



THE ARMED FORCES AND CIVIL DEFENSE

Throughout history, the Armed Forces have assisted population when an emergency or catastrophe ravaged our territory or when it was necessary to help a neighbor country which was affected by an adverse event. These human aid activities are part of the extra missions of the Armed Forces that are currently organized to properly and efficiently respond to these situations in order to mitigate and ease their effects.

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INTRODUCTION

Civil Defense is that part of National Defense that comprises a set of non-aggressive measures and actions aimed at preventing, annulling or mitigating the effects that the armed conflict, the agents of nature or any other disaster of any origin may cause to population, their property and/or to the environment thus contributing to restore the normal life pace in the areas affected.

LEGAL AND ORGANIC FRAMEWORK

First, it is worth mentioning those important aspects of the legal framework for this significant task. We will do this based on the Argentine Constitution in order to focus on the mission, functions and organization of the Operational Command of the Joint Staff and, mainly, on the civil defense activities carried out by the Armed Forces under its operational control in times of peace.

It is also worth mentioning that all efforts are addressed to support our society from which the Army, the Navy and the Air Force take their troops and, also, to support countries in the region.

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It is really important to understand the Military Instrument of the Nation as an integrated instrument whose nature, origin, organization and doctrine of use is in line with joint action as a basic and essential concept to get the maximum operational capacity.

Executive Power Decree No. 1691/2006 which establishes the Regulations on Organization and Operation of the Armed Forces, states that the Main Mission of the Armed Forces is to:

Join forces and repel any foreign state military aggression in order to permanently guarantee and protect the interests of the nation, namely sovereignty, independence and self-determination, territorial integrity as well as the life and freedom of its inhabitants.

Also, it states that, in the general framework of the interests of national defense, participation of the Armed Forces in Operations to support the community of our country or friendly countries, among others, have to be considered as Supplementary Missions of the military instrument.

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This Supplementary Mission is to be understood as follows:

In case of catastrophes, natural disasters or any other circumstances that may be determined pursuant to the laws in force, it is necessary to consider that, although they are important requirements of the nation that must be taken care of by means of operational and logistic capacities of the Armed Forces. As a supplementary mission of the military instrument, the participation of the Armed Forces in said support operations will be carried out based on the remaining dual capacities.

This dual capacity is available to serve the population with the purpose of maintaining and restoring normal life conditions.

Therefore, Law No. 23554 (National Defense), as ruled by Executive Power Decree No. 727/2006, states that the Joint Staff is the one responsible for conducting the planning process, defining doctrine and establishing training methods that allow for the integrated use of forces and to get the maximum operational capacity of the military instrument. The only traditional war experience that our country had was in the 20th century in the Malvinas War (1982), an event that clearly showed the importance of strategic planning and joint military action.

The ruling goes in this sense as it states that in times of peace, said Joint Staff will have the functional control of military means. With this purpose, a permanent working body is created and it will be responsible for the operations that require the use of the military instrument to achieve the goals established in the missions identified: Operational Command.

This Operational Command is precisely the one responsible for joint military training, the control of

joint exercises, the operational strategic planning and its execution as well as for military operations, therefore exercising the operational command of the means that are at their disposal. As the Command does not have organic operational forces, whenever these are required, they are provided by those responsible for their enlistment, training and support, that is, the Staff of the Armed Forces of the Nation.

The Operational Command has the mission to direct and coordinate the operational activities carried out by the Armed Forces in times of peace in order to contribute to the compliance with the operational responsibilities given to the Chief of Staff.

As regards this issue, its functions are:

- › To have the primary responsibility in the integral conduction of civil protection operations (civil defense) to be carried out in the Argentine territory as part of the response given by the Nation in case of social emergency or natural disasters and/or man- made disasters.
- › To have the operational control of the different forces of the Armed Forces at its disposal in order to carry out civil protection activities to support the Argentine provinces that are dealing with natural or man- made disasters which have not been declared national emergencies. Also, they have the function to deal

with those forces deployed abroad as a result of the execution of international cooperation agreements in case of catastrophe.

In order to comply with their mission and functions, in the current organic structure, the Command has a Head of Civil Defense Joint Military Operations that is responsible for advising and assisting the Operational Commander with regard to this type of tasks, that is, support to the community, humanitarian aid and humanitarian assistance. It is worth mentioning that these activities are carried out both in the national territory and abroad.

This Head of the Area actively takes part, within the framework of the Federal Emergency System, in the preparation of environment and civil protection policies and regulations that include planning, education, doctrine and training aspects to be included in the Armed Forces. Moreover, it has an active civic- military relationship by means of agreements, understandings and other administrative acts with national, governmental and non- governmental organizations to maximize the general cooperation and coordination regarding emergencies and disasters.

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Through Ministry Resolution No. 121 of the year 2006, the Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces is granted powers to coordinate operations and activities for community



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support in case of social emergency or natural or man- made disasters. This will only take place whenever the Ministry of Defense and/or national authorities state that the Armed Forces have to take part in missions to support the community.

Through the Executive Power Decree No. 636/13, the Military Coordination Secretary for Assistance in case of Emergency was created within the Ministry of Defense. This secretary is responsible for institutional coordination and deployment of the Armed Forces for immediate response in case of emergencies and natural/ man- made disasters.



Subsequently, through Resolution No. 297/14 of the Ministry of Defense, the Regulation of the Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces No. 03/2014 was passed: Civil Protection Activities (Support to Community, Humanitarian Aid –in the country-, Humanitarian Assistance –to other countries-), and through the latter, the Special Order No. 01/2014 was passed: Joint Action of the Armed Forces committed to Civil Protection Missions.

These two documents deal with the actions carried out by the Armed Forces committed to missions to support the community, they coordinate both personnel and means of the three forces and organize the national territory in Emergency Zones.

The foregoing, under the structure of an Emergency Zone Command per zone, is aimed at getting a better response once the adverse event has been produced; a situation that is coordinated from the highest military conduction level and in permanent communication with the Ministry of Defense.

Some of the support functions that the Armed Forces may serve as from their capacities, organization, human and material resources, are the following:

- › Organization of Emergency Operation Centers: deployment of facilities, communications, technology resources, security and personnel specialized in planning and conduction.
- › Transport: planning, direction and control of the transport of personnel and stock by different means (air, land, river and sea) that may be available.
- › Evacuation: transport of people and items that have been affected by a disaster to secure areas. Evacuation may be carried out by different means (air, land, river and sea) that may be available.
- › Accommodation: shelter to persons affected by an emergency through the deployment of means for temporary shelter and the operation of evacuees centers.
- › Rationing: support for the preparation and distribution of food for the people affected and the personnel committed to the emergency response.
- › Items supply: reception, storage and distribution of items for the personnel affected and to support the operation.
- › Sanitary assistance: sanitary assistance to people with the remaining military means (priority 2) as priority 1 is to provide assistance to the military personnel that are giving support to the emergency.
- › Communications: support with specialized personnel and campaign communications facilities that increase the capacities of the territorial network for the conduction of the emergency by the responsible authorities.
- › Debris removal: removal of material after events of collapse by trained personnel and heavy machinery.



- › Search and rescue: use of land, air and maritime means with the equipment and training necessary for the search and rescue of persons in any type of geographical setting.
- › Demolition: blowing- up by specialized personnel and adequate means.
- › Building: construction that will improve transit and defense of the area affected (bridges, roads, retaining walls), by means of the use trained personnel and proper materials.
- › Support to fire- fighting: support to personnel specialized in fire- fighting by means of logistic activities (transport, rationing, supply) and exploration of the areas affected.
- › Labour: organization of groups for the handling of items in storage, supply, distribution and works.

TRAINING AND DOCTRINE

The Armed Forces are permanently carrying out activities to train their members regarding disaster prevention, response and mitigation of effects.

In this sense, the Operational Command of the Joint Staff of the Armed Forces (Head of Civil Defense) carries out the following training courses:

- › Civil Protection Planning
- › Methodology for the Direction of Emergency Operations Centers

- › Managers of the CRISIS system

The Joint Staff College has recently started carrying out a new research project related to “Support to Emergencies, Civil Protection Operations Planning” and is planning to carry out a seminar on civil protection during the year 2014 for the post- degree courses to be offered at this Institution.

The Institution is currently working on training programs regarding civil protection in order to include them in the lower execution levels.

From the point of view of training, several exercises have been carried out with the purpose of training organizations to respond to natural disasters. These exercises have been carried out based on risk maps regarding earthquakes, floods, volcanic ashes, chemical spills, nuclear accidents, epidemics, among others.

Moreover, some other exercises are carried out periodically to support catastrophes in the region, whether with the participation of personnel and means of our Armed Forces abroad or the participation of the Armed Forces of the region in our country.

These exercises are:

- › Ejercicio Solidaridad (Solidarity Exercise) with Chile
- › Ejercicio Masi with Bolivia
- › Ejercicio Hermandad (Brotherhood Exercise) with Peru
- › Ejercicio Integración (Integration Exercise) with Bolivia and Peru

The CRISIS system (S- C) allows to collect, analyze and integrate all relevant information related to a crisis event by updating and completing the situation chart and making it possible to coordinate different actors and to transmit requirements and execution orders.

Additionally, there has been a great effort to update doctrine and the Joint Civil Protection Regulations have been reedited, cooperation manuals for catastrophes have been prepared with those countries with which we have executed agreements and civil protection tactical procedures manuals have been prepared to standardize usage criteria to get more efficiency in the response.

COOPERATION AMONG COUNTRIES IN THE REGION

Important progress has been made as regards mutual confidence and security measures, mainly bilateral, agreed during the last years among neighboring countries. The Argentine Republic has executed cooperation agreements with Chile and Peru committing to implement humanitarian aid among countries in case of disaster.

We are also working to execute similar agreements with Bolivia, Paraguay, Brazil and Uruguay.

MAIN SUPPORT ACTIVITIES IN ARGENTINA AND OTHER COUNTRIES IN THE REGION

Among the most important operations carried out by the Armed Forces, we can mention the following:

) San Juan earthquake (1944):

This earthquake destroyed the city of San Juan and neighboring cities. It has caused about 10,000 deaths out of a total population of 90,000. It has also caused damage in the north of the province of Mendoza. The highest degree of the earthquake intensity was IX (Mercalli scale).

The Regimiento de Infantería de Montaña 22 “Teniente Coronel Juan Manuel Cabot” (an Army unit), located in the province of San Juan, was on the field, but part of it had to come back to the headquarters. Neither the Army nor the Nation had experience to respond to such event. Officers, petty officers and soldiers offered their assistance. Also, tents and supplies were made available and they helped with the evacuation and further rebuilding of the city.

) Caucete earthquake (1977):

This earthquake destroyed buildings in the department of Caucete. The destruction phase of the earthquake took more than one minute. It caused 65 deaths and more than 300 people were seriously injured. It affected the departments of 25 de Mayo, Sarmiento, Pocito and the north of Mendoza, where adobe buildings were destroyed in more than 50%. The highest degree of the earthquake intensity was IX (Mercalli scale). Most of the personnel of the Comando del Cuerpo del Ejército III (Army Command), located in Cordoba and the Brigada de Montaña VIII, with units in San Juan and Mendoza gave support to the community. Support consisted in evacuation, operation of evacuees’ centers, debris removal, sanitary assistance, distribution of supplies and water, among other activities.

) Flood in the Littoral (1998):

In 1998, there were extraordinary rainfalls in the high and medium basins of the rivers Paraná and Uruguay that caused a huge rise of the water level that affected seven provinces: Chaco, Corrientes, Formosa, Santa Fé, Entre Ríos, Misiones and part of the province of Buenos Aires. More than 100,000 people were evacuated but more than 400,000 were affected. About 17,790,000 hectares were flooded causing great agricultural and farming losses.

In this event, the response capacity of the provinces was exceeded. For this reason, the National Administration took control of it. The President of the Nation ordered the use of the Armed Forces. A Disaster Zone Command “Litoral” was created with the purpose of coordinating support operations of the Armed Forces, Security forces and the police in the areas affected.

The main activities carried out by the forces at the disposal of the Emergency Zone Command were the following:

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- › Evacuation of people affected
- › Move of people and personal belongings
- › Distribution of food, clothing, medicine and other materials
- › Construction and maintenance of bridges and roads
- › Load and unload of elements of any type
- › Lodging and rationing for people
- › Drainage of flooded sectors

For this National Emergency, the Armed Forces were deployed during 13 months.

It is also important to mention the support to neighbor countries when they suffered serious damage caused by different natural disasters. This is the case, among others, of the support given to Chile during the earthquake of the year 2010. In this situation, a mobile hospital, a water-treatment plant and generators were deployed with the personnel necessary to operate them for a period of six months.

During the floods that took place in Bolivia in 2007, military engineering, marines, water-treatment plants and helicopters were used. Air Force planes were used to transport personnel and means. All of them have operated during two months.

In other emergency situations, we have assisted: Peru in the earthquakes of Arica (2004) and Pisco (2007),

Ecuador when the Tunguragua Volcano erupted, Chile during the fire at the Parque Torres del Paine (2009), just to mention some of the many situations during which assistance was provided.

ACTIVITIES CARRIED OUT NOWADAYS

The main activities carried out by the Armed Forces during the year 2013 have been:

- › Support to the National Plan for the prevention and control of dengue in the north west and north east of the Argentine Republic by carrying out training activities for the personnel and participation in workshops organized by national and provincial entities.
- › Support during forestry fires:
 - › In the province of Chubut: El Hoyo
 - › In the province of Tierra del Fuego
 - › In the province of Buenos Aires: fire in a farm in the city of Azul
- › Support to the National Plan for Fire Management with helicopters of the Argentine Army
- › Support during an emergency caused by the ashes of the Puyehue Volcano.
- › Support during an emergency caused by a tornado in the Metropolitan area of Buenos Aires.



The Armed Forces develop ongoing activities to train their member in the prevention of disasters, response and mitigation of their effects.

- › Support to the “AHÍ” Plan in the following shantytowns:
 - › City of Buenos Aires: Barrio No. 6 Cildañez, Barrio No. 15 Lugano, Barrio No. 31 Retiro, 1- 11- 14, 21- 24 Zabaleta.
 - › In the Greater Area of Buenos Aires: city General San Martín: Independencia, La Cárcova, Barrio Hidalgo. City of Quilmes: Novak, Odisea, Emporio del Tanque, Los Álamos, Kolinós, Km 13, La Sarita, 9 de Agosto, Del Carmen. City of Avellaneda: Wilde, Corina. City of Lanús: Eva Perón, La Fe, Acuba, Monte Chingolo.
 - › Sanitary campaign to support riverside inhabitants in the Delta of the rivers Paraná and Uruguay in the provinces of Buenos Aires, Entre Ríos, Santa Fé, Corrientes and Chaco.
 - › Support during the floods in the province of Buenos Aires, in the cities of Carlos Casares, Bolívar, Tapalque, Las Flores, Pehuajó and Azul, among others.
 - › Support during the flood in La Plata city, an event for which 27,452 men and 2,295 vehicles were used between April 3 and 25, 2015.
 - › Support in the city of Rosario during the explosion that took place in a building in the city center which caused the death of more than twelve people.
 - › Transport of members of a brigade to Puerto Natales (Chile) to collaborate in the fire which took place in Torres del Paine.

THE “CRISIS” SYSTEM, EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

At the request of the Joint Staff of the Armed Forces in the year 2006, the Technical and Scientific Research Center for Defense (CITEDEF, in its Spanish acronym) and the National Geographic Institute (IGN, in its Spanish acronym) developed an information system, the functions of which are aimed at the training and management of a crisis. Said information system, which took the name of “CRISIS” system (S- C, in its Spanish acronym), allows to collect, analyze and integrate all relevant information related to a crisis keeping the situation chart updated and complete by making it possible for the coordination of the different actors and the communication of requirements and orders.

Nowadays, the system is developed and is frequently used both for training and management activities which shows that it is a very useful tool for the purposes for which it was created.

TO FUTURE

Civil protection military operations carried out by the Armed Forces, which have the purpose of solidarity, allow to verify and train the Military Instrument for the functions of Command, that is, those activities related to planning, conduction, coordination and control. They also make it possible to carry out all activities related to logistics, supply, distribution, storage and transport.

At the same time, these operations allow to carry out other activities related to the Main Mission, such as the support to communications, engineering works and treatment of hazardous materials. These actions, which are within Complementary Missions, require a high recruitment level thus contributing to keeping the proper training of the Military Instrument and checking the effectiveness and efficiency of organizations and their procedures for usage.

It is important to mention that in the international context, there is a new concept regarding the use of the Armed Forces in Humanitarian Aid actions. For example, during the 2009 Wilton Park Conference about “The use of military resources for humanitarian response to natural disasters”, the following was expressed:

Although the Armed Forces have traditionally not been considered critical in the response to natural disasters, their role has been redefined during the last years as from the growing impact of catastrophes and the decision of states to deploy their military resources which have become valuable tools to face humanitarian crisis.

The foregoing allows to conclude that *the intervention of the Armed Forces in Civil Defense operations will continue being real and will tend to grow.*

Therefore, it is necessary to make estimations in order to have prepared and equipped forces to respond to future demands of that nature and to have a budget that allows for its efficient compliance without reducing military capacities with the purpose of complying with this part of Civil Defense in an efficient way.

The Armed Forces are looking to future taking into consideration their capacity to support different emergencies that may occur. Resources of the Armed Forces are resources of the state that are made available for the main purpose of Defense. However, these resources are very useful for assistance in case of emergency. In this context, the Armed Forces respond to the requirements of different government authorities thus becoming an important part of the Response Plan.