil authorities has been viewed as a very sensitive operational area for the military, but likely to recur more frequently. As future training efforts ensue and improved coordination of the U.S. government's interagency efforts continue, these operations should decrease in complexity and increase in effectiveness and efficiency.

## **FOLLOW-ON ACTIONS**

*EE 06-1* is one in a continuing series of programs of the Small Wars Center of Excellence and will inform the *Joint Urban Warrior 06 Homeland Security Homeland Defense Scenario-Driven Seminar*.

## **CONTACT INFORMATION**

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