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Study # 11

JOINT STAFF COMMAND AND CONTROL PROBLEMS ATTENDING  
MILITARY SUPPORT OPERATIONS IN DOMESTIC EMERGENCIES:  
STEEP HILL-14 AND TEMPEST RAPID "BETSY," 1965

8 June 1966

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PREFACE

Purpose

To provide Joint Staff authorities with an empirical basis for improving national military command and control capability for dealing with domestic emergencies, by identifying:

- a. The OJCS role, de jure and de facto, in situations of this type.
- b. Specific command and control problems encountered, and their circumstances.
- c. Externally imposed constraint parameters affecting J-3/ NMCC functions.
- d. Significant procedural, organizational, or other deficiencies amenable to Joint Staff-initiated remedial action.

Scope

This study deals with command and control associated with military support operations in domestic emergencies as experienced during a recent civil disturbance and a major natural disaster. It analyzes that command and control experience from the national military point of view, with special attention given to J-3 and NMCC activities. The focus is expressly and exclusively on command and control implications bearing directly on Joint Staff interests and responsibilities.

The particular cases examined are the Los Angeles, California, Watts Riot (STEEP HILL - 14) of 11-17 August 1965, and Hurricane Betsy (TEMPEST RAPID) of 10-17 September 1965, in both of which the Department of the Army functioned in the capacity of Executive Agent for the JCS. Neither examination is concerned with the substantive events that occurred, as such, nor with the actual carrying

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out of military operational tasks themselves, but only with the accompanying command and control phenomena materially relevant to the JCS level of involvement. It does, however, include an analysis and evaluation of demonstrated shortcomings in existing command and control arrangements where Joint Staff requirements are not appropriately taken into account.

#### Data Sources

Research for this study has been based on a variety of primary and secondary sources. OJCS central document files were referred to, and formal and informal J-3 and NMCC records, including both incoming and outgoing JCS messages, were examined. Of all the materials utilized, the Emergency Action (EA) logs and EA tapes proved especially valuable, with the tapes constituting a primary source in the most literal sense. Since the bulk of command and control activity was conducted via telephone, tape recording had been routinely employed for staff purposes as a kind of carbon copy of what transpired (e.g., see p. 75). For research purposes, these tapes provided a unique repository of some of the most critical data. Preserved in them was an authentic, verbatim record of original command and control interactions as they actually occurred at the time. Many crucial facts would otherwise have been completely irretrievable.

In view of the Army's central role, record files and other material of the Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations (DCSOPS) and the Army Operations Center (AOC), as well as the Office of the Chief of Engineers (OCE), were made available through the cooperation of the Vice Chief of Staff, U.S. Army. Access to sources there afforded an opportunity to investigate important specific details contained in transcripts, logs, journals, messages, synopses, talking papers, briefing sheets, situation reports (SITREPS) memoranda, and internal working notes.

In addition, interviews with key participants involved in the events themselves elicited much information not reflected in

documentary sources. Among these, staff members of J-3, in the North American Division, the NMCS Division, and the NMCC, were consulted, as were their counterparts in the DCSOPS Readiness Division and the AOC, and officials in the Civil Works Directorate of OCE.

Published open sources were also useful.

### Background

This study is in response to a request by the Director for Operations, Joint Staff, which in turn reflects the desires of the Director, Joint Staff, that WSEG undertake an analysis of certain command and control difficulties recently posed for the Joint Staff by a class of military contingency wherein the JCS ostensibly have no mission. It is formally part of a program of related studies being conducted by WSEG in accordance with the provisions of DJSM 1111-61, and other JCS authorization, and in the present case as specifically amplified in J-3M 1599-65.

The rationale for the study requirement is that several potentially serious lacunae, discrepancies, and ambiguities in current military command and control arrangements at the national level were revealed. Among the unresolved problem areas observed was the weakness of existing JCS-Service relationships when the Service functions as Executive Agent, especially with regard to conflicting terms of reference governing jurisdiction over operational commitment of strategic force resources under JCS control. Another was contradictions between established institutional and statutory lines of military responsiveness to civil authority. Most pervasive was the inadequacy and unstructured randomness of staff coordination and information exchange processes, both within the military community and with civilian agencies.

Clearly a number of basic command and control dilemmas, hitherto unforeseen, were presented for the Joint Staff by events that were

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presumed to be of only incidental military significance and, at best, peripheral to the primary concern of the OJCS. The first order of ameliorating such conditions, accordingly, is to determine precisely what happened.

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I. INTRODUCTION

By statute and DOD Directive, the JCS - ergo, the Joint Staff and the other OJCS agencies - have no active, direct role in military support operations associated with domestic emergencies resulting from civil disturbances or natural disasters. It is the Chief of Staff, U.S. Army (CSA), who has primary responsibility and so functions unilaterally. Although nominally acting as Executive Agent for the JCS, in this capacity he is responsive to the Secretary of Defense and/or the President directly, not through the JCS.

The term "Executive Agent for the JCS" as used in connection with domestic emergency military activities is not without ambiguity. Both the abstract concept and the literal meaning imply certain prerequisite conditions, e.g., authority to delegate, a specific act of designation, and the stipulating of limitations, all connoting a generally subordinate relationship of the named Service to control by the JCS in whose behalf the agent capacity is being performed. In practice, however, the term is commonly used much less explicitly, often when few of these criteria are actually met. Official definitions to the contrary notwithstanding, it is employed loosely to refer to any situation where a Service, rather than the JCS, exercises executive responsibilities for the DOD, irrespective of how or by whom it is charged with the mission. Hence, usage, coupled with the unclear jurisdictional position occupied by the JCS in the present circumstances, accounts for the sometimes imprecise, if not misleading, application. Technically it is a misnomer to the extent that the JCS did not in the first instance have any original role authority in domestic emergencies to delegate. The Army's charter comes directly from the Secretary of Defense.

The basic arrangement was established by DOD Directive 3025.1,

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"Responsibilities for Employment of Military Resources in Domestic Emergencies Other than Civil Defense," dated 14 July 1956 (and retained in changes through 23 April 1963). This assigns "primary responsibility" in CONUS to the Department of the Army, while the JCS are excluded (except for specified overseas areas). Despite the changes otherwise introduced by the Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1958, it was reiterated in JCS PUB 2, "UNAAF" (Section 5), dated November 1959, and reaffirmed in subsequent JSCPs (including JSCP-66, Part IV). It is codified in detail in AR 500-50 (Civil Disturbances) and AR 500-60 (Natural Disasters). With respect to civil disturbances, the JCS expressly dealt themselves out of a role, in favor of the CSA, by formal directive to that effect. SM-685-63, which is treated fully later in the study, names the CSA "Executive Agent for the Joint Chiefs of Staff" and gives him wide prerogatives for autonomous action.

Furthermore, in the case of natural disasters affecting river activities, as happened during Hurricane Betsy, statutory responsibility for military support operations is vested in the Chief of Engineers U.S. Army. It devolves from the Navigation Act of 1899 and other earlier legislation pertaining to civil works such as flood control. In this capacity the Chief of Engineers functions independently of the authority of either the Chief of Staff, U.S. Army, the JCS, or the Secretary of Defense. In a disaster context he is responsive to the Director, OEP.

De jure, thus, the JCS are not supposed to be concerned. De facto, however, elements of the OJCS, particularly the NMCC, inevitably do become involved in four different ways, as demonstrated by the Watts and Betsy experience.

One reason was by virtue of the very existence of the NMCC. Progressively over the past several years, as the NMCC facility evolved and its capability improved, the NCA have increasingly become accustomed to it as a ready source of information on any circumstance or

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activity of military significance. The service provided has been reliable, efficient, and convenient enough to invite ever greater information requirements, irrespective of whether the subject was relevant to or outside the purview and interest of the JCS. Habit, reinforced by expectation, hence accounted in part for the NCA automatically turning to the NMCC during the two incidents. Each query set off a chain reaction of responses and a new order of requirements, with the NMCC the focal point of activity.

Another was because of the substance of some of the information the NMCC was dealing in. The Joint Staff, upon being made aware of it, thereby was drawn in and attempted to assert a participant role for itself. Such staff-action involvement stemmed from jurisdictional issues and pragmatic considerations when commitments of military force resources by an Executive Agent were seen to impinge upon the JCS strategic mission.

A third way that the Joint Staff and the NMCC became involved was by arbitrarily being directed to by higher authority. Instructions by the NCA or their representatives would be accepted and complied with at the staff and NMCC level without demurrer. Sometimes the action that was thus set in motion was not consonant with parallel action already underway elsewhere.

Finally, the NMCC at times interjected itself on its own initiative. Responsibility for some command and control functions would be assumed by default when the NMCC recognized there was no one else occupying an adequately comprehensive vantage position encompassing all aspects of a requirement.

As will be seen, the problems encountered by the Joint Staff and the NMCC reduced themselves essentially to problems of information exchange. Most of these, however, were introduced not by the unique circumstances of the emergency events themselves but were the result of latent preexisting conditions that only became manifest then.

II. STEEP HILL - 14

A. OUTLINE OF THE COURSE OF EVENTS

The Los Angeles Watts Riot of 11-17 August 1965 was the worst civil disturbance in recent U.S. history. Erupting unexpectedly, the outbreak of racial violence displayed a volatility that rapidly outdistanced local law-enforcement capability. When the 2500 police and sheriff's deputies were unable to contend with the deteriorating situation, civil authorities resorted to calling in the California National Guard, eventually committing all of the state's available Guardsmen - totaling some 13,400 from the two California Guard Divisions - before order was restored. Forty-six square miles of the city were affected, and a 150-block area was devastated. Property damage was estimated in excess of \$200 million. Reported casualties ran to over 9,000, of which 34 were fatalities, and 4,152 arrests were made.

The Los Angeles situation had direct national military implications for the regular armed forces. Considerable federal military support of the California National Guard was required, largely in the form of logistical assistance: MATS provided airlift for Guard troops from northern California; and vehicles, equipment, and supplies were furnished from Army stockpiles. However, at one point, for a 72-hour period, imminent federal military intervention appeared likely. A relatively large-scale force of regular Army units, and associated USAF troop-carrier transport aircraft, was accordingly positioned and held in readiness for deployment into the riot area on call.

Despite the intensity and duration of the wide-spread violence and the corresponding magnitude of operational measures undertaken

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to cope with it, federal military intervention proved unnecessary. State resources were able to quell the disturbances and regain civil control, without the California National Guard being federalized or any regular active federal forces being employed.

Nevertheless, the possibility of, and preparations for, federal military intervention was for more than three days a central concern preoccupying the attention of the National Command Authorities (NCA). Because of the special manner in which decision making and implementation processes were handled at the seat-of-government level, national military command and control could not function as it is normally designed to. The experience, particularly within the Joint Staff/J-3/NMCC complex, uncovered unsuspected anomalies in organizational structure and hiatuses or conflicts in procedural arrangements for dealing with this type of military contingency.

#### B. THE CONTEXT FROM THE JOINT STAFF PERSPECTIVE

Contemporary with the Watts Riots were a number of other competing situations in which the Joint Staff had interest or responsibility that were simultaneously vying for attention. Some arose from unexpected events of emergency character and others were associated with the conduct of planned or on-going operations. Each of them imposed potentially the same requirements on the NMCC, since any one could become momentarily the focus of information demands of unknown intensity from various quarters - as indeed several did during the period of the Los Angeles activity. The NMCC therefore had to be prepared to respond to all of them.

Much of military significance was happening around the world. Overshadowing everything else was Vietnam. Besides the problems normally associated with general prosecution of war by land, sea, and air components, there were also certain related [REDACTED]

(b)(1) [REDACTED] This too was at the height of the great U.S. military build-up when large numbers of forces were being deployed to Southeast Asia. At the same time, Typhoon Lucy, followed by Typhoon Mary, struck the

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Southwest Pacific. Off the coast of South Vietnam an incident, fraught with disproportionate sensitivity, occurred between a

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Elsewhere, the churning Dominican Republic situation threatened to go critical once more; an Indian-Pakistani war was in the making; and U.S. Task Force Leo was being withdrawn from the Congo. At home, military support of the upcoming GEMINI space flight had started, and an explosion in a TITAN missile silo near Little Rock, Arkansas, killed 53. There were others.

At one point or another, to a greater or lesser degree, all of these were a subject for active NMCC consideration. A few brought pressures equal to those accompanying the Los Angeles situation. The experience of the one episode thus must be viewed contextually in the light of the many concurrent phenomena of the same order.

#### C. JOINT STAFF C&C EXPERIENCE RELATED TO WATTS

Joint Staff involvement in the Los Angeles Watts situation was gradual and began relatively late. It started out, and remained, as essentially an information coordination function confined almost exclusively to the NMCC. Other OJCS agencies were not directly concerned, and staff action was not required. Prior to becoming involved, the NMCC was routinely aware of the situation as it normally is of any significant news item. But the interest was at best passive and limited to being cognizant of the event reported by unofficial press sources. There was no systematic monitoring of developments.

#### The Information Acquisition Problem

The first formal inducement to active NMCC interest did not occur until late 13 August, the third day of rioting. It came from outside, in the form of an information requirement that the NMCC was not prepared to fulfill.

At 1820 hours on the evening of the 13th, the Military Assistant to the Secretary of Defense (Col. Moody) called the Assistant Deputy

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Director for Operations (ADDO), NMCC, to inquire about the Los Angeles situation. Since the NMCC had nothing official on it, the ADDO said he would try to find out and call back. He turned to the Army Operations Center (AOC), which gave him a brief rundown based on the little fragmentary information it had available at the time. Just one hour earlier the AOC had been notified by the 115th Intelligence Group stationed at the Presidio in San Francisco that the riot situation was deteriorating, with a U.S. Post Office reportedly under attack. Included among the other details given were indications - shortly to be confirmed - that California authorities were contemplating using state national guard reinforcements. He also learned that the Secretary of the Army and the Chief of Staff, Army (CSA) had become personally interested in the situation.

Although the NMCC did not know it then, the AOC had already been gearing up to handle the burgeoning Los Angeles developments. As early as the preceding day (the 12th) the regular staff action officer for civil disturbances, who normally maintains his office in the Unit Readiness Branch of the Readiness Division of DCSOPS in the immediate vicinity of the AOC complex, was moved into the AOC proper and began operating out of the Conference Room. In response to the workload at hand and in anticipation of it increasing, other augmentees were added, so that, from the 12th on, action teams manned the AOC around the clock on a 24-hour basis. Further specialized augmentation was soon necessary in order to establish information channels with the California State National Guard, but discussion of this is reserved for a fuller treatment later.

When the ADDO called back the Military Assistant's office some 10 minutes later to report what he had found out, he was advised that the AOC had in the meantime already conveyed the same information directly.

This original query initiated by the Military Assistant in OSD suggested that the Los Angeles situation could be expected to attract

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considerable attention from the highest quarters. It prompted the NMCC to brace itself for an onslaught of questions the following morning. In preparation, an attempt was made to determine pertinent jurisdictional relationships at the national level and to establish appropriate information-flow arrangements accordingly.

Therefore, while the ADDO was trying to obtain information from the AOC, the DDO called the CSA in an effort to find out what the applicable Washington decision/coordination structure was supposed to be in such matters. The CSA described the uniqueness of the situation with respect to the federal military role, even if unfederalized national guard forces were employed, and pointed out that technically everything was still under civilian control, actually at the state level. As yet, the only national agency legally concerned in any way was the Attorney General's office. At the same time, however, he apprised the DDO that the Special Assistant to the President in the White House Executive Office (Mr. Califano) would undoubtedly have a direct interest, as well as, on the OSD side, the office of the Special Assistant to the Secretary and Deputy Secretary of Defense. He advised that all three would probably want to be kept abreast of the developing situation. He also asked, incidentally, if the DDO knew whether the aforementioned Special Assistant to the President was in Washington or at the President's ranch in Texas.

The CSA called back the DDO shortly thereafter from the AOC, where he had gone to get himself briefed on the most current information. He gave the DDO further amplifying details on the situation itself, and added that, because of implications for the Armed Services, he planned on calling the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS) to discuss some of the problems. He also referred to the Army ordinarily being in charge, in its capacity as Executive Agent for the JCS for civil disturbance matters, in the event any federal military activity was required. Meantime, the NMCC had queried the White House Situation Room (WHSR) regarding the whereabouts of the Special

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Assistant to the President; the DDO was able to inform the CSA that Mr. Califano was at the White House and not at the LBJ Ranch. Before concluding the conversation, the DDO requested that the NMCC be kept fully informed on current developments in the situation.

Within two hours the NMCC received a copy of an "Information Brief" on the Los Angeles situation prepared by the AOC. The DDO was listed by name on the distribution. Based largely on the 115th Intelligence Group report referred to earlier and follow-on reports passed by telephone, it established definitely that California National Guard forces were to be used. The Lt. Governor of California, as acting Governor in the absence of Governor Brown who was out of the country vacationing in Greece, had responded to a request by the Los Angeles Chief of Police and directed the Adjutant General of California to mobilize that portion of the state's National Guard necessary to deal with the riot and restore law and order. The Adjutant General had in turn ordered the 40th Armored Division (N.G.) located in the Los Angeles vicinity, to provide the required task force. It was anticipated that approximately 1700 Guardsmen would be employed.

The AOC Information Brief was the first of a number of such ad hoc summary reports issued during the early stages as circumstances seemed to warrant. Identified as either "Information Brief" or "Information Bulletin" seven of these were produced over the next two days. Then formal SITREPs were published by the AOC regularly. Thereafter these became one of the chief official sources of information on Los Angeles developments for the NMCC.

Immediately upon receipt of the first AOC Information Brief by the NMCC, at about 2045 hours on the 13th, the ADDO called the WHSR and conveyed the substance of its contents.

Meanwhile the DDO, continuing to try to get a firm fix on proper information-flow patterns and requirements, followed up the CSA's recommendations and telephoned the Sec Def's Military Assistant

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(Col. Moody). He asked for guidance as to how and to what extent the NMCC should keep OSD, the Attorney General's office, and the White House informed. Col. Moody advised the DDO that he had already levied this responsibility on the Military Assistant to the Special Assistant to the Secretary and Deputy Secretary of Defense (Col. Knowlton). Circuits, moreover, had been set up for this purpose, between Sixth Army Headquarters and the AOC, then through Col. Knowlton, who was the normal channel for DOD-Justice contacts, to a Mr. Flug in the Attorney General's office. The upshot of the discussion was agreement that the NMCC would keep Col. Knowlton in OSD informed, as well as the White House, and would only call Col. Moody in the event of anything significant that ought to be brought to the attention of the Secretary of Defense personally.

However, when the DDO telephoned Col. Knowlton a few minutes later to brief him on the Los Angeles situation, the arrangements agreed to above were changed. Instead of being cast into a role of intermediary to relay information intended for the Justice Department, Col. Knowlton preferred that the NMCC go directly to Mr. Flug in the Attorney General's office. To this end he provided the DDO with a list of telephone numbers where this official might be reached.

Shortly thereafter the DDO accordingly called Mr. Flug directly. After bringing him up to date on the situation, the DDO asked how intensively and currently did he want the NMCC to keep him informed. Mr. Flug indicated that the Justice Department was getting information from several other sources simultaneously and wished only a general picture as seen from the military view. In effect, Mr. Flug implied that in the future, instead of the NMCC calling him, he would contact the Center when he needed information. To emphasize the point, he made sure he had the correct NMCC telephone number.

While the DDO was attempting to get procedural arrangements defined, other NMCC members were trying to elicit fuller information in more specific detail from the AOC, particularly with respect to

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National Guard activities. The AOC was experiencing its own problems regarding what the California National Guard was doing and planning. Since the mobilized Guard forces had not been federalized, they did not come under the operational control of the Department of the Army. Thus, neither DCSOPS nor the AOC was in an official position to task the state or Guard authorities with reporting requirements. Certainly there would be no clear-cut way of making them comply. And amidst the confusion reigning at the immediate scene of action, the stress of pressing operational demands of the moment left little incentive for local Guard commanders to voluntarily entertain such secondary considerations as the information needs of remote Washington.

The difficulty was effectively overcome by the relatively simple device of a temporary organizational improvisation. Beginning on the night of 13 August, one of the augmentees assigned to each AOC team was an officer from the staff of the National Guard Bureau, which enjoyed an official supervisory relationship with the National Guard of the several states yet was administratively under Department of Army jurisdiction. This gave the AOC a direct, legal tie-in with the unfederalized California National Guard through the resident Senior Adviser on duty there. Never intended to function as a command line, once it became operative it proved invaluable for information purposes.

Another channel available to the AOC, which was especially useful as a source of information on the riot situation itself, was the routine one with Sixth Army Headquarters located in the Presidio, San Francisco. Although not conducting intelligence operations of its own -- the Armed Services are not permitted to undertake intelligence missions addressed to domestic civil situations within CONUS -- the intelligence unit assigned to Sixth Army kept in touch with police and civil authorities at the scene, and maintained a close working liaison with the local FBI field organization. It was this channel that accounted for the 115th Intelligence Group's report referred to earlier.

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In view of the CSA having indicated that he was going to discuss the Los Angeles developments with the CJCS, the DDO called the Director, J-3, late that evening, to apprise him of this fact and to brief him on the situation and what the NMCC was doing in relation to it. The Director, J-3, concurred that the Director, Joint Staff (DJS) should also be briefed. The DDO immediately called the DJS and summarized the situation for him. Neither had any specific instructions or guidance for the NMCC.

A half hour later, as the accumulating information revealed the magnitude and gravity of the situation, the DDO decided to call the Chairman and brief him. The CSA had not yet talked with the Chairman, so this was the first time that the Los Angeles situation and its military implications were formally brought to his attention. His reaction imposed no requirements on the NMCC or Joint Staff either.

From then on the NMCC experienced difficulty in getting adequate, timely information to keep itself or anyone else current on what was happening. The main reason was that the JCS, as a corporate entity, was outside the special chain of command operative in the Los Angeles circumstances. By the end of 13 August a functioning national command and control system had emerged that excluded the OJCS from any role in the decision-making or implementation processes. Without the participation devolving from the authority of the agency it represents, the NMCC accordingly did not occupy one of the natural information nodes that it customarily does.

Another contributing factor was the informal mode in which national decision making was being conducted. Forsaking institutional channels, it was carried on among a few key individuals functioning somewhat independently. In part this reflected the respective styles of the personalities involved, and in part the force of precedent. The informality of successive earlier civil-disturbance experience, going back as far as Oxford, Mississippi, had served to reinforce the modus operandi and it was by now followed as a model.

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Finally, the high-level consultation, decision making, and implementation activity occurred largely outside the military Service community, and the transactions were carried on on a person-to-person basis by telephone. Use of record communications was conspicuously lacking. Since almost none of the calls was switched through the EA console, the NMCC was not privy to what transpired, nor even knew that they were taking place. The AOC was not in a very much better position in the early stages.

Structurally the system was more linear than pyramidal. At the top, its axis went from the President to the Special Assistant to the President (Mr. Califano) at the White House, who specialized in handling civil disturbance matters at the Executive Office level. Insofar as the civil aspects were concerned, the latter dealt with the General Attorney and Confidential Aide to the Attorney General (Mr. Flug) of the Justice Department. On the military side, the President's Special Assistant dealt directly with the Vice Chief of Staff, U.S. Army (Gen. Abrams), who similarly specialized in handling DOD civil disturbance responsibilities, though at times the Deputy Secretary of Defense (Mr. Vance) would be included--at least laterally, if not as an intermediary link. The Vice Chief of Staff pro forma would task CINCSTRIKE with missions and force requirements, but dealt directly with CONARC/CINCARSTRIKE, and through the medium of the AOC, exercised operational control over the forces provided. In the objective area, the Task Force commander on the scene would be responsive to the Vice Chief of Staff. Figures 1 and 2 show simplified diagrams of the system.

This general pattern of arrangements was more or less adhered to during the Los Angeles Watts situation. However, it was complicated to some extent by the absence from Washington of several highly placed government officials. For one thing, the President was at his ranch in Texas, and a number of decisions were made and implemented directives issued from there, some of which apparently bypassed even

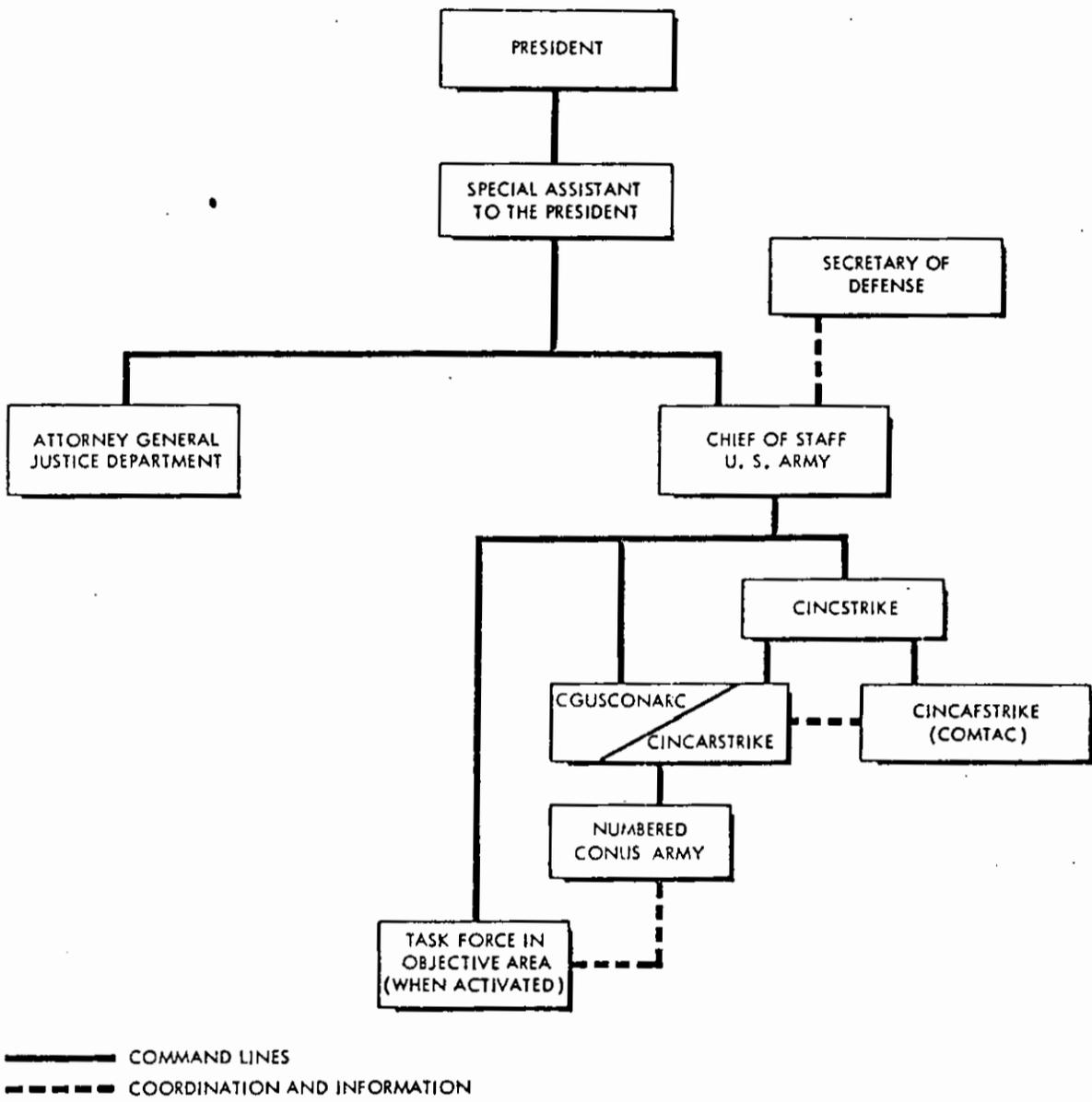


FIGURE 1. Type Structure of Command Arrangements for Military Support Operations in Domestic Civil Disturbances

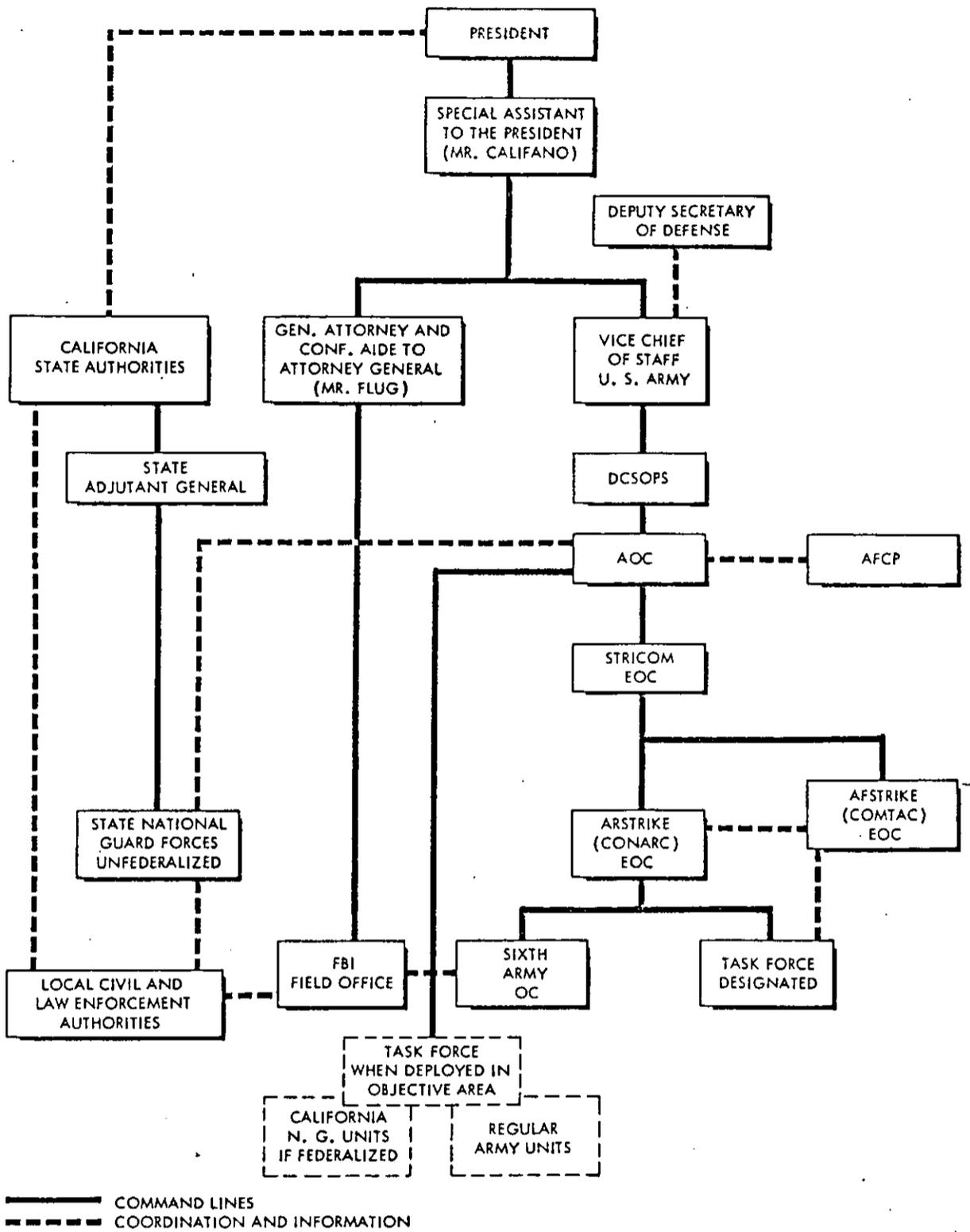


FIGURE 2. Functional C&C System for Military Support in Civil Disturbances - Watts

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the channels described above. The heads of the two government departments most affected, the Secretary of Defense and the Attorney General, were vacationing at Martha's Vineyard, while the Deputy Secretary of Defense was in Wyoming. And, as was noted earlier, the Governor of California was in Greece. The President's Special Assistant for National Security Affairs (Mr. McGeorge Bundy) was also out of town, as was the Secretary of the Air Force. The confusion attending the efforts to get these authorities back to their official stations, compounded by the national command system's informality, illustrated the exasperating information problems confronting the NMCC.

#### The Aircraft Diversion Episode

Shortly after midnight on 14 August, the NMCC learned from a UPI news release that the President had ordered Air Force transportation to rush the Governor of California home from Athens because of the Los Angeles riots. Checking with the Air Force Command Post (AFCP) to confirm the item, the ADDO was informed that it was true, except that no military aircraft would be provided inasmuch as the Governor could make better time returning by commercial airline. The information was relayed to the WHSR. This proved to be the beginning of a long episode of informational confusion lasting through the remainder of the night and well on into the afternoon of the following day.

Over the succeeding few hours, it was learned from NMCC Emergency Actions (EA) and the AFCP that other aircraft were being diverted to bring back various officials as soon as possible. Planes were dispatched to pick up the Deputy Secretary of Defense from Wyoming, as well as the Secretary of Defense and Attorney General from New England. Additional aircraft movements were reportedly also under way. The information coming in about these aircraft diversions was usually fragmentary, often contradictory, sometimes implausible, and occasionally erroneous, and the reports were always received at second hand far removed from their authoritative source. Moreover,

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the facts themselves changed from time to time as orders were countermanded or modified.

Attempts by the NMCC to corroborate the validity of any given report or to acquire missing information were repeatedly frustrated. The fault lay not so much in information channels as in the very processes of national decision making and implementation then being practiced. Rather than a system, it was an amorphous organism.

The President at his ranch in Texas had personally interested himself in the Los Angeles situation and was setting in motion preparations for a national response to it. All of the aircraft diversions had been expressly ordered by him, either through his Press Secretary (Mr. Moyer) at the Ranch or his Special Assistant at the White House (Mr. Califano), who passed them on to the Office of the Secretary of the Air Force or relayed them directly to the AFCP. Subsequent instructions amplifying or amending these orders were conveyed through sundry aides on the Executive Office staff both in Texas and Washington. The reaction of the AFCP to all of the requirements it received naturally tended to be one of honoring anything identified abstractly with the label "White House," irrespective of how devious or tenuously extended the relay chain sometimes appeared to be. Only after considerable telephone dialogue back and forth among many people around the country, for example, was it reliably established that the Secretary of Defense (and the Attorney General) had elected to remain at Martha's Vineyard for the time being, but that the aircraft diverted there from Andrews AFB would be kept on standby in the event he were needed in Washington in a hurry.

An added note of perplexity was injected by an inadvertent misunderstanding that got completely out of all proportion before it was rectified.

Among the Presidentially directed aircraft diversions was one for the Governor of California who was returning from Europe via

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TWA. Early in the afternoon of 14 August, the NMCC EA Chief advised the DDO that according to the AFCP the SecDef's aircraft had been directed to go pick up the Governor of Florida [sic] and bring him to New York to meet with the Governor of California when he arrived. The two of them together were then to be flown to California. Since the logic of this piece of intelligence was somewhat less than self-evident, the DDO checked with the WWSR, but it knew nothing that might shed light on the mystery, nor did anyone in the Pentagon. Nevertheless, the DDO called the Chairman to apprise him of the diverting of aircraft around the country, and especially the incredible development concerning the Governor of Florida. The Chairman was mystified. His first reaction was "Is McGeorge Bundy in town, I wonder?", then decided that, since he was away, there was no need in contacting him. It was agreed that the NMCC should continue trying to track down more information on the aircraft activity.

Fifteen minutes later, incidental to another matter, the mystery was cleared up. The DDO, in the course of querying the AFCP for specific operational details, such as ETAs, seized upon a passing reference made to a plane for "Governor Collins." It was quickly established that an error had been made earlier somewhere, and the individual in question was not the present Governor of Florida but former Governor LeRoy Collins, the then Assistant Secretary of Commerce, who happened to be in Tallahassee at the time. He had been designated the President's personal representative to help solve the Los Angeles problem. The DDO called back the Chairman and gave him the corrected information.

#### The Unexpected Decision to Commit Forces

The effect of all the aircraft diverting activity was a growing impression on the part of the NMCC that some dramatic national course of action was imminent or perhaps underway. Other indications had been reinforcing that impression. A telephone conversation between Mr. Califano and the VCSA very early that same morning, which had been taped by EA, suggested that the President was concerned lest the

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Los Angeles situation be beyond the capabilities of California state resources and he wanted to know what his options were. Therefore, highly detailed status-of-forces information was required by Mr. Califano within one hour on the California National Guard and, at the same time, on regular Army troops in the area. In addition, the views of the VCSA assessing the situation and evaluating the adequacy of available state National Guard forces to handle it were requested, as well as his recommendations as to what regular troops might be employed in the event federal intervention were required.

Prompted by the foregoing exchange, the NMCC immediately contacted the AOC to obtain as much information as possible on the situation for the morning briefing of the Chairman, DJS, and Director, J-3. The AOC action officer for civil disturbances advised the ADDO that he had just sent the NMCC a copy of his latest information brief by pneumatic tube, but gave some additional information over the phone. More specific details were being posted on maps by the AOC team, and the NMCC was invited to send someone down to examine them as well as a lot of pertinent hand-written notes that were accumulating faster than they could be processed and disseminated. The ADDO was also advised that the VCSA was on his way down to the AOC with the requirements stemming from his conversation with Mr. Califano ten minutes before.

Both the Califano-VCSA conversation and the AOC information indeed pictured a grave situation. Coupled with the continuing play given to aircraft diversions, it pointed to the likelihood of developments taking a radical new turn momentarily. For the rest of the morning, thus, the NMCC sought more information on what was happening, but, other than the mass of minutiae concerning VIP aircraft, it had little success. The air was thick with clues of indeterminate significance. Therefore, when the DDO called the Chairman the second time early in the afternoon, the Chairman decided to find out what was afoot from Mr. Califano himself. The President's Special Assistant could not

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enlighten him much, except to inform him the shots were being called from the LBJ Ranch and he was only carrying out orders. He did, however, indicate that, on his recommendation, the VCSA was being given a central role. In fact the VCSA had been instructed to consult by telephone with the Secretary of Defense that very night and again the next morning.

The DDO thereupon called the Director, J-3, and brought him up to date on current developments as best they could be inferred from the limited vantage point of the NMCC.

Early that same evening the VCSA made his call to the Secretary of Defense, which EA was able to monitor. The Secretary himself was not there, but the Attorney General took the call. Despite a technically poor communication connection, a long and somewhat rambling discussion ensued. The VCSA reported in specific detail on the riot situation and gave figures on California National Guard forces committed and the available remainder that could be used. When asked by the Attorney General if these would be enough to take care of the situation, the VCSA replied that he thought so but felt obliged to consider the possibility that regular Army troops might be required to restore order. Accordingly, he was getting planning preparations under way for such an eventuality. The Attorney General requested the VCSA to call in again two or three hours later.

Apparently it was during the VCSA's return call, or as a direct upshot, that the most important military decision of the Los Angeles incident was made and implemented. In the general context of the informational void that characterized OJCS experience up to then, the decision, when it belatedly and abruptly came to the attention of the NMCC as a fait accompli, caught the Joint Staff by surprise and off balance. Even the Chairman was unaware of it. The repercussions were the major episode of Joint Staff substantive involvement in events connected with the Los Angeles riot situation. The implications went far beyond the immediate circumstances of the one specific case itself.

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The discovery was made by NMCC at 2220 hours on the night of 14 August. The North American Area Desk Officer (NA Desk), in the course of a routine query of the AOC, got the first inkling that some kind of decision to make available federal military support had been made and was already well on the way to being implemented. The information available to AOC was sparse and incomplete, but it included one specific reference to 30 C-130 troop-carrier aircraft, ostensibly to airlift regular Army troops if federal intervention proved necessary. According to the AOC, this number of air transports not only had been allocated, with White House approval, but the AOC was in the midst of staffing the necessary technical and operational arrangements with CINCSRIKE and the Air Force preparatory to their actual prepositioning--probably at McChord AFB in Washington. The AOC could offer little more on the background and circumstances of what was going on.

The information obtained by NMCC raised more questions than it answered. Though not definitive, it was nevertheless conclusive evidence that important JCS interests were about to be affected.

In an effort to learn more about the nature of the decision and determine the scope of the course of action unfolding, the NA Desk immediately turned to the CINCSRIKE Operations Center. An action officer had already been assigned and was at work on it there. He corroborated the AOC information and expanded on it with some unexpected new details, but was able to add only a few peripheral facts to explain the extent and rationale of the undertaking he was engaged in. As for the source of authority that had set in in motion, he could only cite hearsay reports that had filtered down parenthetically with the instructions he received.

The STRICOM Action Officer disclosed that staffing on the troop-carrier aircraft had been pursued all day. The aircraft in question were not National Guard of Air Force Reserve but were to be provided from regular AFSTRIKE forces. The quantity of aircraft involved in the contemplated operation, moreover, could be considerably more than 30. In some of the discussions, for example, the figure referred

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to was on the order of 100. Specific data on availability and reaction times had also been developed in terms of 60 aircraft. However, CINCSTRIKE had not yet received a formal execution order, although all of the necessary preparatory steps were being taken on the basis of verbal guidance passed from the AOC and DCSOPS.

When asked if the STRICOM staff had looked into the ramifications of such a commitment, the Action Officer replied that they were aware of the problems. The interference with other priority missions and the impact on capability to support contingency requirements elsewhere had been examined and weighed fully, and DA was so informed in complete detail.

During the dialogue the NA Desk pointed out that there was nothing official in the way of JCS approval for the operation. He therefore instructed that any further action be held up until the NMCC gave the word. At this, the CINCSTRIKE Action Officer interjected a forceful reclamation, with the observation that DA was supposed to be the JCS Executive Agent in these affairs. In previous similar circumstances STRICOM had always responded to DCSOPS direction, through the AOC, for any operations falling within the purview of CINCSTRIKE OPLAN 563 (nickname STEEP HILL), and the present operation definitely came under such provisions - specifically, STEEP HILL-14. On that note the NA Desk terminated the conversation, saying he would seek clarification and call back.

The news of large numbers of aircraft being set aside for the Los Angeles situation was disturbing. From the Joint Staff view, the point of concern was that it could only be at the expense of other pressing operational requirements for airlift. At that very time several competing simultaneous demands were already subjecting the limited available air-transport resources to severe strain. Dominating all, in urgency and magnitude, were the needs of the Vietnam war. It was the priority consideration of the moment. The great military buildup in Southeast Asia, then in full swing, relied heavily on air movement to deploy personnel, equipment, and supplies into the objective area.

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Only a few weeks earlier, JCS 2343/602-6 had addressed this very problem, as did also SM 647-65. Two JCS messages (JCS 6207 and JCS 6945) sent out in late July summarized the worldwide transportation situation and set forth JCS guidelines for utilization of available resources to meet the heavy demands of priority requirements, especially with respect to the critical airlift situation. A special deployment planning conference held at CINCPAC Headquarters in Honolulu on 3-5 August considered, among other things, air-transport limitations in its deliberations. Out of it came CINCPAC Letter serial 000259, dated 6 August, which took into account, and accordingly was in part conditioned by, military airlift shortage constraints in laying out Phase I deployments for the Southeast Asia buildup. In short, by the time of the Watts riots the schedule of force packages flowing from CONUS left little excess airlift capacity to be spared.

There were other airlift commitments during the same period. One was the requirement to provide air support of the upcoming Gemini space shot, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Another was the concurrent air redeployment of Task Force Leo, which was being withdrawn from the Congo. Finally, there was also the Sudan mercy airlift, wherein helicopters had to be air-transported to the Sudan for evacuation of wounded government troops from the civil war area in the southern part of the country.

In addition, apart from the C-130s in question, substantial military air support had already been committed to the Los Angeles situation itself, and a major airlift effort was in progress.

Earlier that same day, shortly after noon of the 14th, the Senior Adviser to the California National Guard had informed the AOC that the Los Angeles Chief of Police was asking for 2000 more Guard reinforcements to be provided from the 49th Division, California National Guard, located in northern California, and that airlift would be required as soon as possible to deploy the additional forces to Los Angeles by nightfall. The actual requests came in increments and through varying routes.

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First the DCSLOG Director of Transportation notified the AOC that he had received a request from the 1501st Air Transport Wing at Travis AFB to approve MATS moving 250 Guardsmen to Los Angeles. The AOC referred the request to the VCSA, and the NMCC was so advised, but the VCSA disapproved the use of MATS for this purpose at that time. When the request was repeated later, the VCSA still would not agree to the use of active MATS aircraft without the approval of the President. However, after obtaining White House approval through Mr. Califano, the VCSA called back the AOC and cleared it. A request then came in for MATS to air-transport 652 additional troops, and other requests followed. In each case the request was referred to the VCSA, who would authorize it on the basis of the original White House approval received from Mr. Califano, and the AOC would pass the mission requirement down via the channels it had arrived.

From the point of view of staff coordination, the procedure apparently was no more systematic than that for the diverting of VIP aircraft. Nevertheless, it was operationally effective enough. Approximately 2000 Guardsmen of the 49th Division were airlifted by MATS from northern California into the objective area by nightfall of the 14th. All told, by the 17th of August MATS flew a total of some 3000 Guard personnel within California in connection with the riot situation, either to Los Angeles or back to their home stations. Throughout, the NMCC was aware of the MATS developments as they occurred.

In the light of all the concurrent airlift activity taking place the belated discovery regarding the contemplated use of quantities of STRICOM troop-carrier airlift galvanized the NMCC into action. Even while the NA Desk was still occupied with the AOC and CINCSTRIKE Operations Center, the DDO queried the AOC Team Chief and learned that a decision actually to preposition 30 C-130 aircraft at McChord AFB had been made only a half hour earlier. As best it could be reconstructed, the decision had been conveyed, via a chain of telephone calls, by Mr. Califano to the VCSA, who, it was subsequently learned, cleared it with the Deputy Secretary of Defense, and thence passed

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it through DCSOPS to the AOC. Verbal implementing instructions were now going out, but the AOC, as other NMCC queries shortly revealed, was encountering some procedural difficulty for setting in motion the operational execution of the order.

The procedural problem hinged on the issue of authority to direct forces. As far as the military establishment was concerned, the whole affair was being handled in unorthodox fashion at the national decision-making level. Moreover, the implementing agency--the Army--had improvised an unusual arrangement of its own. Even before the decision had crystallized, an ad hoc management group for the pending operation, consisting of senior DCSOPS officials and headed by the VCSA, had formed and was operating out of the AOC Conference Room. When the execution order was received, the AOC team was at a loss as to the specific steps necessary to carry it out. The AFCP informed the AOC that there would have to be some kind of formal authorization before the AFCP could direct the operational units to act. The AOC then turned to the NMCC for guidance, but in the irregular, non-institutional circumstances, and in the absence of precedents to follow, the latter suggested that, as a general criterion, any movement orders on STRIKE aircraft properly ought to be routed from the AOC through the NMCC.

At this juncture the DDO decided to consult with the Director, J-5. Unable to reach the Director, he discussed at length what was transpiring with the Vice Director, J-3. Both agreed that, since a requirement for imminent federal intervention in the Los Angeles situation did not seem to be indicated, the actual repositioning of so many aircraft would be a waste and the more advisable course would be merely to alert them on an "if-needed" basis. Secondly, both were in accord that, in the event of any commitment of such aircraft, the decision had to go to the JCS, who would direct the movement. The Vice Director instructed the DDO to try to track down the source of the order and find out the status of the operation, then call him back and they would take up the matter with the Director, Joint Staff.

[REDACTED]

The DDO checked with the Duty General in the AOC but could learn little more about the provenance of the order other than the purported sequence of telephonic exchanges as understood by the Duty General. As to the status of the operation, the Air Force had just cleared the movement of the aircraft into McChord AFB and orders had gone out by telephone from the AOC for STRIKE to move the C-130s accordingly.

It was shortly before midnight (14 August) when the DDO called back the Vice Director, J-3. The long and wide-ranging conference that ensued rapidly escalated until most of the key military principals involved were heard from. It culminated in somewhat of an anticlimax for the Joint Staff and the NMCC.

The DDO reported to the Vice Director, J-3, that the Army had issued the movement directives to CINCSTRIKE. The Vice Director felt confident that CINCSTRIKE would not respond (or shouldn't), but to make sure, the AOC Duty General would be instructed to hold up the directive on the grounds that any orders to STRIKE have to emanate from the JCS. EA brought the AOC Duty General into the conference, who explained that the directive to CINCSTRIKE was being sent by the Army in its capacity as executive agent in civil disturbances. He added further that verbal orders had gone out and STRIKE was ready to respond as soon as the confirming message was received, which the AOC was preparing to send momentarily.

At this point, the VCSA entered the conference. When the Vice Director, J-3, raised the issue of who ought to be directing STRIKE to move aircraft, the VCSA referred forcefully to the existence of "your" civil disorder SOPs which predelegated the authority. According to their provisions, he explained, "The Army is the agent in this sort of thing and they call the turn as directed by the Secretary of Defense, and I have Secretary Vance's authority to go ahead and do this." In answer to the suggestion that, in view of overcommitted airlift, the aircraft be placed only on alert, the VCSA replied that the 19-hour reaction time that this entailed precluded it. Moreover, the figure of 30 C-130s represented the minimum, pared down from an actual requirement of 60. The VCSA then withdrew from the conference.

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At precisely this moment the Director, J-3, joined the conference. Briefed on what had taken place, he agreed that the 30 aircraft would have to be provided by STRIKE if the Army needed them, but concluded that the Joint Staff should intercede. Because these were JCS resources and STRICOM was a unified command under JCS jurisdiction, it was his view, too, that the order should go out as a JCS directive. He decided to consult with the Director, Joint Staff (DJS).

Just before the DJS was brought into the conference the AOC Duty General informed the NMCC that the particular document to which the VCSA had reference earlier was identified as JCS SM-685-63. It contained the SOP to cover civil disturbances, and would corroborate that the Army was only complying with its provision in the present circumstances. The Joint Staff conferees did not look up the cited document immediately. They felt there was undoubtedly a question of interpretation involved, but that the real point in issue was one of principle. Only later was it realized that the document was crucial. However, examination of the substance and significance of JCS SM-685-63 will be deferred for fuller discussion in a subsequent part of this study.

In the interim, EA was able to reach the DJS and he entered the conference. The Director, J-3, briefed the DJS on what was happening. His reaction coincided with and strongly reaffirmed the J-3 position challenging the authority of the Army to order the commitment of STRIKE forces. Again there was no hint of cavil regarding the right to the aircraft, only that the order would be issued by the JCS. The DJS therefore decided to preempt. He instructed the Director, J-3, to have a JCS message prepared and sent by the NMCC to CINCSTRIKE directing the movement of the aircraft. His guidance was that the message be short and general, and go out immediately.

The Parallel Command Directives

The Director, J-3, and the Vice Director quickly composed the gist of the message draft before terminating the telephone conference. Charging the DDO to have the NMCC take it from there, they gave explicit instructions on the message text, along with detailed guidance on how it was to be transmitted and who had to be alerted. Speed was essential, since the entire object now was to get a JCS message out before the Army's message.

As the drafting of the message was being completed, the NMCC conveyed alert notifications by telephone to STRICOM, the Services, and the WHSR that such a message was being sent by JCS and summarized what it would say.

The formal JCS message that was actually transmitted was JCS 8289, DTG 150530Z. CINCSTRIKE was the action addressee, while CINCAFSTRIKE, the Services, WHSR, and others were listed as info addressees. The subject was identified as "Airlift Requirement for Civil Disturbance." Short and to the point, it directed CINCSTRIKE to position 30 C-130 aircraft at McChord AFB as soon as possible for use by the Army in connection with the Los Angeles situation if required. This was the only message sent by JCS related to the Watts riots. For the record, it beat the Army's formal message by one hour and three minutes.

For all practical purposes, however, the Joint Staff/NMCC effort was in vain. CINCSTRIKE records reflect that STRICOM was honoring the authority of and responding operationally to direction by the Army, acting as Executive Agent for the JCS, as of 150410Z, i.e., over an hour before the JCS message went out. Moreover, CINCSTRIKE was responding to far more than the order to preposition 30 aircraft.

The Army's formal message was DA 728261, DTG 150633Z, with CINCSTRIKE the action addressee, CINCARSTRIKE, CGUSCONARC, CINCAFSTRIKE and others, as info addressees, and the JCS on the advance-copy distribution. The subject was "Planning Directive for Civil Disturbance

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Operations in Los Angeles, California (C)." Not only was it more comprehensive and explicit than the JCS message, but it ordered other CINCSTRIKE force commitments considerably beyond the scale of 30 C-130 aircraft. Citing Appendix 8 to Annex C to CINCSTRIKE OPLAN 563 (STEEP HILL-14), dated 21 January 1965, it directed CINCSTRIKE to do the following:

- a. Preposition 30 C-130 aircraft at McChord AFB immediately and maintain them on a 3-hour reaction time.
- b. Be prepared to position 30 additional C-130 aircraft at McChord on order.
- c. Bring one battalion of the 4th Infantry Division at Fort Lewis, Washington, to DEFCON 3 in a STEEP HILL configuration as an initial force ready for loading on aircraft.
- d. Bring the remainder of the 4th Infantry Division to DEFCON 4 in a STEEP HILL configuration prepared to be moved to the Los Angeles area as a follow-on force.

In effect, as it soon proved, this meant that a total of some 64 C-130 aircraft (counting those for support and control but not including replacements) had to be set aside in a standby posture, i.e., the 30 being held at McChord, plus 30 additional on 4-hour alert (at Stewart AFB and Langley). Also, an entire regular army infantry division, with a personnel strength at that time of approximately 14,000 was withdrawn from available status. The magnitude of the two together represented a substantial inroad into the inventory of CONUS-based ready force resources.

These forces were not released until 72 hours later. The aircraft were particularly critical. Air Staff recommendations and Joint Staff requests that the Army consider relinquishing them, and repeated AFCP and NMCC inquiries of the AOC as to when their return might be expected were to no avail. The VCSA ruled that their status would not be changed before it became clear that federal intervention would not be needed. Finally, when the Los Angeles situation subsided and remained

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calm over a period of time, the D/A directed CINCSTRIKE to release both the aircraft and the infantry division as of midnight (EDT), 17 August.

The Information Problem, Second Phase - Timeliness

Once the form and character of military support was clarified by the readying of forces, the AOC regularized the reporting of information on the situation to the extent of producing formal SITREPs. Beginning on the morning of 15 August, consolidated SITREPs in message form, following the standard SITREP format, were prepared at periodic intervals, with the JCS, White House, and others listed as action addressees and the NMCC on the advance copy distribution. A total of 17 such formal SITREPs pertaining to the Los Angeles situation and military operational activities related to it were published before the series was terminated on 20 August. It was succeeded by a new set of formal SITREPs of more generic scope covering civil disturbance situations throughout the entire country. These latter reflected a growing concern at the time that a latent significance might underlie the seemingly nationwide pattern of simultaneous civil disturbance incidents, some others of which also involved state National Guard forces.

These AOC SITREPs were the NMCC's primary means of following developments in the Los Angeles situation. From the point of timeliness, however, they did not adequately meet NMCC information requirements. Since they were prepared three times a day, covering the preceding 8-hour period, the interval between the cut-off time and the actual production and dissemination of the finished report meant that some items were received as much as 11 hours behind the event. This, as it turned out, was not nearly current enough for some of the NMCC's most influential clients.

On the morning of 15 August the Secretary of Defense called the NMCC for a summary of the situation. He posed some specific questions requiring precise latest information, which the NMCC was unable to

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answer because the most current data at its disposal had been posted at least 8 hours earlier. Whereupon the Secretary instructed the DDO to obtain reports frequently, suggesting "every three hours or so to bring you up to date." Shortly thereafter the Deputy Secretary of Defense also called the NMCC, and when he learned how old its latest information was, advised the DDO that he had his own direct line to the AOC and would get his report there.

A request therefore was immediately made of the AOC henceforth to report to the NA desk of the NMCC on a 3-hour basis. It was emphasized that the DDO had to be no more than three hours behind the situation. The AOC complied and from then on, between the formal AOC Sitreps and its interim telephone reports, the NMCC apparently experienced no further embarrassment over the timeliness of its information.

Throughout, however, because of the unusual command circumstances that obtained, the NMCC--and thus the Joint Staff--remained totally dependent on the AOC as the sole source of official information to follow the course of developments in the Los Angeles situation. The JCS-Army interrelationship was manifestly one of information exchange, largely in one direction, and it was confined almost exclusively to command and control channels. There was no significant staff interaction evident.

#### D. THE ROLE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF SM-685-63

The crucial determinant that had been interjected by the VCSA into the controversy over jurisdictional authority to commit STRICOM force resources was, in timing and effect, somewhat of a deus ex machina settling perhaps conclusively the procedural point of contention of the moment. It did not decisively resolve the substantive issue, however. For its very validity implied contradictions in basic concepts and, as demonstrated, raised potentially serious problems when applied in practice. Interestingly, in view of the direction of its backlash, it was a JCS document.

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SM-685-63, dated 25 May 1963, was a JCS memorandum for the Commander in Chief, U.S. Strike Command, titled "Domestic Disturbance Force (U)." It was derived from JCS 1259/630 (the Appendix), dated 23 May 1963, which was approved by the Chiefs with a "red stripe" decision-on date of 24 May 1963. It had been initiated originally by the Chief of Staff, U.S. Army, in a memorandum for the JCS, CSAM-344-63, dated 20 May 1963, subject "Terms of Reference for CINCSTRIKE Domestic Disturbance Force (U)." The whole was a direct outgrowth of the Oxford, Mississippi, incident of 1962.

The CSA stated in his memorandum that, because CINCSTRIKE has operational control of all combat forces of CONARC and COMTAC in line with his responsibility for augmenting overseas unified commands, he was in the best vantage position to know the availability of force resources for domestic disturbances in relation to other commitments. The CSA therefore proposed that CINCSTRIKE be given the additional responsibility of organizing and moving an appropriate force, as required, to a domestic disturbance area. Upon arrival, the deployed force would pass to the operational control of CSA.

The CSA's proposal was adopted by the JCS, and the directive implementing their decision was SM-685-63 to CINCSTRIKE. In it CINCSTRIKE was assigned the mission of planning for, providing, and being responsible for the movement of, forces under the operational control of STRICOM to be employed in domestic civil disturbance situations when directed by the CSA, acting as Executive Agent for the JCS. He was ordered to prepare detailed plans, accordingly, to provide and to move ready-deployable, tailored Army forces (up to a total of 15,000 personnel), along with the necessary Air Force forces to deploy them by air, and to direct the movement of such domestic disturbance forces to and from the objective area in CONUS.

Command relations were also stipulated. During the planning and movement to objective area phase of domestic civil disturbance operations, it was specified that the chain of operational control would be from

[REDACTED]

the CSA, as Executive Agent for the JCS, to CINCSTRIKE. Included was a general provision that the CSA would keep the JCS informed, expressly charging the AOC with maintaining current status information on all forces involved and with keeping the NMCC informed. Necessary liaison with other interested government agencies would be maintained by the Department of the Army.

CINCSTRIKE OPLAN 563 (STEEP HILL), prepared in response to SM-685-63 and approved by the JCS on 3 September 1963, reflected the above directive in explicit terms. Part IV of JSCP-66 (JCS 1844/440, decision-on dated 7 December 1964) reiterated these arrangements for dealing with domestic civil disturbances.

The JCS, thus, had in effect excluded themselves in advance from any active, direct role in the Los Angeles situation.

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### III. TEMPEST RAPID - "BETSY"

Exactly one month after the Los Angeles Watts riots a different type of domestic emergency arose that also had military support requirements in which the Joint Staff and NMCC became involved. The natural disaster situation presented by Hurricane Betsy and its aftermath, in the period 10-17 September 1965, posed many of the same kinds of command and control problems as had Watts, but added several novel ones uniquely its own.

#### A. OUTLINE OF THE COURSE OF EVENTS

Hurricane Betsy was one of the severest and most destructive storms to hit the U.S. in decades. After an erratic course that took it across the southern half of the Florida peninsula, the full force of the hurricane struck New Orleans and the Mississippi River delta on 10 September head on. Although property damage was extensive, loss of life was relatively low, due in part to adequate warning and the consequent precautions taken by the public; an estimated quarter million refugees fled the low-lying Gulf coastal area to seek shelter in advance of the storm. Nevertheless, the death toll attributable to Betsy was at least 65. The scale of devastation to property, from wind and water, in the Louisiana delta region alone ran in excess of \$1 billion, while shipping losses, including some 700 vessels sunk, grounded, or delayed, accounted for another billion.

The President from the beginning personally interested himself in the situation. He flew to New Orleans in the late afternoon of 10 September, in the wake of the storm, to observe conditions at first hand. Determined to make available all possible federal resources to aid the stricken area, he exercised his executive emergency powers and formally declared it a disaster area, thereby automatically

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putting in train a variety of federal assistance by a number of governmental agencies.

One of the most important forms that this federal emergency assistance took was military support. Supplies and equipment of the armed forces were provided on a large scale and placed at the disposal of local civil authorities. Improvised refugee shelter facilities were established, and operational tasks, such as rescue, evacuation, and help in restoring critical services, were performed. Before it was over, a total of some 5000 regular military personnel from the Army, Navy, and Air Force (and including Coast Guard) participated, plus an additional 4000 unfederalized Louisiana National Guard troops.

From a command and control point of view, the most significant episode of the military support activity was the sequence of events surrounding the search for a barge carrying a lethal cargo that had disappeared in the Baton Rouge vicinity. The missing barge, loaded with 600 tons of liquid chlorine, was considered a serious hazard until located and recovered. Almost forty miles of the river were closed to navigation, and evacuation of the city of Baton Rouge was contemplated. Steps were even taken toward furnishing gas masks for the entire population. But the chief source of perturbation proved to be the elaborate search operations themselves. They became the focus of national decision-making attention and the object of three parallel but uncoordinated command and control systems.

The CSA ostensibly had primary responsibility as Executive Agent for all military support assistance rendered in connection with the disaster, as prescribed and as practiced in the past. The JCS were supposed to have no direct role. However, circumstances quickly modified this for both the Army and the OJCS. Conflicts regarding civil-military procedural and organizational arrangements at the decision-making level introduced a measure of confusion into the national military command and control system. With respect to the missing chlorine barge--because of unusual jurisdictional complications

[REDACTED]

that obtained in the case--it bordered on chaos, enough so to frustrate the intentions of the President. A conjuncture of other factors also made for some remarkable command and control non-sequiturs.

B. THE CONTEXT FROM THE JOINT STAFF PERSPECTIVE

As in the preceding Watts civil disturbance emergency, Hurricane Betsy was by no means the sole incident on the Joint Staff attention spectrum. The NMCC was simultaneously confronted with a number of other concurrent and equally pressing matters during the same period, most of which were intrinsically more central to JCS concerns and properly had priority call on NMCC interest. Betsy was somewhat of an intruder, forced on an unsuspecting NMCC by a combination of functional, institutional, and legal circumstances.

Among the contemporary subjects on the NMCC working agenda, Vietnam was still predominant. The complex pattern of ground, air and naval activity being conducted in the general prosecution of the war was closely followed in detail, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Else-  
where in the Far East, Typhoon Shirley, adding a contrapuntal note of its own to Betsy, had dislocating repercussions in the West Pacific area requiring emergency measures that included redeployment of USAF aircraft and diverting of vessels. The Indian-Pakistani war was on, and urgent preparations for evacuating U.S. nationals [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] were in progress. The smoldering Dominican Republic situation also threatened to flare anew. Other problem topics arose. All of these actively engaged the NMCC, in competition with Betsy.

The NMCC itself, moreover, was in the midst of a radical transition. Coinciding with the Betsy emergency, its operations were at that very time in the process of being transferred from the old temporary center to the newly completed NMCC. Activation of the new center was a complicated procedure. It meant a physical move from one location to another and a change in kind from a relatively rudimentary

[REDACTED]

facility to a sophisticated one. Yet, a cardinal requirement was that there be no break in continuity of NMCC services. All of the functions were transferred and teams formally began operating exclusively out of the new center by 15 September. It should be noted, however, that despite the potential vulnerability posed during this turn-over phase, and the internal NMCC preoccupation with the mechanics of accomplishing the transformation, there apparently was no connection between this event and the occurrence of the command and control problems encountered with Betsy.

In short, the Joint Staff/NMCC experience in the Hurricane Betsy emergency must be viewed in the light of the relatively marginal distraction it actually was. It nonetheless did consume a disproportionate amount of time and energy and contributed its own modest share to generating some of the accompanying confusion.

#### C. JOINT STAFF C&C EXPERIENCE RELATED TO HURRICANE BETSY

Joint Staff involvement in the Hurricane Betsy disaster was confined almost exclusively to the NMCC. It began abruptly quite early, and remained thereafter a major preoccupation for the duration of the emergency period. The central role of the NMCC manifested itself essentially in a command and control mode and form, with most of the activity carried on by means of telephone. Other OJCS agencies did not participate directly, nor was staff action required. Not a single JCS message relating to the disaster was sent.

#### The Initial Passive OJCS Role

It was while the President was flying over New Orleans on his inspection trip that the Joint Staff first became peripherally involved in the Betsy disaster emergency. Up to this point the NMCC had only been aware of the storm as a news item. At approximately 1800 hours on the 10th a military representative on the OEP staff called the NMCC to relay a request for military airlift assistance which OEP had received from the AT&T Emergency Center in New York. Quantities of AT&T trucks, repair equipment, and supplies had to be rushed into

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the New Orleans area to restore communications damaged as a result of the storm. Some 24 transport aircraft would probably be needed.

A disaster area had not yet been formally declared. But since the Army was Executive Agent in domestic emergencies, the DDO, after consulting with the Director for Operations, J-3, passed the request to the AOC for action. The AOC in turn tasked the AFCP to make a determination on it as an airlift requirement on the basis of AT&T reimbursement. The DDO apprised the DJS of this development. The Director, J-3, was already aware of it.

Meantime, as the NMCC and AOC learned considerably later, the President had made an oral decision to make available all possible federal aid for the stricken area. In accordance with the President's instructions, OEP prepared a formal request on the evening of 10 September to be signed by the Louisiana governor asking the President to declare part of the state a disaster area, a prerequisite in order to comply with statutory provisions applicable in such cases. Technically, the resulting Presidential declaration was not formally issued until the next day, but it was post-dated to 10 September. It was in the form of a brief memorandum from the President to the Director, OEP, declaring those portions of Louisiana affected by Hurricane Betsy a disaster area requiring federal assistance. It served as the legal basis establishing federal authority and responsibility for subsequent actions taken by various government departments and agencies.

This marked the beginning of the President's intense personal interest in the disaster and his determination to bring all federal resources to bear that could help in any way. On the 11th he held three telephone conferences with the mayor of New Orleans, and others with the Governor, offering more federal aid. He also consulted with OEP officials in Washington and talked with OEP representatives on the scene to find out what federal assistance was being rendered and what additional assistance might be provided.

[REDACTED]

However, during the evening of 10 September when the AT&T request came in, and well on into the next day, neither the NMCC nor any part of the NMCS had official word that the President had declared a disaster area or was about to. Nevertheless, even without the formal declaration, the Air Force decided to accept and respond to the AT&T airlift requirement, partly on the grounds that a declaration was probably forthcoming, but mostly because the Army, as Executive Agent, had in effect approved the request by virtue of having passed it on. The Army's view, as conveyed to the AFCP, was that it could be construed as emergency military measures to alleviate human suffering, coming under the general provisions of DOD Directive 3025.1 and AR 500-60. Besides, it was reimbursable. Through the remainder of the night the AFCP, with coordination assistance from the AOC, undertook the necessary staffing.

The NMCC also had a minor, albeit negative, role in coordinating the airlift. The DDO made sure that no CINCSTRIKE forces would be employed for this mission, lest it interfere with other STRICOM operational commitments, and eventually all the aircraft were obtained from AF Reserve units assigned to CONAD. After the figure was raised from the original 24 to 29, then reduced again, a total of 27 C-124 and C-119 transports from various parts of the Midwest were lined up and the airlift operation got underway late the next morning, 11 September. Subsequently, additional AT&T airlift requirements were levied through the AOC, and the Air Force responded with Reserve aircraft from points in the southeastern part of the country. The WHSR was kept apprised of all these developments by the ADDO.

There was still no official notification of the President having declared a disaster area. In the early hours of the morning of 11 September a wire-service press report came into the NMCC stating that he had. Upon receipt of the news, the ADDO called the WHSR to confirm it, but the WHSR knew nothing about it, suggesting that OEP would be the agency best able to verify the report. Checking with OEP, the

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ADDO was advised that it had nothing on it yet either. Nor did the AOC have any information.

The DDO, unable to track down the story, was concerned. In view of the scale of military operational activity already underway and the possible implications for considerably more stemming from a Presidential declaration of a disaster area, he consulted with the Vice Director for Operations, J-3. Shortly thereafter he also included a discussion of the situation in his briefing to the DJS. Both the Vice Director, J-3, and the DJS merely noted the information. Only sometime later during the course of the day was it definitely established de facto, through a chain of events, that a disaster area had been officially declared.

Until the evening of the 11th, NMCC interest continued to be essentially passive, with no particular initiative taken or indicated. Its purpose remained one of acquiring enough information to keep itself generally cognizant of main developments in the disaster situation. The incentive for more active NMCC participation came soon after.

#### The Army's Primary De Jure Role

The Army, however, as Executive Agent with primary responsibility, had meanwhile been organizing itself to respond to the military requirements of the disaster situation. The two action officers on the staff of the CONUS Defense Branch in Troop Operations Division of DSCOPS, who normally handle military support matters in disasters for CSA, had been monitoring Betsy from their regular offices since before the storm struck. It was they, for example, who performed the Army's staffing coordination on the AT&T airlift request. They continued operating from their offices throughout the 11th. Then, shortly after midnight, as the pressure of activities connected with the disaster increased, they moved to the AOC at 0115 hours, 12 September. Thereafter, these two staff-action officers provided the specialized subject competence to augment the AOC teams.

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At the same time, beginning early on the 11th, the Army took action to organize its field operations. The mission was essentially disaster relief. Specific responsibility for rendering emergency military support to local civil authorities ordinarily was decentralized through normal D/A channels, from CSA, through CONARC, to the CONUS numbered army in whose territorial area the disaster fell. Accordingly, FOURTH ARMY was charged with providing Army assistance and with coordinating whatever assistance was to be provided by the other Services. FOURTH ARMY in turn designated the Commanding General of Fort Polk (Major General Reaves), the nearest major Army installation in the vicinity, to be in charge locally. General Reaves set up a temporary command post on the scene, consisting of a provisional staff and an Emergency Operations Center (EOC) located in the Army Terminal Command at the port of New Orleans, from which to direct disaster relief activities.

Over the next few days, General Reaves' EOC attempted to establish, with greater or lesser degree of success, liaison with Louisiana state civil authorities, the Louisiana National Guard, and field representatives of OCD, OEP, U.S. Public Health Service, and the Red Cross. A reasonably effective working liaison was achieved locally with the U.S. Army District Engineer and the Naval and Coast Guard District Commandants in New Orleans. Less success, however, was experienced in establishing operational liaison between the EOC and the Air Force at the local level.

The Army's information chain was largely unstructured at first. It depended on ad hoc telephone queries coming directly from Washington soliciting data from General Reaves' EOC, a tenuous arrangement because of communication difficulties. Then on the 11th, the EOC began making periodic reports by telephone to FOURTH ARMY on a somewhat more regular basis. Information reporting remained informal until the afternoon of the following day, 12 September, when General Reaves' EOC was directed to begin submitting formal teletype SITREPs to the AOC via FOURTH ARMY, in accordance with the Army's standardized TEMPEST RAPID

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reporting system for natural disasters. This was soon modified so that the SITREPs were also routed through CONARC before going to the AOC, although it should be noted that both FOURTH ARMY and CONARC added information beyond the immediate purview of General Reaves' EOC. The resulting TEMPEST RAPID Betsy SITREPs coming into the AOC were thus consolidated ones supposedly reflecting all of the military activity related to the disaster. As will be seen later on, the reporting system never did prove satisfactory for Washington's purposes. It was particularly inadequate for the NMCC's needs.

#### The Joint Staff De Facto Role - First Phase

The incident that precipitously cast the NMCC into a direct participating role in the disaster activities was the discovery of the chlorine barge being missing. The attendant command and control episode dominated the entire Betsy experience.

At noon on the 11th, the Emergency Branch of the Operations Division of the Civil Works Directorate in the Office of the Chief of Engineers (OCE), U.S. Army, alerted the DCSOPS staff action officer who handled disaster matters that a barge loaded with liquid chlorine was reported missing from its mooring in the vicinity of Baton Rouge and could not be accounted for. The notification contained only the barest facts, and was itself unconfirmed. At this point in time, the staff action officer who received the information was not yet operating out of the AOC.

Word of the missing barge was duly passed to the AOC, and sometime in the middle of the afternoon, according to DCSOPS and OCE sources, reached the NMCC. No special significance or emphasis seems to have been attached to it at the time by either the AOC or the NMCC, certainly nothing like the undue attention it was soon to attract.

Nevertheless, the report must have been noted in the NMCC, for AOC records indicate that General Reaves in New Orleans was contacted by the NMCC at 1600 hours that same afternoon, presumably by the DDO.

[REDACTED]

There apparently was no particular urgency behind the call, other than a desire to obtain verification and amplifying details regarding the barge report incidental to interest in the Louisiana situation generally. General Reaves was a logical contact, since he was not only a central figure on the scene, but he had recently completed a tour of duty on the Joint Staff and was himself a former DDO. The upshot was no salient new information to confirm the barge report, nor that there was any alarm locally. The impression was left that there were no untoward problems and disaster measures were proceeding as well as could be expected.

The NMCC, not having express cause to pursue the matter further, turned its attention to other higher priority concerns of the moment. As a consequence, when the DDO and the command center team were relieved by the oncoming shift that evening, the subject of the barge was not singled out and flagged as a special item to be watched. In fact, the item died and was irretrievably lost in both the NMCC and AOC. When it hit the NMCC again, it came as a fresh new subject and had a more lasting impact.

However, OCE had also passed notification of the barge report to OEP, with whom OCE maintained routine liaison. Through that channel word ultimately got to the President.

#### The Information Acquisition Problem

Sometime during the evening of 11 September the report of the lost chlorine barge, stressing the potential danger it presented, came to the attention of the President. He regarded it as a pressing matter of grave concern. Around 2215 hours he called the Secretary of Defense, who was unaware of the situation, and directed that everything possible be done to locate the barge. The Secretary of Defense immediately (at 2221 hours) called the NMCC.

The Secretary's opening query caught the DDO on duty off balance. He had no information on the missing barge. The Secretary, indicating

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that there was Presidential interest, advised him to check on it and find out forthwith; he didn't know what agency had responsibility but suggested trying OEP. He instructed the DDO to see if there was anything the Defense Department could do and to "set the wheels in motion to do so." He would be in touch with the NMCC later that night.

As soon as the Secretary hung up, the NMCC began querying various operations centers and agency duty officers to try to get a line on the barge situation. First, the ADDO called the Navy Flag Plot (NFP) at 2225 hours to see if it had anything on the barge. NFP had nothing whatsoever. The ADDO thereupon requested that Navy sources be checked and NFP said it would contact the Commandant of the 8th Naval District (COM 8) in New Orleans.

The ADDO next called the WHSR, at 2230. It too had heard nothing at all about the barge. Asked if it was in touch with OEP, the WHSR replied that it was not. Accordingly, five minutes later, the DDO reached the OEP communications duty officer at his home, who referred the call to the regular OEP duty officer, but the DDO's question was the first time either of them had heard anything about the barge. Simultaneously (2235), the NMCC Team Chief was calling the AOC. It, like the NMCC, no longer had any knowledge of the earlier barge report received in the afternoon, so it contacted the CONARC EOC requesting CONARC to seek the information. At the same time (2237) the NMCC NA Desk called the U.S. Coast Guard duty officer, who also had no information, but said he would try to track it down and call back.

The ADDO, at 2240, called the AOC again to emphasize the importance of getting information on the barge because of the Secretary of Defense's interest. Since the AOC had no more on it, the ADDO's call was patched through to FOURTH ARMY, where the Chief of Staff indicated he had the report but no other information as yet. He would try to trace the story and call back. Meanwhile the AOC, continuing to seek out sources of information, gleaned only fragmentary bits, but enough

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to confirm the report of the lost barge. A description of the barge and a few circumstantial facts were obtained from the OCE duty officer and conveyed to the NMCC." Somehow, about this time, the NMCC also learned that the 8th Naval District in New Orleans had reportedly issued a warning to mariners cautioning all vessels of a dangerous lost barge, but not singling out chlorine as the hazard (actually issued by the Coast Guard, it was later learned).

The DDO, still trying to get a firm grip on the story, turned again to the OEP. Calling the OEP duty officer at Winchester, Virginia, he was referred to an individual in Washington, who was not in. Repeating this cycle, and unable to reach a responsible OEP official, the DDO interrupted these efforts temporarily to call the Chairman (CJCS), at 2252, and briefed him on the barge developments. Two minutes later the ADDO also briefed the WHSR. Shortly, at 2255, the DDO did manage to reach an OEP official in Washington, only to be advised that he should call a Mr. Zeitlen in OCE. For the next 40 minutes, Mr. Zeitlen's phone was either busy or there was no answer.

In the interim, productive contact was finally made with OEP. The Chief of the Special Facilities Division of OEP at Highpoint called the NMCC at 2309 hours to inquire whether the barge had been found, and at the same time apprised the DDO that the Deputy Director of OEP had just discussed the danger of the barge situation with the President, who was very concerned. After comparing notes on respective current information, the DDO was instructed to report any new developments to OEP right away, and OEP would immediately get in touch with the President.

The NMCC kept trying to locate information sources. The NA Desk rechecked with the Coast Guard duty officer, but that source had been unable to learn anything about the barge since the earlier query. Shortly thereafter the ADDO decided to determine what government agency ordinarily should have jurisdiction in matters such as the one in question. He accordingly called the NFP again to ask who had

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cognizance of the Mississippi River. Told it was not the Navy, he was advised the NFP believed the U.S. Coast Guard had responsibility for the river. Whereupon the ADDO attempted to reach the District Coast Guard Commandant in New Orleans directly, but without success because of communications trouble.

At this point (2327) the Chief of Staff, FOURTH ARMY, placed his return call to the NMCC to report what he had uncovered about the barge. The information, instead of helping clarify the picture, injected some confusing new elements. He had talked with General Reaves in New Orleans, who said that, based on a call from the District Engineer, there were two barges reportedly adrift, but there was no mention of chlorine connected with either one. The New Orleans Port Authority, furthermore, had assumed responsibility and dispatched tugs to conduct a search for the missing barges. He volunteered the observation that General Reaves did not seem very much disturbed that there was any danger. The DDO thereupon gave him his own information confirming a lost chlorine barge, including a description of it, and that a warning to mariners had been issued because of the danger. The DDO also advised him of the pressure being exerted by the President and the Secretary of Defense. After noting an unverified report that the Red Cross [sic] was supposed to be conducting the air search for the barge, both agreed that the Coast Guard seemed the logical one to take action on finding it. The FOURTH ARMY Chief of Staff then closed with a promise to see if he could come up with any further helpful information.

At 2333, the DDO was eventually able to reach Mr. Zeitlen in the Civil Works Emergency Branch of OCE. The DDO asked for exact and specific information on the barge, and its source. Mr. Zeitlen, however, had only limited information. The original source had been the Engineer field office in Baton Rouge and the report had been confirmed by the District Engineer in New Orleans, but there were no further details. He would try to find out more and call back the DDO.

[REDACTED]

A few minutes later, at 2335, the DDO was in telephone conference with General Reaves in New Orleans, which the AOC set up after considerable difficulty with communications. General Reaves was able to give the identity of the barge and describe the extent and status of the search operations that were underway. Some of the circumstances complicating the problem, he pointed out, were that there were over 200 barges stranded or adrift. It was believed that the one in question might be sunk. The DDO emphasized the urgency of the situation and requested that the Army incorporate the search for the barge into its disaster relief activities. General Reaves said he would coordinate with the Coast Guard to institute an aerial search and with anyone else capable of assisting.

Mr. Zeitlen of the OCE Civil Works Emergency Branch called back the DDO to report what he had learned about the barge situation, but he had found out less than the NMCC knew already. The DDO gave him the information he had just obtained from General Reaves.

Then, on the basis of now having reasonably reliable information on the barge situation, the DDO tried to reach the Secretary of Defense at the number left earlier with EA, but the Secretary had departed for his quarters. Five minutes later, at midnight, the Secretary returned the call. The DDO briefed him on all the current information regarding the missing barge and what was being done about it, as reported by General Reaves. The Secretary was not satisfied. He said the chlorine barge was of the utmost importance, and he wanted a separate search mechanism established exclusively to locate it. The full resources of DOD were to be made available to whatever extent they could be usefully employed for this purpose. He instructed the DDO to ask General Reaves if he couldn't use some Air Force aircraft, Army helicopters, or anything else that might be helpful, and if so, to order them down there. Clearly, the implication was that the Secretary regarded General Reaves as the DOD authority in charge at the disaster scene.

Generating the National Military Response

The DDO immediately apprised the AOC of what the Secretary of Defense had directed. Passing it on as an Army action, he stressed the Secretary's instructions that a specific search for the barge, using whatever DOD resources were necessary, be undertaken to find it as soon as possible. At the same time (0007, 12 September), the ADDO advised the NFP Duty Captain that the Army had been tasked with the search requirement and might call on the Navy for support, including possibly U.S. Coast Guard support requested through the Navy. The Duty Captain said he would promptly alert the Naval and Coast Guard Districts in New Orleans. The ADDO also briefed the OEP.

The AOC informed the CONARC EOC of the requirement for a special search effort and its background, then attempted to call General Reaves to relay it to him directly, but was unable to do so for the next hour or more.

The DDO himself managed to reach General Reaves at approximately 0030 (12 September) through some channel other than AOC communications facilities. The DDO relayed the guidance and instructions regarding the barge search requirement levied by the Secretary of Defense. General Reaves described the scope and extent of the surface and air search operations that had been conducted all the preceding day by the Coast Guard and others. He felt the scale of the effort was adequate for the time being and would advise the NMCC if he needed more help.

The DDO called the Secretary of Defense back to convey the substance of the conversation with General Reaves. The Secretary's response was that additional search efforts were feasible, and if the barge were not found in the morning, General Reaves was to be instructed to be sure to obtain whatever was required for an all-out effort.

As soon as the Secretary hung up, the DDO, unable to reach General Reaves, called the AOC. He reported the information developed as a

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result of his earlier conversation with General Reaves, including the new guidance of the Secretary of Defense just issued in response to it, and requested the AOC to pass the necessary instructions to General Reaves accordingly.

A few minutes later the ADDO was finally able to get a call through to the District Coast Guard Commandant at New Orleans. The ADDO informed him of the interest of the Secretary of Defense and the President in the chlorine barge and advised him that the Army was Executive Agent. He then asked what was the magnitude of effort in searching for the barge so far. The Commandant summarized in detail what had been done and said that two aircraft were planned to be employed when the search operations resumed at daybreak. Not long after, the OCE Duty Officer called the AOC to contribute additional information received through Engineer channels from the Division Engineer at Vicksburg and the District Engineer at New Orleans. According to these Engineer sources, all possible was being done to push the barge search. Commercial river boat interests, civil law enforcement agencies, the Louisiana State Department of Public Works, and the U.S. Army Engineers were all participating.

While the ADDO had been talking to the District Coast Guard Commandant in New Orleans, the WHSR had tried to reach him. Returning the call, the ADDO reported the latest information on the barge situation. He explained that the Army had been designated Executive Agent and was running the show, adding that if it needed more personnel for the search in the morning it would get them.

At 0121 hours General Reaves called the DDO through the AOC to report fuller details on the status of the barge search and to ask for divers. The DDO took the opportunity to convey the reaction of the Secretary of Defense to the present scale of the search effort in progress, namely, that the Secretary was not satisfied that enough was being done and had directed a maximum effort to find the barge if it were not located by morning. General Reaves said the

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thinking now was that the barge was probably sunk, and if so, the river might have to be closed to navigation because of the danger of striking the chlorine tanks. Therefore, 12 Navy divers, fully equipped, were needed in the morning to commence underwater search to complement the surface and air search. He requested they be flown down to Baton Rouge, giving instructions on whom they were to report to and what arrangements had been made locally to employ them. The DDO recommended that he go to the New Orleans Naval District for the divers. General Reaves agreed, saying he was in close touch with both the District Naval Commandant and the Coast Guard Commandant.

About this time the issue of making public the information on the chlorine barge danger, and the attendant search operations, arose. Public information policy and its implementation relating to the barge episode came to be one of the separate sub-themes of command and control that posed distinct problems in its own right. A press release breaking the story had already appeared, and the warning notice to mariners had been issued (by the New Orleans Coast Guard District at 110150Z the day before, it turned out). The Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs (OSD PA) shortly after midnight sought guidance from the Secretary of Defense. Desiring to avoid any possible panic, the Secretary did not want to emphasize the incident nor suppress it, but instructed that it be played down as much as possible. At 0138 OSD-PA placed a call to General Reaves, which the DDO monitored, and conveyed the public information guidance given by the Secretary of Defense. General Reaves then raised the question of closing the river, a measure considered imperative because of the danger if the barge were struck by a passing vessel. He said he had brought it up with the Coast Guard District in New Orleans, but it advised him the Coast Guard did not have the authority to close the river, inasmuch as the Mississippi was under the jurisdiction of the Army Engineers. In any event, closing of the river would further complicate the public information problem.

[REDACTED]

When the DDO briefed OEP on the current barge situation, at 0225, he included the information picked up from monitoring the OSD PA call that, owing to the chlorine hazard, the river might be closed. Despite General Reaves statement to the contrary, he identified the Coast Guard as the one that would do the closing. But OEP only noted the information without comment.

Not long after, General Reaves called the DDO expressly on the question of authority to close the river. Since the call was routed through the AOC, the DCSOPS staff action officer for disasters, who by now was operating out of the AOC Conference Room, joined the telephone conference. The staff action officer indicated the matter had already been passed to the OCE and was being staffed down through Engineer channels, with authorization expected momentarily by either the Division Engineer in Vicksburg or the District Engineer in New Orleans. The conferees could not determine who actually had authority to order closing of the river. The DDO was sure it was the Coast Guard, while the AOC staff action officer was equally sure it was the U.S. Army Engineers. General Reaves said that, since he was preparing to retire for the night, if he received no word from the Engineers within the next few minutes he was going to go ahead on his own initiative and he himself would authorize the Coast Guard to close the river.

Before he was able to take action on the river closing, General Reaves called back the DDO regarding another matter, again through the AOC. He wanted some Navy ASW aircraft to assist in the search for the now presumed sunken barge. The DDO promised to contact NFP to obtain them. The AOC staff action officer entered the conference to say that AF search aircraft were also available. General Reaves indicated they too would be welcome. It was agreed that the Navy ASW aircraft and the AF search aircraft would be required by first light and both should come under the local Coast Guard for operations. The question of logistical support was noted, but deferred unresolved.

[REDACTED]

The DDO then brought up the subject of the river closing again. He now thought that it was the Army that should properly do it as Executive Agent in disasters, adding that the Joint Staff had no role but was merely trying to help out. When General Reaves indicated that the New Orleans District Engineer had just advised against closing the river, the DDO and the AOC staff action officer both recommended that General Reaves order the Coast Guard to close it. At this, General Reaves responded, "Well, why don't you tell me then; don't recommend to me. I want somebody to tell me." When the AOC staff action officer claimed he didn't have the authority, the DDO asked who did, and upon being told it was the Chief of Engineers, pointed out that the Engineers came under the Department of the Army. The DDO then dealt himself out of the controversy on the grounds that it was an internal matter for the Army as Executive Agent. General Reaves' only comment, which he identified as "my recommendation," was that if the river were not closed, the responsibility would not be his.

All three, as it turned out, were completely wrong in the case. The source of authority, and the manner in which it was exercised, resided elsewhere in an unsuspected different system-complex, one outside the agencies or command echelons any of them represented.

The AOC, meanwhile, dutifully trying to perform in the spirit of Executive Agent, began laying requirements on the Navy. Within the hour (at 0404) the DDO, despite the NMCC's attempts to disengage itself, was brought into an AOC-Navy conference in progress. The AOC staff action officer was dealing with a Navy action officer. At issue in their discussion was the number of divers and the ASW aircraft that the Navy was being tasked to provide. The Navy action officer balked at the AOC's figure of 50 divers as being unrealistically too high, and that furthermore the naval-type functions for which the divers and the ASW aircraft were to be used should properly be turned over to the Navy to execute as its own mission.

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The DDO, after volunteering that so many divers were high (they settled on 20-25), addressed himself to the chain of command in emergency operations such as this, for the benefit of both parties. First he emphasized that the Joint NMCC had nothing to do with such operations. These were a responsibility under DOD Directive 3025.1. He then summarized known and at length the applicable provisions of this document placed the Army in charge as Executive Agent. Before concluding, the DDO suggested to the AOC action officer that he get a conference established forthwith among the AOC Duty General, the NFP Duty Captain, the U.S. Coast Guard Duty Officer, and that the three coordinate with General Reaves in New Orleans.

The foregoing two telephone conference discussions--with General Reaves and with the AOC and Navy--reflected in microcosm the large state of jurisdictional confusion and cross purposes that now characterized the condition of national command and control in relation to the chlorine barge problem.

#### The National C&C Dilemma

Slightly more than five hours had elapsed since the Secretary of Defense set in motion all of this activity with his original call to the NMCC. In the interval, two divergent national military command and control assumptions had emerged and by now were simultaneously being applied in practice to form two different systems. If not contradictory and mutually exclusive, they were at least irreconcilably conflicting.

One assumption was that the Army, as Executive Agent in disasters, was in charge, with the barge problem to be incorporated as part of its disaster relief mission. From this view, the Army was accordingly responsible for coordinating the federal effort, bringing to bear whatever resources of the armed forces were necessary. In such capacity the Army would initiate and exercise directive control over the conduct of the search operation and the performance of related

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tasks through its own customary Service channels. Such an arrangement indeed was consciously introduced early, and repeatedly insisted upon by the NMCC as the only proper C&C system to be adhered to, but was frustrated by competing arrangements that arose and were being followed--by the NMCC, among others.

Another assumption that materialized, and which up to this point was the one functionally predominant, was in effect diametrically opposed to the entire Executive Agent concept. It crystallized early in the form of the NMCC dealing directly with General Reaves in New Orleans (at the express instructions of the Secretary of Defense). In so doing it bypassed the Army institutional structure completely, and incidentally also the OJCS. Although this direct SecDef-NMCC-Reaves link manifested itself initially as an information channel, it soon became operative in the fullest command sense. In effect, the Army's Executive Agent responsibilities and prerogatives were thereby abrogated on two counts: at the national level, it was the NMCC that coordinated with the Services and civilian agencies; at the local level in the objective area, it was the NMCC that levied requirements and issued guidance for General Reaves to carry out. Moreover, even here a bifurcation soon became evident, inasmuch as General Reaves, the SecDef and Army designated repository of military authority at the scene, was himself frequently bypassed. Rather than consistently utilizing him as the focal point of contact, the NMCC in many instances dealt directly with the Coast Guard and Naval Districts in New Orleans and with the District Engineer. Conversely, at the Washington level, the NMCC dealt directly with NFP and the CNO staff, with the U.S. Coast Guard staff, with OCE, and with OEP.

Meanwhile, a totally different assumption, unrelated to the two military ones, was asserting itself from another direction. It was in the form of an OEP-U.S. Army Corps of Engineers system encompassing both national and local arrangements. This third national C&C system was already actively operative and was soon to become the

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only official one for the barge search. However, the continued functioning of the other two made for reciprocal confusion within and among them, and the three together, for exasperation at the decision-making level.

As noted earlier, it had been the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers that was the first federal agency to become involved in the missing chlorine barge problem and bring it to national attention. In its view, the Chief of Engineers had overriding responsibility in the case, in his civil capacity relating to specified Engineer functions connected with rivers and harbors in CONUS. For this purpose a Civil Works Directorate existed in the OCE to manage a large-scale civil works establishment employing a total of some 34,000 personnel. It operated independently of the U.S. Army or the Department of Defense under its own statutory authority stemming from the Navigation Act of 1899, from flood control responsibilities going back to the early 19th century, or other laws. Moreover, for emergency civil works programs the Chief of Engineers, under P.L. 81-875, was responsive to OEP directly, not to or through either the CSA or the Secretary of Defense, and was completely outside the JCS purview. Such operations were even funded separately by means of OEP reimbursement. OCE performed well over \$100 million of civil works projects for OEP annually. In a disaster context such as this, OCE was an operating arm of OEP.

From the beginning, the missing chlorine barge problem was accepted by OCE as clearly falling within the Engineer mission, and the OCE Civil Works organization addressed itself to it accordingly. The relatively elaborate formal structure of this large and complex organization included a self-contained C&C system of its own extending from the Chief of Engineers down to operational elements in the field. Centralized in the OCE in Washington, it was the Emergency Branch of the Operations Division of the Civil Works Directorate that had immediate staff and action responsibility in such matters. The normal offices of the Emergency Branch functioned as an improvised operations

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center utilizing its regular personnel, but under the supervision of the Chief of the Operations Division, and was manned around the clock from the 13th on. It maintained liaison with AOC, NMCC, and other agencies, and served as the link between OEP, which had policy and decision authority, and the Engineers Civil Works infrastructure of subordinate echelons that implemented operational directives.

At its opposite end, in the arena of action, a temporary field operations center for the barge search had been set up in the immediate vicinity of the search area early on 11 September at Port Allen Lock across the river from Baton Rouge. It functioned as a facility of the New Orleans District Engineer, who in turn was under the Division Engineer, Lower Mississippi Valley Division (at Vicksburg), reporting to the OCE Civil Works Directorate. The OCE Emergency Branch had arranged for installation of a direct telephone tie-line (dedicated commercial) to Port Allen Lock, as did the District Engineer at New Orleans. The officer in charge at Port Allen Lock, who had been detached from the staff of the New Orleans District Engineer and represented him on the scene, directed the technical details of the actual search operations conducted by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and later exercised delegated authority of the Chief of Engineers in coordinating those conducted by all other agencies.

In addition to the three federal C&C systems, Louisiana state and local civil authorities all the while were demanding a pre-eminent managerial role for themselves. No little bitterness was expressed at being left out or forced into a subordinate role by the federal government. There was, however, no integrated state-wide C&C system, although a recently constructed (but not yet fully operative) state EOC existed at Baton Rouge. Furthermore, OCD's fairly extensive national structure also was involved apart from any of the military ones, with its Region 5 submitting formal SITREPs regularly to OCD in Washington and maintaining what it termed an EOC

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of its own in Baton Rouge. Even field representatives of OEP from its regional office in Denton, Texas, were there on the spot ready to help coordinate on the barge problem and look after OEP interests locally. But none of these latter three (Louisiana state, OCD, and OEP) properly constituted a true C&C system, nor were they in the main line of fire focussing on the search operations. Figures 3, 4, and 5 show the general configuration of each of the three primary C&C systems operative during the Betsy disaster.

These three separate command and control systems, though parallel, did not reinforce each other, but instead, because they functioned largely in isolation tended to reduce the effectiveness of each. The worst feature was that they amounted to a kind of inverted pyramid, all three converging on the various operational elements in the objective area who were grappling with the common problem in their respective ways. This state of affairs persisted throughout the period of the barge emergency. In fact, during the most critical stage it even occasioned massive national and local attention as a problem in its own right, distinct from the substantive one of the barge search itself.

Despite the national command and control confusion, a number of relatively complicated operational steps nevertheless did get accomplished during the remainder of the night of 11-12 September by people on the spot. Preparations were now proceeding on the assumption that the barge was probably sunk. In the early hours of the morning the U.S. Army Engineers (it turned out it was they who owned the river) finally ordered the closing of the Mississippi to all traffic for a distance of approximately 38 miles upstream and below Baton Rouge. The 25 Navy divers were being flown down, by AF airlift, to arrive in the forenoon. Arrangements for two Navy ASW aircraft with MAD (Magnetic Anomaly Detection) capability were completed; the request for them had been forwarded by the Commandant of the 8th Naval District in New Orleans through Navy channels and the CNO had

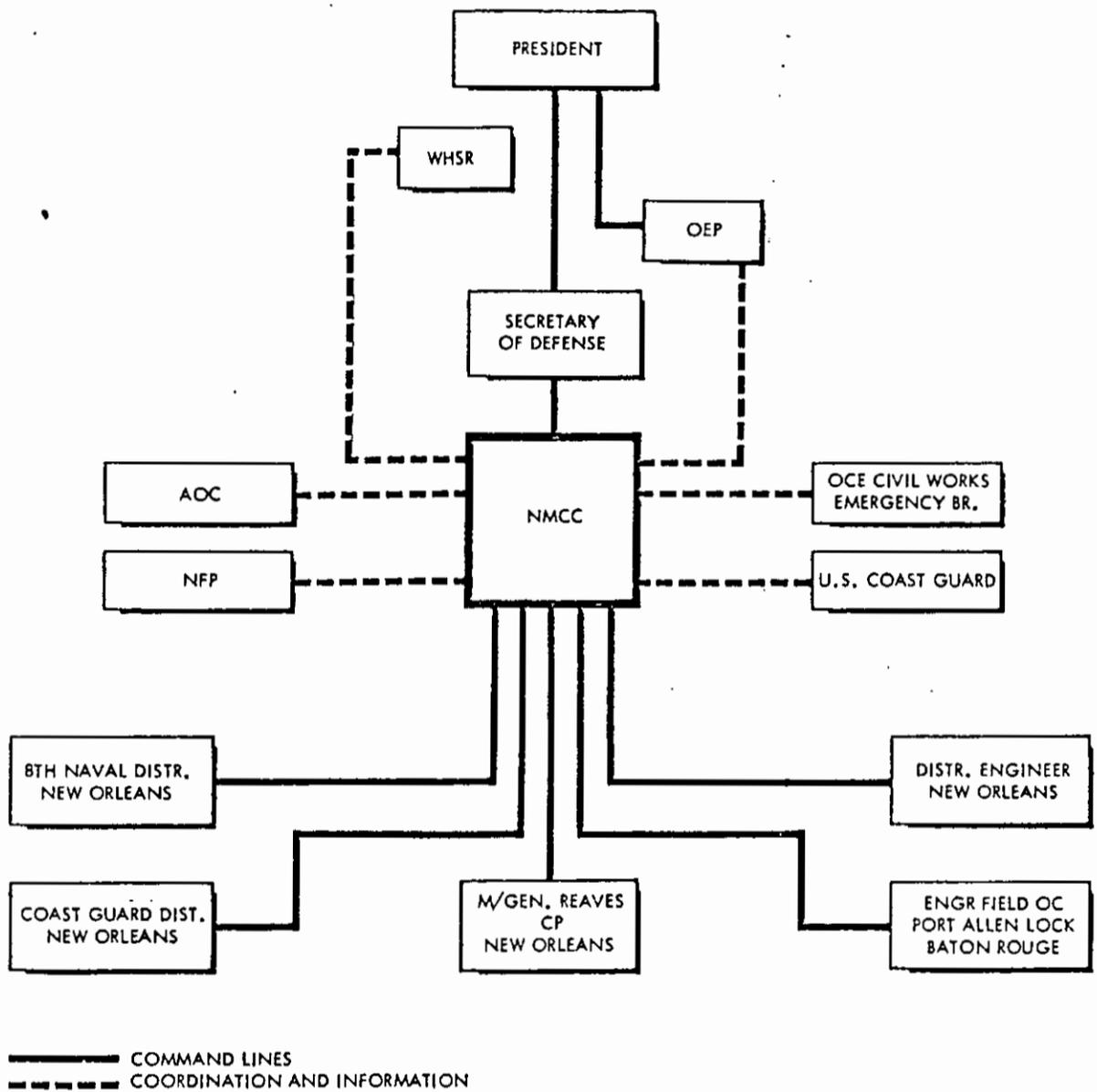


FIGURE 3. NMCC-Oriented de facto C&C System

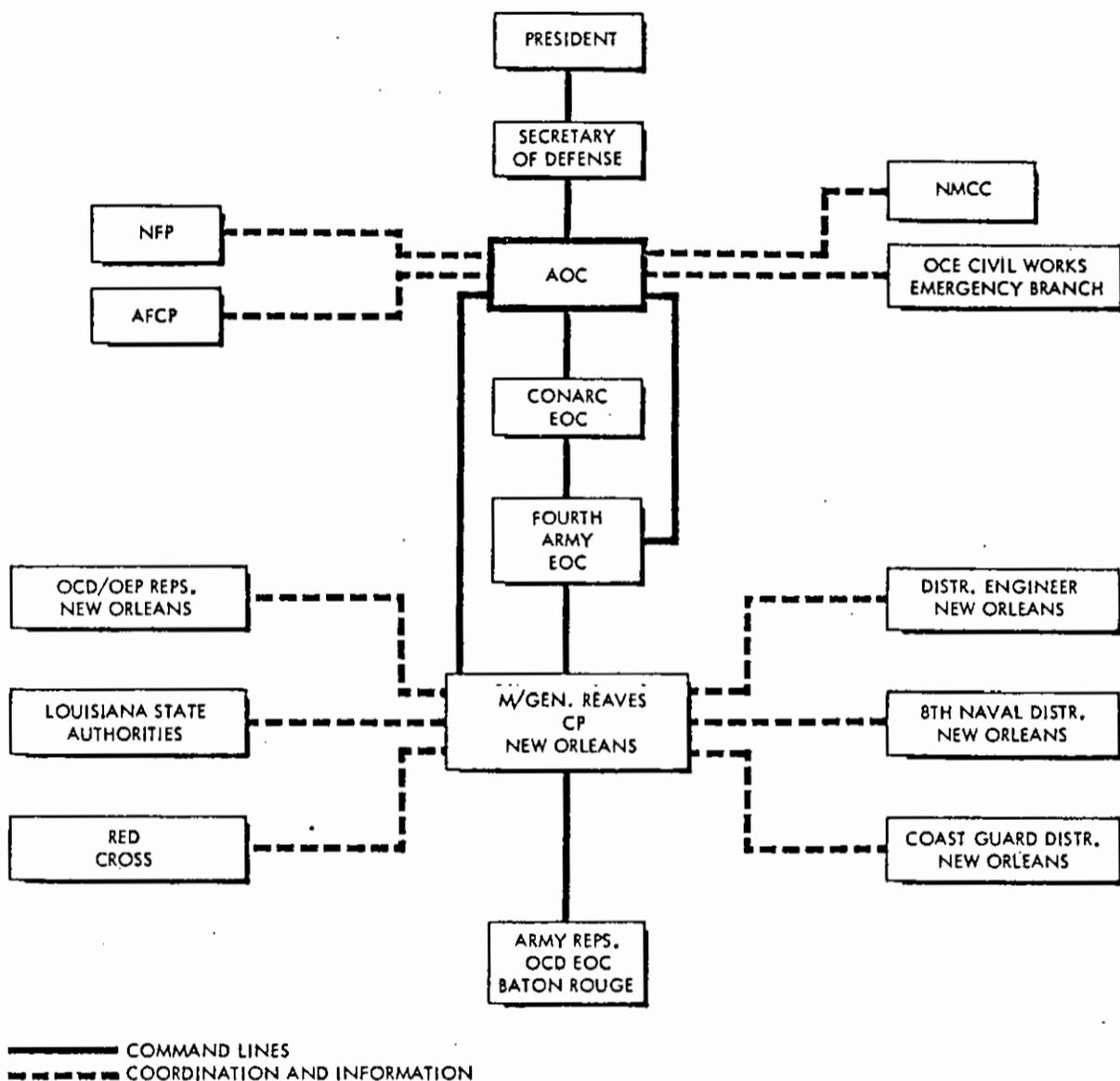


FIGURE 4. Army as Executive Agent: AOC-Oriented C&C System

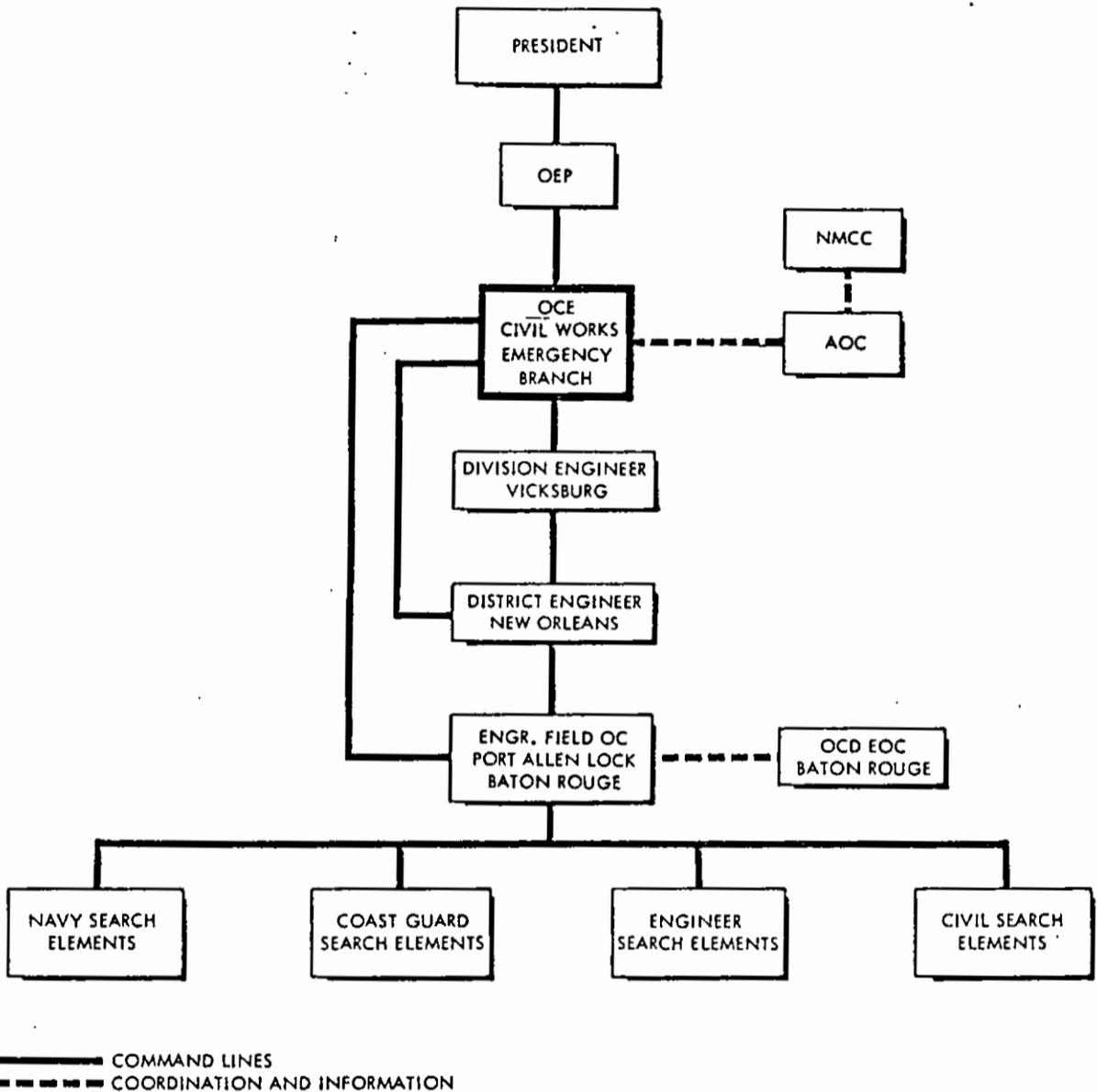


FIGURE 5. OCE-Oriented C&C System (Chlorine Barge)

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directed CINCLANT to provide them. The Coast Guard was providing three patrol craft equipped with sonar fathometers. The District and Division Engineers were marshalling a small fleet of Engineer survey and utility boats with various gear to be employed in the search which would get underway at first light, while local commercial river boat interests and law enforcement agencies were contributing additional small craft. Also, the Army fixed-wing light plane and the Coast Guard helicopter used the day before would again be available. Much more was to be committed through the course of the following day.

First thing the next morning (12 September) the DDO briefed the Vice Director, J-3, on the barge developments that had transpired the night before. He recapped the situation and what had been done, and stressed that the Army was in charge as Executive Agent. He then briefed the Military Assistant to the Secretary of Defense similarly.

The danger posed by the potentially deadly cargo of the missing barge now became a subject of immediate concern, not only intensifying the impelling urgency of the search operations, but setting in train a sequence of ancillary measures. All were articulated by command and control action, presenting in the process a new order of problems to cope with. From the beginning the danger had been implicitly understood; now it was to be explicitly assessed, the possible eventualities considered, and the indicated precautionary requirements addressed in concrete terms.

The DDO, in a telephone conversation with the District Coast Guard in New Orleans, at 0820 on the 12th, raised the question of what precisely did the danger amount to. He was advised that the tanks on the barge were sealed and there was thus no danger unless they were ruptured. Since it was strongly suspected that the barge was sunk, however, it was understood that the danger could be of serious magnitude. If the otherwise inert liquid chlorine came in contact with water, the quantity of resulting deadly chlorine gas

[REDACTED]

that would be released into the atmosphere might make it necessary to evacuate the city of Baton Rouge and the surrounding countryside. The DDO thereupon requested this appraisal be conveyed to General Reaves and he be asked to call the NMCC directly.

At 0855 the Secretary of Defense called the NMCC to be briefed on the current barge situation. The DDO summarized what was being done and included the foregoing estimate of the hazard posed by the chlorine. The Secretary wanted to consult at once with General Reaves, as the one in charge, although the DDO pointed out [erroneously] that it was the local District Coast Guard Commandant that was coordinating the search. But General Reaves could not be reached. The Secretary left the DDO with instructions to get in touch with General Reaves and keep up to date on the latest details.

Though unable to contact General Reaves, the DDO did speak with a District Coast Guard official in New Orleans. The latter, in assessing the implications of the chlorine danger, introduced the new subject of gas masks. Possibly great numbers of them would be needed for the general populace in the affected area. This was soon to become a requirement, which would exercise C&C as a separate topic from the barge search. Before closing, the DDO requested that General Reaves be contacted and asked to call the NMCC immediately because the Secretary of Defense wanted to talk to him.

The DDO then briefed the CJCS on latest developments in the barge situation, and the ADDO likewise briefed OEP. While waiting for General Reaves' return call, the DDO checked once more with the District Naval and Coast Guard Commandants in New Orleans to get more details on the barge situation and what they were doing in the search operations. Little new information of significance was developed.

It was not until over two hours later that General Reaves was able to call back in response to the DDO's request and was connected with the Secretary of Defense. The Secretary inquired who was it that

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had responsibility for the chlorine barge problem. General Reaves replied that he was working on it, as were the District Coast Guard Commandant and the District Engineer, and the three, keeping in close consultation, had together come up with general courses of action. When questioned as to who specifically was supposed to be making detailed preparations in anticipation of a "real" emergency resulting from the chlorine, General Reaves advised that it would "probably" be the District Coast Guard Commandant. The Secretary concurred. After General Reaves gave a long, detailed run-down of all that was underway in connection with the search operations, the Secretary turned to the chlorine gas danger. The dialogue that ensued dwelt on the indicated precautionary measures required. The upshot was that the Secretary instructed General Reaves to determine how many gas masks might be necessary and directed him to requisition enough immediately in order to have them on hand if needed.

General Reaves passed the gas mask requirement to the CG FOURTH ARMY, who decided to send a staff team of specialists to evaluate the situation and make a determination before forwarding the requirement to CONARC. The team arrived on the scene in Baton Rouge that same night, somewhat to the consternation of the Civil Defense organization; CD Region 5 sent a "flash" report to this effect to OCD, which called the NMCC, and another loop closed upon itself. There was considerable perturbation of military command and control before the gas mask requirement was finally overtaken by events.

A confirming assessment of the chlorine gas danger shortly also came in via the Engineer route. The Chief of the Operations Division of the OCE Civil Works Directorate advised the AOC that, if the tanks burst, the population of Baton Rouge and environs would definitely be in jeopardy. This was passed to the NMCC, thereby triggering extensive efforts to fix the parameters of the hazard. Attempts were made over the next few days to find out exactly from the commercial owners the quantity of lethal cargo aboard that particular barge and

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to develop threat charts utilizing inputs by technical experts from the U.S. Public Health Service, chemical warfare specialists in the Army's Office of Research and Development, and OCD.<sup>1</sup> The NMCC had a direct role in trying to seek out, and in consolidating, some of the data, and an instrumental role in interpreting its significance for various individuals in OSD and OEP.

Meanwhile, extensive operational forces were converging upon the objective area to engage in the actual conduct of the barge search. At noon the Commandant of the 8th Naval District in New Orleans called the DDO to report that, at the request of the District Coast Guard Commandant in New Orleans, he was dispatching the destroyer HYMAN upriver to Baton Rouge to assist at the site of the search operations. Shortly after, it was learned that the Coast Guard was sending an 82-foot cutter of its own, to be on location that evening. Through the afternoon, reports came in from a variety of sources of indeterminate numbers of additional small vessels, aircraft, and other resources being provided by the Coast Guard, Navy, Army, Air Force, and Corps of Engineers, as well as by state and local agencies and commercial and private interests. All this was in connection with the barge search only. There was a great deal more happening in the many other spheres of disaster relief activity in which considerable federal participation, both military and civil, was involved.

In the early afternoon, at 1255, OEP called the NA Desk. They were putting together a consolidated report for the President, to be submitted in the next hour and a half, on the extent of total federal assistance in the Louisiana disaster situation. What was needed was

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<sup>1</sup>It should be noted that there was a counterview extant, though not prevailing, which assessed the barge danger differently. Certain responsible professional opinion held that release of the chlorine in the river, whether deliberate or accidental, would be salutary, for it would be dissipated in the water over a wide area and its germicidal action would help prevent epidemic diseases.

[REDACTED]

a comprehensive summary of the military support being provided by all of the Services. NA had at hand detailed figures on Army logistical support relating to disaster relief, which it had received from the AOC earlier, and some on the Air Force, but little else. It turned to the AOC and requested the status of military resources and services committed, but the AOC, after checking with General Reaves, could come up only with Army figures updated to noon of that day. The DDO meanwhile contacted the OCE Emergency Branch, and when it was unable to provide figures on the military participation of the various Services in the barge search operations, decided to call Baton Rouge as the quickest way to get a first-hand current report from the scene. The DDO had learned of the OCE telephone tie-line and requested the number so he could talk directly with the Port Allen Lock field operations center. The Operations Chief of OCE Civil Works was reluctant to divulge it at first, for fear of possibly inviting thereby added harassment of the small staff which was already hard pressed to perform immediate technical operational functions. He complied, however, and as it turned out, the NMCC did not abuse the privilege.

The DDO, calling the Engineer field operations center, obtained the latest information on the barge search efforts and estimates on the resources of the various agencies participating. Combining this with what had been learned from the AOC, and earlier from General Reaves and the Naval District and Coast Guard at New Orleans, the DDO (and later the NA Desk) were able to reconstruct a general summary of the scale of the military effort for OEP. Included in the recap was both an emphasis on and a description of the diversity of Service elements engaged in the chlorine barge search.

#### Resolution of the Jurisdictional Confusion

By now the sense of confusion that characterized the way federal disaster assistance was being brought to bear, particularly regarding the barge search operations, was becoming self-evident. Autonomous individual efforts by the several military Services and civilian

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agencies, coupled with the lack of centralized common authority either in the objective area or in Washington, did not make for the precision, efficiency, and eclat of a single-minded national responsiveness to the emergency that the President's wishes demanded. Indeed, from the worms-eye perspective of the disaster area, the whole appeared perhaps well-intentioned but somewhat amorphous behavior on the part of the Federal Government, without much semblance of order perceivable. Louisiana state and local authorities, critical of some of the action taken or not taken, were complaining; economic interests were exerting political pressure; and the public was showing signs of dissatisfaction. It looked even worse from the reversed-binocular view of Washington.

By mid-afternoon of the 12th, the President was keenly sensitive to the state of affairs. He conveyed his sentiments to the Director, OEP. Late that same afternoon, OEP decided that the only alternative was to convene a Coordination Conference in Baton Rouge in which representatives of all federal, state, and local principals could participate. The avowed purpose was to reconcile differences and bring into concert the total disaster effort at every level. Invited to the conference that was formally called as a Presidentially sponsored event for the following day, 13 September, were the Governor, state agencies, federal civil and military agencies, officials of 40 affected parishes (counties), regional, state, and local OCD directors, and OEP regional representatives.

At the behest of OEP, the Chief of Engineers, U.S. Army, elected to attend personally, among other things to look into and try to straighten out the "military command relations confusion" as an important part of the whole coordination problem. Both he and OEP agreed that the military chain of command was especially wanting with respect to the barge search operations.

The OEP Coordination Conference was duly held as scheduled on the afternoon of the next day (13 September) at Baton Rouge. Many

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people were in attendance in what proved to be a stormy session. The senior Senator from Louisiana, tied in by telephone, spoke for 17 minutes, hitting hard at federal agency support. The President also joined in by telephone hook-up and addressed the conferees. Whatever was achieved by the conference itself, much was accomplished to redress some of the coordination failings on the military side.

The Chief of Engineers, accompanied by the Chief of the Operations Division of the OCE Civil Works Directorate, had flown down for the conference. He took advantage of the opportunity the occasion afforded to meet and consult with General Reaves and representatives of FOURTH ARMY, who also attended, with a view to ironing out the jurisdictional problem of the barge and the C&C chaos generally. Much of the framework for this had already been laid in anticipation of the Baton Rouge military discussions. A basis for settlement, in the form of an unequivocal ruling by OEP, had armed the Chief of Engineers with the necessary leverage beforehand.

At noon, before the Baton Rouge conference began, an OEP message, signed by the Deputy Director (131615Z Sep (U) priority), was sent - to the Chief of Engineers, addressed to him by name. Referring to the President having declared a disaster area, and acknowledging that various elements of the Federal Government were engaged in the search for the lost chlorine barge, it stated:

Pursuant to the authority vested in me under provisions of Public Law 81-875, you are hereby requested to coordinate the search activities for the lost barge. In addition you are authorized to proceed with such salvage operations as are necessary to remove any potential hazard to health and safety.

It then went on to state that, if the barge were determined to constitute a "hazard to navigation," existing "Corps of Engineers statutory authority applies." It further instructed that the Corps of Engineers should coordinate with OEP Regional representatives from Denton, Texas.

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The Baton Rouge military discussions progressed without difficulties. Agreement was reached on the relationship between local Army authority and that of the Corps of Engineers establishment, spelling out respective responsibilities and defining command channels. The Engineers would run the barge search.

However, the C&C confusion was not cleared up so easily at the Washington level. The ruling in the OEP message was not given wide enough dissemination and most of the non-Engineer military participants were unaware for the next two days of the paramount jurisdictional role reaffirmed for OCE. Even after it was universally understood and respected in a command sense, it was not adhered to for informational purposes.

Nevertheless, some unexpected consequences followed. At 1007 hours on 16 September, for example, the OCE advised the AOC that the CNO had formally "chopped" the Navy ASW aircraft to the operational control of the Chief of Engineers, U.S. Army, in his capacity as the OEP-designated national coordinator of all federal agencies engaged in the search effort. In actual practice, the OIC of the Engineers-field operations center at Port Allen Lock exercised the delegated authority, directing the search operations of the Naval aircraft, as well as a variety of Coast Guard, Army, and civilian aircraft participating. He also exercised the same operational control over the Navy and Army diver contingents, the Coast Guard craft (three cutters and other boats), two sonar-equipped Coast and Geodetic Survey boats, civilian small craft, and a sizeable flotilla of Engineer boats, (picket and survey boats, utility work boats, and launches), but apparently not the destroyer HYMAN which was serving as a station ship.

In the general spirit of willing cooperation that prevailed at the scene among those actually engaged in the common cause of carrying out the search mission at hand, there was no jurisdictional friction evident, and the technical operations themselves proceeded reasonably smoothly. Whatever hint of rivalry may be inferred from the record

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suggests only a lively competitiveness as to who would be credited with finding the missing barge first.

The Feedback Problem - SITREP and Status of Forces Information Retrieval

There was, however, still the same information-flow confusion reigning as before the Baton Rouge Coordination Conference with respect to what might be called kinesthetic requirements--the NCA-level need to keep itself apprised of its own operational posture in appropriately specific, objective, and current terms: What resources were committed? Where were the forces? Which elements were doing what? National C&C confusion in this functional area remained an unbroken continuum, and the problem never was successfully overcome. The informational dilemma, like the command dilemma, was essentially a concomitant of systemic shortcomings in the larger sense.

Among the contributing factors accounting for the condition was that the OCE Civil Works establishment did not possess the technical C&C capability (organization, personnel, facilities, equipment, supporting communications networks, and procedures specifically devised for the purpose) to allow its Emergency Branch to serve in the full capacity of a national command center. The nature of its functions ordinarily do not require it. Moreover, the OEP-designated Engineer paramountcy was confined to the barge responsibility alone. The charter by no means embraced all military disaster-relief activities. The Army and the other Services were rendering a variety of non-Engineer military assistance. There was thus still no institutional basis for centralized information feedback. A C&C channelizing of data collection, reporting, processing, consolidation, and updating, that would allow a read-out of total military support, did not exist. Yet, as will be seen, the demand was there. As a consequence, the same three C&C systems--the one oriented along the axis of the NMCC-General Reaves link, the Army's own as Executive Agent oriented to the AOC, and that of the Corps of Engineers--all remained actively operative, each continuing to try to respond to national information requirements each in its respective way.

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The information-retrieval problem, as witnessed earlier in the OEP request to the NMCC for a report on all Service participation relating to the disaster, began to come to a head on the 12th. Again, late the same evening, the NMCC had another similar requirement, this time for the JCS Operational Summary Report. At 2015, it called the AOC for the latest information, indicating it was needed no later than 0130 hours 13 September. AOC called the CONARC EOC to inquire where was the TEMPEST RAPID SITREP, and was told it would be "on the wire" within 30 minutes. The AOC relayed the ETA of the SITREP to the NMCC.

An hour later the ADDO called the AOC about the overdue SITREP that had failed to materialize yet, and a long discussion of the NMCC requirement for detailed information ensued. In the course of it, the AOC advised the NMCC that the Engineers would probably not be covered by the SITREP, because their activities were not included under FOURTH ARMY. At the NMCC's request, the AOC promised to locate a contact in OCE where the NMCC might obtain the desired information on the Engineers.

At 2150 the AOC again called the CONARC EOC concerning the TEMPEST RAPID SITREP, which still had not arrived, and was told it would check and call AOC back. Returning the call ten minutes later, the CONARC EOC informed the AOC the delayed SITREP was about to be transmitted, and confirmed that it would contain no Engineer information. It was sent shortly after 2200 hours.

Meantime, the AOC was trying to locate a source of Engineer information for the NMCC. At 2250 it was put in touch with the Chief of the Operations Division of the OCE Civil Works Directorate, who was at his home (the OCE Emergency Branch was not operating around the clock until the next day). Explaining the NMCC's information requirement, the AOC was advised by the Operations Chief that he would call back "after the 11 p.m. news." Finally, at 2310, he contacted the NMCC and briefed it on the Engineers search activities,

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but did not have much specific information on the various forces actually involved.

The 0130 deadline had come and gone and the NMCC was still trying to get information on force commitments. At 0223, for example, the NMCC called the New Orleans Coast Guard directly to find out how many Coast Guard personnel were involved in current operations, and was told it was "impossible to say." There followed a general discussion on the various craft and boats being used, and then two more lengthy calls at 0553 and 0629. The Coast Guard was able to come up with a fairly detailed breakout in its own forces participating in the barge search, but only a coarser one on those of the Army and Navy (including divers), and the Corps of Engineers.

Early in the morning, at 0734, the Secretary of Defense called the NMCC for a rundown on the current barge situation and was briefed by the DDO. With regard to the military forces engaged, the Secretary reiterated the need for complete, accurate, and timely information. This was thereafter repeatedly stressed by the NMCC both to the AOC, which passed it down Army channels, and to the NMCC's other sources of data.

For the remainder of the day, the following night, and through the next day (14 September), the NMCC solicited information on the situation and status of forces. The DDO emphasized to the AOC the requirement for up-to-the-minute reports, and it tried to respond by keeping after its sources for the latest updated information. During this period the NMCC was itself in direct contact with the CONARC EOC, FOURTH ARMY EOC, the U.S. Coast Guard Duty Officer in Washington and the New Orleans Coast Guard District, Pittsburgh Plate Glass Co. (the leasee of the barge), 8th Naval District in New Orleans, Army and Navy representatives in Baton Rouge, the Engineer field operations center at Port Allen Lock, and others.

[REDACTED]

Getting the crucial information about the Engineers, who were the national coordinators of the entire barge exercise, was particularly difficult. A little before noon on the 14th, the AOC, in view of the pressure being put on it by the NMCC, took up the general problem of information requirements with the OCE Emergency Branch, discussing the urgent need for information and reviewing the procedures for updating Engineer reports. The Emergency Branch indicated it was reluctant to initiate information soliciting calls to the Engineer Division at Vicksburg, and would "resist" calling the New Orleans District Engineer or the field operations center at Port Allen Lock in Baton Rouge, on the grounds that these people were too busy. The AOC noted that the OCE Emergency Branch was not as current as the Washington-level interest was demanding. Therefore the result was a great number of telephone calls by various Washington agencies directly to the scene of operations. The effect thus was to compound, rather than save, time and trouble for the Engineer operating personnel at the scene. The AOC accordingly recommended that OCE resort to special measures to insure having up-to-the-minute information. One proposal that the AOC suggested was having a man at the search site charged with nothing else than keeping the Emergency Branch posted hourly on developments until the Washington-level interest subsided. The Emergency Branch promised to look into the matter and take it up with higher authorities in OCE, but apparently nothing was done.

The pressure of information demands on the NMCC, and in turn on the AOC, kept building up. At 1430 the NMCC received a requirement for a White House fact sheet, the title of which was to be "Assistance by U.S. Army during Hurricane Betsy," to be submitted by 1200 hours 16 September. It passed this to the AOC to fulfill. It shortly also apprised the AOC of yet another requirement the NMCC had received, this one to furnish a talking paper on the disaster. The NMCC explained what was to be included and instructed the AOC to prepare it. Both of these, along with more spot requests from NMCC for specific information items, were reflected in added pressures that the AOC was putting on the OCE Emergency Branch.

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At 1800 the OCE Emergency Branch advised the AOC, after another long dialogue about the need for information, that OCE had now arranged to get three reports a day from the field and would relay them promptly to AOC. It hoped this would satisfy the AOC/NMCC information requirements. The AOC so advised the NMCC, saying the next Engineer report was due at midnight, about the same time as the TEMPEST RAPID SITREP from FOURTH ARMY, and the AOC would provide the NMCC with a copy of each as soon as they arrived.

Within the hour, at 1842, a call came into the NMCC from the White House, setting in motion a fresh round of information seeking, and illustrating in the process the underlying problem that everyone had to fight against. A Special Assistant to the President needed a 300-word resume for the President summarizing what military action was taken in connection with the hurricane in the state of Louisiana in the wake of the disaster. The Special Assistant wanted the resume in his office at the White House by 1100 hours the next day, 15 September.

The NMCC immediately considered passing the requirement to the AOC as an Executive Agent responsibility. The AOC, however, explained its handicapped position regarding information on other Service participation, particularly with respect to the Corps of Engineers, Navy, Air Force, and Coast Guard role in the barge search. The upshot was that the DDO decided the NMCC would prepare the resume for the President, and an NMCC action officer was assigned to it. The AOC would provide only inputs covering Army support, less the Engineer activity. Through the night the NMCC action officer on the resume, after visiting the AOC, repeated the cycle of contacting people at large, including General Reaves CP and the other sources in New Orleans and elsewhere, to gain the needed data. He had his troubles. Not only was the TEMPEST RAPID SITREP late again, but some Service and Engineer figures were not up to date, breakouts given by one source did not match those from another, and there were a few semantic loose ends

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that militated against neat taxonomy. Eventually an acceptable resume did get produced, however, and was duly delivered to the WHSR.

In the midst of these efforts to respond to the resume requirement, an added distraction was introduced. A report of a new danger came in, namely, another lost barge adrift carrying quantities of flammable toxic chemicals. It exercised the NMCC no little before it was finally put to rest as a false scare.

Through the afternoon of the 15th the AOC-OCE Emergency Branch information exchange interface, so tenuously established only the day before, threatened to fall apart and came in for another round of discussion and rearrangement. The Emergency Branch, caught somewhat in the middle of a loop doubling upon itself, was having difficulty bearing up under the burden of all the information demands being placed upon it. It could claim, with some justification, that in many instances the White House was ordering the NMCC to provide information on Engineer activities for OEP, which the NMCC levied on the AOC and the AOC passed to the OCE Emergency Branch, this despite the fact that OCE was already responsible directly to OEP - for these activities and was accordingly so reporting to it on its own.

There was now, too, a misunderstanding--and perhaps some second thoughts on the part of OCE--regarding the frequency of updating information from the area of operations in Baton Rouge. The OCE Emergency Branch revealed to the AOC that it had placed a requirement for only one report a day from the field instead of three. This was eventually straightened out, after a series of telephone calls and checking back into verbal agreements reached between senior officials in DCSOPS and OCE, and reestablished in terms of three reports. Then the issue came up as to whom the Emergency Branch would give these reports: to the AOC, which would relay them to the NMCC, or, as the AOC insisted, to both the AOC and NMCC? The AOC was concerned that when it would relay the OCE reports to the NMCC, questions might be raised which the AOC would not have the information to answer. The report itself was bound to generate questions.

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The solution, arrived at by late afternoon, proved a simple one. Agreement on an AOC-initiated arrangement was reached with the NMCC and the OCE Emergency Branch for a reporting procedure that involved no additional burden on anyone or relay delays, to wit, the Engineer call would be taken on the AOC console, NMCC would be notified and placed into the circuit, and both would get the information simultaneously. Furthermore, if the NMCC had questions, it could ask them of the OCE Emergency Branch at that time directly. At the NMCC's request, the Engineer calls would be routed through the EA console so the reports could be taped. The AOC console operator was so instructed as a continuing requirement for all Engineer reports until further notice. The arrangement was found acceptable and adopted by all parties concerned, and thereafter was adhered to with no further procedural difficulties arising on this score.

Substantively, however, the information-retrieval problem was still there. The NMCC was able to project at best a gross image of the disaster situation and the status of national military response to it. What was wanted by the NCA was a finer-grained picture, one reflecting, moreover, higher real-time fidelity. In view of the absence of an integrated institutional framework to fit the unique circumstances, the problem never was solved satisfactorily.

#### C&C of Information Processes - Reporting the Finding of the Barge

The barge search operations progressed through the 15th and 16th without success. The President's personal interest was still keen. More concerned than ever lest the public's reaction to the danger turn to panic, he now began to consider the possible impact of the locating of the missing chlorine barge. He determined that release of information on the finding of the barge should be tightly controlled. He wanted its timing and content to be carefully weighed and the release itself to be a White House announcement. OEP accordingly issued instructions on the reporting procedure to be followed to comply with the President's desires.

[REDACTED]

But something went awry. The proclivity for short-circuiting that characterized the multiple national C&C systems, and a conjuncture of external circumstances, conspired to garble both the guidance sent down to lay out the procedure and the reporting response going up when it came time to follow it.

Sometime late on the 15th, OEP instructed OCE that it was imperative that the finding of the barge be reported immediately to the Director, OEP, who would convey it to the President. Subsequently, later that same night, the NMCC received similar instructions apparently from some other White House source, to the effect that no one would release word on the finding of the barge until the White House said so. The DDO was led to understand that the President was interested in making the announcement himself.

Through the night these instructions were passed up and down to all and sundry having anything to do with the barge search. Early in the morning of the 16th, however, feedback began to come into the NMCC indicating confusion and misunderstanding along the line as to who was supposed to do what in reporting the finding of the barge. -

At approximately 0630 the Commandant of the 8th Naval District in New Orleans, in the course of a conversation with the DDO, revealed the reporting procedure as he and others locally understood it. According to this version, the "OCE officer in charge at the site will call General Cassidy [Lieutenant General Cassidy, Chief of Engineers] direct; General Cassidy will in turn notify the White House." But the DDO believed the procedure should be through the OCE to the AOC, then to the NMCC, which would pass it to the Secretary of Defense who would notify the White House. The DDO said he would check on it.

At 0638 the DDO contacted the AOC regarding the conflicting versions. He asked the AOC to confirm which of the two was right, or give the Army's understanding of the proper procedure. At 0645 the AOC turned to the OCE Civil Works Emergency Branch and asked for

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clarification. At 0818 the Chief of Engineers called the AOC personally. He stated that his instructions to the field on the reporting procedure to be followed "if the barge were found were that the military would report up the military chain, i.e., from the Engineer officer in charge of the field operations center (Port Allen Lock) to OCE, thence to AOC and the NMCC. Simultaneously, the OEP representative colocated at the Engineer field operations center would report independently to OEP, Washington. After these calls were completed, the Engineer officer in charge at the site was authorized to talk to the press. No one apparently noted at the time that this last directly contravened the White House instructions that only it would release the information.

The AOC immediately relayed the procedures outlined by the Chief of Engineers to the NMCC. At 0830 the Director of Civil Works, OCE, advised the AOC that he would contact the OIC of the Port Allen Lock field operations center at the site and reaffirm the above procedures to make sure that everyone would be in concert. Everything now seemed in order.

Then the barge was found, and the procedural arrangements so carefully spelled out fell apart.

Just before midnight, at 2335 on the 16th, the Chief of the Operations Division of the Civil Works Directorate of OCE called the AOC to report the barge had been located. Since the call was patched through by the AOC to the NMCC in accordance with earlier agreements, the NMCC (the CCOC and NA Desk) received it at the same time as a conference call. The report stated the missing chlorine barge had been located and was positively identified at 1930 hours Central Standard Time (2130 EDT). It was in 60 feet of water 200 feet from shore, and there was no danger imminent. The Chief of the OCE Civil Works Operations Division wished to note this to be an official report. He understood the White House wanted to make the public release and he expected that the NMCC would now relay the report to the White House

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accordingly. A more complete report of the technical details would be submitted by OCE some time later.

The AOC determined there was no need for it to notify anyone else. The NMCC NA Desk, however, immediately passed the report to the WHSR and advised that it was the NMCC's understanding the President wanted to make the announcement himself. Five minutes later the DDO himself called the WHSR again to repeat the report, adding that the barge was only one mile south of where it had originally been tied up before going adrift and sinking.

The WHSR called back within a few minutes and wanted more details, particularly a confirmation of the barge's position. The DDO promised to get the desired information and send over a memorandum. He turned to the AOC, and at 0030 (17 September) the AOC set up a conference with the Division Engineer Office in Vicksburg. A few additional facts were provided, but the DDO needed more. He therefore called the Commandant of the 8th Naval District in New Orleans. The Commandant confirmed that the barge indeed had been found. He was getting his information from the captain aboard the destroyer HYMAN on the scene. It was clear to all concerned that the finding of the barge was to be extremely closely held, because the President would make the announcement in the morning and desired nothing to be released until then. Consequently, all search operations were to continue for the moment as though the barge had not been located yet. The Commandant then gave the DDO what facts he had on the finding of the barge and its position. At about the same time the ADDO received considerably fuller specific details on the finding of the barge from the OCE. Included in this latter report was the advice that the Engineers would reopen the river to navigation at 2400 hours CST (0200 EDT 17 September).

At 0125 the DDO conveyed the above information to the WHSR by telephone, explicitly stating that the river would be opened within the hour.

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Meanwhile, the same information was being fed independently into the White House via the OCE-OEP route. Even before the original notification of the AOC and NMCC of 2335 hours (see above), the OCE first notified OEP, in the process unexpectedly demonstrating what must be a not infrequent C&C problem. It will be recalled that the previous day the OEP had stressed to the OCE that it was imperative the Director, OEP, be notified immediately as soon as the barge was found. Accordingly, when it was found, this urgent information was promptly relayed through Engineer channels to OCE, whereupon the Chief of Engineers tried to reach the Director, OEP, by telephone to report the news. The Director's telephone line, however, was busy, and after repeated efforts to no avail, the Chief of Engineers decided to exercise the preemption prerogative provided for under the uniform telephone precedence system then in effect. At approximately 2300 he directed that his call be cut into the call then in progress that was tying up the OEP Director's line. When the telephone operator did so, the Chief of Engineers discovered that he had inadvertently interrupted a conversation between the Director, OEP, and the President. The report was not given.

A few minutes later, however, the OCE Director of Civil Works was able to reach the Deputy Director, OEP, and passed the report. Ostensibly OEP also received word from its own field representative in Baton Rouge directly. Through OEP the White House thus had the information by 2330 hours. There was no reaction regarding a White House announcement at that time.

At 0151 hours (17 September), a press wire service--AP 15, dateline New Orleans--broke the full story, crediting the District Engineer as the source. The NMCC, upon learning of it, immediately apprised the WHSR of the public release. The DDO then called the AOC, demanding how and why the story had broken, in view of the fact that only the White House was supposed to have made the release. The AOC contacted the OCE and was advised that the Operations Chief of OCE

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Civil Works had instructed the Division Engineer at Vicksburg to announce the opening of the river, the authority for which was the OCE Director of Civil Works who had cleared it with OEP.

At 0230 the DDO was in telephone conference with the Operations Chief of OCE Civil Works and the AOC. The DDO asked if the Director of Civil Works had been aware that the White House wanted to release the information on the finding of the barge. The Operations Chief said indeed he was, but it would have been impossible to conceal it under the circumstances. He explained that the District Engineer in New Orleans and the OCE in Washington were under "terrible pressure" by commercial interests to get the river open because of the enormous economic losses being suffered. Accordingly, since the barge had been found, the OCE Director of Civil Works, after clearing with OEP, authorized reopening the river. However, because the inference that the barge had been found would have been obvious from the announcement of the river reopening, there was no alternative but to cite the reason for the Engineer action. Besides, the facts were widespread common knowledge at the scene, particularly among journalists. Early next morning fuller details, substantially the same but amplified, were available from the OCE Director of Civil Works.

After reporting the substance of the above to OSD/PA, the DDO at 0527 decided to call the Military Assistant to the Secretary of Defense and apprise him of what had happened. The DDO gave the background on the White House requirement concerning release of the information, summarized what occurred, and presented at length the circumstances accounting for how and why it was done. The Military Assistant decided not to trouble the Secretary of Defense at that hour, but instead, have a memorandum waiting for him when he came to the office.

A little before 0700 hours the Military Assistant to the Deputy Secretary of Defense called the DDO to pass on the reactions of OSD. He reported that the Deputy Secretary said the action taken on releasing the information that the barge had been found was correct. It is not known if there were any repercussions from the White House.

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Thus ended the lost chlorine barge episode, at least insofar as national military command and control involvement was concerned. For several weeks longer other problems relating to the barge removal persisted, but these did not affect the Joint Staff/NMCC. Nor by this time was there much more military support activity required in connection with general disaster relief on the part of the Army as Executive Agent. For all practical purposes, federal military interest and responsibility in the Hurricane Betsy disaster were over.

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#### IV. CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS

The STEEP HILL and TEMPEST RAPID domestic emergencies, as posed by the Los Angeles Watts civil disturbance and the Hurricane Betsy natural disaster, thoroughly exercised national military command and control in untried ways under unusual conditions. Departures from assumptions, coupled with unexpected developments, necessitated extensive adjustment and considerable improvisation, particularly on the part of the NMCC. In the course of the experience, many problems were encountered and a number of structural and functional weaknesses in existing arrangements were demonstrated. Some of the inadequacies that emerged have broad implications as systemic properties characteristic of command and control behavior common to emergency situations generally, irrespective of specific cases, and reflect, as it were, the state of the art. The significance of other deficiencies noted, however, was explicitly related to the nature of domestic emergency requirements, in certain instances to unique circumstances peculiar to the respective events, and serve as one index to present capabilities and limitations of command and control to cope with this class of military contingency. Still other difficulties were contextual, resulting from constraints imposed from outside, and cast light on the operational environment in which military command and control functions were performed. Some of the major problems and shortcomings that were revealed are selectively recapitulated below, along with some of the more obvious remedial measures that seem to be indicated.

In both domestic emergencies Joint Staff involvement was confined almost exclusively to the NMCC. There was no appreciable staff action by J-3 or other Directorates, nor did the JCS as a corporate body participate.

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Ostensibly, the OJCS had no role. Predelegated military responsibility and authority in this type of emergency situation resided in the Army, functioning in the capacity of Executive Agent for the JCS. De jure the JCS were not intended to have a mission. Since they were expressly excluded from taking part, Joint Staff agencies were not supposed to be directly engaged. De facto, however, the NMCC found itself in the awkward position of having an active role thrust upon it, which it was unprepared organizationally, procedurally, and substantively to fulfill.

Several factors accounted for the unanticipated central role forced on the NMCC. In part, the existence of the NMCC invited queries by the NCA, who had become accustomed to turning to it as a convenient source of information on military matters. Also in part, pressures from the White House and OSD impelled, or arbitrarily directed, the NMCC to interject itself. Another important inducement was self-interest, stemming from Joint Staff implications of some of the information the NMCC was dealing in. Lastly, some responsibilities were assumed by the NMCC on its own initiative because there was no one else to discharge them.

Much of the national decision-making and implementing action connected with the two emergencies was conducted largely in isolation at the highest governmental levels outside and above the formal institutional framework of the Department of Defense. It was divorced from the Service and Joint Staffs and from OSD agencies. These processes were characterized by informality, consummated typically on a direct interpersonal basis between a few key officials. The resulting decisions and execution instructions that were thus rendered tended to impinge upon the military establishment via command and control channels, first manifesting themselves in the form of specific operational requirements and explicit orders. To reconstruct the genesis, context, and parameters of directives often proved to be as

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difficult and time-consuming a task for command and control as learning about the situation or force posture in relation to it.

In both the civil disturbance and the hurricane disaster the NMCC was brought into play cold. It did not know the situation. It did not have operational terms of reference as to what was expected of it. Accordingly, the first requirement confronting the NMCC was informational -- What is the situation? Where are the sources of information? How can the needed information be retrieved? Throughout, even after the initial stage, acquisition of situational information was a continuing problem. A corollary informational problem was status-of-forces feedback, to monitor force posture and operational progress.

There was a lack of congruence between command and control channels and processes, on the one hand, and formal lines of authority as configured institutionally by the organization of the military establishment or prescribed by statute, on the other. Required functions thus did not fit the structural pattern of the military command and control complex, nor were existing procedural arrangements suitable. Ad hoc innovations extemporized on the spur of the moment to overcome these obstacles were difficult to implement when they affected interrelationships between two or more echelons or two or more different agencies.

In both emergency situations the Army was the designated Executive Agent (for the JCS), although for the most important episode of the Betsy disaster -- the barge search -- the DA, as such, was superseded by the Chief of Engineers functioning autonomously in his statutory civil capacity as agent of OEP. In the JCS-Executive Agent relationship, there was an inadequate informational interface between the AOC and the NMCC with respect to completeness, accuracy, and timeliness. In the Army-OCE relationship, there was similar inadequacy between the AOC and its Engineer counterpart.

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During Betsy, for matters other than for the barge search, the NMCC found itself immersed in much of the AOC's activities associated with the Executive Agent mission of the Army. During Watts, for matters pertaining to commitment of force resources (and others), the Army functioned in effect as Executive Agent directly for the White House, rather than for (or through) the JCS. The resulting bypassing of the NMCC in the latter case occasioned the only instance of direct Joint Staff action involvement in either of the two emergencies. That involvement was post facto and proved to have no affect on the course of events.

Ambiguity of jurisdictional authority denied the NMCC and other elements of the military command and control complex a basic institutional frame of reference in which to perform the functions required of them. The necessary effort to resolve the ambiguity or circumvent an outright impasse posed an added command and control burden of its own, distinct from coping with the requirements of the emergency itself.

In connection with the barge search during Betsy, there was functionally no single centralized military command and control focus at the national level. The OCE (specifically the Emergency Branch of the Operations Division of the Civil Works Directorate) was catapulted by legal circumstances into a para-NMCC role, which it did not have the capability to fulfill. There were actually three military command and control "systems", each national in scope, operative simultaneously, which were separate and uncoordinated. One was oriented to the NMCC, another to the AOC, and the third to OCE. Within each individually, moreover, there was also internal inconsistency, and together they sometimes worked at cross purposes. The result was national command and control confusion.

The overwhelming proportion of discrete command and control functions in both emergency situations, at every level, were conducted

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by telephone. There was a minimum of record communication employed, and only one JCS outgoing message was sent. Telephonic informational errors (on the order of simple inadvertent typographical errors), once introduced, created disproportionate misunderstanding and confusion, causing as much command and control perturbation as did substantive operational problems.

Largely in the interest of speed, operations center channels were used as a substitute for going through the formal pyramid of intervening agencies, command chains, and staff echelons. The NCA, particularly, chose to deal with operations center personnel directly, instead of with the institutional authorities they represented. The NMCC, along with the whole military command and control infrastructure, offered a ready vehicle at hand for principals to bypass intermediaries and ordinary lateral lines of coordination in emergencies. In effect, the practice amounted to compressing the decision-execution nexus, although the Executive Agent idea was violated as a consequence.

Most of the dysfunctional features of command and control reduced themselves essentially to information exchange problems. The most serious of these that were uniquely related to the two sets of experiences, as a type, devolved from contradictions between abstract terms of reference governing a Service's Executive Agent mission, as determined before the event, and the concrete requirements of the NMCC, as demanded of it during the event. An appropriate change in information processes would go far toward resolving the role conflict.

To help redress some of the demonstrated shortcomings, a few relatively minor procedural adjustments seem to be in order. These would involve only selective informational aspects of present arrangements without disrupting the fundamental JCS-Executive Agent relationship. The indicated remedial measures, furthermore, are amenable to Joint Staff-initiated action.

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Existing documentation pertaining to Executive Agent functions already includes general provisions for information exchange between a Service performing in such capacity and the JCS. JCS PUB 2 (UNAAF) and SM-685-63 do so, but DOD Directive 3025.1, which contains the basic terms of reference for military support operations in domestic emergencies, does not. Where addressed at all, it is little more than a passing reference without emphasis. What is needed is an explicit provision unequivocally laying down a requirement for the Executive Agent Service to keep the JCS apprised before the fact of any action contemplated that potentially impinges upon the JCS strategic mission.

Accordingly, DOD Directive 3025.1 and SM-685-63 (perhaps JCS PUB 2 as well) might usefully be amended by adding such a provision. It could be in the form of a stated requirement, to the effect that when an Executive Agent Service is contemplating commitment of substantial force resources, or is about to take any action potentially having significant bearing on matters falling within the JCS purview, prior coordination with the JCS is mandatory and will be initiated by the Executive Agent.

In the case of the Executive Agent difficulties associated with the chlorine barge search during the Betsy disaster, the problem is much more complicated. The somewhat exotic conjuncture of circumstances accounting for the unusual role of the U.S. Army Engineers is probably rare. But it is likely that some aspects of similar Army-OCE interaction in domestic emergencies will be repeated in a future natural disaster situation. Without legislative overhaul of present statutory arrangements, however, little specific remedial action appears feasible over the short term.

The only indicated course seems to be a very general one. The advisability of proposing an additional requirement to be included in the provisions of JCS PUB 2 and DOD Directive 3025.1 might be considered,

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to the effect that the DA would provide command and control support - as one form of military support - to OCE and to Engineer elements in the objective area, as mutually agreed to between the CSA and the Chief of Engineers. This proposed measure, too, could be initiated at the Joint Staff level.

Any constructive remedial action to revise organizational and procedural arrangements, wherever indicated and to whatever extent possible, could help alleviate some of the constraining handicaps that exist and might well preclude some of the functional dislocations that may otherwise recur. But basically most of the problems go beyond the internal workings of the NMCC/J-3 -- in fact, the underlying conditions are outside and above the jurisdictional purview of the Joint Staff. Therefore, action of such scope as seems to be required must emanate ultimately from a high enough level of authority to affect all of the principal agencies and echelons involved.

A reasonably wide circulation of the present study can itself have some salutary effect. Undoubtedly, by merely identifying problems, it would suggest other steps to be taken to rectify specific command and control inadequacies. The educational step alone of demonstrating what happened in the past would to some extent help avoid the same pitfalls in the future. However, because of constant turnover of personnel in military agencies, corporate memories are notoriously brief, and the "lessons learned" from a particular edifying experience are thus short-lived. For any lasting benefit to national military command and control in domestic emergencies, positive measures should be undertaken.