



# Capabilities and Competencies in Humanitarian Operations

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# Motivation

Both the U.S. military and non-military organizations bring assets, skills, and capabilities to a humanitarian crisis



The competencies and capabilities of each are not homogeneous



Identification of the specific competencies and capabilities that are core to the types of organizations bringing logistics and support is critical



Ensures better planning by both military and non-military organizations for greater effectiveness and efficiency in the humanitarian response



# Research Focus

- The unique and overlapping core capabilities and competencies of the U.S. military and non-military organizations are not well understood in the context of humanitarian assistance and disaster relief.
- This research focuses on the core capabilities of these organizations for their support to humanitarian operations.





# Background

U. S. Department of Defense identified humanitarian assistance and disaster response as a key mission in promoting security around the world





# Literature Review

Our work builds upon the seminal work by Prahalad and Hammel (1990) on the core competency of the corporation.

Several studies have been conducted

## Humanitarian Logistics

Apte, 2009;  
Tomasini & Van Wassenhove, 2009;  
Marx, 2009;  
Gibbons, 2007;  
Waugh & Strelb, 2006;  
Alexander, 2003

## Military Logistics

Smith, 2007;  
Prebelič, 2006;  
Van Creveld, 2004;  
Kress, 2002;  
Lynn, 1993;

## Similarities and Differences

Jahre et al., 2009;  
Kovács and Tatham, 2009;  
Pettit & Beresford, 2005





# Capabilities and Competencies

The ability of organizations to function efficiently and effectively during disaster response operations depends, in some part, on their ability to

- Identify,
- Cultivate, and
- Exploit their core capabilities.



# Capabilities and Competencies

Prahalad and Hamel (1990) introduce three tests to identify those competencies that are “core” to a commercial firm:

- The capability **must not be easy** for competitors to **imitate**,
- It must be able to be leveraged across a **wide variety** of products or markets,
- It must contribute to the needs of the **final customer or end-user**.



# Capabilities and Competencies

We modify these tests and apply to organizations in the context of humanitarian assistance and disaster relief.

- First,
  - The capability could be **unique**.
  - If the capability provides a **public good** then this, too, would likely make it core.

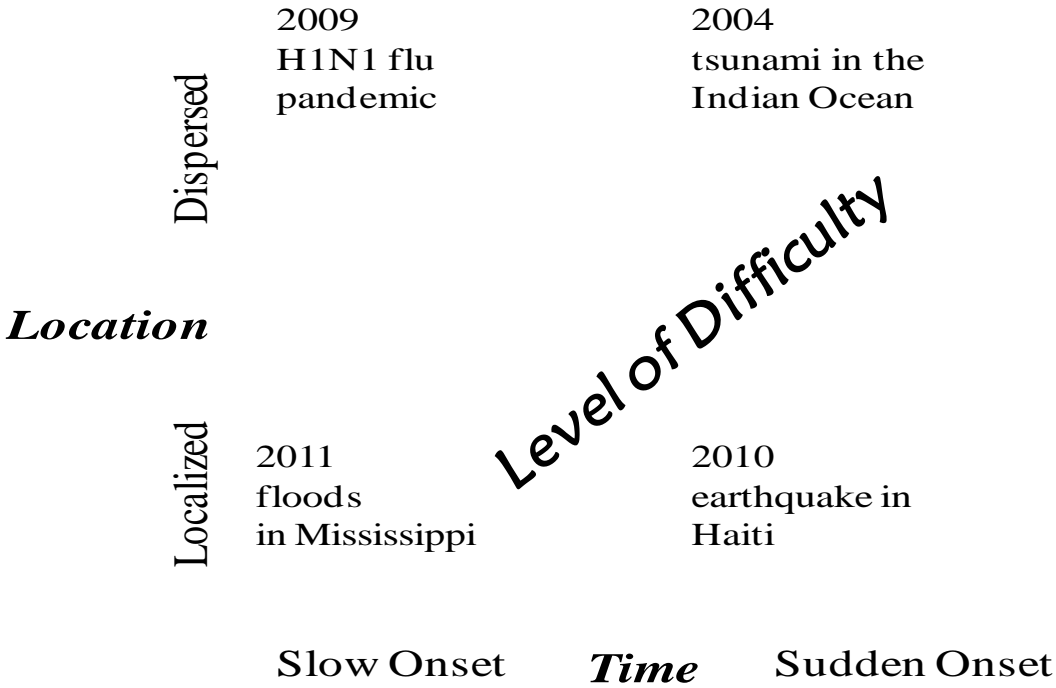






# Capabilities and Competencies

- Second, a core competence should provide potential relief to a **wide variety of disasters** classified based on the speed of the disaster's onset as well as the geographic dispersion of the affected area.



Source: Apte, 2009

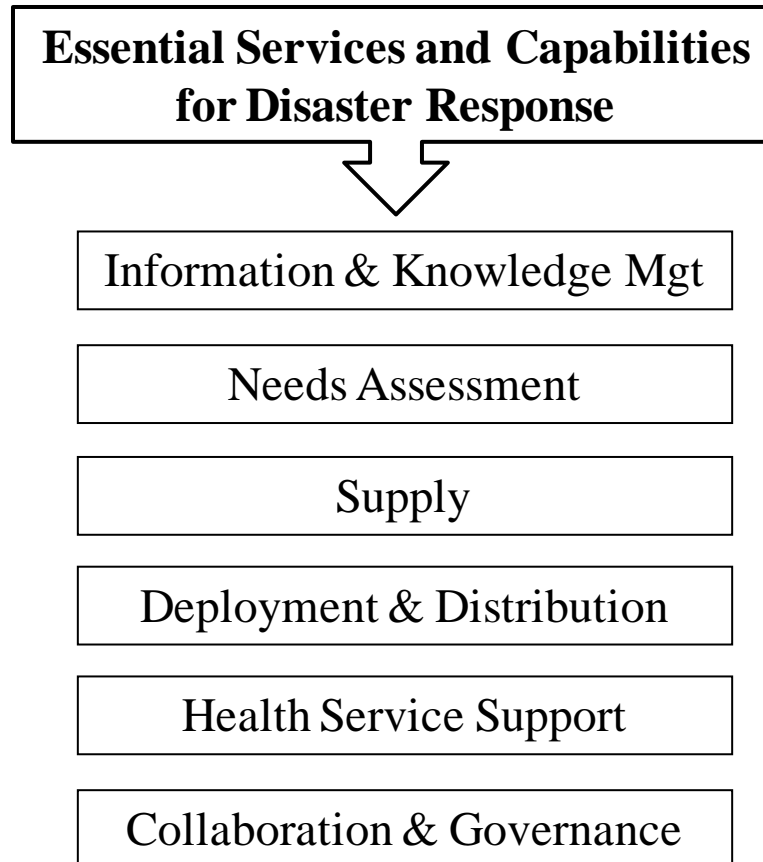
# Capabilities and Competencies

- Third, a core competency should make a substantial contribution toward the **end-relief** received by the affected population.





# Essentials to Delivering aid





# Information and Knowledge Management

## Information Management:

- When did the disaster occur?
  - Who is affected?
- What infrastructure and services are no longer functioning?
  - Where is the greatest need for disaster aid?
- How should the disaster response be coordinated with local authorities?
  - And, how much relief aid is necessary?



# Information Management

## Non-governmental organizations:

- Largely reliant upon news sources
- Government releases of information
- Personnel on the ground in the affected region in the aftermath of a natural disaster.





# Information Management

## U. S. Military Capability:

- Intelligence gathering
- Develop an operational picture of the “battle space”:
  - Access to satellite and aerial reconnaissance assets that are capable of developing a very clear picture of the state of the infrastructure and population on the ground
  - Deployment of special operations forces trained to be inserted into adverse environment for the purpose of establishing landing zones and collecting intelligence to affected areas



# Knowledge Management

The gathered information has to be converted to knowledge and integrated into the organizations. Knowledge management in terms of lessons learned is also a core capability for both the communities.

- In the military the rotation of personnel makes it necessary to transfer the information into knowledge to retain this capability, so that it is not individual specific.
- In non-government organizations the high turnover rate of the staff and limited resources necessitate the management of knowledge.



# Needs Assessment

## U. S. Military:

- Known as requirements generation :
  - To generate a high-fidelity *operational picture* of what is happening in the area of responsibility.
  - Involves intelligence that can be collected by human, electronic sensor, and imagery assets to generate situational awareness.
  - The end product is a statement of the capabilities in terms of a specific mission carefully defined in terms of its duration, scope, and chain of authority.



# Needs Assessment

## Non-governmental organizations:

- Needs assessment
  - Is to gain awareness of the size of the affected population to determine the type and volume of aid that must be sent to the area
  - To make a project plan that can be developed to deliver the aid.
- For example, the World Food Program (WFP) calculates quantities of food to be delivered to various locations based on needs assessment surveys that take into account size and scope of the affected population



# Supply

## Military and Non-governmental organizations:

- Entails reviewing any pre-staged or prepositioned materials and determining their suitability for the particular disaster as well as determining how the supplies will be moved from their point of origin to the final point of consumption.

## Military:

- Has a core capability in the management of large stores of supplies in the case of a contingency.
- Has the necessary material handling equipment and supply professionals to move materiel quickly.

## Non-governmental organizations:

- Must also manage donated supplies.





# Deployment and Distribution

Non-governmental organizations:

- With few exceptions typically dependent upon contracted or regularly scheduled commercial flights in order to move staff and supplies to the affected area.





# Deployment and Distribution

## Military:

- Possesses unique transportation assets that provide essential deployment and distribution capabilities during a natural disaster.
  - Both strategic airlift and sealift capabilities that can roll-on, roll-off equipment, materiel, and personnel are available in quantities and within lead times that very few other organizations are capable of delivering.





# Deployment and Distribution

## Military:

- Large transport aircraft capable of landing on short, unimproved airfields
- Ships with shallow drafts or landing craft that can move directly from the sea to shore without a need for a dock
- Capability to bring large numbers of helicopters off-shore that can operate independently of support from land in order to deliver supplies to specific locations in need.





# Health Support Services

Military and Non-governmental organizations:

- Work toward the same objective
- Relieving pain and suffering
- Preventing fatalities

Non-governmental organizations:

- May have to source some medical capabilities from many other organizations or network of volunteers
- In addition to providing general medical supplies, specific requirements also have to be managed





# Health Support Services

## Military:

- Possesses hospital ships
- Rapidly deployable field hospital and surgical units
- Capable of deploying rapidly
- Managing the logistics of supply and the transfer of patients







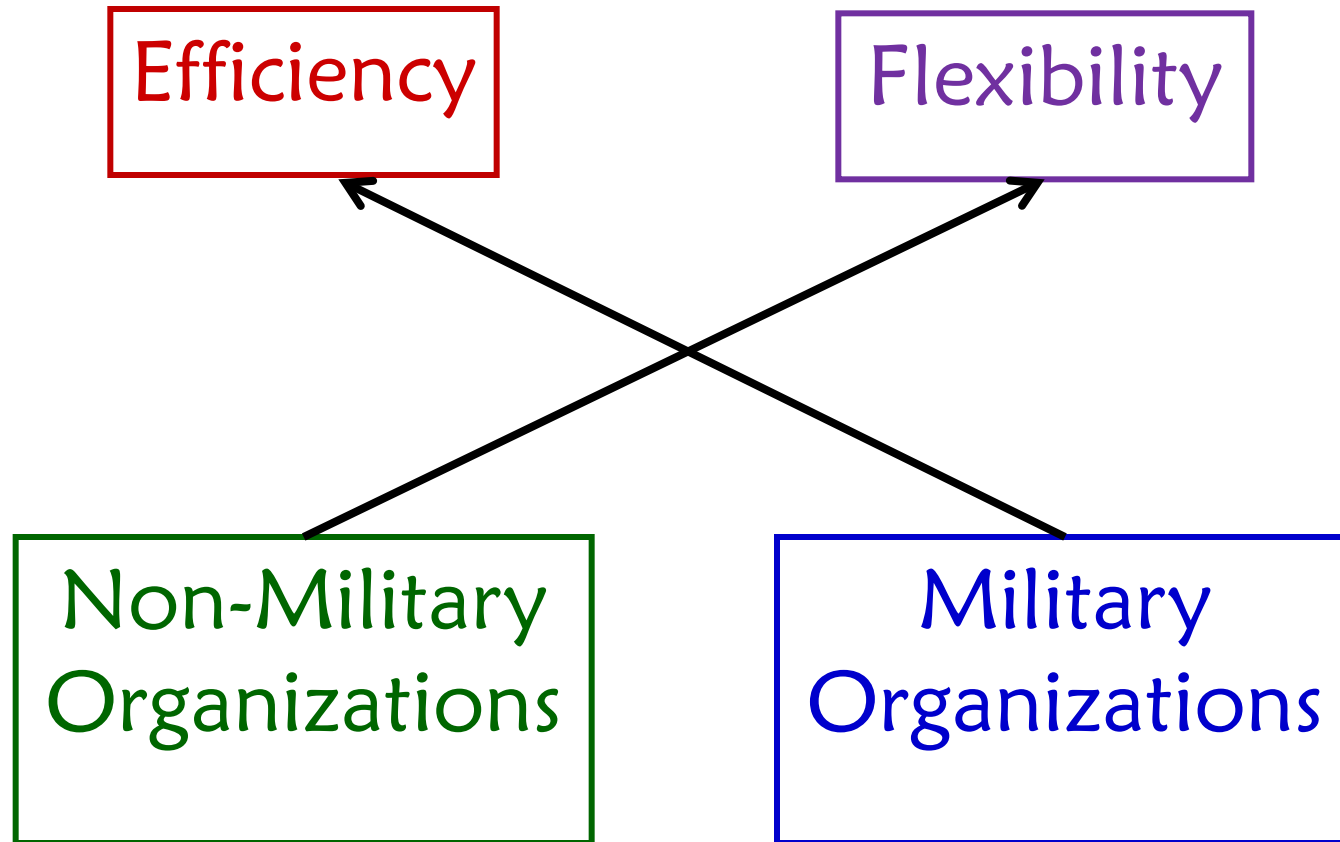
# Collaboration and Governance

## Non-governmental organizations:

- Establishment of the UN cluster approach facilitating the collaboration among organizations
  - Strengthens the structure
  - Level of collaboration

## Civil-military collaboration:

- US SOUTHCOM has mature interagency processes and coordinating mechanisms.
- The recent Haiti disaster and SOUTHCOM response suggests that there exist challenges in coordination among government agencies, international partners, NGOs, and private organizations.





# Non-Military & Military Core Competencies

Adapted from Joint Publication 4-0 (2008)

## Non-Military Core Capabilities

- Demand validation
- Type and extent of supplies
- Situation on the ground

- Deploy Emergency Supplies & Services
- Manage Last Mile Distribution

- Dynamic set of co-players
- Pre-established clusters for structure and accountability
- Tradeoffs in principles versus pragmatism

## Essential Services & Capabilities

Needs Assessment

Deployment & Distribution

Collaboration & Governance

## Military Core Capabilities

- Information assessment
- Lead time
- Situation on the ground

- Move & Sustain the Force
- Operate the Joint Deployment and Distribution Enterprise

- Within organization,
  - Fixed line of power
  - Command and control
  - Established networks
- Across organizations,
  - Challenges exist