

Lieutenant General Russel Honore: Strategic Advisor during National Crisis

by

Colonel Mark L. Tromblee
United States Army

Under the Direction of:
Professor Harry A. Tomlin



United States Army War College
Class of 2018

DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT: A

Approved for Public Release
Distribution is Unlimited

The views expressed herein are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of the Department of the Army, Department of Defense, or the U.S. Government. The U.S. Army War College is accredited by the Commission on Higher Education of the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, an institutional accrediting agency recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Education and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation.

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE			Form Approved--OMB No. 0704-0188		
The public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing the burden, to Department of Defense, Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports (0704-0188), 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302. Respondents should be aware that notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person shall be subject to any penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information if it does not display a currently valid OMB control number. PLEASE DO NOT RETURN YOUR FORM TO THE ABOVE ADDRESS.					
1. REPORT DATE (DD-MM-YYYY) 01-04-2018		2. REPORT TYPE STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT		3. DATES COVERED (From - To)	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE Lieutenant General Russel Honore: Strategic Advisor during National Crisis			5a. CONTRACT NUMBER		
			5b. GRANT NUMBER		
			5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER		
6. AUTHOR(S) Colonel Mark L. Tromblee United States Army			5d. PROJECT NUMBER		
			5e. TASK NUMBER		
			5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER		
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) Professor Harry A. Tomlin			8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER		
9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) U.S. Army War College, 122 Forbes Avenue, Carlisle, PA 17013			10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)		
			11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)		
12. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Distribution A: Approved for Public Release. Distribution is Unlimited. I understand this document will be included in a research database and available to the public. Author: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>					
13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES Word Count: 5480					
14. ABSTRACT Regardless of their assignment following graduation from Senior Service College, graduates will undoubtedly be called upon to provide strategic advice. As we build competencies toward this end, the use of models and tools prove useful to develop a framework for the development and communication of strategic advice. This paper examines the skills, attributes and background that made Lieutenant General Russel Honore an effective joint task force commander and strategic advisor during a time of domestic national crisis; Hurricane Katrina. This will consider the internal and external factors that affected his cognition and decision-making. Elements of Operational Design along with Steven Corman's Pragmatic Complexity Model of Strategic Communication are applied to this distinct period of time to evaluate how LTG Honore was a highly acclaimed and effective strategic advisor and communicator during Hurricane Katrina.					
15. SUBJECT TERMS Strategic Communication, Best Military Advice, Design					
16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT	18. NUMBER OF PAGES 26	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON
a. REPORT UU	b. ABSTRACT UU	c. THIS PAGE UU			19b. TELEPHONE NUMBER (w/ area code)

Lieutenant General Russel Honore: Strategic Advisor during National Crisis

(5480 words)

Abstract

Regardless of their assignment following graduation from Senior Service College, graduates will undoubtedly be called upon to provide strategic advice. As we build competencies toward this end, the use of models and tools prove useful to develop a framework for the development and communication of strategic advice. This paper examines the skills, attributes and background that made Lieutenant General Russel Honore an effective joint task force commander and strategic advisor during a time of domestic national crisis; Hurricane Katrina. This will consider the internal and external factors that affected his cognition and decision-making. Elements of Operational Design along with Steven Corman's Pragmatic Complexity Model of Strategic Communication are applied to this distinct period of time to evaluate how LTG Honore was a highly acclaimed and effective strategic advisor and communicator during Hurricane Katrina.

Lieutenant General Russel Honore: Strategic Advisor during National Crisis

Now, I will tell you this -- and I give the president some credit on this -- he sent one John Wayne dude down here that can get some stuff done, and his name is General Honore.

- Ray Nagin, Mayor of New Orleans¹

Thomas Galvin refers to the persistent and mission specific roles desired of those that bear the moniker of "Army War College Graduate". He lists them as "steward of the profession, networked leader, resilient leader, critical/reflective thinker, strategic advisor/communicator, strategic planner, strategic theorist and strategic leader."² These traits are intrinsically linked and build upon each other, as a military strategic leader will concurrently serve as a strategic advisor to duly appointed civilian authorities. A strategic advisor must be able to comprehend the environment, identify the specific problem facing the organization, and be able to achieve alignment of audiences to share a common vision. A strategic advisor must cultivate relationships that he may call upon to fill gaps in knowledge, attain support, gain insight and effect change. Further, it is communication that gives life to the advice. A strategic advisor must be able to communicate his vision to superiors, subordinates and peers allowing shared understanding across all audiences. When properly implemented, strategic communication has the potential to reinforce all lines of effort.

There is no prescriptive methodology with which to approach the role of a strategic advisor. This leaves the question of how to best fulfill this role within an environment comprised of uncertainty and complexity. An adaptable approach to understanding the environment, a mechanism to formulate one's best military advice, and a scheme with which to convey advice that resonates with strategic decision makers is demanded.

This paper examines LTG Russel Honore as a strategic advisor as the commander of Joint Task Force – Katrina and the approach that made him effective during a time of domestic national crisis. This research paper considers the internal and external factors that affected his cognition and decision-making. Elements of doctrinal Operational Design along with Steven Corman’s Pragmatic Complexity Model of Strategic Communication are applied to evaluate why LTG Honore was the necessary strategic advisor and communicator for the United States during this crisis. While Hurricane Katrina occurred prior to the actual publication of operational design and the pragmatic complexity model, General Honore utilized many of the elements that we now attribute to these two models. It is worthwhile to consider these two models and their applicability to provide strategic advice in the contemporary environment.

On August 26, 2005, Hurricane Katrina made landfall in vicinity of Buras-Triumph, Louisiana, approximately seventy miles southeast of New Orleans. On the following day, Mayor Ray Nagin declared a state of emergency and issued a voluntary evacuation notice. Concurrently, Governor Blanco of Louisiana requested that President George W. Bush declare a major disaster of the State of Louisiana so that federal assistance could be provided. In granting that request, the Federal Coordinating Officer (FCO) from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) was designated as the authority for coordinating federal relief efforts with state and local governments, local authorities, and relief agencies. The National Response Plan describes the various roles and responsibilities of individual agencies during a national disaster. Inclusive in this framework are the responsibilities of the Department of Defense. Hurricane Katrina marked the first ever full-scale activation of the National Response Plan due to its sheer

scope and scale.³ Hurricane Katrina's devastation reached such a magnitude that it overwhelmed local and state capacity, requiring the assistance of federal resources, including the Department of Defense.

The existing framework for relief efforts is covered by the National Response Plan (NRP) that lays out a sequential response of local, state and federal agencies as local capacity becomes overwhelmed. The Department of Defense is considered the "heavy lifter of last resort" for domestic disasters."⁴

The Department of Defense is not the lead agent for any of the fifteen emergency support functions listed within the National Response Plan; yet has a supporting role within each. As the United States Armed Forces are ultimately controlled by duly appointed civilian authorities, the civilian leaders may be considered the strategic leaders during times of crisis such as Hurricane Katrina. It is then incumbent on military leadership to provide their best military advice to effectively and efficiently employ military resources and assist in the achievement of the objectives established by civilian authority.

The Secretary of Defense shall provide military support to civil authorities for domestic incidents as directed by the President or when consistent with military readiness and appropriate under the circumstances and the law. The Secretary of Defense shall retain command of military forces providing civil support. The Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of Homeland Security shall establish appropriate relationships and mechanisms for cooperation and coordination between their two departments."⁵

Mayor Nagin and Governor Blanco set priorities during the time surrounding Hurricane Katrina such as saving lives, the orderly evacuation of at-risk civilians in New Orleans, and restoration of civil control. Blanco and Nagin were unable to gain or maintain an understanding of the environment required to synchronize resources and

efforts to achieve their objectives. According to Secretary of Homeland Security, Michael Chertoff:

“Having a picture of conditions on the ground in various areas and communicating about the conditions was also a big problem. During the Katrina response, our efforts were significantly hampered by a lack of information from the ground. With communication systems damaged and state and local assets compromised by the subsequent flooding, our ability to obtain precise reporting was significantly impaired.”⁶

While there was a pervasive media presence within Louisiana during and after the storm, this only provided information to those that were unaffected by the storm and its effects. Communication to the those affected by the storm was difficult due to the lack of power and local communication networks. However, this audience had the greatest need for information. Information such as the path of the storm and locations that were available to provide logistics and life support.

Hurricane Katrina ultimately resulted in nearly \$100 billion in property damage, destroyed approximately 300,000 houses, caused in excess of 115 million cubic yards of debris, displaced over 770,000 people and killed an estimated 1,330 people.⁷ Katrina decimated communication networks, which precluded authorities and leaders from disseminating key information and messages to necessary audiences.

As the commander of Joint Task Force (JTF) Katrina, LTG Russel Honore was in charge of directing all federal military forces in the Joint Operational Area (JOA). This role was that of an operational, not a strategic leader. However, General Honore established effective communication and impact to multiple disparate audiences that resulted in him serving as a strategic advisor. Due in part to his position, General Honore was able to provide essential information and advice to the President of the United States, the Federal Coordinating Officer, the Mayor of New Orleans, the

Governor of Louisiana, those affected by the storm along with a global audience able to view the effects and devastation caused by Hurricane Katrina over multiple forms of media such as television, radio, and social media.

As JTF Katrina was established, General Honore was in command of First Army Headquarters. Due to its role in the training of National Guard and Army Reserve forces, this organization maintained close contact and relationships with state leadership including Governors and Adjutant Generals. These relationships formed prior to Hurricane Katrina were of great benefit as the command and control of National Guard forces that were mobilized in support of Hurricane Katrina relief were under the responsibility of Major General Bennett Landreneau, the Louisiana Adjutant General. This relationship was enhanced as General Honore is a native of Louisiana, giving him a unique understanding of the operational environment surrounding this national disaster. LTG Honore displayed genuine empathy with the victims of Hurricane Katrina, due in part, to his upbringing.

LTG General Honore had significant and relevant experience in preparing for natural disasters. As an Army Division Commander in Korea, General Honore had planned for contingencies that might result from floods during monsoon season. Additionally, as the senior trainer for mechanized task forces at the National Training Center in Fort Irwin, California, General Honore had prepared to evacuate units in the training area if necessary from flash floods that are frequent in the Mojave Desert. Both of these experiences helped shape General Honore's perspective and contributed to his understanding of environments very similar to that of Hurricane Katrina.

Prior to Hurricane Katrina making landfall, LTG Honore understood that it was essential for he and his staff to be in a position to attain an accurate understanding of the strategic environment. He additionally decided that as the senior Department of Defense official, he would need to send key messages and information to achieve the desired effects. Stating that “the first rule is to get there”⁸, he initiated movement along with his staff. Understanding that “we own the authority to deploy and then need to await the request to deploy”⁹, they began movement from Fort Gillam, Georgia to Camp Shelby, Mississippi prior to receiving an order from Northern Command or request from FEMA.

Authority for this movement was inherent within the standing mission to First Army from NORTHCOM to be prepared to conduct hurricane relief. As the storm path of Hurricane Katrina was expected to affect a wide geographic area spanning locations within both First Army and Fifth Army’s area of responsibility, LTG Honore advised Admiral Timothy Keating, the NORTHCOM Commander, to create a Joint Operational Area under 5th Army Headquarters. Because of his initiative in deploying, General Honore and his staff arrived in Camp Shelby prior to Hurricane Katrina making landfall. At this time, 5th Army was still in Texas, resulting in Joint Task Force – Katrina falling under General Honore’s Command. General Honore’s presence in the region enabled him to establish conditions and coordinate for needed resources as well as enhance his understanding of the environment. “We didn’t want to get separated from the problem.”¹⁰ This presence additionally increased his credibility with the local population and leadership as his actions became visible in the area affected by the storm.

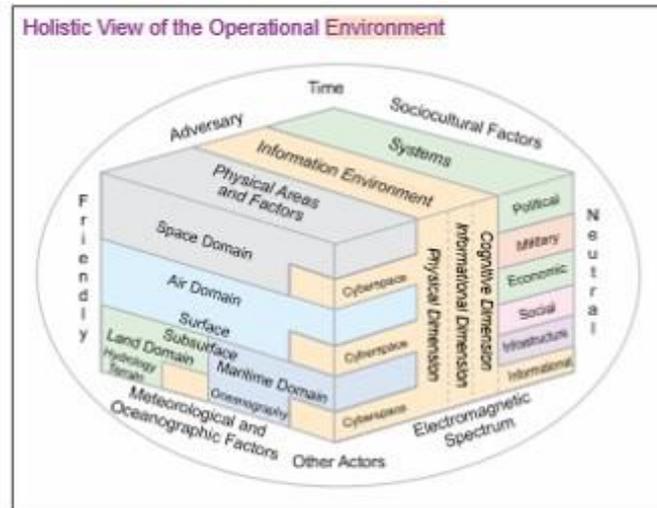


Figure 1. Using Design to Frame the Operational Environment.¹¹

The iterative process of operational design assists in gaining and sharing an understanding of the operational environment. As a commander-driven process, the shared understanding of the environment leads to recognition of potential points of intervention and opportunities as the operational approach is developed. Design aids the commander and his staff in their efforts to see the whole problem. Design considers the implications of both the strategic and operational environment along with an appreciation of the actors within a complex adaptive system. This facilitates an understanding of the relationships of those actors within the system along with the potential effects that actions will have on audiences and actors within the system. As LTG Honore and his staff used design to understand the environment and build their operational approach, the process proved beneficial in the establishment of their command and control (C2) structure. LTG Honore remarked:

Build the C2 to fit the problem based upon the commander's assessment along with staff input. The National Response Plan at the time didn't work. It was written for a nuclear scenario, not a catastrophe such as the devastating effects of Katrina where necessary lines of communication were unusable.¹²

Design also assisted LTG Honore in assessing his operational approach to coordinate relief efforts. Assessment mechanisms such as measures of effectiveness (MOEs) and performance (MOPs) help monitor progress of the operational approach and whether it needs to be adjusted. As defined within joint doctrine, measures of effectiveness are “indicators used to measure a current system state, with change indicated by comparing multiple observations over time” while measures of performance are “An indicator used to measure a friendly action that is tied to measuring task accomplishment”.¹³ LTG Honore and his staff applied a variation of the commonly used SWEAT (Sewage, Water, Electricity, Academics and Trash) assessments from Operation Iraqi Freedom to evaluate the capacity for the Parishes in Louisiana to provide these essential services along with security.¹⁴ These assessments provided feedback that General Honore incorporated into his daily discussions with civilian leadership and were the basis of his current and relevant advice.

General Honore utilized a variation of effects-based operations in considering what actions were necessary to achieve the desired results. “We adapted the battlefield framework to accomplish what we had to do.”¹⁵ General Honore described the art of command as “providing what is needed, not what was asked for.”¹⁶ Governor Blanco had asked for eighty thousand troops. General Honore understood that an effort to bring eighty thousand troops into the JOA would have overwhelmed all logistics solely for their transportation and basing and resulted in fewer search and rescue or evacuation assets.

LTG Honore and his staff utilized elements of operational design to gain an understanding of the operational environment and develop their operational approach.

Design concepts allowed them to attain what LTG Honore defined as “decision superiority; the ability to see first, understand first, act first.”¹⁷ To gain an appreciation of the devastation and maintain situational awareness, LTG Honore was able to make use of rotary wing aircraft and pilots from the USS Bataan. While this may have slightly decremented the ability to conduct search and rescue, it provided situational awareness permitting Honore to choose the time and place to act.

LTG General Honore credits his participation in twenty-six rotations as the Senior Trainer for the Mechanized Task Force at the National Training Center in developing his informed intuition. “Somebody has the answer to what you’re looking for. The key is how do you figure out who that guy is and empower him to share the information and get the word back to the boss.”¹⁸ General Honore limited barriers to communication within his organization. This allowed him to receive and consolidate information into coherent advice that he provided on a daily basis.

General Honore understood the imperative to provide essential information and advice to civilian strategic leaders along with the population affected by Hurricane Katrina, stating, “You need communication to coordinate, and if you can’t coordinate, you look stupid.”¹⁹ The Pragmatic Complexity Model provides an effective mechanism to communicate effective messages across numerous audiences. This model requires a comprehensive understanding of the environment. Narratives play a key role within the environment. A narrative contributes to the historical and social construct of an audience’s perspective and provides a framework that allows events to be placed within time and space.²⁰ The sender must be aware of the narrative of the targeted audiences as well as his or her own narrative. A thorough knowledge of these two elements allows

the sender to recognize many pre-existing barriers to communication or bias that may exist on part of either the sender or the receiver.

Understanding narratives as a concept is key to the application of the Pragmatic Complexity Model. Comprehension of the culture of the audience is necessary for an understanding of how they will perceive the actions along with their associated themes and messages. The pragmatic complexity model accounts for the dynamics of communication that may be informed by design. Each communicator, both sender and receiver, has his or her own individual beliefs and norms. This helps shape their narrative along with the events that they experience on a daily basis. While they may share many similarities, they each have their own distinct context that forms their interpretation of words, images, and actions. Other factors such as opposing messages, the medium of communication used, bias, culture, credibility the tone of voice used, body language and narrative affect an individual's perception of the meaning of the message received or sent. Comprehension of the audience's narrative assists the "complex process of interpreting one-another's actions and making attributions about thoughts, motivations, and Intentions."²¹ As a Louisiana native, LTG Honore had an enhanced appreciation for the geographic and cultural environment in the area affected by Hurricane Katrina. As such, he understood the distinct, narrative, values, beliefs, norms and biases of the population.

The Pragmatic Complexity Model accounts for the numerous factors that may enhance or impede the transmission and reception of desired messages such as the narratives of both the sender and audiences, potential interference, and competing messages. Most importantly, this model allows for feedback from the audience that

permits an evaluation of communication efforts that may provoke a refinement of potentially ineffective communication techniques. This model necessitates an understanding of the relationships between the numerous audiences and the transmitter of the information. As an operational leader, LTG Honore was in charge of the active duty federal force within Joint Task Force Katrina. He required collaboration with other leaders and across organizations to ensure efficient synchronization of strategy, tactics and logistics. His coordination and collaboration demonstrated an effective use of the Pragmatic Complexity Model of Communication elements. Simultaneously, as a strategic advisor, he had reach and influence with state and federal strategic leaders as well as across numerous global audiences.

Pragmatic Complexity Model

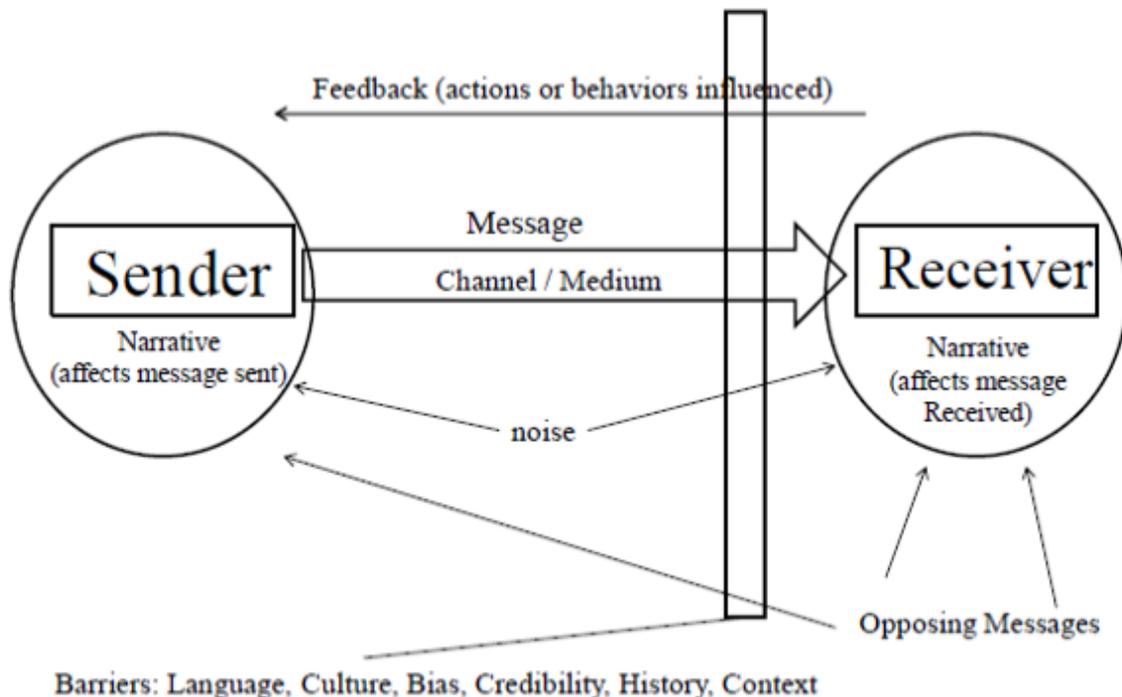


Figure 2. The Pragmatic Complexity Model of Communication.²²

The Pragmatic Complexity Model is effective in that it facilitates the achievement of desired effects through messages that resonate with the audiences. The model recognizes that audiences receive messages through multiple senses beyond the spoken word. The messages received by audiences will be influenced by factors such as tone, visual cues, body language as well as the credibility of the speaker. Understanding that reputation effects influence, LTG Honore has professed that “the leader’s audio and video have to match.”²³

Equally as important as the message is the transmitter of the message. LTG Honore made a deliberate choice not to have his Public Affairs Officer lead engagements with the press or the media. General Honore understood that the face behind the message matters. He comprehended that it was essential he controlled his own messaging as it would allow audiences to see him as the person that can make decisions and take action. This facilitated an increased level of transparency and made General Honore both responsible and accountable for the message as well as the actions. Messaging coming from the operational leader demonstrated the message’s level of importance.

Measures of performance and measures of effectiveness also require consideration so that the sender may remain active in this process. The sender must be able to recognize feedback and adjust the message to achieve the desired effect.

An understanding of the environment through application of operational design directly facilitates application of the Pragmatic Complexity Model of communication as it requires an “understanding of the dynamics at work and using communication as a strategy to disrupt and perturb existing systems such that they can begin to organize

around new meaning-making frameworks.”²⁴. The significant elements within the framework or operational design are: “understand strategic guidance, understand the operational environment, define the problem and develop an operational approach.”²⁵ The Governor provided the strategic guidance and objectives. General Honore utilized now-recognized elements operational design along with his background and personal narrative to gain an understanding of the operational environment enabling his visualization of the problem providing him the means to identify points of intervention to commit resources via an operational approach to achieve the objectives established by civilian leadership.

Military advice must take the political environment into account. Operational design is an effective tool to gain this comprehension. Additionally, trust formed through relationships and credibility is essential in ensuring that the advice is effective. “Military advice has meaning only if the voice has gravitas, credibility and acute strategic tone. Regardless of the soundness of the advice, if the military leader has not earned the trust of those receiving it, advice has less value.”²⁶

As with the Pragmatic Complexity Model, LTG Honore recognized that images and other non-verbal communication resonate with the audience. A significant example of this premise includes an instance in which General Honore had to correct the weapons posture of soldiers providing relief efforts. On this occasion, numerous soldiers were travelling in the back of a military vehicle with their rifles pointing out of the vehicle. This was common practice during operations in both Iraq and Afghanistan. Soldier training in numerous deployments reinforced this practice. Witnessing this, General Honore’s immediate reaction was to instruct the soldiers to “Get those damn weapons

down!”²⁷ LTG Honore understood the visual message that the population would receive from this weapons posture. He knew that soldiers had to be seen as part of the relief effort and not as a security force. It needed to resonate that JTF Katrina was there to provide assistance and did not pose a threat to those who had already been devastated by a catastrophic event. Another example how of symbols and images impact an audience, a young child was filmed proclaiming “Thank you Mr. Army” to the soldiers that were providing relief.²⁸ This is illustrative of the population receiving the message through visual images that military forces were contributing to the relief efforts.

Admiral Thad Allen was the FEMA principal Federal Coordinating Officer in charge of coordinating the relief efforts of all organizations for Hurricane Katrina and Rita. He was one of the numerous authorities with whom LTG Honore provided regular advice in addition to the President of the United States and the Governor. This advice was enhanced by the trust and confidence that these strategic leaders placed in General Honore. Admiral Allen noted:

“General Honore and I were basically joined at the hip for weeks. We communicated anywhere from twenty to thirty to forty times a day via phone call, satellite phone, PDA, whatever it took to make sure that he had total visibility on what I was doing. I had total visibility on what DOD was doing and that the DOD forces in support of the state and local governments were most efficiently applied. I believe that [collaboration] was the real key factor in being able to stabilize the situation down there on the ground.”²⁹

“The Secretary of Defense was in routine daily contact with General Honore and Admiral Keating to ask General Honore how that coordinating relationship was working with the National Guard. And General Honore, as he will tell you, gave repeated assurances that the relationship was working well, that he and General Landreneau had a good relationship, and although there was not technical unity of command, there was unity of effort.”³⁰

Hurricane Katrina had significant political implications for both the state and federal governments. LTG Honore understood that Governor Blanco was under pressure from local business leaders due to reports of looting. While she had proclaimed that looters were to be shot on sight, LTG Honore witnessed that the majority of items being taken were food items, baby supplies, and essentials necessary for survival. He comprehended that words have meaning and convey a particular image or message to the audience. He was able to provide evidence of the truth to counter rumors and misinformation while affirming his credibility as an advisor, communicator and leader. Likewise, reports of snipers were exaggerated as there were no confirmed reports of any people or equipment hit by any gunfire. General Honore's assessment was that the reported 'snipers' were simply people shooting into the air as they had no other way to get attention. General Honore displayed great empathy with the audience affected by the storm. His understanding of the environment shaped by operational design allowed him to receive messages in an effective manner, very similar in the way he sent messages using the considerations found within the Pragmatic Complexity Model.

Understanding that interference and competing messages such as the allegations of looting would detract from his messages along with the credibility of JTF Katrina, LTG Honore allocated necessary time and effort to correct inaccurate information. He concurrently ensured that the correct and necessary information was reaching the desired audiences to achieve the Governor's and Mayor's desired effects.

As General Honore provided strategic advice, he utilized an iterative and continuous dialogue between military and political leadership. He always promoted

political leadership as the ultimate authority in decisions to achieve established objectives through military force. The continuous dialogue process is in effort to achieve prudence and exercise moral courage as political and military leaders hold each other accountable for the development of strategies, policies and objectives that enable the greatest possibility for success with the least risk. This dialogue must be followed by action as military leaders undertake the responsibility to translate aims, strategy, and policy into operations and tactics.

Effective advising and communication requires sound relationships built upon trust. LTG Honore had well established relationships within Louisiana to facilitate these efforts. There was a significant level of trust between the National Guard and Active Component forces. Honore's own son was serving with a National Guard unit in Iraq at the time of Hurricane Katrina. When the Governor asked General Honore to execute all evacuation efforts and understanding the need for collaboration and unity of effort, Honore responded that he would coordinate evacuation with General Landreneau the Commander of the Louisiana National Guard, with whom he had a long-standing relationship.

Through use of the elements of operational design and the Pragmatic Complexity Model LTG Honore ensured that his subordinate commanders had a clear understanding of his visualization and intent. Major General William Caldwell was the Land Component Commander in JTF Katrina and responsible for securing the New Orleans Airport. General Honore's instruction to General Caldwell included: "If I have to give you commander's guidance, you're the wrong guy. Bill, save lives."³¹ This is indicative of the trust and relationships that General Honore had formed prior to this

crisis. These relationships contributed to the alignment of organizations and resources involved in relief efforts.

Understanding that a pervasive media was crucial to getting word to the American people, LTG Honore demonstrated to all audiences that he and his staff maintained a presence in the affected area and were there to coordinate the relief efforts. “At the end of the day, we’re working for the American people and that kept us grounded.”³² LTG Honore used the press and media as critical tools to “tell the American people what’s going on, not scratch the itch of the reporter.”³³ During press conferences, General Honore ensured that he delivered his key messages and information regardless of the questions asked by the reporters. He used the reporters first question to deliver his highest priority message, the second question to deliver his second priority message, and with the third question asked, he would repeat his first highest priority message.³⁴ “I probably shoot my mouth off too much. But what you see is what you get. I can’t worry about that. I have to get a mission done.”³⁵

The media provided an alternate means to communicate when communication networks were overwhelmed. Through press conferences General Honore was able to issue orders to his staff via television broadcasts. This did cause some frustration across his staff as they were being issued the directives at the same time as the public being informed. However, use of mass media was successful in securing external support for the relief effort. The evacuation of pets is an example. The day following a press conference where General Honore claimed that soldiers would assist in the recovery of pets affected by the storm, Federal Express, PetSmart and L.L Bean delivered a 747-cargo plane filled with animal catch-sticks, pet cages, food, other pet

supplies and one thousand pairs of wading boots to assist the soldiers in their evacuation and care of pets. “We were literally making this up as we went.”³⁶ General Honore was able to motivate organizations through common interests. He delivered messages that resonated with multiple audiences across multiple delivery channels and produced effects in support of the established objectives.

Through operational design, General Honore understood the capacity of the multiple organizations providing relief. Comprehending that the capacity of state and local organizations was degraded by the effects of the storm, with many of the members of these organizations being affected as well, he knew that active duty forces would need to take on a larger role than prescribed in the National Response Plan. This was confirmed in his regular collaboration with all agencies assisting in the relief effort.

Speaking of the role of the active duty forces, LTG Honore stated that:

“Only the military can do expeditionary logistics; not FEMA, not contractors. The military exists to protect the people of America and we embraced that mission with pride. The presence of the active duty force allowed them to be first responders instead of victims. Local authorities such as the mayor and governor were exhausted due to lack of sleep, constant media presence as well as being victims of the storm themselves.”³⁷

The New Orleans Police Department, as an example, had lost the capability to execute command and control. Approximately half of their vehicles were under water from the storm surge. Without power, they were unable to charge their radios. The capacity of the Louisiana National Guard was also degraded as approximately five thousand of its soldiers were deployed to Iraq.

As an example of providing the best possible military advice to civilian authorities, Michael Chertoff, the Secretary of Homeland Security, wanted soldiers to execute all aspects of the mortuary affairs efforts. Honore recognized the impact that

would result from having untrained soldiers conduct this task. As the Commander of First Army, General Honore knew that there were only thirty-four trained soldiers for this task and those were unavailable due to pending overseas deployment. Honore directed coordination for contracted coroners to execute necessary technical requirements while soldiers would transport the remains to established collection points.

A close relationship between Active Duty and National Guard forces through collaboration and coordination was necessary to achieve unified action in the provision of relief. The capacity of the National Guard was diminished as many of its members, also victims of the storm, lacked the logistics and capacity to conduct evacuation or search and rescue operations. Regarding the role and capacity of active component forces, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld remarked:

“The Department of Defense has, ever since September eleventh, focused very seriously on the homeland defense task that we have to know can fall to us in the event of either a truly catastrophic event, whether manmade or natural, or multiple events which would add a dimension of complexity and certainly not out of the realm of possibility. We have of course as a department never organized, trained and equipped for that role and we have certain statutory limitations with respect to posse comitatus on law enforcement. On the other hand, there isn't any institution in the country that is organized, trained and equipped to do things that are conceivably useful in that kind of a catastrophic event, nor would it make any sense for the society to create an institution of that magnitude to be available.”³⁸

With the faith and trust that civilian leadership had in the advice of General Honore, President Bush stated that, “He's a good man. He can do the job. That's why General Honore is here. And so, when I come into a briefing, I don't tell them what to do. They tell me the facts on the ground, and my question to them is, do you have what you need?”³⁹ General Honore proved effective at understanding the environment and was able to provide advice to multiple strategic leaders in order to achieve the goals and objectives established.

In the years following Hurricane Katrina, General Honore continues to demonstrate his relevancy as a strategic advisor during times of national crisis. He has appeared with numerous media outlets commenting on government response to Hurricane Sandy in 2012 and Hurricanes Harvey and Maria in 2017. He has additionally published numerous books on developing a culture of preparedness and contemporary leadership. This demonstrates his continued reach to international audiences along with the credibility and relevancy of his advice on the subject.

Through use of elements of operational design and the pragmatic complexity Model, Lieutenant General Honore was both an effective and necessary strategic advisor during Hurricane Katrina relief efforts. As a Louisiana native, he was embraced by the affected population. His comprehensive understanding of the operational environment through design allowed him to align strategy, operations, and logistics to achieve the desired effects and provide security, save lives, and promote confidence in the federal relief efforts among the affected population and the nation as a whole. Use of the Pragmatic Complexity Model permitted him to deliver credible and trustworthy information that resonated across multiple audiences with various narratives impacted by with a countless number of potential biases. Given that natural disasters will happen again and that “an impossible task is when our nation needs us the most”⁴⁰, LTG Russel Honore presents an instructive example of an operational joint task force commander and strategic advisor in time of natural disaster and domestic crisis.

Endnotes

¹ Ray Nagin, “Transcript of Radio Interview with CNN”, September, 2, 2005. www.cnn.com/2005/US/09/02/nagin.transcript/, (accessed February 26, 2018).

² Thomas Galvin, Welcome to the Seminar, Faculty Paper (Carlisle, PA: Department of Command, Leadership, and Management, March 2015), 8-9.

³ Gregory A Gecowets and Jefferson P. Marquis. "Applying Lessons of Hurricane Katrina". *Joint Force Quarterly: JFQ*, no. 48, 2008, 72.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 70.

⁵ Steve Bowman et al., *Hurricane Katrina: DOD Disaster Response*. (Washington, DC: U.S. Library of Congress, Congressional Research Service, September 19, 2005), 1, <https://fas.org/sqp/crs/natsec/RL33095.pdf>, (accessed January 4, 2018).

⁶ Charles R. Wise, "Organizing for homeland security after Katrina: Is adaptive management what's missing?", *Public Administration Review* 66 (3): 304, <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/j.1540-6210.2006.00587.x>, (accessed January 5, 2018).

⁷ Jean-Loup Samaan and Laurent Verneuil, "Civil–Military Relations in Hurricane Katrina: A Case Study on Crisis Management in Natural Disaster Response," *Enhancing Transatlantic Governance on Disaster Relief and Preparedness*, 2009, 1.

⁸ Russel Honore, U.S. Army, Commander, Joint Task Force Katrina, Skype interview by author, January 11, 2018.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Joint Operation Planning*, Joint Publication 5-0 (Washington, DC: U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, December 26, 2006), I-12.

¹² Russel Honore, Skype interview by author, January 11, 2018.

¹³ U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Joint Operation Planning*, Joint Publication 5-0 (Washington, DC: U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, December 26, 2006), GL-12.

¹⁴ Russel Honore, Skype interview by author, January 11, 2018.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ Hayden White, *The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990), 48.

²¹ Steven R Corman, Angela Trethewey and Bud Goodall, *A 21st Century Model for Communication in the Global War of Ideas*, Consortium for Strategic Communication (Tempe, AZ, April 3, 2007), 9.

²² Ibid., This diagram is adapted as a summary of the concepts presented.

²³ Russel Honore, *Leadership in the New Normal* (Lafayette, LA: Acadian House, 2012), 21.

²⁴ Steven R Corman et al, *A 21st Century Model for Communication in the Global War of Ideas*, 2.

²⁵ U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Joint Operation Planning*, Joint Publication 5-0 (Washington, DC: U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, December 26, 2006), IV-7.

²⁶ William E Rapp, "Ensuring effective military voice". *Parameters* 46, 4 (2016).

²⁷ Russel Honore, *Don't Get Stuck on Stupid! Leadership in Action*. (Lafayette, LA: Acadian House, 2017), 89.

²⁸ Daniel P Moynihan, *Collaboration amid Crisis: The Department of Defense during Hurricane Katrina*, Maxwell School, Syracuse University, www.maxwell.syr.edu/parcc/eparcc/cases/Collaboration_Amid_Crisis_The_Department_of_Defense_During_Hurricane_Katrina/, (accessed January 12, 2018).

²⁹ Thad W. Allen, *Katrina: It Reshaped the Gulf Coast- How Will it Reshape Washington, D.C.? Remarks by Admiral Thad Allen, Commandant, United States Coast Guard, Policy Perspectives*, Volume 13, 2006, Federal News Service, 2 www.journal.policy-perspectives.org/article/view/4140, (accessed December 18, 2017).

³⁰ U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, *Hurricane Katrina: The Defense Department's Role in the Response: Hearing Before the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs*, 109th Congress, 2nd sess., February 9, 2006, 14, <https://www.hsdl.org/?abstract&did=472074>, (accessed January 14, 2018).

³¹ Russel Honore, Skype interview by author, January 11, 2018.

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Kevin Chappel, "The Aftermath of Hurricane Katrina and the Man Who's Helping Put Things Back Together", *Ebony*, November 2005, 287.

³⁶ Russel Honore, Skype interview by author, January 11, 2018.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Remarks by Secretary Rumsfeld at the Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, PA, 2006, <http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/dod/tr20060327-12710.htm>, (accessed November 12, 2017).

³⁹ President, Lieutenant General Honore Discuss Hurricane Relief in Louisiana, Federal Information & News Dispatch, Inc., <https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2005/09/20050912.html>, (accessed January 9, 2018).

⁴⁰ Russel Honore, Skype interview by author, January 11, 2018.