

**General Douglas M. Fraser  
Commander, US Southern Command**

**Air Warfare Symposium**

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**General Fraser:** Thanks, Mike.

It really is an honor to be with you today. I just want to make sure everybody knows, I'm General Doug Fraser. My brother in name is here with us and he'll be up after me. The good news is, I get to share all his perks. [Laughter]. He's very good at doing that.

The other thing is, we probably came from the same clan of thieves in Scotland at some point back in our history. So it's a great privilege for me to be here with you and to share this opportunity.

Southern Command is a unique region and one that I think is very much focused and one we don't understand just how closely we are related with all the people there. Four hundred and fifty million people; 41 different nations, protectorates; roughly 40 percent of our oil comes from the Latin American region; two-thirds of our trade that goes between the East Coast and the West Coast transits the Panama Canal. If you go and look at the surnames of people within our country, four of the top ten surnames are Spanish -- surnames. So there is a very close relationship to Latin America that we all feel within our country.

What I'd like to talk about, though, is what I've been dealing with for about the last 37 days or so -- Haiti.

If I could have the next slide, please.

To describe the situation for everybody, remember a 7.2 earthquake; 14 miles from a city of three million people; very close to the surface which meant there was a lot of damage.

Fortunately I had been to Haiti about three months prior so I had some understanding of what the situation looked like. But if you can see, over 200,000 people killed -- is the current estimate -- 300,000 injured. Three million people affected. That's out of a population of nine million, so it's a significant impact.

Then if you further look at the infrastructure, within Port-au-Prince there's one airfield. The other airfields

within the country, there's one up here at Cap Hatien. The road from there is narrow. It goes through the mountains. It's a two lane road. It takes 12 hours on a good day to transit, and it's a small port and a small airfield.

There's another one down here in Jacmel, but that city was also affected by the earthquake and it's a small airfield.

So the closest alternate airfield, as you saw from General McNabb's brief, is in Dominican Republic. On a good day, again, there are a couple of airfields there and one pretty close to the border of Haiti called Barahona. On a good day that's a six to eight hour transit, two lane road again, from the Dominican Republic into Haiti.

And the port here in Port-au-Prince supplied 91 percent of the goods that came into Haiti in a given year, given day, and it was completely destroyed with the earthquake. We have found that one of the piers was okay.

So that's the situation that we were looking at on the day this happened.

Next.

We started from a very unified part, so this is the day after the earthquake. This is Dr. Shaw, the administrator of the U.S. Agency for International Development. This is Ms. Cheryl Mills who is the Chief of Staff and the focal point in the Department of State for Haiti. That's me.

This is our commander on the ground, General Ken Keen who is my deputy on a routine basis, happened to be in Haiti on the day of the earthquake. Was at the Ambassador's house when the earthquake struck. Fortunately wasn't affected there and the Ambassador's house was okay. Unfortunately, though, we lost one of our folks in the hotel that completely collapsed there, as you've heard about the Hotel Montana. But a lot of heroic efforts in the early hours by lots of people to save some of our folks.

So that's with the Ambassador, the President and the Prime Minister of Haiti.

This is the Commander of the UN Mission, Stabilization Mission for Haiti, General [Pazoto]. There's a very close relationship that has grown between General Keen and General [Pazoto]. Incidentally, General Keen attended the Brazilian Staff College. So we go back and we talk, as

General Lorenz talked about this morning, about the connections and the importance of our educational institutions. It played out right here as you can see in our experience. There's been a very close relationship between all our folks and the United Nations as well as the other agencies that are in Haiti.

Next slide.

This is the mission that we were given. That is to provide humanitarian assistance and disaster relief and to support efforts to do that. We provided security for that mission. Our mission was not to come in and provide security and stability in Haiti. That was a mission already being done by MINUSTAH and there was no reason for us to take that over because they were still conducting that mission.

In addition, they were affected. They lost 40 people within the MINUSTAH organization itself. The UN lost another 90. Their headquarters essentially collapsed. They lost their command and control. So a lot of impact for everybody as you look at what happened.

But again, you see the mission and objectives that we had.

One thing that's always a concern for us in dealing with Haiti is mass migration. If you go back to 1994 when we had a lot of Haitians looking for a better life and looking to get into the United States, so a big issue. We have not seen any indications of mass migration to date, but it's still something we watch for.

Next slide.

Here's our challenges. You talk about one airfield, that's the one airfield. A single runway, no parallel taxiway. You could only get on and off of it by that single taxiway. On a normal day it handled 10 to 12 flights per day operated from seven in the morning until ten at night.

So this is a picture of what that ramp looked like about day four. Our folks went in and I'll talk about exactly what they did with this airfield here in a minute.

The seaport, you can see what happened with the seaport. The big places where they handled all the containers were in the water, destroyed, couldn't handle that. Then you see, as you look downtown Port-au-Prince, and it was really the center of the city that took the

destruction. With 13 of 15 government buildings being destroyed, so they lost all their capacity, they lost all their records, they lost all their ability to get and understand governments.

If you look at the people of Haiti also, as you look at government, you look at police, you look at everybody, everybody suffered some consequence from the earthquake. Nobody was left out. So family, somebody.

So as you look at the initial part of this crisis, they were dealing with their own personal needs as well as trying to get the government back in action.

Next.

The response was pretty marvelous. The President was very direct when he said this is your mission, and essentially opened the capabilities of the United States government to support this mission. So every capability that I asked for was delivered without question and it was delivered without a long, deliberate process to figure out how to do this. It was all on a voice message, can you send me this? And it was there and moving as quickly as we could move it.

And draw all these arrows. I'll show you a little bit more in a minute, but there was capability coming from everywhere to get to this location.

If you remember the early part of the airfield, and that was the only lifeline we had going into Haiti, a lot of people were talking about the inability to land. Well people were coming from around the world, international carriers, expecting to be able to go to a Dulles Airport or something like that. And every type of airplane imaginable was on the airfield. So if you think about trying to transfer cargo, transfer people, and figure out how to do that in an efficient manner, it was a real nightmare trying to do that. That's where people ran into a lot of problems there.

You see where the United Nations was and the MINUSTAH force, they were throughout the country. Then you also see we brought in the Hospital Ship Comfort, and I'll talk more about that in a minute.

Next.

The other interesting thing is we focus a lot on Haiti. But if you look at the United States Department of Defense response it came from over 100 units in 35

different locations, not only within the United States but around the globe.

I had a plug come in from US Northern Command, from Joint Forces Command. We had planners from Pacific Command come join us. We had planners from European Command. We had people from all over the Department of Defense fall in on our headquarters, augmented by about 400 people. As well as now augmenting the capabilities in Haiti. You can see from around the country how much and who that involved.

Next.

At the height of our time there, and I'll talk a little bit about how this went, but you see the amount of forces that we've had there. So we have a Marine Expeditionary Unit, the 22<sup>nd</sup> Marine Expeditionary Unit that was focused down here in the Leagone, Petit Goave area which was very much earthquake impacted. We brought the Marines because we didn't know what kind of capacity we were going to have to get into the port, so we needed something that could get there quickly and give us across the shore kind of capability to move cargo.

We also asked the aircraft carrier Vincennes to come out. It actually happened to be the only significant vessel that was out of port when the earthquake happened. The only other ship that we had access to that was in our AOR was a destroyer that was about two to three days sailing time away. The Vincennes was about five days. So I asked it to come south. It picked up helicopters. It didn't have an air wing embarked. I asked it to come south. It picked up helicopters as it sailed by Mayport, and they became the lifeline for the early days of our experience in Haiti, being able to offload capacity from the airfield but still be able to provide a lot of vertical lift capability into Haiti.

Because of the streets and that, we didn't know what the situation was going to be. The 18<sup>th</sup>, or the 2<sup>nd</sup> Brigade of the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne provides our capability here in Port-au-Prince. Because of the northern part of Haiti, and uncertainty of what the situation was there, we asked for the 24<sup>th</sup> MEU to come and help us understand what the situation was there.

As you saw on an earlier chart, there were a lot of people who migrated from internal in Haiti out to other parts of the country. So that was what the MEU helped us make sure that we didn't have a situation outside of Port-au-Prince that we weren't aware of.

We've also had some Special Forces units, just small teams out providing eyes and ears in cities up in the north. Again, just to understand what the situation was and what the capacity was. But you can see, a lot of other nations came in. The Canadians came in with 2000 soldiers, with ships. The Colombians came in with a medical capability. The Mexicans have come in with a medical capability. It was a big international effort to support.

You can see the numbers of people that we had, a little over 22,000 people with about 6,000 on the ground.

Next slide.

Here's where we are today. What's been happening is our initial point was to put logistics capability, command and control, the ability to move humanitarian assistance and provide that to the people of Haiti while the non-governmental organizations, the international community was able to resource that capacity on their own, which was going to take a little bit longer. So that's what you see happening on the ground in Haiti today.

The medical situation is now transferring back over to Haitian hospitals. There are 56 hospitals operating in Port-au-Prince that have surgical capability, and those are all up and operating well. Food distribution is out to most people. Water is out to people. Shelter remains one of those situations, I'll talk about it more.

The Canadians are still there. We still have the 22<sup>nd</sup> Marine Expeditionary Unit helping in these two areas as well as the 82<sup>nd</sup> here in Port-au-Prince, down to roughly 13,000 people. So the 24<sup>th</sup> MEU has left as well as the Vincennes and some other ships.

Next slide.

Here's how we overcame those obstacles. This is air traffic control, Haiti style. Because the tower was destroyed. So those individuals working in that kind of capacity took the airfield from 10 to 12 flights a day to 160 flights. That's fixed wing flights, and they also controlled another 100 helicopter flights a day. So they're working 24x7, moving a lot of airlift through that capacity. You see kind of the operation that looks like when we're moving cargo and trying to get that out to humanitarian. As soon as a helicopter lands there would be a line of soldiers or marines that would move water, put supplies on the helicopter and it was gone. Five minutes on the ground and it was back out providing assistance.

You see what the port looks like in some of the capability, the roll-on/roll-off capacity. The important thing to remember here is we talk about containers per day being able to go across the port. But it was not just containers. There was also bulk cargo. So how do you unload bulk cargo and yet not clog a port? So what Transportation Command did was they had a ship, the Cornhusker, that had a capability to anchor off-shore. We put a barge up against it. Now the ships could come into there, offload their bulk into containers, and now we could move the bulk into containers and now we can move the containers across the shore so that we keep the capacity coming through the shore. On a normal day max in Haiti prior to the earthquake it was 233 containers a day. We're up to about a thousand container capability there today.

Next.

The Comfort. The amazing thing is the response that we got from everybody moving into Haiti. The Comfort was not ready to sail and got a ship's company, got all the medical capability, and sailed within 72 hours. So it made it to Haiti within about nine days, which is pretty miraculous if you look at the capacity to do that.

The 22<sup>nd</sup> MEU, most of their Marines were off. They were not constituted to come back. So within 72 hours they had also loaded and constituted their entire ship's complements as well as the Marine's complement to get them on sail. There were Marines skiing in New Hampshire when they got the call to come back and responded in that capacity.

You can see the various medical capabilities. This is Doctors Without Borders. This is another capability by an NGO there.

This is Esther. She was the first baby ever born on the hospital ship Comfort in any of its operations. Her mother had spine injuries as well as broken bones, so it was a pretty miraculous delivery for her also.

Next.

Shelter. You can see the destruction as you look at parts of Port-au-Prince. So those, there aren't places for people to live even in backyards or close, and you see this is the Presidential Palace and what happened to this. This is the area you see across from the Presidential Palace.

So there's a lot of capability coming in, looking to shelter a million people. The initial capability that

USAID uses and the international community is to provide plastic. That plastic provides initial shelter and then they'll use that as they get more traditional shelter capacity in, to build a bigger structure, a 20 square meter structure, that will have more permanent capability. Plus tents.

Next.

Food and water distribution. You can see some of the totals that we have up there from the number of meals to the number of bottles of water, liters of water. Water actually happened to be a better news story than we thought initially. Roughly only 40 percent of the city of Port-au-prince has plumbed water capacity. Other than that, they use trucks to deliver water throughout the city. That came back up fairly quickly.

Food has been a much bigger issue to try and do. The World Food Program with a lot of the other NGOs has now provided food to 3.5 million people, but it was initially getting the rice, getting the supplies in for that capacity. As you wait for the port, you wait for the shipping to get in to be able to do that. Then getting that distribution out to the people so that they knew what to expect and where to expect it and that food was coming. So you can see the number of people that are being fed.

Next.

Debris is also a big problem. The USAID administrator on the ground puts it in this term. It will take a thousand trucks a thousand days to move the rubble that's within Port-au-Prince. That's a three year process. So how do you do that, what do you do? It's all throughout. And it's really interesting, in the middle of the city there's almost complete destruction. As you go to other parts there can be houses that are complete and sturdy, next to one that's completely collapsed. So it's a hodgepodge as you go throughout the city, but that is now going on. And the issue with that is you've got to remove rubble to be able to provide capacity for people to build a camp. That's a real intertwined mission as we look at it.

Next.

Security. I talked about the role of MINUSTAH and MINUSTAH has been providing that security, generalized security, throughout the country this entire time and has been doing a great job. You've heard about instances of violence and criminality. It's all been criminality. There has been very little violence by Haitians, and if

there is, it's normally gang related, gang on gang, based on the criminals who were released from the prisons. But you can see this picture in the lower right probably says it better than anything about the competence and the trust the people of Haiti have in our men and women.

Next.

These are the folks they serve. You would be impressed by all our soldiers, marines, sailors, airmen, coast guardsmen. The compassion that they have shown throughout this entire mission has made a huge difference. For me, the fact that in a lot of cases where non-governmental organizations were very hesitant to work with the military, they are now working and coming in to find military capacity and work with them just because of the relationship that they have grown on the ground with all the organizations that are there.

Next.

What are the things that we need? It is that port opening capability. And it's that on a maritime basis. But it's also, what are the alternatives? We did a few air drops. Let me explain air drops and the sensitivities to air drops, because people have asked why didn't you do more? The biggest thing is security for air drops, to make sure nobody gets hurt, one, when capacity has fallen to the ground, but also in the distribution. So you have to have a secure drop zone to be able to drop, and then be able to keep that secure while you take the pallets apart and now then be able to get an orderly distribution of the food because that makes sure everybody who needs food gets the food. So it has to be a very organized, orchestrated activity to be able to conduct food drops in this situation.

Next.

Expeditionary capability for airfields, everything we do. The quicker we can get there, the better off we are for everybody.

Flow control was a real issue. You've got one airfield, you've got international folks coming in. You've got to bring materiel, you've got to bring supplies, you've got to bring people, and 160 flights a day isn't very many when you've got a million people who need to get fed.

So the ability to measure that and manage that, and 1<sup>st</sup> Air Force has the capability to do that and we've utilized

it during this. It is very helpful. But it has to enable the international community to help do that. Then you have to watch the logistics balance. You can get a lot of people in there, but you don't have supplies or you don't have vehicles to distribute, then you haven't gotten the right capacity I to work it.

ISR, and this is kind of non-traditional ISR. It's change detection for debris. How do you watch as debris moves? How do you see where displaced people and camps are and what's the size of them? In this situation they migrated a lot from place to place. As a distribution point for food would open they would migrate to that point because they could get access to food. So very much in a non-traditional manner of how do we work and provide that change detection and capability for not only that kinetic capability, but for the smart side if smart power for enhancing the capability. And the quicker we can get it there the better, because it's early-on when you don't know the situation on the ground that it's the most important.

Next.

That's where we are. All the trends are in the right direction. Medical capacity, the Comfort with patients on it is down to 150 patients on the ship and that continues down. There's no demand for pre-earth quake or earthquake related medical care. Food has been distributed as I said to 3.5 million people, so that's going. Shelter is going well. That emergency shelter should be out to everybody by 1 May -- 1 sheet by 1 April, 2 sheets by 1 May, and that's a conservative estimate.

Security. We're turning over distribution points back to NGOs, to MINUSTAH, to the Haitian government, and they're running those things. So the capacity and the requirement for U.S. military to be there is diminishing. So we're looking at a contingency-based transition back, and looking to do that as it make sense.

With that, I'll be happy to take any questions.

[Applause].

**Moderator:** Thank you, General Fraser.

Let me ask you, focusing still on Haiti, about lessons learned. And one of the questions that got passed to me is dealing with the press. On the one hand you had to deal with the press in order to create the international interest and the outflowing of support from our citizens, but on the other hand, they seemed to have pretty good

commo capability and they were also taken away from some of the supplies you were probably bringing in. Can you comment on the challenges of dealing with the press in a situation like this?

**General Fraser:** Our effort from the very start was to be as open as we possibly could because we knew we were going to be dealing with international non-governmental organizations, with the UN community, with a lot of different people. So we kept all our information, as much as we could, unclassified. And I'd say 99 percent of it's unclassified and available to all those communities. So we would essentially tell them what the situation was on the ground. What we found, like every situation just like we find on the battlefield, the more we embedded media and tot them out and gave them the ability to have mobility to get around the situation, they saw what the situation was, what our men and women were doing to support it, and they reported it accurately because they had accurate information.

**Moderator:** Looking backwards, I assume you did not have a com plan or any pre-planned type OpPlan to go ahead and do this. What lesson would you take away in terms of planning not only for Haiti but perhaps other nations in your AOR for the future?

**General Fraser:** I take away a couple of things. One, we didn't have an O-Plan. There hadn't been an earthquake in Haiti for 150 years. It was not what I expected to have to deal with in Haiti. Hurricanes yes, earthquakes no.

One is, we cannot man any of our combatant commands to the level to meet any worst case scenario that we're going to have in that location. So it is training and the ability to train and stress the staff we need, but it's also augmentation to bring staff in to be able to robust the staffs that we have.

The other one is flexibility. You've got to provide commanders, you've got to provide people with the options to respond to whatever the situation is on the ground. That's why as we approached this we looked for carriers, we looked for things that would take capacity off of an airfield because we knew it was going to be clogged. So how can we get capacity off of there? How can you get the through-put through but it doesn't stop on the airfield? You've got to get it off of the airfield. It's the information coming in.

The bottom line to it is, we've talked a lot about education and General Lorenz talked about it this morning.

How do we teach our people to think, not to have to plan for, but to understand what the capacities are available and then move that capacity while you're thinking and how that's going to come in.

For humanitarian assistance, also, my compliments to TRANSCOM. Because I told them here's what I need to do. And they put all the pieces together and they moved very quickly and very robustly because of the system they put together. AMC did the same thing. AMC amassed huge amounts of capability and brought it in on a dime. So it is expecting the unexpected and being flexible enough and agile enough to just look at the situation, use your intuition and move. That's what the situation requires.

**Moderator:** This next question backs you out a little bit. There's a longstanding distrust of the United States in your AOR. What are the bright spots for you? You've been around, traveling most everywhere around the AOR. What are some bright spots where you're very optimistic?

Also, I have another question on Venezuela. Would you care to comment on Venezuela?

**General Fraser:** Our military to military relations are strong throughout the region. I think if you look and talk about those are the bright spots throughout. That's not just Southern Command, but that's the situation. It's what I see throughout the other combatant commands that I've been a part of. So the importance of continuing to do building partnership capacity, focus on that. The importance of our education, IMEP. It's critical for what we're doing.

As just an anecdote, the Canadian battalion commander and the Marine battalion commander who were out in Leagone had gone to Command and Staff College together, so as soon as they got on the ground they weren't trying to sort one another out, they knew what to do and how to operate. So that's a critical piece. So all that, in my mind, is a bright spot.

There's a distrust of U.S. intent, and that comes from a history within Latin America that we haven't always been the best neighbors. So we just need to work our way through that and continue to show them that what we say and what we do are reality. That's what we're in the process of doing.

**Moderator:** Venezuela?

**General Fraser:** What do you want to know about Venezuela?

**Moderator:** Look ahead with Venezuela. And give us an assessment of what you see going forward.

**General Fraser:** From my standpoint, Venezuela continues to undermine democratic principles within the country. We have continued to work to build military to military relations with Venezuela. We still invite them to courses, we still invite them to training. We still have a liaison capability for Joint Interagency Task Force south, our counter-drug mission, interagency counter-drug mission in Key West. And they're the ones who have chosen not to engage with us in that capacity.

So I don't see a direct military threat to the United States from Venezuela. They have been anti-American, anti-U.S. in their outlook. They continue to do that. As long as President Chavez is there, I don't see that changing. So I think we'll still have a difficult relationship with Venezuela for some time into the future.

**Moderator:** I'm sorry to say we're out of time, but General Fraser, I have to thank you for a very insightful presentation for us today. Thank you very much.

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