

An Interview with

Assistant Secretary of Defense for Homeland Defense



Paul McHale

JFQ: *One of the first items we were hoping you could illuminate is the difference, both in terms of terminology and philosophy, between homeland defense and homeland security.*

ASD(HD) McHale: The difference is essentially a distinction between warfighting and law enforcement. In sum, the difference is captured by the distinct authorities and the types of forces that execute the missions pursuant to those authorities. The President of the United States, under Article 2 of the Constitution, is the Commander in Chief. His authority as Commander in Chief is delegated in part to the Secretary of Defense. Under the Goldwater-Nichols Act, the combatant commanders respond to the chain of command and specifically to the direction of the Secretary of Defense. So by relying upon that military chain of command, we

ultimately deploy military forces to achieve warfighting missions, including the missions within the NORTHCOM [U.S. Northern Command] and PACOM [U.S. Pacific Command] AORs [areas of responsibility].

By contrast, homeland security captures the broad set of statutory authorities that assign to various law enforcement agencies the requirement to defend the citizens of the United States against unlawful activities, including and most especially the activities of transnational terrorists. Those authorities are derived from congressional action, they are subject to the control of the President of the United States through the execution of his executive responsibilities, but they are distinct from the warfighting activities that take place under his authority as Commander in Chief. When you look at those two areas of responsibility, it's clear that among the Cabinet officers, only the

Secretary of Defense has the responsibility for warfighting. The primary Cabinet officer assigned the bulk of those homeland security missions is the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). Working in conjunction with one another, exercising distinct but related authorities, the Secretary of Defense conducts warfighting to protect the American people, and the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security exercises law enforcement responsibilities to achieve the same result.

We recently published the *Strategy for Homeland Defense and Civil Support*, and in capturing the distinction that I just described, we specifically define *homeland defense* as the protection of U.S. sovereignty, territory, domestic population, and critical defense infrastructure against external threats and aggression or other threats as directed by the President, and that direction is pursuant to his authority as Commander in Chief. We define *homeland security* as a concerted national effort to prevent terrorist attacks within the United States, reduce America's vulnerability to terrorism, and minimize the damage and recover from attacks that do occur. Although those

On October 6, 2005, Col Merrick E. Krause, USAF, and Dr. Jeffrey D. Smotherman of Joint Force Quarterly interviewed the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Homeland Defense, the Honorable Paul McHale, at the Pentagon.

definitions are helpful, at the end of the day, Secretary [Donald] Rumsfeld is the warfighter, and Secretary [Michael] Chertoff is one of our nation's senior law enforcement officials, and, in combination, these two cabinet officers use their authorities to achieve the common purpose of protecting the American people.

JFQ: *How does the Department of Defense (DOD)—in conjunction or separately, depending upon the two missions you describe—inform, educate, and relate to the domestic public, first responders, and all the other agencies and military personnel who are required in the different roles and missions?*

ASD(HD) McHale: Most of our contact with the first responder community is conducted through and coordinated with the Department of Homeland Security. Under the provisions of the Homeland Security Act of 2002, as well as the related provisions of Homeland Security Presidential Directive Number 5, the lead agency for preventing attacks within the United States is the Department of Homeland Security. Homeland

Security has the assigned duty to work in close coordination with the various elements of state and local government, to include first responders, and so Defense achieves its coordination under the interagency lead of DHS. The relationship between Defense and Homeland Security is very close; it reflects a 3-year effort predating the creation of DHS to ensure that our two departments would be working effectively to achieve common goals. On a practical level, what that means is for over 2 years, 65 employees from our office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Homeland Defense have been working full-time at Homeland Security headquarters. Those Defense employees work each and every day side by side with their DHS counterparts to ensure that there is complete, open, transparent communication on all relevant matters between the two departments.

In addition, there is daily, almost continuous, contact between the Homeland Security Operations Center over in DHS and our office here in the Pentagon. That relationship couldn't be much tighter than it is. The current director of the Homeland Security Operations Center is a retired Marine Corps general officer, Matt

Broderick. Matt was chosen for his position at DHS because of his exceptional leadership skills, and in part I think because of his familiarity with the Department of Defense. So he is exactly the right guy in exactly the right position to ensure that the relationship between DHS and DOD will be a close one.

Through the normal procedures of the interagency process, senior officials from DOD and DHS meet daily at the deputies and principal level. It is a rare day that senior officials in the DOD are not in direct contact with the Secretary of DHS or his deputy.

JFQ: *The United States is engaged in a limited war against a vague enemy, a transnational enemy, who is fighting a total war against us. How can America defend itself with the mismatch of wills, especially in an environment where modern technology levels the playing field through weapons proliferation and new communications capabilities?*

ASD(HD) McHale: I would respectfully disagree with the premise of the question; that is, I don't think that [there is] a mismatch of wills to the detriment of our



DOD staff in the FEMA Regional Response Coordination Center

FEMA (Mark Wolfe)



Secretary of Homeland Defense Michael Chertoff briefing press with heads of supporting agencies, including ASD(HD) Paul McHale

FEMA (Ed Edgah)

ongoing national effort. The barbaric acts of September 11, 2001, galvanized the American spirit, and although we have faced significant, sometimes painful, challenges, during the intervening period of time, my sense is that our nation remains resolute. It is the intent of our adversaries to weaken the American political will through the prosecution of asymmetric warfare, but my assessment is that the enemy's strategic objective to date has not been successful. Americans recall with clarity the losses we experienced on September 11, and they remain committed to our ongoing military operations both overseas and here at home to protect American lives, property, and ultimately, freedom. Homeland defense begins overseas; power projection is an integrated element of what is ultimately the successful defense of our nation here at home. I have not sensed any diminished purpose on the part of the American people in supporting both the pursuit of al Qaeda on distant battlefields and a more robust capability to protect against domestic attacks that al Qaeda might launch here at home.

There are many things that we can do today to provide a stronger homeland defense and more robust civil support capabilities that would have been difficult if not impossible at the time of the September 11 attacks. The creation of NORTHCOM, the identification of its substantial range of missions, and the integration of DOD capabilities into a larger national homeland security effort have all produced an operational environment in which we can more successfully defend the American people.

JFQ: *There is a lot of discussion about a zero-sum game over the resources for providing for the defense and capabilities across all the services and all the agencies. How is the U.S. military balancing resources for training and power projection versus supporting operations at home?*

ASD(HD) McHale: Nearly every national and departmental document produced in the last 5 years has identified homeland defense as the Nation's highest priority. Ultimately, everything we do in the Department of Defense is for the protection of the American people. We are obligated to provide that defense within a world of finite resources, so that requires prioritization of mission requirements and a tough-minded application of risk management. There's no question in my mind that homeland defense is receiving far more of an emphasis today than was the case 5 or 10 years ago, and that means that looking at risk, identifying threats, and allocating resources—core homeland defense activities and related civil support missions—are now being robustly supported, initially in dollars, but ultimately in training, equipment, and assigned personnel.

When NORTHCOM was created, the combatant command was initially a capability established in the shadow of NORAD [North American Aerospace Defense Command]. Because we had experienced a tragic loss of life as a result of an attack launched from within our own airspace on September 11, initial homeland defense activities tended to focus on the air domain. During the past 4

years, it's been clear that additional capabilities in the maritime, land, and cyber domains must be added to the traditional NORAD missions to ensure that NORTHCOM will be a truly joint command. Great progress has been made in that regard. As a result, most recently demonstrated in our successful military response to Hurricane Katrina, NORTHCOM is now capable of effective mission execution, not just in the air domain, but with equal competence in the maritime, land, and cyber domains. And that has required a reallocation of resources, a process that I expect to continue following the completion of the ongoing Quadrennial Defense Review.

Since September 11, both as a matter of policy and operational capability, DOD has developed, under NORTHCOM command and control, the ability to respond to multiple, near-simultaneous WMD [weapons of mass destruction] attacks conducted at geographically dispersed areas within the United States. That kind of multiple WMD response would have been very difficult for DOD to achieve in a timely manner as recently as 4 or 5 years ago. It's now recognized that one of NORTHCOM's core requirements is the ability to promptly and effectively respond to multiple WMD attacks because it's under those circumstances that civilian authorities are likely to be overwhelmed, and DOD capabilities are likely to be called upon. Establishing the kinds of task forces required to support a multiple WMD response has necessitated a reallocation of related resources to pay the inevitable costs associated with an essential but expensive capability.

JFQ: *Could you expand on NORTHCOM's missions and perhaps the Defense Department's involvement in recent domestic humanitarian relief efforts?*

ASD(HD) McHale: NORTHCOM was created for two purposes: to conduct warfighting within the homeland defense AOR, and to provide civil support to lead Federal agencies when civilian authorities are overwhelmed or a unique DOD capability is required. Each and every day since September 11, NORTHCOM has conducted operational homeland defense activities that resemble the kind of defensive measures that we conduct daily within other regional combatant commands throughout the world. NORTHCOM deploys aircraft, anticipates maritime threats, and alerts land warfare

capabilities. That kind of warfighting capacity goes largely unobserved, but for the professionals at NORTHCOM, it's a part of daily life. Each day since September 11, we have been flying combat air patrols, to ensure that, unlike September 11, the airspace of the United States will never again be used as a domain from which terrorists can launch attacks upon the American people. It's not an accident that the attacks of September 11 have not been repeated since that time. Many of the vulnerabilities associated with domestic aviation have been eliminated, and our defensive capabilities, to include the sobering mission of shooting down a domestic aircraft after a terrorist takeover, have provided substantial deterrence and effective operational capabilities to defeat a potential terrorist attack.

NORTHCOM is prepared today to conduct maritime intercept operations in order to detect and defeat, along a maritime approach, a weapon of mass destruction. As we conduct this interview, there are Army units on alert as quick reaction forces. We don't hide that fact. We want to influence and deter terrorist planning by openly highlighting the fact that any domestic land attack conducted by terrorists within the United States will meet, if necessary and at the direction of the President, active-duty U.S. military forces who are prepared to engage in land warfare on our own soil as an ultimate safeguard of American security. And so it is entirely possible that a terrorist attack on a U.S. nuclear power plant would confront the presence of the 82^d Airborne or some other military unit with similar warfighting capabilities. Land defense in the United States is primarily a law enforcement function, but we are prepared to conduct warfighting missions under extreme circumstances on our own soil in order to defeat a terrorist attack.

The military response to Hurricane Katrina was wholly dependent upon the effective integration of unprecedented National Guard capabilities. The Katrina response was the largest, fastest civil support mission in the history of the United States. We deployed 72,000 military forces in just over 10 days. Of the 72,000 forces deployed, 50,000 were drawn from the National Guard, 22,000 from our Active Component. That's a very different strategic approach to natural disasters when compared to responses to previous events. Before Hurricane Katrina, the most robust military response to a

natural disaster in American history was probably the 1992 DOD response to Hurricane Andrew.

Hurricane Katrina made landfall along the Gulf coast during the early morning hours of August 29. By landfall + 5, more than 34,000 military forces had been deployed into the affected area—more than 5 times the number of military personnel deployed within the same time frame in response to 1992's Hurricane Andrew. By landfall + 7, more than 53,000 military personnel had been deployed in response to Katrina—more than 3 times the comparable response to Andrew. By September 10, military forces reached their peak at 72,000—a total deployment for Katrina more than twice the size of the military response to Hurricane Andrew.

JFQ: *You mentioned the National Guard a moment ago. JFQ features a special Total Force forum every 18 months or so [coming later in 2006]. Could you expand on Total Force and Reserve Component issues in homeland defense?*

ASD(HD) McHale: Our homeland defense and civil support strategy envisioned a focused reliance on Reserve Component capabilities. If you look at the force mix that was used in responding to Hurricane Andrew, you will see that the overwhelming majority of the force was drawn from the

Active Component, with a much smaller piece deployed from the Reserves, including the Guard. Our response to Hurricane Katrina was a mirror image—that is, the vast majority of forces deployed in response to Hurricane Katrina came from the National Guard, and by design, a much smaller Active Component capability was deployed. 50,000 National Guardsmen versus 22,000 active duty, with a large portion of the active duty being drawn from offshore U.S. Navy and Marine Corps personnel. The concept reflected in the strategy was a belief that active-duty military personnel should be preserved whenever possible for ongoing power projection missions while recognizing that Reserve Component capabilities, most especially the National Guard, are ideally suited for domestic missions, including homeland defense and civil support.

The strong logistics backbone and ready availability of the National Guard make it ideally suited to a prompt, effective response in remediating the consequences of a catastrophic event, whether a natural disaster or a terrorist attack. Our massive response to Hurricane Katrina proved the merit of that approach.

We anticipate that the focused reliance on the Reserve Component, most especially reliance on the National Guard for homeland defense and civil support missions, will continue into the future, and if anything,



LTG Russel Honore, USA, Joint Task Force Katrina commander aboard USNS Comfort

U.S. Navy (Heather Weaver)

that approach was decisively validated by the National Guard's superb response to Hurricane Katrina. By September 10, we had 50,000 National Guardsmen from all 50 states, 3 territories, and the District of Columbia deployed into the Gulf region, providing an incredibly effective humanitarian relief capability. Never has the Guard been more important to the Nation.

One of our continuing challenges is to ensure that National Guard operational planning is fully integrated into the Total Force. Frankly, we need to improve that integration in response to future civil support missions. The Total Force task organization deployed in response to Hurricane Katrina reflected a very large, very robust mix of Active Component and Reserve Component capabilities, but the operational planning conducted and superbly executed by the Guard was largely completed without close coordination with NORTHCOM and the Joint Staff. Superb leaders stepped up to the plate and got the job done. Next time, we may be able to improve our performance by more detailed, better integrated planning to ensure Active Component and Reserve Component capabilities are mutually reinforcing. In response to Katrina, we got it right because the operators made it work, not because of our prior planning.

JFQ: *Could you give us your thoughts on any key challenges or opportunities you see on the immediate horizon?*

ASD(HD) McHale: I'd like to reemphasize the clear requirement and emerging capability to respond to multiple WMD attacks; the need, when deploying National Guard military police [MP] units for purposes of restoring civil order, to incorporate a full range of nonlethal weapons capabilities into the deploying units; operational competency; and the need for a detailed ISR [intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance] plan in order to ensure that we will have appropriate imagery to support more rapid and accurate damage assessment, following a catastrophic event such as the Katrina disaster. Frankly, we should have learned that lesson following Hurricane Andrew in 1992; it took several days for the scope of the disaster to become known. Similarly, early reports following Hurricane Katrina's landfall were inaccurate and optimistic; the damage was far worse than originally thought. And so in preparation for Hurricane Rita, [USNORTHCOM Commander] Admiral [Timothy] Keating

developed a detailed ISR plan to deploy, as necessary, UAVs [unmanned aerial vehicles], P3s, and employ geospatial imagery in order to get an immediate and accurate understanding of the damage.

We need to develop seamless interoperable radio communication among and between first responders, the National Guard, and Title 10 military forces. Such interoperability is technologically feasible right now, and yet because we did not plan or prepare for the deployment of such capability, few if any police officers could effectively communicate with military personnel, and indeed many National Guard Soldiers were unable to communicate by radio with their Title 10 counterparts because our Title 10 forces were equipped with frequency-hopping SINGARS [single-channel ground-air secure radios] and many National Guard units were not. And so interoperability of communications remains a high priority as an element of future planning.

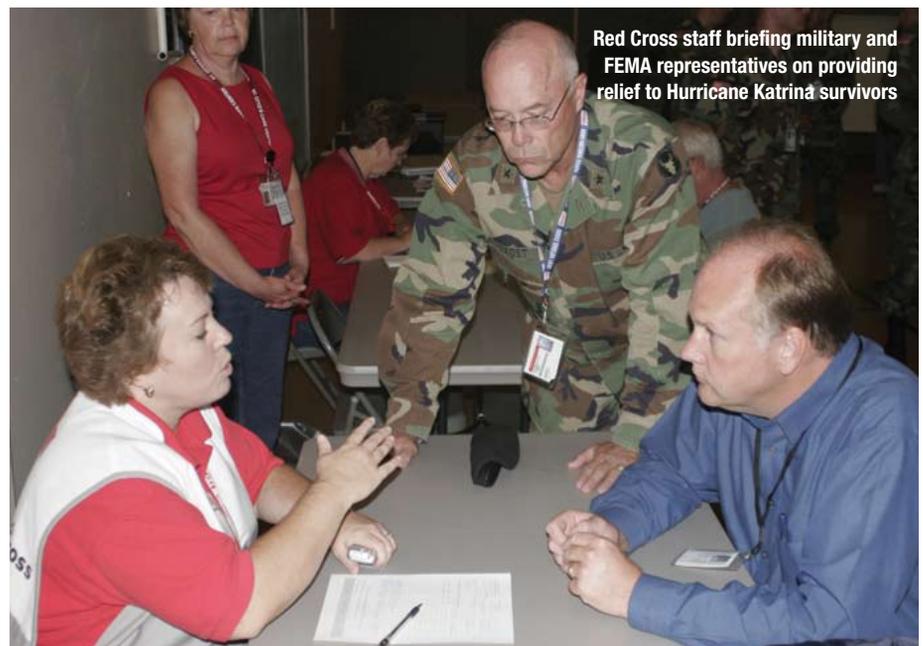
We need to look at the ability to reestablish the first responder community following a catastrophic event. In short, we have to find a way to more rapidly backfill the absence of local police officers. That means that National Guard MP units will have to systematically anticipate the very type of mission that was so very successfully executed but not planned in advance of Hurricane Katrina to include the rapid deployment of nonlethal weapons as part of a broader range of National Guard MP weapons capabilities. Deadly force will remain a necessary option in addressing the life-threatening requirements associated with

the restoration of civil order, but military forces deployed in law enforcement missions domestically should also have the alternative when operationally appropriate to use nonlethal and less than lethal force if that will accomplish the mission.

Mass evacuation will inevitably involve significant DOD resources. Again, during Katrina, we did it quite well. TRANSCOM's [U.S. Transportation Command] performance was flawless when you consider that many of these evacuations involving thousands of citizens were executed with little or no warning and involved the mass movement of civilian personnel in a crisis environment. TRANSCOM's successful completion of that mission was nothing short of remarkable. Having done it under pressure, we now have the duty to plan it more carefully in anticipation of future catastrophic events requiring similar evacuations. We did it quite well without [prior] planning, we can do it better if we anticipate the mission.

JFQ: *The President made remarks in the press about more military involvement in huge domestic disasters, such as in New Orleans or a flu pandemic. Could you describe what this means at a practical level?*

ASD(HD) McHale: Each year in the United States, there are over 50 Presidentially declared major disasters under the Stafford Act. When a major disaster is declared by the President, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)



Red Cross staff briefing military and FEMA representatives on providing relief to Hurricane Katrina survivors

U.S. Air Force (Kenneth Toile)



Alabama National Guard near Alexandria, Louisiana, waiting to perform recovery mission following Hurricane Rita

U.S. Air Force (Roger M. Dey)

becomes the lead Federal agency, and DOD plays a supporting role to the extent that our resources are required to assist FEMA. That system is based on the detailed provisions of the National Response Plan, and the history of that supporting role executed by DOD goes back three or four decades under the provisions of the preexisting Federal Response Plan. And in fact as I mentioned earlier, DOD's support missions predate both the Stafford Act and the Federal Response Plan and indeed go back to the earliest days of our nation's history.

Very few analysts would suggest that DOD should play the lead role in responding to major disasters of the magnitude that we experience each year on a recurring basis. The system of support established under the Federal Response Plan, reflected in the ongoing provisions of the National Response Plan, would seem to be appropriate and effective in marshalling DOD resources to support the designated lead Federal agency, FEMA. What will be subject to ongoing examination is the question of whether DOD should play a more substantial role and perhaps a leadership role in responding to the much rarer, much more substantial occurrence of a catastrophic event—not simply a hurricane, but a hurricane of the magnitude of Katrina. Not simply a terrorist attack, but a terrorist attack employing weapons of mass destruction where the devastation might cover a large area, produce a significant number of casualties, and raise issues of residual contamination. It is likely that for some time to

come, and probably even beyond the publication date of this interview, that the role of the DOD in responding to such catastrophic events will be subject to continuing review and perhaps statutory action. In most cases, indeed, in the vast majority of cases, DOD should remain as a supporting element of a larger national effort. But in light of the hard realities that we confronted following Katrina, it is reasonable to reexamine and perhaps redefine DOD's role in response to a truly catastrophic event.

I am confident that any new definition of DOD responsibilities in relationship to a catastrophic event will remain consistent with our historic belief that the role of the military within domestic American society should be limited, that our operational activities should be constrained, that our relationship to law enforcement activities should be carefully limited to extraordinary circumstances and be of a brief duration. Nonetheless, there are potential reforms that would enable DOD to more quickly deploy even larger humanitarian relief capabilities in a more effective way under appropriate circumstances reflecting the immediate and overwhelming requirements of a catastrophic event. We do recognize that what we did in the aftermath of Katrina reflected the urgency of the mission requirement, not the detail of our prior planning. Because Americans were in need, we exceeded all the benchmarks of prior planning. Therefore, it may be time to raise the bar, tighten our plans, and achieve an even higher, more rapid, and effective military response in

some future catastrophic event. Our performance was better than our plans, and it's time to close that gap.

I would emphasize that I think inter-agency coordination, especially between DHS and DOD, functioned effectively during Katrina, and could be expected to function quite well following any catastrophic event. We have the right connectivity at the top now; the challenge is to develop the follow-on operational capabilities that move the assistance rapidly and effectively. The right people are talking to each other. Katrina revealed that there are significant unmet requirements in terms of rapid deployment of emergency assistance. We in DOD have a duty to work with our interagency partners in order to ensure that civilian capabilities are properly planned, effectively resourced, and are well coordinated with DOD to ensure that once we get downrange, our national response will achieve unity of effort. At this point we've got the right documents, we've got the right dialogue, I don't believe we've yet achieved the right operational capabilities. If somebody is hungry, or cold, or wet, it's small comfort to tell them that somewhere back in Washington, there's a piece of paper assessing the crisis.

JFQ: *Thank you, sir, for your time.*

Col Krause and Dr. Smotherman extend their thanks to ASD(HD) McHale, and to his assistant for communications, CDR Lawrence Zelvin, USN, for the opportunity to ask in-depth questions about the current roles of the Department of Defense in homeland defense missions.

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