

The Impact Of Cooperation Between The Saudi Red Crescent And Civil Defense In Managing Major Crises And Disasters

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Abstract:

This research aims to study the impact of cooperation between the Saudi Red Crescent and Civil Defense in confronting and managing major crises and disasters. The study was based on the descriptive analytical approach, and included a sample of (200) individuals working in the Saudi Red Crescent. The questionnaire was used as the main tool for data collection, and its topics covered the areas of coordination, joint plans, training, resource distribution, and job satisfaction. The results showed that the level of cooperation between the two parties contributes significantly to the speed of response, reducing human losses, and enhancing the efficiency of crisis management. It also enhances community confidence in the ability of the relevant agencies to confront disasters effectively. The study recommends increasing joint training and developing communication and coordination mechanisms to achieve the highest levels of efficiency in emergency response.

Keywords: Saudi Red Crescent - Civil Defense - Cooperation - Crises - Disasters - Emergency Response.

Introduction

Major disasters and crises are among the challenges facing societies at the local and international levels requiring a rapid, effective, and coordinated response to mitigate their devastating effects. In the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, both the Saudi Red Crescent Authority and the General Directorate of Civil Defense play vital roles in this field, as they represent two essential pillars of the crisis management system. Cooperation and integration between these two entities is not limited to mere coordination, but extends beyond that to building a strategic partnership aimed at maximizing the ability to respond quickly and effectively to any emergency. Many experiences have proven that individual efforts, no matter how strong, cannot achieve the same results as can be achieved through joint work. As the body responsible for rescue and evacuation operations, dealing with fires and technical risks, Civil Defense possesses the necessary expertise and mechanisms to reach affected areas and control the situation. In addition, the Saudi Red Crescent, as a relief and humanitarian organization, possesses experience in providing first aid and emergency medical care, in addition to providing shelter and humanitarian aid to those affected. This mutual specialization creates integration, as Civil Defense secures affected sites and opens roads, making it easier for Red Crescent teams to reach them and provide medical and humanitarian support. Instant 1,11

The importance of research-

The importance of studying the impact of cooperation between the Saudi Red Crescent and Civil Defense lies not only in understanding current mechanisms, but also in identifying ways to enhance and develop them by studying previous cases and analyzing the challenges faced by joint work teams. This allows us to extract lessons learned and provide recommendations to improve future performance. This cooperation

,represents a successful model of integration between national institutions in serving and protecting society and confirms that teamwork is the best way to confront major challenges. The ultimate goal of this research is to shed light on this strategic partnership and provide a framework that decision-makers and field teams .can benefit from to ensure a more effective and flexible response in the future 2,9

The importance of studying the impact of cooperation between the Saudi Red Crescent and the General Directorate of Civil Defense in managing major crises and disasters lies in several key areas, as they constitute the foundation for building an effective national response system. This study helps understand the mechanisms of integration between the two entities, clarifying the specific roles and responsibilities of each during the various stages of a crisis, starting with preparedness and prevention, through immediate and rapid response, and ending with the recovery phase. As the Civil Defense, the entity responsible for rescue, evacuation, and risk management operations, represents the front line in any disaster, while the Red Crescent's role is to provide immediate medical and humanitarian care to those affected. This mutual ,specialization and systematic cooperation ensures that there is no overlap in tasks or gaps in response which maximizes the efficiency of field work4,7

The study also provides an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of this strategic partnership. By reviewing past experiences and analyzing data, successful practices that need to be strengthened can be identified, as well as the challenges and obstacles that hinder joint work. The study may reveal the need to improve communication channels and coordination between field teams or develop joint training programs to ensure consistency in procedures and protocols. This critical analysis opens the door to the continuous development and improvement of the crisis management system, which enhances the Kingdom's ability to confront future challenges. The study also emphasizes the importance of teamwork and partnerships between national institutions, as managing major crises is not the responsibility of a single entity, but rather a joint effort that requires the concerted efforts of all sectors. Studying the model of cooperation between the Red Crescent and Civil Defense can serve as a framework to emulate for enhancing cooperation between other relevant entities, such as the Ministry of Health and various security agencies, creating an .integrated network for emergency response 3,5

Therefore, the study of this cooperation is not limited to the academic aspect, but extends to become a practical tool for enhancing community security and protecting lives and property, reflecting the Kingdom's .commitment to building an efficient, flexible, and professional crisis response system3,6

The concept of crisis and disaster management

Crisis and disaster management is a vital concept. It aims to deal with sudden and unexpected events that threaten the stability of individuals, institutions, and societies alike. Crisis and disaster management can be defined as the art and science of planning and implementing responses to negative events. This is ,achieved through a set of procedures and policies that aim to reduce potential losses, whether human .material, or moral, and return the community or organization to a state of stability as quickly as possible9,2

The terms crisis and disaster differ in scope and impact. A crisis is a sudden disruption that threatens the stability of a particular system, whether individual, institutional, or societal. A crisis may be limited in scope, but it requires a rapid and effective response to contain it and prevent it from deteriorating into a disaster . A disaster is defined as a large-scale event that exceeds the ability of a society or organization to overcome using its own resources. A disaster results in significant loss of life and property and requires a coordinated response at multiple levels, including national and international assistance. Disasters can be natural, such as earthquakes and floods, or man-made, such as major fires, industrial accidents, or the .spread of epidemics 1,10

Therefore, crisis and disaster management is not simply a reaction to an event, but rather a proactive and preventative approach that focuses on planning, training, and coordination with the aim of enhancing communities' resilience and facing major challenges with flexibility and effectiveness 1,5

Dimensions of crisis and disaster management

The dimensions of crisis and disaster management focus on how to deal with negative events at three levels which can be explained as follows

The intellectual and cognitive dimension focuses on understanding and analyzing the nature of a crisis or disaster before it occurs. It includes prediction and the ability to extrapolate indicators that may warn of a potential crisis, studying the potential causes of crises, identifying the strengths and weaknesses of existing systems, developing clear strategic plans to deal with different scenarios, and defining the roles and responsibilities of each team. The applied dimension focuses on the skills and practical procedures necessary to deal with a crisis on the ground and includes immediate response and the ability to make quick and effective decisions in the first moments of a crisis, the presence of leadership capable of directing field teams and coordinating their efforts effectively, and conducting training, simulations, and periodic testing of previously prepared plans, which helps hone the skills of teams and increase their readiness for any emergency events 2,8

The social and humanitarian dimension focuses on dealing with the psychological and social effects of a crisis on individuals and society. It includes psychological support and providing psychological assistance to those affected, whether victims or members of response and community awareness teams, by spreading awareness of the culture of crisis preparedness, teaching individuals how to behave during them, and promoting the spirit of teamwork and partnership between various government agencies, humanitarian organizations, and civil society 8,7

Therefore, these three dimensions do not operate separately, but rather complement each other to form a comprehensive crisis management system that ensures not only containing the event, but also mitigating its negative effects in the long term 6,3

The role of the Saudi Red Crescent in emergency response

The Saudi Red Crescent Authority is one of the main pillars of the emergency response system in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Its emergency and relief role complements the efforts of other government agencies to confront major crises and disasters. The Authority's role is not limited to providing medical services, but extends to include all stages of crisis management, from preparedness and prevention through immediate response to recovery. The Authority's most important role is providing emergency medical aid as its specialized teams provide immediate care to those injured in traffic accidents, fires, industrial accidents, and other emergencies. Speed of response is vital, and therefore the Authority is constantly developing its technologies, such as the use of smartphone applications to accurately pinpoint the location of an accident and reduce arrival time 9,1

The role of the Red Crescent is more evident in responding to major disasters, and the scope of the Authority's work expands to include large-scale humanitarian and relief missions. The Red Crescent cooperates closely with the General Directorate of Civil Defense to provide urgent relief to those affected. Civil Defense teams carry out rescue and evacuation operations, while Red Crescent teams are responsible for providing medical care on-site and providing shelter and basic assistance to survivors. This integration between the two parties ensures a comprehensive and consistent response, as each party undertakes its specialized tasks without overlap. The role of the Red Crescent is not limited to actual response, but extends to prevention and capacity building. The Authority continuously trains and qualifies its staff and volunteers on the latest practices in crisis and disaster management. It also plays a significant role in spreading community awareness by offering public training courses on first aid and how to act appropriately in emergency situations. These awareness programs contribute to creating a society that is more prepared and capable of dealing with crises, thus reducing potential losses. In addition, the Saudi Red Crescent is keen to strengthen its partnerships with international organizations such as the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies to exchange expertise and develop the national response system 2,7

Therefore, the Saudi Red Crescent is not just a relief organization, but a strategic partner in protecting lives and property and a fundamental pillar in building a secure society. The Saudi Red Crescent is a fundamental pillar of the Kingdom's human security, not only as a provider of emergency medical services, but also as an effective partner in building a society prepared and capable of facing major challenges 3,8

Civil Defense Tasks in Dealing with Major Disasters

The role of Civil Defense is centered on three main stages: prevention, preparedness, immediate response and the post-disaster phase. In the prevention and preparedness phase, Civil Defense works to implement systems and regulations that ensure the availability of safety standards in facilities and buildings and issues the necessary licenses for various projects after ensuring their compliance with safety requirements. It also implements evacuation plans and periodically trains on them, and raises public awareness regarding ways to prevent potential risks. This preventive aspect is the foundation of Civil Defense work, as it contributes to reducing the likelihood of accidents or mitigating their effects if they occur. Then comes the immediate response phase, which is the most important in dealing with disasters, as Civil Defense undertakes multiple and vital tasks. It carries out rescue and first aid missions for the injured and those trapped at disaster sites. Firefighting operations are among the most prominent tasks it undertakes, as various types of fires are dealt with by specialized teams and advanced mechanisms. Civil Defense also carries out mass evacuations of affected areas to ensure the safety of residents and secure entrances and exits for other relief and rescue teams. Its role also includes handling hazardous materials such as chemicals or radioactive materials and conducting water rescue operations in floods. This role requires good coordination and quick decision-making to save as many lives as possible. In the post-disaster phase, Civil Defense continues its role by providing the necessary support for recovery operations, conducting surveys and assessments of affected areas to determine the extent of damage and inventory losses, which helps the relevant authorities begin reconstruction and rehabilitation operations. It also works to secure sites to prevent further incidents and provides support to other entities, such as the Saudi Red Crescent Authority, in relief missions and providing aid 10,1,3

Therefore, Civil Defense is not merely a firefighting and rescue agency, but rather a comprehensive institution that works to protect society during all stages of a disaster, from prediction and prevention to recovery and reconstruction

Models of cooperation and integration between the Red Crescent and Civil Defense

Cooperation and integration between the Saudi Red Crescent Authority and the General Directorate of Civil Defense in the system of managing major crises and disasters through practical models. This occurs at non-critical stages that require high coordination and rapid response. One of the most prominent of these models is the integrated field response model, where the two parties work as one team at the scene of the event. In the event of a major traffic accident, for example, Civil Defense is the first party to arrive at the site and performs its basic tasks, such as extinguishing fires, rescuing those trapped inside vehicles, and securing the site to prevent further accidents. Immediately after evacuating the injured, the Red Crescent teams begin their work by providing emergency medical aid at the site and then transporting the injured to hospitals. This logical sequence of tasks ensures that there are no time or logistical gaps, which directly contributes to saving lives and reducing human losses. Another model is joint training and qualification. The two sides regularly organize workshops, training courses, and conduct joint simulations. These exercises simulate real disaster scenarios, such as floods or earthquakes, allowing field teams from both sides to work together in a realistic simulation environment. These simulations help improve communication and coordination between individuals, making them more prepared to handle real-life situations with flexibility and effectiveness. In one mock exercise, Civil Defense might secure a collapsed building, while Red Crescent teams search for survivors and provide medical care at a temporary evacuation site. This joint training breaks down barriers between teams and creates a common language of procedures and protocols 4,6

Cooperation is also evident in the information and expertise exchange model, where each entity shares data on potential risks, reports on previous incidents, and lessons learned. For example, Civil Defense may share data on areas most vulnerable to flooding, which helps the Red Crescent develop proactive deployment plans for relief teams in those areas. The Red Crescent also shares data on the most common types of injuries in disasters, which helps Civil Defense develop its rescue strategies. This knowledge exchange enhances each entity's ability to plan better and makes the crisis management system as a whole more efficient 7,9

Therefore, these models are not merely formal procedures, but rather the foundation of a strategic partnership aimed at maximizing national capacity to respond to any emergency effectively and efficiently confirming that teamwork is the key to success in facing major challenges 3,1

The impact of joint cooperation on the speed of response and reducing losses

The joint cooperation between the Saudi Red Crescent Authority and the General Directorate of Civil Defense has a significant impact on the speed of response to crises and disasters, directly leading to a reduction in human and material losses. This cooperation is not limited to normal coordination, but rather represents a strategic integration that combines two different specialties to achieve a single goal: protecting lives and property. This cooperation contributes to maximizing response efficiency, as each entity focuses on the tasks in which it excels. Civil Defense specializes in rescue, evacuation, and securing the site, while the Red Crescent specializes in providing medical care and first aid. This mutual specialization ensures that there is no overlap in tasks and prevents the loss of time and effort, which increases the overall response speed to the event. Cooperation also significantly reduces response time. When there are joint plans and protocols in advance, field teams from both entities can work together seamlessly upon arrival at the accident site. The exchange of information in joint operations rooms allows Red Crescent teams to prepare in advance for the number of casualties and the type of injuries expected, which facilitates the triage process. Providing appropriate care as quickly as possible. This prior coordination reduces the chaos and confusion that may occur in the absence of cooperation, which directly affects the chances of survival of the injured as this impact is reflected in reducing human and material losses. When injured people are quickly rescued and first aid is provided within the first golden minutes after an accident, their chances of survival increase significantly. Furthermore, the rapid response of civil defense to hazards, such as fires or hazardous material leaks, limits their spread and minimizes subsequent material damage 8,6

Accordingly, the joint cooperation between the Saudi Red Crescent Authority and the General Directorate of Civil Defense has several positive and direct effects on the speed of response to crises and disasters which in turn leads to a significant reduction in human and material losses. This impact is not limited to mere coordination, but rather represents a strategic integration that brings together two different disciplines to achieve a single goal: protecting lives and property 3,2

Challenges facing coordination between the two parties

The coordination process between the Saudi Red Crescent Authority and the General Directorate of Civil Defense faces a number of challenges that may affect the effectiveness of their joint response to crises and disasters, despite the great efforts made to achieve integration. Among the most important of these challenges are the logistical and technical challenges that may hinder the rapid and effective exchange of information. Each entity may use communication systems and incident management programs that differ from the other, which may create difficulty in linking systems and increase response time. In addition, there are challenges related to field authorities and overlapping roles. At the accident site, there may be some ambiguity regarding who assumes final command, especially in accidents that require a rapid and advanced response from both entities. This overlap may lead to confusion in decision-making or duplication of some tasks, which reduces the efficiency of field work. Furthermore, access to affected sites may pose a logistical challenge. Civil Defense may need to secure a specific route to carry out a rescue operation, while the Red

Crescent may need to use the same route to transport the injured, which requires careful coordination to .avoid any complications 1,7

On the training and human resources front, other challenges may arise, as each entity has its own organizational culture, working methods, and procedures that may differ from one another. Standardizing these procedures requires significant efforts in ongoing joint training, which may not be sufficient to cover all possible scenarios. Furthermore, the lack of joint exercises that simulate complex scenarios may not adequately prepare teams to deal with unexpected challenges in real life. There are also legislative and procedural challenges, as some new crises require new protocols that have not yet been tested, and updating .regulations and procedures may take a long time 9,10

Therefore, understanding these challenges and working to overcome them is a fundamental step toward strengthening the Kingdom's crisis management system and achieving a more flexible and efficient response in the future. Despite these challenges, cooperation between the Red Crescent and Civil Defense remains a vital and successful model for crisis management, and eliminating these challenges is a .fundamental step toward achieving a more flexible and efficient response in the future 4,11

Study Field

The field of study includes Saudi Red Crescent workers, including paramedics, supervisors, and emergency centers.

Research Methodology

The descriptive analytical approach was used to describe the reality and analyze the relationships between the study variables.

Study population and sample

The population consists of all relevant employees in the Saudi Red Crescent, and a sample size of (200) participants was selected.

Research Tool

The researcher used a questionnaire as the primary tool for collecting data. It was designed according to a five-point Likert scale and included topics related to training, readiness, coordination, and job satisfaction. Analysis Results

analyzing:

table (1) frequency distribution

Item	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neutral (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
Coordination between the Red Crescent and Civil Defense contributes to rapid response to major incidents.	11 (5.5%)	22 (11.0%)	33 (16.5%)	74 (37.0%)	60 (30.0%)
Cooperation between the two parties reduces the number of human losses during disasters.	15 (7.5%)	18 (9.0%)	26 (13.0%)	81 (40.5%)	60 (30.0%)
The existence of a joint plan between the Red Crescent and Civil Defense enhances the effectiveness of crisis management.	10 (5.0%)	28 (14.0%)	18 (9.0%)	78 (39.0%)	66 (33.0%)

Joint training and exercises between the Red Crescent and Civil Defense enhance the efficiency of response teams.	5 (2.5%)	23 (11.5%)	38 (19.0%)	81 (40.5%)	53 (26.5%)
Cooperation between the two parties contributes to improving the distribution of resources and capabilities during disasters.	13 (6.5%)	21 (10.5%)	38 (19.0%)	79 (39.5%)	49 (24.5%)
Joint coordination between the Red Crescent and Civil Defense increases the community's sense of security and confidence in facing crises.	10 (5.0%)	17 (8.5%)	30 (15.0%)	69 (34.5%)	74 (37.0%)

The frequency distribution table shows that the majority of sample members (n=200) responded in the “agree” and “strongly agree” categories on all items, reflecting a high positive awareness of the importance of coordination and cooperation between the Red Crescent and Civil Defense in disaster and crisis management. The percentage of negative responses (disagree/strongly disagree) was limited compared to the rest of the categories, which indicates general satisfaction with the effectiveness of this cooperation in improving response speed, reducing human losses, strengthening joint plans, and raising the efficiency of teams and the community's sense of security.

Table (2) Mean and Std. Deviation

Item	Mean	Std. Deviation
Coordination between the Red Crescent and Civil Defense contributes to rapid response to major incidents.	3.75	1.16
Cooperation between the two parties reduces the number of human losses during disasters.	3.77	1.19
The existence of a joint plan between the Red Crescent and Civil Defense enhances the effectiveness of crisis management.	3.81	1.18
Joint training and exercises between the Red Crescent and Civil Defense enhance the efficiency of response teams.	3.77	1.05
Cooperation between the two parties contributes to improving the distribution of resources and capabilities during disasters.	3.65	1.15
Joint coordination between the Red Crescent and Civil Defense increases the community's sense of security and confidence in facing crises.	3.85	1.14

The table shows that the average values for all items ranged between (3.65 - 3.85), i.e. within the “I agree” level, which reflects the agreement of the majority of sample members on the positive role of coordination and cooperation between the Red Crescent and Civil Defense. The standard deviation values (1.05 - 1.19) also indicate the presence of moderate variation between individuals' responses, but this does not negate the general positive trend towards appreciating the effectiveness of joint cooperation in disaster management, reducing losses, and enhancing community confidence. After analyzing the roles of the Saudi Red Crescent Authority and the General Directorate of Civil

Defense and their models of cooperation in crisis and disaster management, a set of key findings can be drawn that confirm the importance and effectiveness of this partnership, which can be explained as follows

- The study demonstrated that strategic integration between the specialized roles of each agency is the foundation for achieving an effective response. While the Civil Defense is responsible for rescue, evacuation, and site security tasks, the Red Crescent is responsible for providing medical

and humanitarian care. This mutual specialization prevents overlap in tasks and accelerates the field response process, leading to increased chances of saving lives and reducing losses

- Joint training between the two parties is one of the most important tools for enhancing preparedness and professionalism. These exercises not only hone the individual skills of the teams, but also build a shared understanding of procedures and protocols and standardize communication between individuals in the field. For example, paramedics are trained on how to deal with injured people in an area secured by rescue teams, ensuring smooth joint work under pressure and during difficult circumstances. This type of joint training breaks down barriers between different organizational cultures and creates a harmonious team capable of working effectively in any emergency
- The study also revealed major challenges facing this coordination, most notably the disparity in the technical systems used by each entity, which can delay the immediate exchange of information. Furthermore, the difficulty of accessing some locations in disaster situations requires more precise logistical coordination. These challenges require innovative solutions, such as developing a unified digital platform for data exchange or establishing more flexible protocols to address access difficulties
- Accordingly, effective and organized cooperation between the Red Crescent and Civil Defense contributes to strengthening the community's confidence in the ability of national institutions to protect lives and property. When the public sees rescue and ambulance teams working in harmony and integration, this enhances the sense of security and confidence in the state's ability to manage crises efficiently and professionally, which represents a long-term strategic success
- **Recommendations to enhance institutional cooperation and disaster management more efficiently**

Enhancing institutional cooperation between the Saudi Red Crescent Authority and the General Directorate of Civil Defense is a strategic goal to raise the efficiency of crisis and disaster management in the Kingdom. This can be achieved by adopting a set of practical and future-oriented recommendations, which can be explained as follows:

- Emphasis should be placed on developing the technical infrastructure by creating a unified digital platform for real-time information exchange. This platform will instantly connect the operations rooms and field teams of both entities, allowing for the sharing of vital data such as the number of casualties, the type of casualties, road conditions, and potential hazards without delay. This digital integration will contribute to accelerating decision-making, reducing errors resulting from indirect communication, and providing field commanders with a comprehensive picture of the situation at any given moment
- Intensify joint training and simulations that simulate complex and diverse disaster scenarios. These exercises should go beyond traditional scenarios to include unfamiliar disasters such as chemical, biological, or even climate disasters. The goal of these exercises is to build a shared understanding of procedures and protocols, standardize communication between field teams, and develop joint leadership skills under pressure. The more field teams are trained to work together, the greater their ability to adapt and respond effectively in real-world situations
- Efforts must be made to unify operational protocols and procedures between the two entities. This requires the formation of joint working groups to review current procedures and consolidate them into a unified manual for dealing with various types of disasters. This unification ensures that teams operate with the same efficiency and methodology, and reduces confusion and conflict in field tasks and authorities
- Strengthening research and academic engagement by systematically studying past cases and lessons learned. A joint research center could be established to analyze team performance in past crises and draw practical recommendations for improving future performance. This evidence-based approach helps develop strategies on an ongoing basis and builds a solid scientific foundation

- Civil society and private sector participation: Cooperation is not limited to government agencies alone. Rather, civil society and the private sector must be involved in the disaster management system. The Red Crescent and Civil Defense can train community volunteers in first aid and basic search and rescue skills, creating a broad support network. Private sector expertise in areas such as technology and communications can also be leveraged to strengthen the rapid response system

The above-mentioned recommendations, when fully implemented, will contribute to raising national preparedness and achieving a more efficient and flexible response to future challenges

Conclusion:

In conclusion, this study demonstrates that cooperation between the Saudi Red Crescent Authority and the General Directorate of Civil Defense is not merely a routine procedure, but rather a pivotal strategic partnership in managing major crises and disasters. The results derived from the analysis have demonstrated that this cooperation enhances the speed of response, reduces human and material losses, and reflects a successful model of institutional integration in serving the community and protecting its members. Furthermore, the mutual specialization of roles, with Civil Defense undertaking rescue and evacuation tasks while the Red Crescent undertakes relief and medical care, creates an integrated system that ensures that there are no gaps in the response chain. Despite the successes achieved, some challenges remain, most notably the disparity in technical systems and the need for more joint training between the two entities

prospects for enhancing this cooperation appear promising and require practical and systematic steps which can be explained as follows

- Focus must be placed on developing a unified digital platform to link the operations rooms and field teams of both entities. This platform will serve as a vital artery that ensures the flow of vital information in real time, thus accelerating the process of field decision-making
- Joint training should be intensified and simulation exercises should be conducted that simulate more complex and unconventional scenarios to raise the level of preparedness and professionalism among human cadres. These exercises not only hone individual skills but also build a shared understanding of procedures and standardize communication across teams
- The need to activate the research and academic aspect by establishing joint working groups to study previous cases, extract lessons learned, and develop new protocols to address future challenges
- Deepening strategic partnerships It is not limited to government agencies only, but extends to include the private sector and civil society to provide innovative solutions

Through the above, the Red Crescent Authority and the General Directorate of Civil Defense can build a broad national support network capable of meeting future challenges. All of these prospects will lead to the development of a national disaster management system characterized by flexibility, efficiency and readiness to respond to any emergency.

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