The role of the search and rescue chief of operations: how to put order into disorder?

Lieutenant-colonel Blaise Agresti, conseiller technique national montagne
Gendarmerie nationale
Example:
War in Afghanistan
how to manage a multifactors crisis?
Chief of SAR operations
level 1: common mountain rescue operations
Tactical approach

level 2: large scale mountain rescue operations
Global approach
Missions of the search and rescue chief of operations (level 2): towards a global and comprehensive approach

MAIN TASK: TO PUT ORDER INTO DISORDER
Main tasks of the search and rescue chief of operations

- Crisis preparation and planification
- Involvement of capabilities
- Operational coordination
- Authorities reporting
- Administrative and judiciary coordination
- Communication
- Debriefing
- Lessons learned and training
Main problems to face during a large scale disaster
Decision making process: how to put order into disorder and reduce the initial crisis answer?
Iterative decision process

1. CRISIS
   - 5 MN

2. EMERGENCY MEASURES

3. COMMAND AND CONTROL ORGANIZATION
   - 10 MN
   - 15 MN

CONCEPT OF OPERATION
Iterative decisional process

CRISE

INTELLIGENCE ANALYSIS

Disaster scale
Complexity
Sensibility

EMERGENCY MEASURES
intelligence and information
Iterative decisional process

EVALUATION OF THE SITUATION

Crisis size evaluation:
1 - Mountain rescue unit level;
2 - Mountain rescue system level;
3 - Multi system organization level

Risks assessment

Judiciary and media dimension

COMMAND AND CONTROL ORGANIZATION
Risks assessment
Organization of command and control
Iterative decisional process
Analysis and decision

Step 1
- What the matter? where? when?
  Operation framework
- Why? What? mission letter and spirit
- With who? Means and reinforcements
- Against who? risks/constraints

Conclusions: constraints/imperatives, rhythm of operations, « main effect » and subsidiary means

Step 2
- HOW? (advantages, disadvantages, risks)
  Confrontation of options

Concept op op operation
Increase of power
Iterative decision process

CRISIS

EMERGENCY MEASURES

COMMAND AND CONTROL ORGANIZATION

CONCEPT OF OPERATION

1 2 3
5 MN 10 MN 15 MN
AVALANCHE DE MONTROC

Mise en examen du maire de Chamonix

Le maire et son avocat au tribunal de grande instance de Bonneville.

Photo Bernard DAMAY

Ce 9 février 1999, une avalanche provoqua la mort de 12 personnes et détruisit 14 chalets. Hier, au tribunal de Bonneville, le maire de Chamonix s’est vu notifier sa mise en examen pour “homicides involontaires”. Président du comité “Sécurité avalanches et risques naturels.”
Administrative consequence (2011): new avalanche cartography
LESSONS LEARNED
PROCESS
RE-BUILDING

National process for all mountain rescue units (terrestrial and air units)

- Coordinated by the national training school in Chamonix
- Classified process out of judiciary investigations
- Debriefings and analysis

- New trainings and scenarii
SAR OPERATIONAL CHIEF TRAINING COURSE

- 2 WEEKS NATIONAL TRAINING for senior rescuers (team leader course)

Based only on operational scenarios, workshop and lessons learned (aircraft crash, large avalanches, cable-car fall...)

Decisions making learning
Operational coordination
Command and control exercises
Media training

November 2012: INTERNATIONAL SENIOR COURSE IN CHAMONIX
Synthesis: preserve freedom of maneuver

- Crisis management is a fight against time
- Leadership versus planification
- The key is a quick and structured decision making process
- Protect the area of operations against medias and authorities
- Selection and training of SAR chief of operations is just crucial
- Take care about organigrams « usines à gaz »
Thanks for your attention

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