

# Cooperation in IDRA in the Asia-Pacific Region

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## **Introduction**

As a responsible member of the international community, the Republic of Korea has actively participated in UN Peacekeeping Operations through the dispatch of infantry troops and by supporting other contingents, such as medical and engineering units, with 611 military personnel deployed in eleven missions, including the deployment of 369 soldiers to the UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), and 242 soldiers to the UN Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH). The level of participation in PKO is a reflection of the government's willingness to contribute to the world peace and security, thus enhancing its status in the international community.

Korea's military deployment for overseas disaster relief operation is that the "Law regarding participation for the UN peace keeping operation" issued in 2009 stipulates that up to one thousand military personnel can be deployed provisionally according to the agreement between the government and the international organizations prior to the agreement by the parliament. Military overseas deployment is normally referred to the UN PKO mission. If the Korean government wants to deploy military contingents to a foreign disaster region not related to the UN PKO mission, the Korean government should have agreement by the parliament. Thus, faced with an emergency situation that required a rapid response, the ROK Government had to choose between quick but limited military involvement (not enough to raise objections in the National Assembly that the president was overstepping his authority) or slower, more substantial military involvement that was formally considered by the legislature. Not surprisingly, Seoul chose not to seek National Assembly approval and dispatched instead only air and sea transportation vehicles among Ministry of National Defense (MND) assets, after consulting informally with the ruling party at the National Assembly.<sup>2</sup> In contrast, United States military deployment policy is more

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<sup>2</sup> James L. Schoff and Choi Hyun-Jin, "Reform Locally, Act Globally? Crisis Management Trends in Korea," *Academic Paper Series*, April 08, Volume 3, No 3.

flexible and easier. Request for military deployment from UNOCHA is responded to according to Oslo guideline. Criteria for deploying the military for disaster relief is a) the damage exceeds the capability of the affected country and the international society; b) a civil organization or institution requested military assistance; c) military assistance owns the specialties that civil institution cannot perform.<sup>3</sup>

Even though Korea's military deployment for overseas disaster relief operation is limited by the Korean constitution, the Korean military has several experiences of cooperation in IDRA such as the ROK division in Iraq from 2004 to 2008, military assistance to the tsunami in South Asia from 2004 to 2005, and Japan and Korea PKO unit's reconstruction work in Haiti 2010. South Korea is also taking part in overseas disaster relief forum and exercises such as GPOI, ARF, MPAT, Khan Quest, etc.

## **Korea overseas Disaster Relief System**

Humanitarian needs across the world have dramatically increased in recent years. The Republic of Korea has set out the timely and effective provision of humanitarian assistance as a major priority. To this end, Korea has adopted a need-based policy, reaching out first to countries in need of immediate relief but lacking in their own capacity to do so. To provide effective assistance, the Korean government has taken initiatives at various levels. Nationally, it established the Overseas Emergency Relief Act in 2007, which enabled an efficient response to the twin disasters of May 2008 in China and Myanmar. Korea has also played an important role in establishing a framework on disaster management and emergency response in the Asia-Pacific region, particularly through the ASEAN+3, ASEAN Forum and Korea-China-Japan trilateral talks. At the global level, Korea has strengthened its cooperation with the UN and other relevant multilateral bodies, inter alia as a member of the OCHA Donor Support Group (ODSG) and the Humanitarian Liaison working group (HLWG) of the UN.

The National Emergency Management Agency led the government emergency relief aid squad, including international aid teams and Korea international Cooperation Agency members. The government's overseas aid efforts received a much-needed boost in 2007 when the law on overseas emergency aid was passed.

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<sup>3</sup> Research Project on Development Assistance in the 2010 fiscal year, "Research on military deployment systems and case studies for disaster relief in major countries."

Based on this legal foundation, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MOFAT) can determine the extent and the method of humanitarian aid, depending on the degree of damage, in the case of disasters. This law also expanded the government's budget on overseas relief aid.

The Korean government overseas disaster relief system consists of a Civil-Government committee under the Prime Minister as chairman. The MOFAT can organize an overseas emergency aid team and convene a government-NGO joint council for overseas emergency aid, and the minister can also request the provision of military transport vehicles from the MND.

**Military provides transportation support  
for relief materials using military planes and vessels**

Disaster	Area	Transportation	Period	Details
Tsunami in S. Asia	Sri Lanka	C-130 (1)	Dec. '04	Medicine (5.2T)
	Sumatra Calang, Sri Lanka Gafle	LST (2)	Dec. '04– Mar. '05	Equipment (22T) Fresh water
Landslide in Philippine	Vilanmore AFB	C-130 (1)	Mar. '06	Blankets (7.5T)
Earthquake in Indonesia	Yogyakarta	C-130 (1)	Jun. '06	Tents (7T)
Earthquake in P.R.C	Sichuan	C-130 (3)	May '08	Tents (26.6T)
Typhoon in Cambodia	Regana	C-130 (1)	Nov. '09	Basic Commodities (7T)
Earthquake in Haiti	Leogane		Mar. '10– Present	PKO (240)

The ROK government has several challenges to improve its overseas disaster relief system. The ROK's main agenda for the overseas emergency relief system's development is

- a) Draft Standard Manual for military cargo plane support
- b) Set up plans & Information Database regarding Overseas Emergency Relief
- c) Expand Scope of Missions for Overseas Emergency Relief
- d) Conduct Government-wide Exercises for Overseas Emergency Relief Mission
- e) Amend Enforcement Ordinance of Overseas Emergency Relief Law

## **Case Study**

### **Indian Ocean tsunami in December 2004**

On December 26, 2004, a 9.0-magnitude earthquake struck off the western coast of Northern Sumatra, Indonesia, setting off a series of tsunamis that devastated parts of India, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, the Maldives, and Northeastern Africa. Similar to other outside countries, its initial focus was on trying to determine the extent of the catastrophe and the fate of its citizens, and the ROK set up a task force within its foreign ministry on December 26 to help coordinate the government's response like other nations. Involving the Korean armed forces in an international relief effort, however, is not as clear cut as it is in the United States and Japan. The ROK constitution has been interpreted as clearly requiring National Assembly approval for the deployment of any ROK troops abroad, for virtually any purpose.

On December 31, the government initially sent an air force C-130 military cargo plane carrying seven tons of medical supplies to Sri Lanka. On January 14, South Korea also sent a forty-three-hundred-ton landing ship to the region with medical supplies and other emergency relief goods, provided by the Ministry of Health and Welfare and several Korean NGOs. The navy also sent a second landing ship to Sri Lanka on January 27 with the capacity to deliver eighty-eight tons of relief supplies including medicines and bottled water.

In terms of the ROK military overseas deployment policy, military troops' deployment is restricted to have National Assembly approval. Therefore, military cargo planes and navy's landing ships were sent to affected countries as transportation means.

### **The Regional Reconstruction Team for Iraqi-Kurdistan**

The Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) comprised civil and military organizations of Korea and the U.S. which engendered a different type of leadership structure. Symbolized by the endorsement of a coalition of the willing, a position of a team leader was given to Korea and the deputy team leader to the U.S., both of whom were senior foreign services officers.

Since the regional security responsibility was transferred to the KRG pursuant to Provincial Iraq Control (PIC) policy in May 2007, the Zaytun Division moved forward to reconstruction programs. It firstly established two Civil Affairs Brigades which were focal points of reconstruction programs, converted into a dual system, Civil Affairs (G-5) and CIMMIC, a bureau of civil-military operation in a process

of drawdown in 2006. Civil Affairs was responsible for economic development, humanitarian aid and social and cultural programs, whereas CIMMIC discharged reconstruction of infrastructure and essential facilities. Civil Affairs succeeded in meeting local demands of basic human needs and economic interest by providing Zaytun hospital's medical services, employment promotion through its Vocational Training Center, Taekwondo training, Kurdish language school and other sports and cultural event. As for reconstruction, CIMMIC pursued community based facilities and infrastructures, such as schools, primary health care centers, roads, and irrigation.<sup>4</sup>

The lesson learned from Iraq is that detailed preparation before deployment is necessary. It implies not only the cooperation system among government, military and civil organizations, but also a detailed and feasible deployment plan with the full spectrum covering from the initial deployment to the withdrawal. Besides, the forces to be dispatched should be composed of elite soldiers and they should be trained with realistic and practical contents that can be utilized right after the deployment. A second factor is that respecting local nation's opinions and taking precedence of public benefit over personal gains are crucial. When conducting reconstruction operations, the locals' cherished desires must first be satisfied and projects for children, women and the old aged should be promoted. With a harmonized coordination with various local organizations, regional stabilization, peace and reconstruction operations will be successfully achieved.

### **Combined reconstruction activities in June 2010 in Haiti**

From June 8, the ROK and Japan International Relief Team took charge of the same area in Carrefour region which is at the halfway point between Port-au-Prince and Leogane. Japan and Korea units worked together on dismantling the collapsed school building. The national flags of Japan and Korea were painted on the two countries trucks appealing that Japan and Korea cooperated on the reconstruction assistance activities. The jointly carried out dismantling of the school building was completed on July 1. On July 7, Korea and Japan units and persons of the school held a completion ceremony at the leveled school site, and the children expressed their gratitude through singing songs. In addition, the two countries visited mutually in order to coordinate for reconstruction activities. This is first time to cooperate on

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<sup>4</sup> Goo Soon KWON, *Civil-Military Cooperation of the U.S-led Post-conflict Reconstruction in Iraq: The Case Study of the Regional Reconstruction Team for Iraqi Kurdistan*, 2011.

a PKO mission between the two countries in a region abroad and a good example of the future PKO cooperation in Asia. In 2009, Japan and Korea made a summit and agreement, “Future-oriented mature partner relations” which is a good reference to coordinate between Japan and Korea in Haiti. But this is just tactical level and military level cooperation at the field after arriving in Haiti and there was no coordination before the deployment.

## Cooperation in IDRA in the Asia-Pacific Region

Coordination between civilian humanitarian actors and military assets has been one of the greatest challenges created by the increasing deployment of foreign military assets. The differences in cultures, priorities and operating modes between military personnel and civilian actors have an impact not least on information sharing between the civilian and military spheres.<sup>5</sup> As I mentioned earlier, cooperation was the weakest in the first few days after the disaster, particularly because local communication structures were themselves affected and there was thus a shortage of accurate information available.

Effectively responding to assistance requires development of the international cooperation mechanism and development of quick response capabilities. I suggest several ways to develop international cooperation based upon the case study.

First, joint training and simulation are a good method in IDRA. In the Asia-Pacific region, there are a lot of conferences and exercises regarding IDRA. Joint Planning and exercises between civilian and military actors in either a domestic, bilateral, or multilateral framework can greatly enhance the capacity for domestic and international humanitarian and disaster relief.<sup>6</sup> The speed and efficiency of the international response to the tsunami, for example, were greatly enhanced by annual military exercises known as Cobra Gold, Khan Quest, Asia Region Forum (ARF) Disaster relief exercise and the Multinational Planning Augmentation Team (MPAT). Asia Region Forum (ARF) Disaster Relief Exercise was held in Manado, Indonesia, on 15-19 March 2011. The ARF Direx 2011 has contributed to strengthening cooperation and enhancing interoperability among ARF nations’ civilian and

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<sup>5</sup> The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, *The Effectiveness of Foreign Military Assets in Natural Disaster Response*, 2008.

<sup>6</sup> In *Times of Crisis, Global and Local Civil-Military Disaster Relief Coordination in the United States and Japan, An IFPA Project Interim Report*, 2007.

military agencies at the strategic, operational and tactical levels. Effectiveness of civil-military cooperation among nations and agencies at all those levels is the key to improve disaster relief capacity. FTX consisted of an Urban Search and Rescue (USAR), Land Operation, Maritime Operation, and Air Operations. The Field Training Exercise (FTX) was held from March 16 to 18 and the demonstration of FTX was implemented on the 15th at North Sulawesi Province, following the opening ceremony. In total 3,575 personnel (3,530 Indonesian participants, and 45 personnel from other ARF Participants) were involved in FTX and HCA. The Exercise has been successfully conducted and the principle of “safety first-zero accident” was achieved. Korea has an opportunity to take greater advantage of these ongoing programs in order to enhance multilateral crisis response planning and training. For example, ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) voluntary model arrangement for the use of foreign military and civil defense assets in disaster relief is very constructive to develop the Korean overseas emergency relief system. The following model text “A) Preamble, B) Conduct and Maintenance of Discipline of MCDA Operation, C) Privileges and Immunities of MCDA Operation, D) Identification and Arms E) Cost Requirements for MCDA Operations, Facilities, and Communication, F) Movement within the Affected State and Interaction with its Local Economy, G) Dispute Settlement, H) Status of the Arrangement” can make the ROK SOP for the military team to deploy abroad for disaster relief.<sup>7</sup>

Second, multi- or bilateral agreements with regard to the status of foreign military deployments greatly enhanced the speed of mobilization for disaster relief. There continues to be room for improvement in this area, such as the use of standardized templates for status-of-forces agreements or memoranda of understanding that cover essential aspects of foreign military deployments. Key issues include basing rights, port rights, status-of-forces agreements, over flight approval, and simplified visa and entry approvals. Rapid response of the U.S military made possible by the Forward Operating Site agreements with Thailand and Singapore was a good example of enhanced mobility.

After the Japan earthquake and tsunami on March 11, 2011, Japan, China and South Korea held a trilateral summit. The three countries announced “Cooperation on Disaster Management” which includes:

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<sup>7</sup> Co-chairs’ Summary Report, ASEAN Regional Forum Disaster Relief Exercise (ARF DiREx) 2011 Manado, Indonesia, March 15-19, 2011.

1. We confirmed the following principles:
  - a. In order to minimize damages from disaster, we will strengthen our efforts for disaster risk reduction by exchanging information.
  - b. When a grave disaster occurs in one of the three countries, the other two countries, after acknowledging and identifying the situation and needs of the disaster-affected country, will send disaster relief teams such as emergency rescue teams and relief supplies as quickly as possible, based on requests of the disaster-affected country.
2. Concretely, we will promote the following measures:
  - a. Conducting exercises and enhancing capacity
  - b. Ensuring quick and smooth communication in case of occurrence of a disaster<sup>8</sup>

This is very good in trying to coordinate for disaster relief even though they announced the agreement after a disaster happening. This agreement will be very useful momentum for the three neighbor countries' disaster relief coordination.

Third, timely and reliable information-sharing is critical to collaboration and coordination among foreign militaries. Information management is an overriding challenge for civil-military coordination, though this seemingly simple objective can mean slightly different things to different stakeholders. Information management seems to be best and most appropriately carried out by OCHA. For many at OCHA, greater standardization of how information is provided by and managed among crisis response partners is the top priority for improving civil-military coordination going forward. The ability to synthesize the plethora of incoming information and redistribute it to all the actors on the ground was helpful in the daily operations. Discussions with the affected governments in the case studies revealed that it was at times easier to coordinate with foreign militaries than with international NGOs. One reason for this is that there are generally few foreign military contingents compared to international NGOs, and they bring relatively small numbers of assets. The affected governments also stated that the hierarchical military structures guaranteed that an instruction to the commander would filter down to all personnel in the contingent. Also, the internet is the most expedient means of exchanging information, though the militaries might need to relax the primacy of information security during disaster

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<sup>8</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, Cooperation on disaster management, 2011.

relief operations.

## Conclusions

Most modern armed forces today have made disaster relief an important part of their program, offering rapid response and performing medical assistance, logistical support, air traffic response, aid distribution, protection and recovery in natural disasters on a global scale. There is a growing acceptance in the humanitarian community that military assets can play an appropriate role in supporting natural disaster relief. The collective efforts of all the civil, military and police actors could, by timing their individual activities to coincide and reinforce each other's, achieve more together than each would be able to achieve on its own. The mechanism of coordination includes exchange of information, joint planning, mutual support and ongoing coordination and feedback. However, civil humanitarian actors are often concerned about being too closely associated with military force, even in peacetime.

To overcome coordination issues, I suggest several points as follows

- Every military unit should follow the “Dos and Don’ts of military support for Humanitarian Assistance”
  - a) Don’t lose focus
  - b) Don’t become “part of the problem”
  - c) Don’t take the lead in areas where others are supposed to act
  - d) Humanitarian organizations are partners and not roadblocks
  - e) Refer humanitarian issues to the appropriate coordination unit
  - f) Practice coordination<sup>9</sup>
- Simulation and training must be conducted on a regular basis. Such an exercise and forum including GPOI, Cobra Gold, MPAT, Khan Quest, and ARF would help a country struck by a natural disaster to detail its most urgent priorities and allow those providing assistance to match the needs with international contribution.
- OCHA should expand the skills and expertise of UN Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) teams to include more civil-military liaison, logistics

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<sup>9</sup> United Nations, Standardized Generic Training Modules (SGTM) 9, Humanitarian Assistance.

and information experts. They can be deployed with other key partners for the initial disaster impact appreciation. The UN should also take steps, including developing a funding base, to expand the roster of potential UNDAC team members so that countries in disaster-prone regions are better represented.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, *The effectiveness of foreign military assets in natural disaster response*, 2008.