



The Sixth Annual USAWC Reserve Component Symposium *Achieving Unity of Effort in Responding to Crises*

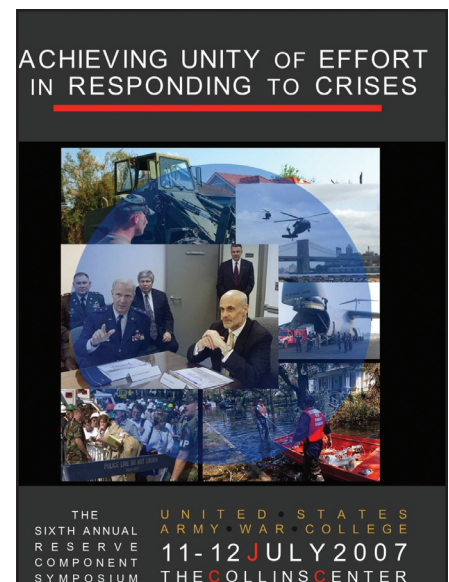
Workshop #2:

“The Potential Need To Establish An Appropriate Mechanism For The Military To Accompany And Support Civilian Components Focused On Regional Response To Catastrophe”

BY PROFESSOR BERT B. TUSSING

Among the many challenges encountered in the military’s response to hurricane’s Katrina and Rita in the summer of 2005 were difficulties surrounding Command and Control (C2). Given the frequently strained interaction between the active component and the National Guard, it became clear that our traditional notions of C2 required a cultural migration away from “command and control” toward a broader concept of “command, control, cooperation and coordination.” At the same time, in spite of their devastation, many experts are labeling Katrina and Rita as representative of the “lower end” of potentially catastrophic events which could occur. In addition to regional disasters such as Category V hurricanes and earthquakes, events with potentially greater national impact such as pandemic influenza or mass casualty terrorist attacks could result in death and destruction that could by far exceed even the destruction experienced along the Gulf Coast. These threats compel us to seek means for achieving a ‘unity of effort’ between those envisioned to respond to catastrophe, first within the military’s active and reserve components, and then between the military and the civil authorities we are sworn to serve.

On July 11-12, 2007, the United States Army War College’s Center for Strategic Leadership hosted a symposium, *Achieving Unity of Effort in Responding to Crises*, designed to address these ends. The forum was directed at determining better means of incorporating all elements of military response—the active component, the Services’ Reserves, and the National Guard—in support of Federal, state, and local authorities following catastrophic events. Participants in the symposium arrived armed with a compelling interest and a wealth of experience in the area of defense support to civil authorities. They represented a host of the leading stakeholders in homeland defense and security affairs, including the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Homeland Defense and America’s Security Affairs, the Department of Homeland Security, the United States Northern Command, the National Guard Bureau, and the Office of the Chief of Army Reserve Affairs. Adding their experience to the exchange of concern and understanding on this topic were the Adjutants General from the states of Georgia, Rhode Island and Texas, the Pennsylvania Director of Homeland Security, and other representatives of both the public and private sectors.



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The methodology for the event was straightforward. Participants were divided into four “workshops,” each focused on a critical aspect of the evolving response and recovery requirements for the military in support of federal, state and local government:

- The evolving relationship between the United States Northern Command and the military’s reserve component in preparing for and responding to catastrophe;
- The potential need to establish an appropriate mechanism for the military to accompany and support civilian components focused on regional response to catastrophe;
- The military’s role in supporting an evolving National Response Plan; and
- The development and dissemination of a “common operational picture” in preparation, response and recovery operations between the components of the military and civilian authorities at all levels of government.

Each workshop began with a “subject matter expert presentation” from individuals and organizations intimately involved in the particular focus areas being addressed. Following the presentations, the workshop groups embarked upon a series of questions designed to frame the discussions, observations, and recommendations that were to follow. At the end of the symposium, those observations and recommendations were presented to a “Blue Ribbon Panel,” which consisted of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs; the Deputy Commander of the United States Northern Command; the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Integration from the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Homeland Defense and America’s Security Affairs; the Director of Operations, U.S. Department of Homeland Security; the Chief of the Army Reserve; the Special Assistant to the Chairman of the Joint Chief of Staff for National Guard Affairs; and the Chief of Logistics of the National Guard Bureau.

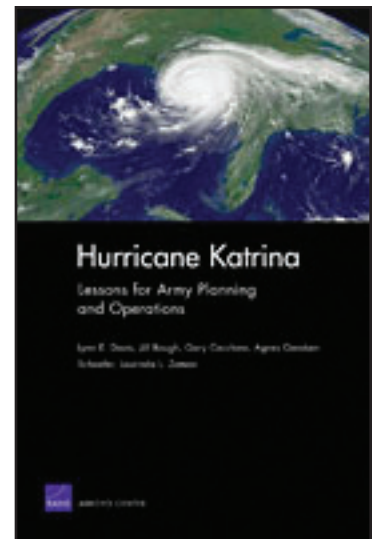
In addressing the potential need to establish a military mechanism to support a civil regional response to catastrophic events, the participants began with a series of foundational “givens.” First, they held that the current National Response Plan, founded on a notion of “tiered response” that has states reinforcing localities and the federal government reinforcing states as the capabilities of each previous tier is exceeded, is sufficient for the vast majority of incidents that the nation is likely to face. Nevertheless, acknowledging that the “vast majority of incidents” may constitute as much as 98% of our concerns, the American people expect a reasoned response to the remaining “2%”—particularly when the product of that small percentage is measured in catastrophic levels of destruction. Second, the participants acknowledged that response to a catastrophic event, which by definition immediately exceeds the available resources of both local and state government, will have to focus on what is being referred to as the “72 hour gap of pain.” This “gap” refers to the time it would realistically take a significant federal response to begin to deal with the needs of a stricken area. Most of the participants in the workshop that examined this issue agreed that a regional response may serve as the best means for addressing this gap. However, all participants were unified in the contention that any regional response incorporating military capabilities would have to be subordinate and complementary to civil authorities and entities dedicated to these ends. Moreover, while the response and recovery capabilities available to the military will always attract attention at the time of an actual crisis, the forum held that the greatest benefit to be derived from the military may be its capacity to plan for potential events—before they occur.



Lieutenant General William Webster, Deputy Commander, USNORTHCOM, and Thomas Hall, Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs, participated in the Symposium’s plenary session.

A presentation by Dr. Lynn Davis of RAND Corporation helped to frame the discussion from the outset. Dr. Davis' presentation was drawn from her recent study, *Hurricane Katrina: Lessons for Planning and Operations*.¹ In it, she proposed directing the military's efforts in preparing for and responding to a catastrophe by way of a regional level focus, to accompany a similar focus for the civil component suggested by the White House report on the federal response to Katrina.²

In supporting a regional response mechanism, the forum held that the military should mirror the "bottom-up" approach of the civil design. Just as the Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC) has been effectively designed by the states in support of the states, so too should the lion's share of a military regional component be designed and supported by the "states' military:" their National Guard. Participants called for the development of military "regional centers" whose greatest function would be involved with developing, coordinating and synchronizing plans to respond to and recover from catastrophic events in their affected states. To enable this type of coordination and synchronization, the center would have liaison personnel, and the capacity for interaction with the regions' states, tenant units of the Services' Reserve components, and the United States Northern Command (USNORTHCOM). The primary agent representing USNORTHCOM would be the regional Defense Coordinating Officer.



The collaboration that would define the envisioned "center" would provide for visibility of all available military, public and private capabilities that could be relied upon for response and recovery operations. This would automatically facilitate planning, training, exercise and execution among the majority of "stakeholders." The participants acknowledged that some Federal and state statutes might exist that would restrict access to these assets and their employment. Of particular concern to the participants were current restrictions which allow the use of the Services' Reserve components in responding to natural disasters, but forbid their employment in responding to "man-made" catastrophes, whether brought about by accident or deliberate terrorist attack. The difficulty in understanding this apparent "disconnect" is harder still when viewed against the Department of Defense's policy of "immediate response." That response, described in DoD Directive 3025.1 and DoD Directive 3025.15, allows any "DoD component or military commander" to respond to disasters/catastrophes without prior authority in order "to save lives, prevent human suffering, or mitigate great property damage under imminently serious conditions."³ Setting this incongruity aside, the members of the workshop were unanimous in their stance that the assets and capabilities of the Services' Reserves in a region should be incorporated in its catastrophic response and recovery plans.

By extension, the participants saw the "center" as a source for establishing protocols for the engagement of military capabilities. Once again drawing from the civil element of the EMAC model, participants suggested that a region's state Adjutants General, as their Governors' representatives, would oversee the development of the military's component of catastrophic response plans. The same spirit of cooperation that characterizes state interaction surrounding the EMAC would hold true in the development of the center; memoranda of understanding and agreement would reflect the intent of the states to respond in one another's behalf as able, available and required. No attempt to establish a "regional standard" would be imposed against any given requirement. Instead, the identified capabilities residing throughout the region—in both the active and reserve components—could be incorporated into a deliberate planning process that would provide a greater chance for meeting critical requirements immediately following the devastating events envisioned in the workshop's discussion.

Time available during the conference did not allow for a detailed examination and concurrence over how the "center" would be constructed. One participant suggested a traditional 'J-Staff' construct that would be populated

1. Davis, Lynn E., Jill Rough, Gary Cecchine, Agnes Gereben Schaefer, Laurinda L Zeman, *Hurricane Katrina: Lessons for Army Planning and Operations*, Santa Monica: Calif.: RAND Corporation, MG-603, 2007.
2. The White House, *Federal Response to Hurricane Katrina: Lessons Learned*, Feb 2007.
3. DoD Directive 3025.1, *Military Support to Civil Authorities*, Jan 15, 1993, and DoD Directive 3025.15, *Military Assistance to Civil Authorities*, Feb 18, 1997.

principally by the National Guard, but would have representatives of the active component, the Services' Reserves, and—potentially—civil authorities. Most participants agreed that, given resource limitations that will always exist, the “center” should serve a headquarters planning function preparing for the employment of available resources, rather than being developed as a response mechanism in its own right. Suggestions varied as to where the regional centers would be located. Constructing the center along the lines of the current FEMA Regions seemed to carry inherent advantages for some participants; others suggested a “functional construct” along lines of common concern to a region (e.g., vulnerability to hurricanes, proximity to fault lines, etc). Another proposal suggested that little more than a “virtual center” was required to facilitate its primary function of deliberate planning.

Whatever the infrastructure that would eventually be adopted, participants held that plans should not be considered as an end in themselves. Once deliberate plans have been created, they must be disseminated, understood, and exercised—throughout the region, among all stakeholders. These plans should be responsive to local, state and regional requirements, and parallel federal response planning efforts. The federal government should be called upon to facilitate the development of these regional response efforts, resourcing the centers as necessary, and providing Title 32 manning authorities to the National Guard for populating them.

The emergency response community reminds us that all disasters are “local.” That axiom has led to a universal recognition of the National Guard as the military’s force of choice in responding to domestic disasters. As a part of the community themselves, they possess an understanding, a familiarity, and a relationship with state and local authorities that the active component of the military could never hope to replicate. By extension, in dealing with catastrophes which transcend the borders and capacities of a state, a cooperative effort led by the National Guard in providing for a regional response may fill a critical gap in saving and sustaining life. State relationships can be mirrored by regional relationships, first in preparation, and then—as necessary—in execution. The question of the likelihood of such catastrophes taking place will bear little significance in the eyes of the American people viewed against the consequences of such events if they were to occur. A reasonable expectation of readiness remains against our federal, state, and local governments, and the military will always bear a major portion of that expectation. It is hoped that the discussions, observations, and recommendations from this forum will contribute to that readiness.

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THE SIXTH ANNUAL USAWC RESERVE COMPONENT SYMPOSIUM
Workshop #2 – Devising a Regional Response to Catastrophe

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