

# China May 2008

## **May 12**

0930hrs

CIRO Team Leader received call from ARTI Team Leader

Preliminary notification to Deploy to China. (Non Committed) Respond with numbers

Subsequent follow through to Team Leaders.

1030hrs

Calls made to Embassies, Consulates, Provincial & Federal Constituents'

1300hrs

Team official call out to respond with go/no go

Team to meet 2130hrs at RDSAR Base to gather gear

2130hrs

Team members arrive to gather gear

## **May 13**

0900hrs

CIRO Team Leader received call from ARTI Team Leader;

Green Light for deployment

Call out to responding members to meet at Base 1200hrs

1300

rcvd call from Rebecca (American Tours International) ref flight departures, booked for AC 227 departing Calgary @ 1915 hrs

1530hrs

CIRO left for Calgary

1915

Disembark Calgary Intl Airport for Vancouver Intl Airport.

2030 (Local Vancouver Time)

Arrive in Vancouver

Approx 8hr Layover

## **May 14 (Local Vancouver Time)**

0330

Disembark Vancouver Intl Airport Destination: Hong Kong Intl Airport

## **May 15 (Local Hong Kong Time)**

0730

Arrive well rested in Hong Kong (Thanks Cathay Pacific!)

1300

Meet Gavin - our liaison in Hong Kong who will be facilitating our Visa applications.  
Team Stages outside near the Ferries while Gavin, & CIRO TL's work on Visa application.

1330

We have been to China Travel. To qualify for the visa we needed to have return flights in and out of China and flights back to our home countries. These we had but we were then required to have HOTEL bookings confirmed in the location we would travel to. These we did not have and, having explained about helping with the rescue, etc, and the fact that we have an area in the local university campus to camp, we were still asked for our hotel bookings. Asked if we could book via the China Travel Company, hotel rooms in the area. No, none available. NO VISAS.

A call was placed to the British and Canadian Consuls Departments. British Consul said we should call in and they would try the diplomatic route.

1415

We meet Paula Corrans and Alan Morrison, both of who are eager to help. They have a list of specialist equipment requested by the Chinese Government and we have almost all the location equipment, communications and water treatment items requested. They are sure that they can get the visas via the Embassy in Beijing. All passports are photocopied and equipment lists are to be supplied. It is also agreed that a letter from the Chinese Red Cross requesting help will be sent to Paula Corrans. (This letter would never arrive.) The embassy staff in Beijing will follow this up with a visit to the government departments dealing with the disaster. All looks good for tomorrow and Paula suggests we sit in Lamma until she calls.

1630hrs

No visas received from the consulates today. We loaded out gear, and ourselves onto the Ferry and headed out to Lamma Island

Quick Meet and Greet with the UK Team International Rescue Corps.

1730hrs

On the island, and our gear all safe and sound in a local gym.

Supper at a local restaurant with our new friends

## **16 May**

0900

All are up and ready for what may happen but, with no word, both teams meet up for breakfast. Gives us a chance to once again meet and talk to the local community who have been so supportive of our efforts to get visas.

1045

Phone Call from ARTI Team leader Doug Copp in Canada. He indicates that the letter from the Red Cross has been withdrawn.

1115

I call the British Consulate and they have also been told that the Red Cross letter has been withdrawn. They can, however, tell us that both formal and informal requests for visas have been made in Beijing and they hope for an answer later today.

1545

From the British Consulate - the morning meeting in Beijing with the Ministry of Commerce has not gone well. They state that visas will NOT BE ISSUED to foreign teams. A further meeting has been called at 1600hrs with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to confirm or overturn this decision. We are advised that this is probably the last hope of visas being granted. We inform the Canadian Team and wait for the outcome of the 1600hrs meeting.

1705

From the British Consulate. The 1600hrs meeting did not go ahead. The Chinese Minister could not be located. He may have been tired and went home for a sleep. The duty officer in Beijing will keep trying throughout the night. Hope looks to be slipping as they allow the time to pass. I inform the British Consulate that IRC will keep the offer of help open for a further 24 hours and then due to the time scales of the disaster we will formally withdraw the offer. They agree and hope for an answer before the end of the 24 hours. Admin is informed of these events. They will start looking at the exit strategy.

### **17 May**

0800

We meet at the gym as the kit must be removed. The gym is in use today. Both teams moved all the IRC/CAN kit to its new location, which is, unfortunately on the roof of a 3 storey building.

1000

Talked with Allan from the CDN consulate, they are in contact with the Brit Con. and are trying to push Beijing, also the Chinese Ambassador to the UN has requested that we be allowed entry.

1200

From the British Consulate: we now have a final word from the Chinese Authority and it is a very definite NO. The official reason for this is that the local infrastructure is not capable of coordinating foreign teams. An appeal was made by the Chinese Ambassador to the United Nations to allow teams in but this has also been rejected in all but a very few cases. A team from Japan has been given visas and possibly a team from Russia.

1300

UK team decides to return home, we assist with moving them and their equipment to the ferry

### **18 May**

0900

Rcvd call from Doug Copp informing us that Noel Hentchel from ATI is at site and the mayor has forwarded a request to the local disaster manger for our assistance.

1100

Team meeting to set drop dead time(DDT) -0800 hr 19 May  
Cleaned and separated gear for Gavin to distribute on our departure.

### **19 May**

0800

DDT passed and prep for departure underway, contacted Doug and Noel

1100 departed Lamma Island, Flight departing at 2400hrs HK time

Arv in Vancouver at 2030 PDT 19 May  
Depart 2230Hrs

Arv Calgary 0030 MDT 20 May

Arv Red Deer 0200 hrs Note. 2 personal vehicles were broken into while we were gone

0930

Doug Copp called to inform me that the Chinese government has now authorized our entry (visa to be issued here in Canada)

1400

Team meets for restocking and prep for possible departure

1500

TV and radio crews arrive for briefing

1600

Called consulate ref visa, informed that they have been issued and that we are already on our way back...news to us

1700

Team ready for redeployment, New DDT 1200 hrs 22 May

### **21 May**

No news

### **22 May**

1200 DDT passes

1300 Mission debrief