



(U) Working Toward Cooperative Disaster Response: The Emergency Response Information Exchange

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Abstract

The Emergency Response Information Exchange (ERIE) discussion was a Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa (CJTF-HOA) sponsored event at Camp Lemonnier, Djibouti, on February 12–14, 2019. It showed numerous ways in which forces of foreign militaries stationed in Djibouti can contribute to the government of Djibouti's disaster response operations and improve coordination with one another. ERIE explored coordination among the international military forces in Djibouti and the government of Djibouti to support disaster relief operations led by the government of Djibouti. The scenario examined humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HA/DR) operations in the immediate aftermath of a large-magnitude earthquake that caused extensive damage in Djibouti City. Based on the discussion during ERIE, this research memorandum presents a series of insights and recommendations on the requirements and expectations for coordination and communication among members of the international community assisting in an HA/DR operation in Djibouti.

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Executive Summary

The Combined Joint Task Force–Horn of Africa (CJTF-HOA) sponsored the Emergency Response Information Exchange (ERIE) discussion at Camp Lemonnier, Djibouti, on February 12–14, 2019. The ERIE discussion showed numerous ways in which foreign militaries stationed in Djibouti can contribute to the government of Djibouti’s disaster response operations and improve coordination with one another.

CJTF-HOA asked CNA to design a scenario and facilitate discussions among Djiboutian officials and representatives from the multinational military forces stationed in Djibouti on the response to a large-scale natural disaster in Djibouti City. ERIE included participants from the US, French, Japanese, Italian, German, and Spanish militaries stationed in Djibouti. The discussion also included senior civilian and military representatives from the government of Djibouti and international organizations operating in Djibouti.

ERIE explored coordination among the international military forces in Djibouti and the government of Djibouti to support government of Djibouti-led disaster relief operations. The scenario examined humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HA/DR) operations in the immediate aftermath of a large-magnitude earthquake that caused extensive damage in Djibouti City. The discussion proceeded in three parts, during which participants planned their individual responses and coordinated with each other to address the challenges presented in the scenario.

Objectives

The purpose of ERIE was to understand the requirements and expectations for coordination and communication among members of the international community assisting in an HA/DR operation in Djibouti.

CJTF-HOA’s objectives for ERIE were to:

- Facilitate conversation among international partners;
- Understand the limitations of international militaries’ involvement in humanitarian relief; and
- Build international coordination mechanisms in Djibouti.

Emergency Organization Plan

The government of Djibouti is in the process of completing its Emergency Organization Plan (PLAN ORSEC), which outlines the government's response to emergencies, including natural disasters. PLAN ORSEC assigns the Executive Secretariat for Risk and Disaster Management within the Ministry of the Interior as the permanent body responsible for coordinating relief operations when the plan is triggered.¹ PLAN ORSEC, however, is not finalized and has not been tested during a real-world emergency.

Insights and recommendations from the ERIE discussion

Based on the discussion during ERIE and CNA's review of PLAN ORSEC, we offer the following insights and recommendations:

PLAN ORSEC refinements

As part of the ERIE discussion, participants used PLAN ORSEC to organize a response to a natural disaster of greater severity than the country has experienced in recent decades. In doing so, government of Djibouti participants noted several areas in which PLAN ORSEC does not specify how their government would organize, lead, and manage the response to the disaster outlined in the ERIE scenario. In particular, PLAN ORSEC does not specify the process for requesting assistance from foreign military forces stationed in Djibouti. The ERIE discussion also revealed that not all Djiboutian government officials agreed that PLAN ORSEC accurately describes their responsibilities during the response to a natural disaster. These differences are likely to be addressed as the government of Djibouti finalizes PLAN ORSEC, tests it through simulations and exercises, and implements it following a disaster.

Recommendations to support PLAN ORSEC development

- As the government of Djibouti refines PLAN ORSEC, we recommend that foreign military representatives participate in the exercises and meetings that contribute to this process.
- PLAN ORSEC outlines the facilities from which the government of Djibouti will manage its response to emergencies; when possible, we recommend that foreign military representatives visit these facilities.

¹ Republic of Djibouti, Ministry of the Interior, Executive Secretary for Risk and disaster Management, *Emergency Organization Plan (PLAN ORSEC)*, Draft 2013, p. 4.

Foreign military support to the government of Djibouti

During the ERIE discussion, the Djiboutian participants not only described their emergency operations procedures, but also expressed preferences for how they would like to access support from foreign military forces in the aftermath of a disaster. These expressed preferences are not currently included in PLAN ORSEC, yet they may present an opportunity for emergency response collaboration between foreign military forces stationed in Djibouti and the government of Djibouti.

Recommendations to improve understanding of the government of Djibouti's HA/DR procedures

- We recommend that foreign military forces engage with the government of Djibouti officials responsible for emergency management to improve their understanding of Djiboutian principles and processes for dividing a disaster area into sectors.
- We recommend that foreign military forces engage with their Djiboutian counterparts to understand their likely disaster relief battle rhythm.
- We recommend that the US and other militaries stationed in Djibouti request information on the composition of the National Disaster Committee that the government of Djibouti is in the process of establishing, including its assigned missions and scope of authorities.

Recommendations to prepare internally for HA/DR operations

- We recommend that foreign military forces stationed in Djibouti train and equip their identified liaison officers to work at the government of Djibouti Crisis Response Center.
- We recommend that foreign military forces stationed in Djibouti determine whether to make bilateral agreements specific to HA/DR with the government of Djibouti.

Foreign military forces' humanitarian response capabilities

Military forces' availability and capabilities make them natural first responders who can save lives and assist the injured when a natural disaster strikes. The ERIE discussion, however, highlighted foreign military forces' limitations. Thus, further discussions will be necessary to plan for the capabilities that will be most in demand during emergency situations.

Recommendations for joint training

- We recommend that government of Djibouti officials and foreign military forces engage in more HA/DR information exchanges to prepare for natural disasters in Djibouti.

- We recommend that foreign nations with a military presence in Djibouti provide urban SAR training to government of Djibouti first responders. This training could either be conducted on a bilateral basis or using a collaborative, multinational training model.

Air operations contingency plans

In the aftermath of a natural disaster, most critical relief supplies usually arrive by air, but Djibouti has only a limited number of airfields. In the ERIE scenario, Djibouti–Ambouli International Airport, the main airfield in Djibouti City, suffered extensive damage, which limited both civilian and military flight operations. Neither the Djibouti–Ambouli International Airport emergency plan, nor the memorandum of understanding between the government of Djibouti and the foreign military forces that use the airport, covers airport operations specific to natural disasters.

Recommendations to plan for contingency air operations

- We recommend that US and other foreign military forces stationed in Djibouti discuss airspace control during HA/DR operations with government of Djibouti aviation authorities.
- We recommend that US officials work with the government of Djibouti aviation authorities to develop contingency plans addressing compromised air traffic control at Djibouti–Ambouli International Airport following a natural disaster.
- We recommend that the US, French forces, and the government of Djibouti coordinate the activation of alternative airfields to support HA/DR operations.

Communications planning

Effective communications between government of Djibouti authorities and the users of Djiboutian infrastructure, such as the foreign military forces operating in Djibouti, will be critical when a natural disaster strikes. This will be especially true as the government of Djibouti requests assistance from those forces. Although conversations during ERIE addressed communications in general, participants did not discuss detailed emergency communications protocols.

Recommendations to plan for emergency communications

- We recommend that foreign military forces stationed in Djibouti and the government of Djibouti work together to develop communications plans to exchange information following a disaster.
- The US and Djiboutian governments should determine and communicate which response decisions must be pre-planned and which can be made ad hoc. For example,

to facilitate communication during a crisis, Djiboutian government and multinational military forces must pre-determine the radio frequencies they will use. These decisions would be valuable starting points for coordinating disaster preparedness efforts.

- We recommend that foreign military forces stationed in Djibouti and the government of Djibouti explore methods to gain shared situational awareness following a disaster.
- We recommend that CJTF-HOA provide government of Djibouti disaster response officials with maps that have the level of detail necessary for common situational awareness during disaster relief operations.

Strategic messaging

Messaging through traditional and social media outlets is critical in establishing and maintaining local and international support for disaster relief operations. This support is instrumental in ensuring that potentially complicated and sensitive relief operations work effectively.

Recommendations to prepare strategic messaging

- Since the government of Djibouti has not experienced the international media onslaught that large-scale international disaster relief operations bring, we recommend that US officials assist government of Djibouti public affairs officials with preparing strategic messaging for disaster relief operations.
- We recommend that foreign military forces stationed in Djibouti coordinate their messaging to the international media about their support to disaster relief operations with one another.

The ERIE discussion gave government of Djibouti officials responsible for emergency operations and foreign military forces stationed in Djibouti the opportunity to share information on their capabilities, capacities, and procedures for responding to a natural disaster. To build on the success of ERIE, we recommend that participants continue to work collaboratively on disaster response planning to use government of Djibouti and foreign military capabilities to their best effect when a large-scale disaster strikes.

Contents

Introduction.....	1
ERIE objectives.....	1
ERIE scenario.....	1
ERIE scenario limitations.....	3
ERIE structure.....	3
Part 1: Assessment.....	4
Part 2: Coordination.....	6
Part 3: Collaboration.....	10
ERIE Insights and Recommendations.....	13
PLAN ORSEC refinements.....	13
Recommendations to support PLAN ORSEC development.....	14
Foreign military support to the government of Djibouti.....	15
Recommendations to improve understanding of the government of Djibouti’s HA/DR procedures.....	17
Recommendations to prepare internally for HA/DR operations.....	18
Foreign military forces’ humanitarian response capabilities.....	18
Recommendations for joint training.....	19
Air operations contingency plans.....	20
Recommendations to plan for contingency air operations.....	22
Communications planning.....	23
Recommendations to plan for emergency communications.....	24
Strategic messaging.....	25
Recommendations to prepare strategic messaging.....	26
Appendix A: List of ERIE Participants.....	28
Djibouti.....	28
France.....	28
Germany.....	28
Italy.....	28
Japan.....	29
Spain.....	29
United Nations.....	29
United States.....	29
Appendix B: ERIE Design.....	31
Information exchange design.....	31
Participants.....	31
Scenario.....	32

Questionnaires.....32
Information exchange execution 33
Figures35
Abbreviations.....36
References.....37

Introduction

The Combined Joint Task Force–Horn of Africa (CJTF-HOA) sponsored the Emergency Response Information Exchange (ERIE) discussion at Camp Lemonnier, Djibouti, on February 12–14, 2019. CJTF-HOA asked CNA to design a scenario and facilitate discussions among Djiboutian officials and representatives from the multinational military forces that are stationed in Djibouti to explore humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HA/DR) operations in Djibouti.

ERIE included participants from the US, Djiboutian, French, Japanese, Italian, German, and Spanish militaries stationed in Djibouti. The discussion also included senior civilian representatives from the government of Djibouti and international organizations operating in Djibouti. For a complete list of the ERIE participants, see Appendix A.

ERIE explored coordination among the international military forces in Djibouti and the government of Djibouti during the aftermath of a large-scale earthquake that causes extensive damage in Djibouti City.

ERIE objectives

The purpose of ERIE was to understand the requirements and expectations for coordination and communication among members of the international community assisting in an HA/DR operation in Djibouti.

CJTF-HOA's objectives for ERIE were to:

- Facilitate conversation among international partners;
- Understand the limitations of international militaries' involvement in humanitarian relief; and
- Build international coordination mechanisms in Djibouti.

ERIE scenario

The ERIE scenario centered on an 8.5-magnitude earthquake that strikes along the Main Ethiopian Rift fault line west of Djibouti City on Friday, February 15, 2019. Figure 1 shows the fault line and the earthquake epicenter.

Figure 1. ERIE scenario earthquake



Source: CNA.

In the scenario, the earthquake causes extensive damage to critical infrastructure in Djibouti City, including Djibouti–Ambouli International Airport, the Port of Djibouti, the Boulaos thermal plant, and high-traffic roads and overpasses. El Hadj Hassan Gouled Aptidon Stadium suffers a partial collapse during a qualifying soccer match for the African Cup of Nations. Multiple fires occur throughout the city, including at the Boulaos thermal plant and the Sheraton Hotel. Electric power is intermittent at government offices, and mobile phone service is intermittent.

The President of Djibouti immediately recognizes the magnitude of the disaster and responds by quickly reaching out to the United Nations (UN) Secretary General to request emergency aid. The President next directs the Foreign Minister to contact the embassies of France, Japan, and the United States in Djibouti to request assistance from military forces stationed in Djibouti. The US Ambassador issues a disaster declaration, and US Africa Command grants US forces in Djibouti 72-hour “life and limb” authority to support the government of Djibouti. Similarly, the commanding officer of Camp Lemonnier contacts US Navy Region Europe, Africa, and Southwest Asia to request 72-hour “life and limb” authority, which is granted.

On the second day of the scenario, a 7.0-magnitude aftershock with its epicenter in the Gulf of Tadjoura causes extensive damage to Djibouti City’s Haramous District, including to the US Embassy located there. At the later phase of the scenario, the magnitude of the humanitarian disaster is becoming clear, with 1,000 people reported missing and hospitals reporting more

patients arriving with complex injuries than they have the capacity to treat. Furthermore, in preparation for their deployment to Djibouti, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs requests billeting for 750 relief workers at Camp Lemonnier.

ERIE scenario limitations

The game design purposefully focused on military-to-military cooperation with the government of Djibouti. Thus, the scenario covered only 48 hours after the earthquake to stay within the 72-hour “life and limb” authority for US military forces. The scenario did not include damage to Camp Lemonnier, the French military bases in Djibouti, or the Japan base to allow militaries to concentrate on responding to requests from the government of Djibouti.

In the aftermath of a natural disaster in which the US government is supporting international relief efforts, the US Agency for International Development (USAID) is the lead federal agency. In the ERIE scenario, the USAID Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance deploys a Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART) that could arrive in Djibouti 48–72 hours after the earthquake.² The DART would support international humanitarian assistance efforts under the auspices of the UN. In the scenario, however, the DART is en route to Djibouti, but their arrival is outside the timeframe of the discussion. In addition, a UN Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) team could assess the disaster and oversee international assistance.³ Like the DART, however, the UNDAC in the scenario is on its way to Djibouti, but it would arrive outside the timeframe of the discussion. Although the ERIE scenario design limited input from civilian organizations from outside of Djibouti, these entities would have the leading role in coordinating international and US efforts during an actual HA/DR operation in Djibouti.

ERIE structure

The ERIE discussion proceeded in three parts (assessment, coordination, and collaboration), during which participants planned their individual responses and coordinated with each other to address the challenges presented in the scenario. For a full description of the ERIE discussion structure and format, see Appendix B.

² U.S. Agency for International Development, Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance website, accessed Apr. 24, 2019, <https://www.usaid.gov/who-we-are/organization/bureaus/bureau-democracy-conflict-and-humanitarian-assistance/office-us>.

³ United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, UNDAC website, accessed Apr. 24, 2019, <https://www.unocha.org/our-work/coordination/un-disaster-assessment-and-coordination-undac>.

Part 1: Assessment

At the beginning of the ERIE discussion, the Djibouti Minister of Interior has triggered the government of Djibouti's Emergency Organization Plan (PLAN ORSEC), and the Djiboutian government has assembled its Crisis Response Center (CRC), as described in the plan.⁴ The Executive Secretariat for Risk and Disaster Management (ESRDM), which reports to the Ministry of the Interior (MOI), is responsible for the CRC. The ESRDM leads operations in the CRC as the relief operations coordinator. The CRC includes the following members:

- National Director of Civil Protection, who serves as the Director of Emergency Operations (DEO)
- Secretary General of the Ministry of Health, who functions as the Director of Medical Services (DSM)
- Prefect of the City of Djibouti
- Mayor of the City of Djibouti
- Director General of the National Police
- Chief of Staff of the Djiboutian National Gendarmerie
- Forces Armées Djiboutiennes (FAD) Chief of Defense Staff

Each of these individuals may send a representative to the CRC in their stead, since individual agencies will also have their own crisis centers that coordinate with the CRC. Figure 2 shows the PLAN ORSEC chain of command and CRC structure.

⁴ The CRC is also referred to in PLAN ORSEC as the Crisis Room, the Emergency Operations Center (EOC), and the Fixed Command Post. We will refer to the main government of Djibouti crisis operations center as the CRC throughout this paper.

Figure 2. Government of Djibouti CRC structure



Source: CNA.

The Djiboutian participants noted that in the first six hours after an earthquake or other large-scale disaster, the President would be unlikely to reach out to the international community. Rather, they expect to focus on assessing the damage and allocating national resources toward disaster response. To facilitate the discussion, we wrote into the scenario that the Djiboutian Ministry of Foreign Affairs had already contacted foreign governments to request assistance.

PLAN ORSEC is relatively new, and Djiboutian government officials outside the MOI are not universally familiar with it. Participants from different branches of the FAD, for instance, had not previously seen PLAN ORSEC. Thus, during Part 1, the Djiboutian participants familiarized themselves with PLAN ORSEC as they worked to respond to a natural disaster larger than any that has struck the country in recent memory. FAD participants asserted that each branch of the FAD should be represented in the CRC; PLAN ORSEC currently includes only the FAD Chief of Defense Staff as a representative of all the Djiboutian armed forces.

Prior to requests for assistance from the Djiboutian government, participants representing the foreign militaries stationed in Djibouti⁵ stood up crisis teams or centers, assessed damage to their bases, accounted for personnel, and began considering the safety and planning for the evacuation of their civilian citizens residing in Djibouti. The US Embassy reached out to the Djiboutian Ministry of Foreign Affairs before the CRC assessed its need for support. The other participants from international militaries also reached out to the Djiboutian government and military and liaised with US and French forces.

Djiboutian government participants stated that their first partner-nation contact would be with the French since they have a preexisting bilateral agreement with French forces for firefighting assistance. The French participant concurred, but stipulated that the French military would support Djiboutian firefighting efforts so long as French assets were not required on the French bases.

Most of the militaries based in Djibouti planned to send liaison officers (LNOs) to the CRC to coordinate relief efforts. The exceptions were the German and Spanish militaries, who both have too few personnel to send an LNO to the CRC. Rather, they would request that the French military represent their interests. The German, Italian, Japanese, and Spanish participants highlighted their need for authority from their capitals to participate in disaster relief operations in Djibouti. Although the scenario opened with these militaries having been authorized to participate in disaster relief operations, the timing of this authorization is important. Prior to receiving authorization, these militaries will not participate in disaster relief operations.

Part 2: Coordination

At the beginning of part 2, the CRC was buzzing with activity. Representatives from the FAD branches and National Gendarmerie presented assets that could support disaster relief and domestic security. The DEO and DMR were also in contact with operational command posts (OCPs) around Djibouti City, which oversaw relief and assistance operations and requested resources from the CRC. Figure 3 shows the Djiboutian team placing their relief assets on the ERIE map.

⁵ France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Spain, and the United States.

Figure 3. Government of Djibouti team placing their assets on the ERIE map of Djibouti City



Source: US Air Force photo by SSgt Franklin Ramos.

Because PLAN ORSEC is still in draft form, participants expressed differing viewpoints about how the OCPs will operate. According to the PLAN ORSEC draft, OCPs are located at each disaster zone, and they communicate with the CRC. Some participants argued that in a large-scale disaster, such as the earthquake scenario in ERIE, it would not be feasible to have individual OCPs at each of the many crisis points. Therefore, operation points of contact would be distributed among Djibouti City's hospitals, fire stations, and police stations. This difference in stance tended to fall along civilian and military lines in the government of Djibouti. This may reflect the difference in responsibilities between policymakers and security and emergency response personnel.

US, French, and Italian LNOs arrived at the CRC, as did a representative from the US Embassy and diplomats representing the other countries with military forces in Djibouti.⁶ Inside the

⁶ In the ERIE scenario, the deputy commander of German forces in Djibouti reported to the CRC. However, he noted that in a real crisis, his government would be represented by German embassy staff. Other international military representatives agreed that this would be the case for their countries, as well. In a real crisis, only French and US forces—and perhaps the Italians—would have LNOs in the CRC. French and US diplomats would also be present in the CRC.

CRC, the Djiboutians coordinated field operations over emergency radios and updated the ERIE map with fires, blocked and damaged roads, and other disaster information. The LNOs and foreign diplomats requested that all crisis teams and operations centers use the same maps and agree on common emergency radio frequencies. These two operational procedures were implemented to develop a common operational picture (COP) that could be shared among all first responders. Figure 4 shows LNOs from international militaries stationed in Djibouti conferring on the support they will provide to the government of Djibouti.

Figure 4. Multinational military representatives confer during ERIE



Source: US Air force photo by SSgt Franklin Ramos.

As discussed during part 1, the government of Djibouti requested assistance from French forces in fighting fires throughout the capital. Because French forces have only one fire brigade, the French LNO asked the CRC to prioritize where it was most needed. The French government declared an evacuation of its citizens and non-essential personnel from Djibouti and assigned French forces to assist. French forces prepared their bases as marshalling areas for French citizens being evacuated on the FS *Mistral*, which—in the scenario—was operating in the Red Sea at the time of the earthquake. Although the non-combatant evacuation operation (NEO) was the French forces' top priority, they could also provide some infantry for security management and debris removal from streets, if the government of Djibouti requested this. Rounding out their military support to the government of Djibouti, French forces made available their base

hospital and off-base ambulance capabilities upon request. The German military offered assistance at the French military hospital with role 1 care⁷.

Like the French military, the Italian forces focused on completing a national tasking they received from their embassy in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, specifically to make contact with Italian citizens working in Djibouti who had not checked in with their company after the earthquake. The Italians also had a medical team and a 4x4 ambulance that could assist the government of Djibouti.

The Japanese forces also received tasking from their embassy to assist in the rescue of Japanese company employees trapped in a collapsed apartment block in Djibouti City. This tasking consumed the majority of their forces, but they also had a search and rescue (SAR) squadron that they made available to the government of Djibouti. Japanese forces were the first to request that the CRC assign them a specific area of responsibility (AOR).

US forces were in a position to help the Djiboutians immediately, while other militaries were tasked with accounting for and evacuating their citizens. The US priorities included first reopening Djibouti–Ambouli International Airport, followed by the resumption of operations at the Port of Djibouti. These transportation hubs would be critical for enabling the flow of international humanitarian assistance into Djibouti.

With the airport control tower downed and the terminal building damaged, air operations and especially air traffic control (ATC) was a concern for the Djiboutian government. The government of Djibouti requested joint ATC management by the United States (which maintains a mobile ATC system) and France. If the Djibouti–Ambouli International Airport is inoperable, the only nearby locations where aircraft could land are Chabelley Airfield (a French airfield outside of Djibouti City) and a road bed in the Grand Bara Desert (two hours outside of Djibouti City). Joint management of ATC is a complex process that requires reaching an agreement of priorities for aircraft landings.

During part 2 of ERIE, a survey of the runways at Djibouti–Ambouli International Airport discovered cracks resulting from the earthquake that required repair prior to the resumption of air operations there. The government of Djibouti requested access to Chabelley Airfield, which is operated by the French military but used by US forces, for incoming humanitarian assistance.⁸ US participants agreed that they would need to explore that option, but they could

⁷ Role 1 medical support is that which is integral or allocated to a small unit, and will include the capabilities for providing first aid, immediate lifesaving measures, and triage. *NATO Logistics Handbook: chapter 16: Medical Support*, October 1997, accessed 29 May 2019, <https://www.nato.int/docu/logi-en/1997/lo-1610.htm>.

⁸ Trevithick, Joseph, "This Small Airstrip is the Future of America's Way of War," *Reuters*, Jan. 5, 2016, accessed Mar. 13, 2019, <http://blogs.reuters.com/great-debate/2016/01/05/this-small-airstrip-is-the-future-of-americas-way-of-war>.

determine rather quickly what it would take to convert Chabelley to be useful for this kind of operation. For example, security measures at the base would have to be adapted to allow access to government of Djibouti personnel. The French military offered the use of a long dirt road in the Grand Bara Desert, which is a two-hour drive from Djibouti City. As shown in Figure 5, the Grand Bara road is capable of accommodating C-130s. Since Grand Bara is not an airfield, only a limited number of flights could land there before it would need to be abandoned due to the inevitable deterioration of the road. In addition, operations at Grand Bara would require ATC capabilities and are dependent on favorable weather conditions. To the latter point, rainy conditions would make the Grand Bara road unsafe for air operations.

Figure 5. C-130 landing on the road in the Grand Bara desert



Source: US Air Force Photo by SSgt. Kevin Linuma.

Part 3: Collaboration

Part 3 of ERIE opened with a large-magnitude aftershock that worsened the damage to Djibouti City from the initial disaster. The international militaries requested that the CRC specifically assign geographic AORs to them. The government of Djibouti participants outlined specific AORs for international military forces to respond to the disaster, based on the resources they could each offer. The international forces would report to the Djiboutian field rescue operations commanders responsible for the area in which they are operating. Figure 6 shows the AORs assigned to international military forces operating in Djibouti City during the ERIE discussion.

Figure 6. AORs for international military forces responding to the earthquake in Djibouti City



Source: CNA.

The CRC tasked the US forces to assist with debris clearance and security in the Haramous District, where the US Embassy is located, and south to Camp Lemonnier. As shown in Figure 6, this sector includes Djibouti–Ambouli International Airport. The CRC assigned Japanese SAR assets to the partially collapsed El Hadj Hassan Gouled Aptidon Stadium. European militaries were assigned the most populated area, stretching from the French naval base to the financial center of Djibouti City. The CRC also requested that French military forces provide security and debris removal in the district around the stadium. The foreign military forces noted that their in-country resources were limited and that the bulk of their assets that could conduct the requested functions were on the way to Djibouti in the ERIE scenario. Given the requirement to prepare for incoming international disaster relief personnel and supplies, US forces

developed a plan to request a construction battalion (Seabee) team to deploy from Naval Station Rota, Spain, to repair the cracks in the runway at Djibouti–Ambouli International Airport. The Seabees could be deployed to Djibouti within 48–72 hours of a request and repair the runway in 24 hours, depending on the severity of the cracks.

For their part, Djiboutian participants agreed that the CRC would be responsible for issuing immediate requests to foreign military forces stationed in Djibouti; however, longer-term requests for international aid would be made through the President and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs directly to international organizations and donor countries. ERIE concluded with foreign military participants supporting government of Djibouti efforts to alleviate the suffering caused by the earthquake and aftershock.

ERIE Insights and Recommendations

PLAN ORSEC refinements

When the government of Djibouti's PLAN ORSEC is triggered, it assigns the Executive Secretariat for Risk and Disaster Management as the permanent body responsible for coordinating relief operations.⁹ PLAN ORSEC, however, is being finalized and has not been tested during a real-world emergency. The Djiboutian participants in ERIE used PLAN ORSEC to organize their response to a much larger natural disaster than the country has experienced in recent decades.

Participants noted areas in which PLAN ORSEC did not specify how their government would organize, lead, and manage the response to the disaster outlined in the ERIE scenario. In particular, PLAN ORSEC does not specify the process for requesting assistance from foreign military forces stationed in Djibouti. Additionally, not all Djiboutian government officials agreed that PLAN ORSEC accurately describes their responsibilities during the response to a natural disaster. The government of Djibouti will likely address these differences as it finalizes PLAN ORSEC and uses the plan in the aftermath of future disasters.

- **PLAN ORSEC does not specify the process for requesting assistance from foreign military forces stationed in Djibouti.** PLAN ORSEC discusses international assistance only if the state of crisis extends beyond one week, or other fixed or variable deadlines determined by the Minister of the Interior, in consultation with the Prime Minister.¹⁰ In the ERIE scenario, the President of Djibouti had already reached out to the UN Secretary General to request assistance before the exercise began. He also requested that the Foreign Minister contact the embassies of the countries with military forces stationed in Djibouti to request assistance within a few hours after the disaster. Although these two scenario elements allowed the ERIE discussion to proceed, the underlying issue remains that foreign military forces assigned to Djibouti may have capabilities they can bring to bear and may be able to make positive contributions in the immediate aftermath of a natural disaster. Determining the process for engaging foreign military forces stationed in Djibouti during an emergency would be a useful addition to PLAN ORSEC.

⁹ Republic of Djibouti, Ministry of the Interior, *Emergency Organization Plan*, Draft 2013, p. 4.

¹⁰ Republic of Djibouti, Ministry of the Interior, *Emergency Organization Plan*, Draft 2013, p. 17.

- **ERIE showed that the process for requesting assistance from foreign military forces stationed in Djibouti will require approval from the highest levels of the government of Djibouti.** Djiboutian participants agreed that the formal request for foreign military assistance in the aftermath of a crisis would have two requirements:
 1. The government of Djibouti requests international assistance when the Executive Secretariat for Risk and Disaster Management identifies a gap in their capability or capacity. The Executive Secretariat provides the Interior Minister with an inventory of these short- and medium-term needs.¹¹
 2. The Interior Minister makes a request to the President of Djibouti for foreign military assistance to fill the identified gaps. In particular, the requirement for high-level approvals has the potential to delay requests from the government of Djibouti to foreign military forces in the immediate aftermath of a major disaster.
- **Requests for foreign military assistance in the immediate aftermath of a natural disaster could potentially come directly to LNOs in the CRC or through other non-traditional channels.** The Interior Ministry will coordinate government of Djibouti actions through the CRC and request that LNOs from the foreign militaries stationed in Djibouti be assigned to it. With LNOs in the CRC, representatives from government of Djibouti ministries and agencies may make direct requests for assistance to LNOs from foreign military forces. Because such requests circumvent the official approval process outlined above, both foreign military forces and their respective governments should decide ahead of time how to respond to them. For example, foreign military forces and their respective governments should clearly define CRC LNO responsibilities prior to an emergency, including determining whether an officer will be assigned as an LNO solely for the duration of the emergency or permanently as an LNO to the government of Djibouti.

Recommendations to support PLAN ORSEC development

- **As the government of Djibouti refines PLAN ORSEC, we recommend that foreign military representatives participate in the exercises and meetings that contribute to this process.** At the beginning of the ERIE discussion, the government of Djibouti team invited the participating foreign military forces to a disaster relief workshop. Later in the discussion, the government of Djibouti team stated that they will be holding simulations in the future to refine their emergency procedures. Both events—and possibly others—offer an opportunity to learn how PLAN ORSEC will be implemented in practice during future emergency operations. This will increase

¹¹ Republic of Djibouti, Ministry of the Interior, *Emergency Organization Plan*, Draft 2013, p. 17.

foreign militaries' understanding of government of Djibouti emergency operations so that representatives know what to expect during an actual emergency. Participation by US officials and foreign military representatives in such events can also help to build and solidify relationships with their Djiboutian counterparts.

- **PLAN ORSEC outlines the facilities from which the government of Djibouti will manage its response to emergencies; when possible, we recommend that foreign military representatives visit these facilities.** Site visits will increase foreign militaries' understanding of the capabilities and limitations of these facilities and their relationship to one another. Improving foreign militaries' understanding of government of Djibouti facilities can help them identify new areas of collaboration and coordination during future disasters.

Foreign military support to the government of Djibouti

During the ERIE discussion, the Djiboutian participants not only described their emergency operations procedures, but they also expressed preferences for how they would like to access support from foreign military forces in the aftermath of a disaster. These expressed preferences are not currently included in PLAN ORSEC, yet they may present an opportunity for emergency response collaboration between foreign military forces stationed in Djibouti and the government of Djibouti.

- **Djiboutian participants would like to have bilateral agreements with foreign military forces for specific capabilities.** The example they pointed to as a model is a bilateral firefighting agreement with the French military. Since this agreement is in place and well understood by both parties, Djiboutian participants stated that they could quickly request and receive firefighting support from the French military. Given the high-level approvals that would be necessary to request support from foreign military forces, as described previously, an existing agreement could expedite requests from the government of Djibouti to foreign forces stationed in Djibouti during the response to an emergency. In addition, it would create predictability for foreign militaries. Exploring the possibility of bilateral agreements focused on disaster relief in specific areas (such as airfield operations, medical care, and emergency communications) could provide an opportunity for closer coordination and partnership with the government of Djibouti.
- **The Djiboutian participants discussed dividing a disaster area into sectors, which PLAN ORSEC also envisions.** During the ERIE discussion, the Djiboutian participants divided Djibouti City into sectors and requested assistance from foreign

military forces in those sectors. Similarly, PLAN ORSEC envisions situations that require multiple OCPs, especially in large-scale disasters.¹² Understanding how the government of Djibouti may choose to create sectors in the aftermath of a disaster can prepare foreign forces to best support Djiboutian efforts to respond to a disaster event. Doing so could allow potential responders to identify damage-prone areas and safe zones before a disaster occurs to assist in the organization of foreign military forces when a disaster does strike. On the other hand, having an OCP in each sector could increase the LNO requirements for foreign military forces.

- **Understanding foreign militaries' deployment plans for their LNOs in the event of a disaster could help conserve LNO resources.** During the ERIE discussion, some multinational military participants identified where they may be assigned in the aftermath of a disaster. Specifically:
 - The French military may assign LNOs to both the CRC and to the Djiboutian National Gendarmerie.
 - The Italian military may assign LNOs to both the CRC and to the FAD.

Other foreign militaries, such as the German military, have so few personnel in Djibouti that they do not plan to assign anyone to the CRC. Rather, they plan to ask the French military to represent their interests. Understanding partner militaries' disaster plans prior to a real-world incident can save time and facilitate the exchange of critical information when organizing a disaster response.

- **Foreign military LNO positions in the CRC require specialized skills, training, and equipment.** Foreign military LNOs assigned to the CRC must adapt to government of Djibouti emergency operations as they occur. Depending on the severity of a disaster, the Djiboutian emergency management apparatus may be forced to adapt in real time as relief operations unfold. Therefore, foreign military LNOs must adapt to changes as they occur by being properly equipped to maintain contact with their respective embassies and bases and to effectively communicate changes in Djiboutian emergency response operations. Additionally, personnel assigned to the LNO positions must be fluent in French. During ERIE, much of the communication occurred within national teams and between the event coordinators and the participants. There was little effective communication between the multinational teams and the Djiboutian team, largely due to the language barrier. During actual emergency operations, CRC business will be conducted in French. Thus, to participate fully in the exchange of information at

¹² See, for example, Section 2.1, *Coordination: Crisis Room*, and Section 3.2, *Ordinary Crisis to "Sufficient Means,"* Republic of Djibouti, Ministry of the Interior, *Emergency Organization Plan*, Draft 2013.

the CRC and to provide assistance, LNOs assigned to the EOC must be able to conduct business in French.

Recommendations to improve understanding of the government of Djibouti's HA/DR procedures

- **We recommend that foreign military forces stationed in Djibouti engage with the government of Djibouti officials responsible for emergency management to improve understanding of Djiboutian principles and processes for dividing a disaster area into sectors.** During the ERIE discussion, government of Djibouti participants divided Djibouti City into sectors for coordinating relief efforts. PLAN ORSEC similarly discusses dividing the area affected by a large-scale disaster into sectors.¹³ During the hot wash, government of Djibouti participants agreed that assigning areas of responsibility will be an important part of their planning process. Foreign military forces must therefore remain engaged with their counterparts to understand how the government of Djibouti will assign sectors after a natural disaster strikes and to coordinate with the officials who are likely to be assigned responsibility for each sector.
- **We recommend that foreign military forces engage with their Djiboutian counterparts to understand Djibouti's disaster relief battle rhythm.** During the ERIE discussion, government of Djibouti participants said that their CRC will run 24 hours a day, 7 days per week during disaster relief operations. Gaining a more detailed understanding of the government of Djibouti's relief operation battle rhythm (i.e., the timing and sequencing of specific response-coordination activities) will help foreign military forces more efficiently and effectively integrate their resources in the aftermath of a disaster. Specifically, foreign military forces should seek to understand the frequency and location of key meetings, as well as how decisions are made within the CRC.
- **We recommend that the US and other militaries stationed in Djibouti request information on the composition of the National Disaster Committee that the government of Djibouti is in the process of establishing, including its assigned missions and scope of authorities.** At the end of the ERIE discussion, government of Djibouti representatives told participants that they are creating a national disaster committee. Developing relationships between members of the committee and the foreign military personnel and diplomats who would be responsible for coordinating

¹³ See, for example, Section 2.2 "Coordination of Field Operations" and Section 3.5 "Extension of the ORSEC Plan to the Regions," Republic of Djibouti, Ministry of the Interior, *Emergency Organization Plan*, Draft 2013.

relief operations in the aftermath of a natural disaster will lay the groundwork for effective HA/DR operations, especially in the initial stages of a response.

Recommendations to prepare internally for HA/DR operations

- **We recommend that military forces stationed in Djibouti train and equip their identified LNOs to work at the government of Djibouti CRC.** The ERIE discussion revealed that the government of Djibouti plans to invite LNOs from foreign militaries stationed in Djibouti to work in their EOC. LNOs will keep their parent commands informed of the developing situation and convey requests from the government of Djibouti. To prepare for this role, we recommend that LNOs have regular contacts with their government of Djibouti counterparts and have the opportunity to undergo any available national HA/DR-specific training.
- **We recommend that foreign military forces stationed in Djibouti determine whether to make specific bilateral agreements on HA/DR with the government of Djibouti.** During the ERIE discussion, government of Djibouti participants stated that they would like HA/DR-specific bilateral agreements with military forces stationed in the country. They cited the firefighting agreement that they have with French forces as the model for bilateral agreements. Djiboutian participants explained that bilateral agreements in specific support areas will reduce the time necessary to establish cooperation during an emergency situation. The French military participant in ERIE noted that they would provide firefighting support to the government of Djibouti, assuming that it would not be needed on a French base. This example suggests that bilateral agreements could be structured in a way that prioritizes assets first for national tasking and then for HA/DR operations in support of the government of Djibouti. We recommend that militaries operating in Djibouti determine whether bilateral agreements with the government of Djibouti for HA/DR support are in their national interest, and, if so, in which areas.

Foreign military forces' humanitarian response capabilities

Military forces' availability and capabilities make them natural first responders who can save lives and assist the injured when a natural disaster strikes. The ERIE discussion confirmed this; however, it also highlighted foreign military forces' limitations and differences. The militaries stationed in Djibouti have different footprints based on their respective missions. For example, some of the French forces assigned to Djibouti are accompanied by their families, so they must consider the safety and well-being of civilian family members when an emergency occurs.

Other military forces, such as those of Italy and Germany, have small footprints focused on counter-piracy operations in the Gulf of Aden. Thus, further discussions will be necessary to plan for the capabilities that will be most in demand during potential future emergencies.

- **Djiboutian participants in ERIE were unfamiliar with the capabilities of foreign military forces stationed in Djibouti.** Specifically, the Djiboutians requested SAR assets—including search dogs, water decontamination equipment, and medical supplies—from foreign military participants. However, most of these are civilian capabilities that were en route to Djibouti in the ERIE scenario. Although foreign militaries stationed in Djibouti do have medical capabilities that could be used in the aftermath of a natural disaster, these capabilities are focused on care of their own personnel. They also do not have the mix of specialized medical personnel necessary to treat the complex medical conditions likely to present in the aftermath of a natural disaster.
- **Some international military forces stationed in Djibouti have limited capability to provide assistance during humanitarian relief operations.** The major exceptions are the US and French forces in Djibouti. However, the French forces are likely to be tasked with supporting a non-combatant evacuation of French civilians from Djibouti after a disaster occurs. This tasking could consume many of their forces. During ERIE, some partner militaries could provide only limited support because of their capacity and capability in Djibouti and their national policies on the use of military force. This is because many of the international military forces assigned to Djibouti are there to conduct counter-piracy missions. The equipment and personnel expertise necessary for counter-piracy operations are not all directly applicable to HA/DR operations. Moreover, the national policies of some international military forces—notably Germany, Italy and Japan—limit the use of their forces outside of their respective countries.

Recommendations for joint training

- **We recommend that government of Djibouti officials and foreign military forces engage in more HA/DR information exchanges to prepare for natural disasters in Djibouti.** Future discussions like ERIE would improve the government of Djibouti's understanding of the specific foreign military assets in Djibouti that could contribute to response operations following a natural disaster. The ERIE discussion also laid the groundwork for cooperation and collaboration between the government of Djibouti and the foreign militaries stationed in Djibouti. It revealed many areas for fruitful discussion to prepare for future natural disasters. In particular, specialized HA/DR topics—such as communication protocols, public messaging, and air operations in the aftermath of a natural disaster—are all areas that merit further, more detailed

discussion. We also recommend that future HA/DR information exchanges include invitations to diplomats from countries with military forces stationed in Djibouti. The ERIE discussion included both the US Embassy Mission Disaster Relief Officer and the Regional Security Officer, who added realism to the discussion since they would certainly be crucial participants in US support to the government of Djibouti following a disaster but prior to the arrival of the USAID DART. Participation in future information exchanges by diplomats of the countries with forces stationed in Djibouti would provide participants with a greater understanding of the authorities that their respective governments would likely grant to their military forces to support government of Djibouti disaster response operations.

- **We recommend that foreign nations with a military presence in Djibouti provide urban SAR training to government of Djibouti first responders.** This training could either be conducted on a bilateral basis or using a collaborative, multinational training model. During the ERIE hot wash, government of Djibouti participants requested SAR training. A large-scale natural disaster of any type that strikes Djibouti City is likely to require extensive SAR operations. The US and other participating militaries have specialized SAR capabilities that could prepare Djiboutian first responders to conduct SAR in the aftermath of a natural disaster. In addition to military assets, many of the countries participating in ERIE have urban SAR units that may be able to train and provide technical assistance to government of Djibouti first responders.

Air operations contingency plans

In the aftermath of a natural disaster, most critical relief supplies usually arrive by air, but Djibouti has a limited number of airfields. Moreover, few airfields in neighboring Somalia and Eritrea are easily accessible to Djibouti. In the ERIE scenario, Djibouti–Ambouli International Airport in Djibouti City suffered extensive damage, which presented participants with a difficult problem. In addition to civilian air traffic, Djibouti–Ambouli International Airport also supports the flight operations of foreign militaries stationed in Djibouti. Thus, damage to the airport limits both civilian and military flight operations. The Djiboutian participants in ERIE stated that Djibouti–Ambouli International Airport has an emergency plan, and they agreed to share it with US participants. In addition, a memorandum of understanding covers use of the Djibouti–Ambouli International Airport and includes the foreign military forces that use the airport. Neither document, however, covers airport operations specific to natural disasters. Participants in the ERIE discussion identified several other issues related to air operations that need to be addressed for effective disaster relief efforts.

- **Runway repair.** In the ERIE scenario, participants discovered cracks in the runway at Djibouti–Ambouli International Airport that would need to be repaired. US forces,

however, do not have the equipment at Camp Lemonnier to perform runway repairs. However, deployable Seabees in Rota, Spain, have the personnel and equipment to repair runways. Upon arrival, they can repair the runway within 24 hours, depending on the damage to it.

- **Backup air traffic control.** In the ERIE scenario, the earthquake destroyed the ATC tower. Djiboutian participants requested support from the US and French militaries to reestablish ATC, in conjunction with remaining Djiboutian ATC personnel and equipment. Although this is likely a workable solution, given the personnel and equipment present in Djibouti, it will need to be planned and exercised.
- **Rotary-wing operations.** Djiboutian participants requested that foreign military forces operate their rotary-wing aircraft from Djibouti–Ambouli International Airport to conduct surveillance of earthquake damage prior to any runway repair. The earthquake damage described in the scenario would allow rotary-wing aircraft to continue operating out of Djibouti–Ambouli International Airport. Both French and Japanese military forces have rotary-wing aircraft they can use to provide surveillance of disaster areas. Although both countries are willing to provide this capability, the Djiboutian government would need to specifically request it from Japan. Djibouti and the foreign military forces stationed in the country should consider planning and exercising coordinated rotary-wing surveillance operations from Djibouti–Ambouli International Airport to prepare for future emergencies.
- **Alternative airfields.** The ERIE scenario did not include damage to other airfields in Djibouti, and participants chose to open intact airfields to relief operations. ERIE participants used Chabelley Airfield, which is approximately 12 kilometers from Camp Lemonnier, and the Grand Bara road, which can serve as a temporary airfield and is approximately 85 kilometers southwest of Camp Lemonnier. Djiboutian participants requested an agreement in advance of an emergency so that they could access Chabelley Airfield when the need arises. Chabelley Airfield is operated by the French military and is used by US forces. US participants commented that they would need to change security procedures there to allow access by Djiboutian relief personnel. Furthermore, US participants suggested that allocation of landing slots for aircraft other than US military aircraft could be limited since the US had planned to use Chabelley for military flights. Chabelley would also require ATC, which it could perform using a mobile capability on a high-mobility multipurpose wheeled vehicle (HMMWV). This ATC capability can also support Djibouti–Ambouli International Airport, if necessary. The Grand Bara road is a 40-km road that could be used as an expeditionary airfield. Its composition, however, would allow only a small number of aircraft to land before it would become compromised. In addition, since the Grand Bara road is compacted soil, it cannot be used during rainy weather. Since it is 40 km long, multiple

aircraft could use it before it would have to be abandoned. Like Chabelley, the Grand Bara road would require an ATC capability since it is not an operational airfield.

Recommendations to plan for contingency air operations

- **We recommend that US and other foreign military forces stationed in Djibouti discuss airspace control during HA/DR operations with government of Djibouti aviation authorities.** In the immediate aftermath of a disaster, the authority to control airspace is tantamount to determining which aid gets in and which does not, making it a sensitive issue. Moreover, once a disaster strikes, the requirements for aviation in the airspace not only increase but also change. For example, the requirement for rotary-wing sorties performing disaster surveillance increases substantially. During the ERIE discussion, government of Djibouti participants stated that given the damage to Djibouti-Ambouli International Airport, they would request support from US and French forces for controlling their airspace. Exploring how this division of labor may unfold in the aftermath of a future natural disaster will be important to align expectations and prepare assets to perform this mission effectively. Even if a formal emergency airspace control agreement is not possible at this time, laying out each country's expectations for and concerns about airspace control will better prepare each country to support the arrival of humanitarian aid in the aftermath of a natural disaster.
- **We recommend that US officials work with government of Djibouti aviation authorities to develop contingency plans addressing compromised ATC at Djibouti-Ambouli International Airport following a natural disaster.** The ERIE discussion showed that the government of Djibouti and the other users of Djibouti-Ambouli International Airport have not developed an alternative plan for ATC. During the ERIE discussion, government of Djibouti participants stated that they would request joint ATC using US, French, and Djiboutian controllers. We recommend that the government of Djibouti and representatives from foreign militaries explore this arrangement in greater depth and dialogue about procedures likely to be most effective in the aftermath of a natural disaster. These discussions should include procedures for shared US, French, and Djiboutian ATC and specific criteria for the transition from multinational ATC back to Djiboutian civilian ATC.
- **We recommend that the US, French forces, and the government of Djibouti coordinate the activation of alternative airfields to support HA/DR operations.** During the ERIE discussion, US participants quickly identified alternative airfields to support HA/DR operations. However, activating alternative airfields introduces issues such as prioritization of aircraft, access to the airfield, and the volume of air traffic that an airfield can support. Given these concerns, we recommend that US and French military officials coordinate emergency operations at Chabelley Airfield. We also

recommend that the US coordinate air operations at both Chabelley Airfield and on the Grand Bara road with the government of Djibouti to understand Djiboutian requirements in the context of a larger HA/DR operation. We also recommend exercising air operations on the Grand Bara road, when conditions permit, to prepare for its use following an emergency.

Communications planning

Effective communications between government of Djibouti authorities and the users of Djiboutian infrastructure, including the foreign military forces operating in Djibouti, will be critical when a natural disaster strikes. Although conversations during ERIE addressed communications in general, participants did not discuss detailed emergency communications protocols.

- **Foreign military forces and the government of Djibouti have not developed emergency communications protocols.** During the ERIE discussion, it was clear that emergency communications is an area that the government of Djibouti and foreign military forces stationed in Djibouti have not yet developed. Foreign militaries' communications capabilities focus on communications with their national headquarters, for which they typically rely on satellite phones. For local communications, some foreign militaries will rely on cellular phones, which could be compromised in the aftermath of a natural disaster. Other foreign militaries, including the US, plan to use emergency radios to communicate. Foreign military participants in ERIE indicated that they would like to communicate with the Djiboutians, but they were not sure that their equipment would be compatible with Djiboutian equipment. They also were not sure which radio frequency the Djiboutians would be operating on in the aftermath of a natural disaster. Djiboutian participants indicated that they would use emergency radios; however, they also asked foreign military participants whether they would be able to provide them with satellite phones. This may indicate that the Djiboutian government is considering changes to their existing emergency communication capabilities.
- **Foreign military forces identified developing and maintaining situational awareness (SA) as a priority in the aftermath of a natural disaster.** The US Civil Affairs (CA) battalion stationed in Djibouti has personnel and equipment capable of providing SA following a disaster. Specifically, the CA battalion can use unmanned aerial vehicles to survey damaged areas. Doing so would support US military response efforts in the short term by developing a disaster COP. In the longer term, the CA battalion can provide this COP to representatives from the UN and USAID when they arrive. However, US participants in ERIE expressed concern that the maps they use may

not be the same as the maps the government of Djibouti would use in their disaster response operations, which could compromise SA and lead to inefficient allocations of limited resources. Djiboutian participants requested the same emergency equipment as foreign military forces, such as communications equipment and displays for the establishment and maintenance of a COP.

Recommendations to plan for emergency communications

- **We recommend that foreign military forces stationed in Djibouti and the government of Djibouti work together to develop communications plans to exchange information following a disaster.** Initiating HA/DR support will require the use of established communications protocols between the government of Djibouti and foreign military forces that are sufficiently robust to operate following a large-scale disaster. However, communications are likely to present a major challenge because government of Djibouti participants stated that their crisis centers are neither connected to one another nor to foreign military forces' Joint Operations Centers (JOCs).¹⁴ Djiboutian participants noted that they would like to have satellite phones for their use. Although foreign military forces have satellite phones, they use them to communicate with their capitals, and they do not have extras to share. Providing satellite phones to the government of Djibouti is one way of establishing and ensuring communications capability during future disaster situations. If this is not possible, exploring alternative methods for connecting Djiboutian crisis centers to one another and to foreign military forces' JOCs is another way to facilitate communications in the event of a disaster.
- **The US and Djiboutian governments should determine and communicate which response decisions must be pre-planned and which can be made ad hoc.** Before a disaster happens, the US and its partner militaries, in consultation with Djiboutian authorities, should determine which decisions require pre-planned responses and which can be made once a disaster has occurred. For example, to facilitate communication during a crisis, Djiboutian government and multinational military forces must pre-determine the radio frequencies they will use. These decisions would be valuable starting points for coordinating disaster preparedness efforts.
- **We recommend that foreign military forces stationed in Djibouti and the government of Djibouti explore methods to gain shared situational awareness following a disaster.** Shared situational awareness among government of Djibouti officials and participating foreign militaries can improve the efficiency of disaster relief

¹⁴ Djiboutian officials estimated that they would have four to five crisis centers operating in a scenario like the one used to frame the ERIE discussion.

operations. During the ERIE discussion, a representative from the CJTF-HOA CA battalion stated that in the aftermath of a large-scale natural disaster, they would build a COP through direct, on-the-ground observation of the damaged area. Likewise, the CJTF-HOA JOC will presumably use a computerized COP that incorporates information from the CA battalion to build situational awareness. We recommend that CJTF-HOA explore the available methods for building and disseminating a COP that they can share with the government of Djibouti and foreign militaries and update dynamically. For example, CJTF-HOA and the government of Djibouti could develop a plan that calls for dissemination of the COP that the CA battalion plans to build.

- **We recommend that CJTF-HOA provide government of Djibouti disaster response officials with maps that have the level of detail necessary for common situational awareness during disaster relief operations.** During the ERIE discussion, participants representing foreign militaries expressed concern that the maps the government of Djibouti uses to coordinate relief operations may be different from their own, which could lead to reduced situational awareness when responding to a natural disaster. US participants suggested that it would be possible to provide the government of Djibouti with maps appropriate for disaster response operations from American sources. If CJTF-HOA does provide maps to the government of Djibouti for use in their CRC and fixed command posts during disaster relief operations, we recommend that US forces observe HA/DR training events to understand how the Djiboutians plan and conduct operations using these maps.

Strategic messaging

Messaging through traditional and social media outlets is critical in establishing and maintaining local and international support for disaster relief operations. This support is instrumental in raising funds for disaster-affected areas and in ensuring that relief operations, which can be complicated and sensitive, work effectively. During relief operations, priorities sometimes dictate that limited assets be directed away from areas where they are needed. A coordinated public affairs plan can assist commanders in delivering this news in a way that is clear and maintains local and international support for the operation. The ERIE scenario included the early arrival of representatives from international media outlets, which gave participants the opportunity to develop a strategic message.

- **ERIE participants were not uniformly prepared to communicate with international media representatives about their disaster response operations.** Natural disasters and military forces' response operations quickly draw the international media spotlight. During ERIE, Djiboutian government officials had plans to communicate with the Djiboutian people about where to get assistance and how to

report problems. Their plans to communicate about their relief operation to members of the international media were less developed. Similarly, some of the participating militaries were unprepared to communicate with media outlets from their own countries. Developing a narrative that clearly communicates the objectives of disaster relief operations, along with breaking developments, is critical to establishing and maintaining local and international support for the operation and the forces conducting it.

- **Prepared procedures for coordinating public affairs operations would assist multinational military forces in explaining their role in disaster operations to international media organizations.** Specifically, by pre-crafting and coordinating holding statements before a disaster strikes, military forces can prepare for the presence of international media representatives before they arrive. During the ERIE discussion, the US Public Affairs Officer (PAO) issued a holding statement that included a statement of support to the government of Djibouti. Later in the discussion, Djiboutian participants requested assistance with the international media from the foreign military participants.

Recommendations to prepare strategic messaging

- **We recommend that US officials assist government of Djibouti public affairs officials with preparing strategic messaging for disaster relief operations.** The government of Djibouti has not experienced the significant international media attention that accompanies large-scale international disaster relief operations. During the hot wash of the ERIE discussion, government of Djibouti participants requested support from military PAOs and communications equipment to facilitate their interactions with the international media. Given the extensive US experience with foreign humanitarian assistance operations, US PAOs could teach their Djiboutian counterparts many best practices and lessons learned about effective strategic messaging during a crisis. Support from US civilian and military officials to the government of Djibouti as they develop the public affairs component of PLAN ORSEC—such as through subject matter expert exchanges—will better prepare Djiboutian officials for the strategic messaging requirements of a large-scale disaster response operation. Such public affairs assistance should include plans to communicate adverse information, such as when relief assets are insufficient or when they need to be reallocated to a higher priority.
- **We recommend that foreign military forces stationed in Djibouti coordinate their messaging to the international media about their support to disaster relief operations with one another.** Even though actions that individual militaries take may vary significantly, their external messaging can reflect common themes, such as

support to the people of Djibouti and the determination of their national governments to alleviate human suffering using the means at their disposal. These themes would convey a clear narrative that emphasizes the commonalities in military disaster relief operations, limits any misunderstanding of their operations, and disseminates information that could save lives. In the longer term, if militaries need to prioritize their force allocations away from specific missions, a well-crafted message would explain the reasoning behind difficult decisions.

The ERIE discussion gave government of Djibouti officials responsible for emergency operations and foreign military forces stationed in Djibouti the opportunity to share information on their capabilities, capacities, and procedures for responding to a natural disaster. To build on the success of ERIE, we recommend that participants continue to work collaboratively on disaster response planning to use government of Djibouti and foreign military capabilities to their best effect when a large-scale disaster strikes.

Appendix A: List of ERIE Participants

Djibouti

Center for the Study and Research of Djibouti

Director of Americas, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Djibouti Armed Forces

Djibouti Department of Communication

Djibouti Health Ministry

Djiboutian National Gendarmerie

Djibouti Red Crescent

Executive Secretary for Risk and Disaster Management, Ministry of the Interior

Mayor, City of Djibouti

Prefect of Djibouti

France

Liaison Officer (LNO) to Combined Joint Task Force–Horn of Africa (CJTF-HOA)

Germany

Deputy Commander, German Detachment Operation Atalanta

Medical Officer, German Detachment Operation Atalanta

Italy

J-4 Italian Detachment Operation Atalanta

LNO to CJTF-HOA

Japan

Communications Officer, Japan Base

Intelligence Officer, Japan Base

LNO to CJTF-HOA

Medical Officer, Japan Base

Operations Officer, Japan Base

Spain

LNO to CJTF-HOA

United Nations

International Organization for Migration

United States

Camp Lemonnier, Air Operations

Camp Lemonnier, Civil Affairs

Camp Lemonnier, Emergency Management

Camp Lemonnier, Expeditionary Medical Facility

Camp Lemonnier, Fire Department

Camp Lemonnier, General Counsel

Camp Lemonnier, N4

Camp Lemonnier, N5

Camp Lemonnier, Security

CJTF-HOA, J2

CJTF-HOA, J3

CJTF-HOA J4

CJTF-HOA, J5

CJTF-HOA, J7

CJTF-HOA Public Affairs

CJTF-HOA Security Force Battalion

CJTF-HOA Staff Judge Advocate

US Embassy Djibouti Kentucky National Guard State Partnership Program

US Embassy Djibouti Mission Disaster Relief Officer

US Embassy Djibouti Regional Security Officer

Appendix B: ERIE Design

Combined Joint Task Force–Horn of Africa asked CNA to design and facilitate a discussion using wargaming mechanics to exchange information on humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HA/DR) operations in Djibouti. The Emergency Response Information Exchange (ERIE) discussion included military and civilian government officials responsible for emergency response planning in and around Djibouti City and representatives of foreign militaries stationed in Djibouti, including the United States, France, Spain, Japan, Italy, and Germany.

We designed ERIE to explore HA/DR response operations in the immediate aftermath (~72 hours) of a large-scale earthquake on the East African Rift fault line, which runs through Djibouti to the Gulf of Tadjoura. The ERIE discussion focused on the communication and coordination between the government of Djibouti and foreign military forces in Djibouti providing humanitarian assistance, recovery efforts, and other forms of support. The discussion focused less on the efficacy of the disaster relief efforts and more on the ability of the multinational partners to efficiently communicate intentions and capabilities, as well as to deconflict their operations. The objectives for the ERIE were to:

- Facilitate conversation between international partners;
- Understand the limitations of international militaries' involvement in HA/DR operations; and
- Build international coordination mechanisms in Djibouti.

Information exchange design

Stemming from the objectives above, we designed ERIE to communicate the capabilities of all participants and to encourage information sharing in a structured environment. To do so, we created a design with three major pieces: participants, scenario, and questionnaire.

Participants

We asked each participating country to provide two types of participants: decision-makers and subject matter experts (SMEs). The decision-makers would understand the policy-level implications of actions and could represent the activities of their country to an international audience within the context of the scenario. We expected that they would consult with SMEs on the technical aspects of the activities that occur as part of HA/DR operations. The SMEs would understand their country's capabilities in a particular area, such as aviation, logistics, or medical care. For example, the SMEs could discuss numbers of available fire trucks or the

equipment carried by a typical search and rescue team. During the ERIE discussion, the decision-makers answered a set of questionnaires using information provided by the SMEs.

Scenario

In ERIE, we used three scenario steps of increasing intensity—a “crawl, walk, run” construct. The CNA team began by presenting the initial information that participants would have learned in the first six hours after the earthquake, which allowed participants to discuss their immediate actions and reactions. We created the scenario expecting that participants would follow and apply their individual emergency procedures in response to the earthquake. The second scenario element explored the first full day after the earthquake. We presented a fuller disaster report to the decision-makers and SMEs to determine which of their capabilities they could use, how they would interact with other countries’ military forces, and what requests they might make of each other in this situation. Finally, we added a compounding catastrophe—in this case, an aftershock—to further stress the situation and examine participants’ reactions and interactions when all partners have limited resources and capabilities.

Questionnaires

Following each scenario element, we presented a set of questionnaires to the decision-makers, which we used as starting points for a facilitated discussion between each of the country teams present. Participants presented their answers verbally to each other, with CNA and other participants asking clarifying questions as needed. The questionnaires that we used are below.

Questionnaire 1

In the immediate aftermath of the earthquake, we assume all parties will first ensure their own safety and protection. We do not expect you to brief your own internal processes during this event.

1. Working with your country group, discuss your internal processes and procedures for ensuring the safety and security of those for whom you are responsible. Ensure that your country group understands the internal procedures.
 - a. What aspects of your internal processes would be visible to the other groups present?
2. How will you communicate with the international community? By what methods?
3. What will you communicate to the international community? What is the message?
4. What is the best way to establish effective international coordination?
 - a. Organization?
 - b. Location?

- c. Means?
- 5. What is needed to ensure effective coordination and communication?
 - a. Organizational?
 - b. Technological?
 - c. Political?

Questionnaire 2

For this stage of the event, we gave participants small blocks to place on a map of the region that represented their capabilities. This helped to visually depict each activity on the ground.

Please write the name of the physical asset you are deploying on a block with your country's flag, and place it at its assigned work location on the map.

1. What public activities (visible to the international community) will your country be undertaking at this stage?
2. What assistance will you be requesting from the international community?
3. How will you coordinate your activities with the international community?

Questionnaire 3

1. How are you contributing to the international humanitarian assistance effort at this stage of the crisis?

Hot wash questionnaire

1. What have we learned about the initial response by foreign military forces to a major humanitarian event in Djibouti?
2. What steps can we take today to limit the impact of a major humanitarian event in Djibouti in the future?

Information exchange execution

We executed ERIE without adjudication since there was no adversary activity and the direct impacts of participants' actions did not affect subsequent scenario elements. We used this format because subsequent scenario events, such as the aftershock, were independent of rescue efforts. Thus, participants spent the majority of the event examining their own capabilities to respond to the events, discussing their capabilities with other nations present, and discussing their emergency response plans and capabilities with the other participants on their national team.

When the participant teams completed their internal discussion of the scenario events, they presented their questionnaire responses to the group, which was followed by a facilitated discussion. Following the group discussion of the final questionnaire, we gave participants the hot wash questionnaire, which focused on the ERIE discussion itself and how they should prepare for a future large-scale natural disaster in Djibouti.

Figures

Figure 1. ERIE scenario earthquake..... 2

Figure 2. Government of Djibouti CRC structure..... 5

Figure 3. Government of Djibouti team placing their assets on the ERIE map of
Djibouti City 7

Figure 4. Multinational military representatives confer during ERIE 8

Figure 5. C-130 landing on the road in the Grand Bara desert 10

Figure 6. AORs for international military forces responding to the earthquake in
Djibouti City 11

Abbreviations

AOR	Area of Responsibility
ATC	Air Traffic Control
CA	Civil Affairs
CJTF-HOA	Combined Joint Task Force–Horn of Africa
COP	Common Operational Picture
CRC	Crisis Response Center
DART	Disaster Assistance Response Team
DEO	Director of Emergency Operations
DSM	Director of Medical Services
EOC	Emergency Operations Center
ERIE	Emergency Response Information Exchange
ESRDM	Executive Secretariat for Risk and Disaster Management
FAD	Forces Armées Djiboutiennes
HA/DR	Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief
HMMWV	High-Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicle
JOC	Joint Operations Center
LNO	Liaison Officer
MOI	Ministry of the Interior
OCP	Operational Command Post
PAO	Public Affairs Officer
PLAN ORSEC	Government of Djibouti Emergency Organization Plan
SA	Situational Awareness
SAR	Search and Rescue
SME	Subject Matter Expert
UN	United Nations
UNDAC	United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination
USAID	US Agency for International Development

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