

Success in Kashmir: a positive trend in civil–military integration during humanitarian assistance operations

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The modern cast of disaster relief actors includes host nations, non-governmental organisations, private volunteer organisations, military organisations and others. Each group, civilian or military, has valuable skills and experiences critical to disaster relief work. The goal of this paper is to supplement the study of civil–military relief efforts with contemporary anecdotal experience. The paper examines the interaction between US military forces and other disaster relief actors during the 2005 Kashmir earthquake relief effort. The author uses direct observations made while working in Pakistan to contrast the relationships and activities from that effort with other accounts in prevailing scholarly disaster literature and military doctrine. Finally, this paper suggests that the Kashmir model of integration, coordination and transparency of intent creates a framework in which future humanitarian assistance operations could be successfully executed. Recommendations to improve civil–military interaction in future relief efforts will also be addressed.

Keywords: disaster relief, earthquake, humanitarian assistance, Kashmir, military, NGO

Background

On 8 October 2005, an earthquake measuring Mw 7.6 rocked the Kashmir region of northern Pakistan and India. While neighbouring countries had recently experienced devastating earthquakes, this was the largest earthquake in modern Pakistan since the 1935 Quetta earthquake, which killed 35,000 people. The earthquake coincided with the morning attendance of school, resulting in the deaths of many teachers and thousands of students. This earthquake killed an estimated 79,000 people, injured many more, and left over two million homeless or displaced.

At Bagram Airbase, Afghanistan, 270 miles from the centre of the disaster area, Task Force Griffin (TF Griffin), headquartered by the United States (US) Army's 12th Aviation Brigade, was seven months into a year-long deployment to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. On Sunday, 9 October 2005, Combined Joint Task Force–76 ordered TF Griffin to prepare to deploy to Pakistan and provide humanitarian assistance. The following morning three UH–60 and five CH–47 helicopters departed from Afghanistan for Qasim Airbase in Rawalpindi, Pakistan. Accompanying the aircrews were the operations, logistics and maintenance personnel required to support the task force during their 30-plus day humanitarian assistance mission.

This paper, while focused on anecdotal actions of US military forces in Pakistan, examines recurring themes regarding the intervention of military forces in the primarily civilian realm of disaster relief. As an aviator and army lieutenant colonel leading the US military aviation effort, the author analyses the mission in Kashmir from the perspective of an individual who interacted daily with host nation personnel, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), other foreign militaries and the disaster victims themselves. Examining these relationships is essential to the study of improving disaster relief and will form the core of this work.

The goal of this paper is to supplement the study of civil–military relief efforts with contemporary anecdotal experience and to bridge the gaps that exist between military and civilian literature. The paper addresses the concerns of both military and civilian organisational leadership; however, the author will not examine political motivations of relief actors, which do play a large role in today's disaster relief efforts. Finally, the paper will discuss the manner in which US military forces interacted with other relief actors in Pakistan and will suggest that the Kashmir model of integration, coordination and transparency of intent is a viable framework in which future humanitarian assistance operations can be successfully undertaken.

A subject the paper will not address at length is cultural awareness training for military personnel. While acknowledging that there is still room for improvement, US military forces study the cultural customs and courtesies of the people in the deployment location prior to any movement. The US military provides cultural awareness training for deployments in support of the full spectrum of potential operations from combat to humanitarian assistance. Cultural sensitivity and awareness displayed by aircrews and support personnel unquestionably enhanced the ability of TF Griffin to develop a much better working relationship with their Pakistani counterparts, fellow relief workers and the earthquake victims. This was particularly important because the assistance mission in Pakistan occurred during Ramadan.

The military as a humanitarian resource

US military forces, like those of other countries, have a long history of participating in both domestic and international humanitarian efforts (Gaydos and Luz, 1994; Palka, 2005; USDOD, 2001; Walker, 1992). However, there are differences in military and civilian terminology and sensitive issues regarding the employment of military forces, which this section will address in order to create an appropriate framework for examining the model put forth in this paper. Military humanitarian actions range in scope from simply providing transportation for relief goods or workers to or within a disaster area, to actively participating in complex, large-scale disaster relief efforts. US Department of Defense (USDOD) *Joint Publication 3–07.6: Joint Tactics, Techniques and Procedures for Foreign Humanitarian Assistance* defines foreign humanitarian assistance (FHA), a military term synonymous with disaster relief, as operations that are intended to 'relieve or reduce the results of natural or man-made disasters or other endemic conditions such as human suffering, disease, or privation that might present

a serious threat to life or that can result in great damage to or loss of property' (USDOD, 2001, p. I-1). The joint publication further directs that FHA operations are supposed to be 'limited in scope and duration' and should 'supplement or complement the efforts of the host nation (HN) civil authorities or agencies that have the primary responsibility for providing FHA' (USDOD, 2001, p. I-1). *Joint Publication 3-07: Joint Doctrine for Military Operations Other Than War*, goes on to describe the three types of FHA operations as 'those coordinated by the UN, those where the United States acts in concert with other multinational forces, or those where the United States responds unilaterally' (USDOD, 1995, p. III-5).

Another type of humanitarian assistance operation addressed in both civilian academic and military literature is the complex humanitarian emergency or, as named in military publications, 'complex contingency operations' (USDOD, 2001, p. I-7). These are internal, socially derived disasters that may be incited by 'some kind of violent political/military event' (Albala-Bertrand, 2000, p. 189) and 'tend to have multiple causes including political breakdown or exploitation, and military offensive, which interact with and increase existing vulnerability to natural disasters' (Alexander, 1997, p. 289). The resolution of a complex humanitarian emergency may go far beyond delivering aid and planning recovery and reconstruction. In a complex emergency, military forces will often focus on providing security in addition to relief aid distribution. Recent examples of complex humanitarian emergencies include crises in Sudan, Somalia, Bosnia, Ethiopia, Liberia and Sierra Leone (Anderson, 2005).

When responding to a request for assistance in a disaster scenario, military organisations will find that the relief tasks they perform may be tasks with which they are well acquainted, but the operational environment and humanitarian actors with whom they are coordinating may be entirely unfamiliar (Daniel, 2006). Military forces possess strategic force projection capabilities, they are experts at logistical planning, and they have ready-at-hand medical supplies, transportation, food, water and life-support supplies, communications, engineering and security capabilities (Alexander, 1999; Anderson, 2005; Cuny, 1983; Gaydos and Luz, 1994; Telford and Cosgrave, 2007; Walker, 1992). Military forces are also capable of bringing their own life support systems (such as food, water, medical supplies, shelter), which decreases their dependence on limited host nation resources. From a humanitarian perspective, it appears that the greatest argument for the involvement of military forces in disaster relief is largely one of the military's availability and the resources they bring.

Involving military organisations in the humanitarian realm is not without controversy, either from the perspective of the civilian community or military leadership. Some humanitarian actors may fear that when a military force shows up, it will try to assume full control of the relief operation (Cuny, 1983; Waldo, 2006), possibly in the pursuit of other, not-so-humanitarian goals. Other actors may also believe that military relief forces will 'adopt too authoritarian an attitude to the problems of survivors' (Alexander, 1999, p. 411). Furthermore, those needing relief or serving in relief organisations may come from a country in which past interactions with military forces may have been fearful or intimidating (Cuny, 1983). These past

experiences would certainly cause individuals to be wary of working with or relying on uniformed personnel for assistance. If the disaster area has a history of military or political tension, the use of military forces may hinder the relief operation (Alexander, 2000). Therefore, prior to deployment, military leaders should take the time to study the past history of the host nation's military and its relationship with the citizens of that country.

Military leaders will be concerned about committing training resources, personnel and materiel to preparing for and executing humanitarian assistance instead of focusing on their primary mission of preparation for combat. In fact, they may perceive that maintaining combat readiness while conducting humanitarian assistance missions is unachievable (Gaydos and Luz, 1994; Palka, 1995), or that an extended engagement in humanitarian assistance missions will produce 'little training value in the repetition of routine' (Walker, 1992, p. 158). Still others suggest that there is potential for a protracted engagement to 'lead their organizations down the dark road to mission creep and quagmire' (Daniel, 2006, p. 53). Doctrinal reinforcement of these concerns can be found in *Joint Publication 3-07.6, Joint Tactics, Techniques and Procedures for Peace Operations*, which cautions that 'US military forces are not the primary US Government (USG) means of providing FHA' (USDOD, 2001, p. I-1).

Despite these concerns, past and recent experience has demonstrated that service members who have participated in humanitarian assistance operations have gained tremendous fulfilment (Thompson and Halter, 2006) and have found the experience to be both 'personally and professionally rewarding' (Palka, 1995, p. 206). From a public perspective, US taxpayers may be 'more willing to maintain a larger military force if they see meaningful work, other than training for war, being conducted by the military' (Gaydos and Luz, 1994, p. 53). The debate regarding the appropriate use of military forces in humanitarian assistance operations will persist into the future. However, the fact remains that disasters will continue to occur and as circumstances force marginalised populations to occupy hazard-prone areas, placing themselves at greater risk, the military will continue to provide post-disaster assistance.

Military–host nation relationships

Joint Publication 3-07 directs that FHA is 'intended to *supplement* or *complement* efforts of host nation (HN) civil authorities or agencies with the primary responsibility for providing assistance' (USDOD, 1995, p. III-5). If a military organisation has the mission to provide assistance to the host nation during a disaster, the operation cannot be successful without fully integrating and coordinating military actions and resources with those of the other relief actors involved. This is especially true in terms of the degree to which the US military integrates or 'vertically nests' its effort with that of the host nation relief effort. Foreign militaries must avoid setting up a separate and parallel relief system even if logistical advantages or security concerns may favour doing so. Military leaders should balance the potential benefits regarding security and logistics with the fact that civilians may call their intentions into

question. Additionally, if not fully integrated into the mainstream disaster response, military relief forces may not be able to attain full efficiency and unity of effort with other relief actors.

The terms supplement and complement, as used in the quotation above, imply that US military forces should see themselves in an assistance role and as integrated enablers, not as the ones who are in charge of the relief operation. While the temptation may be very strong to step in and take over, especially if relief operations are stymied, military forces must resist doing so. It would certainly be appropriate to make recommendations for improvement to relief decision makers; however, military personnel must do so with discretion so as not to be seen as a critique of the host nation's or lead agency's management of the relief effort. The lead relief coordinator should present any accepted suggestions as their own. This empowers the host nation or lead agency in the eyes of other actors and gives them ownership of the idea as well as the responsibility for implementing the plan. Military forces must remember that their time in the disaster area is transitory and therefore by empowering the host nation they can ensure that their good ideas and contributions do not leave with them when they redeploy.

Joint Publication 3-07.3 states that 'in some cases, joint forces will provide direct support to a recovering host nation (HN) or population' (USDOD, 1999, p. I-8). In the case of the Kashmir earthquake, TF Griffin initially had no higher headquarters on the ground in Pakistan. While they continued to report to and receive support from their higher headquarters in Bagram, Afghanistan, TF Griffin went straight to work, accepting missions from the Pakistani Army General Headquarters. Task force personnel coordinated directly with the General Headquarters representative for mission requirements. This direct support relationship worked out very well both for task force mission planners and the Pakistanis. Each evening liaison officers would ask the Pakistan Air Mission Coordinator (Pakistani AMC) for a list of missions for the following day. Overnight, planners developed the mission packets, which operations personnel would brief to aircrews the following morning. During the day, liaison officers continually sought updates or new mission requirements. This was not only the most efficient approach, but it also kept aircrews fully utilised during the early stages of the effort, forced the host nation planners to prioritise tasked missions, and demonstrated that TF Griffin leadership was determined to integrate their support with the efforts of other actors to the greatest extent possible.

Military-military relationships

US military forces participating in a disaster-focused FHA will quickly see many benefits in working with both host nation and other foreign militaries. US military forces may find that they are reporting to a non-US military headquarters, such as the United Nations. They may even find themselves under the operational control of a non-US commander, as many countries use their military as the primary organisation responsible for civil defence or large-scale emergency response (Cuny, 1983).

However, the chain-of-command from the senior US military commander on the ground to the US National Command Authority will remain fully intact (USDOD, 1999). A benefit of working with other military organisations is that regardless of national origin they seem to understand each other. In military parlance, they 'get it'. Chain-of-command, planning, mission orders, security, communications and coordination are all concepts that are components of professional military organisations. Military relief providers can use this common ground as a basis upon which they can quickly form a cooperative working relationship.

Military-NGO relationships

It is in the best interest of a military organisation to form a cooperative working relationship with civilian relief agencies. While military forces may have resources and manpower, which are very valuable in a disaster, it is the civilians that are the relief experts. Many NGOs have participated in numerous relief efforts and are either locals themselves or have worked with the local population for an extended period of time. NGOs can be of great assistance in letting military leaders and planners know how to best utilise their assets to assist in the relief effort. A cooperative working relationship with NGOs can be a force-multiplier for military organisations. Following an FHA operation in Bangladesh in 1991, a US military officer codified the benefits of establishing a working relationship with NGOs:

US military personnel must learn to draw on these organizations as assets; we should not be too proud to request their advice and assistance. In Bangladesh, a synergistic relationship developed in which both the military forces and the NGOs provided the talents they were each best suited to bring to the table. The NGOs had the advantage of a sound day-to-day knowledge of the area of operations, the trust of the locals at the village level, and years of experience in disaster relief operations; all of this can be invaluable in the initial assessment process as well as in actual operations (Seiple, 1996, p. 17).

NGOs will be very concerned about construed associations or relationships arising from their involvement with military forces and the potential implications upon their status as a neutral entity (Donini et al., 2004; Pugh, 1998, 2001; Weissman, 2004). As such, military leaders should refrain from publicly declaring NGOs as partners. Even in a relief effort, a perceived blemish on their neutrality could potentially place NGOs at risk or make them 'targets of insurgents' (Bello, 2006, p. 293). Walker (1992, p. 156) examined this issue and proposed a series of questions regarding the initiation, control, monitoring and funding of the responding military that NGOs must ask in order to determine if they can maintain their 'independence and integrity of purpose' when working with military forces.

In order to increase resource accessibility and better coordinate efforts with NGOs and civilian relief organisations, the military must establish a Civil-Military Operations Centre (CMOC). The CMOC 'provides a venue for coordination between

the military and civilian organizations' (USDOD, 1999, p. II-18) and 'serves as the focal point for requesting support from US forces' (USDOD, 1999, p. III-5). The CMOC allows civilian and military relief workers to meet and capitalise on the strengths of each other's organisations. In past operations, these centres have 'facilitated dialogue, mutual awareness, exchange of information and requests by civilian fieldworkers for military logistical support' (Pugh, 2001, p. 352). The CMOC also provides the benefit of allowing all civilian organisations to have access to military capabilities and resources, eliminating perceptions of favouritism. This may enable NGOs to better maintain their status as a neutral party.

In the case of TF Griffin, the CMOC consisted of a tent structure at the relief staging area on Chaklala Airbase in Islamabad. TF Griffin did not use, store or discuss any classified materials or information in this facility, which allowed open access to all personnel involved in the relief effort. The pick-up zone officer and aviation liaison officer worked out of and lived in this tent, making them available at all times to the Pakistanis or any other relief provider. The CMOC contained a chart with current and future missions as well as a map that catalogued where relief flights had been and displayed an assessment made by the pilots of what type of aid was still lacking in each area. Ease of access and availability of information made the CMOC a valuable asset to all relief actors. The CMOC quickly became a rally point for passenger manifesting, liaison contact and relief coordinators looking for means to move their people, equipment and supplies.

Military leaders must understand that the solution to future disaster risk reduction and preparedness is deeply rooted in 'local self-sufficiency' (Alexander, 2006, p. 12). Military forces can best help create conditions that facilitate a return to local capacity by engagement with NGOs early on and throughout the duration of the assistance mission. Relief organisations, and especially military forces, must minimise both their footprint and time spent in the disaster area and encourage local leadership to take responsibility for recovery as soon as possible. A return to self-sufficiency by the affected population indicates that the time may be appropriate to begin the re-deployment of foreign military assets.

The military, the media and relief

Some military personnel may have had an adversarial relationship with media workers in the past. Military leadership must understand that media organisations play a critical role in the overall effort of a disaster relief operation. The scenes of destruction and the dead and injured as portrayed by the media helped to ignite a great outpouring of commitments for the people of Kashmir. The correlation between the media's coverage of a disaster and political and donor activity, which often results in action or aid commitments, is known as the 'CNN effect' (Olsen et al., 2003, p. 110) or 'CNN factor' (Roberts, 1993, p. 446; Whitman, 1994, p. 167). The Government of Pakistan was well aware of the CNN effect and made efforts both to welcome and accommodate the international media.

Figure 1 A reporter steps off a TF Griffin helicopter to file a report from the disaster area, October 2005



Source: Mark McKearn.

During the initial days of the relief effort, the number of media personnel occupying the relief staging area at Chaklala Airbase at times appeared to equal the number of relief workers. Media personnel fought with tenacity for a seat on an aircraft destined for the disaster area. As a general practice, TF Griffin aviation liaisons reserved at least one seat for a media person on each of the larger relief helicopters. This provided between 15 and 20 opportunities each day to get media personnel into the affected area (Figure 1). TF Griffin liaisons understood that their primary responsibility was getting aid and relief workers to the earthquake victims; however, they went to great lengths to ensure that media personnel had opportunities to report on the damage and destruction to potential donors. Such positive media coverage helped ensure that relief aid continued to flow into the staging area.

Integration and coordination

In situations where US military forces enter a foreign country by invitation, US embassy personnel from the Department of State will provide some level of liaison with the host nation. US Embassy personnel met advanced party personnel from TF Griffin at Chaklala Airbase in Islamabad. Coordination through embassy defence attaché personnel proved invaluable during the early stages of the relief effort. Embassy

personnel have greater situational awareness and understanding of politically sensitive issues than newly deployed forces. As such, they must advise newly arrived foreign military leaders regarding political concerns or potential activities that may negatively affect or impede the assistance mission.

The most critical contribution of embassy personnel in Pakistan was their ability to introduce the advanced party personnel from TF Griffin to key Pakistani military decision makers. If a host nation is not running their own disaster relief mission, embassy personnel should introduce advanced party personnel to persons in the head relief agency (for example, the United Nations, Red Cross or another). From the initial introductions made in Pakistan, US and Pakistani military leaders quickly formed working relationships and made key decisions very early on, which set favourable conditions for a US humanitarian assistance mission that would last another six months. Once steady state operations were established, embassy personnel provided critical support in the areas of trouble shooting and problem solving beyond the capabilities of the US military relief leadership, allowing military personnel to maintain focus on their humanitarian assistance mission.

TF Griffin was the first operational foreign military organisation on the ground in Pakistan. Consequently, they were the first ones to integrate their effort with and receive mission requirements from the Pakistanis. Once TF Griffin leaders had initial mission requirements, their planners developed a concept of support, which included pick-up zone operations, airspace control measures and mission graphics. These concepts were briefed to and accepted by the Pakistani Army General Headquarters and formed the core of the aviation relief support plan.

Relief actors should take the steps necessary to increase the efficiency of their operation and maximise their capabilities. One of the necessary steps in attaining this end is coordinating with other relief actors. As noted by many (Hicks and Pappas, 2006; Moore et al., 2003; Taylor, 1986; United Nations, 2005), coordination among relief actors in a disaster is critical to successful disaster response. TF Griffin went to great lengths to reach out to and coordinate with military and civilian aviation relief providers. As follow-on foreign military forces arrived, they were steered to the TF Griffin operations area by the Pakistanis to receive a new aviator briefing (developed in conjunction with Pakistan's 8th Aviation Squadron), aviation maps of the area of operations, communications frequency cards, and global positioning coordinate cards with known checkpoints and landing zones (Figure 2). TF Griffin offered these same products and briefings to civilian aviators as well. Sharing these products among all aviation relief providers led to a safer, more coordinated effort.

In taking on this responsibility to coordinate the greater aviation effort, TF Griffin leadership made three very important contributions. First they ensured standardisation of aviation operations between as many organisations as possible, preventing a potential aviation disaster. Second, they relieved the Pakistani Army aviation personnel from adding this briefing requirement to their already overworked force. And lastly, by acknowledging in all of their actions that the Pakistanis were in charge of the relief operation and that all mission requirements should originate from the

Figure 2 Colonel Mark McKearn, the TF Griffin and 12th Aviation Brigade Commander, conducts a briefing for visiting Japanese Defence Force senior leaders, October 2005



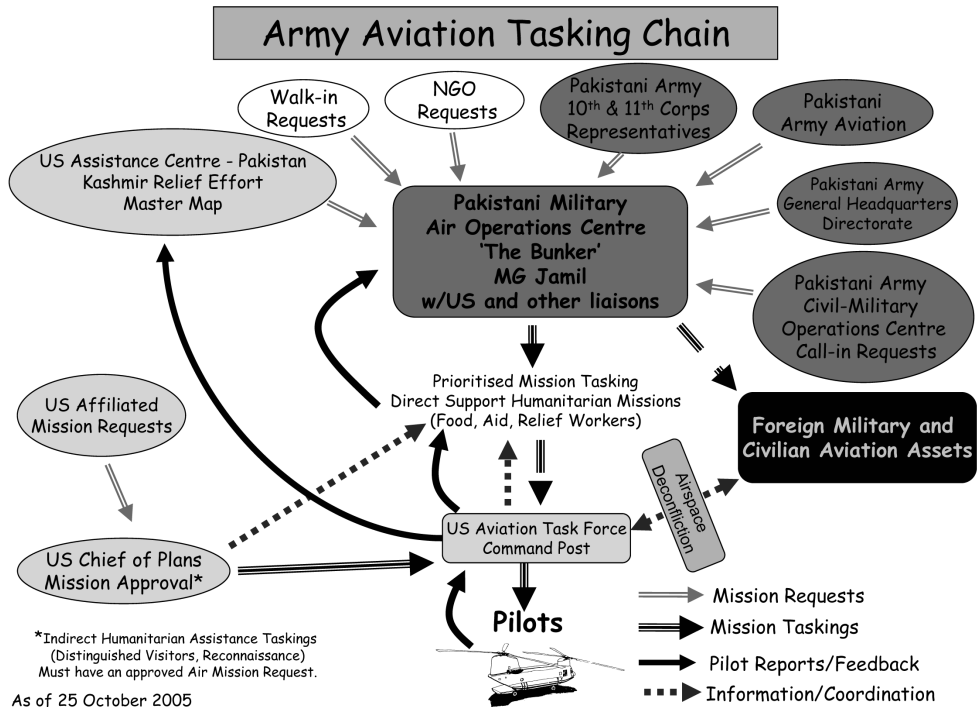
Source: Wiley Thompson.

Pakistanis, TF Griffin set an example of full integration, which many other organisations followed as they came on board.

During the relief effort, TF Griffin leaders and relief planners formed good working relationships with the other military and some civilian aviators. These relationships allowed for a dialogue to develop in which aviation relief planners shared recommendations to improve operations and gain efficiency of work through a coordinated, collective effort. While this effort to coordinate was not so successful with all aviators, those who did collaborate greatly increased the safety and efficiency of their operations by sharing frequencies, route and zone structure, and landing zone names. As such, military forces must place greater emphasis in the future on coordinating and integrating with civilian counterparts, whatever their speciality may be.

During all of the coordination and product development, TF Griffin liaison personnel ensured that they gained the concurrence of the Pakistani AMC. The Pakistani AMC would then present new products to the relief community representatives at nightly coordination meetings. Figure 3 depicts an example of this type of coordination and integration with the greater effort.

In order to allow full access to air support, as well as screening and prioritising air mission requests, a TF Griffin officer submitted the army aviation tasking chain (Figure 3) to the Pakistani AMC as an example of how the mission request process

Figure 3 Army aviation tasking chain

Source: Wiley Thompson.

could work more efficiently during relief operations. This diagram depicts an ad hoc yet understood and executable system, which was established to resource aviation requirements for all actors, regardless of the size or affiliation of their organisation. The host nation personnel accepted the model and implemented it during their nightly coordination meetings. This gave the Pakistani leadership ownership of the idea, which resulted in much wider acceptance among the other relief actors. From the outset of the assistance mission, the leadership of TF Griffin presented themselves as an enabling organisation that was able to support the needs of the Pakistani and Kashmiri people by lending their unique capabilities to the effort.

Building trust through transparency

When a military force attempts to integrate with humanitarian-focused civilian organisations there may initially be a gap in trust. The sooner military leaders conducting FHA can bridge that gap in trust, the quicker they can begin truly to support the operation and take advantage of the working knowledge possessed by civilian relief workers. TF Griffin personnel made building trust through transparency a top priority right from the very start. Transparency, in this situation, implied that TF Griffin

Figure 4 Any cargo, any destination—a TF Griffin CH-47 loaded with blankets from China, October 2005



Source: Wiley Thompson.

had no hidden agenda while in Pakistan and that their only mission was to support the relief effort. While some relief organisations would carry only certain people or cargo, or fly only to predetermined destinations, TF Griffin pilots and aircrew would take on any cargo or mission the Pakistani AMC gave them (Figure 4). They would fly to any destination, as long as the mission could be safely accomplished, thus demonstrating their altruistic intentions.

During the Kashmir earthquake relief effort, leaders of a British Royal Air Force (RAF) helicopter squadron (CH-47 equipped) were anxious to accept an offer by the TF Griffin leadership to merge living and working conditions on Qasim Airbase. This was a very sound course of action from a logistical standpoint. TF Griffin already had a life support area set-up, which, if used by the RAF crews, would alleviate the RAF leadership from having to find and develop their own sleeping, eating, living and maintenance facilities. Since each organisation possessed similar airframes, aircrews could realise efficiency of effort by sharing maintenance facilities and functions, as well as weather briefing resources and operations personnel.

However, the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID) had paid for the RAF aircraft flight hours. DFID organisers in Pakistan were hesitant to allow the merger to go forward. TF Griffin leaders were informed that DFID personnel were concerned that a close association with the US military could taint their mission in Pakistan and their standing as a humanitarian-focused organisation. Building on lessons learned earlier in the FHA operation, TF Griffin leaders invited DFID personnel to ride on their aircraft and scrutinise their operation from the inside. In

doing so, they showed DFID that they had no hidden agenda and that their sole mission was to help relieve the human suffering caused by the earthquake. In the end, DFID allowed the merger of facilities, functions and operations to go forward and each organisation benefited greatly from the relationship.

The way ahead

The fact that TF Griffin aircraft and aircrews were able to arrive in Pakistan only 48 hours after the earthquake was simply based on the fortunate circumstances of being already engaged in the region. Assembling, loading and transporting large amounts of personnel and equipment takes time—time that disaster survivors may not have. However, the relief providers can improve the timeliness of future responses. Forward-deployed militaries of all nations could form agreements with regional partners so that upon issuance of a formal request for international assistance, those forces, if available, could begin immediate preparation for deployment. Regional partners can have pre-approved paperwork, such as country clearances, in place so as to eliminate some of the ‘red tape’ that impedes timely deployment.

While often near impossible to predict, military planners must have a better understanding of anticipated hazard requirements from the disaster community. Awareness of known, regional resource and capability shortcomings would allow military organisations to plan better for potential assistance requests and become more familiar with key actors in the civilian disaster relief community. Telford and Cosgrave (2007, p. 11) noted similar ‘joint planning and training’ shortcomings during the 2004 Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami response. Military and civilian relief planners should address inadequacies like these during planning conferences organised around a regional or hazard-specific theme.

Lastly, the most productive and beneficial effort to improve military support to disaster relief may come about through dialogue and contributions to disaster related literature from both the civilian and military communities. Increased discussion regarding concerns, operational procedures, lessons learned and strengths and weaknesses of both civilian and military relief organisations would contribute greatly to a better working knowledge of each group. When responding to a disaster, civilians and military alike leave behind the comfort and safety of their home to deploy to an unfamiliar area in an attempt to relieve the suffering of those who have endured a terrible hardship. Possibly, one day, military forces and civilians can cease viewing each other with suspicion or contempt and begin to see the other as a welcome partner in the humanitarian realm.

Acknowledgements

I wish to thank the following individuals for their suggestions and advice regarding this article: A. Jon Kimerling, Robert Marble, the two anonymous *Disasters* reviewers and my wife Kristina.

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