CHAPTER 6

DEFINING CRITERIA FOR HANDOVER TO CIVILIAN OFFICIALS IN RELIEF OPERATIONS

Colonel John Bessler
U.S. Army

On April 18, 1906, an earthquake of 8.3 Richter magnitude struck along the San Andreas Fault near the city of San Francisco. The fire that resulted from the tremors was devastating. In a city of 400,000 people, the combination of the earthquake and fire left 550 dead, but the true magnitude was manifested in the 220,000 homeless and the total loss of the city's commercial industrial center. Federal relief efforts included mobilization of National Guard assets, but despite the magnitude of this disaster, after 6 weeks the Guardsmen were demobilized and sent home, having accomplished all missions required to the satisfaction of the state and local officials. The key milestones associated with this withdrawal included, but were not limited to, the restoration of utilities outside the burned area, the closure of the missing persons' bureau, debris removal completed from the downtown area, resumption of retail trade, and stabilization of food lines.[1] During this period, as in all disasters, normal social and economic activities ceased or were dramatically degraded. How long an emergency period lasts is generally a factor of the society's capacity to react and cope with a disaster. In the case of the San Francisco earthquake, the end of the emergency phase was characterized by achievement of four milestones: a generalized cessation of search and rescue, a restoration of law and order and a feeling of security by the locals, a drastic reduction in emergency mass feeding and housing, and clearance of debris from principal arteries.[2]

In the 21st century as populations and global temperatures continue to rise, there will be increased competition for resources and a strong potential for friction between and among nations. This increased competition will often end in conflict. Additionally, global climate change will likely cause an increasing number of natural disasters such as cyclones, hurricanes, and similar events; all with accompanying human suffering. Often in these situations, U.S. military forces will be utilized because they are the most readily available, well-resourced, capable, and large organized entities which can alleviate immediate suffering and provide needed aid. Fortunately, as the California earthquake vignette illustrates, the U.S. military has a long history of intervention in disaster and humanitarian assistance as well as assisting with post-conflict stability operations. This long history has similarly led to an accompanying plethora of doctrine to assist both the commander and planner. But what is missing in the doctrine is guidance on how to create an exit strategy from these sorts of missions—a way of defining the metrics needed to transition these relief efforts from one of primarily military control back to civilian control.

In the past, no aspect of these kinds of operations has been more problematic for American military forces then the transition back to civilian control. While it is widely agreed that civilian and international organizations must as soon as possible take on those missions that were initially carried out by the military,[3] the difficulty is in defining

the handover criteria which varies from crisis to crisis. Particularly in disaster relief operations, the U.S. military is often asked to stay longer than is prudent because the host nation or the people they are assisting feel that the military provides the only sure sense of security, dependability, and safety in a very traumatic situation—a sense of assurance that civil organizations are unable to provide at that particular moment. This is especially challenging when the crisis is of such a magnitude that the civil police force is absent and normal law and order begins to break down. In these situations, the military may have to wean the civilians from the military presence in order to enable the host government or civil authorities to reassert themselves as fully empowered and capable to deal with the circumstances.[4]

The four milestones that were achieved in the aftermath of the San Francisco earthquake correlated with the National Guard's relief from responsibility and transfer to civilian authorities and could well serve as guidelines for disengagement criteria that might be useful today. Building on these, this chapter proffers three models by which commanders can define their exit metrics and illustrates each in three distinct relief operations. First, U.S. joint and service doctrine, U.S. policy, and other agency positions associated with such operations at home and abroad is reviewed, and three examples of exit metrics are introduced. Second, three cases studies involving U.S. military disaster assistance are used to examine the issues of domestic and permissive overseas environment exit criteria: Hurricane Andrew, Hurricane Katrina, and the U.S. intervention to assist the victims of the 2005 Indonesian tsunami. While these are relief operations, the issues are remarkably similar in post-conflict operations. Lastly, this chapter will attempt to draw some conclusions and recommendations for the future, as disaster relief and post-conflict operations, most assuredly and most unfortunately, will only continue to be a growth industry.

CURRENT DOCTRINE

The civilian spectrum with whom the military must interface is varied and challenging. Not only do commanders have to interface with the locally distressed civilians, but also with informal neighborhood leaders and elected or paid officials from all levels—local, regional, state, and national. The military also often interacts with personnel representing governmental and nongovernmental relief organizations who may have been in the region for years prior to the military's arrival, or whose lead elements often deploy nearly as rapidly as the military does, such as U.S. Agency for International Development's (USAID) Disaster Assistance Response Teams (DARTs) and the Red Cross.[5] The civilian view of the disaster, what needs to be done, what the civilians expect the military to provide, and even how the crisis and emerging tasks will be defined, may be different from the military's view, and this difference must be resolved in the earliest days of the response. Coordinating and cooperating with these different groups may prove to be one of the military's greatest challenges, and yet they may well prove to be among the greatest enablers, depending on the nature of the crisis and how the military engages them. Because it is the civilians to whom the military will eventually leave the recovery and reconstruction tasks for completion, it is imperative they are contacted at the earliest opportunity.

Current joint doctrine describes operational termination as so critical to success that it is the first thing to be determined when designing any military operation. Knowing the conditions that must exist before military operations can terminate and how to preserve gained advantages is crucial to achieving the national strategic end state.[6] *Joint Publication (JP) 3-07.6, Joint Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures for Foreign Humanitarian Assistance*, states that two of the three most critical functions that a Joint Force Commander (JFC) must accomplish early in the planning process are to ascertain and articulate a clearly identifiable end state, and to determine transition or termination criteria for the operation—the conditions that must exist before either should occur.[7] Determining these conditions for stability operations and support operations is particularly difficult. The Joint Warfighting Center's *JTF Commander's Handbook for Peace Operations* emphasizes the ambiguity and difficulty in identifying these conditions by quoting *Field Manual (FM) 100-23, Peace Operations*: "Transitions may involve the transfer of certain responsibilities to nonmilitary civil agencies. . . . Transitions in peace operations may have no clear division between combat and peacetime activities, they may lack definable timetables for transferring responsibilities, and be conducted in a fluid, increasingly political environment."[8]

JP 3-07.6 provides specific planning doctrine and describes criteria for termination or transition as being based on events, measures of effectiveness, availability of resources, or other various metrics. A successful harvest or critical facilities' restoration in the crisis area are examples of the types of events that might trigger mission termination. An acceptable drop in mortality rates, a certain percentage of dislocated civilians returned to their homes, or a marked decrease in requests for support are potential statistical criteria that may prompt the end of the involvement of U.S. forces. Essentially, when non-Department of Defense (DoD) organizations such as the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA), the United Nations (UN), the Red Cross, local authorities, or others, have marshaled the necessary capabilities to assume the mission, U.S. forces execute a transition plan.[9] Because these organizations are normally civilian agencies with less ability to rapidly mobilize, U.S. military doctrine advocates that forces remain in place until these organizations have sufficient capacity to relieve the military of these duties. *Joint Publication (JP) 3-08, Interagency, Intergovernmental Organization and Nongovernmental Organization Coordination during Joint Operations,* provides an excellent checklist for planners to use when the need to coordinate with local, regional, national, and international nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) arises. While it is not a complete list of tasks, it is a good resource to guide commanders and planners in developing a list appropriate to the relief effort to which they are deployed.[10]

The U.S. Army conducts full spectrum operations to accomplish its missions in both war and in operations other than war. Full spectrum operations include offensive, defensive, stability, and support operations. The 2003 version of *Field Manual (FM) 3-07, Stability Operations and Support Operations*, defines "support operations" as those generally conducted in response to emergencies and natural or manmade disasters, and to relieve or reduce suffering. Support operations meet the immediate needs of civil authorities or designated groups for a limited time until they are able to accomplish those tasks without military assistance. This version goes on to describe two categories of support operations: domestic support operations (DSO), and those which support foreign humanitarian

assistance (FHA). Disaster relief operations are further described as having three stages: response (roughly corresponding to the emergency phase described above), recovery, and restoration. Both DSO and FHA are limited in scope and duration. The military's role is often most intense in the response stage, diminishing steadily as the operation moves into the recovery and restoration stages. Response operations normally focus on those life-sustaining functions required by the population in the disaster area. Recovery operations begin the process of returning the community infrastructure and services to a status that satisfies the needs of the population. Military forces normally redeploy as operations transition from the response to the recovery stage.[11]

In any support operation, the military's role is normally associated with maintaining or restoring essential services and activities to mitigate damage, loss, hardship, or suffering. In DSO, long-term relief is primarily a local and state responsibility with appropriate federal support; for FHA, U.S. responsibility is at the national level. FM 3-07 acknowledges that there is no specific menu of tasks a commander can complete to achieve success, and the FM focuses on characteristics and concepts, "aiming more at broad understanding than at details of operations;" leaving the latter to the commander on the ground.[12] In response to an emergency, however, FM 3-07 does focus relief tasks on lifesaving measures to alleviate the immediate needs of a population in crisis, including security and the provision of medical support, food, water, medicines, clothing, blankets, and shelter. In some cases, it involves transportation support to move affected people from a disaster area to areas with more infrastructure or security. Relief operations also involve the restoration of minimal infrastructure and create the conditions needed for longer-term recovery, and include establishing and maintaining the minimum safe working conditions needed to protect relief workers and the affected population. These operations may also involve repairing or demolishing damaged structures; restoring or building bridges, roads, and airfields; and removing debris from critical supply routes and relief sites. However, unless repairing major structures is essential to lifesaving activities (like a destroyed bridge to reconnect a population center with medical facilities), major repair and restoration tasks normally are relegated to the reconstruction phase.[13] In the absence of more concrete doctrinal guidance, this list could well serve as the baseline for transition tasks, but the commander must still tailor it to the facts on the ground. The military's ultimate aim remains to transition relief functions to civilian organizations as rapidly and efficiently as possible.

A major challenge facing military commanders is the relationship between their forces and civilians. There are three groups of civilians in any relief effort: (1) the populace being assisted; (2) NGOs and other private organizations; and (3) the local, regional, and international governmental officials involved, as well as responsible U.S. Government officials. Technical and cultural differences aside, civilian visions of the desired end state, the conditions that constitute the end state, and the nature and sequencing of the tasks required to create those conditions may be vastly different than that of the military. Understanding the expectations and capabilities of all parties is a critical element and, in fact, affects all three transition models discussed in this chapter. Civilians will be engaged long after the military has departed. It is also essential to understand the differences in interpretation between the military and the civilian end states to get agreement on transition criteria.[14]

A critical dynamic to bear in mind is: "The deployment of ground forces [for whatever reason] into any region [at home or abroad] and the approach they take to the [local] population will immediately affect the population's daily life, perceptions, and politics—for better or worse, depending on the viewpoint of the inhabitants."[15] Ignoring this dynamic may have negative effects, not the least of which might be a loss of the legitimacy—however temporary—of the local government in the eyes of the local populace. If U.S. military forces are viewed as able to provide more and better services, including the establishment of an environment relatively free from looting, vandalism, or crime, then one of the unintended consequences of the military's presence might very well be a growing reluctance on the part of the targeted population to accept local civil authority during the recovery phase.

In Army and joint doctrine, security is identified as an activity common to both types of relief operations.[16] Both domestically and overseas, providing a safe and secure environment for the local population as well as the relief workers is critical to success. Security is an essential element that must be established prior to the military transitioning out of the area of operations. In the case of DSO, DoD Directive 3025.12 contains specific guidance concerning the use of military assets during civil disturbances. Federal military forces can be authorized to assist civil authorities to restore law and order when the magnitude of the disturbance exceeds the capabilities of local and state law enforcement agencies, including the capabilities of the National Guard.[17]

In FHA, security is also a significant consideration. The type of environment—permissive, uncertain, or hostile—will dictate the level of required security forces. In a permissive environment, this may be nothing more than enough forces to prevent desperate populations from overrunning distribution points. The fact remains that there is a security aspect to both types of support operations, if only to allow civilian agencies to operate safely and uninhibited from either the population being helped on the one hand, or hostile forces on the other.[18]

Exacerbating both support and security issues is the dynamic that different sectors of a neighborhood, county, province, or country recover or transition at different rates. This means that the military cannot simply up and pull out of everything and everywhere on a single day, but must gradually contract its footprint and phase itself out; this too must be a consideration in the initial planning. Departure does not have to be a long process, but it can often be extended over quite a prolonged period. An excellent illustration of the latter can be found in New Orleans where, years after Katrina, National Guard troops continued to bolster New Orleans' hurricane-depleted police force, while the city and its police force worked to bounce back from Hurricane Katrina and clamp down on violent crime.[19] Without security for both relief workers and citizens, the transition from emergency to recovery cannot successfully move forward.

POLICY AND CIVIL SECTOR PROGRESS

Recognizing an increasing likelihood of troop deployments for humanitarian assistance following the end of the Cold War, beginning in 1997, the *National Security Strategies* (NSS) and *Quadrennial Defense Reviews* (QDRs) described military intervention for humanitarian assistance operations as both necessary and expected.[20] In these documents, it is clearly

the national vision that relief operations should be of limited duration and designed to give the local authorities the breathing room and the opportunity to restore order and services before withdrawing troops. In spite of a brief flirtation with unilateralism, the George W. Bush administration adopted a similar logic.[21]

The primary U.S. Government organization most engaged with foreign relief today is the United States Agency for International Development's (USAID) Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA). OFDA provides humanitarian assistance to save lives, alleviate human suffering, and reduce the social and economic impact of humanitarian emergencies around the world.[22] OFDA only responds to a foreign crisis when the U.S. Ambassador or Chief of Mission in an affected country declares an emergency. In addition to providing U.S. relief resources when responding to natural disasters or civil conflict, OFDA often fields special response teams to assess, report, coordinate, and enable relief efforts by international aid organizations and the host nation.[23] The OFDA Field Operations Guide (FOG) is issued to team leaders deploying to disaster areas. It provides information on OFDA responsibilities, reference materials, checklists, lists of available commodities, and general information on disaster activities, to include working with U.S. military forces responding to the crisis. The FOG has even been cross-referenced with Sphere guidelines as described below, but the FOG fails to provide any guidance for an exit strategy.[24]

In 2004, President Bush directed the formation of the Department of State's new Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization (S/CRS). This purpose of this office is to address long-standing concerns over what is seen as inadequate planning mechanisms for overseas stabilization and reconstruction operations, a failure of interagency coordination in carrying out such tasks, and a lack of capabilities among the nonmilitary departments and agencies.[25] Developed primarily for post-conflict operations, S/CRS nevertheless provides a robust source of information and capabilities that can be applied to relief operations, as many of the same tasks in post-conflict scenarios are concomitant with relief operations. This office has developed a menu of literally hundreds of essential tasks that can be used by commanders for planning and defining exit metrics. When fully staffed, S/CRS will provide a ready resource for either stability or support operations.

The NGO community's Sphere Project was launched in 1997 by a group of humanitarian NGOs, including the Red Cross and Red Crescent, to better codify relief requirements and standards. Collating input from over 220 relief organizations, the Project published a handbook to assist the relief community in determining the metrics of success during intervention—the Sphere standards.[26] The Sphere standards generally address water supply, hygiene, sanitation, food, shelter, and health issues as minimum standards. However, there are conflicting opinions as to the applicability of the Sphere Project standards' use in disaster relief operations. Among the criticisms are: the standards are focused on relief camps, not the devastated area as a whole; politicians can use the standards to obscure the underlying causes of the misery (if other than a natural act); and the standards are inappropriate in cases where the normal living conditions were below the Sphere standards before the disaster.[27] Moreover, the overwhelming list of tasks, while a good reference for relief leaders to use in asking the right questions about quality of life standards, is so exhaustive and detailed that contemporary use by the military in developing measures of effectiveness is problematic.[28]

Much good work has been done recently in compiling lists of tasks for relief workers to accomplish and the standards towards which to strive. However, the reality is that each relief effort is unique in its scope and challenges. Commanders and planners have at their disposal the doctrine and guidelines, described above, as well as the tools and resources of S/CRS and international relief organizations to consider while planning and conducting relief operations. But none of these provide specific metrics or tools to determine when or under what conditions to transition tactical and operational control to civil authorities during relief operations.

PROPOSED METRICS MODELS

DoD must become better prepared to execute support missions, for it is clear that relief operations are here to stay. Current doctrine provides a good conceptual basis for planning but fails to adequately address criteria for transferring control from the military to civilian government and NGOs. Likewise, the S/CRS and Sphere Project initiatives make important contributions to the understanding and conduct of relief operations but do not address military-civilian transition—i.e., an appropriate exit strategy for the military. Such transition guidance is sorely needed, but given the uniqueness of each situation a standard set of criteria may not apply. To that end, this chapter proffers three conceptual models by which commanders can define their own exit metrics. These three models are referred to as negotiated conditions, objective conditions, and requests for assistance/tracking capacity.

The negotiated conditions model can be described as the efforts of a military staff, very early in a crisis, to closely interact with civil officials, as well as with civilian humanitarian effort representatives, to determine a coordinated response to the crisis, and to jointly determine the exit timeline and milestones. This may be the most recurrent model for anticipated disasters—such as hurricane or typhoon landfalls. Enough lead time or prior planning must exist to ensure a rapid linkup between civilian officials with access to policy decisionmakers, such as the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), USAID, and the supporting military.

When the amount of destruction is unanticipated, very rapid, or the damage is of such a scope as to overwhelm the ability of civilian officials to cope, an objective conditions model may be a better option. Objective conditions are a known set of parameters by which a military staff tracks progress in a relief scenario where the disaster's true magnitude and requirements are unknown or ambiguous. During relief planning, military staffs use predetermined metrics to monitor progress, shift effort, and gauge the relief effort's progress. These predetermined criteria normally are modified to fit the particular situation and can change throughout the operation itself. Usually in situations where objective conditions are used, the military takes the lead until civilian authorities are better able to contribute meaningfully to the process.

A request for assistance (RFA)/tracking capacity model is a third approach. It refers to a two-fold staff tracking mechanism. An RFA is a request for support or assistance. Requests can be for either a commodity, such as water or medical supplies, or for a service, such as transportation or medical evacuation. RFAs are normally made to the military relief operation's representatives by a local official or relief organization. In this

model, military planners and civilian representatives (such as from USAID or the Red Cross) jointly monitor how many RFAs are received, prioritized, and addressed across the various regions within a given area over time. As RFAs diminish in various areas, the military staff develops some applicable threshold metric that when exceeded allows the military effort to be shifted elsewhere or terminated. Tracking capacity is a metric tool which enables the on-site military commander to monitor the growing support capacity of other agencies that are providing assistance in the area of operations, such as NGOs, international governmental organizations (IGOs), as well as reconstituted local, state, and national agencies.

These models allow a commander to address the uniqueness of his own mission situation and to develop meaningful, tailored criteria. They make use of what is known about relief operations without proposing arbitrary and inappropriate exit metrics. The following three disaster relief operations, two at home and one abroad, illustrate how these models were used to determine the conditions and criteria for transitioning from military to civilian control.

Hurricane Andrew.

Until Katrina, Hurricane Andrew was the most economically devastating natural disaster to hit the United States, making landfall on August 24, 1992, south of Miami, FL, and again on August 26 near Morgan City, LA. The President declared a major disaster in both areas, authorizing federal relief effort. The 2nd U.S. Army established Joint Task Force (JTF) Andrew on August 27, which ultimately involved over 24,000 service members. The JTF's mission was to provide humanitarian support, reflected in the key tasks expressed in the commander's intent:

> "immediately begin to operate feeding and water facilities; provide assistance to other (local, state, and federal) agencies in the receipt, storage, and distribution of relief supplies, with an end state to get life support systems in place and relieve initial hardships until non-DoD, State, and local agencies can reestablish normal operations throughout the area of operations." [29]

The commander's intent nicely captured what are termed immediate response guidelines.[30]

Immediate response authority allows on-scene commanders and those ordered to support relief efforts to assist in the rescue, evacuation, and emergency medical treatment of casualties; the maintenance or restoration of emergency medical capabilities; and the safeguarding of public health. Immediate response may also include firefighting, water, communications, transportation, power, and fuel related tasks, as well as the authority to provided immediate assistance in clearance of debris, rubble, and explosive ordnance from public facilities to permit rescue or movement of people and restoration of essential services.[31] While broad in its scope, it is not a blanket authority for any specific level of support and the focus is on expediting transition of relief support to civilians.

Among JTF Andrew's primary operational objectives was creating the conditions to help the communities themselves to be an integral part of the recovery process; in other words, enabling them to facilitate the return to normalcy. Responding to the commander's intent and key tasks, the initial response of the JTF focused on six critical areas of emergency services: providing food, water, shelter, sanitation, medical supplies

and services, and transportation, with the objective of easing the suffering. The JTF was deployed to ensure that local residents had access to life-saving measures and means. As such, it provided much-needed relief in these areas and was generally hailed as a success by local and state authorities and the media.[32]

The early establishment of a strong working relationship between the military and the lead federal agency, FEMA, was initiated by the 2nd U.S. Army when it appointed a Defense Coordinating Officer (DCO) to serve as liaison between DoD and FEMA. This officer established contact with FEMA on August 23—before Andrew made landfall—and by the time the JTF was operational, many of the requirements were identified, relationships were built, and much of the coordinating structure was in place. This early cooperation persisted throughout the mission and proved to be a force multiplier for the JTF.[33]

Despite the lack of previous transition criteria, the excellent interface between the JTF staff and FEMA bridged the gap. Their close relationship enabled both the military and the civilian authorities to agree on the need for measuring the success of operations and to arrive at a consensus on an end state; namely, the capacity of state and local governments to shoulder the burden of providing essential public services, specifically sanitation, water, power, and emergency rescue and medical support.[34] Early and cooperative JTF interface with local, regional, and federal officials led to a list of key milestones on which all parties could agree—negotiated criteria. This enabled the JTF to work towards a civil-authority endorsed list of tasks which, when accomplished, signaled that the military mission was complete. Using these criteria as metrics, the JTF was able to withdraw after approximately 20 days, when the key milestone of "schools reopened" was met. The use of negotiated conditions to determine transition milestones, when hammered out collaboratively with the civil authorities, is a useful technique when the just-alerted commander may only have a writ to provide immediate response, and little else to go on.

Hurricane Katrina.

The damage wrought by Hurricane Katrina in 2005 was unprecedented in scope in the United States: over a million people displaced; 1,300 storm related fatalities; over five million people without power, some for weeks; and economic damage estimated at nearly 200 billion dollars. The federal disaster declarations covered an area of the United States roughly the size of the United Kingdom.[35] The federal response was equally massive in immediate and long-term aid and military support. The DoD contributed substantial support to state and local authorities, including search and rescue, evacuation assistance, provision of supplies, damage assessments assets, and public safety. Ultimately nearly 25,000 active and 50,000 National Guard personnel, 200 aircraft, and 20 ships were committed to the affected states of Louisiana, Mississippi, and Texas.[36]

For example, subordinate to JTF Katrina, the 82nd Airborne and portions of the 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) spent 3 weeks working with local, state, and federal disaster-response agencies helping victims of Hurricane Katrina and then Hurricane Rita.[37] The JTF Katrina commander and his staff used the military primarily for rescue operations, security operations, medical support, clearing debris, and opening transportation arteries to enable local, state, and federal officials and volunteer organizations to deliver critical

supplies. The National Guard was used in law enforcement operations when necessary, under their Title 32 status. The latter was particularly crucial when over two-thirds of New Orleans' police force failed to show up for work, either because their own homes were devastated, traffic arteries were closed or flooded, or it was in their judgment simply too dangerous a place to work in the storm's immediate aftermath.[38] In fact, National Guardsmen were still patrolling some parts of New Orleans years after the fact.[39]

According to the U.S. Army Center for Lessons Learned (CALL) database regarding DoD's Hurricane Katrina response, the overarching purpose stated by the President and pursued by JTF commanders at all levels was to empower local or county governments to rebuild their communities—not to do it all for them. Hence, for the JTF, the critical issue was restoring capacity (such as emergency medical services, availability of clean water, and open transportation routes) so the local, state, and volunteer civil agencies could deliver supplies and services and begin to rebuild. To do this, the JTF commander and staff adopted six objective conditions to pursue, expressed as tasks. Progress toward these conditions, in their judgment, would empower civil authorities and provide a measure for evaluating success in the ambiguous circumstances they found themselves in. First among these tasks was influencing the local government and public service agencies to accept a leading role in the support and rebuilding efforts. The second task was influencing the federal government (through FEMA) to target resources towards those parishes or localities most in need. Connecting local leaders with the available resources and assisting them to establish relationships with the proper agencies was their third measure. Influencing media to highlight the plight and rebuilding efforts of these parishes served as a fourth measure. The fifth key task was to directly assist the local populace with short-term, high-impact civil-military engineering projects. And finally, they measured their degree of success in assisting local officials to develop transition plans which would allow for continuing long-term solutions.[40] The JTF Katrina experience provides a second model for establishing metrics for transition—an objective conditions model.

Progress in regard to these operational level tasks varied initially based on the participants' level of understanding and the differing magnitudes of damage sustained by the various communities. For the most part, the tactical execution of tasks centered around those normally associated with disaster relief: rescue, water and food distribution, sanitation, emergency shelter, and debris removal. Once these primary tasks were adequately addressed, military and civilian officials were able to look ahead to longer-term recovery.[41]

Conditions improved at different rates across the disaster area and resulted in some unanticipated results and confusion. As conditions improved in some areas of operation, a new dynamic emerged wherein the populace and civilian officials became dependent on military support. In several areas, the transition to civilian responsibility met with extreme reluctance on the part of local officials and citizens who, after the trauma and aftermath of this catastrophe, did not feel secure with the military's departure. In these cases, military units had to wean the local population, government, and economy from the relief effort's resources.[42] Moreover, in some cases, small unit leaders became so identified with their supported communities that they felt significant pressure during the drawdown to continue support, notwithstanding the fact that the need was greater

in other areas.[43] In short, the citizenry in several parishes and neighborhoods lost faith in their local and regional elected officials, and, until that was restored, the announcement of the military's impending departure was not happily received. Perhaps a more visible presence by local leaders and officials at the neighborhood, city, and county levels earlier in the relief operation, coupled with progress reports by the military highlighting milestones and progress by the civil-military team might have alleviated some of the populace's angst.

To be sure, the turnover to civilian relief agencies and authorities is anticipated and collaboratively determined so that it is an integral part of planning, and the public is appropriately informed. Ideally, all planning is accomplished in collaboration with supporting relief agencies and local and state leaders. Such a collaborative relationship among the military, civilian relief organizations, and local and national officials ensures better prioritization of efforts and more effective use of resources. A collaborative relationship should be established at the earliest opportunity, but in the absence of an immediate proactive civil-military relationship, a model like the objective conditions model serves well. In the wake of a crisis so devastating, and a civilian response slow to realize its enormity, the objective conditions model enabled JTF Katrina to work proactively toward transition until such time as the local, state, and federal authorities were capable of assuming a more robust role.

Tsunami Relief.

On December 26, 2004, at 7:38 a.m. local time, a 9.15-magnitude earthquake struck off the west coast of the Indonesian island of Sumatra. It was rapidly followed by 15 smaller earthquakes across the region. Altogether these seismic events lasted for 10 minutes and produced a number of tsunamis—large destructive ocean waves. The height of the individual tsunamis differed radically from area to area, depending on the direction the shoreline faced and the depths of the surrounding waters. Along the coastlines of Thailand and Sumatra, some waves reached over 30 feet in height, though most were half that height. Many people who survived a first wave assumed that the worst had passed, only to be swept away by a second, often larger, wave that arrived a few minutes later. By the end of the disaster, over 225,000 people were declared dead or missing, entire towns and villages had totally vanished, and the shorelines of northwestern Indonesia and other affected countries were permanently altered.[44]

Within 72 hours of the tsunami strikes, the U.S. Navy had established JTF 536 at Utapao, Thailand.[45] It also established three Combined Support Forces (CSFs), one in support of each of the three hardest-hit countries: Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Indonesia. Named Operation UNIFIED ASSISTANCE, this relief operation was essentially a naval force from the 7th Fleet augmented by teams from USAID. The U.S. effort was soon joined by Australia, Japan, and Singapore. Focusing on assisting the overwhelmed governments of the hardest-hit countries, the multinational force conducted search and rescue, delivered supplies, and provided medical support. With the arrival of international relief agencies, additional support and supplies began pouring in. As a result of their internal politics, the Indonesian Government reluctantly accepted U.S. support, but with the major caveats that U.S. forces maintain a minimal footprint ashore and that all U.S. personnel

be withdrawn before March 1.[46] In adhering to this request, the U.S. commitment was for just under 2 months.

JTF 536's humanitarian mission ultimately revolved around a number of tasks including providing search and rescue, water, food, and medicines to the survivors. In addition, JTF personnel conducted damage surveys, cleared debris from key locations, and assisted in organizing relief packages from the arriving bulk supplies. All U.S. military personnel were withdrawn by February 23, 2005.[47] Throughout the mission, U.S. naval commanders were constrained not only by the Indonesian government's caveats of accepting assistance only with a hard end date and limited footprint, but also by U.S. imposed force-protection measures which required all U.S. personnel to be offshore by sundown each day. [48]

In one sense the hard end date set by the Indonesian government made it easy for the military planners to develop a transition mindset. It forced them to consider transition tasks beginning on January 2 before support vessels had fully closed on the area of operation.[49] Despite this mindset, the sheer scope and totality of the devastation made it initially difficult to determine what assistance was needed, in what capacity, and when that assistance would no longer be needed. *Joint Publication (JP) 3-57, Doctrine for Joint Civil Affairs*, states that transitions should occur when the mission has been accomplished or when the President and Secretary of Defense so direct.[50] But in this case, defining "mission accomplished" would be a tough nut to crack,[51] if for no other reason than the totality of the devastation. And neither doctrine nor the directive codifying the end date answered the questions of how to measure progress and effectively transition out of the support mission.

Advance representatives of USAID flowed into the area along with the Navy and quickly formed civil-military teams with the JTF and the CSFs.[52] Nongovernmental relief organizations, some already in country before the tsunami, greeted the JTF as it arrived. In discussing the end state for operations in the region, more than one recommended that Navy planners use the Sphere standards as the desired outcomes for each country. However, the civil-military teams comprised of USAID representatives and Navy planners decided that these standards were not feasible. In many cases in the affected regions, the standards of living did not meet Sphere standards before the disaster, consequently achieving the standards was impractical. For this reason, as well as the exhaustive nature of the Sphere list, planners and USAID team members rejected the Sphere standards in their search for appropriate transition metrics and looked internally for an appropriate mechanism.[53]

In managing the relief operation, the JTF-USAID team developed a system whereby they tracked RFAs for the various areas. These RFAs were used throughout the operation to validate, coordinate, and prioritize requests for assistance from international relief agents and local officials ashore. [54] Using RFAs, USAID's military liaison officers afloat with the Navy helped track the volume, type, destination, and closure of RFAs. Hence, RFAs greatly enhanced the coordination in the civil-military effort. Since a declining number of RFAs indicated less need for military assistance, Lieutenant General Robert Blackmon, the CSF Commander, settled on tracking the number of RFAs as one metric to determine his transition termination progress.[55] When a minimum threshold of requests was crossed in an area, local efforts could be relinquished to others and military operations could be shifted or ended.

Throughout the 6 weeks of the Navy's involvement, relief organization participation, international support, and host country abilities continued to grow as the world mobilized to assist the hard hit victims. In his guidance for transition, the Commander directed the military footprint to slowly shrink when RFAs for military assistance decreased or were passed to aid agencies.[56] To further help visualize progress towards their own eventual withdrawal, the JTF staff tracked the capacity of non-CSF organizations as those organizations expanded their footprint in country. In doing this, they used four capabilities-based categories as further metrics: (1) coordination (essentially command and control — how capable the organizations were in coordinating continued relief); (2) health services (how capable the organizations were in providing disease control measures); (3) engineering (capacity of the organizations to provide basic sanitation, water, and engineering support); and (4) transportation (capacity of the organizations for water and supplies distribution in-country as well as intercountry delivery).[57] This easy to understand, capabilities-based system, coupled with the RFA tracking system, provided simple, clear metrics for measuring progress and managing transition.

The technique of tracking RFAs and evaluating civil capacity provides another successful approach for determining when to transition relief operations to civil control. Defining transition in terms of a minimum threshold in requests for assistance worked exceptionally well in this case. Measuring the growing capacity of incoming relief organizations and others was equally effective. Coupled with an early transition mindset and a determined effort to develop effective relationships among the military, USAID, NGOs, and local officials, an RFAs/tracking capacity model is another proven methodology for managing transition to civilian control.

THE MODELS CONSIDERED

The three cases researched for this chapter reinforce current doctrine which identifies three essential activities as decisive in successful relief operations: (1) ensuring security; (2) restoration of essential services (herein defined as immediate life saving, access to potable water and food, basic sanitation, and access to medical facilities); and (3) early interaction between the on-site military commander and civilian officials. These three activities are critical to success and are present in each relief effort case.

Security must be achieved before services can be reliably restored—indeed, establishing security is first among essential services. Essential services in relief operations are defined as those elements of basic life support required to protect human life and safeguard public health: emergency rescue and emergency medical treatment, clean water, food, shelter, access to medical services, and clearance of debris from major arteries in order to provide access. Yet, both security and essential services are enhanced by a collaborative and cooperative effort to merge military and civilian planning and execution. For the military commander, such coordination is essential in order to accomplish the military relief mission and to determine when and how to transition responsibility to the civil sector.

Transition is a crucial aspect of relief operations. The end of military operations does not mean the end of relief operations. The relief organizations and local, state, and national authorities are on the ground before the military shows up and will remain long after the

military departs. When and how the transition occurs are key decisions in the military planning process. While in the decisive activities, the commander must either choose or develop a mission and situation specific model by which he can measure success and determine a glide path to disengagement. The case studies reveal three distinct models by which a relief effort commander and his staff can attack the problem of identifying metrics for transition.

Negotiated conditions appear to work well in situations where local government and relief officials are willing to interact early and collaboratively with military staffs deployed to assist. Establishing a positive civil-military relationship as soon as possible and developing a true interagency approach at all levels clearly enhances the potential for success of the relief effort. However, this model will be difficult to use if the staff is unfamiliar with or unwilling to deal with civilians; if it adopts a we-they attitude; or if it fails to organize effectively to deal with the myriad of civilian agencies (local, state, federal, and NGO) which will likely flood the area and headquarters. The commander must eventually effectively organize his staff to receive and interact with the civilians in any event, regardless of the model chosen, but proactively seeking collaboration on the end state and effective metrics significantly enhances success.

The objective conditions model may be a better alternative when the scope of the devasta-tion is overwhelming, the ability to judge the magnitude of the disaster is wanting, or civilian agencies are incapable of productively assisting. Establishing critical and objective conditions to provide broad guidance to subordinates is an effective technique by which to visualize what is required for transition. However, these broad conditions must be carefully translated into discrete productive tasks or the actual military forces interfacing with the populace may waste effort or performing activities that are not aligned with the intent of higher headquarters. Nesting intent to the lowest level is paramount with this model. In addition, ensuring that a strong strategic communications plan exists as soon as possible to empower the civilian agencies and officials, and aggressively building an effective civil-military relationship also facilitate the application of this model.

The RFAs/tracking capacity model used in the tsunami case study can also be used to measure success. RFAs are quantifiable and are easily tracked by a headquarters. They provide a fairly simple way to illustrate to officials and commanders the progress being made in various areas. However, the Sphere standards debate offers an important lesson learned in regard to transition criteria: military staffs should avoid building overly-detailed or ambitious lists for humanitarian relief. A simple, quantifiable list of measures, developed in conjunction with NGOs and government officials at all levels, and vetted through relief experts such as USAID liaison personnel provides a more realistic and attainable transition framework, regardless of the actual tasks. Tracking capacity validates the RFA indicators and quantifies how capable arriving enablers are, but these must also be specific. If too general, they will not convey an accurate picture to the commander and they will complicate transition planning. Again, in this model, it is incumbent on all involved to ensure the civil-military linkage is strong. It is imperative that a collaborative effort be made to identify the disengagement plan because civilian officials and NGOs have differing perspectives from the military, and among themselves, as to when they are capable of assuming responsibility for relief operations.

Few operations are as complex as a major relief effort and that is why other organizations involved typically look to the military as the lead at the outset. The men and women in uniform who are on the spear's point have never failed the nation at home or abroad; they are masters at mobilizing resources and coordinating large operations. As we look at a future of greater demands, commanders and staffs confronting potential relief operations must remain mindful of the ambiguities and complexities that will confront them in planning and executing these operations. They must also be mindful that other military requirements exist, or may arise, and that any relief operation should have an appropriate military ending point. Whether choosing to use objective criteria, negotiated criteria, or RFAs/tracking capacity to define mission success, commanders and staffs owe it to all those involved to think through to the ending point, to know when it has been reached, and to neither rush nor extend it.

ENDNOTES - CHAPTER 6

1. J. Eugene Hass, Robert W. Kates, and Martyn J, Bowden, eds., *Reconstruction Following Disaster*, Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press,1977, p. 5.

2. *Ibid*., p. 3.

3. Conrad C. Crane and W. Andrew Terrill, *Reconstructing Iraq: Insights, Challenges, and Missions for Military Forces in a Post-Conflict Scenario*, Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, February 2003, p. 43.

4. U.S. Army Center for Army Lessons Learned, "Disaster Response, Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, Initial Impressions Report, # 06-11," Ft Leavenworth, KS: U.S. Army Center for Army Lessons Learned, CALL, February 2006, p. 89.

5. USAID Speeches: "Briefing on Humanitarian Assistance To Iraqis in the Event of War," February 25, 2003, available from *www.usaid.gov/press/speeches/2003/sp030225.html*.

6. *Joint Publication (JP) 5-0, Joint Operational Planning*, Washington, DC: The Joint Staff, December 26, 2006, p. IV-5.

7. *Joint Publication (JP) 3-07.6, Joint Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures for Foreign Humanitarian Assistance*, Washington, DC: The Joint Staff, August 15, 2001, p. I-9.

8. *JTF Commander's Handbook for Peace Operations*, Ft. Monroe, VA: The Joint Warfighting Center, June 16, 1997, p. V-1.

9. JP 3-07-6, p. IV-22.

10. *Joint Publication (JP) 3-08, Interagency, Intergovernmental Organization and Nongovernmental Organization Coordination During Joint Operations*, Vol. I, Chap. III, Washington, DC: The Joint Staff, March 17, 2006.

11. *Field Manual (FM) 3-07, Stability Operations and Support Operations*, Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Army, February 2003, pp. 1-1, 1-6, 6-12. An October 2008 revision of this FM integrates stability and support operations in light of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars. While the concepts articulated are similar, the 2003 version vocabulary is more useful in conceptualizing transition metrics as developed herein.

12. FM 3-07, p. iv.

13. *Ibid*., pp. 6-11.

14. JP 3-08, Vol I, p. IX.

15. *Field Manual (FM) 1, The Army*, Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Army, June 14, 2005, pp. 3-9.

16. FM 3-07, pp. 1-14, 1-22, 2-16. See also JP 3-07.3, pp. IV-15 thru IV-16.

17. *Ibid*., p. 6-21. DoD Directive 3025.12, "Military Assistance for Civil Disturbances, MACDIS," Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Defense, February 4, 1994, available from *www.dtic.mil/whs/directives/corres/pdf/302512p.pdf*.

18. *Field Manual* (*FM) 3-05.40, Civil Affairs Operations*, Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Army, September 29, 2006, pp. 3-7.

19. "Louisiana: Extension of Guard Watch in New Orleans," *New York Times*, Associated Press, January 10, 2008.

20. William S. Cohen, *Report of the Quadrennial Defense Review*, Washington DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, May 1997, p. 8.

21. William J. Clinton, *A National Security Strategy for a New Century*, Washington, DC: The White House, May 1997, p. 9; George W. Bush, *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America,* Washington, DC: The White House, March 2006, pp. 47-48, and introductory presidential letter.

22. "USAID from the American People," USAID website, Humanitarian Assistance, available from *www.usaid.gov/our_work/humanitarian_assistance/disaster_assistance*.,

23. *USAID Field Operations Guide for Disaster Assessment and Response, 4.0*, Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, February 2005, p. xix.

24. *Ibid*.

25. Nina M. Serafino and Martin A Weiss, *Peacekeeping and Post-Conflict Capabilities: The State Department's Office for Reconstruction and Stabilization Report for Congress*, Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, The Library of Congress, Order Code RS22031, April 2005, p. 1.

26. Andre Griekspoor and Steve Collins, *Raising Standards in Emergency Relief: How Useful are Sphere Standards for Minimum Humanitarian Assistance?* September 29, 2001, available from *www.pubmedcentral.nih.gov/articlerender.fcgi?artid=1121289#id2730650*.

27. *Ibid*.

28. James Daniels, "Operation Unified Assistance, Tsunami Transitions," *Military Review*, January-February 2006, p. 51.

29. "CINCFOR Hurricane Andrew After Action Report, Vol I," Fort McPherson, GA: United States Forces Command Headquarters, November 20, 1992, p. 4.

30. FM 3-07, pp. 6-11.

31. *Ibid*., pp. 6-11.

32. "CINCFOR Hurricane Andrew After Action Report, Vol. I," p. 4.

33. Jerold E. Brown, "*Humanitarian Operations in an Urban Environment: Hurricane Andrew, August-October 1992*," Fort Leavenworth, KS: U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, School of Advanced Military Studies, p. 425, available from *www-gsc.army.mil/ carl/download/csipubs/Block/chp12_Block%20by%20 Block.pdf*.

34. "CINCFOR Hurricane Andrew After Action Report Vol. I,"p. 15.

35. Mark R. Arn, "Department of Defense's Role in Disaster Relief," Civilian Research Project, p. 2, available from *www.dtic.mil/cgi-bin/GetTRDoc?AD=ADA461435&Location=U2&doc=GetTRDoc.pdf*.

36. "Preliminary Observations on Hurricane Response," Washington, DC: U.S. General Accounting Office, February 2006, p. 4.

37. "Port of Wilmington Welcomes USNS Peleliu with 82nd Airborne, 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit Cargo Back From Hurricane Relief," October 7, 2005, available from *www.ncports.com/web/ncports.nsf/ pages/051007+Hurricane+Relief*.

38. Donna Miles, "Military Leaders Describe Recovery Mission," September 3, 2005, available from *www.defenselink.mil/news/Sep2005/20050903_2609.html*.

39. "Louisiana: Extension of Guard Watch in New Orleans."

40. U.S. Army Center for Army Lessons Learned, p. 90.

41. *Ibid*., p. 89.

42. *Ibid*.

43. "After Action Review MSJTF Wright, HQ 265th EN Bn, Marietta to CP Shelby to Lyman and Return, DATES: 2 SEP 05-23 SEP 05," Fort Leavenworth, KS: U.S. Army Center for Army Lessons Learned, p. 1.

44. Bruce A. Elleman, ed., *Waves of Hope: The U.S. Navy's Response to the Tsunami in Northern Indonesia*, Newport Papers No. 28, Newport, RI: Center for Naval Warfare Studies, U.S. Naval War College, February 2007, pp. 6-7.

45. *Ibid*., Appendix I.

46. *Ibid*., p. 111.

47. *Ibid*., Appendix I.

48. Elleman, p. 89.

49. PACOM AAR, "CSG Indonesia-Transition," Revision 4, March 31, 2005, Powerpoint Briefing, available from *team.apan-info.net/QuickPlace/tsunami*, provided by Mr. Jim Long, PACOM Lessons Learned Specialist, slide 1.

50. *Joint Publication (JP) 3-57, Civil-Military Operations,* Washington, DC: U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, July 8, 2008, p. B-4.

51. Daniels, p. 51.

52. PACOM AAR, slide 1.

53. Elleman, p. 88.

54. "CSF-CSG RFA Form," Operation Unifed Assistance Tsunami Relief Information Exchange Portal, p. 1, available from *team.apan-info.net/QuickPlace/tsunami/PageLibrary0A256F7F000E4863.nsf/h_Toc/332D39D97656389F0A256F8900172461/?OpenDocument*.

55. Daniels, p. 51.

56. Elleman, p. 93.

57. PACOM AAR, slides 4-5.