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**TITLE: ESTABLISHING A U.S. UNITY OF EFFORT IN HUMANITARIAN
ASSISTANCE OPERATIONS**

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AUTHOR: Lieutenant Jeremy R. Rich, USN

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Mentor and Oral Defense Committee Member: Adam C. Cobb, Ph.D.

Approved: _____

Date: _____

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Oral Defense Committee Member: Pauletta J. Otis, Ph.D.

Approved: _____

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Executive Summary

Title: Establishing A U.S. Unity of Effort in Humanitarian Assistance Operations

Author: Lieutenant Jeremy R. Rich, U.S. Navy

Thesis: A U.S. unity of effort during the Southeast Asian *tsunami* relief effort could have been achieved through increased communication, standardization of operations, combined training among the agencies involved, and empowerment of United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

Discussion: U.S. efforts in response to the Southeast Asian *tsunami* of December 2004 included USAID, military and non-governmental organizations (NGO) assets. Through a case study of the events of the relief effort, several problems became apparent with civil-military humanitarian assistance, and disaster relief operations including: duplicative assessment efforts, information sharing among different agencies, and communication between agencies. With USAID as the designated lead U.S. agency for humanitarian assistance and disaster relief efforts, several improvements to disaster response can be made through open source internet sharing, incentives for NGO standardization, U.S. agency exchange tours, and increased interagency training exercises.

Conclusion: In order to improve U.S. relief efforts to complex humanitarian emergencies, USAID must be empowered to affect standardization of NGO operations; increase interagency information sharing; and conduct combined interagency training and evaluation exercises.

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INTRODUCTION

Today's military is faced with increasingly complex challenges, including response to low- and medium-intensity conflicts, military operations other than war (MOOTW), and complex humanitarian emergencies (CHEs). As methods of warfare shift from large groups of combatants to small groups waging unconventional warfare, the ever-changing boundaries of combat expose more civilians to military personnel as well as the circumstances of war and conflict. Although the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) is not primarily responsible for humanitarian assistance, the military can contribute resources, capabilities, and knowledge in support of a U.S. effort to assist in both host nation and international relief efforts.

Providing assistance during humanitarian emergencies requires careful consideration of the political, military, cultural, and social implications of military involvement, all under great scrutiny from the international mass media. As the military undertakes more missions related to humanitarian aid and disaster relief, better tools should be developed to streamline the interaction and decrease parallel efforts of the military, other governmental agencies (OGAs), and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

Effective dialogue and communication strategies are needed for the military to substantively interact with a variety of stakeholders who are systematically present during humanitarian disasters, including the United Nations (UN), multinational forces, OGAs, and NGOs, as well as the local government and members of the affected populace. Additionally, the substantial amount of time required for planning and coordinating in this context must be reconciled with the unforgiving demand for a rapid response to suffering and the restoration of order to an affected region. Failure to act quickly may ultimately lead to deterioration of the security environment, with potential to decline into conflict. The development of black markets,

financial disruption and economic strain, deterioration or absence of local law enforcement entities, stressful physical circumstances, higher rates of morbidity and mortality, and increased rates of mental illnesses and psychosocial difficulties have been documented in humanitarian crises.¹ These circumstances can result in volatile social conditions with inaccessible mechanisms to restore social order. Additionally, in order to prevent duplicative activities, which are wasteful and manpower-intensive, a mechanism to coordinate relief efforts in the management of complex humanitarian emergencies (CHE) needs to be created. It is imperative that a unity of effort be established in order that work to restore services to the affected people begin as quickly as possible. That unity of effort will require improvements in information sharing, communication, and training.

Disaster relief and humanitarian aid operations are triggered by both natural and manmade disasters. Natural disasters include floods, famine, drought, typhoons, earthquakes, and hurricanes and can damage infrastructure, interrupt economies, contaminate water supplies, destroy crops, and overload damaged health systems. Manmade disasters are often described as CHEs. The Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) defines a "complex" emergency as: "a humanitarian crisis in a country, region, or society where there is a total or considerable breakdown of authority resulting from internal or external conflict and which requires an international response that goes beyond the mandate or capacity of any single agency and/or the ongoing [United Nations (UN)] country programme."² The defining characteristic of a CHE is that the government either no longer has the capacity to provide for the basic necessities of the people or politically it refuses to do so.

The Southeast Asian *tsunami* presents a case in which the U.S. provided aid to Indonesia, whose affected region, Aceh, was classified as a CHE. The U.S. aid effort incorporated civilian

government, military and NGO operations to provide relief to the people of Aceh in northern Sumatra. The response to the *tsunami* was not only beneficial to the people of Aceh, but also to the interests of the United States. In addition to providing aid to the affected population, the results of the relief effort include, better U.S.-Indonesia relations, reconciliation between the insurgent movement and the government of Indonesia, and increased positive opinion of the United States among the Indonesian people. While the relief effort was successful in a variety of aspects, it also highlighted the lack of a unity of effort among the U.S. organizations involved and weakness in the coordination necessary to provide timely and efficient relief.

HISTORICAL ANALYSIS: THE SOUTHEAST ASIAN TSUNAMI AND BASELINE ENVIRONMENTAL CHARACTERISTICS

Context

On 26 December 2004, an earthquake registering 9.1 on the Richter scale shook the floor of the Indian Ocean, sending enormous waves racing outwards toward the Indian ocean rim from India, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, and Thailand-- to even as far as Somalia. The resulting disasters left 295,000 people dead, infrastructure destroyed, buildings flattened, and 5 million people homeless.³ It so happened that U.S. Pacific Command (PACOM) was conducting an exercise in Thailand, allowing it to quickly respond to the disaster by initiating Operation Unified Assistance. Other countries, including Australia, Singapore, Russia, France, and Malaysia, joined the effort along with more than 90 NGOs to form Combined Support Force 536 (CSF-536).⁴ The Commanding General, established three separate Combined Support Groups (CSGs) responsible for Thailand (CSG-T), Sri Lanka (CSG-SL), and Indonesia (CSG-I). These CSGs worked

independent of each other but with the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance (UNOCHA), USAID, and NGO operations within their assigned areas to provide the necessary relief to the areas affected by the *tsunami*.

This disaster struck Aceh, Indonesia, which had already been classified as a CHE by the UN because of a 30-year insurgency that had resulted in 16,000 deaths⁵ and suspected human rights violations by segments of the Indonesian military (TNI)⁶. The *tsunami* of 26 December 2004 brought Aceh to the attention of the world and forced relief efforts to carefully navigate the political complexities of the counterinsurgency effort in the insurgent-run territory of Aceh.

Social, economic, and political conditions in Indonesia

During the mid-20th century, the U.S. government pressed the Netherlands to grant independence to the Dutch East Indies, now Indonesia. Concerned about growing Communist influence in the region during the 1950s and 1960s, the United States supported several rebellions against president Sukarno, supplied aircraft, and conducted covert bombings. Suspicion surrounding the U.S. involvement in the rebellions and a coup attempt in 1965 left the Indonesian people wary of U.S. intentions.⁷ When Suharto took control in 1967, U.S. and Indonesian official relations grew, with the United States providing economic and military assistance until the 1990s. Additionally, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) provided Suharto's military with a list of 5,000 members of the Indonesian Communist Group (Partai Komunis Indonesia—PKI), contributing to the massacre of an estimated 250,000 people and further provoking distrust of the United States among the Indonesian people.⁸

With the discovery of natural gas in the Aceh province in the 1970s outsiders came who had the technical skills to operate the gas mining equipment that the Acehnese lacked. The

majority of profits from the Aceh natural gas went to the Indonesian government, which returned only 5% to the people.⁹ The combination of outsiders entering and staying in Aceh Province and the indifference of the Indonesian government ignited the Gerakan Aceh Merdeka (GAM, the Free Aceh Movement) movement. The resultant insurgency, which sought to establish an independent Islamic state, grew in size and force. GAM members specifically targeted government security forces during the insurgency tactics in order to elicit a violent response against civilians, serving to increase the public support of the GAM movement among the population of Aceh.¹⁰

During the 1990s, U.S. relations with Indonesia began to sour in response to Indonesian actions surrounding the independence of East Timor and U.S. actions during the Asian Financial Crisis, ultimately leading to a discontinuation of U.S. military aid.¹¹ However, the new millennium ushered in significant change in Indonesia both internally and externally. In 2000, the government began peace talks with GAM and an inconsistent peace began between the two factions. In 2001, the newly elected President Megawati passed a law granting more autonomy to the Aceh province.¹² The law increased Aceh's receipt of gas revenues from five percent to 70 percent.¹³ However, tension in the region intensified, and Megawati issued an ultimatum for GAM to denounce its political objective of an independent state. In late 2001, Megawati became the first leader of a major Muslim country to visit the United States after September 11th, reflecting U.S. intention to support the new Indonesian government.¹⁴ After the Bali bombings of 12 October 2002, President Megawati cooperated with Australian, British, and U.S. intelligence investigation requests, thereby strengthening ties with the United States.¹⁵

On 20 September 2004, Indonesia elected President S.B. Yudhoyono (SBY) with 60.6 percent of the popular vote.¹⁶ A former general trained in the U.S., SBY has made significant

strides with respect to the military, including placing reformists at the head of the Ministry of Defense, Army, and Navy. Additionally, he has placed the military judicial system under the civilian overview of the Supreme Court.¹⁷

Prior to the *tsunami*, decision-making authority in Aceh province lay with the civilian governor and police, but no decisions were made without military authorization. Additionally, the only aid organizations authorized to operate in Aceh, since it was still under the martial law instituted by former President Megawati, were the World Health Organization (WHO), the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).¹⁸ Immediately after the *tsunami*, it became apparent that the Indonesian government would not be able to provide adequate disaster relief, nor were the organizations already in place sufficient to provide the needed aid. It was not until 28 December 2004 that the Indonesian government asked for international assistance, with the caveat that foreigners providing aid would not be allowed to leave Aceh province without the permission of the Indonesian military, citing security of the workers and protection of the aid from theft as the reasons for this stipulation.¹⁹ The leaders also set deadlines for withdrawal of U.S. forces, for fear that their presence for too long a period might provoke an outcry in the rest of the country.

RESPONSE TO THE CRISIS

Several problems arose in the response to the Southeast Asian *tsunami*, including incomplete and duplicative disaster assessments; inappropriate aid delivered to the affected areas by NGOs as well as governmental organizations; and cultural misunderstandings between the NGOs and military. These problems led to delays and inefficiencies in distribution of aid. Rapid response is essential in Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) operations;

therefore, responsibility for and standardization of assessments, information sharing between organizations, and plans for execution must be pre-coordinated among the agencies that might participate. Establishment of a unity of effort in disaster relief requires more than the norm of ad hoc coordination; it requires established and practiced avenues for communication and collaboration, which are planned and understood by all parties involved in the operation.

Assessments

Once a disaster occurs, the various organizations planning on providing relief assess the needs of the people, requirements for aid, avenues for delivery of aid, and the overall situation in order to plan the needed responses. Oftentimes, rigorous assessments are limited by sparse resources and urgent timelines. The Southeast Asian *tsunami* response suffered from several problems related to the implementation of adequate assessments.

First, there was an initial lack of cultural, human terrain, and situational information regarding the people of Aceh, the GAM insurgency, TNI military activities, and security requirements. As a result, there were few NGOs established and operating in the area prior to the *tsunami* due to the imposition of martial law. Typically, various NGOs are present before, during, and after disasters, especially in areas affected by CHEs. The lack of a robust pre-disaster NGO presence caused an initial lack of readily available assessment information. Further, the lack of an NGO presence presented DoD officials with a paucity of mechanisms it could use to access local culture, gain the trust of the people, and break down barriers with an exogenous and perceivably threatening entity.

Second, the cycle of NGO operations prevents rapid funding of relief assessments and operations. Although they are well versed in the local culture and traditions, most NGOs require

funding from public and private organizations in order to respond to disasters. Compounding the problem is that most NGOs do not maintain large emergency relief fund accounts and therefore must get financial support from donors to begin to determine funding requirements for the emergency at hand.²⁰ This loop of funding requirements slows rapid response to the disaster.

Third, according to the Tsunami Evaluation Coalition,²¹ a large number of privately funded NGOs conducted assessments in Aceh concurrently in order to justify their own specific requirements. This resulted in many agencies conducting duplicative assessments, which were not shared with other organizations.²² According to the IFRC (International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies), in late January 2005, only 46 of 200 organizations had submitted reports to UN coordinators and joint needs assessments were rare.²³ Private funding can result in discouraging coordination and assessment sharing as NGOs compete for the attention of the various sources of funding available to them.

The military also had to overcome problems with assessing the situation in Aceh. Two different types of assessments are needed: operational assessments and needs assessments. Operational assessments are inherent to military operations, providing the commander an indication of the progress being made toward the stated goal, and aiding the commander in making decisions for future action. Conversely, needs assessments are conducted during humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations in order to determine the requirements of the situation on the ground, such as food and water, shelter and health care, i.e., the basic needs of any relief situation. Confusion about the existence and difference between the assessments utilized by the military (operational) and those used by relief organizations (needs) led to confusion and delay in establishing initial needs assessments by the Disaster Response Assessment Teams (DRATs).²⁴ Further, once the confusion was alleviated about the type of

assessments required by the NGOs and OGAs, misunderstanding about who was responsible for the needs assessments ensued. Military DRATs can initiate the needs assessments because they are the first on the ground. Once those needs have been established, the professional relief organizations should be given the responsibility of continuing the assessment throughout the operation. This misunderstanding led to confusion among the different agencies involved in Indonesia as to what assessments were required and delayed determination of the initial needs of the affected population.²⁵

Information sharing

In a case study of the Southeast Asian *tsunami*, there was no single open source database to collect and store current and historical assessment reports from all available sources as well as to disseminate information during the relief effort. The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute asserts, "It would have helped to have a single organization... compiling and disseminating up-to-date information to all actors, both military and civil, regarding which organizations were present, what they were doing, what resources they had and what they needed."²⁶ Currently, several such databases are available, Reliefweb,²⁷ operated by the United Nations; the USAID/OFDA homepage²⁸; and the Asia-Pacific Area Network (APAN) website,²⁹ operated by USPACOM. These websites contain current and historical information regarding various countries and were established in order to provide sources of disaster assessment information. While these three websites are easily accessible to the various relief organizations, there is no incentive for organizations to utilize or contribute to them and therefore few contributions are made beyond those of the originating organizations. With no single medium to disseminate information to all of the organizations involved in the relief effort, email was used to

disseminate information outside of commands.³⁰ While email is fast and effective, it limits the recipients of information to those on the address list, effectively blocking wide dissemination of potentially critical information. Additionally, open coordination meetings were conducted, but with organizations spread over a wide area of operations, it was difficult to get full participation in order to ensure the widest dissemination of information.³¹

Missteps in execution

While organizations providing disaster relief are well intentioned, their actions can sometimes be counterproductive. NGOs may indiscriminately deliver aid, regardless of need, with the specific intention of proving their economic worth to donation sources. However, delivery of unneeded or inappropriate supplies to an already crowded relief effort, further complicates the chaotic situation on the ground. During the Southeast Asian *tsunami*, physical space to stockpile delivered supplies was at a premium, making inappropriate or duplicative supplies a hindrance to the efficiency of the operation. More importantly, they might even have prevented the delivery of necessary supplies.³² Delivery of inappropriate aid is a consistent problem with humanitarian aid and disaster relief operations. For example, in earlier African relief efforts, refugee camps received eating utensils, but no food.³³ These instances impede rapid response to the situation and cause more confusion during an already chaotic operation.

The accessibility of affected areas also impacts the delivery of appropriate relief supplies. The more accessible areas in Indonesia received more aid than the areas that were difficult to access, resulting in the delivery of excess aid to some areas and little to no aid to others.³⁴ The primary capability to lift and deliver aid to remote areas lay with military rotary wing assets; however, without a means to coordinate assessment of needs, availability of supplies, and lift

capability, aid cannot be efficiently distributed to the areas where it can do the most good.

NGO, OGA, and Military Coordination Problems

During the Southeast Asian *tsunami*, coordination between the different agencies on the ground (NGOs, OGAs, and the military) was often as chaotic as the situation itself. Problems included NGO attempts to avoid association with the military, classified information handling, and basic communications. One doctor in Banda Aceh observed, "...during the first weeks the situation was extremely chaotic...with no one visibly in charge. In addition, the civilian agencies did not seem pressed to coordinate with each other or with either the Indonesian or the American military."³⁵ These problems contributed to slowing the distribution of aid.

When NGOs provide relief to areas affected by disaster, they attempt to maintain impartiality, real or perceived, and do not want to be aligned with any specific group or side of a situation. Impartiality is important to NGOs, as their goal in humanitarian assistance and disaster relief is to alleviate human suffering, regardless of reason, political affiliation, or other partisan factors. Attempting to maintain impartiality is dually important and doubly difficult for NGOs during response to CHEs. In Indonesia, due to the GAM insurgency, there were two sides with which NGOs had to maintain relations, the TNI and the insurgents. At times, this put the NGOs in a very tenuous position. They had to simultaneously placate two antagonists who could not resolve their differences. This created an environment of suspicion between two factions within the affected area and outside aid workers. At times, the government of the affected country in these situations is concerned about NGOs providing supplies, food, water, and even perhaps weapons to an insurgent organization, which the government is attempting to put down. On the opposing side, the insurgent organization is often suspicious of NGO personnel being spies for

the government - providing information about who is involved in the insurgent organization, what the organization is doing, and where it is operating. These problems were further exacerbated in Indonesia when the U.S. military became involved, adding another organization that raised suspicion among the insurgents, the TNI, and the government because of past U.S. interventions in the region. Additionally, the U.S. government was attempting to maintain impartiality while acknowledging the sovereign government of Indonesia as the proper leader of Aceh, further complicating the position of NGOs in the area. Aversion to being associated with one faction or another leads NGOs to be disinclined to interact with the military in order to avoid association with the interests of the U.S. government.

The U.S. military, unlike civilian organizations, typically works within the various realms of classified information. One purpose of classifying information is to prevent it from being leaked to other organizations. During humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations, however, the sharing of information is valuable. In the military, the sharing of information is normally handled via classified networks. Sometimes information is handled via sensitive channels simply because it is a well-traveled comfortable realm for military personnel and provides a single venue to gain comprehensive information about events and operations. There can, however, be a tendency to overclassify information.³⁶ Sometimes, when there is confusion about its proper classification level, military personnel will overclassify information in order to avoid possible inappropriate disclosure of classified information. This poses significant problems for civilian agencies and organizations that do not have access to the sensitive channels. During the *tsunami* relief effort, the military conducted most of its communication in the classified realm for the first 5-7 days.³⁷ Once the decision to shift operations from the classified realm to the unclassified side, information flow slowed for two days as information was moved from one

network to the other and the various military organizations shifted their electronic communications to internet-based networks.³⁸ Shifting to an unclassified realm enabled a wider dissemination of situational awareness to the host nation and NGOs, thereby enabling them to assume responsibility for the effort more quickly.³⁹ Colonel Medio Monte of Joint Forces Command stated at the Defense Center Network Operations 2008 conference in Arlington, Virginia, "In hindsight, the decision to keep the Joint Operations Center [Indonesia] floor unclassified was the biggest positive thing that we did..."⁴⁰ At first, inadequate guidance and unfamiliarity operating in the unclassified realm caused CSF-536 personnel to maintain the status quo of using classified channels to pass unclassified information, thereby inhibiting information sharing with the other organizations involved with the relief effort.

Simple communications between groups was also hindered during the Southeast Asian *tsunami* relief effort. When members of the military communicate, they use a lexicon of eclectic words and phrases, which may mean one thing in a military setting and imply something completely different in a civilian setting. Additionally, the military typically uses large numbers of acronyms. This can result in sentences being composed almost entirely of acronyms and perhaps only one or two real words. These acronyms and military words, while an inherent part of military vocabulary, are not easily learned or translatable. In any dealings with non-military or even non-branch-specific personnel, military members must make a conscious effort to communicate in "real" words. This is more difficult than it first appears. Difficulty in communications can slow operations or create confusion.

Additional confusion arose during the Southeast Asian *tsunami* relief effort with regard to the Request For Assistance (RFA) process. Some organizations attempting to provide relief supplies had difficulty navigating the UNOCHA website for RFAs or did not know where to

start in order to provide assistance. For instance, General Electric (GE) attempted to donate two water filtration systems directly to USPACOM, but the staff was unaware of the process required to donate supplies. Eventually, GE was directed to USAID's Center for International Disaster Information in order to navigate the donation process.⁴¹ The Marine Corps Center for Lessons Learned (MCCLL) CSF-536 Lessons Learned document states, "Several relief donors expressed frustration with their inability to enter their offerings into the system and receive [information on whether] their supplies were needed, and if so, by whom and how to deliver to pick up points."⁴² This confusion slowed and in some cases prevented the delivery of available supplies.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Several changes need to be made in the conduct of humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations in order to address the problems experienced during the Southeast Asian *tsunami* relief effort. Among these are establishing an open source, one-stop website for organizations interested in participating in relief operations; providing incentives to organizations that are interested in participating in relief operations; increasing familiarity and effective communications between USAID, NGOs, and the U.S. military; and bolstering of USAID programs and funding.

Recommendation 1: Coordination of internet and electronic communications

Several websites were associated with coordination of *tsunami* relief, but they were confusing and difficult to navigate. In order to coordinate a U.S. relief effort, the USAID/OFDA website needs to be established as the single source for U.S. relief efforts, military or otherwise. Moreover, the website needs to have a collaborative repository for current and historic

assessment information. This tool would have accomplished four tasks during the *tsunami* response: First, assessment information could have been submitted on internet forms that conform to the standard established in the USAID *Field Operations Guide for Disaster Assessment and Response*. In this way, a standard for assessment reports would have been instilled in the organizations conducting assessments. Second, by being an unclassified, public internet site, the USAID/OFDA website could have aided in promulgating information about the current situation in the affected area, creating a forum for information to be shared, and alleviating duplicative assessments conducted by various organizations. Third, by being a database for historic assessment information, previous information about Aceh could have been collected from the three international NGOs present during the period of martial law. Finally, as a living database, current assessment information could have been updated (without replacing historic information) in order to reflect the most recent situation in the affected area.

With respect to inappropriate aid and coordinating relief efforts, the USAID/OFDA website is a perfect platform for RFA information, updating others on what to donate and how to deliver the needed supplies. Much like a Joint Prioritized Target List (JPTL) used in combined combat operations, USAID could establish and promulgate a prioritized aid supply list on the website. Through such a list, NGOs could find out what is needed -- indicate through a collaborative tool what aid they intend to donate and the quantity of the aid -- and track its movement, acceptance by USAID, and delivery to the affected populace. In Indonesia, a prioritized aid supply list would have led to a more efficient relief effort. First, it would have minimized the delivery of inappropriate aid (duplicative or otherwise). Second, it would have enabled tracking of supplies, so NGOs could be assured of the status of the aid contributed. Third, the prioritized aid supply list would have alleviated some of the crowding of affected

nation delivery points by establishing a means to minimize the convergence of every NGO attempting to supply aid arriving at the same time.

Recommendation 2: The provision of incentives

USAID should develop incentives in order to encourage NGOs to participate in its programs. One solution suggested by the Tsunami Evaluation Coalition is to establish a system for NGOs requiring that they be accredited in order to obtain tax-free status.⁴³ Another recommendation is to use intelligence and data as currency to encourage participation in the USAID programs. In this case, USAID would allow NGOs participating in USAID programs to have a higher degree of access to information from assessments and greater exposure to the affected people could be used to encourage participation in USAID programs. A third option would be prioritization for USAID funding to NGOs that are USAID-accredited and participating in USAID programs. An incentive program or combination of programs must be attractive enough to overcome any reluctance NGOs have to associating with U.S. government agencies. Currently, the U.S. Department of State has requirements for NGO transparency in funding and operation, but as the agency responsible for coordination of U.S. foreign disaster relief, USAID should also be responsible for ensuring NGO standardization. The International Center for Non-profit Law report, "NGO Accreditation and Certification: The Way Forward?" provides several recommendations for NGO accreditation programs.⁴⁴

These incentives provide two benefits: First they allow USAID to establish a professional standard by which NGOs must abide in order to receive the incentives, and second, they encourage participation in USAID-organized programs, providing a way for USAID to create order out of chaos.

Recommendation 3: Establishing familiarity between organizations

Several problems encountered during the Southeast Asian *tsunami* relief effort--including conflicting needs versus operational assessments, confusion about navigating the RFA process, basic vocabulary, and NGO reluctance to operate with the U.S. government--were a result of unfamiliarity between the organizations involved in the relief effort. A number of efforts can help alleviate such unfamiliarity and increase effective interaction.

USAID needs to fund, organize, conduct, and evaluate integrated training exercises. The simplest exercise for increasing familiarity is to offer academic training to the various organizations participating in relief operations. These training sessions should involve capabilities and limitations of other organizations taking part in relief operations, USAID policies and standards, and how to navigate through USAID relief programs. More complex and more valuable are operational training exercises. The first value of operational training exercises is interaction. Increased and repeated interaction in a robust training environment will enable the different organizations to learn about each other and how each organization fits into the problem. These interactions will decrease apprehension about interaction due to unfamiliarity, enable understanding of the various idiosyncrasies of the different organizations, and provide a benign venue to exercise procedures involved in disaster relief. The emphasis of the exercise organizers must be realism and exercising the interoperability of the units. There is importance to training individually, to ensure each organization can exercise its individual responsibilities, but these exercises should culminate in at least one large force exercise with all organizations that may be involved in a relief effort. Second, operational training exercises are scalable and can build upon previous exercises. Scalable exercises allow for a gradual buildup of difficulty, enabling an

adjustable learning curve by taking the training environment from purely benign to worst-case scenario. Finally, the two most valuable aspects of a training environment are the ability to exercise actual functions to ensure they work as designed and provide feedback. For instance, as highlighted during the Southeast Asian *tsunami* relief effort, the U.S. military needs to practice operating in an unclassified environment. After the training exercise is complete, lessons learned on how to improve both the procedures exercised and the training exercise itself enable improvement of the programs involved. Ultimately, training in a realistic environment allows organizations to practice and adjust procedures to make them more efficient.

Another means of establishing familiarity is to cross-pollinate personnel between the various organizations. This is more achievable within the context of government employees, military and civilian, than it is with NGOs. By establishing exchange officer tours at USAID and Combatant Commander staffs, a greater understanding of the operation of both entities can be grown. According to Hank Nichols, a professor at the U.S. Army's Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute, the military has a program in which some wounded servicemen work at either USAID or the U.S. State Department while they heal, providing small amounts of cross-pollination for a short period of time.⁴⁵ While not at mass scale, the program is a start and a good means of utilizing wounded servicemen while they are convalescing. Additionally, the incorporation of exchange officers into staffs allows for permanent liaison between the two agencies. The more officers that can be exchanged will in time increase the institutional understanding between the agencies. Much like providing incentives for NGOs to participate in USAID programs, career-enhancing incentives must be established for officers who participate in exchange programs; similar to the Joint Qualified Officer requirements the military uses to encourage intra-military training and exchange. Increased individual organizational training,

integrated training, and exchange tours among the various organizations involved in the U.S. foreign humanitarian assistance effort are the keys to increased familiarity and understanding between the actors involved in U.S. humanitarian assistance and disaster relief.

Recommendation 4: Empowerment and public backing of USAID

As the lead federal agency responsible for coordinating the U.S. foreign disaster relief effort, USAID must be empowered to fulfill its responsibilities. According to the MCCLL CSF-536 Lessons Learned brief, some members of the CSF staff would evaluate USAID as not capable of coordinating the U.S. relief effort.⁴⁶ Joint Publication 3-07.6 *Joint Tactics, Techniques and Procedures for Humanitarian Assistance* states that USAID/OFDA has the responsibility to perform needs assessments, fund NGO relief activities, and coordinate directly with the DoD for use of defense equipment in the affected country or for the procurement of transportation of supplies with defense equipment.⁴⁷ USAID must be given adequate personnel and funding in order to meet those requirements, as well as expand its programs to include NGO program incentives, personnel exchange programs, and exercise funding. In addition, USAID should form a cadre of humanitarian assistance and disaster relief instructors who can conduct organization-level academic training and unit-level exercise training and evaluation. The USAID instructor cadre would normally conduct training at USAID, NGOs, and military units from individual commands up to the Combatant Command level. In addition, the cadre would be used to provide organizations with feedback on performance during both organizational and large force exercises. Ideally, the personnel chosen to staff the instructor cadre should have come from an exchange program immediately prior in order to have the most current information as to the status of the other relief organizations. As the lead agency for foreign humanitarian assistance,

USAID must be funded to an appropriate level to carry out the programs necessary to achieve a U.S. unity of effort in humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations.

Another option is to split the U.S. military into two forces, one whose sole purpose would be kinetic military operations, and another whose purpose would be to conduct non-kinetic activities including, humanitarian relief, disaster assistance, counterinsurgency, and peacekeeping.⁴⁸ In addition, this new organization derived from the military and other government agencies would provide the capacity for civil security and nation-building.⁴⁹ One benefit of this concept is that such an interagency force would free the military to fight wars and not be required to conduct other operations. Additionally, having two forces with the logistic and personnel capabilities of the military would enable the U.S. to employ both forces simultaneously, one in a kinetic conflict, and the other in MOOTW. While this concept would free the military from the heavy requirements of MOOTW, it would create another massive government agency with duplicative capabilities to that of the military. Additionally, it can be argued that the U.S. military currently spends a majority of time conducting non-kinetic operations, and that kinetic operations are only a small fraction of the total. In this case, there is no requirement for an additional organization at all. Ultimately, such an organization is not practical due to the large personnel and equipment requirements and the duplication of current military capabilities.

CONCLUSION

What I think this operation does point out and validate is the need for civilian organizations like USAID-OFDA, the UN, and COE [Center of Excellence in Disaster Management and Humanitarian Assistance] to continue to strengthen their civil-military programs involving joint training, seminars, exercises, and the joint development of protocols, procedures, and doctrine. Only through

*continued engagement among civilian and military organizations, before the disaster hits, can both sides be truly ready in a unified, practiced, and professional manner to meet the challenges of disasters such as this.*⁵⁰

- Tom Frey, USAID-OFDA DART Team Leader, Southeast Asian *Tsunami*

The response to the Southeast Asian *tsunami* made significant contributions to the situation in Indonesia. First, TNI and Government of Indonesia (GOI) participation in the relief effort in Aceh boosted confidence in the government among the people generally and GAM specifically. GAM and the GOI signed a Memorandum of Understanding in August 2005 to outline a way ahead in peaceful relations between the two groups and resolution to the conflict.⁵¹ Under the agreement, the GOI was to pull 12,000 TNI troops and 1,000 police officers out of Aceh and GAM agreed to surrender half of its weapons by the end of October 2005.⁵² Additionally, the U.S. humanitarian response to the *tsunami* served to bolster opinions of the United States among the Indonesian people. A Pew Research Center news release indicates that favorable public opinion of the United States rose from 15% in 2003 to 38% in 2005, with 79% of respondents stating that the aid influenced their positive opinion.⁵³ A Terror Free Tomorrow report cites similar numbers of favorable opinion rising from 15% in 2003 to 33.7% in 2005, as well as a drop in opposition to the U.S. fight against terrorism from 72% in 2003 to 35.8% in 2005.⁵⁴ Finally, in 2006, Presidents Bush and Yudhoyono released a joint statement affirming the growth of U.S.-Indonesian relations over the previous two years and intention to increase the strength of the bilateral relationship in the future.⁵⁵

While deemed a success, the relief effort during the Southeast Asian *tsunami* had several problems associated with its execution. This report systematically reviewed the baseline cultural, political, and social conditions, which pre-existed the onset of an exogenous, natural disaster. As with any disaster, the disruption of normal conditions requires both an

understanding of what constitutes normal baseline conditions and an understanding of how the norm has been changed by the disaster. With coordination required between the military, USAID, and NGOs, an organized system must be developed in order to provide timely, appropriate, and coordinated aid to the affected population in order to absorb disasters.

Recommendations to attain such a unity of effort include creating a venue to promulgate, collect, and share information regarding a current or historical aid situation; establishing incentives to NGOs for participation in USAID programs and standardization; increasing familiarity among the various humanitarian assistance actors; increasing integrated training exercises; establishing an instructor and evaluation cadre at USAID to teach and evaluate; and empowerment of USAID to be able to fulfill its designated responsibilities. USAID is the agency designated to be responsible for the U.S. relief effort and must be enlarged to do so. Once a U.S. unity of effort is established among the various U.S. organizations, USAID should be used as the single point of contact for coordination with the international relief effort, specifically UNOCHA. This is necessary in order to begin to establish vertical chains of responsibility from which an international unity of effort in humanitarian assistance and disaster relief can be attained.

NOTES

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