# Disaster Relief and Engagement Operations, 1990-2010:

## A Synthesis of CNA Analyses

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# Contents

# Introduction

## Background

This paper synthesizes the operational analyses that CNA has conducted over the past 20 years on the US military's humanitarian assistance or capacity-building activities in foreign countries. The US military has conducted many such missions throughout its history, but has placed more emphasis on them in the past several years. Specifically, following the US Navy's response to the 2004 Asian tsunami, the Navy began to increase its emphasis on operations to provide assistance to host nations. The military community perceived the 2004 response as a success: press coverage was generally positive, and the operation seemed to positively influence the perceptions of people in foreign countries. Additionally, in the 2007 National Maritime Strategy, the US Navy created a new mission focus: engaging with foreign peoples and governments.

Missions that focus on engaging with foreign nations range from disaster relief operations, to humanitarian and civic assistance (HCA) missions, to military training missions. While all these missions have a humanitarian or capacity-building focus, they vary in the extent to which the primary goal is capacity building versus relationship building. For the purposes of this paper, we divide the missions into two general types: disaster relief operations; and engagement operations, which include HCA and military training.

In disaster relief missions, the outcome depends heavily on the specific operations the Navy conducts in response to a disaster. The response must be appropriate, needed, and performed in conjunction with a multitude of other actors. For these missions, success is very much based on how well the US military can contribute needed assets and capabilities in partnership with other actors.

In engagement missions, success depends less on the specific activities the Navy conducts and more on the way in which the Navy performs them. Based on CNA's observations, both HCA and military training activities fall into this category. The degree to which the Navy includes host nation participants in the missions, the personal interactions between US Navy personnel and people in the host nation, and the level of leadership provided by US mission commanders are all important in building capacity and partnerships with people in the host nation.

The data in this paper were gathered through various operational analyses of disaster relief and engagement missions that CNA has conducted over the years. These analyses were conducted for a number of US Navy and Marine Corps commands and were generally aimed at understanding the effectiveness of these missions both in terms of how the host nation reacted to the mission and in terms of whether the mission enhanced US security. As a summary of these studies, the paper draws on operational analyses of disaster relief and engagement missions conducted in Sub-Saharan Africa, South and Southwest Asia, and Latin America. All the missions were conducted in relatively peaceful countries, outside of areas of armed combat.

The missions included in this paper were all major operations that CNA analyzed. The disaster relief missions include Joint Task Force (JTF) Sea Angel in Bangladesh in 1991, Operation Unified Assistance in Southeast Asia in 2005 and 2006, and Operation Sea Angel II in Bangladesh in 2007. The engagement missions include large-scale HCA and military training deployments, such as Pacific Partnership, Continuing Promise, and Africa Partnership Station (APS). CNA analyzed these deployments between 2006 and 2010.

This paper does not aim to assess the US Navy's overall strategy of using disaster relief and engagement missions to build capacity and influence foreign populations. Rather, it aims to explain how these softer military missions can be assessed and to identify what elements these types of missions need in order to create a desired outcome at the operational level. The strategic aims of these missions are long-term goals and are difficult to assess even in the medium term. They are also goals espoused by the entire US government; therefore, many activities could influence the

achievement of these goals. We believe that in the long term, robust assessments of disaster relief and engagement operations may be compiled in order to better understand how these missions affect strategic goals.

This paper is meant to serve as a guide and to provide recommendations to all levels of commanders for future disaster relief or engagement operations. We identify key aspects and factors to consider when conducting these missions; some are specific to an operational type, and others are general across all humanitarian and capacity building operations. By comparing results across studies, this paper strengthens the results that CNA analysts have discovered in individual missions. The sheer number of common themes that have emerged over the various studies demonstrates that each of these studies touches on issues of importance to these operations. By understanding the core drivers of a successful and effective operation, commanders at the tactical, operational, and strategic levels can focus on the factors that are critical to mission success even when they are in the midst of a "noisy" operation.

# CNA's methodology

CNA is a federally funded research and development center (FFRDC) for the US Navy that was created during World War II to support the Navy during the conduct of the war, specifically by helping the Navy address German U-boat issues. As part of that support, CNA deployed analysts with the US Navy ships in order to directly observe the issues at hand. This idea—collecting data in the field—has driven CNA's research methodology ever since, and is the hallmark of many of the analyses discussed here.

For the missions analyzed in this paper, CNA analysts deployed with ships during disasters. They were with the ships during engagement operations and then returned to the countries afterwards to discuss effects with host nation personnel. This gives CNA a very unique perspective in understanding these operations and the challenges that the US Navy faces when trying to achieve its objectives.

Therefore, a lot of the data that support the analysis are primary and were collected during deployments or in the few months

afterwards. CNA also uses other data—including statistics, media analysis, or data from classified sources—in order to substantiate primary data. We use various methods to actually analyze these data, largely determined by the nature of the data and by the question being asked by the sponsor. Each of these methods was tested for rigor in order to assure that the results were relatively robust.

The analyses of engagement operations were all conducted as part of one study, performed from 2006 to 2010, that assessed changes in attitudes and behaviors of host nation populations. Because all the engagement analyses were conducted as a part of the same study, they generally follow the same methodology, and the resulting data are more easily compared and focused. In contrast, the disaster relief operations we discuss here were each assessed during separate studies, and thus, by differing methodologies. Therefore, the resulting data are less focused on a single issue. These differences in methodology will be explained in the respective sections on each operational type. In contrast,

The paper begins by discussing the two major operational types that CNA has analyzed. We first discuss disaster relief missions: their operational characteristics, their objectives, the driving factors behind them, and the mission case studies and methodologies CNA used in order to assess them. We then provide the same overview of engagement missions and discuss their effects on people in host nations. Finally, we note the similarities between the two operational types as well as some key differences.

# Disaster Relief Operations: Definitions and Phases

The US military has participated in numerous disaster relief operations throughout history. In the 1800s, the US Marine Corps aided in earthquake and hurricane relief, as well as in fire-fighting operations in places as distant as China, Peru, and Nicaragua.[1] More recently, the US military has participated in several large-scale disaster responses that have gained considerable international attention. Examples are Operation Unified Assistance, carried out in response to the 2004 tsunami in Southeast Asia, and Operation Sea Angel II, the US military response to the 2007 cyclone in Bangladesh.

In addition to these large responses, the US military has carried out smaller-scale responses on a fairly routine basis. Examples include Air Force airlifts of fire retardants to assist Australian firefighters responding to large-scale brushfires in March 2009 and the assistance of an Army survey team in assessing the damage caused by flooding in Bolivia in January and February 2008.

Although these responses have varied in terms of the size of the force and the range of military capabilities used, they have certain characteristics in common. It is these common characteristics that we seek to define and further explore in this section. We also look to understand which factors of these operations have been critical to the effectiveness of the mission.

We first provide an overview of common characteristics of disaster relief operations—how they are defined and classified—as well as an overview of the process in which the US government and the US

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[1] Adam B. Siegel, *A Chronology of US Marine Corps Humanitarian Assistance and Peace Operations*, Sep 1994 (CNA Information Memorandum 334).

military become involved in foreign disaster response. We then describe the methodologies CNA has used to analyze disaster relief missions, and provide an overview of objectives for these missions. We include summaries of foreign disaster relief operations that CNA has analyzed, highlighting the main events of the disaster, the contributions of the US military, and the key issues and observations in each operation. Finally, we draw themes from these analyses in order to better understand what factors are critical to effective disaster relief operations.

# What are disaster relief operations?

Given the variety of "disaster relief missions," what is it that they have in common? What are their basic characteristics? By understanding these basic characteristics, we can better understand the operational and policy implications of disaster relief missions.

## Definitions

Various definitions of disaster relief exist in military doctrine. The Joint Staff defines foreign disaster relief as:

> Prompt aid that can be used to alleviate the suffering of foreign disaster victims. Normally it includes humanitarian services and transportation; the provision of food, clothing, medicine, beds, and bedding; temporary shelter and housing; the furnishing of medical materiel and medical and technical personnel; and making repairs to essential services.[2]

This definition highlights three main points regarding disaster relief missions.

1. Time considerations are important in disaster relief. Because disaster relief missions often occur with minimal notice, operations need to be executed with little advance planning.

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[2] Joint Publication 1-02: *DoD Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms,* April 2010, accessed on August 30, 2010, at http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/dod_dictionary/data/f/9603.html .

2. The definition points out that disaster relief missions have a humanitarian motivation: "to alleviate the suffering of foreign disaster victims." While there may also be other motivations for any particular response, the presence of a humanitarian motivation indicates that disaster relief missions have certain characteristics that a traditional military mission may not.

3. The Joint Staff defines disaster relief in terms of the tasks carried out. While some of these tasks, such as transportation, are familiar to the military, others may be less so. In particular, the supplies needed for disaster relief may not be supplies that the military normally has directly on hand.

These characteristics have important operational implications for disaster relief missions. We will further explain these implications later, but for now, we use these definitions simply to better understand the character of a disaster relief mission.

The Joint Staff defines a foreign disaster as:

> An act of nature (such as a flood, drought, fire, hurricane, earthquake, volcanic eruption, or epidemic), or an act of man (such as a riot, violence, civil strife, explosion, fire, or epidemic), which is or threatens to be of sufficient severity and magnitude to warrant United States foreign disaster relief to a foreign country, foreign persons, or to an inter-governmental organization.[3]

This definition hints that disaster relief missions might be conducted for other motives in addition to humanitarian assistance. It points out that the US military defines a disaster as an event "which is or threatens to be of sufficient severity and magnitude to warrant United States foreign disaster relief." While the definition does not state how the United States determines whether an event is of "sufficient severity," it does suggest that the decision to respond to a disaster event is complicated and context dependent.

Title 10 of the US Code also defines foreign disaster relief:

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[3] Ibid.

> The President may direct the Secretary of Defense to provide disaster assistance outside the United States to respond to manmade or natural disasters when necessary to prevent loss of lives or serious harm to the environment.[4]

Like the Joint Staff definition, the Title 10 definition suggests a humanitarian motivation for disaster relief missions. It also points to another motivation: a consideration of harm to the environment. Presumably, this addition refers to disasters that may threaten ecosystems, such as oil spills.

While these definitions describe some characterizations and motivations for disaster response missions, they are also rather general. In order to better understand the different types of disaster response missions, we now turn to examining the specific types of disasters that may occur.

## Classifications

The way in which a disaster affects people is important in considering the appropriate response. If an event has no effect on people, it is generally not considered to be a disaster.[5] If a hurricane hits a deserted island, a response would probably not be needed since it is unlikely that anyone would be affected. Disaster response is employed in environmental disasters, such as oil spills, in order to mitigate the potential impact on people. Thus, events are "disasters" insofar as they affect people.

Additionally, disasters generally consist of two components: an event and a vulnerability.[6] Hurricanes, droughts, floods, and oil spills are events that could threaten a population. Vulnerabilities are existing social or geographic elements of a society. For example, Bangladesh's low-lying coastal areas are especially vulnerable to flooding

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[4] Title 10 US Code, Chapter 20, Section 404: "Foreign Disaster Assistance" (added 1994).

[5] Ed McGrady, *Peacemaking, Complex Emergencies, and Disaster Response: What Happens, How Do You Respond?* Feb 1999 (CNA Research Memorandum 98-176).

[6] Ibid.

caused by large storms. In Haiti, poorly constructed buildings and other infrastructure are especially vulnerable to earthquake damage.

As a result, certain populations are particularly vulnerable to certain types of disaster events.[7] Geography may determine some vulnerabilities, but social, economic, or political factors can also contribute. A history of poor governance, poverty, or a weak economy can exacerbate the disaster situation when an event occurs.

The extent to which the event or the vulnerability contributes to the overall destructiveness of the disaster will vary with each disaster circumstance. Some events are so severe that they will affect the population regardless of that population's vulnerabilities. Yet, in other circumstances, a less severe event may have extensive effects because the population is so vulnerable to it. For example, in 2010, an immense earthquake hit Haiti, resulting in a high level of destruction. However, only a month later, an equally strong earthquake occurred in Chile and caused relatively little damage, due to the more stringent building codes there. Thus, in Haiti, the destruction was caused not only by the specific hazard but also by social and economic factors that contributed to the population's vulnerability.

## Natural and manmade disasters

Disasters can have either natural or manmade causes. Natural disasters include hurricanes, droughts, famines, volcanic eruptions, insect infestations, disease epidemics, and earthquakes. Manmade disasters can range from industrial accidents and plane crashes, to civil wars and riots.

Both natural and manmade disasters can be divided into two general categories based on the time it takes for the disaster to evolve. These categories are rapid-onset disasters and slow-onset disasters.[8] Rapid-onset disasters occur with little warning and

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[7] Ibid.

[8] Ibid.

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require a quick response to alleviate human suffering. These disasters include events such as hurricanes, volcanic eruptions, industrial accidents, and plane crashes. For rapid-onset disasters, the military generally provides immediate relief in the form of transportation, logistical aid, and distribution of humanitarian supplies.

Slow-onset disasters develop over a much longer period and, thus, tend to have more complex causes than rapid-onset disasters. Although natural disasters can be included in this category, manmade disasters tend to be more common. For example, although famine is considered to be a natural disaster, the level of human involvement in creating this situation is greater than the human involvement in the devastation caused by a hurricane. Economic security, social stability, and government policies all play a large role in the creation of a viable food supply. Likewise, in the case of rapid-onset disease epidemics, the existence of adequate healthcare in the affected area could help prevent the spread of the disease.

CNA has tended to focus on rapid-onset disasters with natural causes. In general, these operations are conducted in relatively peaceful contexts with a low threat of violence. As a result, the case studies and accompanying analysis here are focused on these types of disasters. Because slow-onset disasters tend to have more complex causes, US military operations responding to these situations are often classified as complex humanitarian emergencies (CHEs) rather than disaster relief operations. We do not address CHEs in this paper.[9]

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[9] One reason why the military categorizes CHEs separately is that there is a greater risk of violence during these operations than during disaster response operations. Disaster response operations are generally conducted in permissive environments. While there may be some potential for violence in these operations due to the instability created by the disaster, the root of the issue is a humanitarian one as opposed to a political one. For CHEs, the environment is often more complex. For example, during Operation Restore Hope in Somalia in 1992 and 1993, the complex political and social environment in Somalia caused the United States to operate in a less permissive environment.

# Responsive framework for disaster relief operations

All disaster relief operations are responsive in nature, requiring that decisions, planning, and cooperation with other actors be performed quickly and with limited information. When a disaster occurs, decisions must be made quickly as to whether to respond, and, if so, who will respond and in what way. Following any event, a multitude of actors may commit resources or personnel. The US military may be one of these actors, but the decision whether to respond and the relief operation do not occur in a vacuum. Rather, the US military is only one actor of many, and must operate and plan in conjunction with other agencies, organizations, or governments. This crisis environment differs significantly from the environment in which engagement operations are planned and executed, and it leads to important operational consequences. Therefore, understanding the environment and the process in which disaster relief operations are planned aids our understanding of the operational consequences.

When a disaster strikes, the first step is for the host nation to determine whether it can deal with the disaster using its own resources, or whether it needs to request international assistance. Depending on the country, indigenous actors may be able to handle a disaster response themselves. If an afflicted country decides that it cannot provide adequate disaster assistance on its own, it may appeal for international assistance. The international system has a wide array of actors with the capability to respond to disasters, including UN organizations, international nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and state actors.

If the host nation government requests assistance from the US government, the United States can begin to determine what resources to commit. The US government has a defined process for determining whether US resources will be used to respond to a disaster. The State Department manages the overall US disaster response operation. Within the State Department, the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA), under the US Agency for International Devel-

opment (USAID), is the lead office responsible for coordinating disaster assistance efforts across the USG.

When a disaster strikes, the first step in the US response process is the declaration of a disaster by the US Ambassador in the affected country. For an event to be declared a disaster, the following criteria must be met:

- The magnitude of the disaster must be beyond the capacity of the host country to respond.

- The host country must request, or be willing to accept, assistance.

- A response must be determined to be in the interest of the US government, although criteria for determining US interest are undefined.[10]

Once a disaster is declared, OFDA can immediately provide up to $50,000 worth of assistance to the US Embassy in the affected country for relief aid. At this point, OFDA will assess whether it needs to take further action. If the disaster is severe enough, OFDA will likely deploy a Disaster Assessment Response Team (DART) to assess the situation and coordinate with other relief organizations. Once the DART has completed its assessment, it will consider options for action. Depending upon the type and scale of the disaster, as well as the specific needs identified, OFDA can reach out to other USAID bureaus, such as the Office of Food for Peace or the Office of Transition Initiatives, or to private contracting agencies, to provide needed response materials, personnel, and other resources. In theory, OFDA requests Department of Defense (DoD) assistance in disaster relief only after it has determined that civilian agencies cannot provide appropriate support.

Yet, DoD can perform several response roles independently of USAID/OFDA. First, after a disaster strikes, the combatant commander (COCOM) in the region may choose to dispatch an assessment team, called a Humanitarian Assistance Survey Team (HAST), to the affected area. Because the military is prepositioned around

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[10] USAID Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance, *Annual Report for Fiscal Year 2008.*

the world, the HAST may be the first USG team to arrive in the affected area. In other cases, the HAST assessment may occur concurrently with OFDA's DART assessment. After the HAST assessment has been completed, the COCOM may choose to deploy forces at his discretion.

The US military also may act outside of the USAID/OFDA process if the US Ambassador to the affected country requests assistance directly from the regional combatant commander. Such a request was made in the aftermath of an earthquake and tsunami which hit the Solomon Islands in 2007. The Ambassador to the Solomon Islands requested assistance directly from the PACOM combatant commander, and PACOM immediately deployed USNS *Stockham* to the affected area. In this example, the deployment proved to be premature, and USAID/OFDA and DoD agreed that the scale and scope of the disaster did not warrant the response.[11]

Such examples of US military operations demonstrate confusion about how the US military is to be used during a disaster response operation. Is the military really only to be used as a measure of last resort, or is it to be used as a symbol of public diplomacy?

The actors present in this framework are entities that the US military must consider as it plans and carries out disaster relief operations. Indigenous and international organizations, such as national governments, NGOs, and the UN have recently demonstrated a growing capability to respond to disasters.[12] Any actions that the US military takes in disaster relief will need to account for the capabilities and activities of these organizations.

# Phases of disaster relief operations

Disaster relief operations are phased operations that are highly dependent upon the time it takes an organization to respond. The

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[11] A. Cooper Drury et al., *The Politics of Humanitarian Aid: The U.S. Foreign Disaster Response Process: How It Works and How It Could Work Better* (Cambridge, MA: The Institute for Foreign Policy Analysis, May 2008).

[12] McGrady, *Peacemaking, Complex Emergencies, and Disaster Response.*

phases of a disaster relief operation describe which activities are performed and the timeframe in which these activities are performed. The time it takes to complete each of the phases is highly dependent upon the specific situation. The vulnerability of the population may play a large role. For example, a population that is poor, geographically isolated, or discriminated against will likely take longer to go through each phase.[13]

There are four disaster relief phases:

- Monitoring, prediction, mitigation (ongoing). During this phase, the following operations may occur:

    — Mitigation and development efforts make the society more resistant to a disaster.

    — Monitoring and prediction occur continuously. Many organizations, including NGOs and government agencies, attempt to track and predict where and when disasters will occur.

    — Indications and warnings begin as a disaster becomes imminent. They involve recognizing the signs that a disaster will occur soon and warning the potentially affected populations.

- Assessment and relief (one week). During this phase, the damage caused by the disaster is assessed. This assessment helps determine what type of response is required. This phase generally occurs at the same time as relief, which is the initial response to the disaster. For rapid-onset disasters, this phase usually lasts for a few days; for slow-onset disasters, it can last much longer.

- Recovery (months). This phase begins when victims' lives are no longer at immediate risk, but they are still in need of basic necessities, such as food, water, and shelter. In a rapid-onset disaster, this phase is usually on the order of months, but the timeframe depends heavily on the type of

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[13] Ibid.

disaster that occurred and the disaster's effect on infrastructure.

- Rehabilitation (indefinite). Rehabilitation is the ongoing process of restoring the affected society to pre-disaster levels. This phase consists of restoring the permanent infrastructure, including the local economy, and can take years to complete.[14]

When the military responds to disasters, it must understand where in this timeline it is intervening, and adjust its contributions accordingly. Often, military forces arrive when the mission is in the assessment and relief stage, and transition out as it moves into the recovery stage.

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[14] Ibid.

# CNA's analytic methodology

Our analysis of disaster relief operations is based on operations that CNA has analyzed over the past two decades. CNA analyses of disaster relief missions have varied in scope and methodology. Unlike the dataset for engagement missions, in which all data were collected for the same study, the data for disaster relief operations were collected and analyzed for a range of studies which had different research questions.

Because analysts worked under the purview of different commanders, they did not always track the same issues across every mission. Rather, they focused on the issues they observed during each specific mission or on questions posed to them by military commanders. As a result, the focus of the analyst may have changed from mission to mission: some analysts may have concentrated on tactical or organizational issues; others, on strategic issues, such as strategic communication. While this lack of continuity in focus did not allow us to observe how specific factors changed from mission to mission, we did find a lot of continuity in the overarching issues present in each of the missions.

For most of these missions, CNA had an analyst on-site or in the country during or shortly after the event. CNA analysts who deployed to disaster relief operations provided on-site, real-time analytic support for operational commanders and had the opportunity to observe operations on US Navy ships or in US military commands during the operation. Depending on the operation and the commander's needs, the analysts may have concentrated on operational or tactical aspects of the operation. Analysts who deployed after the disaster relief mission was completed gathered data or conducted interviews with people involved in the missions, including government and military officials from the United States and host nations.

The strengths of this dataset include a focus on a variety of issues related to disaster response operations. This variety of issues gives us a rich perspective of the operations. Despite the variety in analytic fo-

cus, certain themes reappeared throughout the analyses. These themes will be explained in more detail in the following two chapters, but they tended to center on three issues: information sharing and communication with other responders, mission flexibility and adaptability, and understanding the military's role in the overall disaster relief effort. The fact that these themes reappeared in analyses with differing focal points demonstrates their importance to disaster relief operations.

However, in contrast to the analysis of engagement missions, we were not able to analyze data collected in a systematic and focused way over time. As a result, the analysis of disaster relief operations presented here focuses on key operational themes; it does not include information on the effects of the missions on people in foreign countries, as the analysis of engagement operations does.

Additionally, because CNA works with the Navy and Marine Corps more often than it does with other military services, all of the case studies here are operations in which the Navy or Marine Corps heavily participated. As a result, our analysis concentrates on issues that arose with Naval or Marine Corps forces vice other services.

# CNA's case studies

By examining and comparing three disaster response operations, we can see factors critical to these operations. The three case studies we use are JTF Sea Angel in Bangladesh in 1991, Operation Unified Assistance in Southeast Asia in 2005 and 2006, and Operation Sea Angel II in Bangladesh in 2007. We divide each case study into three sections: a description of the event; a description of the US military response; and a discussion of relevant issues or observations from the operation, which summarizes CNA's analysis. For all case studies, we rely mainly upon CNA's analyses and reconstructions of the events. In a few cases, we use outside sources to describe what happened during the event, but the section containing the analysis of the operation is derived entirely from previous CNA work.

## JTF Sea Angel (OSA), May-June 1991

Cyclone Marian struck the Bangladeshi coast on April 29-30, 1991, with winds up to 210 kilometers per hour and a storm surge of over 6 meters. Destruction was widespread, and the death toll was about 140,000 people. An estimated 2.7 million people were left homeless. The strong winds and storm surge caused widespread damage to crops, cattle, and fishing boats; thus, survivors were threatened with starvation. In many areas, surface water sources were salinized, limiting access to safe water sources and proper sanitation. In many affected areas, critical communication and transportation infrastructure was severely damaged or completely destroyed, greatly impeding relief efforts by the government of Bangladesh and NGOs.

Further complicating the relief operation, the weather remained rainy and windy in the days following the cyclone's landfall; flooding continued into May. Many coastal areas, including Chittagong port, were flooded for several days and sustained severe damage.

The relief effort was complicated not only by the damage to critical infrastructure, but also by political considerations. The government of Bangladesh had just transitioned from a military dictatorship to a civilian government. At the time of the cyclone, the civilian government had only been in power for 39 days. Given this timing, it was extremely important for the government of Bangladesh to visibly take the lead on setting priorities and policy in providing relief efforts to its people.

## US Military response

Initially, the US Ambassador authorized immediate disaster assistance. Following a request for relief aid from the government of Bangladesh, the US government, through the OFDA provided grants to buy relief supplies. On May 11, after the government of Bangladesh requested further assistance from the United States, the President directed the US military to provide disaster relief assistance. A JTF was established for the purposes of distributing the relief supplies and aiding in damage assessment. Initially, the operation was named JTF Productive Effort; however, military leaders later changed the operation's name to JTF Sea Angel due to media reports in which Bangladeshis referred to US servicemen as "angels from the sea."

The US military relief effort included transporting relief items from Dhaka to Chittagong, repairing the roads, and fielding preventative medical and water purification units. The main purpose of the effort was to provide transportation capabilities for relief supplies. The Bangladeshi government and NGOs already had such supplies on hand, but did not have the capability to distribute them, especially to remote areas.

The lead elements of the JTF arrived on May 12, and they began operations, mainly disaster assessment, on May 13. On May 15, Air Force C-130s and Army Blackhawk helicopters began transporting personnel and relief supplies from Dhaka to Chittagong. Also on May 15, the Amphibious Task Force (ATF) and 5th Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) arrived off the coast of Chittagong. Navy and Army helicopters and LCACs helped transport supplies from Chittagong to outlying areas.

The US military relief effort coordinated with several entities in order to carry out relief operations. Most important, due to the sensitive political environment in the country, the United States coordinated closely with the Bangladeshi civilian government. The JTF headquarters was in Dhaka, and worked with the US Ambassador to establish a coordination committee headed by the Bangladeshi Prime Minister's personal representative, Brigadier Shaffat.

In addition, Bangladeshi armed forces and other government agencies were responsible for security and the final distribution of relief aid. A small Japanese relief team of about 50 people and two helicopters, as well as British Royal Fleet Auxiliary *Fort Grange,* also with two helicopters, acted under US tactical control. Pakistani, Indian, Italian, and Chinese military units also aided in the relief effort, along with numerous NGOs. CARE, the largest NGO present in Bangladesh, provided some transportation capabilities via trucks and trawlers.

The ATF and 5th MEB redeployed on May 29, and JTF Sea Angel carried out relief operations until June 6. During the relief effort, the JTF delivered a total of 2,430 tons of relief supplies.[15]

## Issues and observations

### Little information was available initially.

Even though the US military operation began more than ten days after the cyclone made landfall, little information was available regarding the situation on the ground in Bangladesh. Before arriving in Bangladesh, the JTF lacked information on indigenous disaster response capabilities and activities as well as on NGO activities. As a

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[15] George Stewart et al. *JTF Operations Since 1983,* July 1994 (CNA Research Memorandum 94-42); Adam B. Siegel, *Requirements for Humanitarian Assistance and Peace Operations: Insights From Seven Case Studies,* Mar 1995 (CNA Research Memorandum 94-74); USAID, "The Bangladesh Cyclone of 1991," accessed on 13 Sep 2010, at http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PNADG744.pdf .

result, the JTF did not know how US forces could assist these organizations or how the organizations could assist them.

**Political sensitivities in the host nation had to be accommodated.**

Given the sensitive political situation in Bangladesh, it was important that the Bangladeshi government lead the disaster relief operation. As a result, the Bangladeshi Prime Minister's personal assistant chaired a coordination committee to ensure that the Bangladeshis determined priorities and overall policy for the relief operation in a highly visible manner.

Additionally, the US military determined that the onshore footprint would be as small as possible. As a result, all US forces, with the exception of a few hundred personnel, returned to the ships every night. To the extent possible, NGOs or the Bangladeshi authorities executed the final distribution of aid directly to the population.

**The ATF was close by.**

When the cyclone hit Bangladesh, the ATF was already close to Bangladesh as it was redeploying from the Gulf War. Because of this coincidence, a large number of LCACs and helicopters were available to distribute aid.

**NGOs played a large role.**

In the aftermath of Cyclone Marian, NGOs on the ground had adequate numbers of relief supplies; however, since the cyclone had destroyed key infrastructure, they had little capability to distribute these supplies to the affected area. The JTF was able to provide transportation for the distribution of these supplies.

NGOs also helped by providing information and supplies to the US military. Because NGO staff had often been on the ground for several years prior to the disaster, they were familiar with the local geography and had built relationships with the local people and leaders. Their information on the local area was very important in carrying out the assessment process. Additionally, the NGOs provided the Medical Civil Action Program (MEDCAP) conducted by 5th MEB with medical supplies that were of use in aiding the Bangladeshi population. (The potential relief supplies on the US ships

were of little use in aiding the Bangladeshi people, since these supplies had not been stocked for the purpose of disaster relief missions.)

# Operation Unified Assistance (OUA), 2005-2006

On December 26, 2004, a 9.0 magnitude earthquake occurred under the Indian Ocean approximately 160 miles off the western coast of Sumatra. This earthquake triggered massive tsunami waves that affected the coastal areas of countries surrounding the Indian Ocean, including Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Thailand, the Maldives, and Somalia. Indonesia and Sri Lanka sustained especially severe damage, with Aceh province at the northwestern tip of Sumatra experiencing the most severe devastation. Aceh province was especially vulnerable, not only because it was very close to the epicenter of the earthquake but also because its population centers are relatively close to the ocean and are at low elevation. The tsunami washed away the one main coastal road in Sumatra, and relief agencies were unable to transport aid by ground during the first few weeks after the tsunami struck. In all, the tsunami killed over 200,000 people in a dozen different countries.

## US Military response

Less than 24 hours after the tsunami had caused significant damage to coastal areas in many Southeast Asian countries, Secretary of State Colin Powell announced that the United States would deploy Navy P-3 aircraft to help assess the damage. On December 28, the operation's forward command element, Combined Support Force (CSF) 536, arrived in Thailand to begin coordinating the military assistance part of the US disaster relief effort. The next day, the United States announced the deployment of the *Abraham Lincoln* Carrier Strike Group (ALCSG), which contained five ships, and the *Bonhomme Richard* Expeditionary Strike Group (BHRESG), which contained seven ships, to help provide disaster relief in the affected areas. A Special Purpose Marine Air Ground Task Force (SPMAGTF) consisting of two ships was also deployed to the affected areas.

The US military was tasked with providing relief assistance to the governments of Indonesia, Sri Lanka, and Thailand. The first elements of the ALCSG arrived off the coast of Banda Aceh and began HADR operations on January 1, 2005. The first elements of the BHRESG arrived in the vicinity of Medan and began to transfer supplies on January 3. A few days later, the BHRESG began relief operations in Meulaboh, Sumatra. US military helicopters and landing craft from the strike groups were used to transport relief supplies to shore.

In the first few weeks after the disaster, helicopters were the only means of delivering relief supplies to small pockets of survivors along the coast. When possible, the Indonesian Armed Forces (Tentara Nasional Indonesia, TNI) managed the actual distribution of the relief supplies to the population. The ALCSG also provided helicopters to the World Health Organization (WHO), to transport members of military and civilian organizations to assess the humanitarian situation.

The US military also conducted operations in both Sri Lanka and Thailand. Originally, military planners had envisioned that the BHRESG would exclusively support relief efforts in Sri Lanka, but as more information concerning the situation on the ground emerged, it became apparent that the extent of the damage in Aceh was severe. As a result, the BHRESG was redirected to Indonesia, and only one ship, USS *Duluth*, supported operations in Sri Lanka. In Thailand, where the damage was generally less severe and where the national government was more capable of responding to disasters, the US military mainly aided in search and rescue operations.

Including all of the countries, US military assets delivered about 5.7 million pounds of supplies over 41 days. At the end of January, it became clear that the mission was moving from relief to long-term reconstruction, and the military began to turn over operations to NGOs, the UN, and the government of Indonesia in preparation for disengagement. As part of the turnover, Naval forces created a Spark team to provide US military information to NGOs. The Spark team met daily with NGOs to share the information that the military had collected during its operations. Notably, the Spark team provided NGOs with over 200 images of the damage along the coast of

Sumatra. The military had taken these images from helicopters while conducting relief operations.

After the strike groups redeployed, USNS *Mercy*, a hospital ship, arrived in the region at the beginning of February to provide medical and surgical capabilities. In contrast to earlier US support, which had focused on assessment and relief, *Mercy* provided recovery capabilities. Staff onboard *Mercy* not only provided medical care to victims, but also provided sanitation, water quality surveillance, and disease prevention measures in the displaced persons camps. Personnel from the ship also helped repair medical equipment and facilities in Indonesian hospitals and provided some training to Indonesian healthcare workers. *Mercy* remained in the region for about 6 weeks and redeployed on March 16, 2005.[16]

## Issues and observations

**Flexibility was important as the situation evolved.**

Throughout the operation, information concerning the situation on the ground was difficult to obtain. NAVFOR found that the most useful information often came from NGO reports or reconnaissance missions, rather than from the US national sources on which the military normally relies. Yet, even these alternate sources were not readily available at the outset of the mission. As a result, the operation's leaders had to make changes to the mission and redirect ships as the situation became clearer.

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[16] Kim Deal, *Operation Unified Assistance: Disaster Relief from the Sea*, Mar 2006 (CNA Research Memorandum D0012642.A2); Ann Miller and David Strauss, *Operation Unified Assistance: How Conditions and Relationships Affected the Response*, July 2005 (CNA Research Memorandum D0012643.A1); Matthew Grund, *Operation Unified Assistance: Perspectives on the Interagency Rapid Health Assessments*, July 2005 (CNA Research Memorandum D0012644.A1); Sunoy Banerjee and Robert C. Benbow, *Operation Unified Assistance: Tsunami Relief Operations by Naval Forces*, Nov 2006 (CNA Research Memorandum D0012645.A1); James Bellacqua et al., *Foreign Media Portrayal of Operation Unified Assistance*, Nov 2006 (CNA Research Memorandum D0012634.A1).

Because the Navy ships were self-sustainable, they created little stress on the destroyed infrastructure of the affected areas. Also, their mobility allowed for relatively quick changes in geographic focus as the situation evolved. For example, as the extent of devastation in Aceh became apparent, the US military decided that the BHRESG would be more helpful in Indonesia than in Sri Lanka. As a result, military leaders decided to send only USS *Duluth* to Sri Lanka while the remainder of the ALESG sailed to Indonesia.

Additionally, due to the rapid and unexpected onset of the disaster, the military assets had to quickly adjust their capabilities to the task of humanitarian relief. The ALCSG quickly reconfigured its helicopters to maximize their payload for delivery of humanitarian supplies, and reorganized the flight deck for helicopter operations. This flexibility in execution was a great asset to the relief operation.

It took several days to plan the processes and procedures for the large-scale relief operations out of Banda Aceh, and during this time, the ALCSG's lift capability was underutilized. However, the ALCSG crews used some of this time to work on identifying metrics that would allow them to collect the right type of data on helicopter operations. Given the quick response nature of disaster relief missions, these types of time lags and information lags are inevitable, and the ability of military forces to adapt to these circumstances and changes in plans is critical.

**It was important to accommodate host nation sensitivities.**

Prior to the tsunami, the relationship between the governments of the United States and Indonesia had been somewhat tense. The US Congress had placed restrictions on US interactions with Indonesia during the 1990s due to reports of human rights abuses by the government of Indonesia. These restrictions included cutting International Military Education and Training (IMET) funding to Indonesia. Also, a 2002 incident involving the killing of two American schoolteachers in Papua Province and the US accusation that the Indonesian military had blocked investigation into the incident had hampered President Bush's effort to rebuild the relationship with the Indonesian government.

Additionally, in Aceh there was an ongoing counterinsurgency effort by the TNI against the GAM, known as the Free Aceh Movement, whose goal is the succession of Aceh from Indonesia. As a result of the counterinsurgency, the Indonesian government had restricted travel to the Aceh region in the years leading up to the tsunami (although it lifted many of these restrictions following the tsunami).

Perhaps as a result of this security situation, as well as Indonesia's colonial history, the government of Indonesia was sensitive to the onshore footprint of foreign militaries during the relief operation. Additionally, due to the insurgency in the region, the United States had somewhat higher force protection concerns. The US had to accommodate these concerns while also working in cooperation with the desires of the Indonesian government during the relief operation.

In some cases, getting key personnel into Indonesia was difficult. For example, it took some time for the BHRESG to obtain permission to operate in Meulaboh. Because the local Indonesian government and TNI officials were running the relief operation, the US military had to obtain their permission in order to operate in the vicinity. Several days of meetings were required to obtain permission for US relief operations to begin. In this situation, the United States had to be careful not to overwhelm the host nation and to operate in cooperation with its desires.

The United States also took other actions to assure cooperation with the government of Indonesia's sensitivities. US military personnel did not carry weapons ashore during the operation, and almost all US military personnel returned to the ship each night. (Of course, considering that they were unarmed, returning to the ship each night also might have been due to force protection requirements, as any personnel onshore at night would have had to rely on the TNI for security.) Other accommodations to the Indonesian government's sensitivities included scaling back plans for hundreds of Marines to help in building roads and clearing rubble. On January 21, the US forces observed quiet hours out of respect for the Muslim celebration, Iedul Adha.

These attempts to accommodate country sensitivities seem to have led to an increase in trust between the Indonesian and US governments. After the tsunami, CNA observed that the United States resumed the IMET program in Indonesia. Furthermore, there was an increase in exchange of high-level visits; and there were continued discussions on providing other defense-related support.

**A key aspect was coordination with other organizations.**

A key aspect of the relief operation was the ability of the US military to effectively coordinate with the huge number of other actors also conducting relief activities. Primarily, the TNI was in control of the relief operation and the US military worked closely with them to accomplish relief tasks. Although the US military had not collaborated with the TNI on a regular basis in the years leading up to the tsunami, some US military leaders had remained in contact with TNI counterparts, and the United States was able to use these contacts to better understand what role the US military might be able to play in the relief effort. The US personnel then worked with the TNI to identify landing zones for helicopters carrying aid supplies. Once airlifts began, the TNI was also generally responsible for the final distribution of relief materials to the population. The TNI also provided crowd control and security for these sites, and in coordination with US personnel, helped fix a diesel generator at a local hospital. Thus, US coordination with the TNI was strong.

The United States coordinated to a lesser extent with other foreign militaries. Because all foreign militaries had to coordinate directly with the GoI, communication among foreign militaries was limited. As a result, while some de-confliction and coordination was done via email, the different militaries were generally unaware of the details of what the other entities were doing.

Coordination with NGOs generally occurred at the highest levels, but was less regular at the local level. In many cases, information exchanged at the highest levels did not filter down to people at the lowest levels. In an effort to improve information sharing, the US military created Spark teams as it began to prepare for disengagement from the operation. These teams met with NGOs on the ground to share information with them. The Spark teams distributed photos of the damaged area taken from US helicopters,

which NGOs found to be useful. Some NGOs commented that this type of information sharing and coordination at the local level would have been helpful earlier in the operation.

In addition, some NGOs were reticent about cooperating closely with the US military. At the beginning of the operation, many NGOs relied upon the US military to deliver relief supplies because it was one of the only entities with lift capability. Later in the operation, however, some NGOs did not want the US military to deliver their relief supplies. Some international organizations and NGOs regarded the close cooperation between the US military and the TNI as a sign that the US military trusted the TNI more than it trusted the aid organizations. Additionally, some NGOs did not want the TNI to deliver their aid materials, due to its history of human rights abuses and because of rumors that the TNI was giving less aid to areas that had a reputation of strong GAM support (although these reports were never confirmed).

**Appropriate metrics were needed.**

During the operation, US forces found that they needed more-appropriate measures of effectiveness (MOEs) and measures of performance (MOPs) in order to support operational decisions. The MOPs recommended in the doctrine on foreign humanitarian missions included measuring the size of the refugee population and mortality rates at refugee camps. However, military decision makers found that these types of metrics were difficult to collect and analyze, especially during such a short-term operation. Instead, the military focused on collecting information quantifying helicopter and landing craft operations. This assessment of what was delivered was never compared against an assessment of the needs in the affected areas. As a result, it was difficult to know how effective the aid was, and military operators could not make decisions based on this type of information.

Measuring the effects of a short-term mission during the mission itself will always be difficult and measurements may be incomplete. Still, decisions such as how to allocate resources or when to transition out of the operation should be informed by data to the extent possible.

# Operation Sea Angel II (OSA II), November-December 2007

Cyclone Sidr hit southwestern Bangladesh on November 15, 2007. The storm caused a 5-foot tidal surge, which broke through coastal and river embankments and flooded low-lying areas. Extensive damage to housing, roads, bridges, and other types of infrastructure was reported, and an estimated 3,500 people were killed. The storm cut off electricity and communication to the affected areas, and drinking water was contaminated with saline water and debris.

It is estimated that the cyclone affected about 2.3 million households, and of these, about 1 million were seriously affected. The areas where the cyclone made the greatest impact were also areas with some of the highest poverty rates in Bangladesh. Notably, Cyclone Sidr caused significantly fewer deaths than Cyclone Marian in 1991. This difference was partly due to the increase in mitigation efforts by the government of Bangladesh during the 1990s.

## US Military response

The US military responded to the disaster soon after the cyclone made landfall. The US Navy diverted two ships to Bangladesh, USS *Tarawa* and USS *Kearsarge*. The 22nd Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) was embarked on *Kearsarge*. On November 19 the US military sent a Humanitarian Assistance Survey Team (HAST) to assess how US military capabilities could aid the overall relief effort. Designated operational commander of the US military relief effort, Brigadier General Ronald Bailey, arrived in Bangladesh shortly thereafter. All of these events occurred before November 22, the day that the government of Bangladesh officially requested US military support and the day that *Kearsarge* and *Tarawa* arrived off the coast of Bangladesh.

After the government of Bangladesh officially requested support, the US military began delivering aid. Military tasks were determined in collaboration with USAID and the government of Bangladesh. Initially, the military provided water purification and delivery along with some medical aid. Military relief efforts quickly shifted to providing transportation of food aid to remote locations and the deployment of small mobile medical teams to affected regions.

On December 2, the operation was officially named Operation Sea Angel II, drawing upon the US military's 1991 disaster relief operation in Bangladesh. *Kearsarge* redeployed on December 3, when it was relieved by USS *Tarawa* with the embarked 11th MEU. *Tarawa* continued relief efforts until December 6, when it redeployed out of Bangladesh on December 7.[17]

## Issues and observations

**The timing of US military entry into a country after a disaster matters.**

Following Cyclone Sidr, President George W. Bush announced that the US military would provide disaster relief and that two naval ships were already en route to the Bangladeshi coast. However, this announcement occurred before the Bangladeshi government officially requested any type of aid from the United States. As a result, some Bangladeshi print media stories suggested that the United States had acted prematurely. Sending aid, especially military aid, prior to an official request from the government was seen as imperialistic, and several reporters expressed significant mistrust of US intentions for the relief operation. Even after the government of Bangladesh made an official request for aid, these suspicions continued to linger in the Bangladeshi press.

These suspicions were exacerbated by a halt of US communications and press releases following the President's initial pledge of US military support. Communication did not resume until the US ships arrived off the Bangladeshi coast. While this halt was due to the US leadership's desire to ensure that a relief plan was in place before

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[17] Alison Rimsky Vernon et al., *Impact of Operation SEA ANGEL II on Bangladesh,* Mar 2011 (CNA Annotated Briefing D0024050.A2/Final); Maria Kingsley*, Media Coverage of Operation Sea Angel II*, Sep 2008 (CNA Research Memorandum D0017907.A2); Government of Bangladesh, *Cyclone Sidr in Bangladesh: Damage, loss, and needs assessment for disaster recovery and reconstruction,* April 2008, accessed 21 Sep 2010 at http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/db900SID/PANA-7K8GT8?OpenDocument&rc=3&emid=TC-2007-000208-BGD .

they announced their intentions to the world media, it caused some people to question US intentions for the relief operation.

Unfortunately, these suspicions in the media remained throughout the operation. Even when the official request for aid came from the government of Bangladesh, it was not well publicized. Thus, the legitimacy of the US military's role in the relief effort was continually questioned in the print media. It is difficult to know how much this negative press impacted Bangladeshis' opinions of the United States. Opinion polls conducted in Bangladesh regarding OSA II indicated positive attitudes toward the US operation. Many of the negative media reports came from print media sources with conservative Islamic affiliations. Yet, media reports clearly state that their suspicions of US intentions were based at least in part on the lack of communication from US and Bangladeshi leaders regarding the purpose and status of the US military in the relief operation.

**Partnership with the Bangladeshi military was strong.**

During the operation, the US military made consistent efforts to partner with the Bangladeshi military. The Bangladeshi Armed Forces Division (AFD) provided force protection during all ground activities, which demonstrated US trust and confidence in the capabilities of these forces. The US military leadership also restrained the tempo of operations to accommodate the AFD's operational style. Although this restraint may have led to fewer hours of relief operations each day, it also demonstrated that Bangladeshi leadership in the relief effort was an important US military priority.

Additionally, the US military relied heavily on the Bangladeshi military's existing expertise, capitalizing on each military's strengths. In general, the AFD focused on ground operations, while the US military focused on airlift. AFD liaison officers helped the US leadership to better determine key areas for relief operations and to better understand the nuances of execution in local areas. This reliance upon the Bangladeshi military demonstrated US faith in that military's operational ability and helped create a strong partnership with the AFD.

**Exit strategies and transitions matter.**

In OSA II, US and Bangladeshi military leaders had somewhat different views as to when the mission should be considered accomplished and US forces should depart. While these differences were overcome through multiple meetings and communications between the two sides, the differences in the vision of the end state momentarily strained an otherwise successful partnership.

As in all military operations, the United States sought to clearly define the end state and create indicators that would signal when the US military would hand over its relief activities to remaining agencies and redeploy from the country. US leadership and press releases stated that the United States would leave the country as soon as possible. This message was likely based upon the US leadership's desire to avoid mission creep and to communicate that it did not intend to stay in the country for the long term. US leadership intended to hand over relief operations to the AFD as soon as the AFD could handle the remaining relief activities on its own.

The Bangladeshi leadership expressed their desire for the US military to remain in the country in order to help not only with relief but also with recovery and reconstruction. The leaders were reluctant to fully take over relief operations even once they had the capability to do so. While the reasons for this reluctance are unclear, several meetings were held between US and Bangladeshi leaders to come to an agreement on when the US military would disengage. Reaching a mutually agreed upon end state was very important in maintaining the successful partnership with the Bangladeshi military.

# Critical factors for disaster relief missions

In the disaster relief operations CNA analyzed, what were the critical factors for effectiveness? How did these factors enable the successful completion of the mission? In this section, we note three main categories of critical factors for effectiveness in disaster relief missions: providing information and communication, defining objectives and end states, and understanding the military's role.

## Information and communication

Communication and information sharing among organizations involved in disaster relief missions can influence disaster relief operations at the tactical, operational, and strategic levels. At the tactical level, sharing information among organizations can help facilitate initial disaster assessment and effective delivery of aid to those who are in need. In disaster relief operations, the military often requires information that it may not have but that other organizations, such as NGOs or local governments that work on the ground, will likely have. At the operational level, working and coordinating with other actors in relief efforts, such as multilateral organizations, NGOs, and other governments and militaries, is key for successful delivery of aid. Last, at the strategic level, strategic communication in disaster relief operations can affect perceptions of the mission as well as mission effectiveness.

### Information sharing at the tactical level

Information sharing at the tactical level allows for more effective and targeted delivery of relief aid. In many cases, a disaster may occur in a region or country where the US military is not accustomed to operating. As a result, the military may not have the type of information needed to conduct a disaster relief operation. It may need such assistance as detailed maps of local areas, information on roads and other infrastructure, and contacts with local leader. Such

detailed, local information tends to be different from the type of information the military normally collects.[18]

In all the operations we studied, the military cooperated with other organizations to at least some extent, in order to get necessary information about the situation on the ground in the affected areas. In these operations, the US military generally relied upon NGOs and host nation militaries to provide such information. Both NGOs and host nation militaries often have firsthand knowledge of the country and have built relationships with local leaders who can help identify needs and challenges in specific areas.

For example, during OSA the military relied on NGOs and the AFD for key information regarding local conditions. Likewise, during OSA II, liaison officers from the AFD worked with the US military to help identify the most important areas for relief operations.

During OUA, the information requirement was further complicated by the fact that before the tsunami, the Indonesian government had restricted access to Banda Aceh due to security concerns, and few NGOs or IOs were operating there.[19] NAVFOR found that the most useful information came from NGO reports online or reconnaissance missions. However, in many cases, it was difficult to get the information to the ships actually participating in the relief effort.[20]

Regardless of how the military receives this type of information, it is critical to informing operations on the ground. As the military receives more information, it is likely to shift its activities from one location to another or from one type of activity to another. During OUA, as the military received more information on the extent of the devastation in Aceh province, it was able to re-route most of the BHRESG to help with relief operations in Aceh, where the need was greater.

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[18] Siegel, *Requirements for Humanitarian Assistance and Peace Operations.*

[19] Grund, *Operation Unified Assistance: Perspectives on the Interagency Rapid Health Assessments..*

[20] Banerjee and Benbow, *Operation Unified Assistance: Tsunami Relief Operations by Naval Forces.*

## Operational coordination with other actors

During disaster relief operations, the military will always work with actors outside of the US military. These actors could include other US government agencies, foreign militaries, foreign government leaders, local officials, corporations, and NGOs. The US military's ability to coordinate with these actors in a timely and effective manner is crucial to the effectiveness of disaster relief operations.

However, coordinating with other actors in a crisis situation is often difficult. Because time constrains planning ability, the US military may arrive on scene without extensive knowledge of all of the relief actors and activities taking place in the area. For example, in OSA, the JTF did not have contact with the Bangladeshi government or NGOs until it arrived in the country. The military did not know what capabilities these organizations had, what activities they were carrying out, or what methods of operation they were using. Similarly, the NGOs were unfamiliar with the militaries' operating methods and capabilities. As a result, the various organizations spent several days just arranging coordination as opposed to delivering aid.[21]

Given the crisis nature of most disaster relief operations, it is impossible to plan all aspects of cooperation in advance. However, basic familiarity with other organizations' operating procedures, capabilities, and cultures can help facilitate cooperation once a crisis has begun.

Despite the initial difficulties that can arise in establishing working relationships with other organizations on the ground, the US military has succeeded in establishing such relationships, and they have been important to the effective completion of disaster relief missions. In OSA, cooperation with the Bangladeshi government and NGOs was important in order to ensure that the government was seen as directing the mission, which reinforced its legitimacy. In order to do this, the US military worked through the US Ambassador in Bangladesh to ensure that the Bangladeshi Prime Minister's personal representative chaired a relief committee that decided on priorities for the relief operation. Additionally, the United States

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[21] George Stewart, Scott M. Fabbri, and Adam B. Siegel, *JTF Operations Since 1983*, Mar 1995 (CNA Research Memorandum 94-42).

coordinated closely with both the Bangladeshi defense forces and NGOs to ensure that these entities were responsible for the final distribution of relief supplies to the population. In sum, close coordination with the Bangladeshi government, military, and NGOs helped reinforce the legitimacy of the new Bangladeshi government.[22] As a result, coordination at the operational level aided the effectiveness of the mission.

Similarly, in OSA II, the United States fostered a close relationship with the Bangladeshi military by relying upon the AFD for security and ground operations. Even when the two countries encountered differences over the United States' proposed end state and exit strategy, their strong partnership allowed for the resolution of those differences through close dialogue between the two entities.[23]

Establishing relationships with other organizations can present challenges. The operational procedures, culture, and goals of these organizations can be significantly different from those of the US military. For example, in OUA, after the initial relief effort, some NGOs became less willing to allow the US military to transport their supplies. The US military had closely cooperated with the TNI during the relief operation, and some NGOs did not want their relief supplies to be distributed by the TNI.[24] This example demonstrates that decisions regarding cooperation with different entities must be made by weighing the pros and cons of cooperation. Some decisions have political ramifications, and it is important for military leaders to be aware of these implications.

In general, the US military has overcome difficulties in cooperating with other relief actors. The important transportation assets that the US military brings to the relief effort are key, and NGOs and international organizations recognize their importance. Better understanding of other organizations' operating procedures and culture can help mitigate difficulties that may arise during the operation.

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[22] Ibid.

[23] Vernon et al., *Impact of Operation SEA ANGEL II on Bangladesh.*

[24] Grund, *Operation Unified Assistance: Perspectives on the Interagency Rapid Health Assessments.*

## Strategic communication

During disaster relief operations, communication is important not only for the tactical completion of tasks, but also for effectiveness at the strategic level. The influence of the media and the management of strategic communication are important aspects of the strategic-level impacts that these operations can have. Because large-scale disaster relief missions tend to draw a large amount of media and international attention, it is important for the United States to be able to work effectively with the media in order to communicate its intentions and activities—not only to the host nation public, but also to the US public and the international community at large.

Public Affairs Officers (PAOs) play an important role in effectively communicating with the public. Writing press releases, inviting journalists to observe US military operations, and disseminating photos or footage of US military actions all aid in keeping others informed of what the US military is doing. CNA has found that encouraging host nation officials to make public affairs statements and facilitating journalists' first-hand access to military operators and to people who received aid from the US military generally help create positive coverage of the US mission.[25] In order to create these types of opportunities, a strong PAO presence is needed.

Unless a strong PAO is present during a relief operation, the US message can become muted. For example, during OSA, there was no PAO on the advance team, and there were a limited number of PAOs on the ships that responded. The media's interest in the operation was high, but the military lacked the resources to support all of their requests. Additionally, combat camera film was inaccessible as it was sent to Pacific Command's Psychological Operations unit (CINCPAC PSYOPS), but never given to the CJTF.[26] All of these factors hindered the US military's ability to communicate its activities to others during OSA.

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[25] Kingsley, *Media Coverage of Operation Sea Angel II*; and Bellacqua et al., *Foreign Media Portrayal of Operation Unified Assistance.*

[26] Siegel, *Requirements for Humanitarian Assistance and Peace Operations.*

When the US military is able to communicate with the media, it should make every effort to be clear and open regarding its intentions and activities in disaster relief. CNA has found that when the United States does not clearly and continually communicate its intentions and follow those words with associated actions, there can be an increase in negative rhetoric on US intentions in media reports. For example, during OSA II, the United States announced that it would send a Navy ship to assist in disaster relief. However, this announcement was made prior to the Bangladeshi government's request for aid, and gave the impression that the United States was acting without the permission of the Bangladeshi government. Furthermore, after this announcement was made, the US Navy halted its communications and press releases, leaving the Bangladeshi media to fill in the information gap on its own. Some Bangladeshi media reports accused the United States of having imperialist aims in Bangladesh. These initial impressions were hard to disperse once the media began to report them, and they remained in the media throughout the operation.[27]

Of course, some negative rhetoric will be published regardless of the performance of the US PAOs. But by ensuring that the message being communicated is clear and is as consistent as possible with the actions being taken on the ground, the US military can help reduce the instances of such rhetoric.

# Mission flexibility and adaptability

Due to the short-notice nature of most disaster relief missions, there may be little information available on the extent of the disaster or the location of the most affected populations, especially at the beginning of an operation. As time moves on, more information is likely to become available. In light of this new information, the military may need to adjust its plans or activities. The ability of the US military to adapt to these changing situations has proven to be a key aspect of effectiveness in disaster relief operations.

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[27] Kingsley, *Media Coverage of Operation Sea Angel II.*

## Flexibility in a changing environment

Military assets often have little notice before deploying for a disaster relief effort. Often, these assets will be preparing for or taking part in other missions. The ability of operators to quickly change course and adapt their capabilities to a new operation is key in disaster response. For example, in OSA, the ATF happened to be close to Bangladesh when the cyclone hit, and the ships quickly changed course to travel to Bangladesh. Fortunately, the helicopters and landing craft onboard the ATF were useful in distributing aid.[28] Similarly, during OUA, the ALCSG was able to quickly adjust the capabilities of its helicopters to allow them to carry more supplies.[29]

In other situations, assets may have to adjust their plans as the disaster evolves. During OUA, as more information became available regarding the extent of the disaster in Aceh, the US military decided on short notice to switch all but one ship in the BHRESG from Sri Lanka to Indonesia.[30] This change in plans required that operators quickly adapt to new requirements and a new context.

Additionally, needs may change as the relief effort moves into the recovery stage. In OUA, the military leaders observed that the pace of the operation began to slow down so that the military could hand over its activities to international organizations, NGOs, foreign militaries, and the TNI.[31] As the US military transitioned its lift capabilities out of the operational area, *Mercy* arrived with a different set of capabilities more appropriate to recovery operations.

## Adapting to political sensitivities

When the US military sends assets to aid a disaster relief operation, the completion of disaster relief tasks, such as airlifting supplies, conducting search and rescue, or providing water purification, is a

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[28] Stewart, Fabbri, and Siegel. *JTF Operations Since 1983.*

[29] Deal, *Operation Unified Assistance: Disaster Relief from the Sea.*

[30] Ibid.

[31] Banerjee and Benbow. *Operation Unified Assistance: Tsunami Relief Operations by Naval Forces.*

key part of the mission. However, the way in which the US military carries out these tasks is also important and must be taken into account when performing the operation. Because the US military is generally acting at the invitation of the host nation and in concert with other aid organizations, cooperation and diplomacy are important aspects of these missions. Unless the military takes these political goals into account, a situation could arise where the disaster relief tasks were completed efficiently but the overall effect of the mission was negative.

In this sense, it is important that the US military be able to adapt to political sensitivities in the host nation. For example, just before OSA, the government of Bangladesh had emerged from a military dictatorship. It was important that the new government be seen as able to manage the disaster relief operation and that any military forces be under the command of civilian authorities. For this reason, the Prime Minister's personal representative took on a leadership role with the authority to set priorities and policies for the relief operation. Additionally, in order to reinforce the government of Bangladesh's authority in the relief effort, the United States ordered that all but 500 personnel return to the ship each night. Although this was not the most efficient means of completing the relief operation, the political sensitivities required that the operation be carried out in this way.[32]

To some extent, this same dynamic occurred in OSA II. The US military chose to operate at a less rigorous tempo in order to accommodate the AFD's normal OPTEMPO. Although this decision resulted in fewer relief sorties each day, it was key in maintaining a strong partnership with the Bangladeshi military leaders.

The political sensitivities during OUA were numerous, as there was a counterinsurgency in the affected area at the time the tsunami hit, and as the government of Indonesia was sensitive about having foreign troops operating in the country. In this case, the US military was able to build a cooperative relationship with the Indonesian military through joint operations and coordination on activities.

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[32] Stewart, Fabbri, and Siegel, *JTF Operations Since 1983;* and Siegel, *Requirements for Humanitarian Assistance and Peace Operations.*

In order to accommodate the Indonesian government's sensitivities, the US military took several actions. To obtain permission to operate in the country, the US military made sure to work with local government and TNI leadership. In order to operate in Meulaboh, the US military spent several days meeting with local leaders to obtain appropriate permission for US relief operations to begin. In this situation, the United States had to be cognizant of the need to not overwhelm the host nation and to operate in cooperation with its desires.

The United States also took other actions to respect the government of Indonesia's sensitivities. US military personnel did not carry weapons ashore during the operations, and almost all US military personnel returned to the ship each night. Additionally, plans for hundreds of Marines to help in building roads and clearing rubble were scaled back, and on January 21, the US forces observed quiet hours out of respect for the Muslim celebration, Iedul Adha.

As we noted earlier, these attempts to accommodate country sensitivities seem to have led to an increase in trust between the Indonesian and US governments. After the tsunami, CNA observed that the United States resumed the IMET program in Indonesia. Furthermore, there was an increase in the exchange of high-level visits, and there were continued discussions on providing other defense-related support.

As the US military looks toward future disaster relief operations, it should expect to encounter similar political sensitivities. While it may be difficult to plan for the specific sensitivities present in every country, it is apparent that accommodating these sensitivities is important to the effectiveness of disaster relief operations.

## Defining an end state and transitioning out

Because of the evolving nature of disaster relief operations, it may be difficult to discern at the outset of the mission what the US military's exact commitment to the operation will be—although this depends on the context of the specific mission. In some cases, the US military may be able to define the mission in terms of time or assets committed, such as sending one survey team to help with the assessment of a disaster. However, in large disaster responses, espe-

cially when there are large commitments of assets or personnel, it will likely be much more difficult to assess the length of the US commitment from the outset.

As a result, it is important that military leaders have the right kind of information to help them assess how to proceed with the mission. That is, they need measures that can support operational decision-making. To some extent, the lack of this type of information was apparent during OUA. Operational leaders found that the type of measures that were discussed in the military doctrine, such as morbidity rates in displaced persons camps, were neither easy to obtain nor particularly helpful in making operational decisions. Instead, they could have used information on how much aid was needed and where it was needed.[33]

In order for operations to continue, the military will likely need to hand over its tasks to other organizations. Thus, operational leaders need a strategy to provide for the sustainability of the operation once the military leaves. For example, during OUA, military responders planned a transition wherein they would hand over the tasks they were conducting to NGOs, international organizations, and TNI. The plan had two parts. First, the military created Spark teams, which provided US military information to NGOs and the UN. This information consisted of photos taken from US military helicopters and information concerning the military's operations. Second, US helicopter began to fly fewer sorties each day, giving the UN and other foreign militaries the opportunity to fly more sorties each day. This turnover strategy allowed for a successful disengagement from the operation and ensured that other relief organizations were able to take over the tasks that the US military had been executing.[34]

Another important element in transitioning out of an operation is the ability to create agreements with the host nation or other actors concerning the US military's role in the relief operation. During OSA II, the US and Bangladeshi military leaders had different ex-

[33] Banerjee and Benbow, *Operation Unified Assistance: Tsunami Relief Operations by Naval Forces.*

[34] Ibid.

pectations of the US military's role in the relief effort. The US military leaders intended to stay only for the relief phase of the mission. They intended to hand over the operation to the Bangladeshi government and military as soon as the indigenous forces could manage the operation on their own. However, Bangladeshi leaders wanted the US military to remain in the country to help with the reconstruction efforts. Several meetings were held in order to resolve the differing perspectives. Fortunately, the two entities had built a strong cooperative relationship earlier in the operation and were able to come to an agreement regarding the length of the US military's stay in the country.[35]

# Understanding the military's role and unique contributions

In a disaster relief operation, the US military is always at the service of another organization. USAID is always the lead in any US foreign disaster response. In addition, the US military and disaster relief agencies are generally participating in the relief effort at the request of the host nation. In this context, it is important for the military to provide capabilities that will support the goals of these entities as well as complement their existing activities.

For example, in OSA, the US military found that the greatest need was not relief supplies but rather transportation capabilities to deliver those supplies. The Bangladeshi government and NGOs already had enough relief supplies, but had no way of transporting them to the affected populations—especially the remote populations. As a result, the US military's transportation capabilities were an important asset to the international effort, and the military focused its operations on providing transportation.[36]

It is important for the US military not only to contribute in ways that are appropriate in the context of others' activities, but also to perform activities and tasks that are appropriate for military capabilities and capacity.

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[35] Alison Vernon et al., *Impact of Operation SEA ANGEL II on Bangladesh.*

[36] Stewart, Fabbri, and Siegel, *JTF Operations Since 1983.*

Disaster relief operations require that the military conduct operations that may not be traditional military tasks. This does not necessarily mean that the military must invent new roles, responsibilities, or tasks; rather, it means that the military must examine its current capabilities and capacities and see how it can apply them to disaster relief. Just as important, the military must understand which capabilities it lacks and where it may need to work with other organizations in order to complement its own activities.

In general, disaster relief requirements fall into three categories: those that are inherent military capabilities, those that are military capabilities used in a different way, and those that fall outside of military capabilities. These categories are not rigid: many requirements could fit into multiple categories. For example, communications capabilities may be required for communication among US military forces (traditional capability); they may be required for communication to support both US and foreign diplomats (traditional capability used in a non-traditional way); or, they may be used to communicate with civilians on the ground (In Eastern Exit in Somalia, this capability was outside military capabilities because it required radios the Marines did not have).[37] However, these categories provide a useful framework in which the military can think about how to best contribute its capabilities to disaster response operations.

## Inherent military capabilities

Some military capabilities can be used during a disaster relief operation in much the same way that they are used in combat operations. For example, security, reconnaissance and surveillance, and expeditionary airfield operations are all traditional military capabilities that can be almost directly transferred to support disaster relief missions. OUA provides an example of the use of an inherent military capability in a disaster relief operation. Marines aboard the

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[37] Adam B. Siegel. , *Requirements for Humanitarian Assistance and Peace Operations: Insights from Seven Case Studies.* CNA Research Memorandum 94-74. March 1995.

BHRESG were already organized and trained to go onshore as a unit and unload supplies as part of an expeditionary operation. This organization was directly applicable to operations conducted during OUA in which the Marines went ashore and unloaded and sorted relief supplies.[38]

## Military capabilities used in a different way

Some military capabilities can be used for disaster relief with some modification. The military has these capabilities, but must apply them in a different way in a disaster relief operation than it would in a combat operation. For example, during OUA, the helicopters on-board the ALCSG needed to be re-outfitted in order to lift larger amounts of supplies.[39] Another example is medical capabilities, which may need to be modified for a different type of population.

## Capabilities that fall outside of military capabilities

In some cases, the military may find that a disaster relief mission re-quires tasks that are outside its traditional capability set. These ca-pabilities could include a need for linguists (to act as translators), engineers or disaster management specialists, or civil affairs per-sonnel. In general, the US military does not have a great capacity for these types of capabilities, and it is unlikely that many personnel with these capabilities would be present in any specific disaster re-sponse scenario. This category may also include instances where the military does not have the correct equipment or materiel to com-plete a mission. For example, during OSA, NGOs provided the mili-tary MEDCAP with medical supplies that would help in aiding the Bangladeshi population. Because most of the medical supplies on the ship were inappropriate for treating the types of medical issues found among the population, the NGOs' contributions allowed the military doctors to carry out the MEDCAP.[40]

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[38] Deal, *Operation Unified Assistance: Disaster Relief from the Sea.*

[39] Ibid.

[40] Siegel, *Requirements for Humanitarian Assistance and Peace Operations.*

By thinking through these three types of requirements, the military can better understand in advance what capabilities it can reasonably contribute to a disaster relief operation and what capabilities it should rely on other organizations to provide.

# Conclusion

The military—and the US Navy, in particular—face some significant challenges in disaster relief missions: How should a force enter a country? How should military capabilities be used, and how will that use change over time? How can the military thoughtfully extract itself at the right moment? One reason that these missions are challenging is that the environment is permissive; permissive environments require a level of diplomacy that non-permissive environments do not. In these missions, the US military must work alongside and with the permission of the host nation's government, military, and population. Therefore, any disaster relief response has to be planned and executed with sensitivity and with an awareness of not only the immediate effect of a decision but also its potential repercussions.

As we will see in the next section, this very sentiment is strongly echoed by critical factors in engagement operations. Those operations also must rely on military sensitivities and a diplomatic approach to the conduct of the mission.

# Engagement operations

To date in the 21st century, engagement operations have been a main focus of non-kinetic naval operations. While such operations are certainly not new to the US Navy, a combination of two factors—the rise of al-Qaeda, and the response from populations in the Pacific to US operations in the area after the 2004 tsunami—put a new emphasis on the idea of engaging with important audiences globally as a way to manage emerging threats. Alternately called "sea-shaping" or "Phase 0" operations, this effort to build relationships and increase country capabilities has dominated non-kinetic US naval operations for the past few years. As a result, in 2007, engagement operations became a core competency for the US Navy, as detailed in the National Maritime Strategy.[41]

CNA has analyzed 14 of these deployments. From these various analyses, we have begun to learn how to tell whether an engagement is effective and, if so, why. This section discusses our results.

## Background

With the promulgation of the new National Maritime Strategy in the autumn of 2007, the US Navy created a dramatic change in its mission by adding a new core competency: prevention of terrorism by means of engaging with foreign peoples and governments.

The Navy had already begun to anticipate this change a few years earlier, beginning with the startling success of its disaster relief efforts following the 2004 tsunami. In response to the disaster, the United States sent many naval assets, including the hospital ship USNS *Mercy*. The naval relief effort in general, and the hospital ship specifically, sent a strong signal of friendship and compassion to many populations that were historically opposed to the United

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[41] *A Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower*, Oct 2007.

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States and, even more important, were friendly toward various terrorist groups.

This operation was very successful in changing the populace's perceptions of the US Navy and the United States. Thus, it gave rise to a different way of thinking about the use of naval assets and power that was far more concentrated on the prevention of conflict than on the mitigation of conflict. The Navy began to plan for and use a variety of naval assets to conduct what we have termed "engagement" operations. These operations have many goals, but they are nearly always are aimed at changing the perceptions of at least one particular audience in the host nations.

# What is engagement?

We define engagement operations as non-crisis, pre-planned operations that use soft-power activities (such as medical care) to strengthen partnerships and create trust with countries in a region. The goals (though the specifics differ by region) are generally to increase the host nation's capabilities (for instance, to help it improve its health care or a build a better-prepared maritime force), to build the population's support for the host nation government, and/or to strengthen its relationship with the United States by building trust. These efforts, in turn, might extend US influence with the nation and help counter negative influences, such as anti-government groups and/or illicit activities, or they might help the United States reach other important strategic objectives. In short, engagement operations are a method for achieving US interests in a region.

Engagement has as its focus interaction with certain audiences in each country—normally the government, the military, and/or the population. It may also target other audiences, such as non-governmental organizations (NGOs). A variety of mission activities have been used in the quest to strengthen relationships with countries in the AOR.

Normally, the US Navy conducts these activities with a great deal of host nation involvement in the planning stages or during execution. For instance, host nation personnel could help plan a certain type

of military training for their forces or host nation medical personnel could work alongside US Navy doctors during medical activities.

By their nature, engagement missions are normally not crisis-driven operations. Instead, there is a long planning time and almost all of the activities on the ground are decided before execution. A variety of platforms—white hulls, gray hulls, amphibious ships, destroyers, and even high-speed vessels—have been used in these engagements. Engagements have employed a variety of activities: medical missions, engineering/construction missions and military-to-military training missions (or a combination of the three) in order to have an impact in host nations.

The effectiveness of these missions in changing perceptions is a difficult standard to understand and measure; therefore, the assessment of this effectiveness is often challenging. CNA was originally tasked by OPNAV N3/N5 to understand the impact that these types of missions had on host nations. Over time, we have examined 14 deployments that used a variety of assets and a variety of activities; these missions took place in three areas of responsibility (AORs) and were aimed at various internal and external audiences.

For the purposes of this document, we will focus on major naval engagement missions, especially those that are annual. This in no way implies that other forms of engagement, such as exercises or port visits are not important or are not part of this category. We believe that, generally, the results of our analyses will hold true for smaller operations as well as the major ones. Table 1 provides a summary of each deployment that we examined.

Table 1. Engagement missions that CNA has analyzed

| Operation | Ship | Year | Activity type | Audiences | Countries visited |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Pacific Part-nership | USNS *Mercy* | 2006 | Medical Construction | Population Government | Philippines, Bangladesh, Indonesia, East Timor |
| Pacific Part-nership | USS *Peleliu* | 2007 | Medical Construction | Population Government | Vietnam, Philippines, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Marshall Islands |
| Pacific Part-nership | USNS *Mercy* | 2008 | Medical Construction | Population Government | Vietnam, Timor Leste, Papua New Guinea |
| Operation Caring Re-sponse | Multiple | 2008 | Disaster Re-lief | Population Military Government | Samoa, Tonga, Solomon Islands, Kiribati, Marshall Islands |
| Pacific Part-nership | T-AKE *Robert P. Byrd* | 2009 | Medical Construction | Population Government | Samoa, Tonga, Solomon Islands, Kiribati, Marshall Islands |
| Continuing Promise | USNS *Com-fort* | 2007 | Medical Construction | Population Government | Haiti, El Salvador, Guatemala, Belize, Nicaragua, Panama, Trinidad and Tobago, Surinam, Guyana, Peru, Ecua- |
| Southern Partnership Station | HSV-2 *Swift* | 2007 | Military training | Military Government | Dominican Republic, Colombia, Panama, Nicaragua, Honduras, |
| Continuing Promise | USS *Kear-sarge* | 2008 | Medical Construction | Population Government | Dominican Republic, Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana, Nicaragua, Colombia, Panama (cancelled), Haiti (disaster |
| n/a | USS *George Washington* | 2008 | Military training | Military Government | Argentina, Brazil, Chile |
| Continuing Promise | USNS *Com-fort* | 2009 | Medical Construction | Population Government | Haiti, Dominican Republic, Antigua, El Salvador, Panama, Colombia, Nicaragua |
| Africa Partnership Station | USS *Fort McHenry* and HSV-2 *Swift* | 2007-2008 | Military training | Military Government | Ghana, Nigeria, Gabon, Togo, Cameroon, Liberia, Senegal, Equatorial Guinea, São Tome and Principe, Benin, and Angola |
| Africa Partnership | USS *Nashville* | 2009 | Military training | Military Government | Nigeria, Cameroon, Ghana, Senegal, Liberia |
| Africa Partnership Station | HSV-2 *Swift* | 2010 | Military training | Military Government | Kenya, Tanzania, Mozambique, Seychelles, Reunion, Mauritius |
| Africa Partnership Station | USS *Gunston Hall* | 2010 | Military training | Military Government | Senegal, Ghana, Cameroon (cancelled), Haiti (disaster relief) |

We should note that our typology includes two main types of naval engagement missions: humanitarian civic assistance (HCA) and military training. Both have two aims: strengthening relationships with partner nations, and increasing a specific type of capability or capacity. Military training missions focus more on the latter, but also need to strengthen relationships within the host nation. HCA missions tend to focus on relationship building but have come to concentrate more and more on improving medical capabilities. The main difference between the two types is the activities they perform in order to achieve their goals: HCA missions typically use medical and construction activities, whereas military training missions focus on training the military forces of the host country in order to increase their military capabilities.

In many ways, therefore, we have been able to take advantage of a "natural experiment" in order to conduct the analysis. With so many variables available, we have come to understand how each of them may or may not enhance effectiveness. Nevertheless, understanding human perception and behaviors is an inexact science: data are difficult to gather and understand, since perceptions and behavior changes are not easily observable, especially in the short to medium term. In response to these difficulties, we used as many data sources as we could; if we found a result that was consistent across the data sources or, better yet, across the various deployments, we felt reasonably confident in our results. We note, however, that our results cannot be considered to give the complete picture; rather, as qualitative results, they are our best understanding of the situation at the time.

# Assessing effects and causes

In this section, we explain the methodology we used to analyze engagement operations and we discuss some of our frameworks. We should note that CNA analyses of engagement operations benefited from being conducted under one analytic rubric and done relatively close in time as opposed to CNA analyses of disaster relief operations, which occurred more sporadically. As a result, engagement operational analysis had one driving question: What were the effects of these operations in the host nation and why? In contrast, disaster relief operational analysis focused on a number of different questions.

## What is impact?

When we began to explore the question of impact in host nations resulting from engagement deployments, we had to ask, "What does impact mean?" If we were going to cogently explain our dependent variable, we needed to be able to define it. The word "impact" has many definitions. For the purpose of this study we identified three dimensions of impact: physical, attitudinal, and behavioral. "Physical impact" means the experience of actually participating in the ship's activities—for instance, receiving medical care or a new roof. "Attitudinal impact" refers to a change in opinion on given subjects. "Behavioral impact" refers to a change in behavior based on changes in attitudes. These three dimensions formed the framework we used in order to understand impact.

## Analytic methodology

We knew that we were interested in identifying and explaining any attitude change in host nations. This was our dependent variable. The reason we focused on attitude change is that we believe an attitude change is an important and critical precursor to any behavioral change. Also, the objectives for all of these missions were a series of

behavioral changes.[42] Thus, we first needed to identify and characterize attitudes. We then turned to causation of the attitude changes, in order to determine what makes a positive attitudinal impact vice a negative one, and offer recommendations.

Of course, there is no clear causal line for an attitude change as many factors feed into such a change. However, where possible, we tried to tie the impact back to operational actions that took place during a phase of the deployment. Thus, in that way, we "deduced" some of the causes of the impact and, from this, we derived recommendations for the Navy to consider in order to sustain or avoid such a change in future missions.

# Assessment tools

Assessing attitudes and behaviors is difficult: changes may be hard to capture, and the data that are gathered are very different from data the US Navy normally uses (and are messier).

To that end, we detail the main assessment tools that are available and we note both the strengths and weaknesses of these tools. Understanding the limitations of these instruments is key to knowing whether the assessment is strong. For instance, for bias issues, we know that using only one data source can lead to conclusions that may be skewed since only one perspective was taken into account.

## Surveys

Surveys can range from simple verbal assessments of how things are going; to complex national-level surveys conducted by professional survey firms. General surveys (popularly known as polls) can be divided into several different categories:

- *Random sample surveys* conducted by professional survey organizations. An example of a random sample survey is the

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[42] See Alison Rimsky Vernon, *Annex 2: Objectives from USPACOM, USSOUTHCOM, USAFRICOM, USCENTCOM and Their Naval Components*, Oct 2010 (CNA Information Memorandum D0023786.A1).

Pew Global Attitudes project, an ongoing series of surveys of attitudes around the world. National surveys are used for assessing missions that have objectives focused on the general population.

- *Questionnaire format surveys* targeting a specific audience and subject. These may or may not be professionally managed but typically are conducted informally. An example of a questionnaire-style survey is the training evaluation survey form handed out to students after a training session.

- *Self-administered surveys* distributed and collected to the target population with little or no quality control. Such surveys include patient satisfaction surveys and surveys handed out at events to obtain visitor feedback.

Each of these survey types has advantages and limitations, which we discuss below. CNA's perspective is drawn from its experiences in conducting surveys in support of assessing engagement efforts, and does not reflect results from the broader literature or experience from the professional survey and social science literature.

**Random sample surveys**

Random sample surveys are usually thought of as general population surveys, as they are frequently conducted by the larger survey organizations such as Gallup or Pew. But a random sample survey can target any population and be conducted by anyone, as long as the survey methodology conforms to standard practices in sampling and quality control and the questions and answers are well developed and controlled.

Random sample surveys have an advantage in that they reflect the demographic and attitudinal makeup of the entire population better than other types of surveys. (The only exception is if the entire population can be surveyed, as is the case with small populations such as training classes or government officials.) The disadvantage of random sample surveys is the cost and time needed to conduct them: a national survey of 1,000 individuals in a small country will cost from $40,000 to $60,000.

A number of things must be considered when conducting a random sample survey:

- *Sample size.* Sample size determines the frequently quoted "margin of error" for the overall survey. However, this "margin of error" is for the overall survey questions rather than the answers themselves. For instance, if the analyst is interested in the opinions of a group that represents 25 percent of the overall population, the sample size has just decreased by a factor of four, which will increase the range of possible valid answers to questions about that population (i.e., the "margin of error" is larger). For this reason, surveys should be done on the largest sample size affordable.

- *Quotas.* One method of conducting surveys is to have demographic quotas that the survey must reach. This is generally not considered to produce results that are as reliable as those of a truly random sampled survey that are then weighted to the key demographic variables.

- *Quality control.* Those conducting the survey should be supervised, with their results double checked (by doing random checks from the sample) and tested to ensure validity. Strong oversight of the poll is particularly important when the survey is being carried out a long distance from the analysts. Otherwise, the sample itself could be manipulated or other possible quality-control issues could arise.

- *Language.* One of the most difficult problems facing military personnel conducting surveys in civilian populations is realizing that the military discusses issues in a different way than civilians do. Moreover, when conducting these surveys abroad there may be translation issues that are encountered beyond simple word-for-word translation. How a concept is discussed (for instance, we have struggled with the concept of "like") can be important in understanding and controlling for when designing a questionnaire in another language and when analyzing the answers to these questions after the survey is complete. While it is obviously important not to use military jargon, what may not be obvious is the idea that words or phrases can be used in a cer-

tain way to reflect a partisan point of view. For example, "Did you hear about the Partnership Peace and Prosperity Mission conducted with your government?" may cause confusion in those hearing the question, particularly after the question has been translated. For instance, "hearing about" often cannot be directly translated; "with your government" might also cause confusion—participants may be unclear what that means. For this reason, questions should be as clear and straightforward as possible, and should refer to the object or action of interest as directly as possible.

- *Question order.* Construction of the survey should center around issues of question order—presenting the concepts that the analysis is concerned with (for instance, opinions of the United States or of the deployment) in an order that lessens bias and arrives at the most truthful answers. Thus, questions should be asked in an order that goes from the general to the specific, and allows sub-groups to be differentiated before key questions are asked. In our surveys, for example, attitudes about the United States are a key variable, and these types of questions are asked very early in the survey. Likewise, we wish to analyze our results according to who has heard about the mission, so those questions are also asked early in the surveys. Later, everyone being surveyed is told about the mission and asked about their attitudes toward it. If the process were reversed, any comparison between categories, or comparison of attitudes toward the United States, would be contaminated.

Random-order surveys are most appropriately used for operational assessment in order to gauge the general public's opinion about certain issues. Both the questionnaire format and the self-administered survey are appropriate for tactical assessment and should prove useful in judging an activity's effectiveness.

## Interviews

The fact is that we cannot observe everything empirically. We cannot observe feelings, perceptions, or opinions. We cannot observe behaviors that took place in the past. In other words, we cannot observe how people have organized the world and the meanings they

attach to what goes on in the world. In order to get those data, we have to use qualitative interviewing.

Qualitative interviewing is a method that is often used for academic research but also for program evaluation. Done correctly, interviews contain data that cannot be gotten any other way; moreover, interviews provide a rich context for the evaluation and a deeper understanding of actual events.

The type of interviewing that is most appropriate for assessing engagement efforts is the standardized open-ended interview. This tool requires developing a questionnaire that is thoughtful in its approach and that focuses on word choice for the questions. Then, this questionnaire has to be used in each interview conducted. The value of this is that since the questions were asked the same way every time, it is possible to compare the interviewees' responses across different spectrums, for, say, a longitudinal analysis or cross-country analysis.

The weakness of this type of interview is that it does not allow for the interviewer to pursue topics or issues that were not anticipated when the interview questionnaire was written. This issue is important enough that this interview technique often combined with another interview format that allows various issues to be pursued during the conversations.

Combining standardized interviewing with another technique, interview guides, allows the best of both worlds. A common combination strategy involves using a standardized interview format for part of an interview and then leaving the interviewer free to pursue any subjects of interest at other times of the interview. This is seen in the sample interview questionnaire in appendix A.

These interviews can be used to focus on any audience of interest, but are particularly useful for smaller, hard-to-reach audiences that normally cannot be captured by use of polling. Common examples are governmental personnel, military personnel, and other important groups in a country, such as opposition parties, religious groups, and ethnic groups.

Interviews often yield a lot of data, and transcriptions may go on for many pages. There are a number of ways to analyze the data, such as

keyword searches, but the most common way is through coding. Coding the data allows for the easiest comparisons across time, audiences, and countries.[43]

To begin, codes must be created that are relevant to the study at hand. They do not result in a fixed set of codes; however, ideally, these codes would stay roughly the same across time, allowing for comparison. Each transcript would then be read, looking for phrases or quotations relevant to the coding. If other themes emerge from the transcripts, they should be added to the codes; if some codes are no longer relevant, they should be deleted.

This coding allows for comparison among any number of lines. It will yield some results that may be general and some that are very audience specific.

The results will often indicate some important things about strategic communications: how aware various audiences are of the message that is being transmitted, how they gained such awareness, what they think of the message itself, and, possibly, whether the message has changed any of their perceptions.

Interviews are most appropriate to use when missions are attempting to influence smaller, hard-to-reach groups, such as military or governmental leadership. However, interviews of representatives of any target audience, such as the host nation population, will always provide important contextual information that may deepen understanding.

If relevant to the mission at hand, the interview questionnaires and, thus, their results, should flow nicely with the polling questions. In that way, it may be possible to roughly compare what specific groups thought with what the general population thought and interviews may be able to help establish the causal relationship between specific strategic communication efforts and the end results. Interviews are most useful for doing operational assessments that focus on attitude changes in a small group. They also can offer some insights in-

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[43] Michael Quinn Patton, *Qualitative Research and Evaluation Methods* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2002).

to possible behavior changes, but this is largely captured in an anecdotal fashion.

# Media analysis

Media analysis has been the method most often used by the US military to evaluate whether the message being transmitted was the message received. While it is a seemingly straightforward analysis, analysts must carefully consider how to do the analysis and, and perhaps more important, how to correctly infer the results of that analysis.

Media analysis helps us to understand (1) what information the local media transmitted about the mission, (2) whether the intended strategic communication messages were reflected in host nation media coverage of the mission, and (3) who in the host nation would have been likely to be exposed to the media coverage.

**Various approaches to media analysis**

Media analyses vary almost as much as media themselves. Analysis can focus on words, images, grammatical or logical communications structures, or countless variations on relationships between ideas, words, and images. Our approach is relatively simple: we focus on individual stories or articles, and units of text within those stories.[44]

Media analysis can be applied at several levels. The most basic is to assess the media coverage itself regarding an issue of interest (for example, the tone of newspaper coverage of the US war in Iraq in 2006, broken down by week). This study takes this type of straightforward approach in its analysis of coverage volume and tone.

Analysts can examine media in greater depth by focusing on the content of the media stories, i.e., the images, ideas, and text the sto-

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[44] Ralph H. Espach and Maria C. Kingsley, *Partnership Portrayed: Media Analysis of HSV-2* Swift, *USNS* Comfort, *and USS* Peleliu, Feb 2008 (CNA Research Memorandum D0017497.A2).

ries contain, and the explicit or implicit messages that these convey. This approach is known generally as content analysis. Content analysis disaggregates a piece of text (written or otherwise) into its constituent units and structures of communication content, and examines the patterns among these units and structures in order to understand the text in greater depth. For example, an analyst of content may track the frequency with which a key term appears in a set of newspaper articles, websites, or video clips. By doing so, the analyst can examine relationships between different terms and see how external variables affect those relationships. For example, content analysis could examine whether one of the terms "Democrat" or "Republican" has been associated more closely with the term "corruption" within *New York Times* coverage since 2000, and how this association has varied over the years. This type of analysis is useful for examining systematically the unstated assumptions or biases within a set of media, and the factors that influence their expression.

Other types of content analysis go beyond an examination of the frequency and placement of key terms, to explore in greater depth the meaning or rhetorical function of those terms. Discourse analysis examines the unstated properties or values of key concepts by evaluating their logical or semantic relationships with other elements of the text. It assumes that a term's purpose—rhetorical, political, normative, etc.—can be construed from its placement within the text's logical or narrative structure and its conceptual linkage with other terms or ideas of interest.

The approach that we often use applies content analysis to evaluate the tone and content of the local coverage of these missions. Using internet resources, we observe host country media during the period of these ships' deployments and collect all relevant articles, stories, and video or audio clips. We compile these into databases per mission. These databases can be sorted according to such information as nation and venue of publication, date of publication, content, tone, and imagery. This system supports comparisons of media content across missions and countries, as well as in-depth analyses of the media in any particular country or time period.

**Limitations of media analysis**

Although media analysis can provide some helpful clues about a mission's impact in a host nation, its ability to measure impact is limited in several ways.

Media analysis cannot be used as a proxy for public opinion. The opinions and views expressed in the media do not necessarily reflect the attitudes and opinions of the entire host nation public; rather, they reflect the opinions or views of a particular author. We study media to understand the message to which some people in the host nation may have been exposed and to understand how this message could have shaped someone's perception of the US mission. However, we cannot presume that opinions expressed in the media represent the opinions of all host nation individuals.

Because we use media as a tool to understand attitudinal impact, we attempt to read and understand the media we collect as a person in the host nation would read and understand them. Yet, our ability to understand how host nation individuals perceive media stories is limited. A complex interplay of cultural, historical, and political factors affects each individual's perceptions.[45] Decoding these perceptions would require in-depth and first-hand cultural and political knowledge of the host nations. Not only would perceptions of media stories differ by country, but they would also differ among individuals in each country. Thus, our analysis is limited by our incomplete ability to understand host nation perceptions.

Limitations on a country's freedom of press can complicate the media's impact on attitudes. Such limitations can affect the population's trust in media reports.

The host nation population's ability to access media also influences media's potential impact on attitudes. In countries with highly developed media sectors, more people are more likely to be exposed to large amounts of media. In countries with less developed media

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45 Adam K. Anderson et al., "Emotion Enhances Remembrance of Neutral Events Past," *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America*, 103:5, Jan 2006, pp. 1599-1604.

sectors, fewer people may have access to media on a regular basis. If the media never reach certain parts of the population, their ability to indicate the mission's impact on the population likely diminishes.

For these reasons, we view media analysis as only one aspect of impact. We compare the results of our media analysis with the results of the national opinion polls and host nation interviews to gain a more complete understanding of the impacts of the mission on the attitudes and behaviors of the host nation.

## Intelligence data

Intelligence data are one of the only tools available to systematically collect information on targeted behaviors. By identifying which behaviors are important to reaching the objective, it is entirely possible to collect intelligence reports that identify new behaviors that are emerging. Moreover, these intelligence reports can be run on a regular basis. Intelligence data, however, present some difficulties, which we discuss below.

- *Resources.* Intelligence data are highly resource intensive. Ideally, intelligence assets would be tasked to collect certain types of information—to look for the relevant behaviors. But this costs resources: either more intelligence assets must be added or these tasks must be given priority over other tasks. This is a hard decision in a time of overstretched intelligence assets. Deciding the priorities for intelligence data is a task for the commander, but it should be remembered that intelligence data are one of the few forms of data in which behavior changes can be systematically and regularly monitored.

- *Opportunistic nature.* At its very heart, intelligence data are opportunistic—such data rely on behaviors actually being observable (many behaviors are not) or someone making a particular comment or having a certain conversation. In other words, there is no systematic way to collect this type of intelligence; therefore, the data may not be particularly robust.

Related to this, intelligence data are highly difficult to corroborate and, instead, often rely on the reporting of one person who, like interviewees, may or may not be telling the truth. Therefore, there is significant bias in intelligence data.

## What the results say: the assessment answers

The final difficulty of engagement assessments does not have to do with the conduct of the assessment or with what objectives are being assessed; rather, the final challenge is interpreting the results of the assessment. For many assessments, especially at the tactical level, the answers are easily quantifiable and comparable and can be put into units that are readily understandable and actionable for commanders. They succinctly answer the question, Was that group of actions effective? That is not true of engagement assessments. Instead, the answers regarding the effectiveness of missions will be qualitative in nature and will be mostly judged in terms of trends or progress, rather than in absolutes. Whereas quantifiable answers are easy to understand ("Out of 20 bombs that were dropped, 18 hit the target and the target was destroyed), these answers are difficult to understand or use ("25% of Filipinos like the United States more because of the mission of the USNS *Mercy*"). Commanders are normally unfamiliar with how to use this information to judge progress and to determine whether these types of missions are effective. Why is this the case?

Strengthening relationships is a critical component of US military strategy, but one that does not have a clear threshold of success. That is, there is no moment in time when the assessment can state that a relationship has been strengthened enough. Improving relationships or increasing capabilities is a constant task that does not end.

However, simply because the answers are not clear-cut or distinct does not mean that they do not matter. Previous analyses of engagement missions have shown that such missions can make a great

deal of progress towards their goals.[46] It may be important to focus on changes and trends rather than on any one result, but it is entirely possible to track progress with these types of assessments. For the results to be useful, the commander must be comfortable with qualitative answers and more nebulous effects. If the commander can understand these types of assessments, they can help him or her in planning the next mission.

# Audiences

As is shown in table 2, the assessment tools used must be the appropriate ones to capture the mission's effects on the target audience as well as the type of effects—attitudinal and behavioral. Choosing these tools is a key decision in any assessment.

Table 2. Matching assessment tools to audience (ranked from most to least important)

| Type of effect | General public | Small groups/military, government |
|---|---|---|
| Tactical—Were activities done well? | Participant surveys<br><br>Number of participants<br><br>Media analysis | Analysis of distinguished visitor comments |
| Attitudinal—Did attitudes change and, if so, why? | National poll<br><br>Interviews<br><br>Media analysis | Interviews |
| Behavioral—Did behaviors change and, if so, why? | Intelligence<br><br>Media analysis | Intelligence<br><br>Media analysis<br><br>Interviews (anecdotal) |

For very large groups, such as the general public, national polls are the most effective tool. Polling is effective because it can capture a large and anonymous audience's perceptions about issues—and the

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[46] Alison Rimsky Vernon, *Do Naval Engagement Missions Have an Impact in Host Nations and Why?* Jul 2008 (CNA Research Memorandum D0017500.A2/Final).

issues themselves tend to be large, such as perceptions about the United States as a whole. Moreover, polls measure perceptions in discrete increments (such as on a five-point scale). They do not capture any nuances or complexities in individual answers. However, if the objectives are most interested in the general public, it is unlikely that such nuances are important. If the goal is a population's general willingness or positive perceptions, a poll can help determine whether that objective has been met.

If the target audience is smaller and more individually identifiable, such as the military, the government, or the medical community, polling is a difficult tool to use if only because of the logistical hurdles that would have to be overcome to poll very specific groups. Instead, semi-structured in-depth interviews are the right instrument with which to capture attitude changes in specific groups.

Interviews allow a more in-depth ability to see not only whether an attitude change has been made ("Yes, I liked working with the United States Navy more than before,") but also why that attitude change occurred ("Because they let me work alongside them at the clinic"). Although it is important to use certain sampling and interview techniques, interviews are the right tool to use in order to understand whether attitudes have changed within smaller groups.

Finally, media analysis can also prove useful for tracking attitudinal change, though it should be used with great caution. Tracking the tone and content of articles as well as noting the bias of the media sources in which the articles appear can offer some indication of possible attitude change. For instance, if a strongly anti-American newspaper runs an editorial praising the US Navy for its humanitarian work, it may indicate that there is a change of opinion about the US Navy. The problem, of course, is that it cannot be known whose perceptions would be changed (e.g., anti-American political groups, elites, or a certain geographical part of the country) or whether it was the mission or the article that actually changed their perceptions. Nevertheless, media can offer clues to the existence of possible attitude change.

# Objectives of engagement missions

One of the biggest issues for engagement deployments is the objectives at the operational and tactical level. Often, these objectives are not appropriate to the command level and are difficult to understand, regardless of how much time there has been to plan.

It is important to understand how and why objectives are obtuse, because that understanding has a direct effect on the assessment of engagement missions and what the desired effects may be. Below, we discuss why this matters and how it relates to our understanding of engagement operations.

## Why are objectives important?

Specified, clear objectives are critical to any military mission or strategy, but setting such objectives may be one of the largest oversights in planning and executing engagement missions. Objectives that are unclear or unmanageable have accounted for much of the difficulty in assessing whether engagement missions are effective.

When the end states are unclear—or seem extremely difficult to achieve—commanders and planners are left to find their way without adequate guidance on exactly what they are supposed to achieve. Because engagement missions often have end states that are more nebulous than those of kinetic missions, it is paramount that they have measurable, clear objectives.

## Derivation of objectives

Objectives exist for almost everything in the US military. There are roughly three types: strategic, operational, and tactical (or mission) objectives. Strategic objectives are the guiding force for objectives at lower levels. In theory, all objectives should be traceable back to specific strategic objectives. This implies that they should be deriva-

tive of those objectives—related, but not the same. Instead, each objective should be able to trace its "lineage" back to higher-level objectives and should help fulfill one part of the larger objective.

Tracing objectives is more difficult than it first appears. Strategic objectives are so large in scope and possibilities, that it is difficult for component commands to identify which parts of which objectives the command can contribute to and it is difficult for the combatant commander to be sure that all parts of the strategic objectives have been covered. COCOMs—in consultation with the components—are responsible for designating which objectives each component should target.

When the naval component commander (NCC) identifies the component's set of operational objectives, that component begins to design ways in which to fulfill these objectives and relays these methods back to the COCOM. For some objectives, this can be relatively straightforward, especially when the means are kinetic. For others, this can be more difficult, especially when the strategic objectives are not a concrete end but rather a set of conditions that need to be met, such as strengthening relationships.

Once operational objectives have been set, the component will then designate which parts of those objectives each mission will attempt to fulfill—and these become the mission objectives. Mission objectives should be appropriate for the mission at hand, including the timeframe involved and the scope of the operation.

One should also be able to examine mission objectives and trace their origin back to the strategic objective(s). Likewise, ideally one could examine all the strategic objectives and identify the specific missions that should fulfill those specific objectives.

The delineation and relationship between these objectives turn out to be critical when an analyst is trying to assess engagement operations and finds no theater that delineated its objectives clearly. In that case, it is obvious that the objectives did not offer the guidance necessary to the planners and executors. Below, we discuss some of the shortcomings of objectives.

# Issues with objectives

Each theater has had problems with objectives. Below, we discuss some of the most common ones.

## Unrelated objectives

Some objectives, especially at the mission level, seem to be unrelated to those at a higher level. At the mission level, objectives can appear that may be important to the command, but are not—at least not clearly—derived from higher-level objectives. One example of this is the objective for Continuing Promise in 2009. As we discussed above, most objectives seem to focus strongly on relationship building in general and little on the specifics of relationship building—and this was true for Continuing Promise 09. However, this mission also had the added objective of improving disaster relief capability and public health in each country visited during the deployment. This objective had never appeared in either COCOM or NCC objectives, and seems to appear out of nowhere at the mission level. The objective may be good in itself—but without backing objectives from the headquarters, it appears as if the mission alone is responsible for any improvements in disaster relief capability and public health. And, of course, one mission (or even multiple missions) cannot achieve that objective, especially without an overarching effort from commands.

So, why does this matter? It matters perhaps most for efficacy of effort: are all objectives helping achieve the highest-level objectives? More relevant to the analyst, it makes assessing progress very difficult. The objective is unrelated to other objectives, thereby stands alone as a mission objective—and as a stand-alone objective, it is much too large a task for a mission to achieve. In other words, it is an inappropriate mission-level objective.

## Collapsed objectives

Perhaps the most common feature we encountered during our analysis of objectives—and one that we have previously seen manifested in engagement missions—is that of collapsed objectives. This means that there is no derivation of objectives; rather, the strategic objec-

tive is used for the operational objective and the mission objective. The implication is that if the objective was truly strategic to begin with, individual missions are now responsible for achieving strategic goals.

The most illustrative example of this comes from USSOUTHCOM and Continuing Promise. The strategic objective for the COCOM reads:

- Ensure cooperative United States/Partner Nation relationships

The mission objective for Continuing Promise 2009 reads:

- Ensure cooperative US/Partner Nation objectives by;

- Fostering goodwill and enhancing US credibility

- Solidifying existing relationships and encouraging the establishment of new ones.

That is, the strategic objective was used for the mission, with the supposedly clarifying instructions to "foster goodwill" and "solidify existing relationships" added. In other words, very little was done to make the mission objectives measurable and actionable *for a single mission.* Instead, a single mission has been charged with achieving a very strategic objective—an objective which will require much more than a single mission to achieve and a much longer time frame in which to achieve it. This makes assessing the mission itself extremely difficult. How is either the tactical commander or the component command supposed to determine whether "relationships have been strengthened" within the time frame necessary to report results?

When all three levels of objectives are collapsed into one, it normally means that the on-the-ground commanders as well as the operational command have no real idea of what the required end state is or how to measure whether progress is being made toward achieving it.

# Objectives: concrete and facilitating

Our examination of strategic objectives also focused on objective types. Our analysis showed that there are two main types of objectives: concrete objectives and facilitating objectives.

Concrete objectives are, perhaps, the easier ones to understand in that they focus on reducing or eliminating a specific threat—for example, denying sanctuary to violent extremist organizations (VEOs). They can also focus on maintaining certain conditions in the world, such as keeping access in key countries.

Concrete objectives have a definite end state at which the objective has been reached—the VEOs are gone or access has continued. In theory, every time a COCOM updates a strategic objective, the objective should reflect any new threats that may have arisen and discard any objectives that have been achieved.

With facilitating objectives, it is more difficult to know when they have been achieved. In fact, they may always be included in the COCOM's objectives. Facilitating objectives build or maintain the conditions that are necessary in order to achieve concrete objectives. Examples of such facilitating conditions are strengthening partnerships with host nations, increasing host nation capabilities, and training US military personnel to be able to respond as necessary.

Facilitating objectives make the attainment of concrete objectives much more likely, because they create the conditions that allow the United States to address threats more easily—by having strong and capable partners and trained US personnel, for instance .

Concrete objectives are likely to change as the world changes and as the United States addresses specific threats. Facilitating objectives are likely not to change at all: strong relationships with other countries that can assist in addressing such threats will probably always be a requirement *regardless of the actual threat itself.*

### Facilitating objectives and engagement operations

Engagement operations will almost always be a tool to help meet facilitating objectives, rather than a tool used against a specific threat. Engagement, by its very nature, is most effective in creating conditions that are more favorable to the United States. It does so by creating a more favorable image of the United States among populations, by helping a host nation increase a particularly relevant capability, and/or by creating and sustaining a more trustful partnership with host nation officials.

Lest this seem to be a "lesser" mission, we should note that facilitating objectives are the most important to try to attain since they will always allow the United States to address concrete objectives, regardless of what those concrete objectives are. Therefore, the purpose of engagement missions is critical to the safety and security of the United States. If the United States is isolated, has few allies, and is surrounded by weak countries, great threats are certain to arise.

# Example of appropriate objectives

We have discussed some important issues concerning objectives specifically related to engagement missions. We will now offer an example of what appropriate objectives may be for the operational and tactical levels. We will use an existing COCOM objective for this demonstration, and we will assume that the mission is an engagement mission.

- Strategic objective: VEOs cannot utilize sanctuary in region. Do this by:

  – Influencing local communities to no longer tolerate VEOs in the area, by taking specific actions to deny VEOs sanctuary.

- Operational objective: Marginalize *specific* groups in coastal communities in a *specific* country. Do this by:

  – Strengthening relationships with population, local government and national government.

- Mission objective: Change perceptions among local population, local government, national government, military, and police in specific communities about the desirability of giving VEOs sanctuary. These changed perceptions may lead to specific actions to deny VEOs sanctuary (see strategic objective). Do this by:

    – Conducting activities that will have an effect on the target audience and creating trust with those audiences, and/or strengthening their capacities to deny VEOs sanctuary.

These objectives give the tactical and operational commanders specific things to measure: the commodore, for instance, knows that changing the perceptions about a specific subject among specific groups is the desired end state, and, as we will discuss shortly, those perceptions can be measured in the short term using specific tools. This stands in contrast to current mission objectives that do not specify exactly what the tactical commander must accomplish.

# Description of types of engagement operations

We have extensively discussed the objectives of engagement missions and noted the issues that exist with these objectives. Regardless of the problems with objectives, missions must still seek to try to achieve them. What means—or activities—do engagement deployments use to influence target audiences?

Engagement missions tend to center around two main activity sets: military training or humanitarian civic assistance. How commands choose which set of activities will be used for each deployment, depends to a great extent on what the objective of the mission is. For example, using HCA activities to achieve maritime security would not make sense; therefore, matching activities to desired end states is a critical task for planners. Country selection also matters a great deal in choosing activities. For instance, military training activities might not be appropriate in a country with few military forces; on the other hand, HCA activities might not work for countries with a highly developed health care system. In some instances, activities have been chosen largely because of the assets or personnel that were available, rather than the objectives of the mission or the location of the deployment. These choices may make for a less effective mission.[47]

As we stated earlier, we are focusing on major naval engagement deployments. This is not to discount the importance of smaller naval engagements, such as combined exercises, but we believe that the tools used to assess major missions can be applied to smaller missions and that some of the causes of positive effects may also be applicable.

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[47] Veronica de Allende et al., *The 2008 USS* Kearsarge *Deployment: What were the impacts in host nations?* Apr 2009 (CNA Research Memorandum D0020241.A2/Final).

# HCA engagement missions

Humanitarian and civic assistance activities normally have three components: medical activities, construction activities, and community relations (COMREL) activities. (Other mission types might also include these activities in a minor role.) The focus of HCA missions has typically been on medical activities, though some have focused on construction activities.

While we have discussed the fact that objectives (especially for HCA missions) are problematic at the tactical level for engagement operations, we can surmise that HCA missions have the following characteristics in common:

- The focus audiences are normally the general public (national and/or local) and the government (national and/or local).

- Strengthening relationships with the focus audiences is an objective for the mission.

  - Though the tactical objectives do not normally specify which audience and how the relationship needs to be improved.

- The objective of increasing country capabilities often focuses on medical capabilities; however, the capabilities that have changed the most on a local level, especially in Latin America, are the community's ability to more effectively govern their own city.

- There is great emphasis on interaction with the general public and less emphasis on interaction with government officials.

The balance between the three components—medical activities, construction activities, and HCA activities—can vary a lot among deployments, but normally all of them have at least some presence during the deployment.

# Medical activities

Medical activities have three aspects: (1) surgeries, (2) primary care visits, and/or (3) preventive health and training sessions. We discuss each below.

### Surgeries

Surgical activities are mostly conducted with either a hospital ship (USNS *Mercy* or USNS *Comfort*) or a large-deck amphibious ship (usually an LHD class) used for the mission. Both of these ship types have enough surgery rooms and after-care capacity to be able to perform a significant number (around 100) surgeries during a mission.

Most surgeries tend to be simple procedures that do not normally require a great deal of follow-on care, since the ship is likely to only be in port for 12 to 14 days. Therefore, hernia, gallbladder, and cataract surgeries are the most commonly performed. Only under extreme circumstances will the doctors on the mission do more complicated surgeries—obviously doing open-heart surgery on a patient and then leaving five days later presents a medically unacceptable risk, especially in countries with little follow-on care available.

### Primary care visits

Most HCA deployments can transport enough medical practitioners to be able to set up at least one temporary clinic on the ground in each country. The specialties available in each clinic vary greatly, depending on which practitioners are part of the deployment, though there a few staples: internal medicine, ophthalmology, optometry, and pediatrics. The number of clinics varies among countries, and is mostly determined by what sites are available that could be used as a clinic. Usually, the clinics are set up in a school or other public building—even a stadium in one case. Depending on the specialties available, a number of different "offices" are set up; however, patients are allowed to see only one medical practitioner per visit. Therefore, for instance, a patient has to choose whether a visit to the optometrist or a visit to an internist is more critical to his or her care.

These deployments have tried various ways to control the patient line formations—in general, lines tend to be very long and patients become frustrated. Often, patients wait all day under a hot sun only to find out that they will not be seen that day. Clinics close an hour before the sun sets, as force protection rules dictate that all US personnel should be back aboard the ship before dark.

### Preventative medicine

Some deployments have a preventative medicine component. In some instances, preventative medicine personnel actually work on projects that will help improve community health, such as water treatment issues. Usually, however, preventative health focuses on training relevant personnel; for example, local hospital personnel receive instruction on sterilization of equipment and instruments.

Preventative medicine does not have the immediate impact that either surgeries or medical care have, but it may have a greater impact on public health in a country overall if the local trainees use what they have learned. Many medical professionals believe that preventative medicine is the best use of US Navy resources to improve global health; however, as we will discuss later, preventative medicine does not receive as much attention from either the government or the general public as other forms of medical activities. Thus, historically, preventative medicine has always been the smallest component of any medical activities done during an engagement deployment.

## Construction activities

Almost all HCA engagement deployments—and many military training deployments as well—have included construction/engineering activities. These activities are normally conducted by the US Naval Construction Force (SEABEEs). The exact number and formation of the SEABEEs varies across deployments, but, in general, enough personnel and equipment are sent to conduct at least one major and a few minor construction projects.

Major construction projects usually center around a public building—normally a school or a health clinic—and will include major repairs to that building. The repairs are usually far more extensive

than the host nation would normally be able to do; therefore, the SEABEEs offer a unique service to the host nation. In some cases, entirely new buildings have been built; in other cases, bridges and docks have been repaired—an important contribution to communities that are normally very reliant on fishing as a source of income.

Construction activities are also done as part of COMREL activities, though these projects tend to be much smaller. They include simple repairs of windows, steps, or similar items.

These construction projects have a significant advantage over any type of medical activities because they are *permanent*. People in the community will use these buildings and remember the US Navy's work, every day, for long after the ship has left. While obviously some people will remember the health care given (especially the patients themselves), construction projects tend to have longevity of memory associated with them.

## COMREL projects

COMREL projects tend to span a wide variety of activities—everything from cleaning up playgrounds to playing soccer matches. Two things in particular distinguish COMREL activities: (1) COMREL activities are normally done by enlisted sailors, who normally might not be part of the mission; and (2) COMREL projects almost always involve close interaction with host nation personnel. For instance, the US Navy sailors might play a baseball game against the local team in Latin America with an audience made up of the community, or children may help the sailors paint their school.

This close interaction and involvement of US Navy personnel has profound implications regarding effects in the country. We will discuss these later; here, it is enough to make the point that COMREL projects focus on having "regular" people from both countries interact with each other in a very non-threatening way that is inclusive and respectful of the host nation and its culture. However, we should note that normally COMREL activities have been a small part of the overall engagement mission—at times, even an afterthought. While recent missions have begun to focus more on COMREL, in general this is the smallest part of most engagement deployments.

# Military training activities

## Training maritime forces

Most military training missions have concentrated on training maritime forces in the host nation. The training has typically focused on enhancing the ability of host nation forces to do tasks that help ensure maritime safety and security, thereby making them capable partners for the US Navy in addressing maritime threats, such as narco-trafficking or piracy.

Obviously, the training varies not only from deployment to deployment, but from country to country as well. Training activities can range from lessons in the classroom, to practical demonstrations, to joint exercises. Training is often not limited to military forces; other involved civilian governmental agencies (e.g., fisheries, drug enforcement, and police) may also partake in training activities.

The trainers themselves come from a variety of different sources. Many are from Naval Expeditionary Combat Command (NECC), Security Force Assistance (SFA) Division.[48] Others may draw from their respective specialties in the US Navy and, rather than formal training, might do subject matter expert exchanges (SMEEs) with host nation personnel.

While the actual transfer of skills and/or knowledge is crucial to this set of activities (and often the mission itself), another aspect of military training activities is also important: the personal interactions that occur during the course of the training. The chance for host nation maritime forces to interact with the US Navy is a unique opportunity for many of these countries, and one that makes deep and long-lasting impressions on them. We have seen training courses where the skill/knowledge transfer was not as successful as had been hoped and yet the personal interactions that took place still had a fairly large effect on participants.

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[48] Any training conducted by the SFA requires that participants undergo Leahy vetting—the vetting required by Congress to ensure the participant is not a known war-criminal and has not committed other human rights violations in the past.

### Other activities in military training missions

We should note that military training missions have also included some medical and COMREL activities during each deployment, though not to the same degree as HCA missions. The amount of construction activity is relatively consistent across mission types, with the exception of an HCA mission that makes construction its main activity.

# Key leadership engagement

All of these missions also include key leadership engagement. By key leadership, we mean persons who hold positions of power within a target audience. In some cases, this is the tribal chieftain; in others, it is the Chief of Naval Operations or the Health Minister. The personal interactions between US Navy leadership (normally the commodore) and these leaders are designed to strengthen relationships in a way that will eventually result in the host nation leaders behaving in a manner that helps the United States achieve its goals. Leadership engagements normally take the form of office calls and receptions, but certainly other activities (watching a soccer game together, for instance) take place as well.

The point of these initial engagements has been to start building trusting relationships with these leaders, and that has involved working closely with them in order to provide services that most help the people they lead, such as training or medical services. Building upon this trust can potentially allow the United States to count on these key leaders as allies when the host nation has to make internal decisions that may affect the United States.

# Major engagement deployments

In this section, we first detail the main engagement missions that CNA helped analyze. We then discuss the critical components of any engagement mission—i.e., those that can lead to success or failure. Finally, we note the progress that has or has not been made in creating trust, increasing host nation capabilities and support for governments, and deterring negative influences and illicit activities in three main theaters: the Pacific, Latin America, and Africa.

## The Pacific, 2005-2009

One could say that the Pacific is the theater in which the idea of engagement deployments first gained prominence, due to the tsunami relief effort in 2005.[49] In response to the overwhelming disaster inflicted upon countries in the Pacific (especially Indonesia), the United States sent numerous military assets to assist with disaster response operations. One of the most notable of these assets was USNS *Mercy,* which was able to treat thousands of patients who otherwise might not have received medical care. Moreover, the image of *Mercy*—a white ship with a red cross on it—sent signals that indicated that the United States was non-threatening and was simply there to help. As a result, views of the United States in the region improved, especially in Indonesia. This had strategic importance since Indonesia is the largest Muslim country in the world and one that has traditionally not been a close ally of the United States. Therefore, US military leadership viewed this as a big success for the United States.[50]

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[49] The concept of operations (CONOPS) for all operations can be found in Alison Rimsky Vernon et al., *Annex 1: Primary Source Assessment Documents,* Oct 2010 (CNA Information Memorandum D0023782.A1).

[50] For more information on Operation Unified Response, see Deal, *Operation Unified Assistance: Disaster Relief from the Sea.*

## USNS *Mercy,* 2006

*Mercy* was sent out again later in 2006, just a few months after the tsunami relief effort, to pay a follow-on visit to the affected countries.[51] In general, it conducted medical missions but it also made a point of reaching out to local officials and treating medical cases not necessarily caused by the tsunami. *Mercy* was received quite well in most countries—in fact, in Papua New Guinea, the local officials dedicated a park to *Mercy* next to the hospital. The exception to this trend was in the Banda Aceh province of Indonesia, where the services *Mercy* provided went a little *too* well. In this situation, *Mercy* performed needed medical services in the area that had been hardest hit by the tsunami. This resulted in a population that was very positive about the US Navy and the United States, but became less positive about their own government—they felt that everything the US Navy did could have been done by their own government. Therefore, when *Mercy* departed, the local communities demonstrated against the Indonesian central government and, as a result, Indonesia has never invited a US Navy HCA deployment to return.

## USS *Peleliu,* 2007

The *Mercy* mission, now entitled Pacific Partnership, was followed in 2007 by a deployment of USS *Peleliu*, a large-deck amphibious ship.[52] This deployment was notable for several reasons:

- It was the first time that a gray hull was used for humanitarian missions. *Peleliu* did not have as much medical capacity as *Mercy*, but still had 12 operating rooms and a lot of berthing.

- *Peleliu* conducted one of the first US Navy visits to Vietnam since the war. This was a big step in US-Vietnamese rapprochement, and was considered a big diplomatic success.

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[51] ED McGrady et al., *USNS* Mercy*: Linking Humanitarian Action to Strategic Results*, FOUO, Apr 2007 (CNA Research Memorandum D0016045.A1/Final.

[52] Vernon, *Do Naval Engagement Missions Have an Impact in Host Nations and Why?*

- *Peleliu* also was the first ship to respond to one natural disaster: it added the Solomon Islands to its deployment, after an earthquake off the coast of the main island caused tidal waves to devastate part of the island.

The *Peleliu* mission returned to many of the same countries as previous missions, including the Philippines and Papua New Guinea. The deployment was fairly successful and had some significant effects in host nations, especially with regard to opinions on the US Navy and the United States.

## USNS *Mercy,* 2008

The 2008 Pacific Partnership deployment utilized USNS *Mercy* again (the hospital ships are used on a biannual basis). In the 2008 mission, it went to Vietnam and the Philippines as well as much smaller countries, including Timor Leste, Papua New Guinea, and Micronesia.[53] Like all of the previous missions, this one was medically focused. However, the ship tended to stay longer in each host nation and focused on involving host nation personnel (both medical and military) in the execution of the mission. Engineering activities also took place, mostly centered around repairs of medical clinics and schools.

## T-AKE *Richard E. Byrd,* 2009

Pacific Partnership 09 deviated a bit from the established pattern. Due to asset allocation, PACFLT was unable to secure a large-deck amphibious ship and instead originally planned to use USS *Dubuque*, a smaller amphibious ship (LPD-8).[54] Because of the smaller size of this asset, the mission focus changed as well: instead of surgeries and medical clinics being the focus of activities, construction/engineering and preventative health activities were the focus.

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[53] Maria Kingsley et al., *USNS* Mercy *Pacific Partnership 2008: Analysis of Patient and Media Impact*, Apr 2009 (CNA Research Memorandum D0019982.A2/Final).

[54] Captain Andy Sully, USN, "Pacific Partnership 2009: Post-Deployment Brief," Feb 2010.

Because the LPD can carry large amounts of equipment, there were plans to do some heavy construction activities, including building a large bridge in Kiribati. However, due to an outbreak of H1N1 flu aboard the ship, the ship had to be swapped out two weeks prior to the schedule departure. In its place, Pacific Partnership used the T-AKE *Richard E. Byrd*, a dry cargo vessel. *Byrd* was significantly smaller than *Dubuque,* and this had a direct impact on what mission activities the ship could do.

While the core of the mission remained the same—focus on construction and preventative health—some activities were scaled down and the logistics were much more complex. The main construction project, building the bridge in Kiribati, remained—but it required enormous amounts of logistical coordination since most of the necessary equipment had to be flown into the country. The other change was that while some projects had to be scaled back, other activities were increased—especially those that did not call for heavy equipment. The commodore made COMREL projects a central part of the mission, equal to construction or medical activities. This larger focus on COMREL activities, which were normally on the sideline, was a real difference in the mission. Though it arose out of necessity because of the smaller size of the ship, COMRELs (which included everything from soccer games, to band concerts, to lectures given by sailors and civilian mariners) changed the focus of the mission to personal interactions. The commodore reported that he would conduct the mission this way again, regardless of the asset size.

# Latin America, 2007-2009

In many ways, Latin America is an ideal region for engagement. There are very few open conflicts within the area, and the focus for both USSOUTHCOM and US NAVSO/C4F has often been on relationship building with countries in the region. Moreover, after watching the success that *Mercy* had in its 2005 disaster relief operation and its 2006 engagement operation in the Pacific, USNAVSO decided to use USNS *Comfort*—the East Coast hospital ship—to conduct an annual engagement mission. They named this effort "Continuing Promise," and the initial deployment of *Comfort* was in the summer of 2007.

## USNS *Comfort,* 2007

On March 5, 2007, President George W. Bush declared in a speech to the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce that the United States was sending the hospital ship, USNS *Comfort*, on a four-month deployment aimed at helping local communities in Latin America. With little time to plan, US Naval Forces South and US Southern Command had to quickly ramp up planning and try to execute a complicated mission that would go to 12 countries for about seven to eight days in each country—a very ambitious schedule for the first deployment of this kind in the region.[55]

This deployment, the first of the Continuing Promise mission, was very successful, especially given the serious constraints that the mission had—a short lead time for planning and a schedule with more countries than any subsequent mission would have.[56]

In this deployment, *Comfort* went to 12 countries: Peru, Colombia, Ecuador, El Salvador, Panama, Nicaragua, Belize, Guatemala, Haiti, Trinidad, Guyana, and Suriname. The objectives of the mission were both quite simple and quite complex:

- Ensure the Forward Defense of the United States.

  – Train US military and civilian medical personnel in a collaborative effort to provide humanitarian assistance.

- Encourage regional partnerships.

  – Foster goodwill and enhance the credibility of the United States.

  – Solidify existing partnerships with key nations, and encourage the establishment of new ones between/among nations, non-governmental (NGOs), and international organizations.

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[55] The concept of operations (CONOPS) for all operations can be found in Vernon et al., *Annex 1: Primary Source Assessment Documents.*

[56] Vernon, *Do Naval Engagement Missions Have an Impact in Host Nations and Why?*; and ED McGrady and Daryl Liskey, *The Role of Afloat Forces in Public Diplomacy: The 2007* Peleliu *and* Comfort *Deployments,* May 2008 (CNA Research Memorandum D0017498.A2/Final).

- Enhance regional stability and security.

  – Demonstrate US commitment and support to Latin America and the Caribbean region by providing medical services and humanitarian assistance.

  – Support partner nations' efforts to build capacity to provide humanitarian assistance.[57]

Therefore, the focus of the deployment was on relationship building with the general public of each country as well with its medical personnel and government. The challenge of these objectives is knowing when they have been fulfilled—and subsequent deployments continued to struggle with this issue.

Continuing Promise 2007 used primarily medical activities, with a heavy emphasis on surgeries, in order to strengthen relationships with target audiences. Each visit, however, was quite short, compared to later deployments, and, therefore, there was a real logistical push to try to conduct surgeries successfully and safely within the allotted timeframe. Medical clinics were set up in each country and the deployment saw over 120,000 patients.

Construction projects also took place, including repairing schools and existing medical clinics. Since *Comfort* had left so quickly for its deployment—within three months—the deployment experienced some planning issues with local government officials in most countries it visited; this ended up being a serious lesson learned. On the other hand, as the test case of Latin America, the inaugural Continuing Promise deployment proved to be an overwhelming success, especially among general populations. The amount of personal interactions of US Navy personnel with host nation publics proved to be the deployment's greatest strength. These personal interactions were a significant cause of the positive effects *Comfort* had in each country.

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[57] USNS *Comfort* CONOPS, March 2007, USSOUTHCOM.

## USS *Kearsarge,* 2008

The follow-on Continuing Promise in 2008 was conducted by a gray hull:  the large-deck amphibious ship USS *Kearsarge.*[58]  *Kearsarge* had the largest medical facilities of any ship in the US Navy short of the hospital ships:  with eight operating rooms, *Kearsarge* could host a lot of surgeries.  Moreover, since it is an amphibious ship, it was also able to bring more heavy construction equipment and carry a larger contingency of SEABEEs.  But there were also questions about how people would respond to the appearance of *Kearsarge.*  Used to using white hulls for these types of missions, NAVSO worried about how a combat ship would be received in a region of the world normally quite suspicious of US military motives.

The crewmembers of *Kearsarge,* as well as the commodore and captain, were well suited to this mission because they had recently returned from responding to the natural disaster caused by Cyclone Sidr in Bangladesh.  As part of Operation Sea Angel II, the crew had interacted with Bangladeshi populations and the military, and, therefore, were prepared to interact with groups that were very different from what they were used to.

As was shown in table 1, *Kearsarge* also visited far fewer countries than *Comfort* had in the previous deployment.  Whereas *Comfort* went to 12 countries, *Kearsarge* planned to go to only six:  Colombia, Guyana, Trinidad and Tobago, Dominican Republic, Nicaragua, and Panama.  By doing so, *Kearsarge* was able to spend much more time in each location offering more in-depth medical and construction services—but, of course, to fewer countries.

*Kearsarge*'s schedule changed significantly:  during its visit to Colombia, multiple tropical storms hit Haiti and caused significant devastation; *Kearsarge* had to leave Colombia early and cancel the visit to Panama in order to respond to the disaster.  While this was difficult for the Panamanians, it was not an unexpected outcome for the Continuing Promise mission.  These missions normally are conducted in late summer and fall, corresponding to hurricane season.  They do so in order to be able to train US military personnel in res-

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[58] de Allende et al.*, The 2008 USS* Kearsarge *Deployment: What were the impacts in host nations?*

ponding to natural disasters—and, of course, in case there is an actual natural disaster, the ship is already in the region.

While the withdrawal from Colombia and the cancellation of the Panama visit were disappointing to the two countries, by and large both the populations and the governments of the respective countries understood the overwhelming need in Haiti. Moreover, as we will discuss later in this section, the withdrawal from Colombia—which left construction projects unfinished—proved to demonstrate some powerful effects of the mission.

A gray hull proved to be a real asset, as well. While there was some trepidation that local populations would look at the gray hull suspiciously,[59] in fact, the opposite seemed to be true: when a local populace realized that a "war ship" was bringing humanitarian aid, it strongly contradicted an established stereotype and, therefore, made a lasting impression.

The mix of activities was very similar to that of previous missions, and the deployment returned to many of the same countries. Media coverage was very positive in every country and in the countries in which CNA conducted national polls, an average of 84 percent of respondents were favorable toward the mission. Moreover, around 70 percent of respondents indicated that this mission had made their view of the United States more favorable.

 By going to many of the same countries that the 2007 Continuing Promise mission had visited and conducting similar work, *Kearsarge* demonstrated that the "continuing" part of Continuing Promise was being upheld. This went a long way toward creating trust—a very big issue in the region, where distrust of the United States is a historical legacy of previous US foreign policy.

Important issues arose during this deployment, including:

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[59] There were, however, a few incidents that proved some of this trepidation was well founded: For example, when *Kearsarge* pulled into Port of Spain, Trinidad, and started off-loading medical personnel and supplies via helicopter, many residents of the city thought that they were being invaded by the United States. Obviously, the media had not given enough attention to the upcoming visit.

- *Country selection.* *Kearsarge* conducted a return visit to Trinidad, and CNA found that, similar to the impact of Continuing Promise 07, opinions of the United States were less positive for people who were aware of the mission. In other words, *the mission caused people to be less positive about the United States.* This was a startling finding. The reason for it was the socio-economic status of Trinidad: Trinidadians view themselves as fairly developed and with a sophisticated health care system. They believe that they do not need a basic medical mission. This, of course, does not imply that conducting engagement operations with Trinidad is a bad idea; rather, it simply means that Continuing Promise was not the right set of activities with which to engage. Not all countries are the same in a region, and careful consideration should be paid to the interaction of proposed activities and country characteristics, such as national wealth.

- *Changing behaviors.* For the first time, CNA was able to detect demonstrable new behaviors emerging among a target audience: the local population in Santa Marta, Colombia. This change actually was prompted by the early departure of *Kearsarge* from Colombia in order to respond to the Haitian disaster. Because of this early departure, US Navy SEABEEs were unable to complete the major overhaul of a school they were working on and had to leave instructions and all the material for the local personnel to complete the job—and there was still much work to do. Not only did the local population complete the school, but they also took up and completed other major repairs in their community, including repairs to the park and the medical clinic. They credited these initiatives to the visit of *Kearsarge,* saying that the US Navy sailors had inspired them to work together to solve collective problems in their own community and that this had even changed the political discourse in the community.

- *Leadership.* Across all countries, people had a strong, positive impression of the leadership of Continuing Promise. The commodore for the mission was a strong leader who went out and worked side by side with sailors and local personnel on various projects in each country, and was able to

interact in an extremely positive way with everyone, from the mayor to a local farmer.  Many people cited his example as inspirational to their own lives. They saw him both as extremely memorable and as an example of "true" leadership.

## USNS *Comfort,* 2009

The next deployment utilized *Comfort* again, to conduct medical and construction activities.  *Comfort* made return visits to most countries—only Antigua was a first-time visit.[60]  By this third deployment, many earlier issues (such as poor planning and coordination) had been resolved; thus, this deployment encountered fewer issues on the ground than the other deployments.  Medical care was positively received for the most part, though there were requests for medical specialists who could address overwhelming needs in the communities, such as gynecological or ophthalmologic services.  Also, there were issues with the lines for medical clinics ashore, and better crowd management was a strong request from host nations.

One of the things that this deployment did very well was to coordinate with host nations and the US Embassy in each nation.  By coordinating with various organizations, *Comfort* was able to mesh its projects with ongoing initiatives or projects in the host nation.  Moreover, *Comfort* used COMREL projects in interesting ways that really supported local officials.  Below, we discuss some specific aspects of coordination that worked:

- *US Embassy projects.  Comfort* worked closely with the Embassy and USAID to assist ongoing projects already initiated by the US government.  One example was the repair and construction of a blood bank in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic.  USAID had begun repair work, but was finding it difficult to attain the resources and personnel necessary to complete it. *Comfort* had the requisite amount of both and crewmembers were able to finish the job during the

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[60] Alison Rimsky Vernon et al., *Continuing Promise 2009: Attitudinal and Behavioral Impacts Among Host Nation Officials*, Jan 2010 (CNA Research Memorandum D0021925.A2/Final).

visit. This directly contributed to better health in the country since most blood tests, especially those for HIV, were conducted at this facility. This repair allowed these tests to be conducted in a much more secure way (for example, without samples being mixed up).

- *Supporting US relations with host nation.* In several instances, *Comfort* helped strengthen US relations with host nations. The best example was in El Salvador, where a new, leftist government had recently taken office. The Continuing Promise mission offered an opportunity for the United States to demonstrate to the new government that the United States would be a good partner for El Salvador— the strong coordination with officials as well as the humanitarian activities showed this. Officials in El Salvador reported that this operation made them re-think their negative stance toward the United States.

- *Supporting host nation initiatives.* As we will discuss later, partnership is a key factor in the success of any mission and supporting ongoing host nation initiatives is a tangible, strong way to evince partnership. In the Dominican Republic, the US Consul-General needed a way to strengthen his relationship with the Dominican Attorney-General. Because information about the capabilities that *Comfort* was bringing during her mission had been communicated well throughout the Embassy, the Consul and his staff knew that a US military band was coming as part of the mission. The Consul also knew that the Attorney-General had made prison reform a key issue within the judicial system and needed publicity to press the issue among the public and among other members of the government. The Consul offered the band as a way to achieve this, and, as a result, the band played a concert at one of the model prisons that the Attorney-General had created. This brought a great deal of media as well as other cabinet members to the prison, where they witnessed the Attorney-General's reforms. The Attorney-General reported that this concert helped him with this initiative more than any other initiative had and he was grateful for the assistance. It also strengthened his relationship with the US Consul.

- *Behavior changes.* Senior Colombian officials reported that a series of critical behavior changes had taken place on the Pacific coast of Colombia, in the heart of narco-trafficking havens, and that these changes were associated with the Continuing Promise visits. In short, the people in the local community of Buenaventura—site of the *Comfort* 07 visit—were inspired by the mission itself to change their own community by restoring law and order and making it far less hospitable to drug traffickers. *Comfort* struck a cord for multiple reasons. Two of those reasons were: (1) Buenaventura is a marginalized population within Colombia, and it made a deep impression on the local populace that the United States—a country of almost mythological status—chose to send a large ship to help them; and (2) by working alongside US personnel, local people learned the coordination skills necessary to organize themselves later in order to engage in important community action that would result in a much safer city. While *Comfort* did not "cause" the change in Buenaventura (and there were multiple inputs into the change), it did serve as a catalyst, or inspiration, for initiating some critical changes—changes, by the way, that directly helped increase US security by denying sanctuary to drug traffickers.

## East and West Africa, 2007-2010

Africa Partnership Station (APS) is the main engagement effort from US Naval Forces, Africa (NAVAF) and is an annual military training event. It initially targeted West Central Africa and then expanded to include East Africa as well.

The objectives for APS have varied somewhat across the various deployments, but have largely centered around the idea of increasing maritime safety and security in the host nations. It is of great strategic advantage for the United States to have these nations secure their own waters, especially against transnational threats, such as piracy or trafficking (of drugs, humans, or weapons). In order to reach these objectives, the US Navy needed a multi-pronged approach. For one thing, it needed to train the maritime forces to be able to conduct the activities necessary for securing their waters. For

another, it needed to convince the national governments that maritime security was important and worthy of being resourced, since most maritime forces suffered from a severe lack of resources.

APS has largely concentrated on the first approach: training and educating local maritime forces in how to secure their waters. This training has been broad—it has included everything from installation and training on the automatic identification system (AIS), to conducting visit, board, search, and seizure (VBSS) activities on suspected vessels. It has always included the regular navies and coast guards, but has also included other, more tangential, forces, such as Fisheries or the police.

Initially there was much less emphasis on the engagement with national governments. Therefore, little progress was made on convincing these governments that their maritime domain was important to defend. Traditionally, these governments have been very land-centric and have invested most of their defense resources into the army or air force (which is normally part of the army). It was difficult to convince these governments that the threats emanating from the sea were as important as those coming across land borders. It was especially difficult because, in general, most of these countries have few resources at all, and thus have to be convinced that using some of their extremely scarce resources to fund their maritime forces is the best path to security—a difficult argument to make.

Below, we discuss some details of the four APS deployments and the progress that has (or has not) been made toward increased maritime security.

## APS 2007-08, USS *Fort McHenry* and HSV-2 Swift

The first full deployment of APS occurred from November 2007 through April 2008 and included 12 countries in West Central Africa.[61] Some of the visits were pre-planned; others were "targets of

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[61] Margaux Daly, *Impact of Africa Partnership Station 2007/2008 on Host Nations: Aligning Actions and Effects*, Jan 2009 (CNA Research Memorandum D0019728.A2/Final).

opportunities," meaning that they were visits arranged after the ship was already deployed. Two ships were used for this deployment, USS *Fort McHenry* [62] and HSV-2 *Swift*. The activities were focused on conducting maritime military training, but some humanitarian activities (such as SEABEE construction and COMRELs) took place as well. *Fort McHenry* was used to conduct the training activities, and *Swift* concentrated on humanitarian activities. They did not conduct activities in tandem; rather, they did three "laps" around the countries and visited each country at least two times, though at different times.

The training activities were largely conducted onboard the ship, with some ashore training in the ports. The mission also had an international staff, with representation from several key European partners (the United Kingdom, France, Germany, and Italy) and representatives from some African nations.

The training was designed to target four areas—referred to as "pillars"—that NAVAF had deemed prerequisites for having secure territorial waters: professionalism (of maritime forces), adequate infrastructure, maritime domain awareness, and response capability. Obviously, none of these can be changed overnight; changes will require a lot of work over a long time period. Moreover, three of the four (infrastructure, awareness, and response capability) require many resources, to equip and man the navies.

Overall, the mission was fairly successful from the host nation's point of view. By and large, the maritime forces in each nation responded well to training, though they had a few recommendations for improvement—in particular, earlier coordination, and more donations of equipment and materiel. CNA also determined that there was very little impact on audiences not directly engaged by the mission, and these included the government. Most government officials (even those in defense ministries) were unaware of the visits, and the general public seemed to have little idea that a US ship had been training their sailors. The clear goal, therefore, was to try to raise awareness among critical groups—namely, the government.

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[62] An LSD-43 (an amphibious dock landing ship).

## APS 2009, USS *Nashville*

For the next deployment of APS, the deployment focused on fewer countries, but stayed in port longer. The mix of activities was approximately the same: military training (both theoretical and practical) and some construction and COMREL activities.[63] USS *Nashville* was an amphibious landing ship[64] that could easily carry some heavy equipment as well as portable classrooms and other necessary equipment for training.

Perhaps the biggest change from previous deployments was the dramatic increase in the size of the international mission staff—it hovered at somewhere around 45 personnel. Many European nations were represented, and all of the countries that *Nashville* was visiting also had staff officers aboard. In addition, several African countries were interested in being part of APS and in having their staff officers learn how to run missions of this size.

An international staff served two purposes: (1) it served as a training opportunity for African nations, especially those with smaller maritime forces; and (2) it required a great deal of personal interactions among the staff members during the planning and execution phases. The training that was inherent in functioning in an international staff was important to some African maritime forces as a whole—with few staff officers, having one officer who came away from the mission with much greater knowledge could provide a significant benefit to these forces.

But it was the second aspect, personal interactions, that had the greatest effect. This close working relationship not only improved navy-to-navy relationships between the United States and other countries, but—perhaps more critically—encouraged relationships among the African officers. These relationships were likely to persist after the deployment and to encourage these maritime forces to interact with each other in order to increase maritime domain

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[63] Margaux Daly and Alison Vernon, *Analysis of the Effects of the APS Mission: Factors and Implications for Achieving Objectives* (U), Secret, Dec 09 (CNA Research Memorandum D0021735.A2/Final).

[64] USS *Nashville*, an LPD-13, was decommissioned following this APS deployment, in September 2009.

awareness. This increase in regional relationships was important for two of the four pillars: maritime domain awareness and response capability.

Most of the increase in these relationships that resulted from the international staff's interaction occurred through simple information sharing. Previously, many of these countries had never communicated about cross-border threats or activities. Now, they would often be willing to contact their colleague in another country, thereby increasing the ability of each country to respond to maritime threats.

Creating a partnership with the United States as well as with each other is one of the lasting successes of APS—not only through the international staff but also through the multiple planning conferences and visit that take place each year. Personal interactions (assuming they are positive) are the strongest tool that the US Navy has in making lasting relationships with strategically important countries.

While the training was largely well received during the deployment and there were only minor suggestions for changes, it became somewhat clear, at least to host nation military leaders, that the training was having a somewhat limited effect. These limited effects had less to do with activity execution (which was good) and more to do with the specific regional and country characteristics the deployment encountered. As was mentioned in the discussion of the previous deployments, these are poor countries and they do not have many resources to "spread around." Moreover, in some of the countries, the corruption of the government and the defense forces is severe enough that even if there were resources for the maritime forces, those resources might be unlikely to trickle down to where they would actually be used to buy the equipment or hire the personnel necessary for maritime security.

## APS East and West 2010, USS *Gunston Hall*, USS *Nicholas*, and HSV-2 *Swift*

The next APS deployments occurred on both the east and west coasts of Africa.[65] APS-East occurred first and visited several key US allies in East Africa—not coincidentally, a location where piracy, flowing from the Horn of Africa and the Gulf of Aden, was increasing. In an earlier section, table 1 presented a list of the countries that were visited. APS-East actually comprised two ships: USS *Nicholas* and HSV-2 *Swift*. Working in tandem, they offered military training to each country. *Swift* had an international staff onboard.

While this banner deployment of APS-East was much smaller than the APS-West deployment, it had a very notable success. The Tanzanian President, Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete, visited both ships and discussed maritime security for Tanzania. Tanzania faces two significant maritime threats: illegal fishing and piracy. The Tanzanian President—who spent much more time than originally planned on the ships—discussed what Tanzania needed to do in order to strengthen its maritime forces. No other head of state/government had visited an APS vessel previous to this deployment. In fact, it was reported that the awareness among the government and the civilian populations was fairly high, especially for a first-time deployment.

The APS-West deployment, by contrast, planned to go to only three countries and employ the "hub" concept. That is, the ship would stay much longer in the three hub countries—Cameroon, Ghana, and Senegal—and trainees from surrounding countries (especially those with which APS had previously engaged) would attend training in the three hubs. Each hub had a slightly different emphasis on training: some training focused more on maritime domain awareness; other training, on response capability.

The APS-West 2010 deployment experienced a number of curve balls. The first occurred before the ship even deployed: instead of

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[65] Alison Rimsky Vernon et al., *Reducing Maritime Threats in Ghana: How APS Can Play A Role* (CNA Research Memorandum, forthcoming).

transiting from Norfolk to Rota and then on to Africa, USS *Gunston Hall* was commanded to participate in Operation Unified Response—the disaster relief operation for Haiti—in the winter of 2010. *Gunston Hall* stayed in Haiti for approximately one month and helped facilitate transport of relief supplies to communities. The international staff was already aboard *Gunston Hall* and therefore participated in the relief operations. For the African partners, this was a real opportunity not only to bond with their fellow mission officers but also to serve in a disaster relief operation—not an operation that they would normally ever have the chance to be a part of.

Because of this delay, the visit to the first hub—Cameroon—had to be cancelled. While the Cameroonians were disappointed, they understood the reasoning behind it. NAVAF promised that the ship would return in 2011 for more training in order to make up the training deficit.

Therefore, *Gunston Hall* visited only two hubs—Senegal and Ghana. This deployment had several important aspects:

- There was a great demand for practical training, and that demand was not met. Students felt that the hub concept meant that they would get a significant amount of time actually performing the activities for which they were trained—which was all the more critical since they likely will not have a chance to practice their new skills in their own navies. Instead, students spent almost all of their time in classroom training. However, we should note that *Gunston Hall* conducted a number of exercises with European and African ships, and this gave some students visibility on more "real life" actions.

- Regional relationships were again strengthened. Also, there seemed to be an increase in African "ownership" of the mission and a push for having an African commodore at some time in the next few missions.

- There were some persistent problems, the largest of which was that APS activities (training) will likely never achieve the end state of APS—enhanced maritime security in the region. The persistent lack of resources for maritime

forces (caused by lack of national resources and/or endemic corruption) prevents maritime security from ever becoming a reality. It is of paramount importance to consider how APS could and/or should address these issues; otherwise, it seems unlikely that APS in its current form will achieve its end states.

## Conclusion

Our discussion of the major engagement deployments and their particular issues shows some great similarities—as well as some differences—across the theaters. CNA has concentrated not only on identifying the effects of these missions in host nations, but also on understanding the reasons behind those effects. In the next section we will give a summary of the effects of the two mission types. Then we will discuss what caused those effects.

# Effects of these deployments

Engagement deployments have had identifiable effects on host nations. In this section, we aggregate the effects we have seen and discuss what CNA believes is the process by which effects are or are not achieved. However, first we address the conceptual process of engagement and present our assumptions about the changes in attitudes and behavior that may result from that process.

## The process by which engagement works

Figure 1 gives a conceptual idea of how engagement works.

Figure 1.    Engagement process
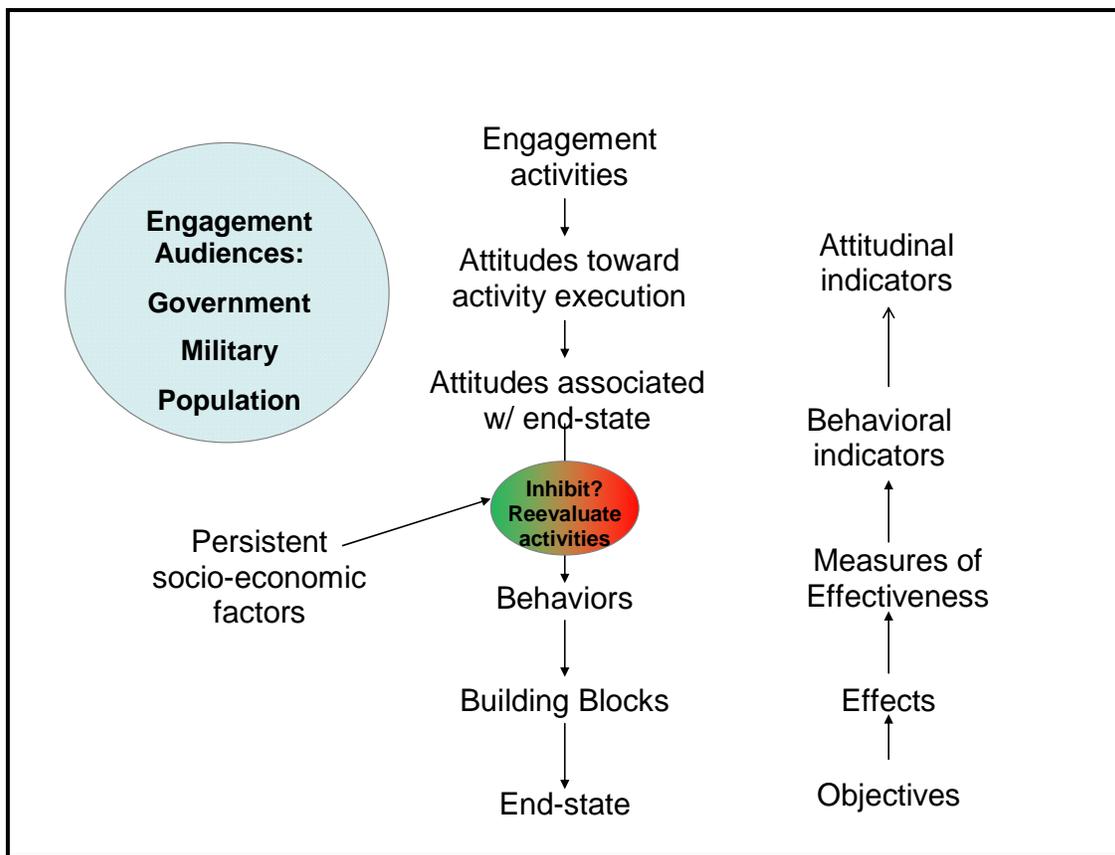
In our proposed assessment framework we will make some assumptions about attitudes and behaviors. Below, we list these presuppositions in order to better detail how this assessment functions.

- *Behavior changes are the objectives.* Almost every objective comprises desired behavior changes—normally, quite a few.

- *Attitudes are a necessary, but not sufficient, prerequisite to behavior change.* This presumption stems from behavioral psychology, which shows that attitude change takes place before most behavior changes.[66] Therefore, changing attitudes must be the first step in the process toward achieving objectives.

- *Attitude change can be linked to a specific mission.* Not only is attitudinal change the first step in behavioral change, but changing attitudes can be closely linked to a specific mission or set of missions. This makes it easier to understand what missions may (or may not) do that will engender attitudinal change.

- *Behavior change may be caused by a number of factors;* attitudinal change may not even be the most important one. While attitudinal change is necessary for any behavior change, it certainly is not the only input into the decision to change behavior. The process by which behaviors change is an extremely open system, with innumerable factors contributing to the decision to change behaviors.

- *It is unlikely that a specific mission, or even set of missions, could be proven to have caused behavior change;* rather, it is far more likely that we can correlate missions and behavior change. Due to the open nature of the system, it is unlikely that an assessment could capture all the causation of a behavior change—and it is certainly unlikely that it could single out one cause, such as a single mission or even a set of mis-

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[66] George Kelly, *The Psychology of Personal Constructs*, 2 volumes (New York: Norton, 1955). The exception is behavior change that takes place under duress when the incentive to change is extremely desirable, whether or not this behavior change aligns with attitudes and beliefs.

sions. At most, an assessment of the behavior changes in a certain country will be able to correlate changes to mission activity.

Some factors can inhibit behavior changes, no matter how much the target audience may desire them. External factors that tend to be immutable in the short to medium term may play a constraining role against any behavior change (just as there are likely factors that facilitate behavior changes). For assessment purposes, it may be important to recognize that the conditions in some countries (corruption, for instance) actively work against achieving certain objectives. In these cases, behavior change is unlikely to result, regardless of how well a mission was done and whether it achieved the critical attitudinal changes.

The entire deployment should be driven by the decision of which audiences it will focus on. At least theoretically, the audiences were chosen because they can engage in behavior that would help achieve the objectives. For instance, the general population may be a target audience because the people are tolerating or even offering sanctuary to VEOs. The goal of the mission is to try to stop the population from doing so. Understanding what activities should be used to convince the people to change their behavior is a key decision and requires an in-depth understanding of each country and each specific situation. Of course, while this is theoretically the way to proceed, reality dictates that asset availability plays a large role in this decision—witness the change in assets in Pacific Partnership 09. Deciding how to merge theory and reality is difficult but critical.

In terms of attitudes and behaviors, one additional issue concerns timeframes. In general, attitudes change more quickly—in a matter of weeks or months. Behaviors need to be tracked over years. Moreover, when tracking behaviors, the trend or the delta of the behaviors is almost as important as the behaviors themselves. A simple number of new behaviors cannot indicate anything about the actual behaviors themselves; due to multiple factors, some behavior changes may have greater impact than others. However, the number of behavior changes is important if viewed as a trend. It is critical to see whether this trend corresponds to other factors that may be important—for example, a new threat that arose or a change in

government that took place during the timeframe of the deployment.

# Humanitarian civic assistance engagement deployments

We have discussed the humanitarian assistance deployments that took place in Latin America and the Pacific. It is worth noting that with the exception of one deployment (Pacific Partnership 09), all these missions were medical missions with a strong emphasis on surgeries. For these deployments, the host nation governments and general public were the focus audiences. In fact, HCA missions are the only mission types that can reach the general public—military training missions are far less effective at reaching this audience. Therefore, we discuss only Latin America and the Pacific when talking about the effects of HCA engagement missions.

## Attitudinal changes

Below, we examine how attitudes have changed within the general publics and the government audiences due to HCA missions.

### General public

Almost all attitudinal effects were positive for both audiences. For the general public, on average about 5 percent of the population will view the United States more positively because of the specific deployment that visited their countries. People in every country viewed these missions positively, though in some countries (for example, Trinidad) the percentage of people who were positive about the mission was much lower than in others.

Awareness of the mission tended to vary across countries, but upon closer examination of the data, we found that island and/or small countries tended to have a much higher awareness of the missions than larger and/or more widely dispersed countries. For instance, awareness of the mission was quite high in Trinidad and much lower in the Philippines and Papua New Guinea—countries that have difficulty with internal spread of information due to geographic and cultural barriers. In general, about 20 to 25 percent of a given

country's population were aware of the visit in the months after the mission had ended.

Moreover, we found evidence that this awareness persists over time. When queried, many poll respondents cited awareness of previous missions, especially the tsunami response in 2005.[67] Anecdotally, we encountered numerous people across the nations who remembered previous HCA visits 20, 30, or even 40 years ago. Therefore, the memory of these missions may persist for a very long time, especially for those directly affected by them.

Construction activities also brought about attitudinal change. In most cases, local personnel were involved in these construction projects, working alongside the US Navy. This partnership between US Navy sailors and local personnel had an interesting result: local personnel began to believe that they could change their situation themselves—they did not have to wait for an outside organization or the national government to do it for them. This change in attitude had tremendous implications when we examined behavioral effects later.

**Government**

In general, governments were never the main focus audience of a deployment, though they are, perhaps, the most critical audience for any engagement deployment to reach. Local and regional officials were often involved in the visit, including in the planning stages; however, in most countries, the national government had no direct involvement with the mission. Normally, if a national official was interested in the mission, he or she would make a quick stop at the site and take a tour or attend a reception aboard the ship, but involvement was rarely more substantial than that.

This is a big lost opportunity. For the strategic goal of these missions—"strengthen relationships with the partner nation"—the national government ought to be the focus audience. It might be important to strengthen relationships with the local and regional

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[67] This was almost as notable in Latin America as it was in the Pacific.

governments, but the United States seeks stronger relationships with the national government. Merely hoping that the national government is paying attention to the HCA mission may not be the best way to engage them and change their attitudes.

Having said that, we did see some attitudinal changes among host nation governments. First, the deployments did change their perceptions about working closely with the United States in all but a few countries. The biggest success story for strengthening relationships is clearly the visits with Vietnam—not a country that is traditionally highly friendly to the United States. In the 2007 deployment, movement of the ship and of personnel onshore was severely restricted and the Vietnamese government caused numerous roadblocks. In 2008, the government of Vietnam requested the ship to return. The visit was very successful, and the US Navy worked much more closely with the Vietnamese.

**The importance of willingness to work with others**

The other important attitudinal change that occurred in almost every country concerned the willingness of officials to work with others in their own government. The creation of an interagency working environment was very new to many officials, and these engagement deployments provided a perfect opportunity to create horizontal and vertical intra-government relationships where few or none had existed.

Before each deployment, a pre-deployment site survey (PDSS) team would arrive a few months before the scheduled visit. During the first and subsequent PDSS visits, a great deal of planning would take place and much of this planning would involve the host nation. The US Navy would hold large meetings in order to delegate responsibility for various parts of the preparation to the different stakeholders. Often, host nation officials from a variety of agencies—the executive branch, health, education, the military, and the local government—would be part of these meetings and would have to work together to achieve their tasks.

In CNA interviews, we heard people talk about these meetings and how revelatory they were. Previously, they reported, there had been very little interaction among the agencies and even less interaction

vertically—in other words, the national health ministry, for example, did not often communicate with the various regional health agencies. Government bureaucracy was very stovepiped—meaning that everyone "stayed in their lane." This opportunity to work together changed the way that many officials viewed their job and the importance of collaboration among various organizations. The attitudes about the possibility of interagency collaboration markedly changed.

## Behavioral effects

Changes in behavior are the ultimate goal of any engagement operation—in the end, after all, objectives are simply a series of behavior changes that take place in order to achieve a goal. Progress toward the objectives can be measured by observation of changed behaviors in the host nation that, altogether, will eventually achieve the specified objectives of the engagement mission. Below, we detail some behavior changes that have been noted and that are closely correlated with the identified attitudinal changes we discussed above—and, therefore, to the deployment itself. We discuss these changes by audiences.

One final note: We do not necessarily know whether all of the behavior changes we cite in this section were temporary or whether they became inculcated over time and are self-sustaining. That is an important question for future researchers to address. For the point of these analyses, however, we focus on the initiation of behavior changes; in and of itself, this is an important milestone for engagement deployments to make.

### The general public

The biggest behavioral change that CNA has identified in the general public that is related to engagement missions is the people's actions to change their own societies. As we mentioned earlier, one great example of this is the USNS *Comfort* deployment to the Colombian Pacific coast in 2009. Because local personnel in Buenaventura were so deeply impressed by the fact that the United States cared enough to send the hospital ship to their impoverished and marginalized area in Colombia in 2007 and so inspired by working

alongside the US Navy before and during the deployment, local leaders began to question their own status quo. The status quo largely consisted of a society with little rule of law and a very large criminal element that made daily life very dangerous. Therefore, local leaders, in conjunction with the national government, set out to reclaim the city from narco-traffickers and transform it into a livable city that would improve its economic status. They have been successful to date: they have reduced their violent crime rate by two-thirds, by largely driving drug traffickers out of the area. While the engagement mission did not directly cause the narco-traffickers to be driven out, it is correlated with the behavior changes of not only the general public but also local and national government officials. As one interviewee stated, "The ship provided the stimulus for Buenaventura." There were, of course, other factors that contributed to this change, but the engagement mission was certainly one factor.

While Buenaventura, Colombia, is the best example of this kind of behavior change, it is not the only example—other local communities also have changed how they take care of their infrastructure, their public spaces, and so on, as a result of the engagement mission.

This is an unexpected result—one that had not been anticipated by US Navy planners. It also is a trend that has strong possibilities if the US Navy can really encourage this change in behavior. In the case of Buenaventura, the change had direct strategic impacts on US security, as drug traffickers found it harder and harder to find an area to operate in. Perhaps this could be repeated in other communities around the world that tolerate or shelter violent extremist organizations.

**Government**

The behavior changes in government and military groups echoes the attitudinal changes identified for these groups. In countries with repeated missions, there has been an increase in interagency relationships—relationships often initiated as a result of an engagement deployment. Local officials claim that their daily operations have become more effective now that they are able to communicate freely with others in the government, even if the issue is not "in their lane."

The second behavior change that we identified stemmed from planning and organization techniques. Local officials who had been part of the planning meetings for the engagement deployments also reported being impressed with how these large and complex operations were planned by the US Navy. The use of delegation techniques, timelines, and numerous other tools was new for many of these governments. They quickly incorporated these tools into their own planning cycles and used different organizational techniques to function more effectively. For instance, local governments across Latin America have demonstrated that they have learned to use regular meetings to increase interagency communication. Moreover, they use these meetings as a way to get buy-in from all involved agencies for a particular decision.

Like the local people's improvement of their own communities, this behavioral change was an unexpected outcome. However, this behavior change will likely make local governments more effective, and that has important ramifications for the United States: First, effective local governance (which should improve as better organizational techniques are used and as local communities are more empowered) is a roadblock to communities providing sanctuary to violent extremist groups.[68] Second, this improved governance increases the capabilities of government to address various challenges—economic, social, or political—and can make for stronger partners for the United States. This is one of the explicit strategic goals of these missions.[69]

Finally, national governments have supported local populations' efforts to establish effective governance in their own communities. National governments have contributed resources and awareness to these efforts across various countries. This is a key behavioral change because it is unlikely that local populations and governments could re-establish their communities without the support of the national government.

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[68] Department of Defense, *National Defense Strategy*, Jun 2008.

[69] Seth G. Jones, "The Rise of Afghanistan's Insurgency: State Failure and Jihad," *International Security,* Vol. 32, No. 4, Spring 2008: 7-40.

# Military training deployments

Military training deployments have different audiences than HCA deployments—these engagements concentrate on military and governmental audiences. APS has been the major naval military training engagement mission we have examined. The other significant annual deployment has been Southern Partnership Station in Latin America. Below, we discuss the attitudinal and behavioral changes of each audience.

## Attitudinal changes

### Military

After every port visit, the military audience in every country had much stronger attitudes about the desirability of working with the US Navy again. It is important for the US Navy to be persistent in its presence, in order to encourage host nation maritime forces to think that it is desirable to work with the US Navy. This is especially important with maritime forces, which may be inundated with assistance from a variety of countries.

The second important attitudinal change concerns maritime security and its importance. After engaging with APS, maritime forces are far more likely to recognize the criticality of maritime threats and the need to secure their own waters from these threats. Perhaps just as important, maritime forces start to believe that they—not another country or another branch of the military—are responsible for achieving this security.[70] At first glance, this may not appear to be a monumental change, but in nations that are overwhelmed by donations and often view their own problems as issues that outsiders need to solve, this acceptance of responsibility is important.

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[70] These findings come from our interviews with APS African participants as well as surveys administered to all participants during the past three APS deployments. These surveys were first designed and administered by CNA; subsequently, NAVAF assessment personnel have administered them and analyzed the data. We should also stress that we were measuring attitudes as opposed to behaviors; thus, this is a stated belief.

The third important attitudinal change is the maritime force's willingness to work with neighboring navies. Traditionally, maritime forces have very little interaction with neighboring navies—this is a real lost opportunity when communication between navies can dramatically improve maritime domain awareness and response capability. Through the planning conferences for APS, the international staff's interactions, and the joint training itself, various key personnel in each maritime force began to establish relationships with each other.[71] This change in attitude about the desirability of working closely with regional neighbors was a direct effect of the APS deployment. Moreover, there have been subsequent systematic interactions between regional maritime forces, such as the naval exercise Obanagame off the coast of Cameroon.

### Government

As we noted in our discussion of APS, deployments seem to have had very little attitudinal effect on the national governments in coastal African nations. Governments have not been an engagement target in these deployments, so it is not surprising that there is very little clear attitudinal change. We suspect that the maritime domain is growing more important to the national government, but we are uncertain why. APS may be causing the change, but it seems more likely that certain external effects (more pirate attacks, discovery of off-shore oil) are driving this growing awareness.

There is one notable exception, in East Africa. The engagement by APS-East with the government in Tanzania seemed to have a real impact on the President of Tanzania. After spending quite a few hours with the APS staff and touring the ships, he stated that he felt he understood maritime threats better than he had before his visit to APS. It remains to be seen whether that attitude will persist. Nevertheless, it seems that APS-East has made more progress in this area than APS-West.

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[71] These findings also come from our interviews with APS participants and are documented in Daly and Vernon, *Analysis of the Effects of the APS Mission.*

# Behavioral changes

## Military audience

The strongest behavioral change that has emerged among the maritime forces is an increase in regional cooperative behavior, including joint declarations of support and of increased communication across national lines.[72] This is not a surprising development; the attitudinal change was very strong, and the behavior change is relatively reinforcing. Information sharing between maritime forces often has benefits for both sides; therefore it is easy to try to continue engaging in that behavior.

Likewise, maritime organizations have often imported planning and organizational techniques learned from their experiences with the US Navy. One commander told us, "I now hold a morning meeting for my staff every day and we use a PowerPoint presentation for the meeting. They hate it, but I love it."[73] This co-optation of these tools is very similar to the effects of HCA missions and may be one of the most important skills that the US Navy can transfer to help improve government and military capabilities.

## Government audience

The government audience has exhibited very few behavioral changes due to military training missions—this is not surprising, given the little attitudinal change that CNA detected. What little behavioral change was captured almost completely centered on regionally cooperative behaviors. An example is the work with the

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[72] Increased lines of communication are, however, mostly informal. APS international staff members from Africa, as well as participants in APS training activities, have commented in interviews and surveys over the past three years that they frequently keep in contact with colleagues they met during APS and often use these informal channels to communicate important information, such as the presence of traffickers.

[73] This interviewee had been a member of the international mission staff (hence, he was present onboard as part of the staff during the entire deployment) and had experienced the benefits of morning meetings and organized planning and execution. Again, we do not know whether this behavior persisted, but its carryover is important in and of itself.

Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) create regional agreements among member states or closer cooperation in the maritime realm. It has not been determined whether these behaviors can be correlated to APS, but they very well might be.

# Causes of engagement operation effects

We have identified the effects of the two basic types of engagement missions among the various audiences. In some cases, there were significant changes; in others, there were not. Why was this? What are the most important factors to consider when using engagement deployments to create desirable changes in an audience? We have identified certain factors that were important in almost every one of the 14 deployments CNA has analyzed—the very commonality indicates the critical nature of those factors. We also closely examined cases that were outliers and did not share the same results as other visits. These outliers also proved to be important in understanding what made deployments successful. Below, we discuss these factors and why they are important. We divide the factors according to whether they are at the tactical/operational level or the strategic level.

# Tactical/operational level factors

Certain factors in planning and execution will help determine the effects of the individual missions. We will draw on examples from various deployments to demonstrate these factors.

## Personal interactions

Without a doubt, personal interactions are the most critical of all factors in all engagement deployments.[74] Interactions between US personnel and local personnel create positive feelings and begin to generate trust between the two groups. Moreover, positive personal interactions can create a type of "cushion" so that if some aspects of the visit do not go well, the host nation is likely to be more understanding. The best example we have of this is the local reaction

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[74] We would like to stress the assumption that interactions are largely positive in nature.

when a patient in Nicaragua died after a doctor's error during an operation aboard *Comfort.* Nicaraguan medical and governmental officials were obviously upset that a patient had died, but were very understanding, saying that "doctors are only human" and "mistakes happen." One Nicaraguan doctor expressed trust in the ship's doctors because he personally had worked with them and "knew they were good doctors." If there had not been a lot of personal interactions and if a real relationship of trust had not been built, the reaction could have been much more violent.

Personal interactions, in reality, are the most fundamental tool that any engagement mission has in order to achieve stronger relationships and increased host nation capabilities. Whether the interactions take place between a doctor and a patient, a US Navy trainer and a lieutenant in the host nation's navy, a commodore and a mayor, or a US Navy flag officer and the defense minister, there is very little else the US Navy can do (that is not physically coercive) that will have a more powerful impact than a face-to-face encounter.

We know this for two reasons:

- Numerous interviews and smaller surveys have indicated this. Time and again, individuals have spoken about how meaningful these interactions have been and how interactions really changed their opinions about many things, but mostly about the US Navy and/or the United States. The commodore of Pacific Partnership 09 knew this when he prioritized COMREL activities, especially those that involved merely sitting down to talk with host nation persons. He knew that it was likely he would have a big "bang for the buck," with these activities.

- In cases where there were *not* many personal interactions, there were normally few effects. For example, the deployment had negligible effects on governments in West Africa—an audience that has not been a focus for the missions. In East Africa, however, the Tanzanian President spent almost three hours on board the APS ships and had extensive conversations with mission leadership.

The recommendation, therefore, is that a mission (regardless of type) should prioritize working closely with the focus audience

(again, regardless of type). If a mission does nothing else, it should get the ship personnel out to meet the people. There is no greater (or more cost-effective) way to get a big impact.

## Partnership

Personal interactions are the most powerful tool a commodore has during a mission, and using this tool to create partnership yields positive effects. Partnership has numerous aspects; below, we discuss a few fundamental ones.

As we have examined in past work,[75] partnership continues to be one of the primary paradigms responsible for effective engagement. The partnership paradigm implies a number of actions and attitudes about how to plan and execute the engagement.

The concept of partnership is straightforward: a group that voluntarily works together and is characterized by mutual cooperation and responsibility. The reasons for creating a partnership are highly varied, but, in the case of engagement deployments, creating a partnership can mean spreading out the cost of deployment as well as focusing on the mutual responsibility and ownership or "buy-in." The focus on responsibility and buy-in is the strongest factor in making a positive attitudinal impact on host nation officials and the general public.

While sharing resources (personnel, equipment, or money) is clearly advantageous for the United States, the use and promotion of partnership is perhaps more important from a geo-political point of view. Many developing countries perceive that they are overlooked or ignored by the world in general or perhaps even the United States in particular. This perception can often lead to resentment and even anti-Americanism. Moreover, it can mean that US engagement deployments can initially be greeted with skepticism.

Certain practices are key to creating a partnership; they center on the involvement of host nation personnel. The *Comfort* 2007 dep-

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[75] Kim M. Hall, *Partnership and the Potential of the Maritime Fellows Program Pilot*, Sep 2008 (CNA Research Memorandum D0018165.A2/Final).

121

loyment demonstrated that if host nation personnel are not involved early in the planning process, unexpected logistical issues may arise. More important, host nation officials will likely be resentful—they may feel that this deployment is just another example of US arrogance and that the United States thinks it knows what the country needs better than the country itself.

The US Navy has tried very hard to learn this lesson, but there are still struggles in these deployments, especially military training missions that must straddle a difficult line between expertise and partnership. In fact, this has been a major complaint of host nations about APS—whenever the host nations perceive that they are being ignored or talked down to, they feel less positive about their experience and about APS in general.

However, in cases where partnership has worked well, the effects have been immediately apparent. An example is Colombia during the *Kearsarge* deployment in 2008. Because local officials felt that they had been part of the planning of the mission and that their opinions had been taken seriously, they were understanding when the ship had to depart early and they were able to continue the projects left unfinished because they knew what to do, having been involved every step of the way.

## Leadership

Naval engagement missions have demonstrated the importance of operational leadership in creating positive and negative effects. The commodore of the mission is the front line of strategic communication.[76] He becomes the symbol of the mission for the general public and officials in each host nation visited. Therefore, if the leadership is problematic, it can have negative effects on some intended audiences. If excellent leadership is demonstrated, there will more likely be a positive impact on all the audiences.

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[76] Vernon, *Do Naval Engagement Missions Have an Impact in Host Nations and Why?*

Perhaps the best example we have of leadership is the *Kearsarge* mission in 2008. Numerous host nation personnel cited this leadership as particularly inspiring and inclusive.

The leadership of *Kearsarge* was exactly what leadership of an engagement mission should be. The commodore was most concerned about interacting with host nation personnel—host nation officials, host nation militaries, and general publics. He consistently communicated a message of partnership and made sure (as much as possible) that the rest of the ship and mission staff did the same. The fact that he was so involved in the mission and that he treated each member of the host nation with respect left a huge impression in the host nations.

In some other deployments, the leadership was not as forward thinking, especially early in the development of engagement missions. When leadership excludes host nation personnel or openly expresses disdain for the mission, it has a negative effect on the mission's credibility. In one case, host nation officials did not believe that the United States was "serious" about the mission—this was one case in which personal interactions actually hurt a mission.

The leadership should be required to have experience with these types of missions, to have some foreign area expertise, and to be skilled at interacting with people who are fundamentally different. If these requirements are not met, the result may be poor leadership that greatly damages a mission even if everything else goes right.

## Platform

We have mentioned the hospital ships and the gray hulls (combat ships) and their respective capabilities in performing the missions. However, these two platform types are also different in another way: the way in which host nations perceive their presence.

At first glance, it would seem that a hospital ship is the best choice of platform, mainly for the strategic message that its presence sends. It was, after all, the first asset used to do engagement missions. Its appearance sends messages of peace and friendship and is extremely non-threatening; indeed, these messages come through to host

nation personnel. Moreover, these ships cause no surprise—their appearance is completely in tandem with its mission. However, there are three problems with the hospital ship:

- Logistically, the hospital ship has real problems. Because of its size and its draft, it rarely can get close into port. Moreover, it has very little transport capability—it has few helicopter landing pads, and it cannot carry its own helicopters; it has to rely on host nation helicopters or other US military helicopters in the region. This means that transporting patients, media, and dignitaries back and forth is a tremendous stress on the ship's crew and on the US Embassy.

- Additionally, because of its size, the hospital ship often cannot get close enough to the port to even be visible to local community; thus, any "messages" are lost simply because the ship is not visible.

- A hospital ship is not easily identifiable as a US Navy ship. We have encountered cases where people have thought the ship was from the Red Cross or even Switzerland. It is, in fact, very hard to brand a hospital ship—its branding lies in the fact that it not branded.

Initially, we presumed that the white hull would be the "better" fit for engagement deployments and that gray hulls might have a harder time being perceived as non-threatening. Gray hulls—especially large-deck amphibious ships—are the easier option in terms of logistics and maneuver. They tend to have a somewhat smaller draft than the hospital ships and much greater transport ability. This means that the gray hull is often more visible to the local community than the hospital ship and that transporting of patients, media and host nation officials is much easier. The gray hull will come with its own helicopters, which means that the US Embassy will have much less responsibility, at least in this regard.[77]

Also, media reporters and officials can get on a gray-hull ship, and this makes a big impression. We know that media stories are much

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[77] de Allende et al., *The 2008 USS* Kearsarge *Deployment.*

more likely to be very positive if reported from the ship. Media reporters can have access to patients and interview them; they can interview US Navy sailors; and they can interact with mission leadership. Officials also can come aboard for such interviews and interaction. As discussed above, the more personal interaction there is, the better, and this is one venue that really promotes personal interaction. The inability to get everyone to the ship for a tour or a reception has a negative impact.

The big concern about gray hulls was that they would send a message of war or combat and certainly not a humanitarian message. However, as it turned out, this was the greatest strength of gray hulls, especially in HCA missions. People reported that when they saw the ship, they immediately invoked the stereotype that the United States was here to invade them or cause other sorts of trouble; however, when they saw doctors, nurses, and construction engineers coming from the ship, it caused them some cognitive dissonance because it did not match their expected picture. This cognitive dissonance appears to make a very deep impression: people who are confronted with an unexpected reality replace their old stereotype with this new picture—in this case, a picture much more favorable to the United States.

Therefore, not only is the gray hull not a problem for engagement missions, it may actually be preferable for these missions—at least in this one respect.

## Length of visits

One notable trend among all engagement deployments was a decrease in the number of countries visited and an increase in the length of visits in each country. Whether the deployment was for medical visits or training visits, host nation personnel often asked for more time—seven or eight days in port was a difficult amount of time to achieve anything, given the amount of time it takes to set up and break down the necessary equipment.

We expected to see some negative reaction from countries that no longer would get an annual visit, but we have seen very little to-date. Even if the various countries are not chosen for a particular deployment, they feel confident that their turn will come. This should

serve as a precaution to the US Navy to vary the rotation instead of constantly focusing on the same sets of countries.

## Branding

The US Navy has paid little attention to branding, and needs to pay more. Branding facilitates long-term memory awareness. Across all AORs, the US Navy has spent a lot of money and many man-hours creating and repairing public buildings in the host nations. But few of these projects have included a branding effort. No permanent marker, such as a plaque or sign, is ever used on these buildings. If other countries were not engaged in branding, this might be just a simple (and relatively unimportant) missed opportunity. Unfortunately, that is not true: almost every country in the world engages in branding, and many of the recipient countries receive a lot of construction aid. So, the average Nicaraguan, Ghanaian, or Filipino may walk down the street of his or her village and see signs that the Taiwanese, the Spanish, the French, the Chinese, or the Russians have given them donations to build a certain building. But there are rarely markers to denote that the United States has also contributed. Therefore, many people have no idea a few years hence that the United States built the school or repaired the roof on the clinic. If there were a marker of some sort, it would increase awareness of the project and contribute to long-term memory retention.

It is unclear why the US Navy does not do this—issues of funding streams have been mentioned, as has the concern that if the project is branded and then the repairs or construction fail, it will be branding a failed project. In our opinion, the benefits of branding far outweigh any risk and is a very large missed opportunity that would take little time and few resources to fix.

# Strategic factors

Some factors can help a deployment make a strategic impact in a country—that is, have an effect on the national government. Below, we discuss these.

## Visibility

We have discussed what type of ship is the most effective in creating an impact, but we have not yet discussed whether a ship is the right asset to use. Many have asked the question: Why not use a medical fly-in mission instead? They are cheaper and much easier logistically. Is it important to use a ship?

The answer is an unequivocal "yes" in countries where sending a strong message to the national government is critical. Many government officials have told us that they know only the United States could have planned and executed missions as complicated and expensive as these engagement deployments, and this makes the governments feel as if the United States appreciates and prioritizes their partnership. Countries know that the United States could go many different places with these missions—the fact that it has come to their country makes an impact. The ship sitting in their port is a physical manifestation of that impression. While a fly-in medical mission may be just as—or even more—effective at treating patients and interacting with people, it lacks the *gravitas* of a ship and the message it sends governments: "You are important to us."

## Predictability and frequency

Initially, one big concern among the NCCs was how often they should or could send these missions. They feared that if the US Navy could not send the missions often enough, host nations might react negatively.

When we spoke with host nation personnel, frequency was not an issue. Of course, the more often the missions came, the better. But people were much less concerned with that than they were with the predictability of the missions. Too often in the past, the United States has defaulted on commitments it has made to countries, promising to come back and never returning because other issues have taken priority. Host nation governments understand that sometimes a commitment must be broken—but the United States has failed to show up when promised so often, that there has been a real loss of trust.

Therefore, host nation officials have always made a point of saying that even if the mission recurs only every two years as opposed to every year, the United States needs to come when it has said it would. To date, the missions have been showing up regularly for the past three or four years. This has created a great deal of trust with host nation governments—so much so that when there have been unexpected changes in the mission due to asset availability or natural disasters, host nations have been extremely understanding of these changes because they trust that the United States will come back when promised.

This should serve as a cautionary note: an abrupt halt to these missions would almost certainly destroy the great amount of goodwill that they have created. A time will certainly come when the United States has to stop doing the missions, but this should be planned years in advance so that there is adequate preparation for the end of the mission. If the missions were to stop without warning or explanation, all the time and resources spent up to now could very well be for naught.

## The government is always an audience

The government is always a critical audience for these deployments—in many cases, it is the most critical audience. Yet, it rarely gets the attention that it merits. Less effort is put into key leadership visits than is put into other activities. Also, while local populations and militaries could be encouraged to influence their governments—for example, to increase the military's resources—this is rarely done and is certainly not given thoughtful consideration.

This is a huge missed opportunity. The goal of most engagement deployments is to have foreign governments that cooperate closely with the United States, that fund their militaries to be capable, and that are active against violent extremist organizations. These things will not necessarily follow from missions to provide health care to a country's population; certain steps must take place and certain factors that must be considered in order to achieve cooperative, stable governments.

# Summary

A number of factors can explain the positive effects that engagement missions have had. Below we connect some of these factors to the effects we have seen.

- Attitudinal and behavioral changes in the willingness and ability of local people to change their own situation have directly stemmed from personal interactions, partnership, and perhaps leadership. By creating trust and treating the local populace as equals and partners in the process, the US Navy has allowed those people to believe they could do the work to change their community just as the US Navy had done it.

- Personal interactions, leadership, predictability, and ship visibility have communicated the seriousness of intent to national governments and have begun to create a sense of trust that has strengthened US relationships with the governments.

- Partnership has changed the awareness of host nation militaries, as well as how they may function. If these militaries had felt they were being "talked down to" or thought that the United States was exhibiting superiority, they would have been unlikely to listen to arguments on the importance of maritime security or to have changed their operations in ways that are designed to increase this security.

- People really remember these missions—especially HCA missions—and the impression that the ships have made is part of that memory retention. Gray hulls may make a more permanent impression, but hospital ships also send strong signals. National populations can easily identify either type of ship with the mission's efforts.

129

# Similarities and differences between disaster relief and engagement operations

We have extensively discussed disaster response and engagement operations and have distilled from CNA analysis the most important factors for each of them. While, of course, the two missions have some significantly different factors, we also found some important cross-over lessons.

## Differences

Many things separate the two mission types:

- Disaster relief operations are quick responses to a crisis situation. Engagement operations are pre-planned, non-crisis operations in which there is time to make a multitude of decisions.

- In disaster relief operations, many US government agencies and NGOs have to work very closely. In engagement missions, they work together much less.

- Disaster relief operations are open ended; the struggle for them is developing an exit strategy and a timeline that are reasonable and that can be effectively communicated to the host nation. Engagement operations simply end as scheduled. For military commanders of disaster relief missions, perhaps one of the most difficult tasks is to pick the right time to withdraw and the right way to explain the withdrawal to the host nation—something that commanders of engagement operations do not have to worry about.

- Much of the trust that is generated by engagement deployments depends on the predictability of the mission returning as promised. If the mission suddenly ends or the resources are used in another way, it is a definite blow to

relations with the host nation. Disaster relief operations do not have that issue.

On the other hand, a few striking commonalities are shared across both missions. We discuss these in further detail below.

# Commonalities

## Objectives

Neither mission type has clear, elucidated, and appropriate objectives for the missions. As we have discussed above, objectives at the tactical level are often strategic in nature and do not provide the commander enough guidance to achieve the desired end states.

In disaster relief missions, an objective—or end state—is difficult to identify, especially in large-scale disasters. Constraining the operation by time or the number of assets often does not make sense because those constraints will likely have no relation to the relief effort. Instead, guiding parameters need to be put in place to help the commander know when the relief efforts have been sufficient and civilian agencies can continue the mission without military help.

Engagement operations, on the other hand, should have clear, actionable end states, but most of them do not—or, if they do (for example, the objectives for APS), the end states are not achievable by a single deployment. To conduct and assess these operations, the Navy must specify in some detail what the desired effects of the mission are.

## Performing the right set of activities

In both types of missions, *context* is important when thinking about which activities are the best ones to perform. In disaster response operations, the military responders must often make it clear to civilian authorities what capabilities they have and recommend ways in which they believe they would best contribute. But it is critical to understand the local context and to understand what other actors

are doing within this context. The US military can be a significant force in any situation, whether it is transporting relief supplies to isolated villages or setting up free clinics and performing surgeries in host nations. It is critical to work closely with the right organizations to make sure the mission does not step on any toes—whether those organizations are local NGOs, USAID, or host nation governments.

In each of these missions, it is critical to pick the right set of activities to achieve the objectives while also considering important external factors. If the planners and executors do not choose wisely, many of those activities will not result in either stronger relationships or successful relief efforts.

## Partnership

Perhaps the biggest commonality of the two mission types is the importance of partnership. For each mission type, creating a partnership with some critical organizations must be seen as the most important thing that is to be done. These organizations include the host nation government, and, in the case of disaster response, they include the US government and NGOs as well. We have seen clear examples where a partnership has not been created and negative effects have resulted. On a larger scale, the failure of the US government to wait for the invitation from the Bangladeshi government to assist with disaster relief operations after Cyclone Sidr in 2008 created tension in the relationship. This tension was brought to bear on the US Navy ships initially, since they were a manifestation of the diplomatic blunder. If host nation governments are not treated as equals with equal responsibility in the mission, problems will arise quickly.

Likewise, in engagement operations we have seen examples of weak partnership—notably in Trinidad in 2008. Because either the advance teams or the US Embassy had not worked closely enough with the Trinidadian government or, perhaps more important, with the Trinidadian medical establishment, there was real disappointment and confusion in Trinidad. The people simply did not understand why this mission had come in the first place and were resentful that they could not work alongside the US doctors. They felt that the

United States was treating them like second-class citizens in their own country. The interviews and polls that CNA conducted reflect this sentiment—as we noted earlier, people in Trinidad who were familiar with the mission actually liked the United States *less* than before.

### Transparency

Transparency is a key part of partnership for both missions, but is much more difficult for disaster response missions. Including host nation officials in the planning sessions and sharing information with very little filter demonstrates commitment to building trust and partnership. On the flip side, the more the host nation or other organizations are not allowed to see the same information or know what the plans are, the less trust is built.

Therefore, partnership is key—and in the case of engagement operations, so is the end state itself. The creation and maintenance of partnership as a focus for engagement missions is done, in part, to make disaster response missions much more efficient: in the midst of a crisis when communications may be difficult, it is hard to establish partnership. It is all the better for those involved if an earlier operation has already done that.

## Thoughts on assessments of HCA/DR operations

Interestingly, the effects of these operations seem to be controversial within the US Navy as well as the US government as a whole. We know this from speaking to multiple commands across time about these various operations; in general, the staffs themselves seem somewhat skeptical of the effects. How can you measure partnership? How can you predict that the relationships established now or capabilities grown now will lay the groundwork for US strategic needs in the future?

While it is hard both to measure the effects and to predict their longevity and trajectory, it is critical to attempt to do both. Even if the measurement of effects looks fundamentally different from other common military measurements, the effects are still present. We have seen that both types of operations, disaster relief and engage-

ment, have clear, desired attitudinal effects on audiences. Occasionally, they have behavioral effects as well. In other words, these missions work, even if the answer to the question "What effects did the mission have?" does not make the US Navy or US military comfortable.

The issue of whether or not a mission works over the long term, and whether or not attitudinal and behavioral changes are inculcated, is an area that needs further study and analysis. Such a study can build on the knowledge base that CNA has created.

# Conclusion

Our examination of the two types of missions—disaster relief and engagement—has pinpointed some key differences between them, but also some critical similarities. While there are differences in ability to plan and with issues such as a withdrawal timeline, other concerns such as transparency, personal interactions and partnership with host nations persist across operational types.

It is not unreasonable to assume, therefore, that these factors matter even beyond engagement and disaster relief missions. They may well be important factors in any mission that is trying to change human perceptions about key issues. Approaching audiences with an intent to treat them as equals and to include them on important decision-making aspects, thereby creating partnership between the target audience and the USG, would seem to be as important in kinetic operations as in non-kinetic operations.

Moreover, the separation of command levels has evolved in the last 20 years in such a way that these levels are often indistinguishable. Tactical actions have immediate strategic ramifications and vice versa. While decisions themselves may be made by the various command levels, the consequences of those actions will quickly be felt by all command levels. A tactical commander's failure to coordinate effectively with USAID can present a problem for the COCOM or DoS; failure to request permission to enter a country places an undue burden on a mission commander in his or her attempt to establish good relationships with host nation organizations. Therefore, it is critical for each command level to understand that the issues that cross operational types will likely call for a broader understanding. When objectives are measurable, appropriate, tie together, and allow the missions to choose the right set of activities in conjunction with outside organizations (such as the host nation), they will contribute to successful shaping and disaster relief operations.

We have compared the factors that bring about certain effects in these operations, and noted that leadership, partnership, and transparency are key to reaching the goals the United States has set for its foreign policy. However, it is worthwhile discussing the effects themselves, as this study concludes—after all, the effects are the end game for both mission types.

The ability of CNA analysts to participate in the "front line" of these operations has informed this work in a unique way—we are able to understand the potential tactical ramifications of a strategic decision (such as the decision not to create actionable objectives) as well as the strategic ramifications of tactical actions (leadership that encourages personal interactions on the ground). By observing the operation as it occurs and then returning to the host nation after the operation has been over for a while, CNA analysts have a unique point of view that can inform all levels of command. We hope that the guidance this paper offers to current and future commanders will help ensure that these operations are effective and successful every time they are executed.