



Loaded Big 12 Conference could see a wide-open race **Back page**

1.4% White House offers small pay raise for troops in 2011 **Page 2**

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A VITAL ROLE IN RELIEF

Military's capabilities prove to be game changer in Haiti efforts

KRISTOPHER WILSON/Courtesy of the U.S. Navy

By MEGAN McCLOSKEY AND JEFF SCHOGOL
Stars and Stripes

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti
In the immediate aftermath of the earthquake that devastated much of Haiti, aid groups from around the world lined up shipments of food, water and medical supplies.

They loaded cargo aircraft and ships and recruited volunteers to assist in the effort. Then they waited, even as

televisions across the world flashed images of suffering and death.

The port was destroyed, and the tiny airport in the Haitian capital was quickly overwhelmed. Much of the aid that did touch down was stuck at the airport because aid groups lacked the ability to push it out to the people, to feed them and tend to their injuries.

It was days before the U.S. troops began arriving en masse, bringing with them an industrial operational capability and a logistical structure

that turned a disjointed system into one capable of caring for thousands of victims. The sudden change, experts say, highlights just how critical military capabilities are in such massive relief missions.

The 22nd Marine Expeditionary Unit deployed early, as did elements of the Army's 82nd Airborne Division and a handful of Navy ships including the USNS Comfort hospital ship.

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A Haitian boy watches as rigid-hull inflatable boats arrive ashore at the New Hope Mission at Bonel, Haiti, last week as part of Operation Unified Response, a joint humanitarian assistance mission to the Caribbean nation.

Some aid groups wary of chaos if U.S. troops leave Haiti too quickly **Page 6**

London conference on Afghanistan will focus on Taliban reconciliation

By GEOFF ZIEZULEWICZ
Stars and Stripes

RAF MILDENHALL, England — Buying off insurgents and setting a tentative timetable for handing over security to Afghan forces will be the focal points of a conference on Afghanistan to be held Thursday in London.

Afghan leaders and 60 foreign ministers will discuss the Afghan government's strategy to improve security and governance, and how the international community can support those efforts.

At the heart of the strategy is an Afghan-proposed reintegration program aimed at bringing low-level Taliban fighters back into normal society, according to the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the conference organizer.

Under the plan, which is backed by U.S. and British leaders, the Afghan government would offer jobs, vocational training and other financial incentives to Taliban soldiers willing to switch sides, according to The Associated Press.

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The shadow of a U.S. soldier is cast on a mud wall as he helps clear an area used recently as a firing position by the Taliban, during a patrol in Kunar province, Afghanistan, on Sunday.

BRENNAN LINSLEY/AP

IN THE WORLD

Relief, military roles carefully balanced

By WARREN P. STROBEL
McClatchy Newspapers

WASHINGTON — As the number of U.S. soldiers in Haiti and aboard a small armada floating offshore builds toward 18,000, the question of how and when they will leave remains unanswered.

While past humanitarian missions, most notably in Somalia in the 1990s, have morphed into protracted — and bloody — “peacemaking” exercises, experts say there are many reasons that Haiti is unlikely to turn into a quagmire for U.S. forces.

Military: In Haiti, U.S. troops provide a support system for quake relief

MILITARY, FROM PAGE 1

The Air Force took over operations at the airport, and incoming flights increased from an average of 13 a day to more than 100.

The effort has not always been smooth, however. The aid group Doctors Without Borders has complained that flight scheduling forced some of its planes to land instead in the Dominican Republic and delayed the arrival of critical medical aid, which it says cost some patients their lives.

The military, however, says humanitarian flights get first priority and that only a handful of planes each day have been diverted.

Despite the criticism, the military's ability to keep track of people, machinery and money is among its biggest assets, said retired Army Gen. Barry McCaffrey, former head of U.S. Southern Command.

“That command-and-control capability, I don't think exists in any NGO (non-governmental organization),” McCaffrey said.

And the military, more so than any single aid group, has the ability to deal with the sheer scope of the disaster, he said.

“There's 200,000 dead, 250,000 injured, 2 million homeless, for God's sake,” he said. “We're talking about large muscle requirements, so the military comes in with power.”

But retired Army Lt. Gen. Russel Honore said the U.S. government's response to the earthquake could have been quicker if the military had been put in the lead instead of the United States Agency for International Development.

“The military has the capability to deploy anywhere, anytime. USAID does not,” said Honore, who led the U.S. military response to Hurricane Katrina in 2005.

He added that the military's status as a command-based organization, one capable of issuing orders from the top down, makes it a more efficient model for leading the relief effort than USAID, which is focused on coordinating various aid groups.

As of Tuesday, two weeks after the earthquake, there were 4,700

troops on the ground and 13,100 off shore. The Air Force has also been able to parachute food and water into Haiti, dropping more than 17,000 meals during one mission. U.S. ships off Haiti's coast carry fuel for relief operations, meaning U.S. troops don't have to tax the limited supplies in Port-au-Prince, said Air Force Gen. Douglas Fraser, head of SOUTHCOM.

U.S. troops have brought badly needed helicopters to get relief aid to distribution points quickly, and they have helped open Port-au-Prince's port to additional ships, Fraser said.

“So it is all those capabilities working together that help us get as much support and aid support as quickly as we can to affect the people of Haiti while other aid organizations are able to grow their capacity and then continue that effort on into the future,” he said.

On the ground, the military also acts as a coordinator between the disparate aid groups, many of whom come with good intentions and considerable medical skill but little ability to communicate among each other or move victims beyond their own staging areas.

Once the USNS Comfort arrived off the coast, the aid doctors at the main hospital in Port-au-Prince had the most desperate cases plucked from their outdoor beds.

“Tell them they are going to a U.S. hospital boat,” one nurse instructed a Creole interpreter. “That they'll be able to get what they need there.”

The patients were taken by military ambulance and then helicopter to the ship where they would receive the intensive surgeries they couldn't get at the rudimentary hospital.

“Without the military we could do none of that,” said Paul Auerbach, a professor of surgery at Stanford who was working at the main hospital in Port-au-Prince, noting the doctors and nurses were grateful for the security the 82nd Airborne provided at the hospital. “Here the military is one of the great morale boosters. The only actual support system

point” on operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, said Marine Col. David Lapan, a Pentagon spokesman. Although military planners are keeping a close eye on the flow of forces.

If all goes as planned, U.S. troops will begin departing after United Nations agencies and private aid groups are ready to fully take on the task of recovery and rebuilding.

A U.N. peacekeeping force, which is being enlarged with 2,000 more peacekeepers and 1,500 policemen, will provide security alongside Haitian security forces.

“As we get through this initial crisis, as

those other organizations bring up their capacity, we will work with all those organizations to determine when the right time is to transition our capabilities out of Haiti,” Air Force Gen. Douglas Fraser, the commander of the military's Southern Command, said Thursday.

Neither the White House nor the Pentagon has spelled out the details of when and how that will happen, however.

Large-scale violence, which has been sporadic so far, or thousands of desperate Haitians taking to the seas to try to reach U.S. shores could upend the Obama administration's plans.

For the latest news about the Haiti disaster, including Stripes' Twitter feed, photos, maps, unit deployments and more, go to: stripes.com/go/haiti

we have is military.”

The Comfort has been operating at full capacity, and the military is now providing equipment to establish a 5,000-bed facility in Port-au-Prince, according to Army Lt. Gen. Ken Keen, head of the U.S. task force in Haiti. The facility would accommodate patients from the Comfort and others in need of post-surgical care.

Keen could not say how long it will take to build the hospital, which would be staffed by non-governmental organizations, but he said “seeds of that hospital” could be in place within the next week.

Col. Christopher Gibson, commander of the 2nd Brigade Combat Team of the 82nd Airborne, tagged two of his doctors to coordinate the medical care across the different aid groups. They are acting as a transition team to help get the neediest patients to the Comfort and field hospitals around the greater Port-au-Prince area.

“There are hospitals that are under-utilized. They are hungry for patients,” Lt. Col. Jozie Smarth said.

Smarth and Lt. Col. Robert Malsby, surgeon for 1st Battalion, 325th Airborne Infantry Regiment, are acting as runners between organizations.

The main hospital was overwhelmed with patients, many of whom were packed like sardines outside in tents made of sheets. The operating rooms were doing two, three surgeries at a time.

About 15 blocks away, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' facility was deserted in comparison.

“It's been very, very slow here,” said Keith Lindsay, head of the operation there. “We're trying to get the word out.”

“Oh, we can get you patients,” Malsby responded. “We can get you lots of patients.”

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RODRIGO ABO/AP

The Natzis family gathers outside their destroyed house Tuesday after spending the night in the middle of a street in downtown Port-au-Prince, Haiti. Tents are in short supply for the many left homeless in the aftermath of the Jan. 12 earthquake.

Haiti efforts focus on refugee housing

The Associated Press

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti — The dusty soccer field lined with spacious tents is an oasis for earthquake survivors among Haiti's homeless sheltering by the hundreds of thousands in squalid camps.

Competition for the canvas homes has boiled into arguments and machete fights, a sign of the desperation felt by the hundreds of thousands of people without homes struggling for shelter in this wrecked city. Haiti's president has asked the world for 200,000 tents and says he will sleep in one himself.

Tents are in desperately short supply following the 7.0-magnitude quake on Jan. 12.

The Haitian government and international groups were preparing a more substantial tent city on Port-au-Prince's outskirts.

Brazilian army engineers with the U.N. peacekeeping force in Haiti have cleared and leveled 12 acres north of the city, planned as the first of more than a half-dozen sites that officials hope will shelter the displaced before the onset of spring rains and summer hurricanes.

Col. Delcio Monteiro Sapper said the Interamerican Development Bank wants to clear a total of 247 acres owned by Haiti's government that could house 100,000

quake refugees.

Helen Clark, administrator of the U.N. Development Program, said providing shelter is a pressing priority that requires innovative solutions.

“China, for example, set up 400,000 semi-permanent houses after the Sichuan earthquake,” she said. “Similar initiatives will need to be considered and supported for Haiti.”

In Montreal on Monday, Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton and officials of more than two dozen donor nations and international organizations met to assess the progress of the relief effort.

The Haitian government asked the international community to provide \$3 billion for Haiti's reconstruction, the tourism minister said. Prime Minister Jean-Max Bellerive told the conference his impoverished nation lost 60 percent of its gross domestic product in the quake.

U.S. officials say the rescue phase of the operation is over and the focus has shifted to recovery.

“Outside of the food area, the two prime worries are: one, medical services or medical equipment, and, two, shelter,” said Lewis Lucke, U.S. special coordinator for relief and reconstruction.