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PROTECTION | PREVENTION | PREPAREDNESS | RESPONSE | RESILIENCE | RECOVERY

EXTREME WEATHER 2017 HURRICANE SEASON

Interview with Jesper Holmer Lund of INSARAG; Geopolitics & Climate; Resilience in Qatar; Security & Conflict; Immersive Counter-terror Training; Reintegrating Violent Extremists; Business Continuity; Communities & Policing; Risk Communication; Leadership; Humanitarian Action; Junior Health Volunteers in Refugee Camps

contents

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News	4	Geopolitics & climate	30
Comment			
Disasters: Natural, man-made, or both?	8	We must place climate change and resource scarcity on an equal level to the conventional considerations of national security, before the ability to enact countermeasures becomes a matter of inconsequential 'what ifs', according to Casey Brunelle	
SK Dogra contends that a new category of disaster should be adopted to reflect how the consequences of climate and nature are compounded by human action			
Averting catastrophe in high-rise fires	10	After Daesh in Iraq	34
Although fires cannot be entirely prevented, proper emergency planning and safety systems are being called into question as more high-rises are being built, reports Anna Averkiou			
Weather			
Hurricanes Harvey and Irma in the US	12	Protracted armed conflicts	36
Over a period of two-and-a-half weeks the US faced the onslaught of two Category 4 hurricanes in Texas and Florida. Bill Peterson reports			
A Caribbean update	18	Refugees fleeing explosive violence	38
Emily Hough provides a short report looking at which islands were worst affected and a brief insight into the initial response			
Humanitarian			
INSARAG interview	20	Child refugee health volunteers	42
Emily Hough speaks to the Secretary of INSARAG, Jesper Holmer Lund			
Humanitarian aid: A matter of trust	24	Reintegrating junior violent extremists	44
Anastasia Kyriacou investigates why trust in NGOs is declining in many countries			
Clean water for an entire nation	26	Islamic state deportees and returnees	
Darrel Larson describes a co-operative project that aims to give clean water to every household in Liberia by 2020			
Conflict & Security			
Surviving a terrorist attack	28	How do you reintegrate people who joined Islamic State back into their communities when they return home safely? Rakyana Adibrata presents an analysis from Indonesia	
Christo Motz speaks to paramedic Hassan Zubier, who was stabbed several times as he tried to save the life of a fatally injured woman in the Turku knife attack			

Urban search & rescue p20



USAID's Office of US Foreign Disaster Assistance

Junior volunteers p42



Crystal Wells | International Medical Corps

comment

Extreme weather: Hurricanes

Concept Café | Alamy

Peacebuilding works 48	Risk communication saves lives 70
Phil Vernon knows that peacebuilding works. Here, he shares details of a report on the levels of support for and engagement in peacebuilding	Ben Duncan highlights examples where risk communication in health emergencies has gone wrong
Preventing & surviving crisis 50	R&D/Technology
Alviina Alametsä lived through a school shooting when she was 15. Here, she shares her thoughts on community resilience	Changing brain injury treatment 72
Resilience	Millions of people, including emergency responders and military personnel, are at risk from traumatic brain injury. Our R&D team reports on promising medical developments for such injuries
Supporting those who flee Boko Haram ... 54	Frontline poisons information 77
Andrew B Brown describes how personnel were kept safe during a fact-finding visit to speak to IDPs in Nigeria	While each emergency service plays its own vital role, ensuring timely access to advice on the features and management of poisoning is a crucial component of crisis preparedness
Employee assistance 56	Co-operation
It is vital for organisations to have crisis plans to ensure the safety and wellbeing of their employees, no matter where they are in the world, says Martin McLaughlin	The constant honing of co-operation 78
National resilience 58	The word 'co-operation' is often used in a multi-agency context, but what does it really mean? Bernard Wisniewski, Robert Socha and Tomasz Zweglinski explore this concept, using Poland's fire and police services as an example
David Stewart analyses how Qatar has shown resilience during a national crisis after its land border, sea routes and direct air flights were closed by a number of its neighbours	A framework for trust 80
Leadership qualities 62	Laurence Marzell presents a scalable, transferable architecture for community policing that is helping to build a bedrock of trust with communities
It's all well and good being a great leader in normal times, but what additional qualities are needed in times of crisis? Rob McAlister elaborates	Immersive counter-terror training 84
Battle boxes for businesses 64	There has been a rise in the number of attacks carried out by lone actors and an increasing number of attackers using vehicles and knives, writes Rob Munro. Can augmented and virtual reality help?
It is time to bring the battle box into the 21st century to help with business continuity after a major incident, says Christoph Schroth. Here is some advice as to what they should contain	In Depth
Bits and bytes and flesh and blood 68	Drone-based Photogrammetry 86
You can have all the best technology in the world to detect and defend but, in a cyber incident, decisions are going to need to be made and communicated by humans, according to Elliott Atkins	The progress of NIMS: Part II 88
	Early warning in small islands: Part III 92
	Regulars
	Events 94
	Frontline 98

CRJ aims to identify and highlight future trends that could manifest as life-threatening hazards and events which will, in turn, confront all those whose concern is to protect lives, livelihoods, the environment and businesses, and consequently the wellbeing and sustainability of nations and communities. We then propose practical solutions.



In many ways, it is a simple matter to isolate and trace the threads in this complex global tapestry of climate, geopolitics, politics, conflict and disputes, modern tribalism that is often fuelled by social media, food insecurity, human encroachment of land previously considered unsuitable for settlement – the list is long but the clues are all there.

This issue's narrative thread provides a timely reminder – if one were needed – that nature can be the biggest threat of all, with reports on the cataclysmic devastation caused by a particularly active hurricane season. And, as CRJ goes to press, wildfires in California have led to 23 deaths, hundreds more missing and thousands of structures destroyed.

On p30, Casey Brunelle traces links between climate, resource scarcity and conflict, before we move on to John Drake's analysis of stabilisation progress in the Middle East on p34. The long term and wider ramifications of protracted conflicts are examined on p36, and we consider the impact on communities and individuals on p38. As countries prepare themselves for the return of foreign fighters or their children (p44 and p46), we look at reintegration and peacebuilding, which are not only said to cost less in the long term, but also create the peaceful and sustainable societies in which we all want to live (p48 and p50).

Turning to learning, David Stewart draws lessons on national resilience from the recent blockade of Qatar (p58); Rob McAllister examines leadership on p62 and Christoph Schroth looks at the supplies all businesses should put together in the form of battle boxes (p64). The persistent and malevolent threat of cyber attacks is examined on p68, before we move on to even more practical solutions.

Page 72 presents developments for the treatment of traumatic brain injury, followed by articles looking on inter-service co-operation and how technology is being harnessed to create more secure and resilient communities.

This all serves to demonstrate that the whole picture, complex as it is, can be redrawn with positive outcomes. It is a challenge, but the will and human creativity are in place.

Emily Hough

National resilience p58



Stewarts | CRJ

Frontline interview: Jeremy Gilley p98



Peace One Day

Employee assistance in

It is vital for companies – large and small – to put crisis plans in place in advance to ensure the safety and wellbeing of their employees, no matter where they are in the world, says **Martin McLaughlin**

Employee safety is an important subject to touch upon at this particular time. In the past few months alone we have seen a slew of crisis events around the world that have thrown millions of lives into chaos – from the wave of hurricanes battering the Caribbean (p18); to the flooding emergency in Houston (p12); and the tragic earthquakes in Mexico City (p20).

For people affected by such events it can be a deeply frightening, unsettling and indeed dangerous time. Similarly, it can be difficult for companies to ensure the safety and wellbeing of their workforce, while at the same time trying to ensure the business itself can be sustained.

So, how can businesses – from SMEs to large multinationals – ensure the safety of their employees around the world in the event of a crisis such as a natural hazard or terrorist attack?

First and foremost it is vital that companies have comprehensive contingency plans that can be put in place at a moment's notice to ensure

the safety and wellbeing of their employees and their respective families. Whether you have five employees or 50,000, it is important to have a plan, ready to be put into action in the event of a crisis.

When it comes to dealing with natural hazards – depending on the particular scenario – it is sometimes the case that there is some kind of advance warning, even if this is just a few hours' notice, which means people can be advised on how best to prepare in some way for what is to come.

Hurricane Harvey is one recent example where a forecast warning was issued in advance, meaning those based in and around Houston had some idea of what to expect. We knew the storm was coming and that it was going to severely affect those caught up in its path. We were also warned that the damage was going to be catastrophic, and that if people remained in their homes, their lives would be in danger. Although the window was short, there was some time to put contingency plans and evacuations into action, to try to ensure the safety and wellbeing of employees working and living in the area.

In the case of Hurricane Irma, which called for a

state-wide evacuation (see p12), many companies gave their employees paid leave so they could evacuate. However despite this, a large number of people stayed behind to protect their homes, or were unable to exit the state owing to traffic hold ups.

One solution in these circumstances is to co-ordinate a process to reach out to all those who decided to remain in the area. It is important to conduct a 'head count' of sorts, to determine their safety and wellbeing, what support or assistance they require, and to keep them updated on the a very fluid situation.

The damage caused by the likes of Hurricane Harvey and Hurricane Irma can set cities back years, especially when you take into consideration the time and money that will be needed to invest in rebuilding. People's lives will be severely affected by the damage to their homes, possessions

and, in some cases, the loss of a loved one. It is important to ensure that all those affected have access to specially trained counsellors as quickly as possible to help them cope with the trauma and loss experienced.

Beyond the damage to infrastructure, such an event can be harrowing for the individuals who are caught up in it, many of whom will face huge financial difficulties of their own as they work to rebuild their homes. It is at this stage that

the benefit of having a robust crisis management programme really comes into its own and enables companies to provide their employees and family members with all the additional support required. Such support encompasses counselling and medical rehabilitation, in order to help them get back on their feet and to protect their future wellbeing.

Turning to terrorism, attacks such as the recent incident at Parsons Green Tube Station in London, or the Brussels bombings in 2016, generally take place without advance warning. When dealing with these unexpected crises, the first step is to try to ascertain who has been affected.

My experience has shown that in the event of a terrorist attack, companies can be swamped with calls from wives, husbands or partners who are worried about their family

Often in the chaos, people leave their homes or workplaces without their mobile phones or handbags, meaning they cannot be contacted or get in touch with loved ones

an emergency



members and loved ones. No organisation is geared up to cater for such an event, so the process needs to be carefully co-ordinated in close co-operation with the respective emergency services. In the case of a terror attack, there is no time to prepare, so the need for contingency plans to be in place is crucial.

During the Parsons Green incident, for example, 19 people were taken from the incident to different hospitals around London. At a time like this, the situation on the ground can become quite chaotic: phone networks can go down, and often in the chaos people leave their homes or workplaces without their mobile phones or handbags, meaning they cannot be contacted or get in touch with loved ones to let them know they are safe. This is where the benefit of having a dedicated crisis team that can help co-ordinate a response and locate employees and their family members comes into its own.

Family members who are worried about loved ones they cannot locate will be helped by access to a centralised 24/7 emergency telephone line that is manned by experienced handlers. If you appoint a specialist company for your crisis management plans, they should have teams that work closely with the emergency services based at the scene, and will attempt to locate those who might have been caught up in the incident to find out if they are

safe and well, or where a family member is being medically treated. Companies should also ensure that if further support is needed after the event, the best care is provided, whether for psychological or physical issues.

If you decide to outsource such crisis management plans, make sure that the provider develops a plan that is unique to your organisation.

Work closely with the company so it can ensure the steps necessary to protect all of your staff are in place and ready to be put into action at any given time.

For example, Allianz Worldwide Care provides 24/7 emergency phone lines, and also has an app that can be accessed anywhere in the world. This allows it to send out mass texts to employees to begin assessing the safety of each employee as quickly as possible.

Reviewing and updating

Crisis plans need to be constantly reviewed and updated, assisting employees and organisations to cope with such challenging events.

Time invested in proactively planning for these kinds of contingencies gives a level of comfort to human resources teams and their staff. They will know that everything that can be done to mitigate the risks, is being done, and that steps will be taken quickly and efficiently if something, unfortunately, does happen.



R Stone | 123rf

Author



MARTIN MCLAUGHLIN heads up the Global Health Services with Allianz Worldwide Care. He is an expert in working with businesses – from SMEs to multinationals – to ensure the safety of their employees all over the world, including in crisis scenarios; more information: www.allianzworldwidecare.com



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