



Cobra Gold 18

Cobra Gold is an annual Royal Thai Armed Forces and U.S. Pacific Command co-sponsored multinational and multiservice exercise. It is an important element of the U.S. and participating nation's regional mil-to-mil engagement efforts seeking to maintain readiness; develop capabilities; and enhance security and stability in the Indo-Asia-Pacific region.

Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Response Exercise (HADR-X)

This year marked the first time Cobra Gold included a Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Response Exercise (HADR-X), which incorporated an HADR Tabletop Exercise (TTX) and Senior Leader Seminar (SLS). CFE-DM led the planning for these events. The objective of the TTX was to ensure both full and limited participating nations understood and implemented international disaster response principles, guidelines and practices for foreign military support during a major natural disaster response. Particular emphasis was placed on best practices, concepts and mechanisms to support effective civil-military and military-military coordination during these operations.

The TTX consisted of an academics portion that included various presentations, but more importantly panel discussions with humanitarian experts facilitated by CFE-DM. A scenario-based exercise then proceeded to ensure all 100 participants were able to put theory and lessons into practice.

The SLS was facilitated by CFE-DM's Director, Joseph Martin, and concluded the TTX. It provided a unique opportunity to more than 30 senior military and humanitarian representatives to discuss challenges and opportunities for improved regional response in natural disasters. Additionally, it highlighted the unique coordination challenges presented in disasters that occur within a conflict environment.

This forum facilitated the essential introduction of civilian and military actors prior to the next disaster in the world's most disaster affected region. CFE-DM plans to continue to take the lead in the planning and execution of the HADR TTX in support of the Exercise Cobra Gold Six-Year Plan (2019-2024).¹

One-hundred thirty participants from:

- Thailand
- USA
- Japan
- Malaysia
- Singapore
- Indonesia
- Korea
- India
- China

Subject Matter Experts/Organizations Represented:

1. Affected State Lead Coordinating Authority in Disaster Response: Department of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation, Thailand (DDPM)
2. Regional Humanitarian Coordination: ASEAN Humanitarian Assistance Centre (AHA Centre)
3. Multinational Coordination Center: Singapore Regional Humanitarian Coordination Centre (RHCC)
4. Regional Military Capabilities: ASEAN Military Readiness Group (AMRG) concept brief by representative of the Malaysian Armed Forces
5. International Humanitarian Coordination: United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA)
6. International Principles and Guidelines for Disaster Response: International Federation of the Red Cross/Red Crescent (IFRC)
7. Disaster in a complex emergency: International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)

¹ Signed 4 August 2017, MG Joaquin F. Malavet, USPACOM & LTG Parinya Khoonnasee, RTArF



Command Post Exercise (CPX)

CG18 also included the traditional Command Post Exercise (CPX) of multinational forces (MNF) executing Peace Enforcement Operations under a fictitious scenario to force invaders to comply with an U.N. Security Council Resolution. CFE-DM played a major role in creating realistic scenarios, including humanitarian assistance complications. For example, the training audience encountered challenging circumstances related to International Humanitarian Law (IHL), including the proper detention and handling of enemy combatants. Many of these combatants were child soldiers, pirates, and non-state actors. Moreover, encountering civilian entities on the battlefield, to include U.N. contracted aircraft and convoy operations, added a level of depth to the exercise that branched outward to other disciplines, such as public affairs, operations, legal, and civil-military operations.

CFE-DM brought together multiple humanitarian experts throughout the planning and execution of CG18 to add a layer of complexity and realism to the exercise and shape humanitarian aspects of the scenario.

Leveraging the experience and expertise from ICRC, UNOCHA, WFP, and UNHCR, CFE-DM developed several dynamic events related to International Humanitarian Law, de-confliction of humanitarian and military operations, protection of civilians, and liaison approaches during complex emergencies.

The events forced the training audience to respond to operational complexities found within the modern conflict landscape shared by civilian and military actors. Prior to the CPX, representatives from ICRC and UNHCR also provided specialized academic presentations on the Rules of Armed Conflict and a humanitarian perspective on the U.N. Convention on the Laws of the Sea (UNCLOS).

