Military Lines of Communication
Disaster Assistance & Operation Tomodachi

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Domestic Response

- Local Military Commanders have the authority
  - to grant immediate assistance to civilians during an emergency;
  - to employ the resources under their control; and
  - to save lives, prevent human suffering, or mitigate great property damage within the US
- All subject to any supplemental direction provided by higher headquarters (Joint Pub 3-28)

- Governors can activate National Guard – Civil Support Teams
  - 22 personnel, CBRN experts
  - 2 communications staff
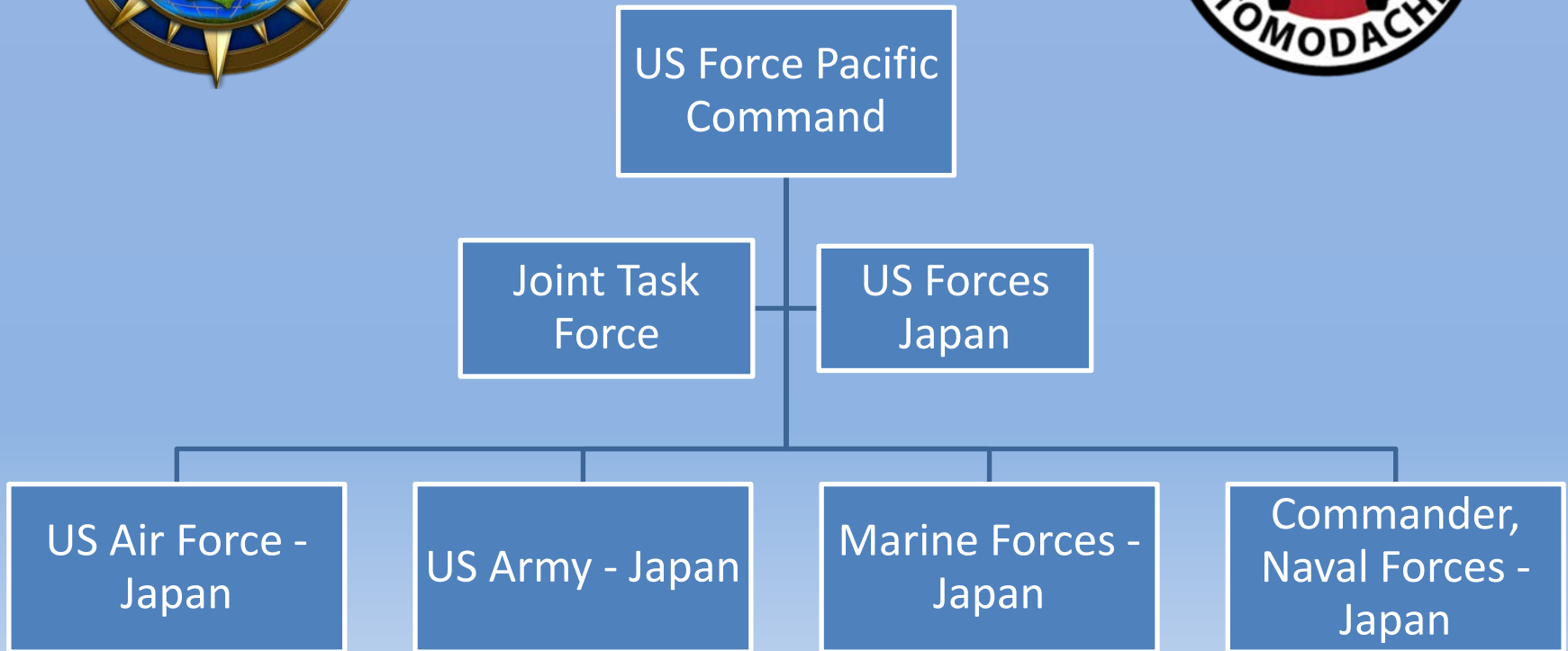
Domestic Response

- Requests for additional DoD support must go through standard chain of command channels

- Defense Support to Civil Authority or DSCA is initiated by a request for assistance from civil authorities or qualifying entities, usually a Governor, and is authorized by the President or Secretary of Defense
  - SECDEF designates the Combatant Commander
  - Normally in the continental US this is US Northern Command

- DoD personnel supporting Civil Authorities
  - Use the Incident Command System
  - Coordinating external communications through the Public Information Officer

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International Response

- In many overseas operations the military chain of command is the only chain used; predominantly counties with Status of Forces Agreements (SOFA)
- Much like domestic response, local commanders have some response authority (Joint Pub 3-29)
  - Forces at or near the immediate scene of a foreign disaster may take prompt action to save human lives
  - Military Commanders must request high authorization within the first 72 hours
  - DoD components will participate in Foreign Disaster Relief operations **only** at the direction of the President or SecDef or a designee approves, with the concurrence of the Secretary of State, and a request for assistance from another US Government department or agency

Chain of Command In Japan


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                    US Force Pacific
                       Command
                           |
        +------------------+------------------+
        |                  |                  |
   Joint Task         US Forces
     Force             Japan
                           |
  +---------+-----------+-----------+-----------+
  |         |           |           |           |
US Air    US Army -   Marine      Commander,
Force -    Japan      Forces -    Naval Forces -
Japan                  Japan        Japan
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Operation Tomodachi

- During the Fukushima accident in Japan, the US military had distinct challenges
- The US military provides in country support to the government of Japan, in accordance with the 1945 WWII agreement and under a current SOFA
- The US has seven military bases on mainland Japan
  - Each with civilian support personnel & family members
- The US Forces serving in Japan maintained the military chain of command with all aspects of response during Fukushima. Communication was no different

Military Services & Interagency Working Together

- Routine operations and Humanitarian Assistance supported by
  - Air sampling
  - Soil sampling
  - Potable and waste water sampling
  - Food and food processing surveys
  - Internal monitoring
  - Dosimetry

Communications Methods within the Military

- Execute Order (EXORD)- An order initiating operations
- Fragmentary Order (FRAGO) - Used to make a change or modify previous orders
- Operation Order (OPORD) – Coordinating execution of an operation
- **Daily Battle Update Brief (BUB)**
- **Request for Information (RFI)**
- Conference Calls- Working groups (inter-service & interagency)
- Daily reports written reports and data collection (inter-service & interagency)

Communications with other agencies

- Non-DoD agency coordination and communication were funneled through and coordinated at the US Forces Japan, the Joint Task Force and US Forces Pacific Command levels

- Daily fusion meetings with interagency representatives to coordinate complex planning and execution operations
  - Government of Japan
  - US Embassy
  - Department of Energy, National Nuclear Security Administration
  - Nuclear Regulatory Commission
  - Environmental Protection Agency
  - Defense Threat Reduction Agency
  - Department of Homeland Security

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Communications with the Public

- Initially, due to the lack and ambiguity of information, at some military installations mixed messages were given to the local community
- USPACOM augmented by risk communication team
- Online survey
- Public Affairs Guidance
- Through local middle and high schools
  - DoDEA Teacher Meetings
  - Hands on "How is Radiation Detected?" classes for both teachers and students
- Medical Providers were provided information to share with patients

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Communications with the Public

- Local Armed Forces Television
- Stars and Stripes, base/installation websites and newspapers
- Social Media
  - Timely answers to questions proposed by leadership and scientific experts
- Town Halls
  - Presenting information and data while avoiding scientific vernacular
  - Two-way communications
  - Answering questions (allowing enough time to ensure all questions were addressed)

Communicating Uncertainty

- Ever evolving environment
  - Provide updates as events changed
  - Remind public we were on the ground **with** them
- Error bars?
- What units are you reporting in?
- Regulatory limits vs Risk
  - Is it safe?
  - Linear Non-Threshold or Threshold Model
  - How do you communicate when the public does not understand the difference?

Lessons Learned

- Health physics professionals should integrate non-scientific communication skills to allow them to more clearly inform decision makers and the public

- Subject Matter Experts need to speak with a generally unified voice

- Communicate with leaders, clearly and early enough for them to act

- Be prepared for unofficial experts

- Prepare answers for associated risks of continuous exposure to low levels of radiation

Lessons Learned

- Consistent messaging with clear information is paramount to maintaining public confidence
- Communication is two way and the public needs to be heard
- Critical importance of risk communication and strategic command messaging
- Perception is reality
- Risk perceptions are based on personal values, messaging must be prepared to meet those challenges

References

- Joint Publication 3-28, Defense Support of Civil Authorities, 31 July 2013

- Joint Publication 3-29, Foreign Humanitarian Assistance, 3 January 2014

- Operation Tomodachi Registry
  - https://registry.csd.disa.mil/registryWeb/DisplayHomePage.do