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**NAVAL WAR COLLEGE  
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Defense Support to Civil Authorities: Critical Capability or Vulnerability?  
Optimizing DOD's Domestic Range Of Military Operations

By

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LCDR USN

A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Department of Joint Military Operations.

The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

10 May 2007

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## Abstract

Our vulnerability as a nation was exposed by the tragic events of September 11<sup>th</sup> 2001. The enduring and varied nature of this vulnerability was again highlighted in August 2005 by the failings of the Hurricane Katrina response, bringing the necessity of effective crisis response into the national spotlight. The lack of interagency coordination was subsequently identified as the overarching failure behind the Hurricane Katrina debacle. Sadly, while issues were being worked out at the operational level, the needs of the people on the ground were not met. The management of this phenomenon has thus emerged as the focal point for transforming this critical *vulnerability* into a critical *capability*. The bright spot, however, was the ability of the DOD, National Guard, and USCG to make a prompt impact on the recovery efforts - *once deployed*. This paper provides a brief synopsis of the Defense Support to Civil Authorities (DSCA) lessons from Hurricane Katrina, as well as a summary of the on-going changes to the National Response Plan (NRP). While these changes are a step in the right direction, they don't address the heart of past failings – poor interagency coordination. Using Joint Interagency Task Force South (JIATF-S) as a model, the formation of a standing JIATF for Crisis Response (JIATF-CR) is proposed as a possible remedy to the barriers of interagency coordination inherent in crisis response.

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*The objective of the United States Government is to ensure that all levels of government across the Nation have the capability to work efficiently and effectively together, using a national approach to domestic incident management.*

President George W. Bush, Feb. 2003, HSPD-5

### **Introduction**

From 9/11 to Hurricane Katrina, the country had four years to improve its capability to respond to such catastrophic incidents. During that time, sweeping changes occurred, such as the creation of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and U.S. Northern Command (NORTHCOM). Agencies were shuffled to match the new department's responsibilities and task forces were formed within NORTHCOM to accomplish its evolving mission. Yet, even with this regrouping and significant warning time, as Hurricane Katrina developed, we were ill prepared for the devastation that ensued. This certainly was not due to a lack of resources or commitment. Moreover, it was the unfortunate outcome of poor interagency coordination, resulting in an inability to expeditiously unify the effort and effectively employ the assets & resources available.

The Department of Defense (DOD) is indisputably the largest single source of organized and trained manpower and equipment in the U.S. Government's inventory; yet DOD remains an afterthought within the governing documents and systems guiding our response to a domestic crisis, (i.e. - the National Response Plan (NRP)). In essence, DOD is a back-up to the back-up in the overall response system. While this is mandated by law (Stafford Act) and to do otherwise would undermine the proven civil-military structure and state sovereignty concept upon which our country has thrived; we must not blindly allow the law to "tie our hands" while a crisis progresses, causing unnecessary death and destruction. In order to maximize our vital crisis response potential, DOD's capabilities must play a more significant and proactive role in the planning, training, exercising, evaluation, improvement and execution of the NRP and its associated systems.

So, should DOD simply take the lead? While DOD's capabilities have proven essential in a wide array of crisis response cases, this is not and should never be its primary mission. That being said, the answer to this complex question, among others, lies in effectively incorporating DOD's capabilities into *all phases* of domestic crisis response. Additionally, this will not only result in a more expeditious and appropriate utilization of DOD assets, but in the long run, will likely increase the capacity of other agencies to respond; ultimately, lessening the draw on DOD assets from their primary mission of national defense. Because of the existing laws and the nature in which the federal response evolves from the local level, any worthwhile and lasting solution must be an interagency endeavor. Short of changing these laws, the best possible forum for unifying the effort and effectively integrating DOD's capabilities is via a standing Joint Interagency Task Force for Crisis Response (JIATF-CR) under the direction of the DHS.

### **Analysis**

**Enduring Vulnerability** The events of September 11, 2001 clearly demonstrated that our adversaries have both the *will* and the *means* to strike our homeland and most experts agree that it is only a matter of time before we are struck again. Former Inspector General of the DHS and author of "Open Target," Clark Kent Irvin, believes that "although the number of future attacks will be few, they are likely to be giant in scale, and the likelihood that DHS will be able to stop them is small."<sup>1</sup> Thus, we must continue to heed President Bush's words from the 2002 National Strategy for Homeland Security:

We are a nation at risk to new and changing threats that take many forms, have many places to hide and are often invisible. Yet the need for Homeland Security is not tied solely to today's terrorist threat...it is tied to our enduring vulnerability.<sup>2</sup>

This bona fide and dynamic threat prompted the formation of the DHS and NORTHCOM. Subsequently, Homeland Security Presidential Directive Five (HSPD-5) directed the consolidation of several response plans and management tools into one all-discipline, all-

hazard plan for prevention, preparedness, response and recovery - the NRP and National Incident Management System (NRP-NIMS). HSPD-5 also tied federal assistance, (grants, contracts, etc.) for state and other local entities to their adoption of the NIMS.<sup>3</sup> In addition to the emerging reality of terrorism on U.S. soil is the ever-present threat of a natural disaster. Hurricane Katrina was the first significant “real-world” test of these changes. Following is an analysis of how the NRP-NIMS team scored.

**“Bayou One”<sup>4</sup> – Learning the Lessons of Katrina** Hurricane Katrina triggered previously unfathomable destruction and widespread national repercussions resulting in the unprecedented domestic deployment of 20,000 active duty and 50,000 National Guard (NG) troops. An estimated \$4.4 billion in federal aid was distributed to more than 1.4 million households.<sup>5</sup> The Federal Response to Hurricane Katrina: Lessons Learned cites 17 critical challenges with associated lessons learned, many of which had second and third order effects in other critical areas. To cover each of these lessons in depth is beyond the scope of this paper; therefore the focus (while not abandoning DOD’s linkage to other lessons) will be on critical challenge #2: Integrating Use of Military Capabilities.<sup>6</sup>

**Lesson One: Rapid integration of DOD capabilities.** The most obvious barrier to an expeditious implementation of DOD capabilities was the slow and bureaucratic request for assistance (RFA) process. From the time a request is initiated until the military capability is delivered to the scene requires a 21-step process and nearly as many signatures/approvals.<sup>7</sup> This process is often referred to as a “pull” vice “push” concept, meaning that DOD cannot act unless called upon (“pulled”) for support by overwhelmed state or local authorities and sometimes another federal agency. Once the requirements of the law were met, DOD, along with the National Guard (NG) and Coast Guard (USCG), demonstrated that it was one of the only federal departments with *real* operational capability to translate Presidential decisions into prompt, effective action on the ground. For this reason, DOD’s capabilities must be

rapidly integrated into the nation's response. Additionally, a system of identifying extraordinary circumstances necessitating DOD to be the Lead Federal Agency (LFA) must also be considered.<sup>8</sup>

**Lesson Two: Increasing DOD & NG interoperability.** Despite its overall effectiveness, once established, Joint Task Force Katrina (JTF-Katrina) was not without its own command and control (C2) difficulties. The ad-hoc and dynamic nature of JTF-Katrina as well as the multi-state environment resulted in confusion over roles and responsibilities between the NG and Federal forces. Even locating forces and defining tasks proved a formidable challenge.<sup>9</sup> As a result, there was significant overlap of mission assignments and even worse, no mission assignment to match true requirements while resources sat idle. To complicate issues further, although well known among military professionals, NG forces may operate under one of three capacities, each carrying a different law enforcement capability and command structure, often equating to significant ROE differences from active duty forces. This fact in itself was not a hindrance, but since the status of NG forces was not well known and prior coordination was non-existent, the proper employment and division of tasks was delayed. The NG Bureau (NGB) proved indispensable in resolving these issues, yet their role in homeland security is not clearly defined. Therefore, the transformation of the NG must focus on increasing integration with active duty forces for homeland security plans and activities.<sup>10</sup>

**Lesson Three: Interagency coordination – linking DOD capabilities to the national response.** The rest of the cited lessons do not specifically point to DOD as the central point for improvement. However, it is important to note DOD's obvious capacity to face these critical challenges, albeit in a training or resource support role in some cases. While linkages exist to nearly all of the other 16 challenges, the most apparent are in the areas of communications, logistics/evacuation, search and rescue (SAR) and most

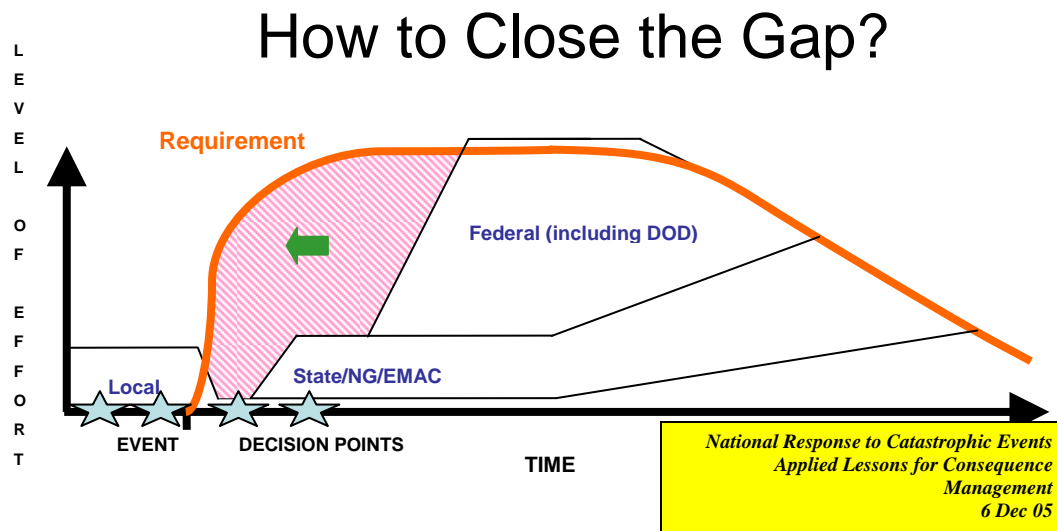


significantly training, exercise and evaluation. From the myriad of lessons flowed 125 recommendations,<sup>11</sup> nearly all of which will require a robust interagency foundation to expedite effectiveness and maintain longevity. Using the knowledge gained from the evolution of our national security system, the maturation of our five year old homeland security system could possibly be accelerated. The national security system took nearly 60 years to refine and its true effect was not fully realized until the passing of the Goldwater-Nichols Act of 1986 mandating cooperation, training and interoperability between the armed services.<sup>12</sup> The implementation of a Goldwater-Nichols type act for homeland security is just one example of the difficult questions that must be answered if we are to succeed in the next crisis. A core interagency entity under DHS would be ideal for addressing such difficulties, not least of which is the leveraging of DOD's domestic range of military operations (ROMO) across the spectrum of crisis response activities.

**Critical Capability or Vulnerability?** As mentioned above, the RFA process for a domestic incident is slow and filled with "red tape." This process is governed primarily by the Stafford Act along with several supporting acts, plans and directives outlining everything from the process itself to funding and integration of the NG. Prior to the submission of an RFA to DOD, several steps in the overall response must occur. Without going into depth, it will suffice to say that local efforts must be overwhelmed to request federal aid and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) must lack the requested capability amongst its various resources. At this stage in the process, there are two critical aspects of DOD's involvement that must be understood. First, local DOD installations are most likely involved in an Immediate Response Authority (IRA) capacity,<sup>13</sup> yet this is not captured anywhere in the NRP. Second, the only DOD personnel in the federal response command structure (NRP-NIMS) are the Defense Coordination Officer (DCO) and his/her five person element (DCE), whose primary task is to coordinate RFAs.<sup>14</sup>

Once an RFA is in DOD hands, the official approval process can begin. Again, without getting overly specific, an RFA goes through roughly seven command positions in various geographic locations before final approval by the Secretary of Defense (SECDEF).<sup>15</sup> Additionally, per DOD Directive 3025.15 (Military Assistance to Civil Authorities), all levels in this process must screen the request for legality, lethality, risk, cost, appropriateness and readiness.<sup>16</sup> Once the RFA is approved by SECDEF, the Joint Director of Military Support (JDOMS) issues an execution order (EXORD).<sup>17</sup> In the language of the NRP, the Mission Assignment (MA) is now assigned. Assuming a warning order (WARNORD) type of process was executed in parallel with the RFA, the specific command(s) can immediately deploy to the operating area fulfilling the requirement and finally removing the “red tape”... until another request arises.

What is most important to note is that while this process takes its course, resource allocation remains relatively stagnant and the needs of the afflicted increase. This phenomenon has been dubbed “the requirements gap,” (see Figure 1) and thus surfaces as a *critical vulnerability*, the management of which is naturally a *critical capability*.



**Figure 1.** How to Close the Gap? (Adapted from Reininger, Robert. “Are We Better Prepared to Respond to a Catastrophic Incident.” Powerpoint. 23 March 2007).

**Closing the Requirements Gap** Unfortunately, the requirements gap, like risk itself, can never be completely eliminated, only managed. So how does one manage requirements that do not yet exist? The answer must contain a balance between pre-emptive action based on previous crises and fiscal responsibility. Using Hurricane Katrina as a springboard, various government agencies, including DOD, have taken steps to improve their part in the national response equation.

DOD's first initiative, in an attempt to build local relationships and regional expertise, is the full time employment of a DCO/DCE co-located at each of the ten FEMA Regions throughout the United States. Second, NORTHCOM now maintains a Standing DSCA EXORD giving the combatant commander authority to pre-position or place certain units on a "prepare to deploy" (PTDO) status in anticipation of an RFA. Third, DOD has created a catastrophic Request for Forces (RFF), which is a pre-notification from NORTHCOM to the Joint Staff outlining force requirements to support a DOD response for specified incidents. Fourth, the NG and DOD have made significant attempts to improve unity of effort through exercises and conferences. Fifth, DOD has also detached dedicated representatives to DHS/FEMA to assist with planning efforts, participate in exercises and a logistics Rehearsal of Concept (ROC).<sup>18</sup>

Finally, the most significant improvement is the creation of Pre-Scripted Mission Assignments (PSMA). PSMA's are exactly what their name implies – a specific MA that has already been through the screening/approval process for legality, lethality, readiness, etc., but has not been "bottom-lined." This "staffing done up-front" concept significantly reduces approval time. Additionally, the PSMA's have created a common language, enhancing the working relationship between the DCO and Federal Coordination Officer (FCO) while reducing their overall workload. There are currently 25 approved PSMA's including the

deployment of the DCO/DCE, transportation, communications packages, medical evacuation and airborne command and control to name a few.<sup>19</sup>

The DHS has also taken substantial action to close the requirements gap. A Catastrophic Incident Supplement (NRP-CIS) has been established, which most significantly creates provision for “pushing” assistance vice waiting to be “pulled” by overwhelmed state and local entities. The creation of an Incident Management Planning Team (IMPT), which has a dedicated DOD representative, has developed 15 national planning scenarios for exercise and analysis. DHS has also pre-designated a Principal Federal Official (PFO) and regional FCOs.<sup>20</sup> While this paper is being written, the NRP-NIMS Interagency Task Force under DHS is coordinating the review/re-write of the NRP-NIMS.<sup>21</sup> However, the revised edition, originally scheduled for publication in June 2007, was recently delayed indefinitely.<sup>22</sup>

Within FEMA a Current Operations Planning Unit (COPU) was established which engages with DOD and seeks the expertise of former DOD planners. They have also begun a FEMA/NORTHCOM duty officer exchange program. The Gulf Coast Recovery Office has exercised evacuations of New Orleans and created a template for other large city evacuations. Additionally, FEMA continues to place sizeable emphasis on the creation of PSMAAs.<sup>23</sup>

The amount of effort and creativity in improving the nation’s ability to respond to a crisis is truly impressive, although disjointed. Despite all of the ingenuity, these initiatives alone and in their isolated state, will not sufficiently close the requirements gap. For example, the catastrophic RFFs mentioned above have not been coordinated with the federal agencies.<sup>24</sup> Additionally, the 15 emergency support function (ESF) concept derived from the old Federal Response Plan (FRP) has not been adequately merged with the NIMS Incident Command System’s (NIMS-ICS) five functional areas of operations, planning, logistics, command and finance/administration.<sup>25</sup> This fragmentation of well intentioned effort appears

to be a perpetuation of what plagued the efforts during Hurricane Katrina. Unfortunately, several challenges still lie ahead, many of which may not be realized until we are faced with the next catastrophic incident.

**Unity of Effort and The Preservation of Factor Time** A significant step forward in the struggle for unity of effort is currently underway in the form of Ardent Sentry/Northern Edge 07, (AS-NE 07). This large scale multi-faceted preparedness exercise, scheduled for May 2007, is designed to test the full spectrum of a national response, including multi-level (local, state, federal), multi-jurisdictional, multi-agency and even multi-national (Canada) coordination.<sup>26</sup> While this exercise is a demonstration of the national commitment to improve our response capability and involves extensive coordination at the tactical level, it still does not establish a means to preserve these efforts by continuously exercising the most critical operational relationships.

One of the most significant differences between any exercise and a “real-world” incident is the degree of involvement of the higher echelons of leadership. Because, in most cases, day-to-day operations must continue simultaneously during the conduct of an exercise, there will always be a certain amount of artificiality, especially at the highest levels. According to Bob Reininger, Deputy Chief, Interagency Coordination Operations at NORTHCOM, “The majority of the exercises have been table top discussions and the decision makers have simply been too busy to participate. Funding is also an issue and many of the essential agencies are not funded to support all of the exercises.”<sup>27</sup>

Those who have participated in the creation of any type of organization would agree that there is a certain amount of “ramp-up” time required before the unit is effective. During this time, several developments are taking place; but the principal development which universally impacts all others and directly affects unity of effort is that of the working relationships. Relationships take time and the impromptu assembly of a task force impedes

the development of the most critical operational ones because they must be formed simultaneously while meeting the needs of “real-world” requirements. Time is always an elusive factor in any operation; however, even the definition of the word *crisis* itself implies that one is at a loss for time at the inception of the situation.

*Crisis* – a situation or period in which things are very uncertain or difficult, especially a time when action must be taken to avoid complete disaster<sup>28</sup>

As Col. Babette Lenfant, director of communications systems for the NORTHCOM’s JTF-Civil Support says, “The time of an incident is not the time to exchange business cards... It’s important to work through challenges without the pressure of a real-world incident, where people are hurt and need assistance.”<sup>29</sup>

Maintaining this intentional ad-hoc construct may provide some flexibility by allowing the final framework to be tailored to the actual situation, but only at the expense of time...time that holds precious life saving power in the infancy of a crisis. The current “pick-up” game approach, unnecessarily robs the *factor of time* from the tactical level by preventable delays at the operational level. The well established working relationships that a pre-formed task force would enable are a significant force multiplier in themselves, contributing substantially toward the ultimate goal - *unity of effort*.

### **Conclusions: You Play The Way You Practice**

The above analysis yields several telling factors that should be incorporated in the development, maintenance and execution of the NRP and its associated systems, including the leadership that oversees them. First, the system must support a rapid integration of DOD’s capabilities. Second, to prevent redundancies and omissions, the NGB must be incorporated at the operational-strategic level. Third, in order to enduringly leverage DOD’s domestic ROMO across the spectrum of crisis response activities, a standing interagency organization must be established. Fourth, the power of the recent improvement initiatives,

although well-intentioned and moderately effective, could be significantly multiplied if coupled with one another. Fifth, to adequately sustain the operational level working relationships so essential to cohesion in a crisis response, the exercises must be supported across the government agencies involved both financially and with participation of key decision-makers. Sixth, the current concept of hastily assembling a task force in the middle of a crisis is simply poor time management. It essentially binds willing and able tactical assets by forcing them to wait while operational processes mature to functionality; meanwhile, the loss of life and property is perpetuated.

With the above factors in mind, following is a look at two existing DOD organizations within NORTHCOM, the Joint Interagency Coordination Group (JIACG) and the Standing Joint Force Head Quarters (SJFHQ) and their ability to manage these factors. Additionally, the idea of creating a Standing Joint Interagency Task Force - Crisis Response (JIATF-CR) is explored as a possible solution.

**The JIACG** The Joint Interagency Coordination Group (JIACG) is indeed well equipped to address the challenges that lie ahead. It is designed specifically to bridge the gap between civilian and military campaign planning efforts for potential crises.<sup>30</sup> The JIACG is not just a group of liaison officers, it is a full-time, multi-functional advisory element that is fully integrated within the combatant commander's staff and is directly involved in planning and operations. For this reason, it possesses a broad spectrum of civil-military experience including planning, exercising and development;<sup>31</sup> unfortunately, the JIACG lacks two key design elements. First, since the issue at hand is crisis response to a domestic incident, it falls under the wrong department. Per HSPD-5 the Secretary of Homeland Security is the principal Federal official for domestic incident management.<sup>32</sup> The JIACG is manned with the appropriate knowledge and expertise; however it regrettably reports to the incorrect Secretary. Secondly, it is not task organized to handle a large scale crisis response. Although

it coordinates and trains with potential crisis response organizations during peacetime, reducing the time needed to bring a response to full operational capability;<sup>33</sup> the JIACG itself is not organized or staffed appropriately to unify and direct the response efforts. Per the Commander's Handbook for the JIACG, it "does not make policy, task, or replace existing lines of authority or reporting."<sup>34</sup>

**The SJFHQ** The Standing Joint Force Headquarters (SJFHQ) on the other hand is well staffed with 58 operational planners, command and control specialists and systems analysts to serve as the backbone of a joint task force structure.<sup>35</sup> While the SJFHQ meets the staffing requirements to conduct a unified DOD response, it also is missing two core building blocks. First, similar to the JIACG, it is not under the correct department. Second, despite its robust manning and command and control expertise, it lacks the critical interagency piece so essential for unifying effort. For example, one of the main reasons the expertise of SJFHQ-North was not fully realized during Hurricane Katrina was due to an interagency "language" barrier. The SJFHQ-N personnel were well versed in "effects based" operations which was foreign to many of the other agencies.<sup>36</sup> Again, the factor of time would not allow "on the job training" without sacrifice of efficiency.

**Creating a JIATF-Crisis Response** So, the solution to achieving unity of effort and closing the requirements gap is simple: Create a Standing Joint Interagency Task Force – Crisis Response (JIATF-CR) by combining the appropriate elements of both the JIACG and the SJFHQ under the DHS. Unfortunately, the remedy to achieving unity of effort in the interagency environment is much more complex. First, in the interagency realm, unlike a strictly military task force, unity of command leading to unity of effort is simply not possible, nor legal. For example, (among other similar laws) Section 304 of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 states:



Except as specifically provided in this Act, nothing in this Act shall confer upon the Secretary of Homeland Security any authority to engage in warfighting, the military defense of the U. S., or other military activities.<sup>37</sup>

Second, NIMS Incident Command System (NIMS-ICS), which is basically civilian agency doctrine for creating C2 structure, often assigns shared responsibility for decision-making among agencies with different legal, geographic, and functional authorities.<sup>38</sup> In this construct, coordination and cooperation essentially replaces command and control as the true basis for achieving unity of effort.

Consequently, the resulting framework must foster cooperation and coordination between agencies while incorporating linkage to a military unified command structure; it must establish and nurture key working relationships that will likely execute the NRP and it must be flexible enough to adjust to the demands of a wide array of circumstances. So, where does the process begin? Should we simply build off of JTF-Katrina? Does this incorporate the necessary elements for effective planning, evaluation, improvement and execution? Regrettably, JTF-Katrina was just that...a JTF not JIATF, which may explain some of its identified shortcomings. Fortunately, an effective interagency model for the proposed JIATF-CR already exists in the form of JIATF-South.

**The Model: JIATF-South** JIATF-S, headquartered in Key West, FL, is under the operational control of U.S. Southern Command (SOUTHCOM) and its primary mission is to stem the flow of drugs and other contraband in the U. S. from Latin America. This task force has realized tremendous success (220 & 252 tons of cocaine seized in 2004 & 2005, respectively).<sup>39</sup> “It is a model of interagency cooperation,”<sup>40</sup> says former SOUTHCOM Commander General Bantz J. Craddock. On a daily basis, successful coordination is occurring between the departments of Homeland Security, Defense, State and Justice.

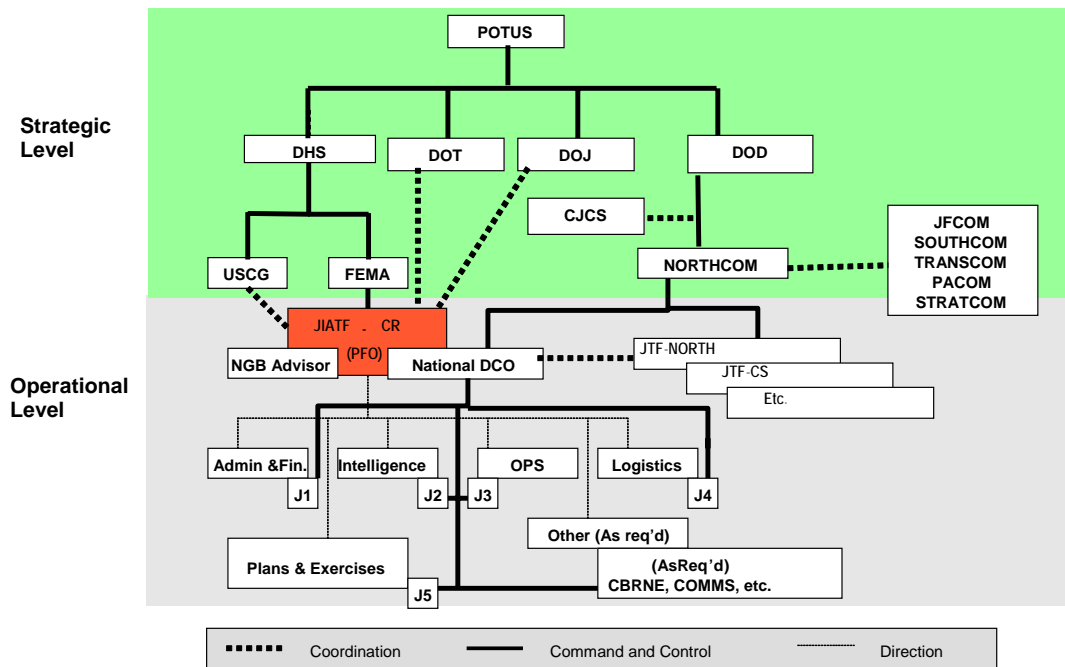
While this exact C2 structure is not a perfect fit into the Homeland Security challenge, the basic framework can still be used and modified appropriately, as well as the

principles used to mesh command and control with coordination and cooperation. Moreover, what is most important is the *concept* of the standing JIATF and the success that it is capable of generating. One could argue that counter-drug trafficking is a 24/7 operation, which is a stark contrast to the occasional crisis response; however, the consequences of crisis response failure are much more grave. The final C2 structure that evolves from the NIMS-ICS will indeed be heavily dependant on the particulars of the incident. However, the C2 framework of task forces throughout history, have and will inevitably change along with the needs of the situation. Therefore, to form a perfectly designed task force to meet the specific needs of all possible incidents is essentially a futile endeavor. Nevertheless, the physical nature of the resulting JIATF-CR should not be the focus, but rather a byproduct of the overall concept, which is to establish an interagency nucleus for all phases of crisis response.

With this in mind, as well as the C2 restraints previously identified, there are three vital elements that must be incorporated into its permanent yet malleable foundation. First, to ensure DOD's capabilities are properly employed (or withheld as necessary to maintain the means to conduct its primary mission) a flag level officer must be assigned to the JIATF. This officer should be considered as the "National" DCO and, due to his/her previously developed interagency relationships he/she should be the primary consideration as the JTF commander of operational military forces as they are assigned at the start of a crisis. Also, this flag officer should be able to provide timely reach-back capability in assigning an established "task specific" JTF when appropriate, (i.e. - JTF - Civil Support if the incident involves chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, or high-yield explosives (CBRNE)). Second, in order to build trust in these crucial operational level relationships, the guiding principles within its formation must foster active participation of applicable agencies in an integrated, functionally staffed format, not simply liaison roles. Third, due to the

complexities of employing the NG and its varied array of capabilities, the NGB must be represented within appropriate staff elements.

## *Sample JIATF-CR Command & Control Structure*



**Figure 2.** Sample JIATF-CR Command and Control Structure (Adapted from Rosario, Francisco. JIATF-South, J5 Joint Planning Group. E-mail message to author, 21 March 2007).

An illustration of this concept is provided in Figure 2, which is loosely framed from the JIATF-S construct and incorporates the five major functional areas identified in NIMS-ICS with provision for more. What are not represented, to maintain clarity and simplicity are the integrated staff elements of the multiple agencies, including the NG; as well as the meshing of the ESFs within appropriate major functional areas. Additionally, the NGB advisor and the National DCO should be the principle advisors to the PFO on matters of military capabilities and interoperability and should interact on a daily basis. Regardless of the final configuration that emerges, to ensure proper analysis and implementation, the JIATF-CR must be the clearing house for all ideas and interagency coordination relating to

crisis response. By establishing this as a *standing* entity, especially the integrated staff aspect, it overcomes the initial “start-up” obstacles inherent to the birth of any organization, smoothing the path toward unity of effort.

To use an international analogy, a standing JIATF could be likened to an *alliance*, while the current system produces more of a *coalition*.

Alliances provide a forum to work towards standardization of national equipment, doctrine and tactics, techniques & procedures (TTP). Coalitions, however...are ad hoc arrangements. They may not provide commanders with the same commonality of aim or degree of organizational maturity as alliances.<sup>41</sup>

Internalization of this concept fortifies the undeniable need for a *standing* interagency unit to surmount the barriers that have plagued our past. Athletic coaches around the world are constantly trying to instill the principle of cause-effect in their athletes by touting the oft repeated phrase: “You play like you practice.” And in the eyes of both Bob Reininger of NORTHCOM and LCOL Michael Rowells, Deputy DCO of FEMA Region I, this principle has yet to be followed.<sup>42</sup> If we don’t start to practice the way we intend to play, then we will not be ready when game day arrives.

### **Final Remarks**

The recent postponement of the NRP-NIMS revision due to “unexpected issues,” which are inherent in the nature of crisis response, is yet another example of the need for better interagency coordination. Representative Bennie Thompson, D-MS, Chairman of the House Homeland Security Committee, stated “Here we are six weeks until hurricane season...failing to have a revised plan in place and relying solely on the previously failed one is irresponsible and unacceptable.”<sup>43</sup> In addition to these unexpected issues there is a perpetual list of unanswered difficult questions that will require interagency operational-strategic level expertise to resolve. Some examples are: Should a Goldwater-Nichols type of act be initiated to mandate interagency coordination?<sup>44</sup> Or could a system similar to the

Maritime Operational Threat Response (MOTR) “trigger” process be established to allow identification & transition of the lead agency as appropriate? Also, the various initiatives and programs developed, while encouraging, still lack a central coordinating unit to ensure appropriate implementation into the overall response. Nonetheless, a standing interagency forum must be created to derive and consolidate answers to these outstanding concerns. A JIATF-CR would provide exactly that. It would maintain a flexible framework while providing necessary core elements for meshing new and old ideas and vetting resulting processes. More importantly, the relationships fostered in this setting will be the same ones required to unify the effort in the event of an actual crisis; thus, essentially taking pre-emptive action toward managing the evolving requirements gap. In essence, a standing JIATF-CR would lay the foundation to “play the way we practice.”

The creation of a JIATF-CR will undoubtedly require widespread buy-in across the agencies involved and will most likely incur significant start up costs. However, just as risk mitigation costs must be balanced with the impact of a mishap, so must this paradigm shift and financial burden be weighed against the much greater price of failure that would once again be paid not only in dollars, but also in public opinion and *blood*. Ignoring this concept would be a disservice to the taxpaying American people and a shirking of our responsibility.

## NOTES

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<sup>1</sup> *New York Times*, “10 Ways to Avoid the Next 9/11,” 10 September 2006, late Edition.

<sup>2</sup> U.S. President, *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, (Washington, DC: White House, 2006).

<sup>3</sup> *Management of Domestic Incidents, Homeland Security Presidential Directive/HSPD-5*, 2-5.

<sup>4</sup> Kosich, Frank. “FEMA – Military partnership strengthened by Defense Coordination Team,” *The Bridge, Federal Emergency Management Agency Region I Newsletter*, no. 1 (November 2006): 2. Note: “Bayou One” was used by ADM Allen, USCG as an analogy to “Desert One” which was the failed attempt to rescue hostages from Iranian extremists and

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widely attributed to a failure of joint coordination eventually resulting in the Goldwater-Nichols Act mandating joint training and interoperability among the armed services.

<sup>5</sup> David M. Walker, *Statement by Comptroller General David M. Walker on GAO's Preliminary Observations Regarding Preparedness and Response to Hurricanes Katrina and Rita* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Accountability Office, 1 February 2006) 2-5. GAO 06-365R, Feb. 2006.

<sup>6</sup> Office of the Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism, *The Federal Response to Hurricane Katrina: Lessons Learned* (Washington, DC: White House, 23 February 2006), 51.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 54.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 54-55.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 55.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 83.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 67.

<sup>13</sup> Department of Defense, Military Assistance to Civil Authorities, Department of Defense Directive (DODD) 3025.12 (Washington, DC: DoD, 18 February 1997), 4.

<sup>14</sup> Department of Homeland Security, National Response Plan, (Washington, DC: December 2004), 41-42.

<sup>15</sup> U. S. Northern Command, Defense Support of Civil Authorities, USNORTHCOM CONPLAN 2501-05 (Peterson AFB, CO: USNORTHCOM, 11 April 2006), C1-C6.

<sup>16</sup> Department of Defense, Military Assistance to Civil Authorities, Department of Defense Directive (DODD) 3025.12, 3.

<sup>17</sup> U. S. Northern Command, Defense Support of Civil Authorities, USNORTHCOM CONPLAN 2501-05, C5.

<sup>18</sup> Robert Reininger, "Are We Better Prepared to Respond to a Catastrophic Incident?" Powerpoint, 23 March 2007, Peterson AFB, CO: NORTHCOM, Interagency Coordination Directorate, 2.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>21</sup> U. S. Department of Homeland Security, "National Response and National Incident Management System Review and Revision Process," Powerpoint, 6 November 2006, Washington, DC: Department of Homeland Security, 10.

<sup>22</sup> "Update of FEMA emergency plan delayed by unforeseen issues," *The Newport Daily News*, 17 April 2007, sec. 1.

<sup>23</sup> Reininger, "Are We Better Prepared to Respond to a Catastrophic Incident?" 4.

<sup>24</sup> Robert Reininger (Deputy Chief, Interagency Coordination Directorate at NORTHCOM), interview by author, 27 March 2007.

<sup>25</sup> U. S. Department of Homeland Security, "National Response and National Incident Management System Review and Revision Process," 14.

<sup>26</sup> U. S. Northern Command, "Major Preparedness Exercise Slated for May," <http://www.northcom.mil/News/2007/041107.html> (accessed 12 April 2007).

<sup>27</sup> Robert Reininger (Deputy Chief, Interagency Coordination Directorate at NORTHCOM), interview by author, 27 March 2007.

<sup>28</sup> *Encarta Dictionary*, Microsoft Word 2003 ed., s.v. "crisis."

<sup>29</sup> Harold Kennedy, "After Several Recent National Disasters, Gaps in Emergency Communications Still Not Fixed," *National Defense*, July 2006.

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<http://www.nationaldefensemagazine.org/issues/2006/july/AfterSeveralRecent.htm> (accessed 6 May 2006).

<sup>30</sup> U. S. Joint Forces Command, "Joint Interagency Coordination Group (JIACG)," [http://www.jfcom.mil/about/fact\\_jiacg.htm](http://www.jfcom.mil/about/fact_jiacg.htm) (accessed 4 May 2007), 1.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 2.

<sup>32</sup> *Management of Domestic Incidents, Homeland Security Presidential Directive/HSPD-5*, 1.

<sup>33</sup> U. S. Joint Forces Command, "Joint Interagency Coordination Group (JIACG)," [http://www.jfcom.mil/about/fact\\_jiacg.htm](http://www.jfcom.mil/about/fact_jiacg.htm) (accessed 4 May 2007), 2.

<sup>34</sup> U. S. Joint Forces Command, *Commander's Handbook for the Joint Interagency Coordination Group*, (Suffolk, VA: 1 March 2007), vi.

<sup>35</sup> John T. Bennett, "DOD Puts JFCOM Standing Joint Force Headquarters on Fast Track," *Inside The Pentagon*, (10 June 2004), 1.

<sup>36</sup> Robert Reininger (Deputy Chief, Interagency Coordination Directorate at NORTHCOM), interview by author, 27 March 2007.

<sup>37</sup> *Homeland Security Act of 2002*, sec. 304,

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/deptofhomeland/bill/title3.html#304> (accessed 4 May 2007).

<sup>38</sup> Ivan T. Luke, *Homeland Security – Civil Support: How DOD Plugs into the Interagency C2 Structure*. (Newport, RI: Naval War College Press, October 2005), 5-8.

<sup>39</sup> Kathleen T. Rhem, "Joint Interagency Group Working to Stop Flow of Drugs Into U.S.," *American Forces Press Services*, 22 September 2006.

<http://www.southcom.mil/AppsSC/news.php?storyId=48> (accessed 12 March 2007)

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> U. S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Joint Publication 3-16: Multinational Operations*, (Washington, DC: 7 March 2007), I6.

<sup>42</sup> Michael Rowells (Federal Emergency Management Agency Region I, Deputy Defense Coordinating Officer), interview by the author, 23 March 2007.

<sup>43</sup> *Newport Daily News*, "Update of FEMA emergency plan delayed by unforeseen issues," 17 April 2007, sec. 1.

<sup>44</sup> Office of the Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism, *The Federal Response to Hurricane Katrina: Lessons Learned* (Washington, DC: White House, 23 February 2006), 51.

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