

NWC Establishes New Civilian-Military Humanitarian Response Program

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The U.S. military is responding to an increasing number of disasters across the world. In order to ensure the Navy and Marine Corps team are synchronized with the evolution of policy, practice, and capabilities with respect to humanitarian assistance/disaster relief (HA/DR) operations, the U.S. Naval War College (NWC) has established the *Civilian-Military Humanitarian Response Program*. This program is positioned in the College of Operational and Strategic Leadership (COSL) and is designed to improve current academic offerings, develop new education and training opportunities, and create simulations/table top exercises that explore the challenges and opportunities within civilian-military humanitarian responses – ultimately helping Navy and Marine Corps staff planners, executors, and assessors have a deeper understanding of the dynamic and rapidly evolving international humanitarian response environment. U.S. military commands interested in more information should contact Professor David Polatty at david.polatty@usnwc.edu or 401-841-1784/ DSN 841-1784.

In December of 2015, COSL created the *Humanitarian Response Program* to conduct innovative evidence-based research and educational collaborations with leading universities and humanitarian organizations. The program's purpose is to advance civilian-military engagement and coordination during complex emergencies and disasters. The standup of this new effort is the result of over three years of work with the Harvard Humanitarian Initiative (HHI), which is a cross-university effort within Harvard University instituted in 2005 to conduct research and education on the practice of relieving human suffering in war and disaster by advancing the science and practice of humanitarian response. HHI's aim, which NWC is closely aligned with, is to relieve human suffering in war and disaster by conducting interdisciplinary, practice-based research and education that can be used by scholars, policymakers, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and others to foster interdisciplinary collaboration.

The decision to create the *Humanitarian Response Program* highlights COSL's appreciation for the critical importance of developing more effective dialogue in the humanitarian operating environment, where the military community plays a key role in complex emergencies, bringing unique capabilities to the challenge of delivering humanitarian aid. A more comprehensive understanding of civilian and military actors working together in complex emergencies can lead to improved coordination. That coordination can lead to more effective and synchronized responses which are urgently needed, as the international community currently experiences an unprecedented escalation in the number of global humanitarian crises. The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA) highlighted that in 2014, nearly 76 million people received international humanitarian assistance,

more than double the number of people targeted 10 years ago.¹ 2015's *A Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower* specifically designates humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations as a key mission area within the U.S. Sea Services' "power projection" function – which encompasses the U.S. Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard's ability to respond to crises and enhance regional stability.

In addition to partnering with the Harvard Humanitarian Initiative, NWC is collaborating with key leaders and faculty from UN OCHA, MIT's Lincoln Laboratory, the Yale School of Public Health, Stanford's Medical School, Oxford University, and the DoD's Center for Disaster and Humanitarian Assistance Medicine. UN OCHA's Civilian-Military Coordination Section is a critical partner within the humanitarian community, as it routinely facilitates dialogue and interaction between civilian and military actors, which is essential to protect and promote humanitarian principles, avoid competition, minimize inconsistency and, when appropriate, pursue common goals. During large-scale sudden onset disasters, UN OCHA's Civilian-Military Coordination Section often manages the international military response on behalf of the affected nation's government.

COSL's *Humanitarian Response Program* leverages these world-class partnerships across the international humanitarian community to achieve three primary objectives:

- 1) Find ways to improve the synchronization and interoperability of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), intergovernmental organizations (IGOs), & U.S./international militaries working together during complex emergencies.
- 2) Foster educational opportunities for leaders and practitioners across the humanitarian response sector.
- 3) Advance the understanding of rapidly evolving frameworks and information communication technologies for humanitarian response.

These objectives will be achieved by the execution of activities depicted below:

¹ Hussein, Pia. "Interoperability: Humanitarian Action in a Shared Space." *OCHA Policy and Studies Series* 013 (2015): 2. Accessed December 8, 2015.



Deployable Training Courses

Evidence-Based Research
Activities

In-Residence Educational
Courses and Simulations

The results of these new efforts will be integrated into NWC educational courses, as well as with the development of new, innovative educational and training courses for both military, NGO, and IGO students. The *Humanitarian Response Program* will add depth and breadth into COSL's existing support efforts for U.S. Navy Numbered Fleet and Navy Component Commander staffs. It is focused on improving the situational awareness of staff planners, executors, and assessors by providing them with knowledge on the latest frameworks, processes, trends, and technologies being utilized in the humanitarian space. The overarching aim is for military staffs is to better align and integrate military capabilities into international humanitarian responses. This specialized focus on HA/DR operations will span not only the full range of natural and man-made disasters; but will also explore the interaction and impact of disruptive factors (political, economic, environmental, social, cultural, etc.) that transform these disasters in much more challenging complex emergencies.

Navy students who attend the Maritime Staff Operators Course (MSOC), Maritime Operational Planners Course (MOPC), Executive Level OLV Course (ELOC), or take part in NWC's Assist and Assess Team (AAT) tailored assist visit will immediately receive the latest and greatest updates from the *Humanitarian Response Program* which are embedded into curriculum. Additional course and simulation developments in this area will be promulgated in future editions of the MOC Warfighter.

Commander Rodrigo Arancibia, Chilean Navy, is a 2015 graduate of the U.S. Naval War College and remained in Newport as a faculty and international fellow from 2015-2016. He has served as a submarine officer for over 24 years and participated as part of the planning team and relief efforts for the Chilean Earthquakes and Tsunamis of 2010 and 2014.