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United States Department of State  
and the Broadcasting Board of Governors  
Office of Inspector General

# Report of Inspection

## Review of the Department of State Interagency Coordination and Public Communication Regarding U.S. Citizen Victims in the Earthquake-Destroyed Hotel Montana in Haiti

Report Number ISP-I-10-72, July 2010

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and the Broadcasting Board of Governors**

*Office of Inspector General*

PREFACE

This report was prepared by the Office of Inspector General (OIG) pursuant to the Inspector General Act of 1978, as amended, and Section 209 of the Foreign Service Act of 1980, as amended. It is one of a series of audit, inspection, investigative, and special reports prepared by OIG periodically as part of its responsibility to promote effective management, accountability and positive change in the Department of State and the Broadcasting Board of Governors.

This report is the result of an assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the office, post, or function under review. It is based on interviews with employees and officials of relevant agencies and institutions, direct observation, and a review of applicable documents.

The recommendations therein have been developed on the basis of the best knowledge available to the OIG and, as appropriate, have been discussed in draft with those responsible for implementation. It is my hope that these recommendations will result in more effective, efficient, and/or economical operations.

I express my appreciation to all of those who contributed to the preparation of this report.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "H. W. Geisel".

Harold W. Geisel  
Deputy Inspector General

## PURPOSE, SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY OF THE INSPECTION

This inspection was conducted in accordance with the Quality Standards for Inspections, as issued by the President's Council on Integrity and Efficiency, and the Inspector's Handbook, as issued by the Office of Inspector General for the U.S. Department of State (Department) and the Broadcasting Board of Governors (BBG).

### PURPOSE

The Office of Inspections provides the Secretary of State, the Chairman of the BBG, and Congress with systematic and independent evaluations of the operations of the Department and the BBG. Inspections cover three broad areas, consistent with Section 209 of the Foreign Service Act of 1980:

- **Policy Implementation:** whether policy goals and objectives are being effectively achieved; whether U.S. interests are being accurately and effectively represented; and whether all elements of an office or mission are being adequately coordinated.
- **Resource Management:** whether resources are being used and managed with maximum efficiency, effectiveness, and economy and whether financial transactions and accounts are properly conducted, maintained, and reported.
- **Management Controls:** whether the administration of activities and operations meets the requirements of applicable laws and regulations; whether internal management controls have been instituted to ensure quality of performance and reduce the likelihood of mismanagement; whether instances of fraud, waste, or abuse exist; and whether adequate steps for detection, correction, and prevention have been taken.

### METHODOLOGY

In conducting this inspection, the inspectors: reviewed pertinent records; as appropriate, circulated, reviewed, and compiled the results of survey instruments; conducted on-site interviews; and reviewed the substance of the report and its findings and recommendations with offices, individuals, organizations, and activities affected by this review.

## Acknowledgements

*The Department of State's Office of Inspector General would like to express its deepest sympathy to all those affected by the Haiti earthquake—victims, families, loved ones, and colleagues. We are grateful to all those who contributed to this review and hope it will have a positive impact on future events.*

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## CONTEXT

This special inspection was limited to aspects of the U.S. Government response to the Haiti disaster: the Department's interagency coordination, communication, and chain-of-command issues surrounding the recovery of U.S. citizen victims at the Hotel Montana site, as well as information dissemination to victims' families and congressional offices. It was conducted in response to a request from Senator Frank R. Lautenberg and Representative Rush Holt, both of New Jersey, and focused on the six Lynn University students and faculty members who died at the Hotel Montana. The team also met with Representative James P. McGovern, of Massachusetts. The Office of Inspector General (OIG) team's objectives were: 1) to evaluate whether the Department's interagency coordination was adequate to respond to the Haiti disaster and whether a clear chain-of-command existed; 2) to assess whether the Department's consular communication with victims' families was timely and comprehensible; and 3) to determine whether during massive and complex overseas disasters, the Department can improve its method of disseminating information.

To achieve these objectives, the OIG team tried to reconstruct the chain of events, both in Washington and in Haiti, from the time the earthquake struck on January 12 until February 14, 2010, when the remains of all the Lynn University casualties were repatriated to the United States. The inspectors reviewed documents such as consular logs and conference call notes, and held interviews with Department officials in Washington and in Haiti. The team also met with officials of other U.S. Government agencies including the U.S. Agency for International Development Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (USAID/OFDA), the Department of Homeland Security Federal Emergency Management Agency, the Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of Defense (DOD), and United States Southern Command (SOUTHCOM).



## BACKGROUND

At approximately 5 p.m. on Tuesday, January 12, 2010, a 7.1 magnitude earthquake struck Haiti with its epicenter approximately 20 miles west/southwest of Port au Prince. Haiti's capital sustained major damage. Due to the severity of the earthquake, coupled with Haiti's preexisting vulnerabilities and the close and longstanding ties between the United States and Haiti, this disaster required a U.S. Government response unprecedented in its complexity and scope. For the United States, it was an "all of government" response. According to the Government of Haiti, the earthquake caused \$7.8 billion in infrastructure damages and losses, destroying 105,000 homes and damaging 208,000. Thirteen of Haiti's 15 government ministries were destroyed, along with 1,300 educational institutions. Fifty hospitals and health centers were rendered unusable. According to UN data as provided by SOUTHCOM, the earthquake killed 220,000 people and injured 300,000. Among the dead were 122 American citizens, 17 of whom perished at the luxury Hotel Montana, which perched on a hillside above central Port au Prince until it was "pancaked" by the earthquake.

Significantly different from other crises and natural disasters, Haiti's earthquake rendered its already fragile government institutions ineffective at the beginning of the rescue phase of the response. Consequently the Government of Haiti did not carry out many inherently governmental responsibilities such as requesting and coordinating international assistance, including the search for survivors, and controlling Haitian airspace, but rather, turned these responsibilities over to the United States and to the United Nations.



## RESULTS OF INSPECTION

### U.S. GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO THE EARTHQUAKE IN HAITI AND LEADERSHIP DECISIONS FOR FUTURE EXTRAORDINARY EMERGENCIES

The Department's Operations Center (OpCtr) was aware that an earthquake had struck Haiti only minutes after it occurred. Within a half hour the OpCtr crisis management support staff (CMS) had alerted Department principals and activated a Task Force, (TF1). They also notified the CA crisis manager who returned to the Department and activated the consular Task Force 2, (TF2), to deal with American citizen problems and other purely consular issues outside the scope of TF1 that are better handled by specialists. In the meantime, Consular Affairs, Overseas Citizen Services, (CA/OCS) responded to the crisis from its offices with staff on hand until TF2 was activated. Department officers took these actions following clear standard operating procedures (SOP) and precedents. Within the hour, Department senior officials held a conference call to begin the disaster response.

As events transpired over the next several hours, embassy officials on the ground and officials in the United States came to realize that the magnitude of the quake and its impact on Haiti's capital city and its government were tremendous. Counselor and Chief of Staff Cheryl Mills took the lead in the U.S. Government response. By chance, SOUTHCOM Deputy Commander LTG P.K. Keen was in Haiti and with United States Ambassador to Haiti Kenneth Merten at his residence. Keen was able to communicate with SOUTHCOM. USAID/OFDA/Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) Senior Regional Advisor Tim Callaghan was in Costa Rica at the time and also learned of the earthquake and communicated with his headquarters.

In Haiti, Ambassador Merten and his team requested relief assistance and, with instructions from the Department, began to take a series of extraordinary steps to begin the relief effort. These included, perhaps most significantly, seeking and obtaining from the Haitian prime minister the authority to take over control of Haiti's damaged international airport as well as Haitian airspace around Port au Prince.

President Obama designated USAID and its Administrator, Rajiv Shah, as the lead to provide disaster assistance, but all emphasized that this was a “whole of government” effort. USAID activated its disaster assistance response team (DART) under the leadership of Tim Callaghan, and with Department and DOD assistance, began planning to get the team, consular officers, urban search and rescue teams (USAR), security forces, and many tons of relief supplies into Haiti as soon as possible. To accomplish this, the U.S. Government was compelled to take a number of unusual, if not unprecedented, actions including deployment of Health and Human Services resources abroad and the use of military resources in support of civilian relief efforts including evacuation of thousands of persons to the United States.

Joint Task Force Haiti (JTF-H) and SOUTHCOM sent resources to the Hotel Montana site immediately because two SOUTHCOM personnel were rescued from the site and one officer was missing. SOUTHCOM was committed to recovering his remains and continued at the site after his body was recovered until all the remains were secured. The U.S. military does not usually engage in recovery operations in civilian disaster situations.

Under Secretary for Management Patrick F. Kennedy quickly assumed responsibility for coordinating the relief effort, committing Department funds under his control to direct other federal agencies to begin relief operations before the U.S. Government had confirmed clear authorities to do so. As a result, the relief effort moved forward at great speed and largely absent bureaucratic delays. A January 28 White House memorandum validated Under Secretary Kennedy’s executive decisions. His leadership had been critical to this successful operation. Although in most overseas crises the lines of authority for disaster response are clear based on geography or the nature of the disaster, the complexity and magnitude of the Haiti earthquake had required coordination at a higher level. The OIG team could not discern whether leadership devolved to Kennedy because of his position—as Under Secretary he controlled not only the funds but also multiple bureaus involved in the operation—or because of his personal strengths. Although successful this time, a risk exists if there is no Department process to determine and communicate, including to Members of Congress and the general public, who will serve as the senior Department official with responsibility for crisis response.

To address this risk in the event of future extraordinary emergencies, the Executive Secretariat advised the OIG team that direction of the task force and responsibility for crisis response will always devolve to a senior Department official, either the Under Secretary for Political Affairs or the Under Secretary for Management. When the Secretary of State makes the determination via the Executive Secretary that either Under Secretary will take the lead role due to the extraordinary complex-

ity of a crisis, the Department will inform other agencies via memorandum to their Executive Secretaries to ensure the whole of government is aware of this decision and of the Department's internal organizational structure. The Department also will inform Members of Congress and the general public regarding which senior Department official will be in charge. Finally, the Executive Secretariat will take the opportunity to reiterate Chief of Mission authority over field operations in the crisis-affected area.



## CONSULAR RESPONSE

CA activated TF2 within 45 minutes of notification of the earthquake. In the interim, it responded to the crisis with staff on hand and its duty officer from its SA-29 offices, transitioning to TF2 as it was brought up. The on-call, trained task force personnel, drawn largely from CA/OCS, immediately manned the telephone bank and began logging calls from persons inquiring about individuals in Haiti. Nearly 400,000 calls and attempts were made to the OCS call center in the first 4 days, and TF2 eventually logged 22,675 cases. The data bank flags congressional interest in particular cases. Consular personnel in Haiti established a consular control center at the embassy and received inquiries about missing Americans. The DART coordinated U.S. USAR teams and the UN On Site Operations and Coordination Center (OS-OCC) coordinated all international USAR teams. The embassy identified the Hotel Montana as a site with a potentially large number of American casualties including U.S. Government civilian and military personnel and private citizens.

Embassy Port au Prince's consular section was initially overwhelmed. Locally employed staff and their families were victims of the earthquake as were the American officers. Communications in Haiti broke down, and the sheer volume of inquiries, bandwidth problems, and lack of training on the system rendered the consular crisis management software, called Crisis Task Force (CTF), ineffective at the embassy. The embassy was besieged by thousands of Haitians and American citizens seeking assistance. In the first two weeks of the crisis, the consular staff in Haiti was totally focused on evacuations, assistance to survivors, and issues surrounding children eligible for adoption. The DART was responsible for directing search and rescue operations including searching more than 20 sites where Americans were possibly trapped. The regional security officer, with his staff augmented by temporary personnel from Washington, directed efforts to locate American citizens reported missing either to the embassy or taskforces. Eventually they located over 200 Americans reported missing, either alive or as confirmed fatalities. No reported cases were left unresolved. CA and TF2 took responsibility for all communication with families in the United States and with Congress to relieve the embassy of this responsibility.

Between January 12 and January 14, TF2 received separate calls from family members of the four students and two faculty members who would eventually be associated in the consular database with the Lynn University (Lynn) group at the Hotel

Montana. Lynn officials also contacted the task force. Initially, officials of Lynn wanted to be the point of contact for all the Lynn families. The insurance company for Lynn hired a global security firm to search for the students. On January 14, this firm erroneously notified the university and families that three of the students had been rescued. Some of the families reported this news to TF2, and this was recorded in the CTF software, effectively closing these cases temporarily. However, this did not have any impact on search and rescue operations at the site.

TF2 received over 500,000 calls during the crisis and rapidly expanded to meet this challenge, adding additional task forces and utilizing the Michigan passport call center and the consular sections in Santo Domingo and Mexico City to cope with the incoming calls and emails. CA uses software designed specifically for task force work. While an improvement over previous crisis management software, it proved inadequate to deal with the volume of entries and number of cases in Haiti. CA has another, separate, system for online registration. This Internet Based Registration System (IBRS) is used to register citizens in country, but also for other services including disseminating travel warnings. It does not determine the citizenship of those who use it. The Passport Office uses a third CA software platform to confirm the nationality of American citizens. CA cannot import the information from IBRS into CTF software to easily identify American citizens in a crisis location like Port au Prince. Although the CTF software can flag entries for special action, the software does not send a specific notification to the users at the embassy. Instead, users at the embassy must run reports to identify special action cases. Additionally, though CTF software does allow users to easily associate cases such as the students at the Hotel Montana, this feature is unique to CTF software and is not readily apparent to those who are not trained in its use. The IBRS system does allow travelers to register as a group, but this, like all citizen registration, is voluntary. Lynn did not register as a group and only five of the Lynn delegation registered independently.

CA/OCS did not immediately identify the Lynn students and faculty as a group, in part due to the confusion caused when the families received the inaccurate information that their children were safe. Nevertheless, the group was identified as such in a short time. CA transferred all the Lynn cases from TF2 to an OCS caseworker on January 18. Calls from Senator Kerry and other members of Congress and conversations with family members and Lynn representatives led CA/OCS to decide to treat them as a group and initiate regular conference calls beginning on January 19. The conference calls included CA staff, American officials in Haiti including at the Hotel Montana site, family members, and congressional staff members. They provided the families with the latest information on rescue efforts and, after the beginning of the recovery phase, the progress in searching the site. Various officials joined the calls and some of the information was confusing or frustrating to the families and seemed, although accurate, unnecessarily bureaucratic.

CA/OCS believes the Lynn delegation should have been identified and treated as a group earlier. CA has made conference calls of this type a standard operating procedure after they proved useful in other cases involving multiple families or members of a single family, for example in hostage-taking or arrest cases. While the scope of the current crisis was a major contributor to problems in communication with the Lynn families, delaying the recognition of the group connection in the mass of incoming information and volume of inquiries, software deficiencies were also a major cause.

**Recommendation 1:** The Bureau of Consular Affairs should develop and implement an interface between its consular software systems in order to check Internet Based Registration System entries against the Passport Information Electric Records System and expand data entry capabilities for the Consular Taskforce System. (Action: CA)

## COMMUNICATION WITH CONGRESS AND THE MEDIA

Hours after the earthquake on January 12, Department Spokesman Philip J. Crowley and Acting Deputy Spokesman Gordon Duguid of the Bureau of Public Affairs (PA) held their first press conference to relay what information they had about the magnitude of the quake and the damage it had done, and noted that USAID/OFDA had already alerted USARs and would be activating the DART. On January 13, Mr. Crowley held the second briefing on the situation in Haiti, announcing that the U.S. Government was launching a “whole of government” effort to respond to the disaster, and introducing Department Counselor Cheryl Mills, USAID Administrator Rajiv Shah, and Commander of SOUTHCOM General Douglas Fraser. The spokesman’s daily press briefings continued to focus on Haiti, and PA also initiated conference calls with media outlets and orchestrated countless interviews and briefings both domestically and abroad to spread the U.S. Government message with respect to Haiti relief efforts. The Department’s public affairs apparatus also worked assiduously to monitor the international media, and was very successful in developing public affairs campaigns to set the record straight when confronted with media stories that were inaccurate or misleading.

In addition to PA, both CA/Office of Policy Coordination and Public Affairs (CA/P) and the Public Affairs Unit of the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs (WHA/P) were consumed with Haiti. CA/P prepared most of the press guidance on consular issues associated with the Haiti disaster. These included not only the search for American victims at the Hotel Montana but also adoptions, evacuations,

and casualties. Although the Department's public announcements were consistent, information was more inconsistent and less controlled when Department officials responded to the many additional, private calls from members of Congress and victims' families. During the earthquake relief period, CA/P fielded the equivalent of a week's worth of telephone calls—between 100 and 250—every day. The crush of information requests was unprecedented, and the Department's press and public affairs response was, of necessity, reactive rather than proactive. Accordingly, after the relief effort concluded, CA/P created an SOP on crisis communication to guide its response in future massive overseas crises. Also, PA is revising its Survival Guide for Public Affairs Officers, adding a crisis section that will include crisis management, establishing and running task forces, and establishing and running working groups. The OIG inspectors thought this was a positive step and recommend its expansion to encompass a full press and public affairs crisis communication strategy.

The Bureau of Legislative Affairs (H) was a conduit for information to congressional offices and served on TF1 from the first shift, but the volume of work was a problem. There is only one WHA congressional advisor in H, and that officer was deluged with calls. Nevertheless, she received high marks from congressional offices for her responsiveness to their inquiries. To help her manage the volume, others in H assisted their colleague and also passed congressional inquiries to CA and to TF2. The congressional advisor began to email updates to a core group of congressional staffers interested in Haiti. Eventually, her addressee list for these updates would number over 1,300. Department Congressional Liaison Offices in the House and Senate used their publication, "State Department on the Hill" to circulate Haiti information to their distribution list of interested congressional offices. The Liaison Offices also made a quick reference guide on Haiti that they distributed daily via their email distribution list. On January 15, H Assistant Secretary Richard R. Verma held his first telephone briefing on the Haiti disaster for members of Congress and their staffs. CA participated in these calls and responded to congressional queries on the full range of consular issues. Assistant Secretary Verma also held in-person briefings for both the House and Senate. Also for H, the volume of congressional interest in the Haiti disaster was unprecedented and prompted the bureau to develop a plan for future huge overseas crises, which emphasizes active H participation in TF1. Legislative management officers were active task force participants during the unprecedented Haiti crisis. To prepare for future disasters, the H crisis plan foresees all legislative management officers undergoing task force training from the OpCtr Crisis Management Support staff, and serving on future task forces.

In Haiti, the Embassy Port au Prince public affairs section was shattered. The cultural affairs officer had been killed in the earthquake, and the information officer was evacuated. To help the embassy with the crush of inquiries from the interna-

tional press, PA sent acting P/DAS Gordon Duguid, as well as public affairs officers from the embassy in Santo Domingo and the Miami press hub. The embassy made it a priority for the Ambassador to be available and accessible to the press. He did countless interviews and frequently answered questions about the Hotel Montana.

Other agencies and departments, such as DOD and USAID, also had press and communications officers on the ground in Haiti, as is their practice in the event of an overseas disaster. At the site of the Hotel Montana ruins, USAID/DART press officer Rebecca A. Gustafson fielded inquiries from the press and also from private citizens, some of whom were relaying information back to the families of the Lynn group. It is part of DART SOP to include press officers as members of the DART team. Experienced in “crisis communication,” their roles vary from country to country, depending on the preference of the ambassador and often augmenting the embassy’s own press and public affairs section.

The White House sent a senior Department of Homeland Security officer to Haiti to set up an interagency joint information center (JIC) to disseminate “coordinated and synchronized, timely and responsive” information following the earthquake. At its peak, the JIC numbered 25-30 public affairs officials, from various agencies including the Department, DOD, USAID, Homeland Security, and Health and Human Services. JIC officials worked and stayed at the crowded embassy compound, and also had a forward element located at Haiti’s international airport to better communicate with members of the international media who were based there. The JIC fielded thousands of media queries and conducted one-on-one interviews with the media, both international and from the United States. They also prepared guidance for interagency use. This was the first disaster where a JIC was deployed overseas. PA is proud of the hard work performed by the JIC and advised the OIG team that JICs are the only way to respond to disasters of the Haiti magnitude. Since Haiti was the first disaster where a JIC was deployed overseas, the OIG inspectors recommended that PA incorporate lessons learned from this first JIC deployment into its forthcoming crisis response strategy.

The “whole of government” response to the Haiti crisis extended to press and public affairs. Due to the huge volume of inquiries that this massive and unique disaster generated, the Department and interagency public affairs apparatus did a very good job of disseminating a massive amount of information in the days following the disaster. PA has described its performance as proactive, well-coordinated, effective, and strategic. The OIG inspectors are sympathetic with this assessment, and recommend that PA incorporate the breadth of its response techniques during the Haiti disaster into its crisis communication strategy. (The recommendation appears at the end of the following section.)

## COMMUNICATION WITH FAMILIES OF U.S. CITIZEN VICTIMS FROM THE HOTEL MONTANA

Although the Montana victims' families and congressional staffers praised CA's American Citizen Services (ACS) personnel for their compassionate and direct contact, victims' families were still frustrated by the lack of information about their missing loved ones. In the days following the earthquake, the Hotel Montana families made the rounds of broadcast morning news shows and were quoted extensively in the press, pleading with the U.S. Government to "send more searchers, send the (U.S.) military" to Haiti to find their children. Already the press was very interested in efforts to rescue or recover victims at the Hotel Montana, which had the greatest concentration of Americans in the earthquake zone. The families' compelling stories became the focus of a number of popular journalists and media outlets. Congressional staffers said that family members believed their complaints to the media and to their congressional representatives prompted CA to initiate its consular conference calls with them. PA advised the OIG team that it also was monitoring the media storm surrounding the families of U.S. citizen victims at the Hotel Montana in the days immediately following the earthquake and that it was a "corporate" decision involving the Department and the interagency that the delicacy of the issue argued against a PA campaign to set the record straight by explaining more fully the situation at the Hotel Montana site.

In their grief, the Montana victims' families had no patience for bureaucratic explanations of the mechanics of the rescue and recovery operation, and (perhaps consequently) did not understand it. Nor did they understand the difference between conducting such an operation in a foreign country as opposed to the United States. Additionally, the families were receiving information, not always accurate, from many different sources, including unofficially from the site. This increased their confusion and their frustration and anger with the U.S. Government. Exacerbating the situation was the families' understandably distraught frame of mind, not wanting to believe that their children had probably perished.

As previously noted, family members believed their media appearances and congressional attention were instrumental in prompting additional actions from CA, illustrating the critical link between press and public affairs and the operational offices charged with managing the crisis. In the case of the Hotel Montana, also as previously noted, PA advised that it was a conscious U.S. Government decision not to address the media storm in the days immediately following the earthquake. PA has not documented a lessons learned exercise of its work on the Haiti disaster. Given

the critical role that public affairs played during this massive international crisis, this type of exercise to identify what worked and areas that would need to be improved could be beneficial for future events. Issues to consider documenting include: how PA will interface with operational offices managing the crisis and with press and public affairs entities at other departments and agencies and interagency institutions such as the Joint Information Center; how PA will contribute to the work of Task Force 1 and other task forces, as appropriate; and how, during a crisis, PA can play an active role in monitoring both the international and domestic media to identify “hot button” problems or issues and to bring such information to the attention of the appropriate task force or action office.

**Recommendation 2:** The Bureau of Public Affairs, in coordination with the Bureau of Consular Affairs and the Bureau of Legislative Affairs, should work with the regional and functional bureaus’ press and public affairs offices and the public affairs office of other involved agencies throughout the Administration, to document its lessons learned from the Haiti disaster in the public diplomacy crisis response strategy that it is incorporating into its revised Survival Guide for Public Affairs Officers. (Action: PA, in coordination with CA and H)



## LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS

**Recommendation 1:** The Bureau of Consular Affairs should develop and implement an interface between its consular software systems in order to check Internet Based Registration System entries against the Passport Information Electric Records System and expand data entry capabilities for the Consular Taskforce System. (Action: CA)

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## APPENDIX

### TIMELINE: RESCUE AND RECOVERY AT THE HOTEL MONTANA

#### **Tuesday, January 12**

A 7.1 magnitude earthquake strikes Haiti at approximately 5 p.m. Telephone and Internet communications are inoperable. Department intranet and cell phones from outside Haiti remain operable. The airport is damaged and shut down. Rubble blocks the streets in and around Port au Prince, making transportation difficult or impossible. Ambassador Ken Merten is at his residence with visiting SOUTHCOM Deputy Commander LTG P.K. Keen. Deputy chief of mission David Lindwall manages to return to the embassy, where he makes contact with the Department OpCtr. By 5:45 p.m., the OpCtr stands up TF1 and CA stands up TF2.

In Costa Rica, USAID/OFDA/LAC Senior Regional Advisor Tim Callaghan learns of the earthquake via CNN news reports and contacts USAID in Washington and the Haiti-based USAID/OFDA/LAC disaster relief coordinator via Intranet. USAID has the mandate to coordinate U.S. Government disaster response. Its Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) director mobilizes USAID's DART, which is in charge of all U.S. USAR teams. The Director asks Callaghan to be DART team leader. Callaghan and three colleagues attempt, unsuccessfully, to reach Haiti the night of the earthquake. During the initial aftermath of the disaster, local telephones, radio and Internet communications are inoperable. Intranet and U.S. Government-issued PDAs still function as do embassy-issued radios.

The TF2 log shows the first entry for Lynn University student Britney Gengel.

#### **Wednesday, January 13**

In Washington, President Obama designates USAID Administrator Rajiv Shah the overall coordinator for Haiti relief efforts.

In Miami, SOUTHCOM Commanding General Douglas Fraser designates his deputy, LTG Keen (already in Port au Prince on a familiarization trip), to remain in

Haiti and lead humanitarian assistance and disaster relief military operations as commander of DOD's JTF-H.

In Port au Prince, the embassy secures the Government of Haiti approval to reopen the airport for noncommercial flights under DOD control. DART-mobilized USAR teams begin to arrive, including the Fairfax County USAR "heavy" team (72 people; 6 search dogs; approximately 50,000 pounds of equipment). Regional Advisor Callaghan and his DART team arrive at midnight. The Fairfax USAR and a USAR from Iceland divide the city and do a windshield survey around Port au Prince to assess the situation. Fairfax takes as part of its assigned territory "hotel row" including the Hotel Montana. The Fairfax team is familiar with Port au Prince and the embassy staff, particularly the regional security officer, because it was deployed to Haiti during the last hurricane. The team begins work even before the United Nations is able to establish the OSOCC.

In Washington, the Department and other agencies begin mobilizing additional personnel and dispatching them to Haiti. These include teams and volunteers from the Department, USAID, Homeland Security, Health and Human Services, and SOUTHCOM staff. The USS Vinson, USS Bataan, USNC Comfort, 22nd MEU, and the 2nd BCT of the 82nd Airborne deploy to Haiti and the surrounding waters.

The TF2 log shows the first entries for Lynn students and faculty members Stephanie Crispinelli, Courtney Hayes, Richard Bruno, and Patrick Hartwick.

#### **Thursday, January 14**

Fairfax USAR gains access to the Hotel Montana site, begins around-the-clock search for survivors. The Fairfax USAR continues to search the Montana for the duration of the rescue phase. USAR teams from other countries are working at the site as well. The United Nations coordinates all USAR teams through its OSOCC, which is established at the airport in Port au Prince. OSOCC records 62 USAR teams working in Haiti, ultimately including six from the United States. In all, the USAR teams accomplish 142 live rescues, 37 by American teams. DART team member Dewey Perks meets with OSOCC several times per day. "Heavy" teams such as the Fairfax USAR go to sites where large groups of people are reported trapped. UN forces, and later U.S. military, keep the Hotel Montana site secure.

USAR teams from around the world continue to arrive in Haiti, including the Fairfax "medium" USAR (43 people, 2 search dogs), Los Angeles "heavy," and Miami-Dade "heavy" from the United States. Ambassador Merten, Deputy Chief of Mission Lindwall, and DART team leader Callaghan, among others, begin daily meetings at 8:00 a.m. with Haitian officials including the Prime Minister outside their

ruined government offices. Callaghan begins daily morning briefings at the embassy for the DART. The search and rescue focal point, Dewey Perks, briefs the U.S. USAR teams. Callaghan briefs Ambassador Merten, LTG Keen, and Ambassador Lewis Lucke, whom USAID Administrator Shah designates to be his Haiti-based relief coordinator for civilian operations (Lucke arrives on the 16th).

In Washington, Lynn University contacts TF2 looking for news of students missing at the Hotel Montana. TF2 log shows the first entry for Lynn student Christine Gianacaci reported as missing. TF2 log entry also shows contact with congressional office of Representative Holt.

A team hired by Lynn University's insurance company mistakenly reports to the families of Stephanie Crispinelli, Courtney Hayes, and Britney Gengel that the girls have been found alive and are returning to the United States.

There are live rescues from the Hotel Montana on the evening of the 14th.

### **Friday, January 15**

Live rescues at the Hotel Montana occur on the morning of the 15th, the last recorded at this site. USAR teams continue to search for survivors.

### **Saturday, January 16**

Secretary of State Clinton visits Haiti. Her plane brings relief supplies and carries evacuees on the return flight. USAR teams continue to search for survivors.

Ambassador Lewis Lucke arrives in Haiti, begins to establish the USAID Office of Relief Coordination, at the embassy, with a focus on Haiti reconstruction. With his arrival, Ambassador Lucke joins JTF-H Commander LTG Keen and U.S. Ambassador to Haiti Kenneth Merten as the third member of the Haiti-based U.S. Government leadership troika. Ambassador Merten is in charge overall.

### **Monday, January 18**

In Washington, ACS Director Michelle Bernier-Toth speaks to John Gianacaci, father of Christine. ACS transfers responsibility for the six Lynn University cases out of TF2 to ACS consular officer Suzanne Grantham, who speaks separately to Mr. Gianacaci, and also to representatives from Lynn University. USAR teams continue to search for survivors.

**Tuesday, January 19**

SOUTHCOM command engineer Col. Norberto Cintron arrives to take command at the Hotel Montana site. ACS Director Bernier-Toth chairs the first consular conference call for the Montana families. To answer the families' questions about progress at the site, Haiti-based DART team leader Callaghan and Col. Cintron participate in this call, and in most subsequent calls. Suzanne Grantham circulates daily email updates to the families and congressional staffers. ACS holds subsequent conference calls on January 22, 23, 25, and 26. USAR teams continue to search for survivors.

**Wednesday, January 20**

The Department requests Department of Health and Human Services assistance in handling U.S. citizen remains in Haiti. Specifically, the Department requests the establishment of a Health and Human Services mortuary and temporary storage facility in Port au Prince, a family assistance center in Florida to assist with the identification of remains, and a disaster mortuary operational response team in Port au Prince to handle the remains of up to 50 American citizen victims. Concurrently, the Department requests DOD assistance in transporting American citizen remains to the United States. USAR teams continue to search for survivors.

**Friday, January 22**

Senator Frank Lautenberg writes to Secretary Clinton asking that she work with the Haitian government to ensure the search and rescue operations continue at the Hotel Montana until Tuesday, January 26, a full 14 days after the earthquake. In Haiti, USAR teams continue to search for survivors.

**Saturday, January 23**

Representative James P. McGovern arrives in Haiti to visit the Hotel Montana site with some of the Montana families (Gengel, Hartwick, and Hayes). U.S. embassies in Santo Domingo and Port au Prince facilitate the visit, providing overland transport and logistical support. Ambassador Merten and other embassy staff accompany Representative McGovern and the family members to the Hotel Montana. At the site, they speak with USAR team members from Fairfax, as well as DART Team Leader Callaghan and Col. Cintron, among others. Those present describe the visit as "transformational" for the families, who could finally understand the magnitude of the devastation and the unlikelihood of survival. Still, USAR teams continue to search for survivors.

**Tuesday, January 26**

Fourteen days since the earthquake: Haitian media announce the search for survivors has ended, but then rescinds the announcement when another person is found alive. The embassy cannot verify whether the Government of Haiti ever officially concluded the rescue phase.

**Wednesday, January 27**

The rescue phase concluded, the USAR teams depart Haiti, leaving behind a 12-person rapid response force to respond during aftershocks or if aid workers become trapped and need assistance. The force remains in Haiti until February 7. DART and USAR are not involved in recovery operations.

Senator Lautenberg writes another letter to Secretary Clinton, appreciative that the Hotel Montana search and rescue continued for the full 14 days and now requesting the Secretary to immediately share with the Montana families, along with their Congressional representatives, the name and contact information for the highest Administration official in charge of coordinating these (recovery) efforts. Senator Lautenberg also urges the Secretary "...to work to ensure that a process for repatriation of any remains located at the Hotel Montana is fully implemented and the families are kept informed and updated on any developments in this process." Under Secretary Kennedy participates in the ACS-organized consular conference call, assuring the Montana families that he is in charge. ACS holds subsequent conference calls January 29, February 1, 5, 8, 12, 15, 19, and 22. ACS cancels the conference call scheduled for February 26 at the request of the last participating Montana family.

**Sunday, February 7**

The body of LTC Bourland is identified.

**Wednesday, February 10**

The body of Lynn student Courtney Hayes is identified.

**Thursday, February 11**

The body of Lynn student Christine Gianacaci is identified.

**Friday, February 12**

The bodies of Lynn professor Patrick Hartwick and student Stephanie Crispinelli are identified.

**Saturday, February 13**

The bodies of Lynn student Britney Gengel and Professor Dr. Richard Bruno are identified.

**Sunday, February 14**

The remains of the entire Lynn University group are repatriated to the United States via Dover Air Force Base.

**Wednesday, March 10**

Last American citizen remains recovered at Hotel Montana site. (A total of 17 American citizens died at this site)

**Tuesday, March 16**

U.S. operations cease at the Hotel Montana site and Col. Cintron departs Haiti.

## ABBREVIATIONS

ACS	American Citizen Services
CA	Bureau of Consular Affairs
CA/OCS	Consular Affairs/Overseas Citizen Services
CA/P	Consular Affairs/Policy Coordination and Public Affairs
CTF	Crisis Task Force
DART	Disaster assistance response team
DOD	Department of Defense
H	Bureau of Legislative Affairs
IBRS	Internet Based Registration System (software system)
JIC	Joint Information Center
JTF-H	Joint Task Force-Haiti
OIG	Office of the Inspector General
OFDA/LAC	Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance/Latin America and Caribbean (USAID)
OpCtr	U.S. State Department Operations Center
OSOCC	United Nations On Site Operations and Coordination Center
PA	Bureau of Public Affairs
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
SOUTHCOM	U.S. Southern Command
TF1	Task Force 1
TF2	Task Force 2 (Consular)
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development
USAR	Urban Search and Rescue team
WHA	Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs



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