

Statement of

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Introduction

Chairman Davis, Ranking Member Waxman, distinguished members of the Committee: thank you for the opportunity to address you today on the Department of Defense's (DoD's) information-sharing lessons learned for disaster response.

Whether on the battlefield or in a disaster area, having the right information at the right time to take the right action can mean the difference between life or death, success or failure. DoD has a great deal of experience in the development and implementation of the essential policies, procedures, and technologies to enable effective information-sharing and shared situational awareness among command echelons, the Military Departments, coalition partners, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

At home, the National Response Plan (NRP), which was published by the Department of Homeland Security in December 2004, recognizes the importance of information to mission success and states: "Implementation of the NRP and its supporting protocols will require extensive cooperation, collaboration, and information-sharing across jurisdictions, as well as between the government and the private sector at all levels." Providing mechanisms for vertical and horizontal coordination, communications, and information-sharing in response to threats or incidents is a key concept of the NRP. The mechanisms provided in the NRP are intended to facilitate coordination among State, local, and tribal entities, and the Federal Government, as well as between the public and private sectors.

Shared Situational Awareness

Shared situational awareness -- a common perception and understanding of the operational environment and its implications -- is a core capability indicated in

DoD's Strategy for Homeland Defense and Civil Support, which was published in June 2005.

Whether before, during, or after an incident, or at the level of senior decision-makers or the soldiers, sailors, airmen, or Marines actually carrying out decisions on-scene at an incident, shared situational awareness is a powerful enabler for mission success.

The Quadrennial Defense Review, which was published February 2006, tasked DoD to develop an information-sharing strategy to guide operations with Federal, State, local, and coalition partners. The Strategy for Homeland Defense and Civil Support supports this task and promotes the integration and sharing of applicable DoD capabilities, equipment, and technologies with Federal, State, local, and tribal authorities and the private sector.

Conditions for Success

While we are always striving to improve DoD's approach to and capabilities for information-sharing and shared situational awareness, our present capabilities have proven to be effective. This performance is largely due to several organizational and cultural conditions within DoD.

DoD is a strategy-driven organization that plans for contingencies. Even as we marshal our currently available capabilities and resources to address an emerging contingency, we are constantly planning and preparing for a full range of potential contingencies in the future.

DoD anticipates and plans for complexity. We plan, for example, to deploy to and operate in regions where the supporting infrastructure (e.g., communications, power, and roads) does not exist or has been destroyed or seriously damaged. We even plan for when things don't quite go as planned.

DoD has a highly disciplined yet flexible, multi-year focused budget and resourcing process that develops the capabilities necessary to deal effectively with current and future contingencies.

DoD plans campaigns, not just battles. Victory in war is often the accumulation of success over many battles, each planned to achieve specific objectives within the strategic context of an overall campaign, which is, in turn, driven by national objectives that direct and guide the exercise of the full spectrum of our nation's instruments of power.

DoD exercises unity of command over Federal military forces, DoD civilian personnel, and contractors at the strategic, operational, and tactical command echelons. This unity of command ensures a unity of effort and an economy of force (e.g., the right number of capabilities and forces) in all of DoD's actions and enables timely and effective decision-making at all command echelons. By design, unity of effort, not unity of command, is possible among Federal, State, and local, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and the private sector.

Incident Information-Sharing and Shared Situational Awareness

Internal

Within the Department, DoD's command and control structure, supported by a formalized reporting system and agile, resilient, and redundant communications, facilitates effective information flow between command echelons whether the contingency is at home or abroad. In the continental United States, a joint task force is established to command and control Federal military forces, guided by the Commander, U.S. Northern Command (USNORTHCOM). This joint task force is responsible for (a) ensuring that the tactical units under its command receive the information they need to fulfill their missions, and (b) ensuring that information, usually provided in the form of situation reports, is provided upwards to the Commander, USNORTHCOM. The Commander, USNORTHCOM, in turn, is responsible for (a) ensuring that the joint task force under its command receives the information it needs to fulfill its mission, and (b) providing information reported by the joint task force upwards to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Secretary of Defense.

External

Several entities exist for information-sharing among civilian and military and Federal, State, tribal, private-sector, and NGOs.

At the Federal headquarters level, incident information-sharing, operational planning, and deployment of Federal resources are coordinated by the Homeland Security Operations Center (HSOC). DoD maintains a 24 hours-a-day/7 days-a-week presence in the HSOC. At the national level, the HSOC facilitates interagency information-sharing activities to enable the assessment, prevention, or resolution of a potential incident. Federal, State, tribal, private-sector, and NGO emergency operations centers (EOCs) are either required or encouraged to report incident information to the HSOC. Federal departments and agencies are required

to report information relating to actual or potential Incidents of National Significance to the HSOC. This information may include:

- Implementation of a Federal department or agency emergency response plan;
- Actions to prevent, respond to, or recover from an Incident of National Significance for which a Federal department or agency has responsibility under law or directive;
- Submission of requests for assistance to, or receipt of a request from another Federal department or agency in the context of an Incident of National Significance; and,
- Receipt of requests for assistance from State, local, or tribal governments; NGOs or the private sector in the context of an Incident of National Significance.

Strategic-level interagency incident management coordination and course-of-action development are facilitated by the Interagency Incident Management Group (IIMG), which also serves as an advisory body to the Secretary of Homeland Security. When activated, DoD provides senior-level representatives to the IIMG.

The Joint Field Office (JFO) is established in the area of the incident to provide a central point for Federal, State, local, and tribal executives with responsibility for incident oversight, direction, and/or assistance to coordinate protection, prevention, preparedness, response, and recovery actions effectively. Co-located within the JFO are all the entities essential to incident management, information-sharing, and the delivery of disaster assistance and other support. In

the event that collocation is not practical, Federal agencies are connected virtually to the JFO and assign liaisons to the JFO to facilitate the coordination of Federal incident management and assistance efforts. When established, DoD posts liaisons within the JFO known as Defense Coordinating Officers (DCOs).

All states maintain an EOC in which operational information-sharing and resource coordination in support of on-scene efforts during domestic incident management activities normally take place. During an incident, DoD also posts DCOs within an affected State's EOC.

Additionally, each combatant commander, including U.S. Northern Command, operates a Joint Interagency Coordination Group (JIACG). The JIACG is a multi-functional, advisory element that represents the Federal civilian departments and agencies and facilitates information sharing across the interagency community. It provides an environment for regular, timely, and collaborative day-to-day working relationships to develop between civilian and military operational planners.

Hurricane Katrina Lessons Learned

The Department of Defense response to Hurricane Katrina was the largest, fastest deployment of military forces for a civil support mission in our nation's history.

Hurricane Katrina made landfall along the Gulf Coast during the early morning hours of August 29th. Within five days of landfall, more than 34,000 military forces had been deployed into the affected area; that is more than five

times the number of military personnel deployed within the same time frame in response to 1992's Hurricane Andrew.

By landfall plus seven days, more than 53,000 military personnel had been deployed in response to Katrina, three times the comparable response to Hurricane Andrew. And by September 10th, military forces reached their peak at nearly 72,000; 50,000 National Guardsmen and 22,000 active duty personnel, a total deployment for Hurricane Katrina, more than twice the size of the military response to Hurricane Andrew.

In scope and speed, no civil support mission in the history of the United States remotely approaches the DoD response to Hurricane Katrina.

DoD received 93 mission assignments from FEMA and approved all of them, on average, within 24 hours.

In addition to the 72,000 men and women in uniform, DoD coordinated the deployment of 293 medium- and heavy-lift helicopters, 68 airplanes, 23 U.S. Navy ships, 13 mortuary affairs teams, and two standing joint headquarters to support the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA's) planning efforts.

DoD military personnel evacuated more than 80,000 Gulf Coast residents and rescued another 15,000. Military forces provided significant medical assistance, including 10,000 medical evacuations by ground and air, the delivery of medical treatment to more than 5,000 sick and injured persons, as well as support for disease prevention and control.

DoD committed more than 2,000 health care professionals for civil support contingencies and approved six bases as FEMA staging areas. When violence erupted in New Orleans, Lieutenant General Blum, chief of the National Guard Bureau, coordinated, over a three-day period, the deployment of 4,200 National Guard military police and security personnel into New Orleans, dramatically increasing the security presence.

The President deployed 7,200 active duty military personnel for humanitarian relief; their presence, in combination with National Guard security forces, restored civil order in the city of New Orleans.

DoD delivered critical emergency supplies, more than 30 million meals, including 24.5 million meals-ready-to-eat and some 10,000 truckloads of ice and water.

Our performance, however, was not without defect. Hurricane Katrina and the subsequent sustained flooding of New Orleans exposed significant deficiencies in our national preparedness for catastrophic events and our Nation's capacity to respond to them. Emergency plans at all levels of government were put to an extreme test and came up short. As a result, President Bush, in his September 15, 2005, address to the Nation from Jackson Square in New Orleans, made it clear that the Federal government will make the necessary changes to be "better prepared for any challenge of nature, or act of evil men, that could threaten our people."

President Bush subsequently ordered a comprehensive review of the Federal response to Hurricane Katrina. This review resulted in the publication of “The Federal Response to Hurricane Katrina: Lessons Learned.” Regarding DoD, the review states:

The Federal response to Hurricane Katrina demonstrates that the Department of Defense (DoD) has the capability to play a critical role in the Nation’s response to catastrophic events. During the Katrina response, DoD – both National Guard and active duty forces – demonstrated that along with the Coast Guard it was one of the only Federal departments that possessed real operational capabilities to translate Presidential decisions into prompt, effective action on the ground. In addition to possessing operational personnel in large numbers that have been trained and equipped for their missions, DoD brought robust communications infrastructure, logistics, and planning capabilities. Since DoD, first and foremost, has its critical overseas mission, the solution to improving the Federal response to future catastrophes cannot simply be “let the Department of Defense do it.” Yet DoD capabilities must be better identified and integrated into the Nation’s response plans.

These recommendations correlate well with DoD’s own internal lessons learned effort. We have already begun to implement improvements with an urgent focus on the operational challenges associated with this year’s upcoming hurricane season. For example, DoD is:

- Detailing a strategic planner to the DHS, and reviewing DoD personnel support to DHS in terms of both numbers and expertise to identify appropriate adjustments;
- Developing a framework to provide initial damage reconnaissance, including those capabilities provided by DoD organizations such as the National Geospatial Intelligence Agency (NGA) as part of a U.S. Strategic Command civil support plan;
- Participating in the interagency revision of the National Search and Rescue Plan, including disaster response operations and address air traffic control and coordination; and
- Pursuing better integration of Federal military forces and State National Guard forces, including greater shared visibility between the two on their respective deployments, maneuvers, and activities.

Conclusion

We recognize that the defense of the U.S. homeland – our people, property, and freedom – is our Department’s most fundamental duty. Men and women in military uniform – Active Duty, Reserve, and National Guard – will continue to meet that obligation with passion, professionalism, and a resolute sense of purpose.

We also recognize that our Department has played and will continue to play an important supporting role in responding to natural or man-made disasters.

The ability of our military forces - Active Duty, Reserve, and National Guard – to respond quickly and effectively to an event on the scale of Hurricane

Katrina and to sustain simultaneously the ongoing War on Terrorism is a testament to their readiness, agility, and professionalism. It is also a reflection of the resources provided by Congress that enables them to organize, train, and equip to meet the full range of DoD's missions.

We have supported -- and expect to continue supporting -- national efforts to improve information-sharing and shared situational awareness, applying the experience, expertise, and technologies that we have developed over many years working abroad with Federal, coalition, and non-governmental partners.