

Military involvement in international disaster response



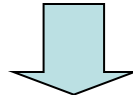
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Council for International Development (CID)

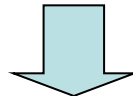
NGO Disaster Relief Forum (NDRF)

- **Foreign military involvement** – not domestic
- **Rapid-onset disaster response** – not post-conflict crises or complex emergencies
- **Not** covering issues around ‘humanitarian space’

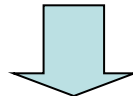
Disaster strikes



Affected government calls for international assistance



Other countries extend offers of international assistance
– this may include the use of military assets



Affected country accepts offer and allows foreign
military involvement

‘Militaryisation’ of disaster response: Who?

Many countries deploy their militaries for disaster response overseas and purchase military equipment specifically for international humanitarian activities:

- This is a growing trend
- Different countries have different approaches
- **USA**
 - has a stated policy of maintaining an active international role for its military.
 - The USA deployed military assets 15 times in response to overseas natural disasters between 2003 and 2006 (mostly regional).
- **Canada, Cuba, Argentina, Chile, Mexico, Peru and Uruguay**: have all deployed their militaries for disaster response – primarily in the region
- **Europe**: only to countries outside Europe (imagine German troops occupying France again)

‘**Militarisation**’ of disaster response: Who?

- **Netherlands, UK, France, Belgium, Germany**, less so Scandinavian states
- **South Africa**: immediate neighbourhood - ‘does not structure, train or budget for disaster management’
- **India, China, Japan, Singapore**: all have an increasing roles and are focused regionally
- **Australia, New Zealand**
 - **FRANZ**: agreement between **Aus, NZ & France** to work together in a response in the south pacific region
 - Australia: “Asia Pacific Civil-Military Centre of Excellence” established in 2008

Why do we need militaries for disaster response?

... because of the things they bring:

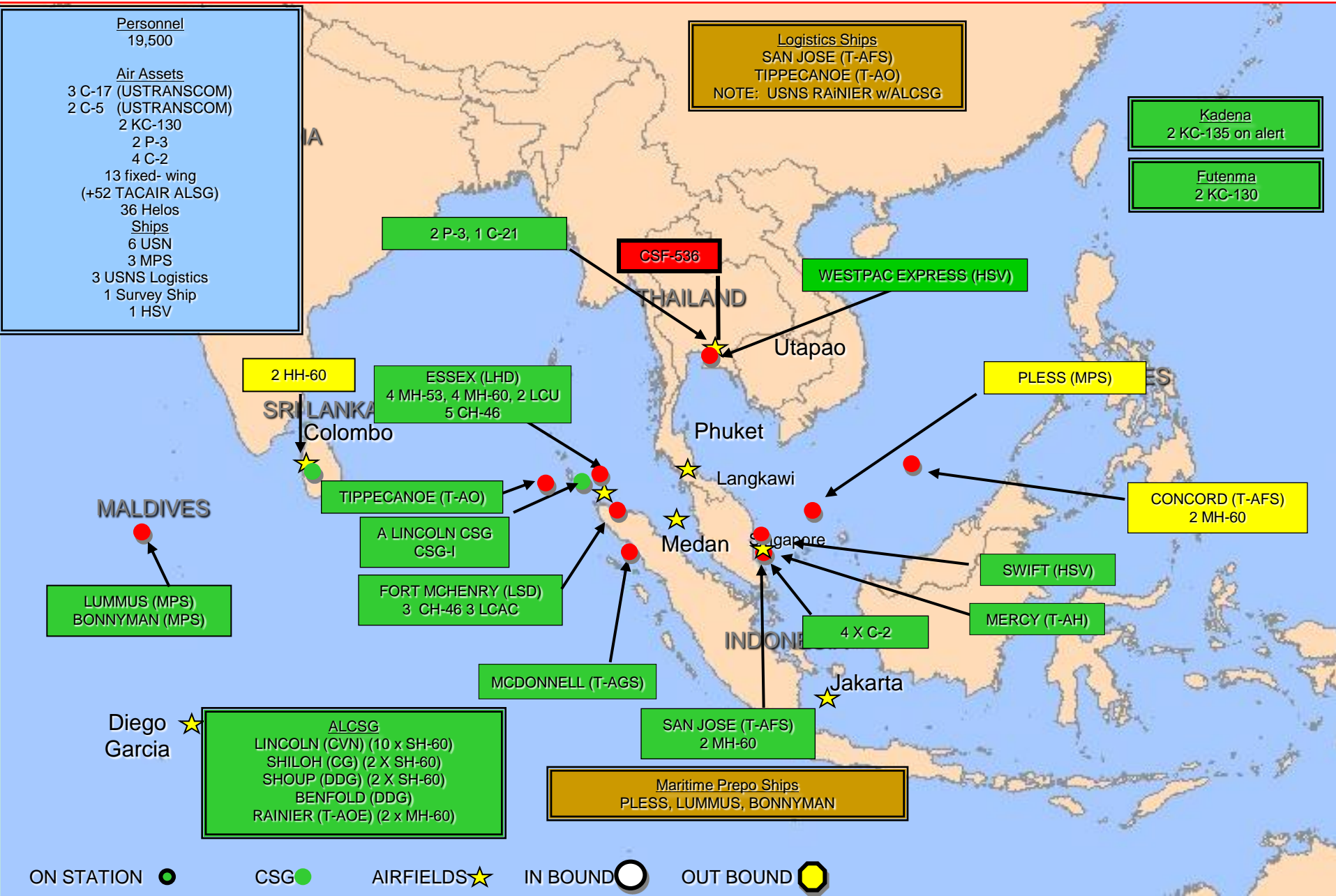


Militarisation of disaster response: **What?**

- **Logistical Assets:** Logistical support from strategic airlift to tactical fixed wing and rotary airlift, sealift, overland transportation and related support mechanisms and personnel.
- **Medical Assistance:** Field Hospitals, technical expertise and equipment, MEDIVAC etc.
- **Personnel:** Perhaps the largest potential provider of highly disciplined and well trained personnel at very short notice to support humanitarian operations.
- **Communications Support:** Specialised communications capabilities to support to humanitarian operations.
- **Security:** An clear role in providing protection for humanitarian aid workers and the communities they are assisting in conflict or post conflict situations.
- Most frequently used:
 1. air transport
 2. medical support
 3. expert personnel

Militaries are currently the only source of the type of equipment and personnel that is essential when there is an emergency and lives are at risk

Aceh Tsunami - US Military



Non-US Military



‘**Militarisation**’ of disaster response: Why?

- It saves lives!
- Post-cold war realignment
- The professionalisation of armed forces: the phasing out of conscription and a greater investment in individual soldiers’ training and salary
- Search for new roles as ‘forces for good’ or ‘humanitarian warriors’
- Reflects moves towards more comprehensive approaches to security (winning hearts and minds)

Source: SIPRI (2008)

- Justifies military expenditures
- Recruitment tool: join the Army to save lives
- Provides political capital and international goodwill
- Worked with the Aceh Tsunami

NZDF White Paper

2.4 The NZDF is the only agency of state that maintains disciplined forces available at short notice and that operates large-scale and integrated fleets of vehicles, ships, and aircraft.

It is therefore able to undertake or support a range of tasks, including maritime resource protection, **humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, and search and rescue, as part of a whole-of-government effort directed by civil authorities.**

- Mentions disaster response *16 times*.
- Operation Tropic Twilight (Tuvalu): Tokelau this year
- Overtly used in both NZDF and MFAT Aid Programme publicity

Why do we do it?

- To save lives!
- International obligation through FRANZ
- Closest country to Polynesia which has vulnerable countries
- Used to justify equipment purchases: HMNZS Canterbury

Why can the use of foreign militaries be **problematic**?

- Militaries are **not** humanitarian organisations

Humanitarian action is guided by the **humanitarian imperative**....assistance is provided based on **need**. It is **...impartial...** without discrimination. Humanitarian providers strive to deliver this help in a **neutral** manner, without taking sides in disputes or political positions on the underlying issues.

Military civic action is conducted based on needs of the force and the mission... (it) is conditional and may cease when the mission changes or the unit moves.

The use of military assets **in support of humanitarian operations should be exceptional and only a last resort.**

Why can the use of foreign militaries be **problematic**?

- **Priorities:** overly focused on security and operational priorities rather than need alone
- **Aid delivery:** Military personnel not always skilled in delivering aid or engaging with affected people
- **Humanitarian access:** Fiji cyclone response
- **Loss of humanitarian space**
- **Fitting with in-country civilian authorities.** The authority should ultimately be with the government of the affected country: how does this fit with foreign militaries?
- **Cost:** deploying military assets is generally more expensive than deploying civilian assets
- **Politics** – nature of assistance becomes reliant on the government's relationships with other nations
- **Serious misdemeanors** – usually associated with occupying forces e.g. Pakistani peacekeepers in Congo
- **Humanitarian standards and practices** – e.g. SPHERE & HAP

NGOs criticise US military in **Haiti** **earthquake operations**

The US military has stepped up its control of disaster relief efforts in Haiti after President Barack Obama dispatched 9,000 soldiers to the devastated country and commandeered its ports and airports.

... aid workers expressed frustration with the militarisation of relief efforts.

"There are 200 flights going in and out every day, which is an incredible amount for a country like Haiti," the World Food Programme's Haiti officer Jarry Emmanuel reported.

"But most of those flights are for the United States military.

"Their priorities are to secure the country. Ours are to feed. We have got to get those priorities in sync," demanded Mr Emmanuel.

Who's right? secure the environment first so you can undertake humanitarian activities safely **OR** address humanitarian needs first and deal with security issues as they arise?

Humanitarian aid (finally) prioritised at airport

The US military, who are controlling the airport in Port-au-Prince, Haiti's capital, **have agreed to prioritise the landing of humanitarian aid flights over military reinforcements** as the need for supplies grows more desperate.

France had earlier criticised American relief efforts.

Bernard Kouchnet, the French foreign minister said United Nations officials must investigate and clarify **the dominant US role in the relief effort** after **a French aid plane was turned away** from the airport.

Alain Joyandet, the French co-operation minister, added: **"This is about helping Haiti, not about occupying Haiti."**

UN troops blamed for Haiti cholera

Hundreds of Haitians have demanded that a group of Nepalese peacekeepers leave the country, **blaming them for a cholera outbreak** that has killed at least 330 people and left nearly 5,000 others infected.

Cholera is endemic in Nepal and the country suffered outbreaks this summer. The troops arrived in shifts starting on October 9, after the outbreak in their home country and shortly before the disease broke out in Haiti.

The UN mission says no cases of cholera have been found among the Nepalese soldiers, but the denials have not been sufficient to address the rising anger over the spread of the disease, which causes severe dehydration, diarrhoea and vomiting.

Source: Al Jazeera, 30 Oct 2010

US military *behind* Haiti quake

Innsbruck political scientist Claudia von Werlhof has accused the USA of being behind the Haitian earthquake in January, it emerged today.

Werlhof said that **machines at a military research centre in Alaska used to detect deposits of crude oil by causing artificial earthquakes** might have been **intentionally set off to cause the Haitian earthquake** and enable the USA to send 10,000 soldiers into the country.

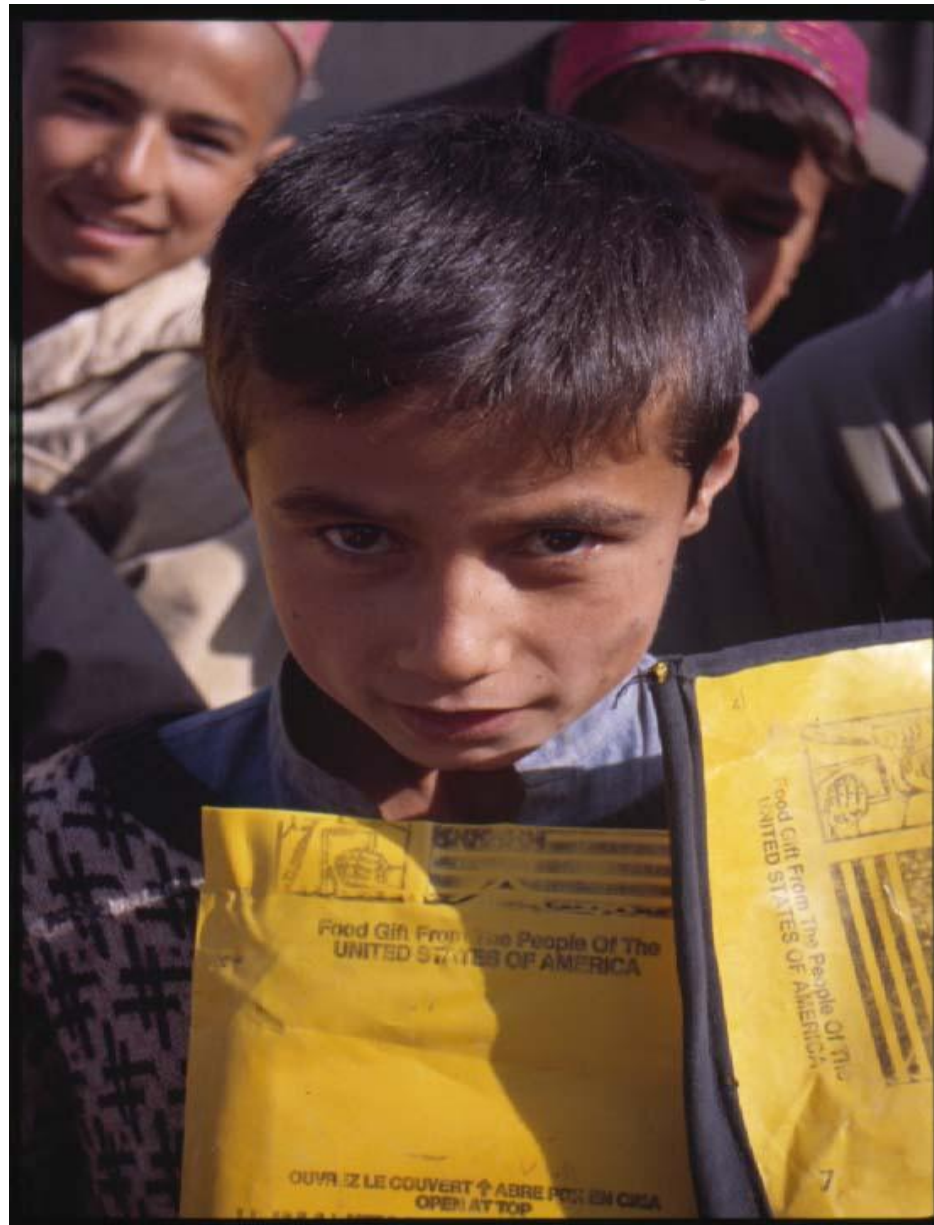
Source: Austrian Times, 9th March 2010

Humanitarian access: Burma denies cyclone relief



- Cyclone Nargis affects 1.5 million people in Burma's Irrawaddy delta
- Up to 200,000 people may have been killed
- US, France and Britain sends nearby warships to assist with relief efforts
- Burmese junta refuses to accept aid from military ships fearing a US "invasion to steal Burmese oil"
- NGOs already in-country had limited access
- Delays in providing assistance highly criticised by international community

Aid delivery







REMEMBER...
ONLY CATCH
THE FOOD.

AFGHANISTAN

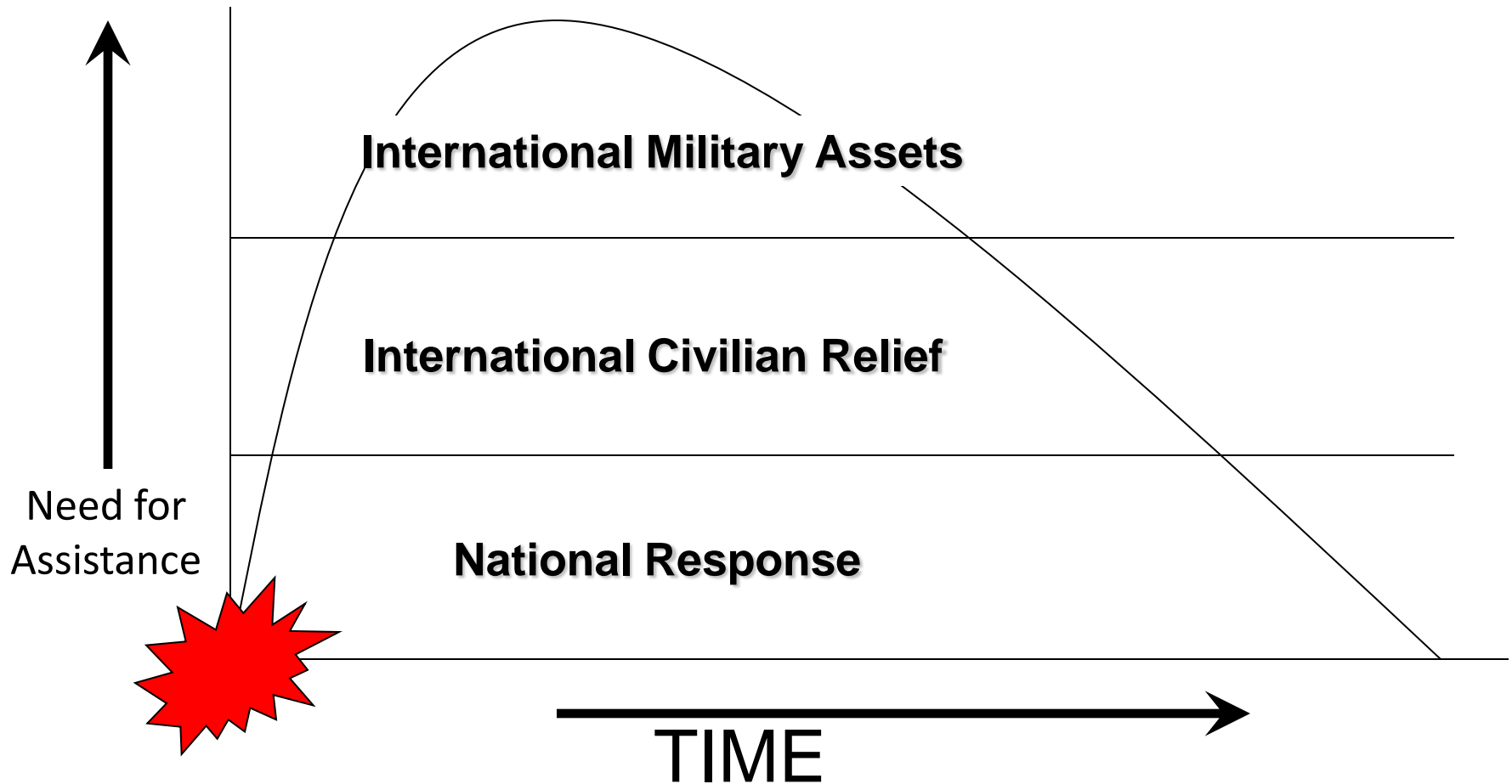
No choice?

Military capacity is still essential for responding to major disaster events – including in the Pacific.

- Not using military assets would cost lives.
- Would you turn down assistance from the military if your life was in danger?

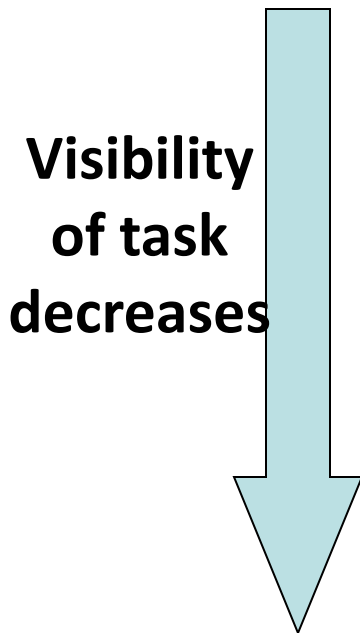
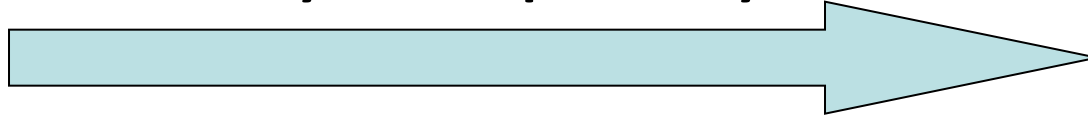
The issue is perhaps the **level and appropriateness of involvement**: ensuring appropriate tasks, length of deployment, engagement with locals, and sticking to the (internationally agreed) rules.

The best use of international military assets is **time and needs related**



Appropriate Relief Tasks

Availability and impartiality of forces decrease



Mission of Humanitarian Tasks	Disaster Assistance	Support of Peace Operation		Combat
		Peace- keeping	Peace Enforcemen t	
Direct	Maybe	Maybe	No	No
Indirect	Yes	Maybe	Maybe	No
Infrastructure Support	Yes	Yes	Maybe	Maybe

Stick to the rules: the **Oslo Guidelines**

- 25. **Last resort**: foreign military and civil defence assets should be requested only where there is **no comparable civilian alternative**
- 24. Military and civil defence assets should be seen as a tool **complementing existing relief mechanisms** in order to provide specific support to specific requirements, in response to the acknowledged '**humanitarian gap**' between the disaster needs that the relief community is being asked to satisfy and the resources available to meet them
- 26. **All relief actions remain the overall responsibility of the Affected State** and are complemented by foreign MCDA operating bilaterally or within an international relief effort.
- 28. An Assisting State deciding to employ its MCDA should bear in mind the **cost/benefit ratio of such operations** as compared to other alternatives, if available. In principle, the costs ... should be covered by funds other than those available for international development activities.
- 34. Member States are encouraged to **invest in increased civilian capacity** instead of the ad hoc use of military forces to support humanitarian actors.

Source: Oslo Guidelines, Nov. 2006 update

Military expenditure

- US: \$708 billion (for the fiscal year 2011)
 - largest defence budget since the Second World War, \$82 billion more than for 2010.
- China (2009) \$99 billion
- Britain (2009) \$67 billion
- Russia (2009) \$61 billion
- Canada (2009) \$20 billion

Source: Stockholm International Peace Research Institute

- UN CAP Humanitarian Appeal 2010 Mid-Year Review (July)
 - appeals are 48% funded, leaving **\$4.9 billion** still to be found to meet humanitarian needs for the rest of 2010.
 - \$10 billion would adequately fund international disaster response
- 1.5 trillion was spent on military expenditure internationally in 2009

What if a proportion of this was used to fund civilian rather than military responders (in-country or international)?

If not the military, then who?

- **NGOs / Red Cross**

- Are the best deliverers of humanitarian aid
- Can be guilty of flag waving and competition
- Different mandates limit coordination/collaboration

- **UN**

- Too big, too bureaucratic, too political
- Are responding countries prepared to be instructed (or 'coordinated') by the UN?

- **Foreign deployable civilian response teams** comprising of trained experts in their field

- Many countries already do this (search and rescue, police, medics)
- Need to be easily deployable, trained and ready
- Need to ensure they fit in with national systems and be prepared to be instructed by the host government
- Need to 'have a day job' as well

If not the military, **then who?**

...perhaps... the country itself

- **In-country disaster response capacity building**
(**preparedness**)
 - Ensure the country can manage disasters itself without international assistance (e.g. NZ with ChCh EQ)
 - When unable to cope, governments are at least able to manage and coordinate an international response (including foreign militaries) adequately themselves
 - National/Local Disaster and Emergency Response plans are in place and followed
 - Civilian first-responders (police, ambulance etc) are trained and ready
 - Having such a large international response capacity can in fact be a disincentive for governments to put resources into preparedness

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