



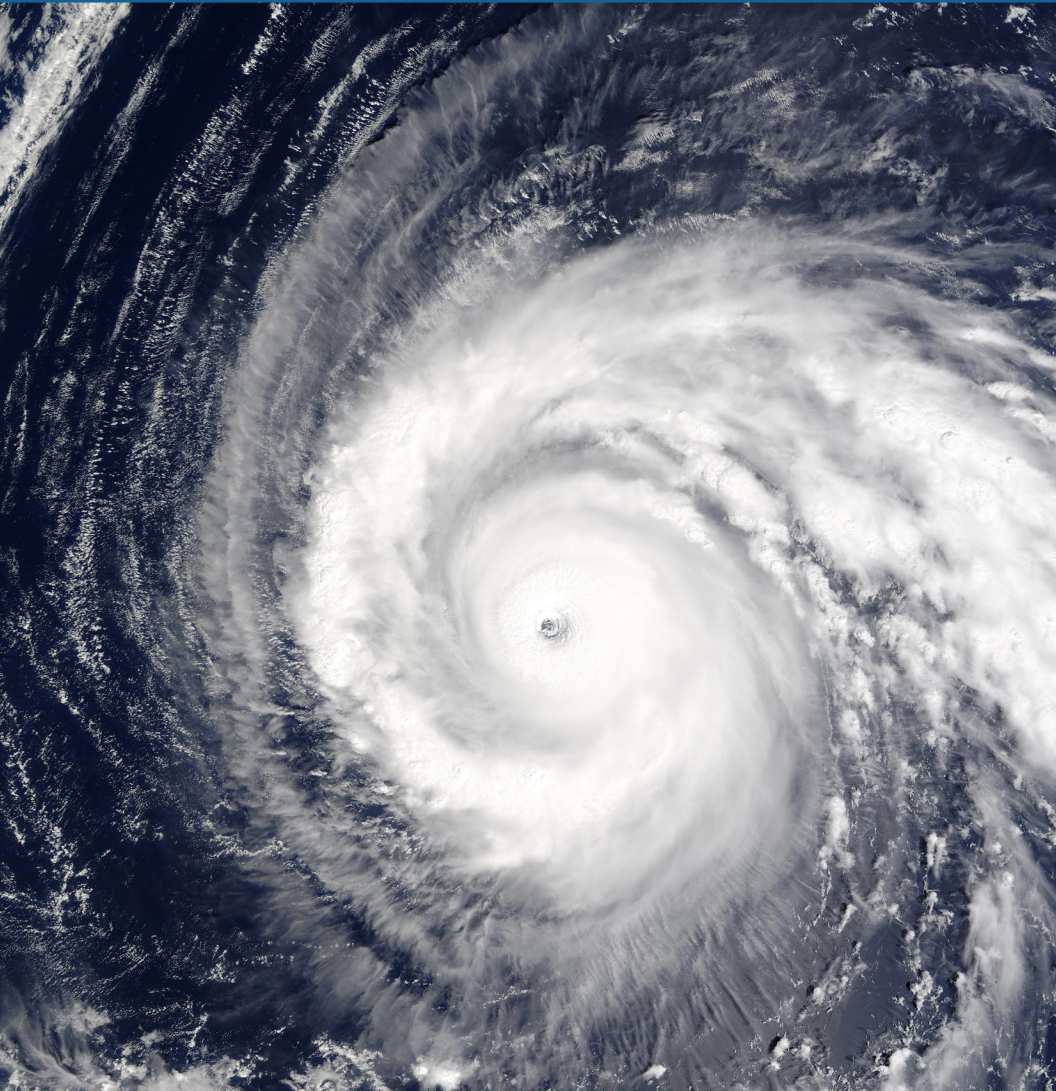
CENTER FOR EXCELLENCE

IN DISASTER MANAGEMENT AND HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

WWW.CFE-DMHA.ORG

CIVIL-MILITARY COORDINATION IN FOREIGN DISASTER RELIEF

BEST PRACTICES FOR AFFECTED & ASSISTING STATES



Series of Best Practices Pamphlets by CFE-DM



- Civil-Military Coordination in Foreign Disaster Relief: Best Practices for Affected & Assisting States
- Civil-Military Coordination in Foreign Disaster Relief: Best Practices for Information Sharing
- Civil-Military Coordination in Foreign Disaster Relief: Best Practices for Joint Operations Centers (JOCs)
- Civil-Military Coordination in Foreign Disaster Relief: Best Practices for Joint Task Forces (JTFs)
- Civil-Military Coordination in Foreign Disaster Relief: Best Practices for Logistics
- Best Practices for Inclusive Gendered Security in Natural Disasters
- Civil-Military Coordination during HA/DR in Conflict: Best Practices for Joint Task Forces (JTFs)
- Best Practices for Civilian Harm Mitigation and Response in U.S. Military Operations
- Best Practices for Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) in Pandemics
- Best Practices for DoD to Increase Readiness for Climate Change Impacts on HADR Related Missions
- Best Practices to Support Locally Led Responses

All pamphlets are open-source and available for free download at:
<https://www.cfe-dmha.org/Publications/Best-Practices-Pamphlets>

Executive Summary

Purpose: To provide a condensed set of best practices for civil-military coordination during foreign disaster relief (FDR) missions for state-level actors partnering with UN or other international actors.

Key Points:

- Respect the independent, humanitarian and impartial actions of non-governmental humanitarian agencies
- Affected State has primary responsibility for disaster relief in their territory
- Affected State, upon determining a disaster exceeds coping capacity, should request international assistance as soon as possible
- Affected State has sovereign right to coordinate, regulate and monitor relief and recovery assistance provided by assisting actors
- Affected State should facilitate rapid access to disaster victims for humanitarian responders
- Affected State should facilitate the timely flow of relief goods and information
- Affected State should provide a coordinated disaster information and planning service – having a National Disaster Response Plan is crucial to ensuring that stakeholders within an affected state are on the same page
- Assisting States should communicate offer of assistance, and if accepted, deployment of military assets to inform Affected State in its decision making
- Assisting States should support efforts and liaise with Affected State, including lead agency for the disaster response, which is usually civilian

Introduction

Need for civil-military coordination: There has been a proliferation of humanitarian actors, as well as more frequent deployment of military actors as part of foreign disaster relief (FDR). Increasing numbers and types of actors on the ground lead to a complicated response environment -- a “fog of relief.” Civil-military coordination is critical in reducing duplication of efforts, reducing gaps in coverage, and contributing to a more effective response.

Definition: Civil-military coordination is the coordination between military and civilian actors - including national populations, local authorities, and international, national and non-governmental organizations - in support of disaster response. For the consideration of Affected and Assisting States, civil-military coordination should take into consideration:

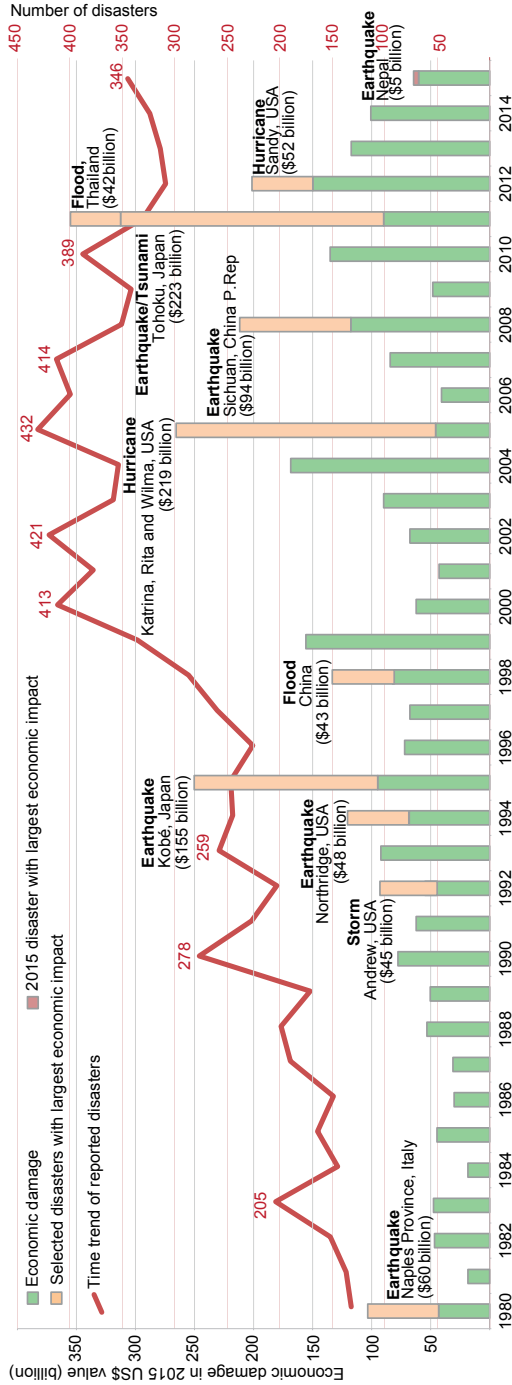
- Coordination within the military structures of all issues related to a response by multiple-actors, including relevant local interests.
- Coordination of military efforts with those of civilian actors to avoid duplication of efforts and minimize gaps, but also to prevent undesired cross-interference, in order to mutually increase effectiveness and efficiency.

Commanders are increasingly required to take into account political, social, economic, cultural, religious, environmental, and humanitarian factors when planning and conducting operations. Furthermore, commanders recognize that operational areas contain the presence of a large number of civil actors with their own mandates, aims, methods, principles, structure, roles and perspectives that might have an impact on military operations and vice versa. Thus, civil-military coordination is not applicable solely to FDR missions but is particularly important in these instances.

Disasters by the Numbers

Annually, hundreds of disasters are reported, tens of thousands of people are killed and hundreds of millions affected. Billions of dollars of economic damage result from disasters, including floods, storms, droughts, landslides, earthquakes, tsunamis, wildfires, temperature extremes, volcanos and human flight. The number of disasters has increased over the past 20 years.

Annual reported economic damages and time trend from disasters: 1980-2015



BEST PRACTICES

Role of Foreign Military Forces

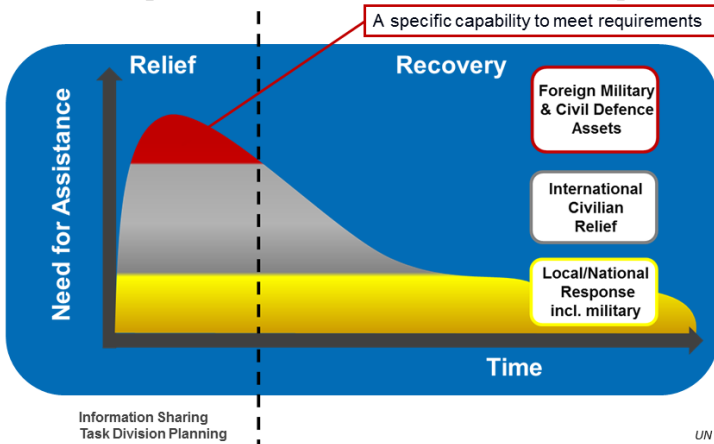
Foreign military assets (FMA) should be used as a last resort when:

- Specific capability cannot be met with available civilian assets; &
- FMA would help meet requirements and provide unique advantages in terms of capability and timeliness; &
- FMA would complement civilian capabilities

An Affected State has a sovereign right to deploy its armed forces internally. National military or civil defense units are often primary responders in domestic emergency responses. However, the humanitarian community still evaluates whether and how to coordinate with a domestic military in line with humanitarian principles.

Foreign militaries typically assist most at the start of disaster response, and are among the first to leave as they handover operations to those staying longer. Thus, the Affected State should prepare to coordinate a large influx of assistance at the beginning, and also to receive transitioned operations upon their departure.

FMA help most at start of international disaster responses



UN OCH

Assisting States – Whole of Government approaches

When the U.S. deploys assets – civilian or military – in response to an international disaster, the lead federal agency is USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA). Most Assisting States' international disaster responses are similarly led by a civilian arm of the government. Awareness of various Assisting States' whole-of-government approaches aids overall coordination efforts.

Role of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) coordinates humanitarian actors in international disaster responses. OCHA plays a critical role in liaising with military actors on behalf of the humanitarian community, including by deploying UN Humanitarian Civil-Military Coordination (UN-CMCoord) Officers.

Coordination occurs along a spectrum from co-existence to cooperation, depending on the security situation. The more insecure the environment the less closely humanitarian actors will coordinate with the military, in order to protect their perceived neutrality and independence from any armed forces in the area.

- In a natural disaster in peacetime, military forces may be deployed to assist relief operations with a similar mission to the humanitarian, in which actors cooperate to save lives and assist affected people.
- In insecure and complex operational environments, and where the causes of a humanitarian crisis are conflict-related, the relationship and interaction will be different. In such environments, military actors are inherently present and share operational space but not necessarily objectives with humanitarians.

Best Practice: Deployment of appropriate military capacity should include an exit strategy that defines how the activities can be continued with civilian personnel and means.

The three key areas of civil-military coordination are:

- Dialogue and Information Sharing: At minimum, coordination can involve information sharing to guide planning and decision-making. *Under no circumstances will humanitarian actors disclose information to any group involved in armed conflict* that may give tactical advantage or put civilians at risk.
- Task Division: Priorities should be determined by disaster needs assessments, led by or coordinated with the Affected State. As humanitarian actors then identify gaps in capacity, task divisions point to where military forces may fill those gaps with a unique capacity.
- Joint Planning: If military and humanitarian actors are co-located in a joint operations center, military will often participate directly in planning. In other situations, joint planning may be limited to specific areas, such as security measures, armed escorts, civilian protection or de-confliction.

A clear separation must be made in partners' minds between military civic action, which is based on the needs to achieve military mission objectives, and military support to humanitarian assistance operations – which is solely to save lives.

Best Practice: Militaries most appropriately support relief efforts through infrastructure support tasks and indirect assistance. When humanitarian access is restricted, militaries can provide direct assistance.

When humanitarian access is restricted, militaries can provide direct assistance.

- **Infrastructure Support** are general services (road repair, airspace management and power generation) that facilitate relief, but are not necessarily visible to or solely for the benefit of the affected population.
- **Indirect Assistance** is at least one step removed from the population and involves such activities as transporting relief goods or relief personnel.
- **Direct Assistance** is the face-to-face distribution of goods and services.
- Appropriateness of military actors performing types of relief assistance ultimately depend of the security situation and level of conflict.

Appropriateness of Military Actors performing Relief Tasks (based on mission)

Availability and impartiality of forces decreases →

Mission of Military Humanitarian Tasks	Peaceful	Peace & Security Activities		Combat
		Peacekeeping	Peace Enforcement	
Direct	Maybe	Maybe	No	No
Indirect	Yes	Maybe	Maybe	No
Infrastructure Support	Yes	Yes	Maybe	Maybe

↓ *Visibility of task decreases*

7

Best Practice: Understand and respect core humanitarian principles.

Humanitarian planning and operations are all guided by humanitarian principles, which are part of the humanitarian code of conduct. Supporting these principles will significantly de-conflict response efforts, and reduce risk to humanitarian actors and beneficiaries.

1. **Humanity**—Aid is provided to save lives and alleviate suffering, based on need.
2. **Impartiality**—Aid is provided regardless of ethnicity, race, tribe, religion, etc.
3. **Neutrality** —Aid is provided regardless of political or religious allegiances.
4. **Operational Independence**: Humanitarian actors must retain the lead role in humanitarian activities. They must not implement tasks on behalf of a military or a foreign government. They must be free in movement, conducting independent assessments, selecting staff and identifying recipients of assistance.

Best Practice: All responders should support and also aim to follow the humanitarian code of conduct.

In addition to the core humanitarian principles, the rest of the humanitarian code of conduct are essentially lessons learned for how to do aid right, based on decades of field experiences. Following these standards leads to long-lasting aid outcomes that are integral parts of the affected community – not just short-term solutions imposed by outsiders.

- Respect culture and custom
- Attempt to build disaster response on local capacities
- Involve beneficiaries in the management of relief aid
- Strive to reduce future vulnerabilities while also meeting basic needs in giving aid
- Accountable to beneficiaries as well as those we accept resources from
- Do not objectify disaster victims, but recognize their dignity

Best Practice: Understand and train to other key humanitarian considerations.

Humanitarian Space: Refers NOT to geographical area, but to a conducive operating environment in which humanitarians can access beneficiaries to deliver aid, and beneficiaries can receive aid regardless of political allegiance.

Humanitarian Access to Beneficiaries: Humanitarian agencies must maintain the ability to obtain access to all vulnerable populations in all areas and to negotiate such access with all parties to conflict. Coordination with the military should facilitate, secure and sustain - not hinder - humanitarian access.

Perception of Humanitarian Action: Humanitarian assistance must come without political or military conditions. Civil-military coordination must not jeopardize the local network and trust that humanitarian agencies have created.

Civilian-Military Distinction in Humanitarian Action: At all times, a clear distinction must be maintained between combatants and non-combatants, who are granted immunity from attack. Military personnel must refrain from presenting themselves as civilian / humanitarian workers, and vice versa.

Security of Humanitarian Personnel: Any perception that humanitarian organizations may have become affiliated with a military could impact negatively on the security of their staff and on humanitarian access.

Do No Harm: Humanitarian action, including civil-military coordination, must not have negative impacts on the people it seeks to help.

Avoid Reliance on Military: Humanitarian actors should avoid reliance on military resources or support, to not lead to dependence on a short-term resource.

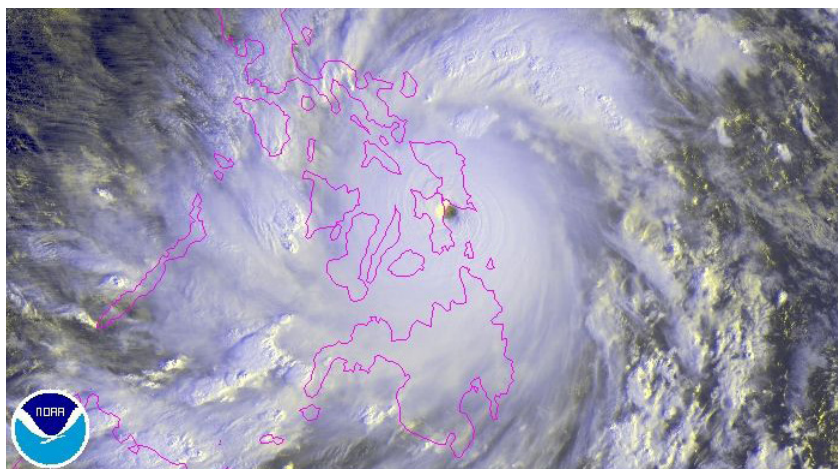
National Disaster Response Planning

Instituting a national disaster response plan vastly improves the delivery of assistance to affected populations, particularly when several levels of local government / security are involved alongside international agencies and military forces.

Haiyan to Hagupit

The Philippines is often examined as an example for two reasons: 1) the major role the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) plays in delivering disaster relief / assistance to affected communities; and 2) the stark contrast in recent experiences of disaster response that demonstrate the importance of planning and preparedness.

The short-comings of the national and international response to Typhoon Haiyan drove a focused national-level effort to develop and implement a disaster response plan which, when first tested during Typhoon Hagupit (2014) meant that deaths were reduced by 99%. The components of this plan explicitly incorporate AFP and establish a mechanism for foreign military forces to coordinate activities with Philippine civilian and military actors as well as international and national non-government organizations.



2013; Image: NOAA

Best Practice: National disaster planning should include development of a commonly understood “end-to-end warning system” to prepare.

An inclusive approach to risk monitoring and analysis, needs assessment, and risk communication provides a shared informational platform to achieve consensus on the operating environment.

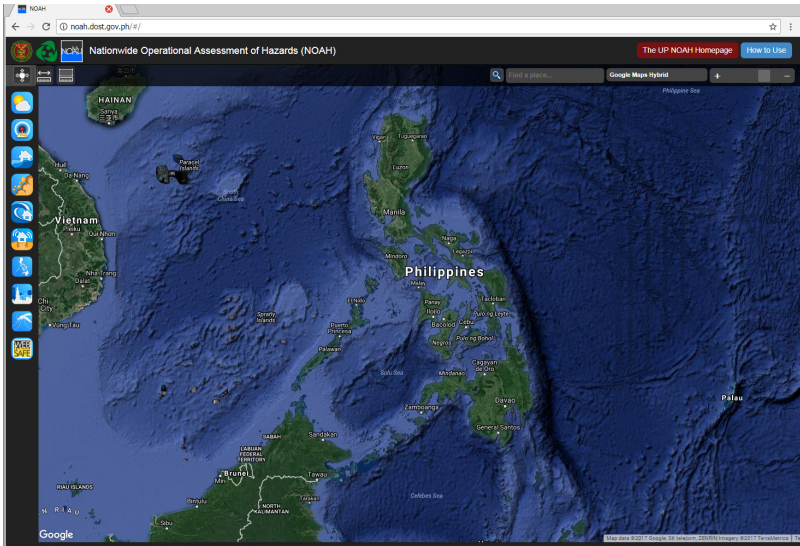
- During Haiyan, “storm surge” warnings were insufficient since the audience assumed this would be just like the 20 other storms that strike the islands each year. The warnings failed to address topographical variations, the size of the storm, and the resources of local authorities to address their individual circumstances.

The two underlying principles are:

1. Local leaders need to receive and give accurate, timely, relevant and understandable warnings; and
 2. People must have the resources to put knowledge from warnings into action. In the Philippines, this takes the form of the Pre-Disaster Risk Assessment – Actions, Protocols and Programs (PDRA-APP) tool. Several government agencies use the tool together to predict potential hazard impacts. This triggers the activation of response clusters and provides guidance on the appropriate level of response actions from the national down to the local level.
- When Hagupit threatened, PDRA-APP was already at work. Every 6 hours, the location, strength, and movement of the storm was reported down the chain. Storm surge models and corresponding inundation maps of municipalities were made available. Specific warnings regarding potential storm impacts on the infrastructure, communication, agriculture and other areas were broadcast. Easily understandable color-coded advisories warned the people. The media publicized response preparedness measures such as sufficient prepositioned relief supplies, emergency phone numbers, and standardized hashtags. The media was included in the public information effort ahead of Hagupit’s landfall.

Working from the same PDRA-APP report, the response clusters took action in partnership with international agencies based on the 2014 National Disaster Response Plan.

Having a Common Picture of Risk and Response



Philippine Government Nationwide Operational Assessment of Hazards (NOAH) web-site consolidates warnings and data on natural disaster threats. <http://noah.dost.gov.ph/#/section/geoserver/stormsurge1>

Best Practice: Establish a military-military coordination platform, led by Affected State

This provides central interface for national and foreign military forces. Common examples are a Multinational Coordination Center (MNCC) or alternately a Multinational Military Coordination Center (MNMCC).

- During Haiyan, the Philippines Multi-National Coordination Center (MNCC) stood up several days after the storm and was tasked with coordinating 29 foreign responding militaries.
- AFP realized it lacked personnel trained in operating the MNCC – thus individual liaisons to national military contingents were largely used to pass information and direct resources. This resulted in relief efforts operating bilaterally, poor information sharing, and duplicated efforts.
- In contrast, 48 hours ahead of Hagupit's landfall, the MNCC at Camp Aguinaldo stood up, staffed and prepared to manage surges of arriving foreign military assets. The MNCC received clear, consolidated needs assessments from civilian authorities via the PDRA-APP, which guided where military resources were directed.

Best Practice: Establish a humanitarian-military coordination platform.

This facilitates communication between domestic and foreign military and humanitarian actors. An increasingly used structure is the Humanitarian-Military Operations Coordination Center (HuMOCC), used in the responses to Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines (2013), Cyclone Pam in Vanuatu (2015), and the earthquake in Nepal (2015).



Typhoon Haiyan survivors prepare to board US and Australian C-130 Super Hercules aircraft during Operation Damayan in Tacloban, Philippines, 18 November 2013. The US aircraft, assigned to the 3rd Marine Expeditionary Brigade, part of Joint Task Force 505, operated to support the Philippine government in coordination with the US Agency for International Development (USAID). U.S. Marine Corps photo by Capt. Caleb Eames.

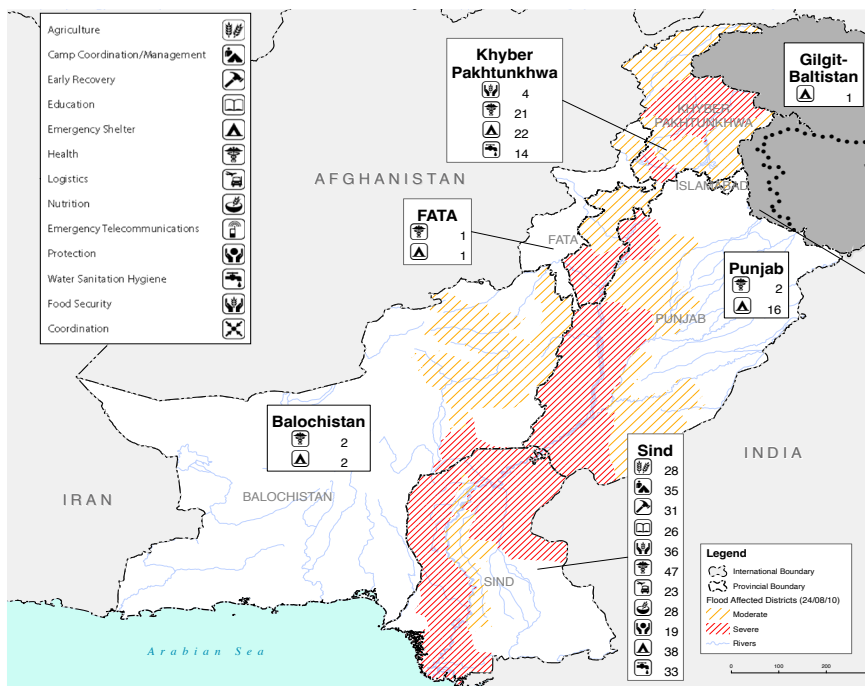
Philippines International Humanitarian Assistance Cluster (PIHAC): After Typhoons Haiyan (2013) and Hagupit (2014), the Philippine government developed the PIHAC, under the Department of Foreign Affairs. Assistance coming from the international humanitarian community would be coordinated by the NDRRMC through the PIHAC. The PIHAC would coordinate foreign military teams (search- and-rescue, medical), and require Philippine response clusters to submit a list of humanitarian civil-military assistance requirements, to convey to the international community. Under PIHAC, a Philippine International Humanitarian Assistance Reception Center (PIHARC) would operate as a “one-stop-shop” at an entry port to process incoming relief workers and in-kind donations.

Coordination

Pakistan Floods, 2010

In 2007, the Pakistani government set up the National Disaster Management Agency (NDMA) – a civilian body headed by a senior military figure. NDMA was tasked with coordinating the country’s emergency response, including

cooperation between government and humanitarian actors. By the time the flooding of 2010 hit, civil–military relations were strained as the result of geopolitical and security changes. Thus, different aid actors had different levels of cooperation with the military; overall, humanitarian agencies faced criticism for not challenging what was viewed as significant politicization and militarization of ‘humanitarian space.’ In 2010, just months prior to the outbreak of the worst flooding in the country’s history, country-level Pakistan Civil–military Guidelines had been developed by the UN country team and OCHA. The guidelines recognized the differences between responses to complex emergencies versus peacetime disasters and set different standards for civil–military interaction in each.



First UN OCHA Cluster Overview (3W), 19 August 2010, three weeks into the flooding (UN OCHA)

Differences remained within the humanitarian community regarding the use of military assets. Pakistan’s military was among the first to respond to the flooding crisis. Afghanistan, Australia, Japan, the UAE, and the US also mobilized military personnel, medical teams, field hospitals, and air logistics facilities. Meanwhile, aid agencies faced significant challenges since their presences tended cluster in larger towns for logistical, political and security reasons.

The way in which a crisis is characterized – conflict-linked or peacetime – matters for the civil–military relations that develop.

- During the Pakistan flood response (2010), responders who saw themselves addressing a pure natural disaster tended to have a laxer approach to civil-military relations, while agencies who viewed the crisis as part of a larger complex emergency tended to take a stricter line on use of military assets.

Best Practice: Discussion on coordination between humanitarian and military actors – addressing both foreign and domestic militaries – should take place as early as possible in preparation for disaster – and any guidelines established should have buy-in from as many stakeholders as possible.

- During Pakistan flood response, humanitarian and donor community lacked agreement on defining last resort regarding use of military.
- Although there were country-specific civil-military guidelines for Pakistan established just before the 2010 floods, not all Pakistani authorities necessarily endorsed the guidelines.

Best Practice: Foreign disaster relief operations should manage information as ‘Unclassified’ to the greatest extent possible to enable effective information sharing.

- The humanitarian community uses various communications systems – landline, mobile-cellular, radio, internet, satellite telephone – with degrees of secure, non-secure and digital streaming capabilities.
- Keeping information ‘Unclassified’ will enable effective sharing across platforms and participating agencies.

Pre-Disaster Education and Training

During FDR missions, military and humanitarian actors have overlapping but not identical missions. The vertical organizational structure of the military does not mesh well with the horizontal organizational structure of humanitarian organizations. Participation alongside each other in non-emergency periods and FDR training will significantly mitigate cultural and institutional differences.

Best Practice: Improve the capacity of military commanders and forces in potentially affected and contributing countries to work alongside humanitarian actors and vice versa.

- Preparing generic status-of-forces agreements facilitates the timely deployment of foreign military assets in disaster relief.
- Tapping humanitarian coordinators’ and resident coordinators’ knowledge of disaster relief is critical. The military forces of both affected and responding states need to understand why specific military assets have been requested and with which other forces they may be working.

Best Practice: National disaster management plans in disaster-prone countries should include how to assess the need for foreign military assets, how to request them, how to manage offers from foreign countries, and how to manage the assets when they arrive.

- Military actors should participate in needs assessment activities *in coordination with humanitarian actors and/or Affected State*. Military assets can facilitate assessment missions. Appropriate military representatives can also help civil–military coordination, identifying the most useful role that military assets can play and facilitating targeted requests for military assets that will best complement civilian capabilities.

Needs assessments should be continually updated and refined, based on new information. This can help to adjust the tasks of military and civilian actors and, importantly, to identify the earliest opportunities for military assets to be withdrawn and their responsibilities given to foreign or domestic civilian alternatives.

Best Practice: Response partners must be aware of and understand the humanitarian information management tools available.

- There are already various humanitarian information management tools available (eg: Virtual OSOCC), and ensuring access to them by potential military responders is crucial.

Best Practice: Participation in multi-agency simulated scenario exercises is essential to developing mutual understanding and will assist organizations in identifying priority coordination points.

- Many global military forces recognize that there is a general lack of awareness amongst personnel regarding the capabilities of other government agencies, non-government organizations and local enterprises in support of disaster and emergency events.
- Correspondingly, there appears to be a general lack of understanding amongst those organizations about the military's potential role in FDR, including capabilities and overall assignment and tasking.
- Opportunities that promote common understanding of supporting and lead agency roles in FDR contexts must be developed if unity of effort and efficiency of mission accomplishment is to be achieved. Attendance at recognized civil–military coordination workshops and courses should be a priority for planners and key liaison officers.

Strategic Considerations

- What is the intended military end-state?
- What are the measures of effectiveness? Will the MOE determine the exit strategy?
- What other government agencies will contribute to the strategic partnership? What is their approach to coordination?
- Are there external agencies that should be included in initial planning? Later planning?
- What civil-military coordination structures and liaisons are needed at the strategic level to support the operational plan? At the operational level to support the tactical commander?
- What military personnel will be assigned to civil-military coordination?
- What level of support will be offered through humanitarian assistance? Is it funded? How much? Are there additional sources of revenue?

Sources & References

UN OCHA, *Humanitarian Civil-Military Coordination: A Guide for the Military*, July 2014. <https://docs.unocha.org/sites/dms/Documents/03.%20UN-CMCoord%20Guide%20for%20the%20Military%20v%201.0.pdf>

UN OCHA, *Guidelines on the Use of Foreign Military and Civil Defence Assets in Disaster Relief* ("Oslo Guidelines"), November 2007. [https://docs.unocha.org/sites/dms/Documents/Oslo%20Guidelines%20ENGLISH%20\(November%202007\).pdf](https://docs.unocha.org/sites/dms/Documents/Oslo%20Guidelines%20ENGLISH%20(November%202007).pdf)

Sphere Project, *Sphere Handbook: Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response*, 2011. <http://www.sphereproject.org/handbook/>

UN OCHA, *Asia-Pacific Regional Guidelines for the Use of Foreign Military Assets in Natural Disaster Response Operations* ("APC-MADRO"), 2014. http://gallery.mailchimp.com/b438b7d9f4bf43c0ebb7a4a0/files/Guidelines_FMA_Final.pdf

IFRC, *Guidelines for the domestic facilitation and regulation of international disaster relief and initial recovery assistance*, 2011. [http://www.ifrc.org/PageFiles/41203/1205600-IDRL%20Guidelines-EN-LR%20\(2\).pdf](http://www.ifrc.org/PageFiles/41203/1205600-IDRL%20Guidelines-EN-LR%20(2).pdf)

UN OCHA, *Foreign Military and Civil Defence Assets in Support of Humanitarian Emergency Operations: What is Last Resort?* 2012, https://docs.unocha.org/sites/dms/Documents/Last%20Resort%20Pamphlet%20-%20FINAL%20April%202012_5.3.pdf

IFRC, *The Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-governmental Organizations in Disaster Relief*, <http://www.ifrc.org/Global/Publications/disasters/code-of-conduct/code-english.pdf>

Ajay Madiwale and Kudrat Virk, "Civil-military relations in natural disasters: a case study of the 2010 Pakistan floods," *International Review of the Red Cross*, Vol. 93, No. 884, December 2011, <https://www.icrc.org/eng/assets/files/review/2011/irrc-884-madiwale-virk.pdf>

US Marine Corps, *Foreign Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief: Operation Damayan, Support to the Republic of the Philippines after Typhoon Haiyan in November 2013*, April 2014, <https://www.cfe-dmha.org/Resources/Lessons-Learned/Typhoon-Haiyan-Yolanda-2013>

CFE-DM, "Advances in Civil-Military Coordination in Catastrophes: How the Philippines Turned Lessons Learned from Super Typhoon Haiyan into Best Practices for Disaster Preparedness and Response" (<https://www.cfe-dmha.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=QEDCMIMtC4%3D&portalid=0>)

United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction: <http://www.unisdr.org/>



Center for Excellence in Disaster Management & Humanitarian Assistance
456 Hornet Avenue, Joint Base Pearl Harbor - Hickam, Hawaii 96860-3503
Telephone: (808) 472-0518
<https://www.cfe-dmha.org>