

USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

POST KATRINA: REDEFINING THE MILITARY ROLE IN HOMELAND SECURITY

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ABSTRACT

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Hurricane Katrina brought to the forefront a gap in the Department of Homeland Security's ability to respond to a catastrophic disaster. The Department of Homeland Security organizations possess immense assets and sub-organizations with great strengths; however, the command and control to pull capabilities together and focus on the mission seems to be lacking. This critical role fell to the military Post Katrina, but only after failure and suffering had occurred.

This paper reviews the involvement of the military in Hurricane Katrina, the legal aspects of the Posse Comitatus Act, the current status of the military within Homeland Security, and recommends changes to ultimately better prepare the military and the Department of Homeland Security. By improving the ability of both organizations to lead and support the people of the United States during future catastrophic events, the turbulent days following disasters such as Hurricane Katrina can be mitigated.

POST KATRINA: REDEFINING THE MILITARY ROLE IN HOMELAND SECURITY

Hurricane Katrina brought to the forefront a gap in the Department of Homeland Security's ability to respond to a catastrophic disaster. The Department of Homeland Security organizations possess immense assets and sub-organizations with great strengths; however, the command and control to pull capabilities together and focus on the mission seems to be lacking. This critical role fell to the military Post Katrina but only after failure and suffering had occurred.

Hurricane Katrina was the eleventh named tropical storm, fourth hurricane, third major hurricane, and first Category 5 hurricane of the 2005 Atlantic hurricane season. It was one of the most powerful and devastating storms during the worst hurricane season in recorded history. Katrina was the sixth-strongest storm ever recorded in the Atlantic basin. It first made landfall as a Category 1 hurricane just north of Miami, Florida on August 25, 2005, then again on August 29 as a Category 4 along the Central Gulf Coast near New Orleans, Louisiana. Its storm surge soon breached the levee system that protected New Orleans from Lake Pontchartrain and the Mississippi River. Most of the city was subsequently flooded, mainly by water from the lake. This and other major damage to the coastal regions of Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama made Katrina the most destructive and expensive natural disaster in the history of the United States.¹

From the gulf coast states (principally Louisiana and Mississippi), the actual loss of life is unknown due to the fact that some people still cannot be found. The official death toll as of 30 October 2005 stands at 1302, (including Bahamas, South Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Florida Panhandle, and most of the Eastern United States), with the highest numbers of fatalities from the greater New Orleans area.² The damage is estimated to be between \$70 and \$130 billion, topping Hurricane Andrew as the most expensive natural disaster in U.S. history. Over a million people were displaced — a humanitarian crisis on a scale unseen in the U.S. since the Great Depression.³

In Louisiana, the hurricane's eye made landfall at 6:10am CDT on Monday, August 29. After 11:00am CDT, several sections of the levee system in New Orleans collapsed. Mandatory evacuation of New Orleans had been ordered by Mayor Ray Nagin on August 28, before the hurricane struck. The order was repeated on August 31. By early September, people were being forcibly evacuated, mostly by bus to neighboring states.⁴

Federal disaster declarations blanketed 90,000 square miles (233,000 km²) of the United States, an area almost as large as the United Kingdom. The hurricane left an estimated five million people without power. On September 3, Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff

described the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina as "probably the worst catastrophe, or set of catastrophes in the country's history"⁵ referring to the hurricane itself plus the flooding of New Orleans.

The combination of strong winds, heavy rainfall, and storm surge led to breaks in the earthen levees that separate New Orleans from surrounding lakes. At least 80% of New Orleans was under flood water on August 31st, largely as a result of levee failures from Lake Pontchartrain. Some parts of New Orleans were inundated with 20 feet of water, which increased the loss of life and property damage. Large portions of Biloxi and Gulfport, Mississippi were underwater as a result of a storm surge of over 30 feet, which flooded those cities. Dauphin Island, a barrier island off the coast of Alabama, was obliterated, with homes and infrastructure totally destroyed. Storm surge from Mobile Bay led to inundation of Mobile, Alabama causing imposition of a dusk-to-dawn curfew for the city.

A major economic impact for the nation was the disruption to the oil industry from Katrina. Preliminary estimates from the Mineral Management Service suggested that oil production in the Gulf of Mexico was reduced by 1.4 million barrels per day (or 95% of the daily Gulf of Mexico production) as a result of the hurricane. Gasoline had reached a record high price per gallon as of Monday August 30th, with concerns over refinery capacity apparently driving the increase.⁶

Over 1.7 million people lost power as a result of the storm in the gulf coast states, with power companies estimating that it would take more than several months to restore power to some locations. Drinking water was also unavailable in New Orleans due to a broken water main that served the city. Power was lost to 1.3 million customers in southeastern Florida from the initial landfall on August 24th.

Both of New Orleans' airports were flooded and closed on August 30th and bridges of Interstate 10 leading east out of the city were destroyed. Most of the coastal highways along the Gulf were impassable in places and most minor roads near the shore were still underwater or covered in debris as of August 30th. Katrina also disrupted travel as it headed inland, with more than 15 inches of rain falling across a large area of the coast to 4 inches in parts of Ohio during the 48 hours after Katrina made landfall.⁷

Estimates for insured damages for Hurricane Katrina took months to determine and may be upgraded. However, Katrina will certainly be near 100 billion dollars and has already exceeded losses from Hurricane Andrew, previously the most costly natural disaster in the United States history. Andrew caused \$15.5 billion in insured damage in 1992. Adjusted for inflation, Andrew resulted in more than \$25 billion in insured damage.

What Failed

All natural and manmade disasters, plus those that are the result of terrorism are the responsibility of local and state leaders. They are the first responders, responsible for all plans, and are the leaders for Command and Control (C2) of their towns and states. The Mayor of New Orleans and the Governor of Louisiana were quick to cast blame on the federal government. However, ongoing investigations and after action reviews appeared to identify the Mayor's and Governor's own actions or inaction, as major contributing factors to problems that arose with the Hurricane Katrina response. A few of the issues that have been identified include a lack of, or incomplete and outdated disaster plan, a delay in an evacuation order, lack of evacuation plans for medically needy, a delay in the required "request for federal support" and poor communication systems once help arrived. Further, individuals failed to heed the early warnings and did not prepare personally with canned food, water, flashlights and other disaster preparedness items. Another huge issue was the lack of an evacuation plan by those individuals without personal vehicles.

The intent is not to pass judgment or blame, but rather to note these as issues to be corrected in Louisiana. Other cities and states can learn from these mistakes and tragedies that occurred and take corrective and preventative action.

The conditions of levees should not have been a surprise; many organizations and personnel verbally and in published documents warned of the potential disaster. The New Orleans Times-Picayune newspaper ran a series on the risk in 2002; the series predicted many of the events that happened in 2005, including the breakdown of the levee system. "It's only a matter of time before South Louisiana takes a direct hit from a major hurricane. Billions have been spent to protect us, but we grow more vulnerable every day." New Orleans Times-Picayune June 23 - 27 2002.⁸ National Geographic ran a feature in October 2004. Scientific American covered the topic thoroughly in an October 2001 piece entitled, "Drowning New Orleans." Walter Williams did a serious short feature called "New Orleans: The Natural History," in which an expert said a direct hit by a hurricane could damage the city for six months.

The issue that has received the most attention in post-Katrina discussions is the speed of rescue and relief operations. The Department of Defense Northern Command began its alert and coordination procedures before Katrina's landfall; however many deployments did not reach the affected area until days later. The Command utilized a set of newly developed procedures and specific decision points in an attempt to ensure an organized response to catastrophic incidents. Post Katrina, it may be necessary to examine those procedures and the actions of responsible authorities to determine whether procedural obstacles, administrative failures, or

both delayed the arrival of needed resources in the affected area. The traditional assumption that the Department of Defense is the resource of last resort may also require re-examination.⁹

In a public address to the Nation, President Bush stated “many of the men and women of the Coast Guard, the United States Military, the National Guard, Homeland Security, and state and local governments performed skillfully under the worst of conditions. Yet the system, at every level of government, was not well coordinated, and was overwhelmed in the first few days.”¹⁰ “It is now clear that a challenge on this scale requires greater federal authority and a broader role for the armed forces – the institution of our government most capable of massive logistical operations on a moments notice.”¹¹

Homeland Security Overview

One primary reason for the establishment of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) was to provide the unifying core for the vast national network of organizations and institutions involved in efforts to secure the nation. In order to better do this and to provide guidance, the Department developed its own high-level strategic plan. The vision and mission statements, and strategic goals and objectives shown below provide the framework guiding the actions that make up the daily operations of the department.¹² “Vision: preserving our freedoms, protecting America ... we secure our homeland; Mission: we will lead the unified national effort to secure America. We will prevent and deter terrorist attacks and protect against and respond to threats and hazards to the nation. We will ensure safe and secure borders, welcome lawful immigrants and visitors, and promote the free-flow of commerce; Strategic Goals: Awareness, Identify and understand threats, assess vulnerabilities, determine potential impacts and disseminate timely information to our homeland security partners and the American public; Prevention: Detect, deter, and mitigate threats to our homeland; Protection: Safeguard our people and their freedoms, critical infrastructure, property and the economy of our Nation from acts of terrorism, natural disasters, or other emergencies; Response: Lead, manage and coordinate the national response to acts of terrorism, natural disasters, or other emergencies; Recovery: Lead national, state, local and private sector efforts to restore services and rebuild communities after acts of terrorism, natural disasters, or other emergencies; Service: Serve the public effectively by facilitating lawful trade, travel and immigration; Organizational Excellence: Value our most important resource, our people. Create a culture that promotes a common identity, innovation, mutual respect, accountability and teamwork to achieve efficiencies, effectiveness, and operational synergies.”¹³

Post 9/11 Homeland Security

America's post-9/11 obsession with securing the “homeland” shifted the domestic political landscape, including American civil-military relations. The American model of civil-military relations had been characterized by a contract according to which the military defends the nation's borders while domestic police keep order at home. “On September 11,” in the words of

Department of Defense (DOD) Transformation “czar” Arthur K. Cebrowski, “America’s contract with the Department of Defense was torn up and a new contract is being written.”¹⁴ This strategic insight described some of the forces compelling military changes in the historical context of US civil-military relations. Although the military itself may resist change, institution-building (outside and within that organization) and attitudinal changes in response to massive terrorist attacks at home cannot but alter American civil-military relations.¹⁵

The Bush administration introduced the prospect of expanded internal military roles shortly after the terrorist attacks on New York and Washington. Officials debated whether the National Guard, currently serving abroad in Iraq and conducting peace operations in Bosnia and Kosovo, should be limited to domestic roles. Existing restrictions on military participation in domestic law enforcement, codified in the Posse Comitatus Act of 1878, quickly came under scrutiny.¹⁶

Posse Comitatus Act

The current use of Reserve and National Guard in Afghanistan and Iraq involves over 45 percent of all forces serving in the current War on Terrorism. The DOD is totally intertwined and interdependent. Virtually any mission performed involves a blend of Active Duty, Reserve, and National Guard. This fact is undeniable and has certainly been proven a successful blend in current worldwide operations. However, the restrictions of the Posse Comitatus Act of 1878 creates a serious conundrum for Homeland Security and military leaders in their effort to plan and coordinate the future contributions of the military in the protection of the U.S. homeland.

The Posse Comitatus Act is named for what it specifically forbids: the early practice of posse comitatus, literally “the power of the county,” by which shorthanded civilian law enforcement officials—a county sheriff in medieval England, a U.S. marshal in 19th-century America—could, in an emergency, deputize a posse of royal or federal troops from the nearest fort. In the 19th-century United States, Posse Comitatus became entangled with the bitter issues of states’ rights and race. Federal officials would deputize troops to enforce laws where the local authorities refused. These troops hunted fugitive slaves in the North before the Civil War and protected black voters in the South after the war. The Reconstruction also ended the deputizing of troops, by legislating criminal charges against any marshal who called up Soldiers for a posse.

That prohibition never applied to a governor’s calling up his own state’s militia—known today as the National Guard. Nor does it apply to federal troops that provide aid after disasters without proper authorization—search and rescue, medical care, food, etc.—as codified under

the 1988 Stafford Act, which also created the Federal Emergency Management Agency. The prohibition does not even apply to federal troops' providing "support for civilian law enforcement," as long as they do not enforce the law themselves: 12 long sections of the U.S. Code (Title 18, Section 371-382), mostly passed during the "war on drugs," instruct the Defense Department to offer intelligence, training, and equipment, stopping short only of "direct participation by any member of the Army, Navy, Air Force, or Marine Corps in a search, seizure, arrest, or other similar activity."¹⁷

Posse Comitatus Act: Section 1385 of Title 18, United States Code (USC), states: "Whoever, except in cases and under circumstances expressly authorized by the Constitution or Act of Congress, willfully uses any part of the Army or Air Force as a posse comitatus or otherwise to execute the laws shall be fined under this title or imprisoned not more than two years, or both."¹⁸

The Posse Comitatus Act (PCA) does not apply to the U.S. Coast Guard in peacetime or to the National Guard in Title 32 or State Active Duty status. The substantive prohibitions of the Posse Comitatus Act (PCA) were extended to all the services with the enactment of Title 10 USC, Section 375. As required by Title 10 USC, Section 375 the secretary of defense issued Department of Defense Directive 5525.5, which precludes members of the Army, Navy, Air Force, or Marine Corps from direct participation in a search, seizure, arrest, or other similar activity unless participation in such activity by such member is otherwise authorized by law.

The PCA generally prohibits U.S. military personnel from direct participation in law enforcement activities. Some of those law enforcement activities would include interdicting vehicles, vessels, and aircraft; conducting surveillance, searches, pursuit and seizures; or making arrests on behalf of civilian law enforcement authorities. Prohibiting direct military involvement in law enforcement is in keeping with long-standing U.S. law and policy limiting the military's role in domestic affairs.

The United States Congress has enacted a number of exceptions to the PCA that allow the military, in certain situations, to assist civilian law enforcement agencies in enforcing the laws of the U.S. The most common example is counter-drug assistance (Title 10 USC, Sections 371-381). Other examples include the Insurrection Act (Title 10 USC, Sections 331-335). This act allows the President to use U.S. military personnel at the request of a state legislature or governor to suppress insurrections. It also allows the President to use federal troops to enforce federal laws when rebellion against the authority of the U.S. makes it impracticable to enforce the laws of the U.S.

Another exception is the assistance in the case of crimes involving nuclear materials (Title 18 USC, Section 831).¹⁹ This statute permits DOD personnel to assist the Justice Department in enforcing prohibitions regarding nuclear materials, when the Attorney General and the Secretary of Defense jointly determine that an “emergency situation” exists that possesses a serious threat to U.S. interests and is beyond the capability of civilian law enforcement agencies.

The Posse Comitatus Act is often cited as a major constraint on the use of the military services to participate in homeland security, counter-terrorism, civil disturbances, and similar domestic duties. It is widely believed that this law prohibits the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps from performing any kind of police work or assisting law enforcement agencies to enforce the law. This belief, however, is not exactly correct. What is correct is that new rules are needed to clearly set forth the boundaries for the use of federal military forces for homeland security.

Military Review of Responses to Hurricane Katrina

Why was the active duty military not present and in charge right away? The current laws of the United States do not task or allow the active duty military to be involved until local and state authorities specifically ask for help and have the approval of the President of the United States. What constituted the official request for federal help and when it was actually done in the Hurricane Katrina crisis is still at question and debate.

This brief overview of the military operations in support of Hurricane Katrina cannot possibly identify all the hard work and literally heroic around the clock efforts of all of the members of the military – Active Duty, Reserve, and National Guard. They were all heroes, each and everyone. However, it also cannot portray the apparent lack of command and control and the failure to create a unity of effort in the early stages of the response. These issues were acknowledged by the media, local and state leaders, and National civilian Leaders all the way through and including the President of the United States. The noticeable and necessary difference did not occur until the First U.S. Army, under the command of Lieutenant General Russell L. Honore’ became officially involved. LTG Honore’ certainly gave credit to his subordinate commanders and staff, but to the public at large it was his “command presence” that pulled the efforts together. Though the recovery efforts will continue for years, the fact that someone was in charge relieved many of the fears and stress throughout the country. These fears were fanned by the media, but they were also quick to acknowledge the difference the military effort made.

“First Army and our coordinating elements provide support in accordance with the National Response Plan,” said Don Reed, Military Support Division chief, First U.S. Army. “DOD assets are provided only upon the request of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the states involved.” These elements helped U.S. Northern Command coordinate DOD support to civil authorities as requested by the FEMA.²⁰

On 28 August, in an anticipatory move a full day before landfall of Katrina, Lieutenant General Russell L. Honore’ activated the First Army’s 24 hour Crisis Action Team (CAT) and sent defense coordinating officer (DCO) elements to three states. Each of the three First Army DCOs was a colonel who had been trained in disaster relief coordination, officials said. In addition to the DCO, there was an Emergency Preparedness Liaison Officer in every state who helped the DCO coordinate the military’s efforts and ensured a well-synchronized, rapid response.

As of 29 August, more than 5000 National Guard Troops had been activated in four states to assist with recovery operations as Hurricane Katrina strikes the Gulf Coast with 140+ mph winds and massive storm surges.²¹ By 31 August 10,000 National guard troops were on duty in Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida. In another anticipatory move, the U.S. Navy had 7 ships staged or in route to the area with over 6000 active duty forces.²² On 1 September the build up and action of the Nation Guard expanded to over 13,000 men and women in the four States effected.²³ The news media continuously broadcast the tragedies and cast a wide net of “fault and blame” over who should be doing what and who was responsible.

The President of the United States visited the area affected by Hurricane Katrina on 2 September for a first hand look. Those in the media felt it was his first true understanding of the devastation from the storm. While, the National Guard strength continued to increase to over 22,000 troops,²⁴ it was the President’s visit that solidified the agreement to bring in Active Duty forces. Still under debate is whether the local authorities and the Governor then formally requested this support or were they then advised that they must first request this support. Prior to these official orders many active duty military leaders had pre-positioned their assets and troops in anticipation, however, they were prohibited from full scale operations in the area. This is where the restrictions of the Posse Comitatus Act hinder the rapid deployment and utilization of Active Duty military forces in the continental United States.

Once the orders were received, a series of events began to unfold over the next 7 days that made a huge difference in the conditions of New Orleans. The Navy continued to flow forces and medical assets into the area. The Air Force had Helicopters and numerous heavy lift aircraft involved in the recovery effort. The Army Corps of Engineers had over 400 additional

personnel in the area, primarily in Louisiana focusing on the Levees and water removal from the city. A 60-member Contingency aero medical staging facility team arrived in the afflicted area on 2 September to provide support and medical care for patients being evacuated.²⁵

On 3 September 2005, President Bush announced the deployment of 7,000 more active-duty forces to support hurricane relief operations along the hurricane-devastated Gulf Coast. There, they joined 5,000 other active duty forces and almost 22,000 National Guardsmen already on the ground evacuating stranded people, getting food, water and other supplies to victims and relief agencies and supporting security efforts.²⁶ Troops from the 82nd Airborne Division, 1st Cavalry Division, 1st Marine Expeditionary Force and 2nd Marine Expeditionary Force joined the relief effort within the next 24 to 72 hours.²⁷

"Hour by hour, the situation on the ground is improving. Yet the enormity of the task requires more resources and more troops," said the President.²⁸ Bush then praised Congress for passing a \$10.5 billion emergency aid package, which he quickly signed, to fund ongoing relief operations.²⁹

National Guard officials had 30,000 Army and Air Guard troops and their equipment from more than 40 states in the region to help with relief and rescue operations. Louisiana Governor Kathleen Blanco said the military presence had a calming effect on New Orleans. Television images showed crowds cheering on 2 September as National Guard convoys loaded with relief supplies slogged through city. "We are seeing a show of force," Blanco told television reporters on the scene. "It's putting confidence back in our hearts and in the minds of our people." The president promised today to finish evacuating people from the area as quickly and safely as possible, to ensure that criminals don't prey on those left vulnerable and not to "allow bureaucracy to get in the way of saving lives."³⁰

Military support for the effort, being coordinated through Joint Task Force Katrina at Camp Shelby, Mississippi, remained focused on saving lives, delivering food, water and other support and evacuating people from the area. Search-and-rescue efforts intensified with the arrival of additional military aviation assets to the region. As of 4 September, 139 military helicopters-78 from active-component units and 61 from the National Guard-were supporting rescue and humanitarian operations, and another 17 aircraft were on the way, U.S. Northern Command officials reported.³¹ This is in addition to a massive Coast Guard aviation response. The Iwo Jima Expeditionary Strike Group arrived from Norfolk, Va., loaded with disaster response equipment and was expected to be operating off the Louisiana coast beginning 4 September. By 5 September active military force has increased to over 13,000 personnel and National Guard forces from as many as 40 States was over 38,000.³²

The Air Force provided strategic humanitarian airlift assistance to the region by airlifting tons of relief materials and military support personnel and equipment into several affected areas. This included more than 9 million Meals, Ready to Eat from the Defense Logistics Agency.³³ The Air Force operations were performed by a mix of Active Duty, Reserve, Air Guard crews, ground operations teams, Pilots, and air support teams from multiple bases around the country. None of them can effectively perform the mission without the support of the other.

As of 7 September the National Guard forces operating in the recovery area are over 41,000 and there were more than 17,000 Active duty Soldiers, Airman and Marines hard at work in the effort. The Navy had 21 ships operating in the recovery effort and more enroute. There were over 300 Helicopters from the Department of defense working on rescue and re-supply missions.³⁴ The USNS Comfort, a hospital ship, set sail on 2 September from Baltimore and was scheduled to arrive on the Gulf Coast by 8 September.

As military members and their assets supported the response effort, more resources were being put in place to support the responders. In addition, support operations ranging from maintenance stations to fuel points were being set up to keep relief efforts going. USNS Arctic was also in the region, providing fuel and stores for naval support efforts.³⁵

Those involved in the military response expressed gratification in their mission. "The people of New Orleans are very happy to see us," said Lt. Col. John Gay, deputy commander of Joint Task Force Arkansas, which includes 600 Arkansas National Guard troops supporting the effort. "The destruction is devastating, but our morale is high and we're dedicated to our mission and to helping these people to the best of our ability."³⁶

Recommendations

The Posse Comitatus Act is inappropriate for modern times and needs to be replaced by a completely new law.³⁷ It is time to re-evaluate the use of military forces in the continental United States. The old law is widely misunderstood and unclear. It leaves plenty of room for people to do unwise and perhaps unlawful things while trying to comply with their particular interpretation. It certainly does not provide a basis for defining a useful relationship of active duty military forces and civil authority in a global war on terrorism. The Posse Comitatus Act is an artifact of a different era. New problems often need new solutions, and a new set of rules is needed for this issue.

In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, local and state authorities were unclear of the procedures necessary to receive assistance from federal authorities. While FEMA was on site,

it alone does not have the authority to bring in active duty troops. Currently, that request must come from local and state authorities through official channels. Homeland Security, in coordination with the state and local officials, should develop and initiate a standard format and requirement for disaster plans at all levels, then assist every city and state in completing their plan. This would insure consistency in requirements from state to state. While every location will have specific issues related only to their geographic area, at least they will all be in the same format and easy for everyone at all levels and all outside responders to quickly grasp the particular area plans in the event of a disaster. This will eliminate much confusion and make it easier to ensure proper plans are in place and up to date. Federal funding should be contingent on all levels of governments using the standard plan. Further, the plans should be reviewed or inspected annually to maintain future funding.

In New Orleans, local police could not communicate directly with other agencies in the area. This created inefficient operations and duplication of efforts. Homeland Security must coordinate and possibly fund communication systems that can "talk" to all agencies at all levels. These communication systems could be tested during mock disaster exercises and used on routine basis to insure their interoperability.

President Bush and Congress should initiate action to enact a new law that would set forth in clear terms a statement of the rules for using military forces for homeland security and for enforcing the laws of the United States. Circumstances have undergone many changes since 1878, and the Posse Comitatus Act is not only irrelevant but also threatening to the proper and effective use of military forces for domestic duties.

Conclusions

Natural and manmade disasters and those that are the result of terrorism will remain the responsibility of local and state leaders. Local and State authorities are the first responders, responsible for all plans, and are the leaders for Command and Control (C2) of their towns and states. However, the federal government has an ultimate responsibility to protect its citizens from all enemies and disasters, foreign and domestic. The military is the most capable, sourced, and prepared entity at the disposal of the federal government to react to any disaster in the continental United States. This is not to say that other organizations could not be developed; however, personnel would need to be trained and equipment acquired to respond as well as the military. The cost to the country would be astronomical and would take years to develop. The questions must be asked; would the American taxpayer be willing to pay for this new organization and what would this organization do while waiting for the next disaster? The

Department of Homeland Security has been developed to pull together many agencies that already existed in the government and to coordinate with local and state authorities for the protection of the nation. Homeland Security has done an outstanding job of developing a better system to respond to disasters in three short years. However, this is a never-ending process and there is still much room for improvement. With each “test” of the nation’s disaster response, Homeland Security and its sub-organizations will learn and continue to evolve into a more effective department.

The policy, Posse Comitatus, which can be interpreted to restrict the use of one of the nation’s biggest assets must be reviewed and revised. Recent events have shown the need for change and clarification of the use of Military Forces in the United States Homeland.

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