

CHAPTER 6

SAFEHAVEN OPERATIONS

SAFEHAVEN SITE

The safehaven is a location designated by Department of State in an area or country to which evacuees may be moved quickly and easily. Ideally, the safehaven will be in the United States, with repatriation operations taking place at the safehaven. Unless the OSD designates otherwise, the United States is the ultimate safehaven for DOD combatants. Circumstances may exist, however, that require an intermediate safehaven. The evacuation force may lack adequate strategic transportation to move all evacuees from the HN to the United States at one time. The situation in the HN may prevent complete processing at the ECC. A need may exist for several evacuation sites, requiring the evacuating force and evacuees to consolidate at a central point outside the HN.

The Department of State may select the intermediate safehaven site or the JTF commander may request a specific location through the WLG. Often the ISB can serve as the safehaven. The Department of State coordinates with the safehaven government for use of facilities and temporary status of forces agreements. Other support required includes customs requirements, security, transportation, and billeting.

The safehaven force must be a separate organization from the evacuation force, under the control of the JTF commander. It should deploy no later than the evacuation force; however, logistics requirements to support a large number of evacuees may require that it deploy earlier.

The Department of State selects the intermediate safehaven site in coordination with the safehaven government. It is important that the JTF commander advise the State Department representative during

negotiations. Following are factors considered when selecting a site:

- OPSEC before and during the operation to ensure the mission's success and to prevent undue pressure against the safehaven government.
- Communications capability with the ECC, JTF headquarter, and local embassy.
- Airfield or port capacity suitable for the aircraft or ships being used, both for the evacuation and for later onward movement of the evacuees. Consideration should include runway length and condition, aircraft parking, availability of maintenance, and refueling support or channel depth and harbor and berthing space. The Defense Mapping Agency may be able to provide updated, classified information on potential ports of embarkation.
- Site near major transportation hubs.
- Adequate billeting, rations, and potable water for both the evacuees and the task force.
- Availability of emergency services such as fire fighting, crash and rescue, medical resources, and ambulance.
- Defensibility. Although the safehaven will operate under the auspices of a host government it may not have the goodwill of the local population. It maybe a prime target for terrorism and riots. The commander must plan for such situations and act to protect the evacuees and the JTF personnel at the safehaven.
- Structurally sound buildings,

ORGANIZATION AND FUNCTIONS

The safehaven force, organized similarly to the ECC's processing center team normally operates under the JTF commander. It comprises primarily combat service support units with limited security forces to provide necessary internal and perimeter security. Five typical safehaven elements are—

- . The command group.

- The reception team.
- The processing team.
- The comfort team.
- The scheduling team.

The *command group* normally comprises the commander, XO, sergeant major, signal officer, chaplain,

liaison officers, and interpreters. The commander is responsible for the operation of the safehaven. The XO, as his executive agent, commands the advance party (if used) and supervises the operation of the safehaven stations. The sergeant major advises the commander on all matters pertaining to enlisted soldiers, to include their interaction with evacuees. The chaplain ministers to the spiritual needs of the force and evacuees and helps soldiers and evacuees to deal with the stress and hardship created by the evacuation. The liaison officer and interpreters assist by maintaining contact with the embassy and host government. They articulate the needs of the force and advise the commander on the safehaven country's disposition toward the force and evacuees.

The *reception team* consists of a briefing section and a public affairs section. The briefing section briefs the evacuees on their arrival concerning the current situation in the host nation, the description and operation of the safehaven, further travel options and arrangements, customs requirements, and projected departure times.

The public affairs section provides information to the media if the embassy does not reserve this duty for itself. (See Appendix H.) It exercises the following control over media activity in the safehaven:

- Protects the privacy of evacuees.
- Restricts the media from billeting areas.
- Escorts media personnel in the safehaven area.
- Ensures interviewers of soldiers and evacuees have the permission of the commander and the individual concerned.

The *processing team* is organized into an administrative section, a legal section, a transportation section, an intelligence section, a medical section, and, if required by the safehaven government, a customs section. The administrative section registers and accounts for evacuees. It ensures all information required by the State Department or the JTF has been collected. It should not duplicate processing completed at the ECC, but should verify that all information is complete and correct. This is also an ideal place to check completion of the Repatriation Processing Center Processing Sheet, DD Form 2585, required for all evacuees. The legal section advises evacuees on claims procedures and assists in relations between evacuees, soldiers, and safehaven country nationals.

The transportation section arranges transport for DOD personnel and dependents to their final destination. If the evacuee is not authorized government

transportation, this section functions as a travel agent. If the evacuee is unable to pay for travel, the transportation section finance representative arranges for a travel allowance that the evacuee must repay. The section expedites departure of evacuees from the safehaven as much as possible.

The intelligence section conducts counterintelligence screening and debriefs the evacuees. It emphasizes the following PIR:

- Information on any evacuees not yet evacuated from the HN.
- Information useful in after-action reviews of the operation.
- Personal observations useful to historians or in developing the operation history.

The medical section examines evacuees and their medical records (when available) in enough detail to detect communicable diseases or other conditions requiring immediate medical attention. This screening may not be necessary if the medical team at the ECC has conducted a thorough screening. The section advises the commander on hygiene and preventive medicine and also inspects any food or water obtained from local sources. The section should be prepared to perform emergency surgery or to coordinate with local hospitals for this eventuality.

The *comfort team* provides logistics support for the safehaven operation. It is responsible for supplies, billeting, sanitation facilities, food, and local transportation of evacuees and the safehaven force. A contracting or purchasing officer should be assigned to assist in these responsibilities.

Billeting is ideally accomplished through facilities or hotels provided by or contracted from the safehaven country. However, the force may have to establish a tent city. This requires the safehaven force to arrive early enough to accomplish this before evacuees begin arriving and to contact locally for labor and sanitation facilities.

Meals ready to eat (MRE) are the ideal solution to food supply, but the section must be prepared to provide special diets. The medical section, the CA representative, and the chaplain can advise the logistics officer in this area. Medical personnel must inspect any food or water procured locally before consumption.

If the climate of the safehaven country differs substantially from the HN's, the comfort team may need to provide adequate clothing. It provides infant supplies

and feminine hygiene supplies. It also provides transportation to the force and evacuees for—

- Local purchase of necessary items that were not brought with the force.
- Travel to local hotels, if used.
- Travel to the point of embarkation, if different from the safehaven site. If organic transportation is inadequate, additional support may have to be contracted locally.

The *scheduling team* plans the departure of evacuees from the safehaven. It coordinates with the transportation section for arrangements already made and the comfort team for transportation to the points of embarkation. The team ensures transportation arrangements are adequate and conflicts are resolved. It transports evacuees to the points of embarkation and contracts for porters, if required. It also manifests authorized passengers on military flights.

DISPOSITION OF THE SAFEHAVEN FORCE

When the last evacuee has departed or been released from the safehaven, the commander requests permission from the JTF commander to close the site. On receiving permission, the force recovers all equipment and personnel, returns the site to its original condition, and coordinates release of the site, through the local mission, back to the safehaven government, if appropriate. Although the safehaven commander must still be concerned for the security and safety of his force, the situation in the safehaven country may not warrant a tactical withdrawal.

The final stage of a NEO is repatriation operations. DOD Directive 3025.14 designates the Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel, Army, as the DOD executive agent responsible for repatriation plans and operations in connection with the return of DOD noncombatant evacuees. As the executive agent, the Army directs

repatriation operations for DOD evacuees and coordinates with other federal, state, and local agencies in planning for repatriation operations in CONUS and Hawaii and for the onward movement of evacuees arriving in either location.

Under conditions of a nonemergency evacuation Commander, FORSCOM, and USCINCPAC are the safehaven commanders for DOD repatriation in their respective areas of responsibility. As such, Commander, FORSCOM, as delegated by CINC USACOM, has tasking authority over all services relative to repatriation operations in CONUS and US territories other than those in the Pacific theater. USCINCPAC is responsible for repatriation operations in Hawaii, Alaska, and US territories in the Pacific. For a more detailed discussion of repatriation operations, see the current *Joint Plan for DOD Noncombatant Repatriation*.

