

THE WINSTON CHURCHILL MEMORIAL TRUST OF AUSTRALIA

Report by Jane Sloane 2005 Churchill Fellow

To study humanitarian emergency response team models for Australia

Modelling coordinated humanitarian aid in action

Jane Sloane

January 2006

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Dated

INDEX

0. ACRONYMS	3
1. INTRODUCTION	5
2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	6
3. PROGRAM	8
4. RESEARCH CONDUCTED AND LESSONS LEARNED	12
5. CONCLUSIONS	31
6. RECOMMENDATIONS	32
APPENDICES	34

ACRONYMS

ACFID	Australian Council For International Development
beso	British Executive Service Overseas – <i>spelt lower case</i>
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
BT Tower	British Telecom Tower
CHASE	Conflict Humanitarian and Security Department (UK)
DART	(Canadian Forces) Disaster Assistance Response Team
DEC	Disaster Emergency Committee
DFID	Department for International Development (UK)
DRM	Disaster Response and Mitigation (of OFDA)
EMA	Emergency Management Australia
IACS	Interagency Steering Committee
INTERFET	Australian Defence Forces in East Timor
NGO	Non Government Organisation
OCHA	UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OFDA	Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (of OFDA USA)
OPS	Operations Division (Of OFDA – USA)
PS	Program Support Division (of OFDA – USA)
SERBRIG	South Eastern European Readiness Brigade
SHIRBRIG	Standby High Readiness Brigade

UN	United Nations
UNMEE	United Nations Mission to Ethiopia and Eritrea
UNSAS	United Nations Standby Arrangement System
USAID	(Department of State's) US Agency for International Development
VSO	Voluntary Service Overseas

1. INTRODUCTION

I was awarded a Churchill Fellowship to research models for a humanitarian emergency response team for Australia and the region. The Indian Ocean tsunami had demonstrated the worth of a coordinated rapid response effort capable of engaging the Australian population and this was the impetus for my application for a Fellowship.

Through my pre-research in Australia before departing for overseas, three distinct areas of focus for my research emerged. These were:

- 1) Determine how to best strengthen existing mechanisms for responding to humanitarian emergencies and how to improve coordination across agencies (government, non government organisations and military)
- 2) Research models for engaging civilians in a coordinated humanitarian emergency response effort
- 3) Consider options for Australia participating in an Asia Pacific High Readiness Brigade under a UN mandate

My special thanks to the Churchill Fellowship Committee in South Australia for recommending my application for a Fellowship and to the National Committee for awarding one to me. I also thank the staff of the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust of Australia for their tremendous support and professional assistance.

This opportunity would not have been possible without Dr Stella Cornelius, Director, Conflict Resolution Network, planting the seed. In every way, as mentor, friend and professional colleague, Stella has been with me.

On a personal level, I thank my partner Darren, and my family, friends, colleagues and staff for their encouragement and understanding while I've been engaged, intellectually, emotionally and physically, with this Fellowship. It has provided me a chance for much deep thinking. I hope that my contribution offers some practical ways to improve our country's responsiveness to humanitarian emergencies in our region.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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While in the United Kingdom, Denmark, Switzerland, the United States and Canada, I spent time with government agencies responsible for humanitarian assistance as well as non-government organisations dealing with humanitarian emergencies and with military organisations.

In this regard I would particularly like to thank Patricia Sanders from the Disaster Emergency Committee (DEC) in London for being so generous with her time and resource material. Christopher Cushing at Bradford University's Department of Peace Studies was equally generous with time and ideas. I owe a real debt of thanks to Colonel Willem Van Dulleman, Chief of Staff, SHIRBRIG, Zygmund Domanski, my SHIRBRIG escort and to the entire SHIRBRIG personnel for making my time with them in Copenhagen so worthwhile and enjoyable. I also thank John Damerell from Lutheran World Federation in Geneva for being such a great sounding board and resource. Ton van Zutphen from World Vision provided a wealth of experience and a fine policy mind. Also, the Disaster Assistance Response Team in Kingston, Canada, particularly LtCol Mike Voith and Captain Lena Cormier, for all their assistance in showcasing their operation, Vibeke Stage and Michelle Fanzo played wonderful roles as hosts to me in Copenhagen and New York City respectively.

It is important to note that this research was undertaken as a pulse check and is not designed nor deemed to be an authoritative document on either current coordination mechanisms or future models. It is instead intended as a dynamic discussion document for some practical ways to improve Australia's responsiveness to humanitarian emergencies.

As a result of my research, I have identified the following models as being appropriate for Australia to better support a coordinated and efficient response to humanitarian emergencies:

Determine how best to strengthen existing mechanisms for responding to humanitarian emergencies and how to improve coordination across agencies (government, NGO and military)

Create a coordinated fundraising model based on the Disaster Emergency Committee (DEC) in the United Kingdom, which provides a coordinated non-government response to disasters. Through a shared appeal, administrative costs are capped at 2% and funds are distributed across all member agencies for expenditure in the field.

Formalise an operational unit within AusAID with dedicated rapid response staff, similar to the Department For International Development model in the United Kingdom (and similar government models in Europe and North America). This dedicated secretariat would provide swift and effective support in the field in the event of a humanitarian emergency.

Research models for engaging civilians in humanitarian emergency response - as a coordinated method of engagement

Work with Emergency Management Australia, Australian Volunteers International, RedR, the Australian Medical Association and the Australian Council for International Development to create a coordinated civilian Rapid Response Register. Involve RedR and Emergency Management Australia in the development of appropriate training models and materials. This Rapid Response Register could come under the banner of an Australian style DEC. Effectively it would mean that NGOs have access to a central pool of volunteers, appropriately sourced and trained, ready for deployment in the event of a humanitarian emergency.

Consider options for Australian participation in an Asia Pacific High Readiness Brigade under a UN mandate

Advocate Australia assuming formal observer status with SHIRBRIG for a 12-month period in order to determine the value in either becoming a formal member of SHIRBRIG (like Canada) or in creating an Asia Pacific version, given the interest in this already expressed by some countries in Asia.

Next steps

- Speaking opportunities within Australia regarding overall recommendations to engage Australian community in discussion and dialogue
- Discussion with CEOs of major aid agencies and the Australian Council For International Development (ACFID) re DEC model
- Debriefing with Alan March and Suzanne Edgecombe, AusAID regarding my recommendations
- Debriefing with Hon. Alexander Downer and regarding my research and recommendations
- Briefing with Hon. Kevin Rudd regarding my research and recommendations

- Debriefing with Lt-General Ken Gillespie, Vice Chief, Australian Defence Force
- Debriefing with Emergency Management Australia and Australian Volunteers International regarding civilian engagement

3. PROGRAM

The following people were interviewed or consulted in the course of preparing this report:

AUSTRALIA

Dr Tony Elisio, Emergency Physician, Royal Adelaide Hospital– Department of Emergency Medicine

Ms Carly Sheehan, Humanitarian and Emergencies Coordinator, Australian Council for International Development

Hon Alexander Downer, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade

Hon Bruce Billson, former Parliamentary Secretary, Foreign Affairs

Lt-General Ken Gillespie, Vice Chief, Australian Defence Force

Mr Alan March, Head, AusAID’s Indian Ocean Tsunami Taskforce and Humanitarian Coordinator, AusAID and Ms Suzanne Edgecombe, Director, Humanitarian and Emergencies Section, AusAID

UNITED KINGDOM

London

Mr Paul Harvey, Research Fellow, Humanitarian Policy Group
Overseas Development Institute

Mr Tom Muller, Coordinator, Humanitarian Practice Network
Overseas Development Institute

Ms Sally Gregory, Humanitarian Adviser
Conflict and Humanitarian Affairs Department
Department for International Development

Mr Jeremy Mitchell, Public Affairs Manager,
Australian High Commission, London

Ms Patricia Sanders, Appeals Manager
Disaster Emergency Committee

Mr Ian Gray, Head of Humanitarian and Emergency Support
World Vision UK

Dr Adam Curle, Founder, Department of Peace Studies, Bradford University
author and academic

Oxford

Ms Susie Smith, Deputy Overseas Director
Oxfam

Bradford

Mr Chris Cushing, Principal Research Fellow, Centre for International
Cooperation and Security, Department of Peace Studies
University of Bradford

DENMARK

Copenhagen

Briefings over course of a week with SHIRBRIG staff:

Col W Van Dulleman, Chief of Staff

Lt Col. Z Domanski

LtCol Feliks Blanco

LtCol Bob Chaloux

LtCol Jef Bolders

LtCol Ingemar Robertson

LtCol Niels Koefed

Capt. Luca Dottarelli

LtCol Adrian Bulea

Maj. Lars R Schmidt

Maj Slawomir Komisarczyk

LtCol. Helmut Anzeletti

LtCol Tollak Tollaksen

LtCol Henrik Kahler, Danish Ministry of Defence Health Service

Mr Steffen Schmidt, Peter Kaas-Claesson, Danish Emergency Management Agency

Mr Arne Vagen, Head, and Mr Christian Jacob Hansen, Program Coordinator, Danish Refugee Council

Dr Gerald Rockenschaub, Regional Adviser, Disaster Preparedness and Response Program, World Health Organization, Copenhagen

Ms Sue Jorgenson, First Secretary, Australian Embassy

SWITZERLAND

Geneva

Mr John Damerill, Program Coordinator, Department for World Service, Lutheran World Federation

Mr David Atwood, Director/Representative, Disarmament and Peace Quaker United Nations Office

Mr Ton Van Zutphen, Director of Humanitarian Accountability, Humanitarian Emergency Affairs Group
World Vision International

Mr Joel McClellan, Former Executive Director, SCHR

Mr Kayoko Gotoh, Senior Adviser, Inter-agency and Donor Liaison, Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery, United Nations Development Program

UNITED STATES

New York

Mr Robertson Work, Principal Policy Adviser, Institutional Development Group, United Nations Development Program

Ms Elisabeth Clemens, Program Director, Knowledge Management, United Nations Development Programme

Ms Sarah Clarke and Ms Jessica Huber, Quaker United Nations office

Ms Michelle Fanzo, Vice President, Arzu Foundation (in support of women in Afghanistan)

Ms Nicole Dellar, Program Adviser, World Federalist Movement

Mr Juan Mendez, Special Adviser to the Secretary General, United Nations

Ms Vina Nadibulla, United Nations Representative, General Board of Global Ministries

CANADA

Kingston

Captain Lena T Cormier, CD representing LtCol Mike Voith (deployed to Pakistan for earthquake relief effort)

Disaster Assistance Response Team personnel

SHIRBRIG training exercise

Ottawa

Ms Christine Vincent, Director, Operations
CANADEM (CANADEM is a non-profit agency dedicated to advancing international peace and security through the recruitment, screening, promotion and rapid mobilisation of Canadian expertise)

UNITED STATES

Wallingford

Pendle Hill

Conference/retreat – Giving Generously -Harnessing the spirit of volunteerism

4. RESEARCH CONDUCTED AND LESSONS LEARNED

1. Overview

The tsunami disaster provided a lens through which to view the decisions made by the government, military and non-government organisations (NGOs) in Australia in coordinating an effective response to a regional humanitarian disaster.

While Australia's financial response to the tsunami was (pro rata) the most generous in the world, there were still some important lessons to be learnt from the humanitarian effort undertaken.

Most apparent was the need for a central coordinating mechanism to utilise the collective expertise of NGOs, the military and government agencies and to apply it to best effect. In addition, there would have been enormous benefit in a central coordinating mechanism to harness the skills and expertise offered by many Australians who were willing to volunteer their services and be deployed to the field.

Humanitarian non government organisations (NGOs) have grown dramatically in size and number in Australia in the past 20 years. Their proliferation and popularity has meant they have played an increasing role not just in emergency response but also in advocating sustainable development programs in the international communities in which they operate. NGOs are also playing an expanded role in engaging people's participation in order to achieve certain goals. This process of social mobilisation and 'direct democracy' has potency in influencing the national political and economic agenda through the legitimacy of representing a portion of 'civil society'. The commitment to, and use of, social inclusion by NGOs is what builds social capital and creates social mobilisation and influence.

For the purpose of this research, NGOs are those organisations that pursue some form of public interest or public good, rather than individual or commercial interests. Their not-for-profit status means they are unhampered by short term financial objectives and are able to provide emergency aid in the event of a disaster. They can also focus on development issues such as polio and malaria prevention, climate change, child labour practices, HIV/AIDS programs and a global ban on landmines. In Australia these NGOs include CARE Australia, the Australian Red Cross, Austcare, Oxfam, World Vision Australia, Australian Volunteers International, Save the Children, PLAN International, TEAR Australia, Medecins Sans Frontieres (Doctors Without Borders), International Women's Development Agency, Quaker Service Australia, Peace Brigades International, Baptist World Aid and Opportunity International.

My research focus was on the potential for creating a humanitarian emergency response team model for Australia and the region. While there is nothing new about the idea of a Humanitarian Emergency Response Team, at present this deployment of personnel is confined to individual agencies rather

than a coordinating mechanism that straddles the military, governments, NGOs and civilians.

A well coordinated medical and humanitarian emergency response team able to engage Australians with the key agencies leading the response effort would better enable Australia to express its position as a concerned international citizen. This high profile, coordinated and transparent humanitarian and medical team would have a human rights and social justice orientation. The emergency response team would be involved in services such as hospitalisation, nursing, immunisation, logistics, catering, engineering, sanitation and much more.

Humanitarian emergency response teams provide an additional foreign policy option to the people and Government of Australia.

In addition to the work of NGOs, the Australian Defence Forces (ADF) already responds to many humanitarian crises. Australia also has a proud record of mine clearance, not only in Cambodia but in Mozambique, too, and other areas.

There is much discussion about the role of the military in civilian peacekeeping operations. Indeed, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) has now formalised its guidelines for civil-military engagement in humanitarian emergencies (Refer Appendix 3).

The United Nations reliance on member states for contributions to peacekeeping operations precludes its capability to deploy immediately in response to a crisis. Coupled with financial and budgetary procedures it can mean 3-6 months before an operation is underway following authorisation from the UN Security Council. A humanitarian emergency response team, trialled and exercised, in communication with the UN, would have the advantage of being organised and deployed quickly in response to immediate need. It could address urgent medical and humanitarian needs in the crisis area while enhancing the UN's capacity to deal with the long-term situation.

This concept is an adjunct to existing operations rather than an alternative. It is one that has the potential to work in close cooperation with Emergency Management Australia and other lead agencies in offering a coordinated, focused series of teams to respond quickly in the case of an emergency, natural disaster or major conflict. In this regard it draws upon the model of the INTERFET force into East Timor, in working with NGOs in the field, or it could serve as a potent coordination mechanism in the case of fire, flood or earthquake.

NGOs are facing an unprecedented number of humanitarian emergencies requiring their assistance. This pressure and expectation brings its own challenges, such as the organisational shift required to effectively train and manage people, managing stakeholder expectations of NGOs and ensuring accountability, transparency and cost on return. There is also, increasingly, a

requirement that NGOs improve operational linkages between development, peacemaking, peace building, capacity building and disaster risk reduction.

My research also focused on the type of work required of a humanitarian emergency response team including:

- Medical services, hospitalisation, nursing, immunisation – both therapeutic and preventative – and mortician services
- Humanitarian services such as required for refugees and the displaced, non combatants, women, children and prisoners of war
- Coordination services including logisticians, legal people, movement experts, tracing service
- Shelter including establishment of camps, sanitation, water, catering, engineering, planning
- Conflict resolution services such as mediation, dialogue, communication
- Forensic support in response to terrorism attacks

Other practical considerations include registration and screening processes. To this end, my research covered studying the beso/VSO (British Executive Service/Voluntary Service Overseas) Rapid Response Register for civilians in the United Kingdom. This sources suitable personnel for short notice emergency assignments and appropriate training to equip them for rapid response assignments.

The cost parameters for such a model were also considered. This cost needs to be determined on the basis of the social as well as the economic cost of the proposed policy or engagement. In addition, attention needs to be given to the objectives, timeline and desired outcomes of any military and non military response. Any costing would ideally factor in support for establishing coping mechanisms for self reliance and strategies to reduce manipulation for non humanitarian needs as well as exit processes with transition to development.

2. Current scenario

I spent time meeting with key agencies and individuals in Australia before going overseas. This provided me with a snapshot of some of the issues surrounding current coordination efforts, which included:

2.1 AusAID

While AusAID did send some of its staff to tsunami affected areas, it does not have a dedicated operational arm, with full time trained rapid response personnel able to be deployed quickly to the field in the event of a humanitarian emergency. This differs from its counterparts in both the United Kingdom (Department for International Development - DFID) and the United States (USAID). DFID's Rapid Response Team, which is located in its Conflict, Humanitarian and Security Department (CHASE) has 27 staff as permanent advisers covering operations, logistics and administration, all part of a duty office system with an emergency response operations manual

carried at all times. DFID's operational policy is to provide a full response and to retract if necessary. It is currently looking at creating a centralised database, as a register of items that people hold on location for use in a humanitarian emergency in order to ensure a more effective and efficient operation.

CHASE's role is to provide advice and support relating to conflict prevention and resolution, refugee and forced migration issues, human rights in conflict situations, emergency response preparedness and contingency planning arrangements, disaster and vulnerability initiatives, use of military assets for humanitarian work and the strengthening of international systems.

The advantage of AusAID having an operational rapid response unit is that it would then provide the opportunity for regular operational scenarios and training to support key staff in a dedicated planning capability with appropriate systems in place.

This is especially important at a time when there is a need for improved coordination with key agencies and experts (scientific and technological as well as humanitarian) who can provide advanced warning of where and when humanitarian emergencies are likely to occur. Ensuring not only sound coordination across agencies but also that local authorities and people are trained in basic environmental principles, effective safety codes and early warning systems as well as civilian engagement to respond quickly to warning signals. Such measures will contribute to a more efficient and integrated response to an emergency.

Scenario planning is critical in being able to allocate and deploy resources across areas including environmental, climatic, violent conflict, terrorism and biological disasters.

2.2 Australian Defence Force

The military in different countries have differing views on whether there is a formal role for them in humanitarian emergencies. While the military in the UK and Canada would see a valid role, it seems that Australia is more in line with the United States in preferring a hands-off role in humanitarian disasters unless there are political or strategic security issues at stake (most recently East Timor and Solomon Islands).

Academic, Hugo Slim, addresses this issue in an article titled 'Military Humanitarianism and the New Peacekeeping: The Agenda for Peace?' 4 June 2000 in the Journal of Humanitarian Assistance. Slim observes that the British Army has introduced the term "wider peacekeeping" to capture the new environment and demands of second generation peacekeeping. He also observes that another key feature underlying the British Army doctrine is its acceptance of the protracted turbulence of most of the wars they are operating in today and the essential no-win position of peacekeeping forces. "Success is understood as the capacity of the force, working in tandem with political and humanitarian efforts, to create the right environment for peace:

the recognition that peacekeeping forces can create space but not solutions. Inherent in the doctrine of wider peacekeeping, therefore, is an element of pragmatism which recognises its limits and the extreme difficulties and uncertainty inherent in today's peacekeeping environment.”

Slim contrasts this acceptance of long term turbulence integral to the British Army doctrine to the American approach with its focus on having a clear view of “end-states” before beginning a peacekeeping operation and having them clearly in writing as “sunset clauses”. In this regard the approach of the Australian Defence Forces appears similar to that of the US military.

To this point the military have only played a major role in areas where there is an investment in the political outcome of the crises. In many parts of the world, such as Sudan and Niger in Africa this is not the case and thus the weight of responsibility has been with those NGOs operating in the region.

The recent, and significant, change of policy by the Pentagon in the United States which now requires the US armed forces to be equally adept at making peace as engaging in warfare is likely to result in an increased engagement by the US military in humanitarian missions. This is the first time that activities such as restoring essential services and ‘meeting the humanitarian needs of a vanquished population’ have been defined as a core function of the US military. To support this shift in policy, a ‘Stability Operations Center’ is due to be established to coordinate education, training, research and lessons learned.’ A timeline for policy implementation has not yet been advised and yet the shift in thinking in the US may also influence that of military operations in other countries including Australia.

2.3 Emergency Management Australia

Emergency Management Australia has also played an important role in disaster management in response to the Indian Ocean tsunami. EMA was originally created as a policy unit for ensuring effective coordination across a federated structure (state and federal governments) in relation to natural disasters such as fire, flood and cyclone. In the wake of the tsunami, EMA changed into an operational agency – working with AusAID, the Department of Foreign Affairs and the Department of Health, albeit without ready access to its own budget and resources. EMA staff worked hard to secure and deploy multi skilled medical teams, paramedics and surgeons but at the time there wasn't the resource base to send its staff to coordinate teams and logistics. Nor had there been training in catastrophic disaster management to prepare anyone for the scale of response required.

The strength of EMA is that it has access to an Australia wide network of volunteers from agencies such as the State Emergency Service in each state, with people skilled in responding to natural disasters such as bushfires and floods. This volunteer base could be the foundation for a central rapid response register.

EMA also operates an Australian Emergency Management Institute at Mt Macedon out of Melbourne with a focus on strategic management, disaster risk management, risk based planning, emergency coordination and exercise management. This, together with RedR's courses in dealing with specific aspects of humanitarian emergencies such as security and logistics, offers a sound foundation for training those wishing to commit to a rapid response register. The Australian Defence Forces could also play a role in training in relation to command and control functions and scenario planning.

2.4 Coordination across agencies

One of the observations from the Australian agencies involved in delivering assistance to tsunami affected countries was that there was a lack of coordination across agencies to ensure that the correct equipment and supplies were delivered to the appropriate places. There would also have been benefit in having an agreement in place for government agencies such as EMA to work with NGOs such as Care Australia in order to secure access to its helicopters and logistics support.

With the increasing number of humanitarian emergencies in our region, and with the possible threat of Avian Influenza (AI) as both a regional and a domestic emergency, it is highly relevant to consider issues regarding coordination at this time.

In terms of AI, there is a requirement for coordinated training, accreditation and equipment to be in place should a pandemic strike. Given that hospitals don't have the resources or staff to cope with such a situation, how is it envisaged that treatment will be delivered to those in need? How could civilians play a part in assisting the rapid response effort? What would be EMA's role in assisting the Department of Health in managing the communication and operational aspects? What scenario planning by hospitals is being undertaken, how are appropriate information technology systems being ramped up to deal with such an emergency and how are state and federal coordination mechanisms being streamlined and strengthened to cope with a pandemic?

3. Field research

Models for a humanitarian emergency response team exist in the UK, Europe and in North America. My research provided me an in-depth study of two models – one in Denmark and one in Canada. I also spent time learning about a third model in the UK which, as a fundraising coordination model, would have valuable application in Australia. The aspects of modelling in which I was particularly interested included structure, coordination, training, personnel and stakeholder engagement, deployment, tracking and integration.

3.1 Disaster Emergency Committee

The Disaster Emergency Committee (DEC) was formed in 1963 in London. Today the trustees are the CEOs of major NGOs together with several

additional trustees representing key areas such as broadcasting, fundraising and marketing. DEC appeals are reserved for major disasters and emergencies which cannot be addressed with the usual in-country response mechanisms. The DEC model permits quick, effective and efficient response and ensures that administrative costs for major appeals are capped at 2%.

When it was first created DEC was located at the British Red Cross, moving three years later to another NGO before being offered space at British Post. It now has its own office space and became both a registered charity and a limited company in 1991. In 1999 the DEC disengaged from government and became solely NGO operated as its members decided that government was taking too much interest in determining policy responses to humanitarian disasters.

The DEC annual operating cost is £300,000 plus a £200,000 reserve with a Formula of Spend for its NGOs calculated over three years. No NGO gets less than 3% of funds with a ceiling of 20%, calculated on the earnings of each NGO within the UK.

There are five core staff at DEC comprising the CEO, Appeals Manager, Donations Manager, Finance Manager and Administrative Assistant. The CEO is responsible to the Trustees who meet four times per year plus an AGM. Aside from the CEOs from each member NGO, there are four extra external trustees as well as a Chairman and Treasurer to cover skills across media and broadcasting, marketing and advertising. Trustees are appointed for three years with option of reappointment for a further 3 years.

Three guiding principles underpin DEC's work in determining whether a national joint appeal is the appropriate response to a particular disaster:

1. The disaster must be on such a scale and of such urgency as to call for swift international humanitarian assistance
2. The DEC agencies, or some of them, must be in a position to provide effective and swift humanitarian assistance at a scale to justify a national appeal
3. There must be sufficient public awareness of, and sympathy for, the humanitarian situation so as to give reasonable grounds for concluding that a public Appeal would be successful.

In order to launch an appeal, the DEC needs to be confident of raising a minimum of £5 million. The DEC CEO initiates discussion about a campaign by arranging a teleconference with program people from each member NGO. From this teleconference the DEC builds up a case on areas affected. Member agencies share information and assessments which enables the DEC Secretariat and Trustees to determine the gravity of an emergency and the likely level and effectiveness of a collective response.

An "Amber Alert" is raised to alert the NGOs in case they have, in the interim, launched their own appeals. The official sign-on is secured through CEO

discussion with all Trustees. At this point, the NGOs stop their own appeals in order to present a united voice through the DEC Appeal.

The BBC is DEC's official broadcaster, as a public service, together with ITV, Channel 5 and SKY. A BBC producer creates the radio and television scripts for the appeal and then the DEC sends the BBC script to independent networks for them to adapt. DEC's design company creates the print campaign using a template without pictures - just a very stark text with messages such as £15 will buy..., £20 will buy...

The BT tower is used to launch the appeal with a live call-in with celebrities. An automated call centre functions from this point on, together with a website for online donations. People cannot nominate the NGO they wish to donate to – money is pooled – the only time they can do this is in a separate mailing undertaken by the DEC where donors can specify both the agency and the appeal.

For each appeal an Appeal Information Sheet is produced with a new postal number secured each time. The phone number and website remain the same for every appeal. A Fast Track Group is created from the NGOs with program, marketing and lead media/press persons appointed from the pool of agencies. Each NGO nominates a spokesperson – often they nominate one of their field based staff due to media interest. This spokesperson is required to advise what s\he will be saying and they are then selected for media interview on a rotational basis. Spokespeople are required to mention the DEC phone number and website and to say “we are part of the DEC appeal” each time they conduct an interview.

The DEC secretariat organises information sharing teleconferences to monitor the situation in “at risk” countries, allowing members to share field information and analysis and to strengthen preparedness strategies. It also adheres to the common humanitarian action plan objectives. This includes building a sense of common purpose among the main humanitarian actors, providing overall direction and prioritisation, ensuring learning from the previous experience and supporting effective resource mobilisation - all points which are also directly transferable to a field situation.

The fundraising administration cost is capped at 2%!!

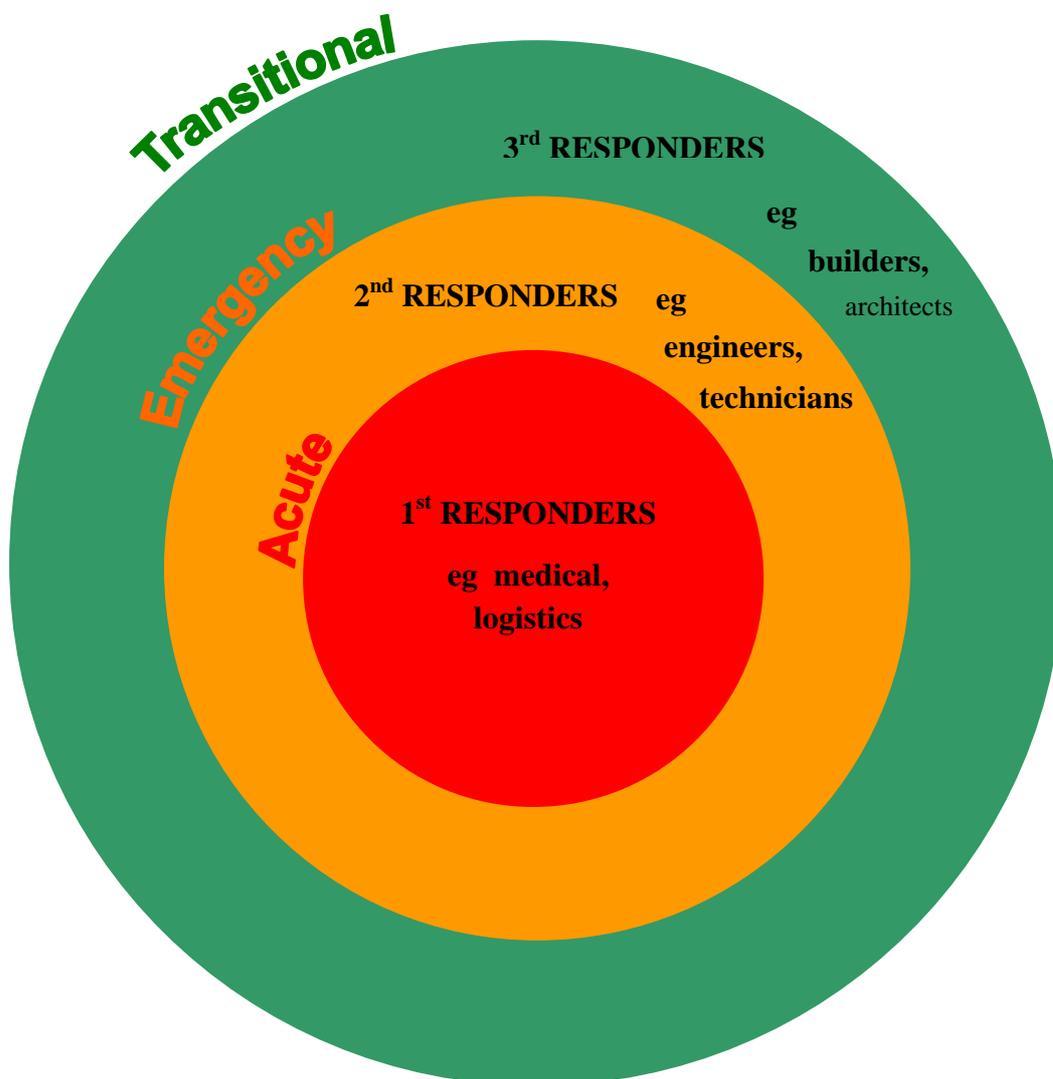
A total of 1% is also spent on evaluating the agency's expenditure in the field and this information is then made available to the public on DEC's website and in hard copy form.

Funds are added together to produce the total amount dispersed to each agency – spend must be 9 months + 9 months – 80/20 spend – except for the tsunami where a three-year plan was required.

The advantage of a DEC model for Australia is that it could not only deliver a more efficient and effective shared fundraising effort, it would also serve as a coordinating mechanism both for a Rapid Response Register as well as other

forms of coordination across NGOs such as a centralised procurement process.

A Rapid Response Register would identify the skills required – such as medical, engineering, operational, logistics, procurement and technical. The model could incorporate a threshold for call up – 1st, 2nd and 3rd responders on call for three months of the year similar to an army reserve model, with a 2nd wave of people such as engineers, technicians. The third wave may be architects and builders. The diagram below shows such a model – with the concentric circles representing the dimensions of this register covering acute, emergency and transitional (developed with Professor Chris Cushing from Bradford University)



A volunteer civilian model would require a team leader with volunteers specialising in areas such as water, shelter, sanitation and search and rescue. Team leaders could each be provided with up to five volunteers covering such areas plus assisting in the interface with local population and other NGOs.

In terms of local capacity building in the field – a federation of NGOs could train local people in the field to ensure that survival strategies were in place. Working with provincial government to build local capacity is an essential part of this process.

3.2 VSO

In April 2005 the UK based beso (British Executive Service Overseas) merged with the UK based VSO (Voluntary Service Overseas). This effectively provided a pool of trained people who could be deployed to a humanitarian disaster at short notice as well as people who were available for longer term reconstruction, recovery and development missions.

The registration process for potential volunteers requires that they have at least five years relevant technical or professional experience in at least one specific field together with a record of provision of this advice to others and up to date knowledge of current developments in their field of expertise. They need to be able to work in and with different cultures, to be computer and internet proficient and fluent in written and spoken English as well as able to be deployed at short notice. Volunteers also need to accept the beso Volunteer Code before taking on an assignment (see Appendix 1) The Active List of skills and experience for registration spans administration, finance, environment, dentistry, construction, languages, law, water/irrigation, planning, radio and radar to name a few.

Specific experience and skills sought are posted on the VSO website. This may range from water and sanitation engineers to disaster management coordinators. Job descriptions are posted with a reference number to quote when ringing or emailing the VSO's Response Unit. A Unit staff person will review the expression of interest against the skill requirements and, if the skills match then the applicant's details are passed to the beso Registrar who will begin the fulfilment process. (see Appendix 2: Process for registering for beso's rapid response team)

Before their placement volunteers participate in an initial assessment of their capabilities, receive appropriate levels of training and briefing and undergo health and fitness assessments and have their flight and visa costs are paid by VSO. Volunteer placement lasts an average of 33 days. During their placement they receive a briefing from the VSO program office, a local living allowance and local accommodation and oversight by a UK regional representative. This regional representative is responsible for 50 -100 short-term volunteers in his or her region. They are responsible for briefing and debriefing the volunteer, meeting them in the field and attending an annual review and strategic planning process. Each UK regional representative reports to the Registrar for the beso register.

3.3 Standby High Readiness Brigade

The Danish Government initiated the Multinational Standby High-Readiness Brigade (SHIRBRIG) on 15 December 1996 to address the need for a rapid response peacekeeping force to stabilise areas of conflict while the UN awaited a mandate to deploy peacekeeping troops. SHIRBRIG is a non-standing brigade consisting of national contributions to the United Nations' Standby-Arrangement System (UNSAS) aimed at rapid deployment and is activated by UN mandated Chapter 6 peacekeeping operations.

Initially involving countries including Austria, Canada, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland and Sweden, a number of additional European countries together with Egypt have since committed to SHIRBRIG. It was declared available for deployment from January 2000 with a small permanent staff responsible for the development of procedures and joint training exercises twice a year and with personnel on standby (for a three year appointment) in the event of a crisis. SHIRBRIG headquarters is located approximately 30 kilometres from Copenhagen.

The establishment of SHIRBRIG followed a recommendation from the UN Secretary General that the UN should consider the idea of a rapid deployment force. The force would consist of units from a number of member states, trained to the same standard, using the same operating procedures and taking part in combined exercises to enable the force to deploy at short notice.

Standby status for SHIRBRIG can also apply to NATO or European Union and so personnel in countries are not just awaiting a SHIRBRIG assignment; a request for deployment could come from a number of different avenues.

Current full participants in SHIRBRIG include Austria, Canada, Denmark, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Romania, Egypt and Sweden. Finland, Lithuania, Spain, Portugal and Slovenia also participate but have not signed all memoranda of understanding. In addition, Chile, Czech Republic, Hungary, Jordan, Ireland and Senegal take part in SHIRBRIG as observers.

Membership criteria comprise a requirement that the countries are small to medium sized and able to commit to a peacekeeping presence. These countries are required to pay for the participation of well equipped and trained units able to meet rapid response deadlines.

The annual operating cost of SHIRBRIG (excluding deployment) is US\$520,000 and this cost is shared across the full member nations.

SHIRBRIG comprises three parts – The Steering Committee, the Planning Element and the Brigade Pool. The Steering Committee is the executive body for SHIRBRIG. It is a politico-military body responsible for policy and oversight of the Planning Element and meets three to four times per year. Chairmanship of the Steering Committee rotates to a different country each

year. The Contact Group in New York comprising the permanent mission members, reports to the Steering Committee.

The Planning Element is the permanent multinational staff of the Brigade. It performs all pre-deployment tasks and upon deployment forms the nucleus of the SHIRBRIG staff.

The Brigade Pool consists of a number of units that exceed the force requirement for the Brigade once deployed. This is to compensate for the possibility that one or more of the participating nations may not contribute troops to an actual mission and ensures that the deployment of the brigade will not be compromised. The Brigade itself consists of 4,000-5,000 soldiers who can provide all the necessary capabilities for the force to be self-sufficient once deployed to a particular area given the likelihood of depleted infrastructures in these areas of conflict. In the event of a conflict SHIRBRIG requires 15 -30 days reaction time before personnel are deployed for up to six months.

SHIRBRIG is not designed for humanitarian operations but it can provide command and control in an emergency as well as standard operating procedures and documentation processes to assist a humanitarian operation. It can also provide standby units for humanitarian operations as it does for peacekeeping operations.

Mandatory skills and experience within the SHIRBRIG structure include infantry, cavalry squadrons, engineers, logistics, coordination centre, transport, surgical (hospitals), aviation and military police. Functions within SHIRBRIG include welfare, action, protocol, finance, administration, personnel management, training, reception, mission planning, standard operating procedures planning.

Denmark is host nation to the SHIRBRIG headquarters and provides many facilities free of cost. The participating countries pay the training and preparation for deployment. At the actual time of deployment, the UN pays for all expenses. The costs to participating countries relate to the conduct of the Planning Element and participation in training activities.

Deployment comprises the following stages:

- | | |
|---|---|
| Phase 1 | Pre deployment (preparation and training) |
| Phase 2 | Deployment (14-30 days) |
| (Readiness is 7-11 days for permanent staff and 28 days for non permanent due to vaccinations required) | |
| Phase 3 | Execution and employment (1-6 months) |
| Phase 4 | Redeployment |
| Phase 5 | Reconstitution |

The Brigade has been deployed on the United Nations Mission to Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE), a mission that gave credibility to SHIRBRIG as the only

operational, cohesive multinational brigade. Most recently it has been deployed to Sudan in response to the large scale famine there.

The strategic direction for 2006 includes more contingency planning, integrated mission planning with non military components, concentration on force level HQ planning and operations, more mission enabling units, improved force decision-making to allow greater predictabilities and increased emphasis on assisting capacity building with African Union and African Regional Economic Communities.

The main limitation of SHIRBRIG is that a country's promised forces may already be engaged in other operations, some may not be fully prepared or may lack part of their equipment, and few of the national units have trained together. Also, since wealthier countries are more able to provide officers, a balance needs to be found to allow for broad and equal representation from all participating nations while taking into account the realities of who can afford to provide the necessary military and financial resources. This said, countries clearly benefit both in terms of the prestige of being associated with such an operation as well as the opportunity to have staff employed and paid by the United Nations in the event of a humanitarian emergency.

There is keen interest in the SHIRBRIG model both in Eastern Europe and in Africa. A core group of African countries is in the process of creating five regional brigade size units based on the SHIRBRIG model with the intention that SHIRBRIG assist with training these units in 2006. There is also another multinational peace force called the South Eastern European Brigade (SERBRIG) with 7 nations from South Eastern Europe plus US and other countries as observers.

The strength of SHIRBRIG is both the scenario planning it undertakes to ensure readiness in coping with the most complex situations as well as the fact that it operates as a transnational coordination model with the support of many European and non European nations.

3.4 Disaster Assistance Response Team

A different model, one that focuses on humanitarian emergencies rather than peacekeeping operations exists in Canada. The Canadian Government has developed a Canadian Forces Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART) to respond quickly to requests for humanitarian assistance and disaster relief. As a military organisation it is designed to deploy rapidly to global crises ranging from natural disasters to complex humanitarian emergencies. Its function is to stabilise the primary efforts for an emergency or disaster. This may include such initiatives as providing purified drinking water and medical aid to prevent the rapid onset of secondary effects of a disaster. Pakistan is the latest country to receive assistance from the DART in response to the devastating earthquake in the region.

The DART is designed to bridge the gap until members of the international community arrive to provide long-term help. It was created to strengthen the

Canadian government's ability to meet both domestic and international requests for aid.

The DART operation has nine full time personnel and incorporates approximately 200 personnel ready to deploy quickly to conduct emergency relief operations for up to 40 days. It operates only in environments where it will not encounter any organised resistance or threat.

The four critical needs it serves are primary medical care, provision of safe drinking water, limited specialist engineer capacity and a command and control structure that allows for effective communications between the DART, the host nation and the other agencies involved in the relief effort. This includes international organisations, non government organisations and UN aid agencies.

DART's operational readiness is impressive. A Reconnaissance Team of eight personnel can be deployed within 12 hours with a DART advance party and main body deployed within 48 hours.

Training for all personnel is conducted annually where DART procedures and scenarios are rehearsed. In terms of the tsunami, the type of assistance provided included operating for medical clinics, provision of 3.5 million litres of safe drinking water, light engineering tasks, operation of a ferry service to transport more than 70,000 people and assistance in the construction of displaced persons' camps. Prior to DART's departure from the field, there is a handover of operations to identified NGOs to continue the work undertaken by DART, as necessary.

There are a number of limitations to the DART model. For instance there is no pre-training in areas such as mother-child health and diseases such as cholera and yellow fever nor is there any training in trauma symptoms and response as psycho social services are not deemed part of the DART service. The tsunami was an exception; where two psychologists were part of the team deployed.

3.5 United States

While I did not spend time observing coordination models employed by the United States government, I was made aware that the overall structure for responding to a humanitarian emergency is as follows. International humanitarian emergencies are the responsibility of the Department of State's US Agency for International Development (USAID) and its Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA). This is one of seven offices within USAID's Bureau for Democracy, Conflict and Humanitarian Assistance. Working in conjunction with these personnel are uniformed officials from the Department of Defence who may provide logistics, communication, or security capacity to a particular response. The administrator of USAID is the special coordinator for all US international disaster assistance responses and is therefore the 'commander in chief' coordinating the disaster response.

OFDA is organised into three divisions – the Disaster Response and Mitigation (DRM) division, with responsibility for coordinating the provision of relief supplies and humanitarian assistance; the Operations (OPS) division, which develops and manages logistical, operational and technical support for field offices and disaster responses; and the Program Support (PS) division which provides programmatic and administrative support including budget, financial, procurement planning, contracts and IT.

If the size and scope of the disaster requires it, then a Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART) is deployed to the affected country to conduct on-ground assessments, provide recommendations and oversee provision of assistance. This assistance is usually provided in the wake of devastating disasters of significant magnitude such as occurred in Liberia, Iraq, Ethiopia and the tsunami-affected countries.

Domestic emergencies in the United States are the responsibility of the Department of Homeland Security and the Federal Emergency Management Agency. These organisations coordinate emergency rescue teams that operate in each state to provide critical medical and humanitarian assistance as required. For instance, there are approximately 70 Disaster Medical Assistance teams nationwide, with 12 of these able to deploy within six hours and remain self sufficient for 72 hours with enough food, water, shelter and medical supplies to treat about 200 persons per day. The commitment required is to be available for a two week deployment each year. However, with Hurricane Katrina, the team members operated over several months due to the scale of the disaster. Similarly there are Disaster Mortuary Operational Response Teams able to conduct large scale mortuary operations as required.

4. The politics of delivering a humanitarian emergency response

How would a coordination mechanism for an operational humanitarian response team work in practice? How could the military and the government work with NGOs and civilians to provide a coordinated response? Does the increased focus on security considerations and counter terrorism preclude the opportunity to engage civilians in a humanitarian emergency team model? Does it exclude the option of such a model becoming an Asia Pacific Humanitarian Emergency Response Team or, does it make it more likely that such a regional model would provide the best form of long term security?

Political choices are key elements of humanitarian assistance and decision-making. These include decisions over who responds and how, who is engaged and to what end. When would a humanitarian emergency response team be involved and to what type of emergency would it react?

If the situation requiring assistance is a complex humanitarian emergency involving civil strife, large-scale displacement of citizens and high mortality and morbidity rates, would a humanitarian emergency response team be deployed? How would negotiation over food movement, relief supplies and personnel be undertaken in these areas?

Many non governmental organisations (NGOs) receive financial assistance from the Australian government for their humanitarian assistance operations. These agencies identify emergencies, make calls for donations, assess needs, develop responses, and then execute the humanitarian relief operations. Different agencies fulfil different areas of expertise. Yet “development organisations” are increasing their provision of emergency relief in disaster situations in response to public and corporate expectation and the level of donations.

While federal governments remain the most significant source for funding humanitarian assistance, NGOs have become increasingly important channels for delivering both emergency relief and humanitarian aid over the past 20 years. This expanded role by NGOs has also meant that they have developed intimate relationships in the field, sometimes resulting in their accessing areas that are not accessible to government agencies or to the UN.

Traditional humanitarian assistance has focused on providing emergency relief during times of natural disasters and yet, often the type of conflict is political or man made in nature. International humanitarian law prescribes the neutrality of humanitarian providers and the consent of sovereign entities. Increasingly, however, the political authority controlling a region targeted for humanitarian relief operations is not a state authority, but a militia leader or clan leader. NGOs have often conducted their relief efforts following complex negotiations with those parties involved in the dispute and sometimes they have gone ahead with cross border relief without the consent of the ruling political leadership.

We are now seeing the rapid deployment of military assistance when the zone of disaster is also affected by political conflict. Here intelligence, security operations and logistics support are employed by the military in a form of what has been called “military humanitarianism.” In this context, the promise of neutrality is made more difficult since these armed forces must also balance their operations with the political sensitivities of the host government.

The difficulties of a military force operating side by side with an NGO have been documented in many crisis situations where the movement of relief supplies and humanitarian forces competes with that of security equipment, ammunition, materials, and forces. The military force takes precedence over NGO humanitarian aid by virtue of the security aspect in dealing with attacking forces, landmines or other physical dangers. Its hard to integrate and accommodate gun carrying military personnel with NGO personnel committed to a peaceful and impartial operation.

Thus it seems prudent to not only ensure that the right protocols are in place for civil military engagement (refer Appendix 3) but that government, NGO and military personnel have been made aware of this protocol and are ready to adhere to it upon deployment to the field.

In a recent address, Jan Egeland, United Nations Under-secretary for humanitarian affairs identified four areas that required urgent attention in

order to better respond to humanitarian emergencies. The first is a predictable UN funding base from which to draw (it is hoped that a newly established UN Global Emergency Fund will attract this support), the second is stronger coordination across agencies, third, a 10% commitment of resources by all key agencies toward disaster preparedness and finally donations by civilians that at least equals the response to the tsunami in relation to each humanitarian emergency. (Independent Weekly, January 1-7 2006 pages 1 & 4)

5. Research Questions

My research focus raised many questions which I teased out while overseas. These questions included the following:

- How do you coordinate an effective response to complex humanitarian emergencies, both natural and manmade?
- What are the lessons learned from previous humanitarian emergency response missions?
- What is an effective model for a humanitarian emergency response team for Australia and the region?
- Is there a valid role for civilians in engaging in a humanitarian emergency response team?
- How do you keep good teams together incorporating involvement from the military, government, NGOs and civilians?
- What is required in terms of capacity building in the Asia Pacific region?
- How would people be recruited and trained to form a humanitarian rapid response team for deployment in the event of a disaster?
- What are the gender issues to be considered in the creation of an effective humanitarian emergency response team model?
- Do military forces have a responsibility to provide a secure environment for humanitarian action?
- How do you foster a closer working relationship between the military and NGOs in relation to humanitarian relief?
- Should the relationship between the military and the civilian population be considered separately from the military's occasional partnership with civilian humanitarian actors?
- Should military support for humanitarian emergency response always be under civilian leadership?
- What type of guiding principles could usefully support coordinating a relationship between government, the military, NGOs and civilians?
- How can a working relationship between the military and NGOs be fostered so that a training and operational partnership might be developed rather than defaulting to a last minute response?
- How to improve regional cooperation in order to encourage shared power and democratic decision-making
- What are the longer term benefits of engaging civilians beyond a donor role to a more direct relationship with the conflict itself? How might this

shape a greater understanding of the nature of conflict and awareness by civilians and citizens

- Is there potential for a SHIRBRIG model in Australia and the region?

6. Training a Humanitarian Emergency Response Team

It's clear from observing rapid response teams in Europe and North America that what is required is a centralised coordinating mechanism that can operate a Rapid Response Register of civilians with appropriate skills and expertise. What is also required is a dedicated training college with experienced staff able to offer training across the essential areas for humanitarian emergencies. This includes logistics, primary medical care, water and sanitation, specialist engineering, information technology and media and public communications.

Ideally, the training would draw from the best NGO experience together with input from military and key government agencies and industry associations such as the Australian Medical Association. Both Emergency Management Australia and RedR have programs in place that could form the foundation for an expanded training facility to accommodate people registering for short term volunteer deployment to humanitarian emergencies.

This rapid response register could become part of Australian Volunteer International's operation as an adjunct to long term volunteer deployment, and/or it could come under the umbrella of a coordinated unit modelled on the Disaster Emergency Committee (DEC). NGOs could then draw from this centralised pool if it required additional personnel in the field. Agencies could add their own "cultural fit" training eg Christian focus of Christian NGOs, information on their decision-making culture and individual field operations.

Volunteers could be provided a yearly training allowance if they were accepted on the rapid Response Register. There would be a number of ways such an operation could be funded. One suggestion is a Tobin style corporate tax to support both the Rapid Response Register and the training requirements accompanying it. Tobin Taxes are excise taxes on cross-border currency transactions. (The name Tobin Tax and the original concept derive from James Tobin, a Ph.D. Nobel-laureate economist at Yale University.)

7. IMPROVING LOCAL CAPACITY TO RESPOND TO HUMANITARIAN EMERGENCIES

It is important that greater attention be given to assisting the development of early warning systems and in-country training for officials and the broader population. In addition, there is a need for the provision of more specific training to address the different aspects of responding to a humanitarian disaster.

There is a need to ensure that neighbouring states and influential states are an integral part of a peace process affecting their territory. Experience has shown that, following a disaster, the majority of lives are saved by immediate

local response. Thus it is imperative that more attention and resources be given to increasing and enhancing the capacity to respond in countries which are prone to natural disasters. This requires identifying those local institutions that have the networks, information, access to resources and reputation to be able to better respond with the right support from other countries.

In addition, and this is beyond the scope of this report, there is a need to look at ways of improving in-country coordination between NGOs, the UN, the military, the host country's governments (at different levels) and foreign government agencies. The UN often appoints its nearest staff person as a humanitarian coordinator without their necessarily having the background experience or training to equip them for such a role. Humanitarian emergency coordinators need to have a very different perspective from those who are in development positions and yet the resident coordinator often becomes the humanitarian coordinator by default.

In addition, given the number and scale of emergencies, NGOs increasingly are having to deploy personnel to the field with minimal or no training to support their relief efforts. Currently the type of training being offered by NGO operations is "competency training" – training according to the competency gap – rather than overall training in working on humanitarian emergencies. There is a lack of incentive for good, experienced people to work on humanitarian emergencies given the conditions and demands of such a position. The UN needs to forge a strong partnership with NGOs and the military.

In terms of the plethora of NGOs operating in a crisis zone, one of the ways to strengthen coordination is to create sectorial coordination groups such as water and sanitation with an NGO linked to a UN body to better service the local population's needs.

It's also important to ensure that response to disasters and emergencies is contextualised so that it is not at odds with local customs and culture and thus creates a divisive effect. Gender is also an important dimension given that women are more vulnerable to disasters because of their lack of access to resources and their overall lower socio-economic status in many countries.

The best local level coordination takes place in the context of relevant disaster preparedness mechanisms that have been put in place pre-emergency. Thus, building preparedness capacity is the best way to ensure effective coordination during the humanitarian emergency response. So, there is a need to invest in early warning systems and effective training of local officials and civilians for tsunamis and other natural disasters.

In terms of responding to a disaster, often those NGOs who are network and membership based and working through decentralised structures are very effective in terms of coordinating community response and participation post-emergency.

5. CONCLUSIONS

There is a need to strengthen existing mechanisms for responding to humanitarian emergencies and to improve coordination across agencies (government, NGO and military). Two practical starting points would be the following:

First, create a coordinated fundraising model based on the Disaster Emergency Committee (DEC) in the United Kingdom which provides a whole of NGO response to disasters. Through a shared appeal, administrative costs are capped at 2% and funds are distributed across all member agencies for spend in the field. There is also the potential to share other costs such as procurement. A Rapid Response Register could operate under this umbrella NGO mechanism.

Second, formalise an operational unit within AusAID with dedicated rapid response staff, similar to the Department for International Development model in the United Kingdom (and similar government models in Europe and North America). This dedicated secretariat would provide swift and effective support in the field in the event of a humanitarian emergency.

There is a keen desire by Australians to play a greater role in responding to humanitarian emergencies. This provides a valuable opportunity to tap into the ready market of skilled and experienced personnel willing to be deployed to the field following a disaster.

To achieve this there needs to be an agreement by Emergency Management Australia, Australian Volunteers International, RedR, the Australian Medical Association and the Australian Council for International Development to create a coordinated civilian rapid response register. Involve RedR and Emergency Management Australia in the development of appropriate training model and materials. This Rapid Response Register could come under the banner of an Australian style DEC. Effectively it would mean that NGOs have access to a central pool of volunteers, appropriately sourced and trained, ready for deployment in the event of a humanitarian emergency.

Given the issues in responding to regional security concerns and complex humanitarian emergencies as well as natural disaster in the Asia Pacific region, there is worth in considering the option of an Asia Pacific High Readiness Brigade under a UN mandate. One low cost way to explore this would be to advocate Australia assuming formal observer status with SHIRBRIG for a 12 month period to determine the value in either becoming a formal member of SHIRBRIG (like Canada) or in creating an Asia Pacific version, given the interest already expressed by Japan.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Create a coordinated fundraising model based on the Disaster Emergency Committee (DEC) in the United Kingdom which provides a coordinated non government response to disasters. Through a shared appeal, administrative costs are capped at 2% and funds are distributed across all member agencies for spend in the field.

2. Formalise an operational unit within AusAID with dedicated rapid response staff, similar to the Department for International Development model in the United Kingdom (and similar government models in Europe and North America). This dedicated secretariat would provide swift and effective support in the field in the event of a humanitarian emergency.

3. Work with Emergency Management Australia, Australian Volunteers International, RedR, the Australian Medical Association and the Australian Council for International Development to create a coordinated civilian Rapid Response Register. Involve RedR and Emergency Management Australia in the development of appropriate training model and materials. This Rapid Response Register could come under the banner of an Australian style DEC. Effectively it would mean that NGOs have access to a central pool of volunteers, appropriately sourced and trained, ready for deployment in the event of a humanitarian emergency.

4. Advocate Australia assuming formal observer status with SHIRBRIG for a 12 month period in order to determine the worth in either becoming a formal member of SHIRBRIG (like Canada) or in creating an Asia Pacific version, given the interest in this already expressed by some Asian countries.

Next steps

- Speaking engagements within Australia regarding overall recommendations to engage Australian community in discussion and dialogue
- Debriefing with Alan March and Suzanne Edgecombe, AusAID regarding my recommendations
- Discussion with CEOs of major aid agencies and the Australian Council For International Development (ACFID) re DEC model
- Debriefing with Hon. Alexander Downer regarding my research and recommendations
- Briefing to Hon. Kevin Rudd regarding my research and recommendations
- Debriefing with Lt-General Ken Gillespie, Vice Chief, Australian Defence Force
- Debriefing with Emergency Management Australia and Australian Volunteers International regarding civilian engagement

APPENDIX 1: BESO/VSO VOLUNTEER CODE OF ETHICS
(British Executive Service Overseas/Voluntary Service Overseas)

Purpose

The purpose of the beso volunteer code is to ensure that volunteers on VSO's beso register, and VSO's partner organisations and staff, understand and agree upon the personal and professional qualities required to have confidence that a short-term placement will be successful in contributing to VSO's goals.

All volunteers on the beso register accept the beso volunteer code in addition to the provisions in the Volunteer Handbook before conducting an assignment. They also review the code when deciding whether they would like to join the register, and agree that VSO may assess them against this at various stages of their association with VSO.

Context

The Volunteer Handbook outlines VSO's policies governing the relationship between VSO and all volunteers. It sets out what VSO and volunteers can expect from each other during all VSO placements.

The beso volunteer code supplements the Volunteer Handbook. It recognises that the analogy of consultant/client is probably a better one to apply to short-term placements than employee/employer, and that there are therefore fundamental differences between short and long term placements with regard to the relationship between the partner and the volunteer. VSO will apply the values and standards contained in the code to the ways it supports volunteers on the beso register, and will use its best endeavours to ensure that its staff and partners also agree to meet this responsibility.

VSO also commits to providing an equitable approach to volunteers on the beso register, always selecting the best available volunteer for any assignment and not using any measures for selection that are not contained within the code. The exception to this will be when VSO has partnerships with organisations that are providing volunteers from their membership or staff. VSO's commitments to these organisations may involve staff with suitable skills and experience being given some priority during the selection process for short-term assignments.

Background

The code combines beso's Code of Practice for volunteers and the dimensions against which all VSO volunteers are assessed.

The code has two sections, which concentrate on the personal and professional aspects of performing short-term placements. It is recognised that different aspects of the code are often strongly inter-connected.

Personal qualities:

By accepting this code volunteers on the beso register agree that they:

are making a positive and realistic commitment, having a positive approach to working as a volunteer based on realistic expectations of what can be achieved during a short-term assignment;

are committed to learning, with a continuing desire to help others to learn and for personal development;

have the ability to solve practical problems using available resources through an inventive and positive approach;

can be flexible and adaptable when dealing with new and demanding situations;

have the self-confidence to be independent and to deal with people and circumstances with equanimity and humour;

have the inter-personal skills to both work with others and to enable others to solve problems, as well as persuading others to implement plans;

are sensitive to the needs of others, with an open and non-judgmental approach, which both respects other people and cultures and demonstrates good listening skills and empathy.

Professional qualities

By accepting this code volunteers on the beso register agree to volunteer with professionalism and integrity.

providing comprehensive and impartial advice that is appropriate to the needs of VSO's partner;

avoiding conflict of interest, such a pursuit of opportunities for personal gain or any circumstance, which may compromise professionalism;

respecting all confidences, not disclosing any confidential or sensitive information provided by VSO or by a partner, which may reasonably be assumed to be confidential;

offering advice that encourages best practice by partners in areas such as occupational health and safety and the environment;

using electronic communications with partners and VSO in a responsible way;

accepting that VSO can conduct an ongoing review of the beso register and volunteer performance on assignment for both adherence to this code and for the continuing suitability of the volunteers on the register to deliver VSO's objectives.

Review of volunteer status

Adherence to the code is one of the criteria on which a volunteer is selected for an assignment, and therefore non-compliance with the code is grounds for a selection validation interview or volunteer status review as laid out in the Volunteer Handbook. If there is thought be cause for such a review even after the volunteer has left the country where they were undertaking the assignment, the Registrar then completes the actions that would otherwise be done by program staff. These reviews may result in a volunteer being removed from the register.

APPENDIX 2: PROCESS FOR REGISTERING FOR BESO'S RAPID RESPONSE TEAM

Applying to join the beso register

1. First, check that you have the [skills needed now](#) and you meet the [criteria for joining the register](#).
2. Then e-mail enquiry@vso.org.uk, attaching a copy of your CV and quoting 'beso register enquiry' in the subject line.
3. Our Response Unit will then review this expression of interest against our current skill requirements.
4. The Response Unit may then inform you that there are no current placement opportunities matching your skills. If this is the case please re-visit our [skills needed now](#) page regularly, as our short-term volunteering requirements can change rapidly.
5. If it is the Response Unit's assessment that your skills could be needed now, your details will be passed to the **beso** Registrar, who will begin the following process:

Joining the beso register

1. If your skills are assessed as currently needed (see above) the **beso** Registrar will consider your CV against our [criteria for joining the register](#).
2. The Registrar will then *either* e-mail you a short-term volunteering application form if you meet these criteria, *or* advise you of any reason we may be unable to proceed with your application.
3. If your CV and completed application form are assessed as suitable, the relevant information will be entered into our searchable database, so that our Placement Advisers can match your details with any incoming requests for short-term (less than six months) placements.
4. Placement requests come in over time, and one of our Placement Advisers will contact you if a potential match is found, to assess your interest in the placement and answer any questions you may have. It's possible at this stage that you will be asked to re-submit a CV specific to the placement in question.
5. If you do decide to express interest in a placement and are available for the required duration, your CV will be sent, with your permission, to the relevant VSO programme office in one of the 35 countries where we work. The programme office will discuss your CV with the local partner organisation to assess your suitability for the placement.
6. At the same time, you will be invited to attend an assessment of your ability to meet the challenges of living and working overseas. The assessment usually involves a day of individual interviews and group activities at our office in London.
7. You will be asked to provide confirmation that you are in good health and, in line with our Child Protection Policy, we also conduct checks for

all volunteers with the Criminal Records Bureau. If you have been matched successfully to a placement, we will also make your travel and visa arrangements at this stage.

8. To help you prepare for your placement, you will then be asked to attend a weekend briefing session at our training centre in Birmingham. You will also be encouraged to undertake self-briefing on the country and region, using websites, guides and other resources.
9. On arrival at your destination country, you will receive a briefing from the VSO programme office before you begin your placement.
10. On completion of the placement you will be asked to report on the extent to which the agreed objectives were achieved.
11. After your return home you will be contacted by a UK Regional Representative, who will ask to conduct a de-briefing with you. This will focus on the effectiveness of our support processes, rather than on the placement itself.
12. After completing any outstanding tasks relating to your placement, you will remain eligible for future short-term placements.

APPENDIX 3: CIVIL MILITARY PROTOCOL IN HUMANITARIAN EMERGENCIES

Civil Military Relationship in Complex Emergencies 28 June 2004 – An IACS Reference Paper (Interagency Steering Committee) Drafted by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)

In recent history, military forces have become increasingly involved in operations other than war, including provision of relief and services to the local population. At the same time, due to the changing nature of modern complex emergencies, the humanitarian community has faced increased operational challenges as well as greater risks and threats to their workers in the field, sometimes leading to seeking support in protection by military forces on a case-by-case basis.

These developments have led to an erosion of the separation between humanitarian and the military space.

Civil military coordination is the essential dialogue and interaction between civilian and military actors in humanitarian emergencies that is necessary to protect and promote humanitarian principles, avoid competition, minimise inconsistency and when appropriate pursue common goals. Basic strategies range from coexistence to cooperation. Coordination is a shared responsibility facilitated by liaison and common training.

The core principles and protocol guiding civil military cooperation is as follows:

A Humanity, neutrality, impartiality

B Humanitarian access to vulnerable populations. Coordination between NGOs and the military should be considered to the extent that contact with the military facilitates security and sustains not hinders humanitarian access. There is a need to find the right balance between a pragmatic and principled response so that coordination with the military does not compromise humanitarian imperatives. Information sharing between humanitarian and military actors may include: security information, humanitarian locations and activities, mine action, population movements, relief actions of the military, post strike information

C Perception of humanitarian action

Delivery of humanitarian assistance must be neutral and impartial. Any civil military coordination must not jeopardise the longstanding local networks and trust that humanitarian agencies have created and maintained.

D Needs Based Assistance Free of Discrimination

E Civilian Military Distinction in Humanitarian Action

Humanitarian workers not to pose as military and vice versa

F Operational Independence of Humanitarian Action

Humanitarian actors must retain the lead role in undertaking and directing humanitarian activities

G Security of Humanitarian Personnel

The decision to seek military based security for humanitarian workers should be viewed as a last resort on the basis of expeditious, effective and secure approach to delivering vital assistance to vulnerable populations

H Do No Harm

I Respect For International Legal Instruments

J Respect For Culture and Customs

K Consent of Parties to the Conflict (to civil military assistance)

L Option of Last Resort – assistance of military when there is no comparable civilian alternative

M Avoid Reliance on Military

Liaison attempts and lines of communication should be established at the earliest possible stage, and conducted with caution. Use of military assets should be exceptional/last resort. The same with use of military or armed escorts for humanitarian convoys

NOTE: a Complex Emergency is a humanitarian crisis in a country, region or society where there is a total or considerable breakdown of authority resulting from internal or external conflict and which requires an international response that goes beyond the mandate or capacity of an single and/or ongoing UN country programme

<http://ochaonline.un.org/mcdu/guidelines>