



State of the Command: 180 Days

Teammates –

I would like to take this opportunity to share some impressions during my first six months as your commander. First, I would like to commend you all on your diligent work to accomplish the JTF-CS vision of the future. Second, the momentum we've built transforming the organization from a strategic focus to an operational focus must continue to evolve into a command-wide expeditionary mindset, capable of reacting to a catastrophic event at a moment's notice. Third, transforming the DCRF into self-contained battalion sized Response Task Forces (RTF) is critical to our success.

As I look back on what we've accomplished in the past six months, I am continually impressed by the JTF-CS staff's diligence, intelligence and drive to be the absolute best. We proved JTF-CS can and will command and control Title 10 forces for an all-hazards Defense Support to Civil Authorities (DSCA) event when we deployed and operated in response to Hurricane Sandy. For the first time in JTF-CS history, the command deployed in support of a catastrophic event and proved that we are more than capable of conducting our mission. I'm proud of our deployment performance. Though the event and command and control construct were far from what we would consider optimal, we adapted to the fluid environment and succeeded. Through our employment however, we discovered internal and external friction points. These friction points allow us to better analyze our operational procedures and further perfect our craft for the next time our Nation calls upon us.

When I assumed command on July 11, 2012, the headquarters was primarily focused on strategic issues revolving around the CBRN Response Enterprise (CRE). Although this work has been, and will continue to be, critical for our success, we have already taken the critical steps to be more operationally and tactically focused. During our response to Hurricane Sandy, we showed that we are a fully operational command; that we are capable of deploying at a moment's notice. Now we must take the next step. We must adopt the expeditionary mindset and begin to retool the command to reflect it. In order to test the expeditionary concept, we must first develop it. It is incumbent on all JTF-CS members during the N-Hour refinement process to help me develop, document, and validate, the most efficient and effective operational employment for both the Headquarters and DCRF. Everyone in this command is empowered to raise flaws and recommend solutions to the N-Hour sequence to reduce our response time. Though the N-Hour refinement is a start, we must ensure that individually and collectively, through planning and exercising, that we are prepared to execute. We have already begun expeditionary training through the increased Joint Planning Group (JPG) rhythm, and the Joint Operations Center (JOC) testing period. Further expeditionary training will be scheduled throughout the year to refine and improve our "flash to bang" time. We must never forget, in our business time equals lives.

On October 1, 2012, the CBRN Response Enterprise (CRE) was declared fully mission capable. And, as General Charles H. Jacoby Jr., USA, USNORTHCOM Commander declared,

this is an 80 percent solution at best. In order to optimize JTF-CS and DCRF operational and tactical capabilities, we must make some transformational changes. Over the past six months, we reviewed and refined the headquarters distributive operational concept to make it more effective. We also began to reorganize the DCRF around the RTF construct. We need to continue to develop and test the RTF construct to make better use of DCRF units arrayed in the six core capabilities: 1) Identification and Detection; 2) Technical and Non-technical Search and Extraction; 3) Mass Casualty and Non-Casualty Decontamination; 4) Medical Triage and Stabilization; and 5) Air and Ground Evacuation (Medical and Non-medical). 6) Mission command. Mission command became the sixth overarching capability during the Fort Polk, LA RTF proof of principle exercise in December 2012. Though traditionally Mission Command is considered inherent in organizations, during the FTX we realized the current DCRF force structure and pre-incident authorities are not well suited to habitual command relationships. As we work through the RTF concept, we must develop and document mitigation plans designed to overcome these challenges. During the CRE assessment process, JTF-CS participants effectively argued for and incorporated the “Road to Readiness” and “Road to Response” training models into the CRE. Once accepted and incorporated into the CRE, the training model will allow us to not only validate, but also sustain the RTF concept through reinforcement training exercises. It is incumbent on us to develop, refine, and resource training to ensure both the Road to Readiness and the Road to response are valid requirements for the continuation of the DCRF.

We have accomplished a considerable amount over the past six months. There is still much we must accomplish in the next eighteen. I cannot impress on you enough the urgency of being fully prepared. The Nation has charged us with responding within hours of a catastrophic event, and we have shown that we can indeed do that. We will continue to become more efficient as we validate and employ the RTF. We will reduce JTF-CS and DCRF response time as we train and operate in an expeditionary mindset. The road to readiness and road to response training model will allow the DCRF maximum opportunity to gain and more importantly retain critical capabilities required to save lives and mitigate suffering – our ultimate charge.

We need to focus our relationships not only with our partners but also with our higher headquarters. We must be candid and transparent concerning our actions and should do everything to develop a cooperative environment, striving together for the greater good. As in any relationship, communication is critical. It is incumbent upon us to strive not to “read” into what others may be thinking, but instead focus on the task at hand to ensure thorough and complete staff-work.

Though the fiscal cliff has been narrowly averted, sequestration still looms large. With it, there are many unknown challenges the Department of Defense will have to face. I cannot tell you that there will not be tough times ahead for JTF-CS, I can only tell you that the senior leaders of NORTHERN Command and the Services are deeply concerned and doing as much possible at the senior levels to ensure our military readiness is preserved. In meetings I’ve attended, GEN Jacoby has said “People are our most valuable asset.”

I personally thank each of you for your hard work these past six months. You have all rowed well to accomplish so much in a short time. Rather than raise our oars and permit the

wind to guide our sails, we must keep striking the water in measured rhythm to steer our own course, to guide our own fate, and to make JTF-CS the national treasure we all know it to be.

EAGLE 6
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