

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS LIAISON OFFICER COMMAND AND CONTROL ALIGNMENT

BY

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USAWC CLASS OF 2009

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REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE				<i>Form Approved</i> <i>OMB No. 0704-0188</i>	
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1. REPORT DATE (DD-MM-YYYY) 23-02-2009		2. REPORT TYPE Strategy Research Project		3. DATES COVERED (From - To)	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE Emergency Preparedness Liaison Officer Command and Control Alignment				5a. CONTRACT NUMBER	
				5b. GRANT NUMBER	
				5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER	
6. AUTHOR(S) Lieutenant Colonel Joseph B. Herold				5d. PROJECT NUMBER	
				5e. TASK NUMBER	
				5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER	
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) Professor Bert Tussing Center for Strategic Leadership				8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER	
9. SPONSORING / MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) U.S. Army War College 122 Forbes Avenue Carlisle, PA 17013				10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)	
				11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)	
12. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Distribution A: Unlimited					
13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES					
14. ABSTRACT To meet Department of Defense requirement to support civilian authorities when incident response requirements exceed local authorities' abilities, the Services have established Emergency Preparedness Liaison Officer (EPLO) authorizations across the country. Personnel selected to serve as EPLOs work with US Northern Command (USNORTHCOM) in planning for, and implementing, that assistance. Recognizing that proper organizational alignment and reporting chains are a vital component in meeting strategic goals, the Services and USNORTHCOM are continuing to evaluate current organizational alignment and command and control reporting chains for these officers both before and during an incident response. This project provides historical background on the US sensitivities to federal forces being employed within the States, examines the current alignment, reviews Joint doctrine and then makes a recommendation on how to organize the EPLOs to best meet USNORTHCOM requirements.					
15. SUBJECT TERMS USNORTHCOM, JFLCC, JFACC, JFMCC, EPLO					
16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT UNLIMITED	18. NUMBER OF PAGES 26	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON
a. REPORT UNCLASSIFIED	b. ABSTRACT UNCLASSIFIED	c. THIS PAGE UNCLASSIFIED			19b. TELEPHONE NUMBER (include area code)

USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

**EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS LIAISON OFFICER COMMAND AND CONTROL
ALIGNMENT**

by

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ABSTRACT

AUTHOR: Lieutenant Colonel Joseph B. Herold

TITLE: Emergency Preparedness Liaison Officer Command and Control Alignment

FORMAT: Strategy Research Project

DATE: 23 February 2009 WORD COUNT: 4,900 PAGES: 26

KEY TERMS: USNORTHCOM, JFLCC, JFACC, JFMCC, EPLO

CLASSIFICATION: Unclassified

To meet Department of Defense requirement to support civilian authorities when incident response requirements exceed local authorities' abilities, the Services have established Emergency Procedure Liaison Officer (EPLO) authorizations across the country. Personnel selected to serve as EPLOs work with US Northern Command (USNORTHCOM) in planning for, and implementing, that assistance.

Recognizing that proper organizational alignment and reporting chains are a vital component in meeting strategic goals, the Services and USNORTHCOM are continuing to evaluate current organizational alignment and command and control reporting chains for these officers both before and during an incident response. This project provides background on federal forces being employed within the States, examines the current alignment, reviews Joint doctrine and then makes a recommendation on how to organize the EPLOs to best meet USNORTHCOM requirements.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURE LIAISON OFFICER COMMAND AND CONTROL ALIGNMENT

In the event of a major emergency, the American public justifiably expects a quick federal response when the extent of an incident exceeds local authorities' capabilities. Whether the response is to an attack on American soil or a natural disaster, Americans have come to expect the federal government to be ready and able to bring its resources to bear in mitigating the situation. This expectation is almost universal and was evidenced during incidents as diverse as the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks; Hurricanes Katrina, Gustav, and Ike; the Minnesota bridge collapse; and various large scale tornado responses. In each incident, Americans count on federal assistance to deal with the aftermath of an event that has overwhelmed the capabilities of local authorities.

To meet the need for federal response to such incidents, numerous federal agencies have established programs designed to bring resources to bear quickly and efficiently in both mitigating an emergency and in providing needed relief. In 2002, the Department of Defense (DoD) designated the United States Northern Command (USNORTHCOM) as the overall agency responsible for coordinating and planning federal military responses for Defense Support of Civil Authorities (DSCA).¹ The Military Services select and assign Emergency Preparedness Liaison Officers (EPLOs) to plan and assist in executing individual Service responses for DSCA. While the EPLOs (also referred to as "Liaison Officers" throughout the rest of this paper) are selected by each Service according to individual Service criteria, USNORTHCOM is responsible for the overall DoD coordination and planning effort and establishes minimum, standardized

training requirements. The potential disconnect between selection authority and overall accountability for the coordination effort has caused some consternation amongst the various Services and the USNORTHCOM planning staff.

There is debate as to how much USNORTHCOM should “own” the Liaison Officers and if changes to mandate a more centrally controlled, Joint EPLO program should be initiated to standardize aspects of the EPLO programs across services. This paper recommends organizing the Liaison Officers within USNORTHCOM on a functional basis along current Military Service lines to maximize their effectiveness in both planning and execution roles. Doing so will address a number of areas of concern surrounding the EPLO program, including geographic distribution; qualification, selection, and administration; equipping; training and professional development; command and control; and reporting.² This paper will concentrate on the organizational alignment and how that impacts the command and control functions of the Liaison Officers.

After establishing the critical importance of correct organizational alignment in meeting strategic goals, the paper will present background on USNORTHCOM and the implications of our federalist system in disaster response coordination requirements. In the United States, the default expectation is local authorities will be in charge of the incidents and federal response will only occur when local authorities do not have the expertise or resources to handle the incident without assistance—this presents its own set of challenges when injecting Department of Defense resources into the response. Next, it will examine the implications of using Reserve forces for Liaison Officers with special attention on their organizational alignment prior to any incident response

operations. After reviewing the options outlined in Joint Doctrine for aligning joint forces, the paper will examine how the Services currently organize their Liaison Officers in support of USNORTHCOM. Following a look at USNORTHCOM's current organizational construct for force organization, the command and control structures of the Liaison Officers both before and during activation will be evaluated. Finally, the Joint EPLO initiative being advanced by USNORTHCOM J-35 will be reviewed and a recommendation provided.

Organizational design has strategic implications on an organization's ability to deal with contingencies, secure advantage, increase efficiency, and innovate.³ The alignment selected can be an impediment to accomplishing strategic goals if it causes increased dissonance or inconsistency. Conversely, it can significantly advance the unit's ability to meet strategic goals. The design of the organization must balance differentiation of skill sets and capabilities with methods of integration which advance the organization's ability to succeed.⁴ The Military Services each bring their own distinct capabilities and cultures which must be integrated into a greater whole to provide Combatant Commanders with effective forces to meet mission requirements. Joint doctrine allows joint force commanders latitude in aligning forces; but it also provides guidance and a fairly consistent organizational construct which has been propagated throughout the Combatant Commands. Within this construct, the designation of component commanders for the land, air, and maritime domains has become the "norm." Consistency in organizational structure across Combatant Commands enables the Services to efficiently train staff members to function in different Combatant Command staffs and simplifies the acclimation process. Within that overall construct,

however, there still exists enough flexibility to allow for the commanders to organize forces to meet particular mission requirements. Major deviations from the standard, however, should only be made after carefully examining the implications and risks of doing so.

USNORTHCOM was established as a Combatant Command on Oct. 1, 2002 to provide command and control of DoD homeland defense efforts and “to coordinate defense support of civil authorities [DSCA].”⁵ The federal military assets available to USNORTHCOM to meet its mission requirements are Title 10 DoD forces (active duty and mobilized reserve component forces) from all of the military services. This presents the Commander, USNORTHCOM, with a broad range of capabilities, but utilizing Title 10 forces within the United States comes with a set of inherent limitations and legal requirements. Even with those limitations and requirements, however, after the terror attacks on 9/11, the government recognized a need to make Title 10 forces more readily available to assist US citizens in times of need. The government’s response to Hurricane Katrina brought further pressure to bear on USNORTHCOM to ensure DSCA planning encompassed prevention, preparation, response, and recovery operations for both natural and manmade incidents.

While the public clamored for quicker and better response from federal entities, to include the DoD, it is imperative to realize that in the United States’ federal republic system, “all disasters are local.” Initial response, therefore, is handled through local authorities by design. The entire National Response Framework is predicated on the incident being handled at the lowest jurisdictional level possible.⁶ This is true even as the size of the incident increases to the point where federal assistance is requested.

Normally, the incident response is controlled by local authorities with federal government agencies (to include USNORTHCOM) in a supporting relationship. The federal component of incident response is usually to be brought in as a last resort after the capabilities of local and state authorities have been, or are in danger of being, exhausted. At that point, it is envisioned the states will have deemed federal assistance as essential and official requests for federal assistance will be forwarded, normally via the procedures outlined in the Robert T. Stafford Act.⁷ There are certain situations where the federal government may respond immediately without waiting for local authorities to request assistance, but those cases are rare and only if the general consensus is that the response required will almost immediately exceed the local authorities' capabilities. To meet this tiered response framework, the federal government has assigned the states to 10 Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) regions and assigned specific coordination and planning responsibilities to the regional headquarters.

Each FEMA region is assigned Federal Coordinating Officers—senior FEMA officials specifically appointed to coordinate Federal support in the response to and recovery from emergencies and major disasters.⁸ To support the Federal Coordinating Officer, the Department of Defense assigned a Defense Coordinating Officer (DCO) to each region to coordinate the Defense Support to Civil Authorities (DSCA). The DCO is responsible for processing requirements for federal military support, forwarding mission assignments to the appropriate federal military organizations, and assigning federal military liaisons, as appropriate.⁹ These federal military liaisons are the Liaison Officers, mentioned previously, who represent their Services and are spokespersons for their

Service's capabilities, limitations, and requirements. While most EPLO positions are filled by Reservists, the DCO positions can be filled by civilians or active duty military—in fact, currently at the regional level, the DCO positions are all filled by active duty Army colonels.

Per the DoD Military Emergency Preparedness Liaison Officer (EPLO) Program Directive (DoD 3025.16), Liaison Officers are senior Reserve officers who represent their Military Service, the Federal Emergency Management Agency and a designated DCO.¹⁰ The break-out of responsibilities for selection, training, and readiness of the Liaison Officers is split amongst the Services and USNORTHCOM. For instance, while the personnel selected to fill EPLO positions are picked by the individual services, those selections are based on the criteria provided by USNORTHCOM. During normal, day-to-day operations, the Liaison Officers are assigned to and work for their parent Military Service, but once activated fall under USNORTHCOM operational command. This arrangement, where forces are “chopped” to a gaining Combatant Command for employment, is not unusual and occurs with numerous other military organizations.

Liaison Officers are organized into three operational levels—working daily at the state/territory, regional, and headquarters echelons.¹¹ There are State EPLO teams at each of the 50 states as well as teams assigned to DC, Guam, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. For each State EPLO team, there is a minimum of one representative from the Army, Navy, and Air Force. At the regional level, the EPLO teams are aligned with the 10 FEMA Regional Readiness Coordination Centers and consist of representatives from each of the services. At the highest level, there are five headquarters with Liaison Officers assigned: USNORTHCOM, Air Forces North

Command (AFNORTH), US Army North (ARNORTH), Fleet Forces Command (FFC), and Marine Forces North (MARFORNORTH).

Within the state, regional, and headquarters framework, each Service assigns Liaison Officers to meet their USNORTHCOM mission requirements. The Army, Navy, and Air Force assign at least one Service EPLO to almost every state and also provide Liaison Officers at both the regional and headquarters levels. The Marines assign 32 EPLOs at or above the regional level while the Coast Guard fielded nine last year, concentrated in the regions with littorals.

For the DoD components, the current EPLO breakdown is as follows. The Army assigned 194 Reservists to the EPLO program, with 120 assigned to the various states, 60 as Regional Liaison Officers and the remaining 14 occupying positions at the various headquarters. The Air Force has a total of 106 EPLOs in the program with 49 at the state level, 19 assigned regionally, and 38 at headquarters level. The Navy assigns 51 to the states, 20 to the various regions and 16 to headquarters billets. Finally, while the Marines do not assign Liaison Officers at the State level, they did furnish 31 as Regional EPLOs with a single Marine EPLO at headquarters. Totaled, this means there are 130 State EPLOs, 220 Regional EPLOs, and 72 EPLOs assigned at the various headquarters (FEMA, Office of the Secretary of Defense, ARNORTH, AFNORTH, etc.).

The Liaison Officers are organized within the overarching headquarters, regional, and state strata subject to individual Service requirements and preferences. This is consistent with the relationships between the Military Departments and the other Combatant Commands. By that construct, the EPLOs do not fall under Combatant Command (USNORTHCOM) operational control until activated in support of an incident

response. Also, as with other Combatant Commands, USNORTHCOM establishes the requirements for the Liaison Officers and it is up to each Service to determine how they will meet those requirements. It is the Services' responsibility to mesh Joint and Service doctrine with the Combatant Command requirements to ensure their representatives can best support the Combatant Commander. The Combatant Commander holds each Service accountable to provide a representative fully trained and qualified to represent his or her Service's capabilities and limitations appropriately.

The individual Services are responsible to organize, train, and equip forces whereas the combatant commands are responsible for their employment.¹² In addition to responsibility differences, the President and Secretary of Defense chains of command are separate and distinct for the combatant commands and the service departments. Therefore, the organizational constructs selected by the Services must satisfy Joint doctrine to enable the EPLOs to meet mission requirements both before and after activation. Prior to activation, the Liaison Officers report through a Service chain of command, but once activated, they fall under USNORTHCOM's operational command and should be organized as part of a standard warfighter headquarters. This is the way the Services are organized when working in the other combatant commands and should be no different for USNORTHCOM.

There's an additional constraint particular to Reserve force employment that the Services and USNORTHCOM need to be cognizant of since the majority of the EPLOs are Reserve officers. Activation of Reservists is specifically a Service function, not a Combatant Commander function. The Liaison Officers are available for operational missions only when mobilized for specific periods in accordance with the law, or when

ordered to active duty and after being validated by their parent Service.¹³ The Secretaries of the Military Departments are specifically designated to exercise authority through their respective Service Chiefs *for forces not assigned to the Combatant Commanders* [italics added].¹⁴ Therefore, Reserve Component EPLOs report up through their service components until activated. This places the pre-activation organizational alignment of the Liaison Officers squarely in the hands of the individual Services. Once activated, they fall under the operational control of USNORTHCOM¹⁵ and should align organizationally the same as the other component forces within USNORTHCOM.

USNORTHCOM, as one of the designated combatant commands, exercises command of assigned forces and is directly responsible to the President and the Secretary of Defense for the performance of assigned missions and the preparedness of its command. The USNORTHCOM commander is authorized to prescribe the chain of command within USNORTHCOM and to designate the appropriate command authority to be exercised by subordinate commanders.¹⁶ Within USNORTHCOM, as within all unified and subordinate joint commands, the joint forces can be established on either a geographic or functional basis.¹⁷ Each alignment presents benefits and challenges, so the organizational construct selected by the combatant commander must balance Joint and Service doctrines on force allocation and command and control to most effectively meet its mission requirements. Typically, within combatant commands, the command structure is actually a combination of both geographic and functional alignments for the various capabilities being presented by the Services. USNORTHCOM is aligned similarly, and by balancing geographic needs with force

capabilities, can most fully utilize the Liaison Officers and the forces they can assist in bringing to meet mission requirements.

Joint doctrine allows for the combatant commander to establish component commanders to integrate planning, improve efficiency, and ensure unity of effort amongst other reasons.¹⁸ The designated component commanders—the Joint Forces Land Component Commander (JFLCC), Joint Forces Air Component Commander (JFACC), and Joint Forces Maritime Component Commander (JFMCC)—have authority over forces or military capability as delegated by the Joint Forces Commander.¹⁹ USNORTHCOM has specifically identified and assigned component commanders for its assigned area of operations.

Army EPLOs are “administratively controlled by the US Army unit of assignment and operationally controlled by USARNORTH through DCOs.”²⁰ In the practical world, this means the Army Liaison Officers are aligned geographically both for pre-activation operations and training as well as during incidents. The regional and state Liaison Officers report directly to the DCO both pre- and post-activation. This organizational alignment works well for the Army for a variety of reasons, not the least of which is that each of the regional DCOs is an Army full colonel. This allows the reporting alignment before and after activation to follow a consistent, known chain of command within Service lines.

Another factor in why it makes sense for the land component to be geographically organized is that the land component response is based on inbound Army units being assigned and constrained to a specific geographical area of operations. This matches nicely with Joint and Army doctrine on ground force

employment. The Commander, 5th Army, is designated as the JFLCC and it's within his authority (with the concurrence of the Commander, USNORTHCOM) to subdivide his area of operations, as desired to meet mission requirements.²¹ With the Commander, 5th Army, as the JFLCC, the 10 DCOs can be thought of as having roles similar to subordinate land component commanders within the USNORTHCOM area of operations, split along geographic boundaries. The DCO is responsible for coordination of DSCA within the region—which is a pre-designated, geographically bounded area.

This construct serves the Army well as it allows for the DCOs to work in a direct reporting chain with the Liaison Officers who will be activated to support their area of operations in the event of an incident. This provides for continuity in training as well as familiarity with the specific geographically bound regional area. Since all of the DCOs are active component Army officers, this also keeps both the pre- and post-activation reporting chains for the Army within a single Service up to the Component Commander level at USNORTHCOM. If other land forces are required and requested, they would be assigned to the JFLCC in accordance with Joint Publication 3-31.²²

The Air Force aligns its Liaison Officers along service lines with State Air Force EPLOs reporting to Regional Air Force EPLOs who, in turn, report to the senior Air Force EPLO at the Air Force National Security Emergency Preparedness Directorate within 1st Air Force. The senior Air Force EPLO, an active duty Air Force officer, ultimately reports to the JFACC (Commander, 1st Air Force). During a response, the Liaison Officers are activated by the Air Force and report up through this chain to USNORTHCOM in accordance with Air Force doctrine. At the regional and state levels, the Regional EPLOs and State EPLOs liaise with the DCO to provide airpower expertise

for the joint incident response while the USNORTHCOM JFACC at 1st Air Force is responsible for the larger theater-wide perspective. This provides for flexibility as well as consistency in operational environments for the air assets.

Though the State EPLOs are assigned a specific state and have specific responsibilities within that geographic area prior to being activated for an incident, the Air Force views State EPLOs as being assigned nationally for response once activated.²³ Pre-activation response preparation activities, such as base installation visits and coordination of state and local response plans, do not limit the State Air Force EPLO's ability to respond nationally.

This organizational construct is favored by the Air Force for a variety of reasons. First and foremost, the majority of the Air Force response is with aviation assets and geographic boundaries are largely irrelevant to aviation assets during incident response. The lines drawn on a geographic map limit neither the resources the Air Force will draw from nor the area the assets will traverse/operate in. Second, in some disaster areas, locally based Liaison Officers could be victims themselves and unable to respond. By maintaining "national level" training and responsibility, impacted State EPLOs can concentrate on personal recovery while the Air Force can still meet its Service responsibility of providing Airmen with knowledge of Air Force asset capabilities to the Joint Commander and DCO. Third, by training Liaison Officers without regard to a specific geographic area, it increases pool of available Air Force Liaison Officers for both initial response and continued presence. Finally, during most disasters, multiple Liaison Officers are required at each location to meet 24/7 operational needs.²⁴

This State EPLO/Regional EPLO/JFACC construct also follows Joint and Air Force doctrine for aviation command and control alignment and presentation. Per Joint Publication 3-30,

Joint air operations are normally conducted using centralized control. Centralized control is placing within one commander the responsibility and authority for planning, directing, and coordinating a military operation or group/category of operations. Through centralized control of joint air operations, the JFACC provides coherence, guidance, and organization to the air effort and maintains the ability to focus the tremendous impact of air capabilities/forces wherever needed across the theater of operations. Additionally, this assures the effective and efficient use of air capabilities in achieving the JFC's objectives.²⁵

The Air Force's pre-activation organizational construct along Service lines enables the Air Force to maintain consistency in training and equipping service representatives for all Combatant Commanders, including USNORTHCOM. Specifically, for USNORTHCOM, the activation of the State EPLOs under the operational control of USNORTHCOM through the Regional EPLOs is consistent with Service and Joint doctrine. As when working in other Combatant Commands, each headquarters level is provided an Air Force representative responsible for coordinating and liaising with their counterparts to represent the JFACC and present air asset availability and capability.

To parallel Joint doctrine methodology, the DCO can be equated to a JFC/CC complete with needs for an air component coordination element which assists the JFLCC staff in planning air supporting and support requirements.²⁶ The Air Force Regional EPLO serves as an air component coordination element for the DCO while the JFACC (again) has overall theater-wide air responsibilities.

Similarly, Joint Publication 3-32 calls for the Joint Forces Maritime Component Commander (JFMCC) to exercise operational control over assigned and attached forces.²⁷ The JFMCC controls all maritime assets to include Naval, Marine, and Coast

Guard. If Naval or Marine aviation assets are needed in response and are not already tasked to directly support maritime operations, they can be chopped to the JFACC for theater-wide aviation responses. Naval EPLOs are tasked to represent COMNAVREG MIDLANT [now, Commander, FLEET FORCES] as the Regional Planning Agent in planning and coordinating Department of the Navy assistance to civil authorities.²⁸ When activated and deployed, Naval Liaison Officers are under the operational control of US Fleet Forces Command and report as USNORTHCOM directs.²⁹ This construct follows both Joint and Service doctrine for the maritime forces and allows for maritime assets to be presented to USNORTHCOM in a consistent manner regardless of the location of the incident.

In reviewing the various options available for organization of the EPLOs, it's important they be aligned as to most effectively serve USNORTHCOM in its role in the coordination and execution of DSCA while paying attention to Service considerations and limitations.

As a Combatant Command, USNORTHCOM has a clearly defined geographic area. A potential organizational alignment which could be implemented is to continue the command and control structure further down a geographic alignment all the way to the regional DCO level for all components. However, as areas of operation are further and further subdivided, inefficiencies arise, flexibility is inhibited and the more restrictive the options become. The areas of operation and control need to reflect the ability of the assets to impact those areas. Thus, while it may make sense to use regional boundaries for geographically constrained forces (such as for the JFLCC), attempting to parse aviation assets down to smaller and smaller geographic areas becomes

problematic and is counter to Command and Control for Joint Air Operations Doctrine. In addition to aviation assets from the Air Force, Joint Publication 3-32 also reiterates the need for flexibility of the area of operations concept for maritime forces, to include aviation assets.³⁰

As opposed to taking the functional component command all the way down to the regional level, a better option is to continue to align Liaison Officers under functional component commands at the levels appropriate for the resources and capabilities they bring to the fight, which are different for each of the Services. As the Doctrine for the Armed Forces states, Joint Force Commanders may elect to centralize selected capabilities with the joint force, but should strive to avoid reducing the versatility, responsiveness, and initiative of the subordinate forces.³¹

EPLO organization both before and during activation must be based foremost on meeting the Combatant Commander's mission requirements. The best way to do this is to operationally align in accordance with Joint doctrine for providing forces to the Combatant Commander. This entails establishing and having the forces work under the direction of Component Commanders who are responsible for meeting the Combatant Commander's needs. Therefore, in accordance with joint doctrine, USNORTHCOM has designated a JFLCC, JFACC, and JFMCC to ensure mission requirements are satisfied. These component commanders need to stand ready to assume operational control of forces assigned in response to an incident calling for Defense Support of Civil Authorities. Each component commander should establish the appropriate command and control mechanisms to best utilize the resources which will be assigned and available to him. The Liaison Officers should be organized along service lines to meet

these requirements with modifications within that construct determined by the appropriate component commander. The component commanders will gain the Title 10 forces with most Air Force assets going to the JFACC, the maritime assets to the JFMCC, and Army assets to the JFLCC. As the primary interfaces between their Services and the component commander, the Liaison Officers should be aligned along Service lines which will transition smoothly to the pre-designated component commanders.

As stated, USNORTHCOM has designated the Commander, 5th Army as the JFLCC and charged him to be responsible to bring all land forces assigned to an incident under a single, theater-wide commander. The JFLCC has the authority to subdivide the AO into smaller components represented by the 10 FEMA regions. Doing so will align the ground forces with the Federal Coordinating Officers and DCOs, formally recognizing what is already a de facto alignment. The DCOs represent the JFLCC at the regional level with access to representatives from the other joint force components at their disposal. The Air Force and Naval Regional EPLOs are there specifically to liaise with the DCO and assist in coordinating the DoD response for their respective components.

The Commander, 1st Air Force (AFNORTH) (who also has responsibilities as the Commander, Continental U.S. North American Aerospace Defense Command Region), has been designated the JFACC for USNORTHCOM. As such, he will assume operational control of all Air Force assets assigned to USNORTHCOM as well as any Naval or Marine aviation assets chopped to his control. With the Commander, AFNORTH as the JFACC, the Air Force Liaison Officers should retain their current

alignment with State EPLOs reporting to Regional EPLOs who, in turn, report up to AFNORTH.

The 8 May 2008 DSCA Standing EXORD formally designated the Commander, US Fleet Force Command as the JFMCC for DCSA planning and operations within both the USNORTHCOM³² and USSOUTHCOM³³ areas of operation. With that designation, it follows the Naval and Marine EPLOs should also be organized along service lines to be able to support the JFMCC at the component commander level.

While this EXORD definitively laid out the JFMCC's role, it also expanded the DCO's authority in what could be a problematic manner. Specifically, the EXORD placed the activated Liaison Officers under the operational control of USNORTHCOM (delegated to the respective functional component commander (JFACC, JFLCC, JFMCC)), but also stated "the Liaison Officers requested by and allocated to USNORTHCOM are TACON to the DCO of the affected region."³⁴

TACON is the command authority over assigned or attached forces or commands, or military capability or forces made available for tasking; it is limited to the detailed directions and control of movements or maneuvers within the operational area necessary to accomplish assigned missions or tasks.³⁵ While the definition of TACON states it is "limited," the fact that Liaison Officers requested by the DCO of the affected region fall under the command authority of the DCO could be problematic if it is not clearly understood which Liaison Officers working for which component commander are truly TACON to the DCO.

For the reasons previously brought forth in this paper, TACON is too broad of an authority to grant a regionally-focused DCO when directing the operational employment

of forces that are not geographically constrained—such as aviation assets. Air Force EPLOs at the DCO level should be a liaison, but not in a direct reporting chain to the DCO. Liaison Officers responsible for aviation assets should have their chain of command running to the component commander with a “dotted line,” supporting relationship to the DCO. This arrangement is in alignment with joint doctrine and ensures assets are used most effectively across the entire area of responsibility as opposed to within a single, geographically bounded region. By aligning TACON with the functional component, the responsibility and authority can be appropriately placed at the level it can most impact the entire area of responsibility, not just the portion which falls within a single FEMA region. The AF EPLO, as a liaison, is responsible to coordinate for the DCO to attain the forces necessary to meet requirements or to explain why those forces cannot be made available. However, actual TACON to the DCO is too limiting of a view for aviation assets.

In conclusion, the current organizational alignment with the individual services being responsible for selecting and training Liaison Officers to the standards established by USNORTHCOM is in alignment with joint and individual service doctrine and provides for a consistent methodology for the Services to meet their responsibilities to USNORTHCOM and the other combatant commands. By organizing the Liaison Officers along service lines which will closely mirror the component commander command and control alignment, it simplifies the organizing, training, and equipping functions of the Services while simultaneously meeting the requirement for the military departments to coordinate on the activation of Reserve Component forces. The designated component commanders have ready access to the Liaison Officers via their

individual services to establish training requirements to meet the component commander's needs at all levels. Most importantly, when the needs of civil authorities are most pressing, these organizations will prove the most effective, and the most efficient.

Endnotes

¹ *The USNORTHCOM Homepage*, <http://www.northcom.mil/About/index.html> (accessed November 5, 2008).

² USNORTHCOM Joint Emergency Preparedness Liaison Officer (EPLO) Working Group slides, 2-3 April 2008, Slide 16 (author received from Mr. Don Reed, USNORTHCOM J-35).

³ Gareth R. Jones, *Organizational Theory, Design, and Change*, 4th ed (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, 2004), 12.

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