



Background/Overview:

The US-China Disaster Management Exchange (DME) is a long-standing military-to-military dialogue between the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) and U.S. Army Pacific (USARPAC). The purpose of the DME is to promote strategic and substantive dialogue with the PLA, promote mutual understanding and good relations, and serve as an area of practical cooperation between China and the United States. USARPAC objectives for the DME were to assist the PLA in building cooperative capacity to assist other countries with Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Response (HADR), and to emphasize defense support to civil authorities in the event of a humanitarian disaster. CFE-DM has supported the US-China DME since 2013. The event rotates location annually between the U.S. and China.

2017 DME

Participation

Over 260 military personnel met in Oregon to attend the USARPAC-PLA 2017 DME. Ninety-one PLA soldiers were in attendance, including two general officers, and eleven senior colonels. The head of the U.S. delegation hosting the DME on behalf of USARPAC was Maj. Gen. Susan A. Davidson, the Commanding General of the 8th Theater Sustainment Command. The senior ranking officer for the U.S. Army was Gen. Robert B. Brown, commanding general of USARPAC, who presided over the closing ceremonies. CFE-DM sent two subject matter experts (SMEs) to support the events in Portland and Camp Rilea, Ore. Other organizations participating were the US Geological Survey (USGS), US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), National Oceanic Atmospheric Association (NOAA), USAID Office of US Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA), Pacific Disaster Center (PDC), US Coast Guard and the National Disaster Reduction Center of China, Ministry of Civil Affairs, P.R. China.

Three levels of engagement

The Expert Academic Discussion (EAD) took place in Portland, Ore. from 13-15 November 2017 and provided an opportunity for senior-level discussions on domestic disaster challenges in both countries. During the EAD, the US and Chinese delegations used recent flooding events in the respective countries to discuss current technologies used to predict and monitor flooding. Also discussed were mitigation efforts by both countries to prevent these types of disasters from reoccurring. CFE-DM SMEs participated in this discussion and provided relevant questions to enhance the learning of both audiences.

Participating Organizations

- US Army Pacific (USARPAC)
- Oregon Army National Guard
- US Coast Guard (USCG)
- People's Liberation Army(PLA)
- USAID Office of US Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA)
- US Geological Survey (USGS)
- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)
- US Army Corps of Engineers
- Center for Excellence in Disaster Management and Humanitarian Assistance (CFE-DM)
- Pacific Disaster Center (PDC)
- National Disaster Reduction Center of China, Ministry of Civil Affairs, P.R. China
- The office of State Flood Control and Drought Relief Headquarters PRC



Following the EAD in Portland, a Table Top Exchange (TTE) took place at Camp Rilea, Ore. from 15-19 November. During the TTE, CFE-DM worked closely with the Pacific Disaster Center, and the US Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) to provide participants with a challenging scenario based on a flood that occurred in Peru. The PDC Emergency Operations (EMOPS) system provided a common operating picture for which the DME TTE participants could source and process requests for assistance (RFAs) using the Multinational Coordination Center (MNCC) construct. CFE-DM SMEs acted as role players for the affected state's national disaster management office. CFE-DM was also able to leverage their partnership with the Regional HADR Coordinating Center (RHCC) in Singapore to provide a SME on the ASEAN SASOP Chapter VI HADR MNCC Annex which facilitated the TTE MNCC construct. The RHCC SME provided valuable expertise on the functioning of the HADR MNCC and showed the value of opening up the DME to multinational participation.

Camp Rilea also hosted the Practical Field Exchange (PFE) from 15-19 November, which allowed soldiers from both countries to practice hands on tactical techniques in a disaster setting. US and PLA soldiers worked side by side to free simulated victims from a rubble pile and administer medical first aid. A maritime search and rescue demonstration was also given by the US Coast Guard Air Station Astoria highlighting the capabilities of their USCG HH-60 Jayhawk helicopter and its ability to rescue victims from the water.

The DME concluded with closing remarks from Gen. Brown, USARPAC, and Maj. Gen. Taoyi, PLA. Both speakers remarked on the importance and the success of the 2017 DME, highlighting the need for both militaries to continue to work toward a cooperative stance when providing assistance to nations struck by disaster.

