

NEWS FROM THE FRONT

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Military Assisted Departure/ Noncombatant Evacuation Operations

**UNITED STATES ARMY AFRICA PREPARES FOR MAD/NEO IN AFRICA
DURING GLOBAL CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC**

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USARAF COVID-19

MILITARY ASSISTED DEPARTURE

NONCOMBATANT EVACUATION OPERATIONS

The United States Army Africa area of operations spans the entire African continent, which is home to 1.2 billion people living in 53 countries, including one self-governing territory, which is 11.73 million square miles. The continent is further subdivided into five regions. Further complicating this complex and very large continent is the fact that there is no homogenous identity. This unique web of cultures, geo-political identities, and environmental diversity, lends to the friction that could potentially lead to destabilization necessitating a noncombatant evacuation. The current global coronavirus pandemic further complicates this situation. It is within this backdrop that USARAF conducted contingency planning to address this likelihood of a Military Assisted Departure/Noncombatant Evacuation Operation (MAD/NEO) to remove American Citizens and Third Country Nationals from a pandemic-ridden area of the continent; which, if conducted across the continent concurrently, would clearly stress the command and supporting agencies. The purpose of this article is to address these concerns and identify a few lessons and best practices identified during planning.

History of Army MAD/NEO:

During ***Operation Frequent Wind***, conducted in April 1975, in Saigon, Vietnam, the United States military evacuated over 130,000 people by air and sea, representing the largest military supported evacuation in history. In ***Operation Urgent Fury***, a much smaller MAD/NEO, former United States President Ronald Reagan ordered United States Forces to evacuate 800 American medical students from the Caribbean island of Grenada.¹ In another evacuation operation, the Department of State (DoS) evacuated 14,000 personnel from Lebanon in 2016. The operational environment (OE) dictates the options that Geographic Combatant Commands have for what type of force they will use for a MAD/NEO.

Several NEOs have been conducted in the past in the USARAF Area of Responsibility (AOR). In South Sudan, NEOs occurred in 2014 and 2016. Both NEOs required the Special Purpose Marine Air Ground-Task Force (SPMAG-TF) and the East Africa Response Force (EARF) as the response forces.

The Department of State and Department of Defense evacuated its U.S. Embassy in Jubah, South Sudan, during **Operation Oaken Steele**. Evacuation became necessary when local combatants fired on the Embassy. The military reinforced the embassy to protect Department of State personnel during this conflict between rival factions in that country's civil war. The operation, which ran from July 12, 2016, until January 26, 2017, saw U.S. Forces deploying to Uganda to provide for rapid crisis response during the unrest. U.S. Marines have also conducted NEOs in Liberia in 1990; Mogadishu, Somalia, in 1991; Sierra Leone in 1992; Liberia again in 1996 and Sierra Leone again in 1997.

Phases and Key Tasks of a MAD/NEO:

During a NEO, the embassy Chief of Mission (COM) is the responsible person on the ground. Neither the geographic combatant commander nor the subordinate joint force commander is the senior United States Government authority for the evacuation. The COM is ultimately responsible for the successful completion of the evacuation and the safety of the evacuees.² Although not in the military chain of command, the COM is the lead federal official for the protection and evacuation of all United States noncombatant evacuees, including Department of Defense dependents.

Dividing MAD/ NEOs into four phases simplifies this complex operation. Phase One is the shape phase, where United States Africa Command directs its staff to begin planning a noncombatant evacuation based upon a Department of State request for support. Phase Two includes the deployment of the Joint Task Force and operational control of forces under executive order authority. Phase Three is the evacuation phase, or the phase when the evacuation begins. Phase Four is the recovery phase, which concludes when all personnel have been identified and evacuated to the Temporary Safe Havens (TSH) and when all forces

have safely returned back to their assigned stations, whether those are forward deployed locations or bases in or outside of the Continental United States.

A typical mission may be phrased something like this: “After receiving the order, the Joint Task Force will conduct a Military Assisted Departure/Noncombatant Evacuation Operation of specified personnel from ‘Country X’ in support of the Department of State in order to protect United States and designated Third Country Nationals and United States and Host Nation interests.” The purpose for this MAD/NEO is to evacuate specific American Citizens and other personnel from “Country X” to an identified Temporary Safe Haven and/or Initial Staging Base. Once at the TSH or ISB, the evacuees are transferred to the responsibility of Department of State personnel and are sheltered in tents, buildings or hotels and eventually repatriated to their respective home countries.

The specified tasks in this MAD/ NEO would be the following:

- First, safely evacuate noncombatants to designated Temporary Safe Haven.
- Second, secure the Reception Center and Assembly Areas identified by the U.S. Embassy.
- Third, secure critical infrastructure (U.S. Embassy or Consulate, other selected sites and the Air Port of Debarkation/Sea Point of Debarkation).
- Fourth, track all personnel through the Noncombatant Tracking System (NTS).
- Fifth, securely transport all citizens from Reception Center and Assembly Areas to the Temporary Safe Haven.
- Sixth, establish an Initial Staging Base (ISB) for transferring noncombatants to Department of State control for repatriation.
- Seventh, coordinate with the U.S. Embassy for Interagency and HN support to execute the evacuation.
- Lastly, the ultimate goal for the MAD/NEO is to safely remove evacuees from the affected area to the TSH, maintain security of the Embassy and the redeployment of all response forces. This ensures the protection of U.S. interests and property and assure the civilian population is unaffected by evacuation operations.

Global Crisis

The COVID-19 pandemic affected the entire globe with the intensity of an invisible storm, creating fear, uncertainty, and economic, social and political instability. AFRICOM and USARAF's near-term priority is to conduct operations to train, advise and assist our African Partner Nations in an environment degraded by COVID-19. They must train and advise partner nation (PN) security forces while protecting our force and our African partner forces from the coronavirus. In March through April 2020, USARAF asked the question, "What does it take to conduct MAD/NEO in a COVID-19 environment with over 1.2 billion people and over 180,000 American Citizens dispersed over a Continent three times the size of the Continental United States?" Somalia, Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) had been battling massive swarms of locusts since January 2020. Swarms also invaded Djibouti, Eritrea and Tanzania. The locusts devoured crops and despoiled pasturelands, threatening the survival of millions of Africans. Food security in the region was already low and the locust swarms and the COVID-19 virus compounded the instability in many of these countries. Political instability, social unrest, scarcity of food resources, and the potential impacts of COVID were all understood to be catalysts for a potential NEO.

USARAF COVID-19 MAD/NEO Operational Planning Team (OPT) and Planning Considerations:

A Military Assisted Departure (MAD) occurs when the Department of State requests the military aircraft to perform the evacuation of American Citizens and designated Third Country Nationals (TCNs). The difference between MAD and NEO is that Military Assisted Departure is when the Department of State requests for the military lift assets to perform the evacuation of noncombatants from an area where it is no longer advisable to remain. In a Noncombatant Evacuation Operation, the Chief of Mission orders AMCITS and designated personnel to depart from a threatened area abroad with DoD assistance. The Department of State and Department of Defense conduct MAD/NEO in a permissive, uncertain, or hostile environment. Each entails a degree of finesse in the relationships with Host Nation security elements, hostile actors and criminal opportunists. Normally, the Department of State does not call in the

military to support a permissive evacuation but they can be requested on the tail end of an uncertain and definitely for a hostile environment.³

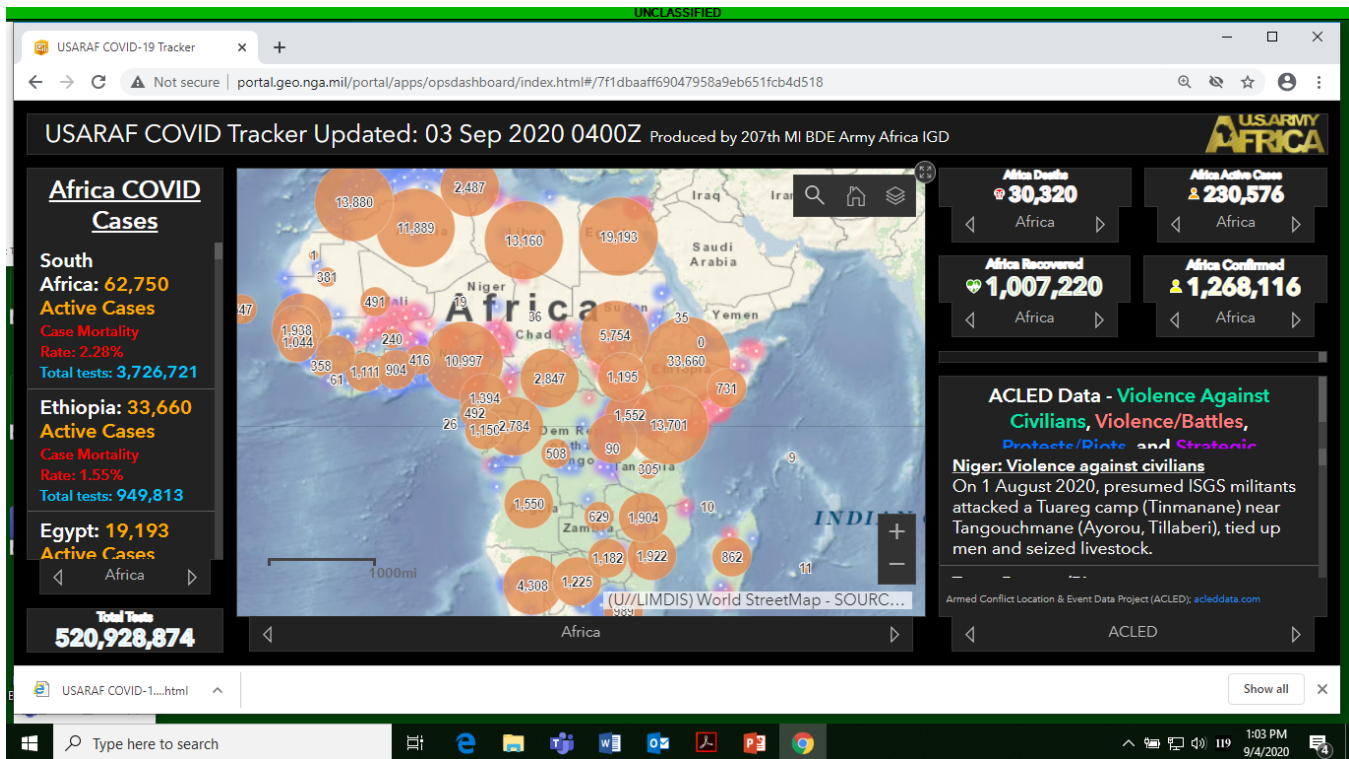
During a crisis, time is critical. Planning ahead is a necessity, and must begin early -- before the onset of a crisis. MAD/NEOs take time and assets. Every Noncombatant Evacuation Operation is a complex military operation. The keys to success are integration and synchronization across multiple entities and holistic planning that includes all details required to execute the evacuation. The Department of State maintains options to support their requirements and the Department of Defense is a mechanism they have available to use. When COVID-19 became a global pandemic, United States Army Africa began preparing a scalable response plan available to use for MAD/NEO from a crisis response viewpoint. USARAF leaders considered whether they needed to establish a Joint Task Force in response to the crisis. They asked the questions, "What if you need to evacuate people from across the Continent and what has changed due to COVID-19?" The coronavirus created unforeseen complications and USARAF needed to develop a better understanding of the area of operations.

USARAF stood up an Operational Planning Team (OPT) consisting of planners from all components and the United States Africa Command staff. The OPT planned and prepared for a potential MAD/NEO in Africa during the pandemic. During mission analysis, the planning team identified several areas of risk. USARAF must mitigate these areas in order to successfully conduct MAD/NEO during a pandemic. The team reached out to interagency partners, including the DoS and U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), to develop mitigation strategies. They did a deep dive with United States Special Operations Command (SOCOM) to gain a better understanding of conducting Noncombatant Evacuation Operations in an austere environment. Lastly, the team worked with Special Operations Command Africa, United States Air Forces Africa, United States Transportation Command, Special Purpose Marine Air Ground Task Force Crisis Response-Africa and the East Africa Response Force in the Horn of Africa (HOA) to determine all available forces and assets in support of future evacuation operations.

USARAF planners leveraged their Liaison Officers at U.S. Africa Command to assist in planning and preparing for MAD/NEO. Throughout planning, the team gained insight into potential challenges of conducting evacuation operations in a biologically contaminated environment, most notably, how to protect both the forces conducting the mission and evacuees. USARAF, which was considering these concerns across the entire continent, provided all this feedback to AFRICOM. The OPT conducted mission analysis for an area three times the size of the Continental United States. This thorough planning and preparation identified Landing Zones (LZs), routes and the number of AMCITS and TCNs at each Embassy and Consulate. The team planned the logistical requirements for sustaining and supporting the Assembly Areas, Intermediate Staging Bases and Temporary Safe Havens during a noncombatant evacuation. COVID-19 changed the whole dynamic of the Operational Environment and made in-depth, comprehensive planning for evacuations essential.

During the early months of the global pandemic, the DoS used contracted air and United States Transportation Command assets to move people from all over the globe back to the U.S. The COVID-19 pandemic response obligated contracted air and TRANSCOM assets out of the global logistics system, so the Department of State had to conduct repatriation flights using alternative transportation methods. For USARAF, the OPT had to analyze how the commitment of these repatriation assets by TRANSCOM would affect various sizes of NEO on the African Continent, if they were conducted.

USARAF's Intelligence Directorate (G2) conducted a significant deep-dive into the analysis of instability. By collecting, processing and analyzing data from multiple intelligence disciplines, the G2 provided accurate, real-time, all-source production in support of USARAF's Commanding General and staff planning. The G2 examined what other forces and assets were available. They conducted their planning for MAD/NEO from early-March to mid-April 2020. The OPT continued through the spring of 2020, but has now been paused as USARAF observes the outcome and follow-on effects of COVID-19 in Africa. USARAF conducted continuous planning during this OPT.



USARAF COVID-19 Country Tracker

Size and Scale of MAD/NEO Operations

USARAF developed different sized options for Noncombatant Evacuation Operations, enabling them to scale the operation to the size and complexity of the NEO they could execute if the situation at U.S. Embassies or Consulates began to deteriorate because of COVID-19's effects on the local populations.

The first option for NEO is the "small NEO" option, planned for less than 10,000 evacuees. The second option was the "medium NEO" option, planned for more than 10,000 and less than 100,000 evacuees. The third option is the "large NEO" option, planned for over 100,000 evacuees. The fourth option is a "large, complex NEO" available for countries with huge distances between several cities in that country, similar to one in Southern Africa. USARAF looked at all the Emergency Action Plans (EAP) at the various Embassies and Consulates in some of the more remote countries (due to the COVID-19 crisis). A large NEO in one West Africa country involves the possibility of over 125,000 evacuees. Time and distance related

complications added to the already precarious COVID-19 environment. USARAF provided this mission analysis to AFRICOM.

Because of the large number of American Citizens in various East African countries, USARAF paid particular attention to the U.S. Embassies and Consulates located there. The locust swarms devastated crops, causing food shortages in East Africa. The added burden created by the restrictions placed on the populations due to COVID-19 lockdowns created a perfect storm of instability and civil disturbance. This instability resulted in the need to plan for possible evacuation of American Citizens from some of our installations. USARAF trained their Soldiers how to use the Noncombatant Tracking System, Personal Protective Equipment and COVID-19 isolation as part of their mission analysis. If required, response forces would fly the evacuees from multiple locations to Temporary Safe Havens. Furthermore, USARAF researched the quantity and locations of Personal Protective Equipment and the screening process required in a COVID-19 environment under restrictions. They planned their MAD/NEO crisis responses to be scalable. USARAF has a process for Request for Forces and they knew what forces and assets were needed to accomplish any Noncombatant Evacuation Operation. They created a timeline for it, and planned and prepared for how the operations would unfold. For a large NEO, they would have to request additional forces, support (RFFs, RFS) and funding. Planners examined all 53 countries and studied various factors of instability, including increasing COVID-19 virus spread in each of these countries. They had scalable options and plans that could be requested and implemented.

In a permissive environment, Department of State conducts evacuation operations without U.S. Forces to assist in the safe and orderly departure of American Citizens from a country. In a hostile environment, however, a NEO may require one of several military options. It may require the deployment of a Joint Task Force if there is a deteriorating security environment in the area or region that the NEO is to occur. The forward-deployed Amphibious Ready Group/Marine Expeditionary Unit (ARG/MEU) are a combined US Navy and Marine formation that can assist a JTF in conducting an evacuation. The ARG/MEU team is trained and certified to conduct NEOs. This capability is ideally suited to conduct a NEO from afloat platforms within the range of rotary winged assets; which is a limiting factor. Army units generally

conduct Noncombatant Evacuation Operations when needed for those locations that are beyond the operational reach of an ARG/MEU such as when a NEO is more distant within the interior of the African Continent.⁴

The Special Purpose Marine Air Ground Task Force - Crisis Response - Africa Force allocated to United States Africa Command (SPMAG-TF CR-AF), is another quick, initial response option when the threat to United States interests is significant enough to require a response but contained or urgent enough to prioritize speed over mass. This response force includes six MV-22B Ospreys and two KC-130 cargo planes. It's Aviation Combat Element, Ground Combat Element (A reinforced rifle company with enablers) and Logistics Combat Elements each have over 200 Marines and Sailors.

Noncombatant Evacuation Operations can occur at a time and place that a Marine Expeditionary Unit is not within supportable range to execute. Thus, general-purpose forces from other services are needed to conduct the evacuation operation, usually with very little notice or time for preparation. Large NEOs generally require forces from other services and supporting Combatant Commanders (CCDRs).⁵

Host Nation support capabilities also determine Courses of Action for the conduct of NEOs. The Geographic Combatant Command should consider the option of either responding early to a developing situation or rapidly expanding if the Operational Environment deteriorates in a flexible force option during a MAD/NEO. Three objectives the evacuation forces entering hostile territory need to consider are keeping their forces to a level small enough to provide self-defense, extracting and protecting evacuees, and accomplishing the normal functions required during noncombatant evacuations. These functions include communication, sustainment, intelligence, and Command and Control (C2). In order to minimize the footprint on the ground or to provide the capability to conduct operations in international waters, which are exempt from the required diplomatic clearances from the Host Nation or other countries, the GCC may initiate a sea base.⁶

Emergency Action Plan:

The EAP, which every U.S. Embassy and Consulate must maintain, covers the military evacuation of U.S. Citizens and designated foreign nationals. The Geographic Combatant Command reviews these plans to insure they are feasible, acceptable and suitable, and will provide adequate military support. The senior DoS representative at the time of the evacuation directs evacuation operations, unlike other military operations. The U.S. ambassador would be the lead for any evacuation process.⁷ If a country's government becomes unstable or civil war breaks out as a result of elections, coups or other factors, the DoS representative or the Ambassador may have to give an evacuation order. Instability could also result from highly restrictive restrictions placed on the local population by the Host Nation government to control the spread of COVID-19. In some circumstances, the DoS representative or the Ambassador may give politically driven evacuation orders with little notice.

MAD/NEO operations USARAF plans for:

United States Army Africa continues to plan and maintain situational awareness in all 53 countries in Africa so that they are prepared to respond if they are called upon to evacuate American Citizens or Third Country Nationals from any of these countries.

Logistics Planning For MAD/NEO:

USARAF conducted planning to support and provide C2 for the potential evacuation of American Citizens based on the concept of the operation, the concept of logistics and the Emergency Action Plan. USARAF planned the concept of logistics to support the movement of American Citizens from several cities in a Southern African country to Temporary Safe Havens either in other African countries or in the United States. Department of State and Department of Defense planned to fly the evacuees on commercial or Department of State chartered flights out of the Air Port of Embarkation. At each of the Initial Staging Bases, evacuation sites and Temporary Safe Havens, the evacuation operations require the ability to self-sustain for maintenance and recovery. In addition, they need to have a continuous CL I (subsistence) resupply to sustain the evacuees and U.S. Forces assisting in the MAD/NEO. USARAF established Acquisition Cross-Servicing Agreement (ACSA) agreements or contracts for Host

Nation barracks or hangars to provide shelter at the Initial Staging Bases, Assembly Areas or Temporary Safe Havens. United States Army Africa, United States Air Forces in Europe/Air Forces Africa, United States Army Europe, United States Naval Forces Europe, United States Embassies, Defense Logistics Agency, Army Materiel Command and United States Transportation Command worked together to coordinate all logistical considerations in preparation for a Noncombatant Evacuation Operation.

The response forces must provide Class (CL) I Meals-Ready-To-Eat (MRE) and bottled water for the evacuees in a MAD/NEO. USARAF logisticians acquire bottled water on a Blanket Purchase Agreement (BPA) in African countries for U.S. Forces and evacuees. At the evacuation sites and Evacuation Control Centers (ECC), they plan to support evacuees with 2-3 MREs per day and 4 liters (L) of bottled water per person. CL IIIB (bulk fuel) planning includes Defense Logistics Agency (DLA) fuel contracts, a Logistics Directorate (G4) tender to transport the fuel, fuel storage from the unit or ACSA and using United States Air Force (USAF) fuel cards at the airports. Response forces carry a combat load of CL V (ammunition) for force protection. CL VI (personal items) includes comfort packs at the safe havens. CL VII (major end items) planning includes the need for Force Provider Expeditionary (FPE) sets. These sets can support up to 1,000 people and are stored in Army Prepositioned Stock (APS) 7 located in Livorno, Italy.

Movement includes aircraft required to deploy U.S. Forces and to bring evacuees from the Assembly Areas to Temporary Safe Havens. The required number of aircraft with accompanying 463L pallets with cases of MREs depends on the number of response forces and the number of evacuees to be transported. This aircraft could be flown from Ramstein Air Base, Germany, or from any major military Air Port of Embarkation in Europe available to provide support. Moving these pallets of MREs to support the evacuation requires C-130 or C-17 flights to the Initial Staging Base and the Temporary Safe Haven. Finally, busses to transport evacuees from the barracks or hotels at the safe haven or evacuation sites to the aircraft are arranged through contracting or ACSA. A blanket purchase agreement for bottled water in various African countries is also required.

ACSA Agreements and contracts must be in place for a variety of support requirements. Logistics Civil Augmentation Program (LOGCAP) for Base Life Support and Logistics Civil Augmentation Program for Base Life Support activation for Cooperative Security Locations or contracted Base Life Support and ACSA for Host Nation base camp and contracted airlift are required.

Some of the sustainment forces that are required to complete these logistical tasks are an Army Field Support Brigade, a Movement Control Team, a Contract Support Brigade and the Theater Sustainment Command. Also, Brigade Support Battalion's Forward Support Companies are needed to provide necessary sustainment and logistical support during a MAD/NEO in Africa.

Land-locked countries “over-flight” challenges:

Although there are logistical challenges throughout Africa, coordination can be especially problematic when there is no United States presence in a land-locked country. The security situation on the ground may be uncertain at best, and conducting “over-flight” in these land-locked countries often requires a waiver, or diplomatic “dip” clearance. If no waiver/”dip” clearance can be obtained, alternate Courses Of Action must be developed to bring aircraft with Soldiers, Marines and Airmen into a country and to bring those same Soldiers, Marines and Airmen, along with American Citizens, out of a country and into TSHs located in other regions of the same country or in nearby countries.

Limited approved water sources:

Disease and death can result from consuming unclean water, so locating approved water sources during the planning for MAD/NEO is essential. Some of the countries where American Embassies are located have a limited number of approved water sources available for potable water. This creates a dilemma when planning for MAD/NEO operations in these countries. Planners must identify approved sources before conducting evacuation operations. Crisis

response forces transport water purification equipment, including Reverse Osmosis Water Purification Units, Tactical Water Purification Systems or Lightweight Water Purifiers, to purify water unless they have already purchased, contracted for, or obtained bottled water through ACSA. Several Water Treatment Specialists (92W) who operate this water purification equipment should also be included in the support element of the Army response forces providing support for the evacuation operations. A best practice is storing water in strategically staged water buffalos, water bulls, water storage bladders or storage tanks near key sites such as Assembly Areas, Initial Staging Bases and Temporary Safe Havens prior to evacuation operations. Airlifting and air-dropping bottled water are options, but it is preferable to be able to procure the water locally through contracting or ACSA in these countries where we need to evacuate American Citizens and Third Country Nationals. Third Person Logistics (3PL) is another option for acquiring water and bringing it to the evacuation sites, Assembly Areas, Initial Staging Bases and Temporary Safe Havens when conducting Noncombatant Evacuation Operations.

DLA fuel contract established:

Logisticians should establish Defense Logistics Agency fuel contracts for refueling aircraft involved in the operations prior to commencing Noncombatant Evacuation Operations. These contracts should be established in nearby countries or in the countries where the response forces transport noncombatants. The fuel contracts insure that transportation assets will be fueled properly and prevent any delays in noncombatant evacuation.

The USARAF G4 and the 414th Contract Support Brigade are responsible for insuring these Defense Logistics Agency fuel contracts are established and funded. Despite delays in establishing fuel contracts, United States Forces will arrive at the evacuation sites as planned, but establishing Defense Logistics Agency fuel contracts prior to MAD/NEO is always a best practice and facilitates the timely arrival of United States Forces on aircraft. Fuel contract delays cause the Department of Defense to expand the military footprint. The GCC and their components must solve these operational logistics challenges.

Programs to Reduce Gaps in Logistical Support:

ACSA - Acquisition Cross-Servicing Agreements with HN Life Support or Services:

ACSA with countries that we operate in or have American Citizens in enable us to provide logistical support or supplies either directly to or from a foreign government or organization such as North Atlantic Treaty Organization or the United Nations. Contingency operations such as a MAD/NEO, exercises, combat operations, or Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief all have the need for these transfers of support provided for in ACSAs. Plan for, approve and regularly update ACSAs prior to conducting any MAD/NEO.

Contingency Contracting-Up to 1.5 million dollar for contingency contracts:

The Army can spend up to 1.5 million dollars for contracts needed in any contingency environment such as natural disasters, military operations, and humanitarian or stability operations. The USARAF process for contract requirements include several steps and documentation. The USARAF timeline for contracts is 180 days; however, that timeline can be compressed to meet emergency operations. At present, there are no funding limits to contingency (emergency) contracts in support of NEO.

G4 Tender- companies like Tranlogistics Limited Liability Company (LLC) do 3PL: 3rd Person Logistics:

The USARAF G4 extends tenders to companies such as Tranlogistics llc or Agility. These companies perform Third Party Logistics (3PL). Third party logistics in logistics and supply chain management is an organization's use of third-party businesses to outsource elements of its distribution, warehousing, and fulfillment services. These companies manage transportation, supply, packaging, or distribution, or they can manage a combination of these logistics functions in the supply chain. During Noncombatant Evacuation Operations, these supply chain functions are critical. 3PL companies are exceptional logistics providers in very austere environments such as in peacekeeping operations locations in Africa. Well structured,

they have the flexibility needed to provide support during evacuation operations. 3PL companies have provided logistics and support services for both international organizations and relief groups in many African countries. They also provide the procurement, storage and delivery of food and bottled water for United States advisors training our African Partner Nations' Forces.

Conducting MAD/NEO in a COVID-19 Environment:

Conducting Noncombatant Evacuation Operations is complex enough on the African Continent. COVID-19 multiplied the complexity of the Operational Environment considerably. Although the Chief of Mission has overall responsibility and authority for a Noncombatant Evacuation Operation, as the Joint Forces Land Component Command (JFLCC) in Africa, USARAF has responsibility for conducting Noncombatant Evacuation Operations. They will deploy their Joint Task Force for MAD/NEO only in uncertain or hostile environments. United States Army Africa can scale its Joint Task Force from small to large, depending on the size and complexity of the evacuation operation. Finally, the Department of State must articulate its requirements to United States Africa Command, which requests support for a Noncombatant Evacuation Operation from United States Army Africa.

Lessons Learned/Best Practices

Involve Interagency Support:

USARAF coordinated with other federal agencies, like the Department of State. The DoS had the capability to operate in austere environments. The strong relationships we have developed with agencies like the Department of State allow us to leverage their capabilities to conduct missions as complex and resource intensive as an evacuation operation. Building and maintaining these interagency relationships is critical during a crisis. Furthermore, having transparency with the DoS was invaluable in United States Army Africa's successful planning for MAD/NEO. USARAF also coordinated with United States Special Operations Command, who have executed multiple operations in the most austere and unforgiving African countries.

Detailed Planning Reduces Risk:

Detailed planning reduces the risk in a complex environment. USARAF conducted thorough, deliberate planning, beginning with mission analysis that looked at every factor involved in MAD/NEO. They planned for every possible contingency and complication. Then they created mitigations to reduce the risk in every aspect and phase of Military Assisted Departure/Noncombatant Evacuation Operations that they planned and prepared for.

Multi-Component Planning and Training:

We need to look at MAD/NEO from a Joint and multi-component perspective. MAD/NEO operations involve multiple Services and elements that must work and train together to maintain proficiency. Failure for all four Services to maintain Joint readiness can have catastrophic consequences. The Services must work and train together so that they understand each other's language, equipment, communication and TTPs. Preparation and understanding the Operational Environment is essential.

Contingency Planning:

Plans are unlikely to survive first contact because the Operational Environment, the enemy and unforeseen factors have a vote. COVID-19 is a factor that involves huge medical risks. Plans must include the possible outcomes of what may happen and they must include a Course of Action with numerous branch plans to execute if the original plan is not working.

Response Forces:

Response forces are now at all the Combatant Commands. Every Combatant Command has a response force available. The deaths of four Americans, including Chris Stevens, the U.S. Ambassador to Libya, in Benghazi, Libya, on Sept. 11, 2012, highlighted the need for crisis response forces. The Department of Defense now postures crisis response forces needed to evacuate United States Embassies, but Benghazi certainly exposed the need for

U.S. Forces to assist in Noncombatant Evacuation Operations and to protect all American Citizens, Third Country Nationals and key personnel and interests.

Africa is an Austere Operational Environment:

Africa is unquestionably a more geographically, politically, socially and economically complex Operational Environment than other continents. Consider Africa's complexity and austerity when developing Courses of Actions for support and operations. We must understand the Operational Environment and the issues that it presents. We must also take an approach that can be adapted based on changing conditions.

Importance of Synchronization:

Synchronization is essential in MAD/NEO. It is imperative to set the conditions for requesting capabilities if a request for a Noncombatant Evacuation Operation occurs. Plan and conduct the synchronization of support requirements with the Host Nation and the other Services prior to conducting MAD/NEO.

Summary

With the onset of the global COVID-19 pandemic in early 2020, USARAF conducted extensive planning and preparation for conducting MAD/NEO on the Continent if required. Their planning and preparation involved planning with the Interagencies and other Services. Although they did not have to deploy a Joint Task Force to the African Continent to conduct Command and Control for a MAD/NEO, they were fully prepared to assist the evacuation of American Citizens and Third Country Nationals from any of the 53 countries on the Continent. If the Department of State calls on the military to assist in a Noncombatant Evacuation Operation, USARAF has conducted all the necessary planning and preparation to successfully execute this type of mission.

List of Key Terms

AA – Assembly Area
ACSA – Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement
AFAF – United States Air Forces in Africa
AFRICOM – United States Africa Command
AFSB – Army Field Support Brigade
AMC – Army Materiel Command
AMCITS – American Citizens
AO – Area of Operations
AOR – Area of Responsibility
APOD – Airport of Debarkation
APOE – Airport of Embarkation
APS – Army Prepositioned Stock
ARG – Amphibious Ready Group
BPA – Blanket Purchase Agreement
BSB – Brigade Support Battalion
C2 – Command and Control
CCDR – Combatant Commander
CL I – Class 1, Subsistence
CL III (B) – Class 3 Petroleum (Bulk)
CL V – Class 5, Ammunition
CL VI – Class 6, Personal Items
CL VII – Class 7, Major End Items
COA – Course of Action
COCOM – Combatant Command
CONUS – Continental United States
CSB – Combat Support Brigade; Also Contract Support Brigade
CSL – Cooperative Security Locations
DLA – Defense Logistics Agency
DoS – Department of State
DOS – Days of Supply

EAP – Emergency Action Plan
EARF – East Africa Response Force
ECC – Evacuation Control Center
FPE – Force Provider Expeditionary (FPE) sets
FSC – Forward Support Company
FSF – Foreign Security Forces
G2 – Intelligence Directorate
G4 – Logistics Directorate
GCC – Geographic Combatant Command
HADR – Humanitarian Assistance/Disaster Relief
HN – Host Nation
HOA – Horn of Africa
ISB – Initial Staging Base
ISOS – International SOS
JFLCC – Joint Forces Land Component Command
JTF – Joint Task Force
LNO – Liaison Officer
LOGCAP – Logistics Civilian Augmentation Program (LOGCAP)
LWP – Lightweight Water Purifier
LZ – Landing Zone
MAD/NEO – Military Assisted Departure/Non-Combatant Evacuation Operations
MCT – Movement Control Team
MEU – Marine Expeditionary Group
NATO – North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NAVEUR – United States Naval Forces Europe
NTS – Non-combatant Tracking System
OCONUS – Outside Continental United States
OE – Operational Environment
OPT - Operational Planning Team
PPE – Personal Protective Equipment
RFF – Request for Forces

RFS – Request for Support
RC – Reception Center
ROWPU – Reverse Osmosis Water Purification Unit
SOCAF – United States Special Operations Command – Africa
SOCOM – United States Special Operations Command
**SPMAGTF- CR – AF - Special Purpose Marine Air Ground Task Force – Crisis Response
- Africa**
SPOD – Seaport of Debarkation
3PL – Third Party Logistics
TCN – Third Country National
TRANSCOM – United States Transportation Command
TSC – Theater Sustainment Command; Also, Theater Security Cooperation
TSH – Temporary Safe Haven
TWPS – Tactical Water Purification System
UN – United Nations
US – United States
USAFE – United States Air Forces in Europe (USAFE)
USAID – United States Agency for International Development
USARAF – United States Army Africa
USAREUR – United States Army Europe
USEMBS – United States Embassies
USMC – United States Marine Corps
USN – United States Navy
92W – Water Treatment Specialist

End Notes

1. JFQ 85, 2nd Quarter 2017, "The Need for A Joint Support Element in NEOs," pp. 52-53, 55.
2. JP 3-68, "Noncombatant Evacuation Operations," (18 NOV 2015. Validated 14 November 2017.), pp. ix-x.
3. Ibid, p. ix.
4. Ibid, pp.I-5 to I-6.
5. Ibid, pp.I-5 to I-6.
6. Ibid, p. I-6.
7. Ibid, p. II-3.