

Coordinating the U.S. Response to Foreign Disasters:
Concept and Considerations
for a Framework



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 **BANYAN**
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Informing Decisions that Shape the Nation's Role in the Asia-Pacific

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I. Understanding the Problem

When a large disaster occurs abroad, and it has the potential to overwhelm the affected nation, the international community responds. The response team generally includes the government of the affected nation, the U.S. Government, nongovernmental organizations, the United Nations, and other foreign governments interested in providing assistance. The U.S. Government often plays a critical role in foreign disaster response as part of the international community; nations may also directly request U.S. assistance. In its case study of the 2011 Japanese triple disaster,¹ Banyan Analytics explored the interagency coordination challenges faced by the U.S. Government as it responded to a complex foreign disaster. This problem area may be characterized by

- the scale of the disaster in terms of its human and economic impacts and/or the size of the geographic area impacted (or the dispersion of disaster effects); and
- the type of disaster, including natural and man-made disasters; accidents or incidents with chemical, biological, radiological, or nuclear (CBRN) hazards; and combined or

cascading events where a disaster creates conditions for a subsequent CBRN event (as was the case in the 2011 Japanese triple disaster).

Many of the most challenging complex foreign disaster events have had large-scale human and economic impacts (e.g., the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, the 2010 Haitian earthquake, and the 2013 Philippines Typhoon Haiyan). The addition of CBRN hazards to any scale of natural disaster adds complexity as it requires specialized response organizations, capabilities, and knowledge to be integrated into the disaster response.

In past events, the U.S. Government has organized and delivered material goods, military and civilian assets and services, and technical expertise from multiple agencies to provide a timely response. One former State Department official stated that when the U.S. Government gets behind a common objective and works collectively toward achieving it, the result is an impressive thing to behold.² However, a large-scale disaster or any scale disaster including CBRN

¹ Banyan Analytics, The 2011 Earthquake, Tsunami, and Nuclear Accident in Japan: Coordinating the U.S. Government Response, A Banyan Analytics Case Study, January 2014.

² Banyan Analytics, Towards an International Response Framework: Emergency Preparedness in the Asia-Pacific, Conference Report, October 9, 2013.

elements can result in a complex foreign disaster response environment that requires more resources, capabilities, and coordination than standing U.S. foreign disaster response mechanisms can provide—including operations by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) and Department of Defense (DoD) humanitarian assistance and disaster response. Such disasters have demonstrated the scalability challenges associated with U.S. foreign disaster response: they have exceeded the response capabilities and resources of any single U.S. Government agency and have required responders to work together to identify and deliver the resources and expertise needed to address the emerging needs of each event.

While the U.S. Government has developed the National Response Framework (NRF) to guide the interagency response to domestic disasters (including CBRN hazards), no comparable framework exists to guide foreign disaster response.³ As a result, all aspects of foreign disaster response—from participants to funding and other resources—have been organized in real time as the disaster unfolds and becomes increasingly more complex. Based on the U.S. experience in Japan, it can be particularly difficult to find and coordinate the expertise needed to respond to a foreign CBRN event.⁴ This real-time approach can delay response activities during critical phases of a disaster response and put additional lives at risk as a result. The approach also creates a missed opportunity for the prior planning and exercises that would reduce both the risk of wasting valuable and limited resources and the confusion that can result while simultaneously planning, coordinating, and executing the response.

The need for foreign disaster response capabilities, especially for complex disasters, is particularly acute in the Asia-Pacific region. This region “accounted

for 91% of the world’s total death[s] and 49% of the world’s total damage due to natural disasters in the last century,” and the frequency and intensity of climate-driven events are projected to increase as a result of climate change.⁵ The Asia-Pacific has large populations who are vulnerable to disaster effects, including disease outbreaks (a biological hazard).⁶ The projection for continued population growth and climate change impacts in the region mean that the need for U.S. response to complex foreign disasters is likely to increase in the coming years as more frequent severe weather events, rising sea levels, and potential CBRN hazards put increasing numbers of people at risk.

Regarding the likelihood of future nuclear disasters specifically, there are currently 119 operational nuclear power facilities spread across Japan, India, China, South Korea, Pakistan, North Korea, and Taiwan, with 49 reactors under construction and plans to build 100 more power plants (some of these will be in Thailand and Vietnam).⁷ There are also 56 research reactors in 14 countries in the region (excluding New Zealand and Singapore). These numbers are projected to grow in the coming years.⁸ One of the lessons learned by the U.S. during its response to the Fukushima nuclear disaster is that the differences in nuclear facility construction, operations standards and processes mean that the hazard prediction models and response processes used in the U.S. may not be as accurate or effective when used in other countries. As described in our case study of the Japanese triple disaster, it took time and resources to reach consensus among the stakeholders and develop a coordinated U.S. Government response to the radiological hazards created by the Fukushima reactor meltdown. Similar challenges would be likely for disasters with other CBRN hazards in addition to nuclear incidents.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Many U.S. CBRN event responders are intended for use in domestic disasters and have associated policy and funding limits.

⁵ The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and the International Fund for Agricultural Development, *Climate Change Impacts in the Asia/Pacific Region*, 2009.

⁶ Alistair Woodward, Simon Hales, and Philip Weinstein, *Climate Change and Human Health in the Asia Pacific Region: Who Will Be Most Vulnerable?* *Climate Research*, vol. 11: 31-38, December 17, 1998. Population vulnerabilities to climate change impacts and the causes of vulnerability described in this paper remain relevant.

⁷ World Nuclear Association, *Asia’s Nuclear Energy Growth*, October 2013, [http://www.world-nuclear.org/info/Country-Profiles/ Others/Asia-s-Nuclear-Energy-Growth/](http://www.world-nuclear.org/info/Country-Profiles/Others/Asia-s-Nuclear-Energy-Growth/).

⁸ Ibid.

II. Ongoing Efforts to Solve the Problem

The international disaster response community has worked to harmonize response policies and criteria with the United Nations and international norms, formalize response processes, and build intergovernmental response coordination structures.⁹ The resulting international response system relies on individual nations to internally coordinate the response capabilities they offer to affected nations.

The USAID OFDA has undertaken a variety of initiatives to improve U.S. foreign disaster response capabilities:

- conducting quarterly disaster response and risk reduction forums with federal agencies;
- coordinating semiannual interagency conference calls to facilitate information sharing among agencies;
- providing education and training for federal managers;
- developing a comprehensive description of all U.S. Government disaster response capabilities, policies, and authorities; and
- creating a document to codify OFDA's

internal disaster response processes (in progress).¹⁰

In recent discussions, U.S. Government officials have suggested that the interagency coordination used to organize the U.S. response to a foreign disaster is less well structured and effective than coordination of domestic disasters, which is guided by the NRE.¹¹ They suggested that interagency stakeholders— informed by the inputs, opinions, and capabilities of the U.S. foreign response partners—should develop a foreign disaster response framework. Such a framework would guide response activities for both the stakeholders with recurring and well-understood roles in foreign disaster response and other stakeholders, particularly CBRN responders, with more situational needs for and exposure to foreign disaster response processes. It would improve the U.S. response to complex foreign disasters, enable efficiencies in simpler events, and clarify the roles, responsibilities, and authorities needed for foreign CBRN disaster response.

⁹ UN OCHA, Disaster Response in Asia and the Pacific: A Guid to International Tools and Services (undated).

¹⁰ Based on conversations with OFDA participants during Banyan's October workshop.

¹¹ Banyan Analytics, Towards an International Response Framework: Emergency Preparedness in the Asia-Pacific.



III. Purpose of this Document

This document is intended to provide a starting point for stakeholder discussions focused on the development of a “whole of government” framework to inform and complement OFDA’s ongoing efforts, and to assist the U.S. Government in identifying additional considerations and efforts that may be required by other government stakeholders to address crosscutting foreign disaster response areas—particularly funding processes, interagency coordination, and decision processes and authorities.

This document describes insights from U.S. Government stakeholders, our case study of the Japanese triple disaster, and our analysis of domestic response frameworks. While the federal government has a much larger role in domestic

disaster response (where the combined federal, state, and local responders are responsible for much of the response), the NRF and other structures may offer useful insights for the more variable and limited U.S. Government role in foreign disaster response. Appendix A includes a brief description of key elements of domestic emergency preparedness and emergency management that could be relevant to foreign disaster response coordination.



IV. The Complex Foreign Disaster Response Environment

U. S. Government Stakeholders

We have defined two categories of U.S. Government foreign disaster responders: core stakeholders and incident-specific stakeholders. Core stakeholders are U.S. Government entities that usually play a role in coordinating or executing the foreign disaster response regardless of the type and location of event. The roles and responsibilities of these core stakeholders in foreign disaster response are briefly described below.

Department of State, U.S. Ambassador and Embassy in Affected Nation

The U.S. embassy in the affected nation, led by the ambassador, is the lead U.S. Government entity during a foreign disaster response. The embassy and/or the country team represent the United States and directly interface with the affected nation's government. The ambassador has the decision-making authority, and the embassy is responsible for coordinating the

overall U.S. Government response to the affected nation's request for assistance. In CBRN events, the State Department has policy authority over U.S. Government foreign consequence management operations, but it does not have the authority to fund the foreign consequence management response of other U.S. Government agencies.

USAID, Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance

OFDA is the lead coordinating agency for U.S. disaster response abroad and provides the funds for most foreign consequence management activities. Analogous to the role of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) in domestic disasters, OFDA assesses which government agencies should be involved in foreign disaster response and coordinates their response roles and activities. OFDA's Response Management Team organizes the response and deploys Disaster Assistance Response Teams (DARTs) to coordinate and manage the U.S. Government

response in-country. Once deployed, DARTs fall under the authority of the ambassador while reporting to both the ambassador and the Response Management Team in Washington. OFDA is funded for limited foreign disaster responses; complex disaster needs are likely to rapidly exceed OFDA's resources and require other stakeholders to provide funding to support their response capabilities.

White House, National Security Council Staff

The National Security Council staff coordinates, synchronizes, and makes decisions on U.S. policy and procedures. It works closely with the State Department to manage the political and foreign policy impacts of a disaster and works with individual agencies to coordinate the U.S. Government (interagency) response.

Department of Defense

DoD coordinates and deploys military assets and personnel acting through the geographic combatant command (CCMD) responsible for the area in which the disaster occurs. DoD and the CCMD work with USAID to provide logistical and operational support to foreign disaster response activities. DoD maintains CBRN response capabilities and expertise (including the Defense Threat Reduction Agency and the Chemical Biological Incident Response Force) and provides personnel to participate in event-driven technical teams. Congress funds DoD's Overseas Humanitarian Disaster Assistance and Civic Account to pay for the department's humanitarian assistance and foreign disaster response activities; in large or complex disasters, DoD frequently needs to request supplemental funding to cover its operational costs.

Federal Emergency Management Agency

As part of the Department of Homeland Security, FEMA is mandated to respond to disasters that occur in the United States. It can play a supporting role in foreign responses and works regularly with partners to share lessons learned and build their capacities in all emergency preparedness mission areas.¹² FEMA

¹² Federal Emergency Management Agency, FEMA's International Programs & Activities. <http://www.fema.gov/femas-international-programs-activities>.

also has two Urban Search and Rescue teams that are certified for international response and deploy regularly to foreign disasters.

In addition to these core stakeholders, incident-specific stakeholders may be needed to provide vital knowledge, expertise, resources, and authorities to support foreign disaster response. These stakeholders are likely to vary based on the type of disaster and may not be known in advance. For example, to respond to the Fukushima meltdown in the case of the Japanese triple disaster, several domestically focused agencies were needed: the Department of Energy, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, the Department of Homeland Security, the Department of Justice, and the Department of Health and Human Services, among others.

Why a Framework Is Needed

Incident-Specific Stakeholders

Although the core stakeholders generally understand and are able to perform their roles during foreign disaster response, incident-specific stakeholders have expressed confusion about processes, procedures, and funding mechanisms for participating in response events.¹³ Even the core stakeholders can become overwhelmed when the incident is particularly large, complex, or involves CBRN elements, demonstrating the need for an interagency framework that all stakeholders can use to guide their coordination and response efforts.

One critical tenet of emergency management is the need for flexible and scalable management approaches and coordinating structures¹⁴ to guide response to a wide variety of disaster scenarios and situations. A foreign disaster response framework in line with emergency management discipline guidelines and best practices would address deficiencies in coordination of U.S. response operations during complex foreign disasters while providing a standardized means to address all U.S. foreign disaster response, regardless

¹³ Banyan Analytics, The 2011 Earthquake, Tsunami, and Nuclear Accident in Japan: Coordinating the U.S. Government Response, A Banyan Analytics Case Study, January 2014.

¹⁴ National Response Framework, Second Edition, May 2013. http://www.fema.gov/media-library-data/20130726-1914-25045-8516/final_national_response_framework_20130501.pdf.

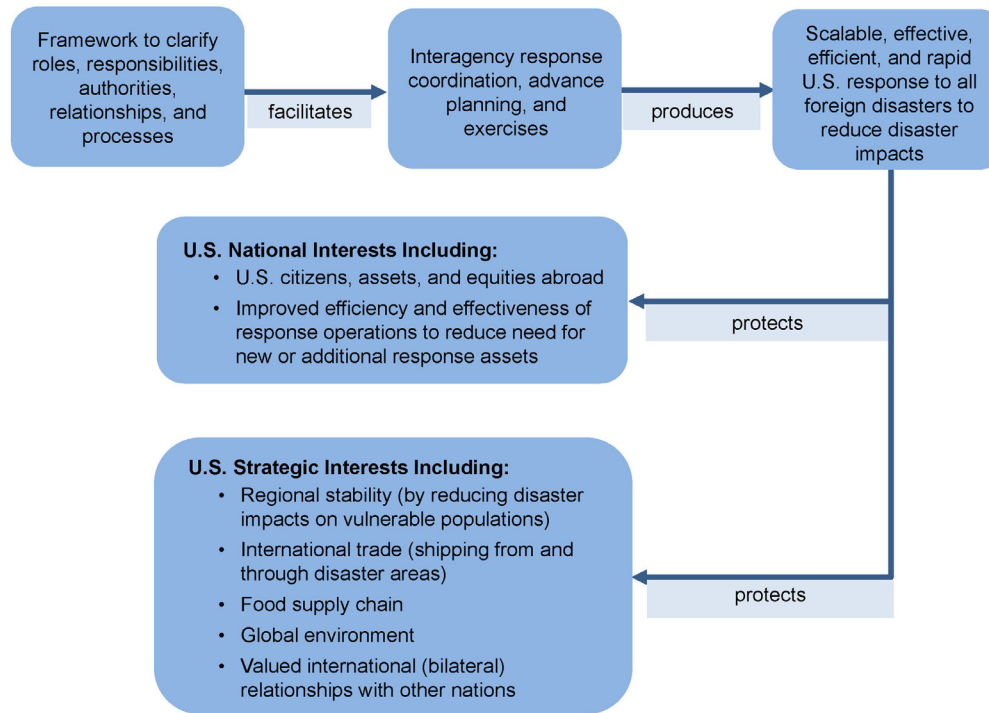


Figure 1: Value Chain for a Complex Foreign Disaster Framework

of scope and scale. Such a framework has the potential to greatly improve interagency coordination and create downstream benefits that act in U.S. national and strategic interests, as shown in the value chain illustrated in Figure 1.

The benefits to U.S. national and strategic interests shown in Figure 1 depend upon the ability of framework-enabled interagency coordination to produce a desired outcome: scalable, effective, efficient, and rapid U.S. response to all foreign disasters that will reduce disaster impacts. This framework must be effective in situations where the U.S. is responding as part of a U.N.-coordinated international response and when an affected nation directly requests U.S. assistance.

A framework designed specifically to enable the U.S. Government to coordinate its response to foreign disasters effectively and efficiently must:

- clarify interagency stakeholders’ roles, responsibilities, and authorities to provide

visibility into foreign disaster response capabilities across the interagency;

- identify key interagency stakeholder relationships, including relationships with OFDA, and describe both the linkages and the nature of the relationships (e.g., resource sharing, information sharing, response partnerships, and supporting and supported agencies);
- codify basic foreign response guidelines for interagency responders usually limited to domestic disaster response;
- be scalable to adequately address all scales of disasters in a variety of locations and be useful for all event types (natural, man-made, CBRN, and combined disasters); and
- clarify funding streams and other resource pipelines.

USAID regularly spends over two billion dollars per year on humanitarian assistance, which includes disaster readiness.¹⁵ The Department of State regularly budgets for and receives approximately one billion dollars specifically marked for international disaster assistance.¹⁶ Other departments and agencies, such as DoD, also receive funding in addition to the funds administered by USAID and OFDA. This funding level cannot be expected to address every disaster that occurs worldwide, and is regularly overwhelmed by large events, such as the Haiti Earthquake, which required supplemental funding. An effective framework would enable more efficient use of limited funds to address international disasters and achieve U.S. objectives.

15 U.S. Department of State, USAID. "Foreign Assistance Data." Last data update February 24, 2014. <http://www.foreignassistance.gov/web/DataView.aspx>.

16 U.S. Department of State, FY 2014 Executive Budget Summary: Function 150 & Other International Programs, Washington, D.C.: 2013, <http://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1868/207305.pdf> (accessed February 27, 2014).

V. Design Considerations

The U.N. has established processes and procedures to coordinate multinational disaster response with the government of the affected nation(s) in a disaster.¹⁷ These processes include how to request disaster assistance and establish a focal point to coordinate and manage incoming disaster response resources. They are designed to respect national sovereignty and coordinate with the local government(s).

When a country requests U.S. support in lieu of or in addition to limited U.N. support (as was the case in the Japanese triple disaster), the U.S. embassy or country team may need to take a larger role in coordinating with an affected nation's government. As experienced in Japan, the regional CCMD is also likely to be an active response partner with a need to coordinate its operations within the affected country. The presence of a CBRN hazard requires further coordination with additional responders and their home agencies.

While much of this coordination occurs within the U.S. interagency when determining whom to send or how to deploy capabilities and fund operations, the U.S. in-country coordination capacity must also be sufficiently flexible and scalable to work with the number and type of U.S. responding organizations that will be needed and with the response and coordination requirements of the affected nation's government. For example, U.S. Government agencies may currently rely on their preexisting relationships with their counterparts in the affected nation for communication, leading to stovepipes of information exchange.¹⁸ To avoid this situation in any future direct requests for assistance, the foreign disaster response framework must include processes to manage requests for assistance and resources while respecting the national sovereignty of the affected nation and local culture and customs. Much of this

¹⁷ UN OCHA, *Disaster Response in Asia and the Pacific: A Guide to International Tools and Services*.

¹⁸ In his address at the conference *Toward an International Response Framework: Emergency Preparedness in the Asia-Pacific*, Dr. Nobumasa Akiyama of Hitotsubashi University noted the friction that developed between the Japanese and U.S. governments due to the lack of information sharing during the response to the Great East Japanese Earthquake and following incident at Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant. The two nations resolved this issue through the "Hosono Process," a bilateral coordination meeting where information was shared on the situation and discussions were held regarding coordination of assistance and measures for stabilization of the nuclear reactor.

knowledge and expertise resides in the embassy and/or country team, and sharing this understanding during a disaster response can be challenging.

A foreign disaster response framework will need to be sufficiently scalable and flexible to be effective in all situations. To achieve scalability and flexibility in a domestic response, the NRF, National Incident Management System (NIMS), and Incident Command System (ICS) each incorporate a modular design in their management structures that can be expanded or contracted to provide the level of management needed—no more and no less. One of the benefits of this design is that responders need to learn only one organizing structure, and they become increasingly familiar with and adept at using it in every response—from the small and more frequent incidents to larger disasters.

In addition to a scalable, flexible design, our analysis of existing domestic disaster and emergency response frameworks as well as shortfalls in foreign responses suggests the following design considerations for a foreign disaster response framework.

International and Cultural Considerations

“Cultural understanding is important primarily because many of these cultures are not so open to what we call intrusion from foreigners. The way that the international response could be made should really start from a confidence building among its counterparts in the national government where the disaster has happened.”¹⁹ Cultural considerations go beyond the obvious language barriers that may exist and should include a deep understanding of the ways that Americans, or any foreigners, should adapt their behavior to enhance the chances of a successful response. Culture should be factored into response operations at all levels, from top leadership to tactical-level teams. The framework should address how response coordinators will interface with the U.S. embassy and/or country team to avoid cultural missteps. While including the full range of country-specific cultural sensitivities is impractical, framework developers may wish to engage with selected foreign

partners to open a dialogue on expectations, lessons learned, growing capabilities, and remaining gaps. Including foreign perspectives in the design of U.S. response coordination structures will help ensure that response processes are consistent with and support achievement of U.S. foreign policy goals and strategic interests.

“Whole of Government” and “Whole Community” Response

One strategy to provide a context for how U.S. responders might integrate into foreign countries’ disaster response systems (or integrate within a U.N. international response) is to adapt crosscutting “whole of” concepts into a foreign disaster response framework. The framework would describe how to integrate the roles, responsibilities, and authorities of interagency assets with nongovernmental organizations responding to the disaster, private-sector entities contributing to response efforts at the national and local levels and the affected communities themselves (includes agency to agency, U.S. Government to affected nation, and public-private relationships). Some work is also needed to clarify how U.S. responders to a foreign disaster may communicate with and/or assist U.S. citizens living in the affected country (for example, existing rules prohibit U.S. agencies from providing “foreign assistance” to U.S. citizens).

All-hazards Approach

As part of scalability and flexibility, a foreign disaster response framework should take an all-hazards approach so it can apply to a wide variety of incidents. This means the framework would apply to any man-made or natural disaster that could cause injury, illness, or death and would guide the U.S. response regardless of the size or location of the disaster. The same framework would be used to provide support from a single U. S. agency or coordinated support from many agencies and would provide the potential clarity, ease of use, and experiential learning possible when a single framework is used to guide many different kinds of responses.

¹⁹ Dr. Julio Amador III, Asian Studies Visiting Fellow, East-West Center, Washington, DC.

Mutual-aid vs. Donor-aid Models

Foreign aid in natural and man-made disasters has traditionally followed a donor-aid model, in which a wealthy country donates food, medical aid, or other resources to a developing state stricken by disaster. As nations around the world continue to develop and build their own capacities, it is useful to consider transitioning to a mutual-aid model as a way to effectively meet the response needs of increasingly complex (and expensive) disasters, enhance U.S. relationships abroad, and enable more cost-sharing.²⁰ Examples include the European Union’s Mutual Aid for Resilient Infrastructure in Europe (MARIE) and the United States’ Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC). The foreign response framework could provide criteria for using a mutual-aid model, how the U.S. (or other traditional donor countries) might integrate their responses within a regional mutual-aid construct, and the cost accounting and reimbursement mechanisms that will be needed to enable affected nations to help fund the disaster response.

Funding

Foreign disaster response is time-scaled and linear; it is difficult (perhaps impossible) to identify and implement clear, consistent priorities within and across disasters. In a budget-constrained environment, funds may be depleted by an early, less-severe incident and not available to respond to a subsequent larger, more critical disaster. In addition, integrating the funding resources and mechanisms of multiple government agencies is challenging. Some of the existing mechanisms have limitations—such as requirements to use the money only for humanitarian assistance, not consequence management or CBRN remediation. The foreign disaster response framework should address both of these issues by creating response prioritization criteria and by outlining the various funding sources as well as their requirements and limitations for core

stakeholders and at least some of the likely incident-specific stakeholders. The result would be a shared understanding of funding processes and limitations to assist response coordination and decision making and reduce the exposure of individual responding agencies to the delay between when they are asked to respond and when their response operations may be funded.

²⁰ A more in-depth discussion of donor-aid and mutual-aid models can be found in “From Donor-Aid to Mutual-Aid: Changing the Landscape of International Disaster Assistance” by Frances Veasey, MS, PMP, published October 31, 2013. http://www.anser.org/babrief_from-donor-aid-to-mutual-aid.



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VI. Path Forward

Based on our analysis of previous disasters as well as extensive stakeholder discussions, it is evident that more clarity on the goals, methods, roles, responsibilities, and resources to be used for the U.S. government to prepare for and respond to foreign disaster would greatly facilitate the nation's efforts abroad. An official U.S. government policy, declared in a Presidential Policy Directive (PPD), would be an effective start to developing a preparedness program that ensures not only that the U.S. is ready to save lives and protect its interests overseas, but also that dollars invested in foreign disaster response are spent wisely. PPD-8 on National Preparedness provides a baseline that could guide a corresponding PPD for international efforts.

In line with such a directive, Banyan Analytics recommends a facilitated interagency effort to develop a foreign disaster response framework that addresses the gaps identified in the coordination of U.S. response efforts during a complex catastrophe abroad. A working group composed of relevant stakeholders should be established to support this development process. Involving the key response stakeholders will ensure that the foundation of the

document is designed to meet all requirements for coordination of U.S. response activities, especially those needed during response to a complex disaster.

Working group meetings would help elicit the necessary information and discussion of the framework criteria identified in this document. These criteria can serve as a starting point of discussion, with further areas of discussion identified based on working group meeting outcomes. To clarify the “as is” and “to be” states for coordinating international response, vignettes should be developed that present a variety of realistic and complex scenarios for stakeholders to walk through. These discussions will help identify existing gaps in the response structure that should be addressed by the framework. Planning toward a worst-case scenario (e.g., complex disaster) can ensure that the framework is able to handle all coordination challenges regardless of the size or type of incident. A governance body will also need to be identified to ensure that the framework receives executive approval.

Outcomes from working group discussions and stakeholder inputs would serve as the basis for the

draft of the framework. Stakeholders should review the framework, with a core team collecting and integrating comments to ensure that all concerns are addressed in the document. The working group should conduct multiple rounds of review to ensure that the final product meets the needs of all stakeholders and senior U.S. Government leadership. A federally

funded research and development center experienced in interagency document development processes, such as the Homeland Security Studies and Analysis Institute, or another similarly qualified not-for-profit research institute, such as Banyan Analytics, should be considered as a partner to the U.S. Government in completing this interagency effort.



Photo credit: Russell Galeti, USAID.

Appendix A: Domestic Response Coordination

The National Incident Management System

The U.S. has a robust emergency management system guided by a core set of principles laid out in the NIMS. Developed under Homeland Security Presidential Directive 5, NIMS is a comprehensive, nationwide approach to prepare for, respond to, and recover from incidents. NIMS provides a foundation and common language to guide integrated preparedness and response and provides guidance for policy and planning regarding communications that could be used when developing a foreign disaster response framework. NIMS introduces principles and concepts for information management and communication, resource management, and command management. Though developed to satisfy domestic requirements, NIMS was designed to apply to all incidents regardless of size, scale, or location.

The following NIMS principles and concepts could be adapted to guide U.S. response to foreign incidents:

- develop and use communications plans to define information needs and identify how those needs will be met to facilitate information sharing and reduce stovepiping

among responding federal agencies. This includes:

- planning how to use information management technologies to integrate coordination functions and share critical information;
- identifying interoperable and redundant communications systems that will be needed to support information sharing between on-scene responders and the coordinating centers supporting their operations;
- identify technologies, standards, and tools to enable information needs, response activities, and potential hazards posed to responders or U.S. interests to be integrated within a common operating picture of the disaster response to inform interagency coordination and in-country coordination of U.S. activities, as needed; and
- define processes and procedures to create and release public information, incident notifications, and risk communications in coordination with the national and local information management systems of the affected nation.

The Incident Command System

The ICS is one component of the command and management sector of NIMS. The ICS provides a framework for incident management organization that facilitates unity of command, resource acquisition, and coordinated operations. It is used to manage domestic incidents at the tactical level, and its principles can be applied to emergency coordination at all levels of government. While U.S. responders are well versed in the ICS, this system is not intended to guide response operations overseas. However, the idea that all incidents are managed locally is a central tenet of the ICS, and this concept is fully compatible with foreign disaster response. Its modular and scalable command and incident planning system could also be a useful example for coordinating foreign response operations.

The National Response Framework

The NRF represents the central guiding doctrine for U.S. domestic emergency response. Based upon NIMS principles, the NRF outlines concepts that facilitate meeting the core capabilities for response in order to achieve the goals outlined in Presidential Policy Directive (PPD) 8. The five main principles that form the basis of the NRF—engaged partnership; tiered response; scalable, flexible, and adaptive operational capabilities; unity of effort through unified command; and readiness to act—could also be applied to foreign disaster response.

While many of the NRF's core capabilities and their associated tasks focus on response at the tactical (local) level rather than national-level response operations and support coordination, three capabilities—planning, public information and warning, and operational coordination—could be applied to foreign response with a few alterations.

NRF annexes also provide a useful model, particularly the Emergency Support Function (ESF) annexes and incident-specific annexes. ESF annexes outline the roles and responsibilities for each ESF. ESFs group governmental and nongovernmental organizations

and certain private-sector entities into organizational structures that provide support, resources, and services during domestic disaster response. Similar coordinating structures could be used during foreign response to help organize U.S. response operations. Incident-specific annexes could be useful to provide additional guidance on roles, responsibilities, authorities, and technical expertise that might be needed for different types of incidents that require unique considerations. An annex for response to CBRN hazards is likely to be needed, given the challenges of CBRN response encountered during the Fukushima disaster and the potential of a future CBRN incident in the Asia-Pacific region.



Figure 2: FEMA Preparedness Cycle

Preparedness

Disaster response effectiveness in the U.S. is improved when it is an integrated part of a complete preparedness program encompassing protection, prevention, mitigation, response, and recovery (the five mission areas identified in PPD-8). While no comparable directive exists for response to foreign disasters, stakeholders and coordinating authorities can apply the intent of PPD-8 to foreign disasters by clarifying the international U.S. role in these five mission areas.

While the U.S. role abroad is most visible in response, it is important for stakeholders to be active across the entire preparedness cycle (Figure 2).²¹ Planning, training, exercising, and all the other activities in the cycle will enable the U.S. to understand its role and refine its processes to improve outcomes and efficiencies, making it possible to achieve disaster response goals and objectives using fewer resources. A similar cycle for foreign disaster response would potentially enable a range of international stakeholders to engage not only in response planning, but also in the preparedness, prevention, protection and mitigation efforts that will help reduce disaster vulnerabilities and impacts. These activities may also support the transition to a mutual-aid model (discussed in the body of this document).

²¹ Federal Emergency Management Agency, Preparedness Overview.
<http://www.fema.gov/preparedness-0>



Abbreviation List

CCMD	combatant command	MS	Master of Science
CBRN	chemical, biological, radiological, or nuclear	NIMS	National Incident Management System
DART	Disaster Assistance Response Team	NRF	National Response Framework
DMCA	Digital Millennium Copyright Act	OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
DoD	Department of Defense	OFDA	Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance
ESF	Emergency Support Function	PMP	Project Management Professional
EMAC	Emergency Management Assistance Compact	PPD	Presidential Policy Directive
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency	USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development
ICS	Incident Command System	USC	U.S. Code
IOM	International Organization for Migration		
MARIE	Mutual Aid for Resilient Infrastructure in Europe		



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