

Multinational Operations in the Indo-Asia-Pacific: Successes and Challenges

A Monograph

by

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Abstract

Multinational Operations in the Indo-Asia-Pacific: Successes and Challenges, by MAJ Antwan C. Austin, US Army, 54 pages.

US Pacific Command is responsible for defending US interests in the Indo-Asia-Pacific region. The region's security environment continues to grow increasingly complex and volatile. The three greatest security challenges in the region are North Korea's growing nuclear and ballistic capabilities, Chinese aggression in the South China Sea, and violent extremist organizations in the Philippines. The United States cannot eliminate these threats unilaterally. USPACOM must work with other US government agencies, allies, and partners to confront these challenges. Multinational operations are key to maintaining peace and stability in the region. This monograph seeks to determine how USPACOM can improve its capability to conduct multinational operations in the future. To answer this question, this monograph uses three case studies to examine the recent history of multinational operations in the area of responsibility. An analysis of real-world operations highlights the operational successes and operational challenges inherent in conducting combined operations in a foreign country with ally and partner nations. The information can help minimize the risk of casualties, reduce the expenditure of resources, and/or decrease the risk of mission failure during future multinational operations in the Indo-Asia-Pacific region.

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Acronyms

ADP	Army Doctrine Publication
AFP	Armed Forces of the Philippines
ANZUS	Australia-New Zealand-United States
AOR	Area of Responsibility
APAN	All Partners Access Network
APOD	Aerial Port of Debarkation
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
AUSMIN	Australia-United States Ministerial Consultations
BCC	Bilateral Coordination Center
BIFF	Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters
CARAT	Cooperation Afloat Readiness and Training
CFC	Combined Forces Command
CFE-DMHA	Center for Excellence in Disaster Management and Humanitarian Assistance
COC	Command Operations Center
CONOP	Concept of Operations
CRG	Contingency Response Group
CSG	Carrier Strike Group
DJTFAFAC	Deployable Joint Task Force Augmentation Cell
DoD	Department of Defense
DoE	Department of Energy
DoS	Department of State
DPRK	Democratic People's Republic of Korea
DSWD	Department of Social Welfare and Development
FDR	Foreign Disaster Relief
FHA	Foreign Humanitarian Assistance

GoJ	Government of Japan
GoN	Government of Nepal
GRP	Government of the Republic of the Philippines
HA/DR	Humanitarian Assistance/Disaster Relief
HMAS	Her Majesty's Australian Ship
HN	Host Nation
HuMOCC	Humanitarian-Military Operations Coordination Center
IGO	Intergovernmental Organization
ISB	Intermediate Staging Base
ISIS	Islamic State of Iraq and Syria
JASDF	Japan Air Self-Defense Force
JHAST	Joint Humanitarian Assistance Survey Team
JI	Jemaah Islamiyah
JMSDF	Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force
JP	Joint Publication
JSDF	Japan Self-Defense Forces
JSF	Joint Support Force
JSOTF-P	Joint Special Operations Task Force-Philippines
JTF	Joint Task Force
JTF-TH	Joint Task Force-Tohoku
JUSMAGTHAI	Joint United States Military Advisory Group-Thailand
LNO	Liaison Officer
MARFORPAC	Marine Corps Forces Pacific
MEB	Marine Expeditionary Brigade
MEF	Marine Expeditionary Force
MILF	Moro Islamic Liberation Front

MNCC	Multinational Coordination Center
MNF SOP	Multinational Forces Standard Operating Procedures
MNLF	Moro National Liberation Front
MNMCC	Multinational Military Operations and Coordination Center
MOD	Ministry of Defense
MRF-D	Marine Rotational Force-Darwin
NDRRMC	National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Center
NGO	Nongovernmental Organization
NIPR	Non-Classified Internet Protocol Router
NPA	New People's Army
ODA	Operational Detachment Alpha
PACAF	Pacific Air Forces
PAF	Philippine Air Force
PHIBLEX	Philippine Amphibious Landing Exercise
ROK	Republic of Korea
SEATO	Southeast Asia Treaty Organization
SIPR	Secret Internet Protocol Router
SOF	Special Operations Forces
SPOD	Sea Port of Debarkation
TIA	Tribhuvan International Airport
UN	United Nations
UNC	United Nations Command
UNDAC	United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination
UNOCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
USAF	United States Air Force
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

USFJ	United States Forces Japan
USFK	United States Forces Korea
USG	United States Government
USMC	United States Marine Corps
USPACOM	United States Pacific Command
VEO	Violent Extremist Organization

Introduction

As President, I have, therefore, made a deliberate and strategic decision- as a Pacific nation, the United States will play a larger and long-term role in shaping this region and its future.... So let there be no doubt: in the Asia-Pacific in the 21st century, the United States of America is all in.

–Barack Obama, President of the United States

The Indo-Asia-Pacific region is important to US national interests. In 2011, the Obama Administration established the “Pacific Rebalance” strategy, which explicitly identified the Indo-Asia-Pacific region as a geostrategic priority for the United States. The area contains the world’s busiest international sea lanes, nine of the ten largest ports, the two most populous nations, and the second and third largest economies.¹ The United States has more than \$1.2 trillion worth of trade that travels through the Pacific each year.² As the world’s most populous area and fastest growing economic zone, the Indo-Asia-Region continues to be important to US foreign policy, national security, and economic interests.

Increased US national interests in the region have led to increased emphasis on military readiness. United States Pacific Command (USPACOM) is the geographic combatant command responsible for the Indo-Asia-Pacific region. USPACOM has received nearly \$9 billion to support rebalance initiatives throughout the area of responsibility (AOR).³ The area hosts seven of the ten largest militaries, five nuclear nations, and five of the United States’ seven mutual defense treaty alliances.⁴ There are many challenges to regional peace and stability, to include improved North Korean nuclear and ballistic capabilities, expanded Chinese militarization in the

¹ “Area of Responsibility,” US Pacific Command, accessed September 3, 2017, <http://www.pacom.mil/About-USPACOM/USPACOM-Area-of-Responsibility>.

² Wyatt Olson, “Pacific Pivot Makes Modest Gains In Early Years,” *Stars and Stripes*, June 29, 2015, accessed November 2, 2017, <https://www.stripes.com/news/pacific/the-pacific-pivot/pacific-pivot-makes-modest-gains-in-early-years-1.355216>.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

South China Sea and increased presence of Violent Extremist Organizations (VEOs). In addition, the region is also prone to natural disasters that often necessitate an international military response in the form of humanitarian assistance/disaster relief (HA/DR) operations. US military forces will not be able to overcome the complex regional security challenges alone. Therefore, the future security and prosperity of the region relies on the United States' ability to work effectively with ally and partner nations.

The 2018 National Defense Strategy states, "Mutually beneficial alliances and partnerships are crucial to our strategy, providing a durable, asymmetric strategic advantage that no competitor or rival can match."⁵ Regional security and stability depends in large part upon bilateral and multilateral relationships. Multinational operations are a vital part of USPACOM's strategy. USPACOM's mission statement is "US Pacific Command protects and defends, in concert with other US government agencies, the territory of the United States, its people and its interests. With allies and partners, we will enhance stability in the Indo-Asia-Pacific region by promoting security cooperation, encouraging peaceful development, responding to contingencies, deterring aggression and, when necessary, fighting to win."⁶ Alliances and coalitions multiply the strength of US forces and increase the likelihood of mission success while reducing the risk to US forces. Success in the region depends on the US military's ability to operate in concert with the armed forces of ally and partner nations during combined operations.

This monograph seeks to answer the following research question: How can USPACOM improve its capability to conduct multinational operations in the Indo-Asia-Pacific region? To arrive at an answer to this question, this monograph examines the recent history of multinational

⁵ Jim Garamone, "National Defense Strategy a 'Good Fit for Our Times,' Mattis Says," US Department of Defense, last modified January 19, 2018, accessed February 12, 2018, <https://www.defense.gov/News/Article/Article/1419045/dod-official-national-defense-strategy-will-rebuild-dominance-enhance-deterrence/>.

⁶ "Area of Responsibility," US Pacific Command.

operations in the USPACOM AOR. Specifically, the case studies focus on foreign disaster relief (FDR) operations.⁷ An analysis of real-world operations highlights the operational successes and operational challenges of conducting multinational operations in a foreign country with alliance and partner nations.

Operational-level interactions are those that occur between the US military and other friendly foreign entities, to include encounters with a host nation's government, foreign militaries, intergovernmental organizations (IGOs), and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). Operational successes are defined as key activities that facilitated effective operations between the US joint force and other agencies. Operational challenges are defined as problems encountered by the US military that hinder effective operations between the US joint force and other agencies. A problem is elevated to a challenge when it introduces the risk of casualties, increases the expenditure of resources, or increases the risk of mission failure.

This research project contributes to the increased effectiveness of multinational operations in the USPACOM AOR in two ways. First, the research identifies operational successes that can be sustained in order to promote effective multinational operations. Second, the research highlights operational challenges that can cause negative effects during multinational operations. The information may help to minimize the risk of casualties, reduce the expenditure of resources, and/or decrease the risk of mission failure during future combined operations. The primary objective is to answer the research question by illustrating how USPACOM can improve its capability to conduct multinational operations in the Indo-Asia-Pacific region.

This monograph is organized into four sections. Section 1 provides an introduction and background information on the research topic. Section 2 provides information about alliances and coalitions. Section 3 contains three case studies of real-world multinational operations that have

⁷ FDR is a type of foreign humanitarian assistance (FHA) and its purpose is to provide limited military assistance to other nations to alleviate suffering of foreign disaster victims. US Department of Defense, Joint Staff, Joint Publication (JP) 3-29, *Foreign Humanitarian Assistance* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2014), I-2.

occurred in the USPACOM AOR within the last seven years. Section 4 provides the conclusion to the research project.

Multinational Operations in the Pacific: Alliances and Coalitions

US allies are critical to responding to mutual threats, such as North Korea, and preserving our mutual interests in the Indo-Pacific region.

—Donald Trump, President of the United States

The United States has participated in multinational forces throughout its history, beginning with an alliance with France during the American Revolution. In today's complex security environment, the United States' need for allies is greater than ever. USPACOM is responsible for defending US interests across the vast Indo-Asia-Pacific region. Unfortunately, the region's security environment continues to grow increasingly complex and volatile. The three major challenges that USPACOM faces are North Korea's growing nuclear and ballistic capabilities, Chinese aggression in the South China Sea, and Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) insurgents in the Philippines.⁸ The key to success is USPACOM's ability to deter adversaries, while reassuring allies and partners that the United States is committed to maintaining peace and stability in the region.

The United States cannot resolve the three major threats unilaterally. The US joint force will have to work with other US government agencies, allies, and partners to confront these complex adversarial problems. Consequently, future military actions in the theater will be multinational operations. Multinational operations are operations conducted by military forces of two or more nations.⁹ The two most common forms of multinational partnership are an alliance

⁸ Jim Garamone, "PACOM Commander Lists Threats, Discusses Strategy In Indo-Asia-Pacific," US Pacific Command, last modified July 31, 2017, accessed November 17, 2017, <http://www.pacom.mil/Media/News/News-Article-View/Article/1263040/pacom-commander-lists-threats-discusses-strategy-in-indo-asia-pacific/>.

⁹ US Department of Defense, Joint Staff, Joint Publication (JP) 3-16, *Multinational Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2013), I-1.

and a coalition. US forces will continue to rely on its longstanding relationships with regional allies. However, in addition to their treaty alliances, the US military needs to build coalitions with other friendly nations.

Alliances and coalitions are USPACOM's operational center of gravity (COG). Joint Publication (JP) 5-0 defines a COG as "the source of power that provides moral or physical strength, freedom of action, or will to act."¹⁰ Alliances and coalitions are a COG because the formal and informal agreements between US allies and partners provide moral justification, freedom of maneuver, and motivation to take military action. International partners enable US joint forces to project power and maneuver throughout the AOR. The cohesion created by multinational operations produces a deterrent and warfighting capability greater than the sum of the individual country capabilities. Alliances and coalitions underpin USPACOM's ability to execute its theater strategy.

US Alliances in the AOR

US alliances have served as a bulwark for regional stability since the conclusion of World War II. Five of the United States' mutual defense treaty allies are located in the Indo-Asia-Pacific region. The five allies are Japan, South Korea, Australia, Thailand and the Philippines.¹¹ Joint Publication (JP) 3-16 states, "An alliance is the relationship that results from a formal agreement between two or more nations for broad, long-term objectives that further the common interests of the members."¹² With the rising threat of a nuclear-armed North Korea, escalating tension in US-China relations, and increasing presence of Violent Extremist Organizations, the security

¹⁰ US Department of Defense, Joint Staff, Joint Publication (JP) 5-0, *Joint Operation Planning* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2011), III-22.

¹¹ "US Collective Defense Arrangements," US Department of State, accessed October 20, 2017, <https://www.state.gov/s/l/treaty/collectivedefense/>.

¹² US Department of Defense, JP 3-16, *Multinational Operations*, I-1.

dynamics in the Indo-Asia-Pacific region prove the need for dependable long-term partner nations.

USPACOM's strategy to promote security and prosperity relies heavily on these historic alliances.¹³ Amongst other things, alliance partners provide US forces access, basing, and overflight permissions that allow the joint force to strategically position personnel and materiel, rapidly project military power, and maintain a credible deterrence strength in the region. Treaty nations are the cornerstone of USPACOM's theater security cooperation strategy for the region.¹⁴ Military alliances are often more beneficial than simple partnerships. Alliance relationships and command structures have been carefully developed over extended periods, so there is often a high degree of stability and consensus.¹⁵

US alliances are the foundation of USPACOM strategy and greatly influences the employment of US joint forces throughout the AOR. Consequently, alliances also influence the way US forces decide to conduct multinational operations. The Indo-Asia-Pacific operational environment is a complex system consisting on many interdependent actors and relationships. Any significant change in USPACOM's capability to conduct multinational operations will affect its regional allies. Analyzing current US alliances in the Indo-Asia-Pacific region is a necessary first step in answering the research question.

¹³ Harry Harris, "US Pacific Command Guidance," US Pacific Command, last modified August 12, 2016, accessed October 15, 2017, http://www.pacom.mil/Portals/55/Documents/pdf/guidance_12_august_2016.pdf?ver=2016-08-16-140701-960, 1.

¹⁴ Harris, "US Pacific Command Guidance," 1.

¹⁵ US Department of Defense, JP 3-16, *Multinational Operations*, II-8.

US-Japanese Alliance

The US-Japan alliance is a vital part of America's security strategy in the Indo-Asia-Pacific region.¹⁶ The two nations share concerns about North Korea's provocations and China's assertiveness over territorial claims in the South China Sea. North Korea's nuclear and missile programs are a serious threat to the security of Japan.¹⁷ China's resolve to deny Japan exclusive administrative control over the Senkaku Islands is also a joint security concern.¹⁸ The United States and Japan share a security perspective evident in the joint statement by the US-Japan Security Consultative Committee: "As the United States continues to implement its rebalance to the Asia Pacific region, it intends to strengthen military capabilities that allow our alliance to respond to future global and regional security challenges."¹⁹

The US-Japanese alliance was established at the conclusion of World War II. In 1951, the two nations signed a Mutual Security Pact. In January 1960, the United States and Japan signed the Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security, whereby Japan agreed to provide US forces with military basing in exchange for US security against external threats.²⁰ In 2015, the release of the revised US-Japan Defense Guidelines strengthened the US-Japanese alliance by allowing new and expanded forms of security cooperation. Japan provides military bases, as well as financial

¹⁶ Beina Xu, "The U.S.-Japan Security Alliance," Council of Foreign Relations, last modified July 01, 2014, accessed November 23, 2017, <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/us-japan-security-alliance>.

¹⁷ James Przystup, "The US-Japan Alliance: Review of the Guidelines for Defense Cooperation," *Institute for National Strategic Studies Strategic Perspectives*, no. 18 (March 2015): 2.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 2.

¹⁹ "Joint Statement of the Security Consultative Committee: Toward a More Robust Alliance and Greater Shared Responsibilities," US Department of State, last modified October 3, 2013, accessed November 23, 2017, <https://2009-2017.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2013/10/215070.htm>.

²⁰ "US Relations with Japan," US Department of State, last modified January 25, 2017, accessed October 20, 2017, <https://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/4142.htm>.

and material support to US forces. In January 2016, the United States and Japan signed a new five-year package of host nation support for US forces in Japan.²¹

US Forces Japan (USFJ) is headquartered at Yokota Air Base on the island of Honshu, Japan.²² USFJ is a subordinate unified command of USPACOM. The commander is responsible for developing plans for the defense of Japan and must be prepared, if contingencies arise, to assume operational control of assigned and attached US forces for the execution of those plans. There are currently more than 50,000 soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines stationed in Japan.²³ The majority of the troop strength is located in Okinawa. The nuclear-powered aircraft carrier, USS Ronald Reagan is homeported at Yokosuka naval base. Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF), III MEF, headquartered in Okinawa, Japan with 22,500 Marines West of the International Date Line is forward-based, and operating within the Asia-Pacific Theater.²⁴

US-Republic of Korea (ROK) Alliance

The US-ROK alliance is the foundation of security and stability in Northeast Asia. The two countries' most pressing mutual concern is the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) nuclear and missile programs.²⁵ In addition to threats against South Korea, North Korea's leader, Kim Jong Un, continues to menace allies by launching ballistic missiles. Despite, international condemnation and economic sanctions, Kim has conducted eighteen illegal missile

²¹ "US Relations with Japan," US Department of State.

²² "About USFJ," US Forces Japan, accessed October 20, 2017, <http://www.usfj.mil/About-USFJ/>.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Robert Neller, "Statement of General Robert Neller, Commandant of the Marine Corps," US House of Representatives Document Repository, last modified March 1, 2016, accessed November 22 2017, <http://docs.house.gov/meetings/AP/AP02/20160301/104529/HHRG-114-AP02-Wstate-RichardsonR-20160301.pdf>, 4.

²⁵ The terms Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) and North Korea are used interchangeably.

launches since the beginning of 2017.²⁶ Recently, North Korea successfully tested an intercontinental ballistic missile that experts calculate could reach the east coast of the United States.²⁷ The US and ROK presidents reaffirmed that both nations remain committed to jointly confronting the threat posed by the DPRK.²⁸

In 1953, the United States and the Republic of Korea signed a Mutual Defense Treaty, two months after the signing of the armistice that ended the Korean War.²⁹ The United States has maintained military personnel in the ROK in support of the obligations under the US-ROK Mutual Defense Treaty ever since. The presence of US forces is meant to deter another North Korean attack on South Korea. The senior US military general on the Korean peninsula is the commander of three separate and distinct command headquarters. United States Force Korea (USFK), Combined Forces Command (CFC), and United Nations Command (UNC) each provide distinct support to the US-ROK alliance.

USFK is a subordinate unified command of USPACOM. The commander and staff guide and direct US military activities from all services on the Korean Peninsula and assists the US Ambassador with representing US interests to the Republic of Korea.³⁰ CFC is a US-ROK command that provides the structure for US and ROK militaries to secure Korea's future together

²⁶ Anna Fifield, "North Korea's Latest Missile Launch Appears to Put US Capital in Range," *The Washington Post*, November 29, 2017, accessed December 10, 2017, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/north-korea-fires-missile-for-the-first-time-in-more-than-two-months/2017/11/28/0c136952-d46c-11e7-9461-ba77d604373d_story.html?utm_term=.4e22e63a40f2.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ "Joint Statement between the United States and the Republic of Korea," The White House Office of the Press Secretary, June 30, 2017, accessed October 20, 2017, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2017/06/30/joint-statement-between-united-states-and-republic-korea>.

²⁹ "US Relations with the Republic of Korea," US Department of State, January 25, 2017, accessed October 20, 2017, <https://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2800.htm>.

³⁰ Vincent Brooks, "Statement of General Vincent K. Brooks, Commander, United Nations Command Before the Senate Armed Services Committee," US Forces Korea, April 27, 2017, accessed October 20, 2017, www.usfk.mil/Portals/105/Documents/2017%20USFK%20Posture%20Statement%20FINAL%20, 2.

under a common command, led by the senior US general.³¹ The deputy CFC commander is always a ROK general and the CFC staff is comprised of military personnel from both countries. UNC is a multinational unified command founded in 1950 to fight the Korean War. Two days after the initiation of the conflict, the United Nations (UN) Security Council passed a resolution establishing the United States as executive agent to implement the resolution and direct UN military operations on the Korean peninsula.³² The command is under US leadership and has UN authority. The command remains useful, as it is a standing mechanism to help like-minded nations contribute unique capabilities before, during, and after conflict.³³

US-Australian Alliance

US and Australian forces have fought together in every major military conflict since World War I. The Australia-New Zealand-United States (ANZUS) security treaty was signed in 1951 and continues to serve as the foundation of defense and security cooperation between the nations.³⁴ Australia invoked the treaty in response to the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks against the United States.

The two countries signed the US-Australia Force Posture Agreement at the annual Australia-United States Ministerial consultations (AUSMIN) in August 2014.³⁵ That agreement allows a continuous rotation of US Marines stationed in Darwin, Australia and expands the rotations of US Air Force aircraft to Australia. The Marine Rotational Force-Darwin (MRF-D), based in Australia's Robertson Barracks in northern Australia, rotates 1200 Marines on six-month

³¹ Brooks, "Statement of General Vincent K. Brooks," 2.

³² "United Nations Command," US Forces Korea, accessed October 20, 2017, <http://www.usfk.mil/About/United-Nations-Command/>.

³³ Brooks, "Statement of General Vincent K. Brooks," 3.

³⁴ "US Relations with Australia," US Department of State, last modified February 24, 2017, accessed October 21, 2017, <https://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2698.htm>.

³⁵ Ibid.

deployments.³⁶ The US-Australia agreement increased bilateral training between the two allies and allowed the US a forward-deployed combat force.³⁷ The Force Posture Initiative also enhances naval cooperation at Her Majesty's Australian Ship (HMAS) Stirling.³⁸

US-Thai Alliance

The United States and Thailand signed a Treaty of Amity and Commerce in 1833, formalizing diplomatic relations between the two nations.³⁹ After World War II, the countries significantly expanded diplomatic, security, and commercial relations. The United States established the Joint United States Military Advisory Group-Thailand (JUSMAGTHAI) in 1953.⁴⁰ The organization still operates in the country and is responsible for coordinating sixty joint and combined military exercises per year.⁴¹ The United States and Thailand are both signatories of the 1954 Manila Pact negotiated by the former Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO).⁴² An interim military government continues to rule Thailand since the elected civilian government was deposed by a military coup in 2014, which created friction in the US-Thai alliance.⁴³

³⁶ Olson, "Pacific Pivot Makes Modest Gains in Early Years."

³⁷ Neller, "Statement of General Robert Neller," 4.

³⁸ Abraham Denmark, et al., "Roundtable: Regional Perspectives on US Strategic Rebalancing," *Asia Policy*, no 15 (January 2013): 23, accessed November 24, 2017, http://www.nbr.org/publications/asia_policy/free/AP15/AP15_B_Asia_balanceRt.pdf?wptouch_preview_theme=enabled.

³⁹ "US Relations with Thailand," US Department of State, last modified January 24, 2017, accessed October 21, 2017, <https://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2814.htm>.

⁴⁰ "Joint US Military Advisory Group Thailand (JUSMAGTHAI)," US Embassy & Consulate in Thailand, accessed December 20, 2017, <https://th.usembassy.gov/embassy-consulate/bangkok/us-agencies/jusmagthai/>.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² "US Relations with Thailand," US Department of State.

⁴³ Ibid.

Despite tension in the US-Thai relationship due to a military coup, Thailand is still an important United States ally in Asia for many reasons. The United States continues to leverage its longstanding relationship to limit China's influence in Thailand. Thailand provides logistical nodes for US forces and it also co-hosts the annual Cobra Gold exercise, the largest multinational military exercise in Southeast Asia.⁴⁴ Thailand is also a cooperative partner in the fight against transnational crime and terrorism. Substantial amounts of human and drug trafficking occur in Thailand and the revenue generated from these illicit activities helps fund terrorists and Violent Extremist Organizations.⁴⁵ US-Thai organizations are working together to reduce criminal trafficking and VEO funding. Lastly, Thailand is a member state in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), which is one of USPACOM's key coalition partners.⁴⁶ A strong bilateral relationship with Thailand helps strengthen the partnership between the United States and ASEAN. The US-Thai alliance remains valuable to USPACOM, and Thailand's stability and growth are important to the maintenance of security in the region.

US-Philippines Alliance

In 1946, the United States recognized the Philippines as an independent state.⁴⁷ The Philippines had been under US administration since the end of the Spanish-American War in 1898, except 1942-1945 during World War II when the Japanese occupied the territory. The Mutual Defense Treaty, signed in 1951, committed the United States to the security and sovereignty of the Philippines. In 2011, the two nations signed the Manila Declaration,

⁴⁴ Harry Harris, "Congressional Testimony to the House Armed Services Committee on US Pacific Command Posture," US Pacific Command, last modified April 26, 2017, accessed October 15, 2017, <http://www.pacom.mil/Media/Speeches-Testimony/Article/1164067/house-armed-services-committee-hasc-opening-statement/>.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ "Association of Southeast Asian Nations," US Department of State, accessed November 24, 2017, <https://www.state.gov/p/eap/regional/asean/>.

⁴⁷ "US Relations with the Philippines," US Department of State, last modified December 15, 2016, accessed October 21, 2017, <https://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2794.htm>.

reaffirming the 1951 US-Philippines Mutual Defense Treaty as the foundation for a strong security partnership.⁴⁸

The Philippines is a significant partner in maintaining regional security. The United States provides financial assistance to the country to support development in areas where there is a Muslim insurgency.⁴⁹ The aim is to support economic development in order to reduce the appeal of radical or extremist ideologies and activities. US Joint Special Operations Task Force–Philippines (JSOTF-P) also provides counterterrorism assistance to the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP).⁵⁰ The Department of Defense signed the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement with the Philippines in 2014, which allows for an increased rotational presence and enhanced cooperation.⁵¹

US military forces and the AFP are involved in several regular joint exercises, to include the Balikatan (*Shoulder to Shoulder*) exercise, the Cooperation Afloat Readiness and Training (CARAT) naval event, and the Philippine Amphibious Landing Exercise (PHIBLEX). In addition, US warships made several port calls in the Philippines in 2013 prior to the Haiyan disaster.⁵²

US Coalitions in the AOR

Coalition operations have been a common experience in American military history and are increasingly favored over unilateral action. A coalition is “an ad hoc arrangement between two or more nations for common action.”⁵³ During the nation’s most recent experiences in

⁴⁸ “US Relations with the Philippines,” US Department of State.

⁴⁹ Thomas Lum and Rhoda Margesson, *Typhoon Haiyan (Yolanda): U.S. and International Response to Philippines Disaster* (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 2014), accessed December 1, 2017, <https://digital.library.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metadc282292/m1/1>, 1.

⁵⁰ Lum and Margesson, *Typhoon Haiyan (Yolanda)*, 2.

⁵¹ Olson, “Pacific Pivot Makes Modest Gains in Early Years.”

⁵² Lum and Margesson, *Typhoon Haiyan (Yolanda)*, 3.

⁵³ US Department of Defense, JP 3-16, *Multinational Operations*, I-1.

Afghanistan and Iraq, the US military fought alongside international partners in coalitions. A relevant example of a coalition is the ongoing coalition in South Korea. The United Nations Command, based in South Korea, is a multinational command composed of like-minded nations who have come together for a common action.

There are both pros and cons of coalitions. Coalitions allow participating countries to share the risks, while spreading the burdens between member nations. In addition, coalitions provide a form of legitimacy within the international community. International legitimacy is important to the United States because it does not want to be portrayed as a nation that bullies weaker countries, like North Korea or China. A coalition of nations can conduct certain military operations that a single nation could not or would not conduct unilaterally.

Because they are an ad hoc arrangement of nations with no formal agreements, coalitions have some disadvantages. No two coalitions are exactly alike. Each coalition will vary in size and scope and contain a diverse assortment of dissimilar forces with different command and control structures. There are often interoperability issues that arise between militaries that do not share the same doctrine or equipment. Because there is no long-term relationship, there may be cultural barriers that impede cooperation as well. A nation's decision to participate in multinational operations is based on its degree of national interest, resulting in varying levels of commitment by contributing nations. Countries, for example, may limit their forces by issuing national caveats.⁵⁴

A major coalition partnership for USPACOM is its relationship with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). ASEAN has ten member states and it is the most influential multilateral institution in the Indo-Asia-Pacific region.⁵⁵ The United States became a "Dialogue Partner" country of ASEAN in 1977 and continues to meet regularly with ASEAN officials to

⁵⁴ US Department of Defense, JP 3-16, *Multinational Operations*, III-3.

⁵⁵ "About ASEAN," Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), accessed November 24, 2017, <https://www.asean.org/asean/about-asean/>.

guide the development of regional relations.⁵⁶ USPACOM wants to enhance its partnerships with non-alliance nations like Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Vietnam, and Malaysia (all members of ASEAN) in order to advance common interests and address shared threats.⁵⁷ Therefore, the stronger the partnership between the United States and ASEAN, the easier it will be for USPACOM to improve bilateral relations with Southeast Asian nations.

Conclusion

The Indo-Asia-Pacific region contains numerous security threats to the region's peace and stability. The three most pressing challenges for USPACOM are North Korea's growing nuclear and ballistic capabilities, Chinese aggression in the South China Sea, and Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) insurgents. As in the past, the US military will confront these problems with its long-term allies and with ad hoc coalition members. A key to success is USPACOM's ability to deter adversaries, while reassuring allies and partners that the United States is committed to maintaining peace and stability in the region.

⁵⁶ "Association of Southeast Asian Nations," US Department of State, accessed November 24, 2017, <https://www.state.gov/p/eap/regional/asean/>.

⁵⁷ Harris, "US Pacific Command Guidance," 1.

Case Studies

This monograph examines USPACOM's military response during three recent foreign disaster relief (FDR) operations conducted in the Indo-Asia-Pacific AOR. The case studies are analyzed at the operational level, where US forces participated within a multinational setting, to identify the key variables that facilitated or hindered effective operations. The recent FDR events studies are Operation Tomodachi in Japan (March 2011), Operation Damayan in the Philippines (November 2013), and Operation Sahayogi Haat in Nepal (April/May 2015). The case studies chosen illustrate a wide range of contingencies with different types of disasters, levels of damage, levels of access, and variance in the affected country's capabilities. The diversity of these cases highlights lessons that may apply to similar future disasters, as well as lessons that cut across cases and should apply to any multilateral contingency USPACOM may respond to in the future.

The common questions asked across cases are as follows: 1) Who participated, what alliances were involved, who was involved? 2) What were the successes? and 3) What were the challenges, what were the friction points, what got in the way of cooperation? The information derived from exploring the following three FDR operations provide an opportunity to identify common themes resident to multinational operations in the Indo-Asia-Pacific region. The case studies aim to highlight operational successes and challenges of conducting multinational operations in a foreign country with alliance and partner nations. By emphasizing successes and challenges, the case studies help increase the effectiveness of future multinational operations in the USPACOM AOR through improved civil-military coordination and military-to-military cooperation.

Case Study #1: Operation Tomodachi (Japan Earthquake, Tsunami, and Nuclear Disaster)

Background

On March 11, 2011, an earthquake with a magnitude of 9.0 occurred eighty-one miles off the shore of Japan. The quake caused a tsunami with waves measuring up to forty meters high. The waves crashed almost six miles inland, inundating 561 square kilometers.⁵⁸ Consequently, the earthquake and tsunami damaged Japan's Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station, which resulted in explosions, core meltdowns, and radioactive offsite release. The incident is the second worst accident in the history of nuclear power.⁵⁹ Japan's northeastern coast was the worst affected area, with 129,500 houses destroyed and 265,324 severely damaged by the earthquake, tsunami, or ensuing fires.⁶⁰ Six months after the earthquake, the Government of Japan (GoJ) concluded that the disaster killed almost 16,000 people, injured over 5,000, and resulted in 4,647 people missing.⁶¹ Once the United States received a foreign disaster relief request from GoJ, numerous US government agencies responded. The US Agency for International Development (USAID) was the lead federal agency, while the Department of Defense (DoD) provided support.⁶²

USPACOM had jurisdiction and command authority over all DoD forces in the Pacific. On March 11, 2011, USPACOM designated the Commander, US Forces Japan (USFJ) as the

⁵⁸ Jennifer Moroney et al., *Lessons from Department of Defense Disaster Relief Efforts in the Asia-Pacific Region*, RAND National Security Research Division (Santa Monica: RAND, 2013), 85.

⁵⁹ Andrew Feickert and Emma Chanlett-Avery, *Japan 2011 Earthquake: US Department of Defense (DoD) Response* (Washington DC: Congressional Research Service, 2011), 1.

⁶⁰ Moroney et al., *Lessons from Department of Defense Disaster Relief Efforts*, 85.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 88.

⁶² USAID is the designated US federal agency to coordinate foreign humanitarian assistance. USAID's Office of US Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) is the organization within USAID responsible for providing emergency humanitarian assistance in response to international crises and disasters. "About OFDA," Office of US Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA), accessed March 03, 2018, <http://www.ofdajobs.net/portal/>.

supported operational commander.⁶³ The scope of the incident soon exceeded USFJ's capability so a Joint Support Force (JSF) deployed to Japan and assumed responsibility for the HA/DR mission.⁶⁴ This JSF supported the Japanese Security Defense Force and managed US military forces tasked with the HA/DR response. The Japanese Ministry of Defense (MOD) established Joint Task Force-Tohoku (JTF-TH) to lead its disaster relief efforts. The JTF-TH established three bilateral coordination centers (BCCs) to coordinate with US forces. The BCCs were located at the MOD at Camp Ichigaya, the headquarters of the JSF at Yokota Air Base, and the headquarters of JTF-TH at Camp Sendai.⁶⁵

The United States was heavily involved in the disaster response in Japan, particularly during the nuclear portion. All US military services participated in the relief and recovery effort. Seventh Fleet operated ships and aircraft in support of the operation. US Pacific Air Forces (PACAF) conducted air operations. The US Air Force (USAF) provided imagery of residential areas and infrastructure to assess damage and help GoJ officials evaluate priorities in near-real time.⁶⁶ III Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF) delivered supplies and provided radiological surveillance support. US Army Japan assisted with assessments and debris cleaning.⁶⁷ Overall, the United States deployed nearly 24,000 personnel, 189 aircraft, and twenty-four Navy vessels in support of the disaster response.⁶⁸ Operation Tomodachi was a real-world combined, joint operation.

⁶³ Center for Excellence in Disaster Management and Humanitarian Assistance (CFE-DMHA), "Operation Tomodachi: Lessons Learned in the US Military's Support to Japan," *Liaison* 5, no. 1 (2012): 57.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 56.

⁶⁵ Nozomu Yoshitomi, "Bilateral Coordination between JSDF and US Forces," *Liaison* 5, no. 1 (2012): 22.

⁶⁶ Clark Courtenay, "US Air Force Global Hawk and C-17s Deployed to Japanese Relief Efforts," *Government Security News*, March 16, 2011, accessed October 2, 2017, http://www.gsnmagazine.com/article/22715/us_air_force_global_hawk_and_c_17s_deployed_japane.

⁶⁷ Moroney et al., *Lessons from Department of Defense Disaster Relief Efforts*, 91.

Participants

The GoJ and Japan Self-Defense Forces (JSDF) launched its largest ever domestic disaster relief operation because of the earthquake, tsunami, and radiological hazard.⁶⁹ Domestic and international assistance organizations, NGOs, private companies and private-sector volunteers played a major role in the humanitarian and relief operations.⁷⁰ A few prominent agencies that assisted during the disaster were the Japanese Red Cross Society, the International Committee of the Red Cross, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the World Food Program, and the International Atomic Energy Agency.⁷¹

The JSDF employed 107,000 personnel, sixty naval vessels and 540 aircraft during the relief operations. The MOD established JTF-TH, which was led by the Japanese Army, but included units from the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force (JMSDF) and Japan Air Self-Defense Force (JASDF) as well. JTF-TH was the largest JTF formed in JSDF's history and was the first JTF in Japan created for a disaster relief mission.⁷² Although many nations offered military support, the GoJ only allowed Australia, Israel, the Republic of Korea, Thailand, France and the United States to contribute significant military assets.⁷³ USPACOM established the Joint Support Force (JSF) under the command of Joint Task Force-519 (JTF-519) to lead Operation Tomodachi. The peak strength of the JSF was 16,000 personnel, fifteen naval vessels, and 140 aircraft.⁷⁴

⁶⁸ Feickert and Chanlett-Avery, *Japan 2011 Earthquake*, 1.

⁶⁹ Yoshitomi, "Bilateral Coordination between JSDF and US Forces," 22.

⁷⁰ Nozomu Yoshitomi, "Military-Public-Private Cooperation in Disaster Relief: Lessons Learned from the 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake," *Liaison* 5, no. 1 (2012): 21.

⁷¹ Daisaku Sakguchi, "Cooperation with Aid Agencies at Home and Abroad," *Liaison* 5, no. 1 (2012): 32.

⁷² Rockie Wilson, *Operation Tomodachi: A Model for American Disaster Response* (Cambridge: Harvard University, 2012), 5.

⁷³ Shunei Tamura, "Assistance from Foreign Forces besides the United States," *Liaison* 5, no. 1 (2012): 28.

⁷⁴ Yoshitomi, "Bilateral Coordination between JSDF and US Forces," 22.

US Operational Successes

The major success of Operation Tomodachi was the strengthening of the US-Japanese alliance and the upgrading of the reputation of the United States. The successful HA/DR operations proved the utility and added credibility to the longstanding relationship between the two countries. US forces helped to save countless lives and minimize human suffering. Operation Tomodachi increased the popularity of the United States in Japan, but also boosted the US reputation with other allies and partners throughout the AOR. These operations conveyed an implicit signal to foreign nations. Successful humanitarian assistance/disaster relief (HA/DR) operations help the international community see the value of having the United States as a security partner, especially in a region prone to natural disasters.

Another success of the HA/DR mission was the real-world demonstration of how fast the US Joint forces can project combat power. The quick and robust USPACOM response illustrated the vast array of capabilities US joint forces can bring to bear in the Indo-Asia-Pacific region. The disaster response was a non-aggressive opportunity for USPACOM to demonstrate its military might and its strong commitment to its allies. This operation also illustrates the importance of forward-stationed US forces. The bulk of US response forces came from the 50,000 soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines based in Japan before the incident.⁷⁵ The US military's permanent presence in the region enables USPACOM to respond quickly and strongly to any challenge.

In total, the JSF provided approximately 280 tons of food, 7.7 million liters of water and 450,000 liters of fuel, and transported 3,100 tons of cargo. Moreover, the JSF also participated in recovery operations for missing persons along stricken coastal areas. Throughout the operations, they cooperated with JTF-TH and recovered 289 bodies.⁷⁶

⁷⁵ "About USFJ," US Forces Japan.

⁷⁶ Koichi Arie, "Disaster Relief Provided by US Forces," *Liaison* 5, no. 1 (2012): 27.

US Operational Challenges

Operation Tomodachi revealed some critical operational challenges with command and control. USFJ is the senior US headquarters stationed in Japan. It had tactical control over US forces in Japan, but it did not have operational control. USFJ is not an operational headquarters, so it is not organized, trained, or equipped to manage large-scale operations. USFJ could not effectively manage HA/DR efforts. A Joint Support Force (JSF) deployed to the island to assume the mission, but was not formed until days after the tsunami.⁷⁷ Once established, some military organizations in Japan participating in the HA/DR effort were not placed under the command and control of the JSF. This situation resulted in an inability to obtain a common operating picture with regard to response efforts and assets.⁷⁸ The US command and control challenges hindered the US response and its effectiveness.

Another dangerous and challenging issue for US forces were the radiological hazards from the damaged Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station. The JSF was tasked to conduct consequence management operations related to mitigating the effects of radioactive materials. It took the JSF several weeks to develop adequate mechanisms for real-time situational awareness on radiological contamination and products to aid decision-making. The need to acquire and translate a plethora of technical data and information about the spread of radiation into assessments was a severe problem. The difficulty was compounded by the fact that the GoJ, US Department of Energy, and the DoD all used different standards to determine what “safe” levels of exposure to radiation were.⁷⁹ Because of the different safety standards, the US and Japan implemented different evacuation zones for their respective personnel. The US military assets in

⁷⁷ Wilson, *A Model for American Disaster Response*, 6.

⁷⁸ “Operation Tomodachi: After Action Review – Medical Issues and Recommendations,” US Army Office of the Surgeon General, 30 July 2011, accessed December 06, 2017, <https://www.pksoi.org/document/getDocumentByDocumentName/DocumentName/AA87E6D1-716C-4786-BBA8-60309F886EDD>, 2.

⁷⁹ “After Action Review – Medical Issues and Recommendations,” 6.

Japan had insufficient capability to measure and model radioactivity in the sea. The lack of common standards created significant problems during Operation Tomodachi.⁸⁰

US joint forces experienced significant challenges concerning information management and unclassified information sharing with all participating organizations.⁸¹ USPACOM established the “Japan Earthquake 2011” site on the All Partners Access Network (APAN), but it was not the only unclassified network used during Operation Tomodachi.⁸² Several groups also utilized another unclassified information sharing and collaborative enterprise similar to APAN. The information system was called “HARMONIEWeb,” and it was accessible before USPACOM established its APAN platform. Organizations continued to use both systems to disseminate information, which led to confusion because the systems were not coordinated. There was not a single public domain site designated for information sharing, so information management was challenging throughout the operations. Information management and sharing challenges existed amongst Japanese, US partner nations, and civilian agencies because of multiple systems and policies.⁸³

Another significant challenge was sharing classified/sensitive information with Japanese personnel, foreign militaries, and civilian agencies. Since the vital objective of Operation

⁸⁰ “Radiological Hazards during Disaster Response Operations – Tomodachi,” Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute, accessed December 03, 2017, <https://www.pksoi.org/sitesearch/list?BasicSiteSearchString=tomodachi>.

⁸¹ “Information Sharing on Operation Tomodachi,” Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute, accessed December 03, 2017, <https://www.pksoi.org/sitesearch/list?BasicSiteSearchString=tomodachi>.

⁸² The All Partners Access Network (APAN) is the US Department of Defense’s unclassified information sharing and collaborative enterprise. APAN allows the DOD and its mission partners to plan, train and respond collaboratively to meet their mission requirements and objectives. Using APAN, personnel and organizations who do not have access to traditional DOD systems and networks can participate in information sharing and collaborative events. “About Us,” All Partners Access Network, accessed November 12, 2017, <https://www.apan.org/pages/about>.

⁸³ Andrew Wilcox, “Operation Tomodachi Findings,” 26 September 2011, Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute, accessed December 03, 2017, <https://www.pksoi.org/document/getDocumentByDocumentName/DocumentName/F436C260-FABF-4C86-88D7-BE94C77009BC>.

Tomodachi was to work with Japan and the international community on disaster relief operations, it was essential for US, Japanese, foreign militaries and civilian organizations to share information. Initially, classified/sensitive data either could not be shared or took considerable time to get dissemination approved. For example, some aerial photographs and satellite images of the affected area were unable to be shared with non-US personnel because of their classification. Japan also deemed most of the information about the nuclear response as classified, further complicating the communications and information sharing effort. US and Japanese foreign disclosure procedures were reviewed and eventually simplified. The sharing and dissemination of classified/sensitive information improved markedly once the approved parameters were established.⁸⁴

Case Study #1 Summary

The findings from this case study highlight ways that USPACOM can improve its capability to conduct multinational operations in the region. There were a number of operational successes during Operation Tomodachi, which if sustained, can facilitate mission accomplishment during future operations. First, JTF-519 used forward deployed US forces to rapidly respond to Japan's request for assistance. The greater the presence of US forces in the area, the more capability USPACOM has to respond to natural disasters and other threats throughout the region. Second, US effort during Operation Tomodachi increased the reputation of the United States amongst the Japanese population. The higher the favorability of the United States amongst domestic populations, the more likely allies and partner nations are to conduct multilateral operations with US forces. USPACOM can continue to take advantage of opportunities to increase the US reputation in affected countries and in the region as a whole. Third, US and Japanese forces conducted combined, joint operations effectively. Land, air, and maritime armed services from both countries all communicated with each other, shared

⁸⁴ "Information Sharing on Operation Tomodachi," Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute.

infrastructure, and operated from the same support bases. In addition to bilateral interoperability, increasing multilateral interoperability between the United States, allies, and partners will improve USPACOM's capability to conduct future multinational operations in the region.

There were also operational challenges during Operation Tomodachi, which if mitigated, may improve USPACOM capability. One challenge was the command and control of US forces between USFJ and the JSF. USFJ retained tactical control over forces in Japan, but the JSF was given operational control over some of the same forces. As a result, command and control relationships were not clear to all the units. Developing a clear command and control task organization and communicating it to participating units may increase effectiveness. Another challenge that hindered operations was information management and information sharing. There were multiple computer networks used during the operation (e.g. SIPR, NIPR, APAN, HARMONIEWeb), which prevented efficient communications. Eliminating the requirement for multiple networks will enable better information synchronization and reduce duplicity of effort. To the maximum extent possible, foreign disclosure procedures should be streamlined. Additionally, in order to facilitate communication and coordination with other nations, IGOs, and NGOs, data should be unclassified as much as possible to maximize information sharing. Lastly, consequence management was a challenge for US forces. The JSF was not properly trained or resourced to deal with radiological hazards from the nuclear power station. There is no common set of guidelines between the GoJ, DoE, and DoD. This challenge is more troublesome given North Korea's nuclear capabilities. USPACOM can improve its capability by working with US agencies, allies, and partner nations to standardize consequence management response procedures. The findings from this case study show multiple ways US forces can increase their ability to conduct multinational operations in the region.

Case Study #2: Operation Sahayogi Haat (Nepal Earthquake)

Background

On the morning of April 25, 2015, a 7.8-magnitude earthquake struck the Gorkha District of Nepal, forty-eight miles northwest of Kathmandu.⁸⁵ It was the most powerful quake to hit Nepal since the 1934 Nepal–Bihar earthquake.⁸⁶ The quake and hundreds of aftershocks triggered more than 1,000 avalanches and landslides that killed thousands and destroyed entire communities.⁸⁷ The April 25 earthquake and ensuing aftershocks affected more than five million people.⁸⁸ A second powerful earthquake struck Nepal on May 12, while recovery operations were still ongoing from the first earthquake.⁸⁹ The epicenter of this earthquake was roughly fifty miles northeast of Kathmandu.⁹⁰ The powerful tremor and aftershocks killed almost 9,000 people, injured over 23,000 individuals, destroyed over half a million homes, displaced over 60,000 residents, and caused an estimated economic loss of approximately \$9 billion.⁹¹

In addition to the many thousands of people in Nepal who died because of the earthquakes and aftershocks, people in the adjoining areas of India, China, and Bangladesh were

⁸⁵ “Nepal Earthquake - Fact Sheet #15,” US Agency for International Development, May 20, 2015, accessed December 1, 2017, <https://www.usaid.gov/nepal-earthquake/fy15/fs15>.

⁸⁶ Greg Botelho and Jethro Mullen, “Dozens Dead After Another Major Earthquake Centered in Nepal,” Cable News Network (CNN), last modified May 13, 2015, accessed November 13, 2017, <http://edition.cnn.com/2015/05/12/asia/nepal-earthquake/>.

⁸⁷ Mitchell Elwood, “US Army Green Berets Save Lives in Nepal,” *Liaison* 8, no. 1 (Spring 2016): 11.

⁸⁸ “Nepal Earthquake - Fact Sheet #15,” US Agency for International Development.

⁸⁹ Botelho and Mullen, “Dozens Dead After Another Major Earthquake Centered in Nepal.”

⁹⁰ David Tarantino, Kelly Suter, and James Cooper, “Nepal Earthquake: Anatomy of a Nongovernmental Response,” *Liaison* 8, no. 1 (Spring 2016): 32.

⁹¹ Alistair Cook, Maxim Shrestha, and Zin Htet, “International Response to 2015 Nepal Earthquake: Lessons and Observations,” Center for Non-Traditional Security Studies, October 4, 2016, accessed November 13, 2017, https://www.rsis.edu.sg/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/NTS_Report_4_Nepal_final_04Oct2016.pdf, 2.

killed as well.⁹² Due to the widespread destruction caused by the quake, Nepal's capacity to respond to the crisis was not sufficient.⁹³ In the aftermath of the earthquake, Nepal activated its national emergency operation center and convened its Central Natural Disaster Relief Committee. Based on the recommendation of the committee, the Government of Nepal (GoN) declared a state of emergency and requested international assistance.⁹⁴ The request for help triggered a massive influx of foreign militaries, intergovernmental organizations (IGOs), nongovernmental (NGOs) into Katmandu to assist with the rescue and relief efforts.

Under Nepal's National Disaster Response Framework (2013), the Ministry of Home Affairs assumes overall control of all the rescue and relief operations and the Army is responsible for directing and coordinating multinational military humanitarian assistance.⁹⁵ The Nepalese Army established a Joint Coordination Center at the Nepalese Army HQ to support civil-military coordination.⁹⁶ Within this mechanism, the humanitarian agencies could request logistic support from the Nepal Army, and in return, the Nepalese Army could share information related to humanitarian assistance. The Nepalese Army also established a Multinational Military Operations and Coordination Center (MNMCC) to support military-to-military coordination. The MNMCC was the primary mechanism for coordinating the Nepali government and the international disaster response efforts during the first week of HA/DR.⁹⁷ The UN established a Humanitarian-Military Operations Coordination Center (HuMOCC) and co-located it with the MNMCC. The HuMOCC

⁹² Botelho and Mullen, "Dozens Dead After Another Major Earthquake Centered in Nepal," Cable News Network (CNN).

⁹³ Ratindra Khatri, "Civil-Military Coordination after the Nepal Earthquake: Role of the HuMOCC," *Liaison* 8, no. 1 (Spring 2016): 22.

⁹⁴ "Nepal Earthquake - Fact Sheet #15," US Agency for International Development.

⁹⁵ Nepal Army Headquarters Staff, "Mission First and People Always: The Nepal Army's AAR on Operation Sankat Mochan," *Liaison* 8, no. 1 (Spring 2016): 16.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Cook, Shrestha, and Htet, "International Response to 2015 Nepal Earthquake," 15.

mission was to provide a predictable humanitarian-military-police coordination platform. The MNMCC was chaired by Nepal's Chief of Defense, General Gaurav Rana, who was designated the executive agent and coordinated directly with the foreign militaries.⁹⁸ The MNMCC coordinated all international military actions through daily meetings with General Rana or his designee. US forces exchanged liaison officers with the MNMCC and with various international agencies, to include the UN/World Food Program.

On 28 April, DoD approved the Department of State (DoS) request to provide humanitarian assistance and disaster relief to Nepal in support of the US government (USG) efforts led by the US Agency for International Development (USAID).⁹⁹ Initially, USPACOM designated MARFORPAC as the lead service component and sent a twenty-person Joint Humanitarian Assistance Survey Team (JHAST) to support relief efforts in Nepal.¹⁰⁰ Eventually, Joint Task Force-505 (JTF-505) was activated, and the JTF Commander was the Commanding General, III Marine Expeditionary Force (III MEF).¹⁰¹ About 900 US military and civilian personnel from the Army, Navy, Air Force and Marine Corps contributed to the Nepal relief efforts under Joint Task Force 505's auspices.¹⁰² Task personnel worked in Nepal, in Japan, and at an intermediate staging base (ISB) in Thailand.¹⁰³ The 3d Marine Expeditionary Brigade

⁹⁸ Liaison Staff, "Interview with U.S. Marine Corps Brig. Gen. Paul J. Kennedy, Commanding General of Joint Task Force 505 Forward during Operation Sahayogi Haat in Nepal," *Liaison* 8, no. 1 (Spring 2016): 27.

⁹⁹ "DoD Humanitarian Assistance Survey Team Arrives in Nepal," US Department of Defense, April 30, 2015, accessed December 1, 2017, <https://www.defense.gov/News/Article/Article/604545/>.

¹⁰⁰ Liaison Staff, "Interview with U.S Marine Corps Brigadier General Paul J. Kennedy, 26.

¹⁰¹ "A Brief Review of Military Response to the 2015 Nepal Earthquake: A Nepalese Army and US Pacific Command Perspective," Center for Excellence in Disaster and Humanitarian Assistance Case Study Series, Case Study No. 1, accessed December 12, 2017, <https://www.cfe-dmha.org/Publications/Case-Studies>, 10.

¹⁰² "Nepal Earthquake Response Task Force Deactivates," US Department of Defense, May 26, 2015, accessed December 1, 2017, <http://archive.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=128906>.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

(MEB) and the US Air Force's 36th Contingency Response Group (CRG) were the largest participating units of the joint force. JTF-505 led "Operation Sahayogi Haat," which means "Helping Hand" in Nepali.¹⁰⁴

There were two US Special Forces Operational Detachment Alpha (ODA) teams already in Kathmandu for a joint exercise with Nepalese Mahabir Rangers when the first earthquake struck on 25 April.¹⁰⁵ The Green Berets provided the first international assistance to the Government of Nepal (GoN) by conducting numerous rescues of people trapped by avalanches and landslides in the mountainous areas of Nepal.¹⁰⁶ The ODAs also provided real-time assessments of damage and infrastructure to incoming USAID and JTF-505 personnel.¹⁰⁷ The US Marine Corps (USMC) primary contribution was aircraft to transport humanitarian personnel and critical relief items to difficult-to-access affected areas, including remote villages in mountainous regions.¹⁰⁸ The 36 CRG had assets stationed at U-Tapao Royal Thai Navy Airfield, Thailand and Tribhuvan International Airport (TIA), Nepal.¹⁰⁹ The US Air Force airlifted personnel and relief supplies; conducted airfield assessment, management, and operations; and provided logistics support at TIA.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁴ "A Brief Review of Military Response to the 2015 Nepal Earthquake," Center for Excellence in Disaster and Humanitarian Assistance, 2.

¹⁰⁵ Khatri, "Civil-Military Coordination after the Nepal Earthquake," 22.

¹⁰⁶ Elwood, "US Army Green Berets Save Lives in Nepal," 10.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 9.

¹⁰⁸ Yonahton Bock, "Form with Content: Ensuring Mission Success in HADR," *Liaison* 8, no. 1 (Spring 2016): 44.

¹⁰⁹ Leighton Anderson, "36th Contingency Response Group (CRG) Operation Sahayogi Haat After Action Report and Lessons Learned," Joint Lessons Learned Information Systems, last modified July 10, 2015, accessed 29 December 2017, <https://www.jllis.mil/?doit=view&disp=cdview&cdrid=84371>, 3.

¹¹⁰ Anderson, "36th CRG After Action Report," 8-9.

On 12 May, shortly after the second major earthquake, a USMC Huey (UH-1Y) helicopter supporting earthquake relief efforts was reported missing.¹¹¹ It took three days for search and rescue personnel to access the crash site due to hazardous terrain and adverse weather conditions. The helicopter was located in a mountainous region eight miles west of Charikot and about eighty-five miles east of Kathmandu.¹¹² Six US Marines and two Nepal Soldiers on board the aircraft died in the crash.¹¹³

The Government of Nepal (GoN) transitioned from relief operations to the recovery phase of disaster response on 19 May. Subsequently, the US Ambassador to Nepal and JTF-505 commander announced the termination of US military HA/DR operations in Nepal on 20 May.¹¹⁴ US forces phased HA/DR operations back to GoN and international agencies and then redeployed. In total, JTF-505 delivered approximately 114 tons of emergency relief supplies, including blankets, food assistance, medical supplies, plastic sheeting, safe drinking water, and shelter kits. In addition, DoD assets transported more than 530 humanitarian personnel and conducted 63 casualty evacuations.¹¹⁵

Participants

The Government of Nepal activated almost its entire army and police force to conduct rescue and relief efforts.¹¹⁶ Ninety percent of troops were immediately mobilized, which equaled to approximately 66,000 service members.¹¹⁷ The GoN quickly recognized that they could not

¹¹¹ Vincenzo Bollettino and Tino Kreutzer, “The Use and Coordination of Civil-Military and Defense Assets in Nepal,” *Liaison* 7, no. 1 (Fall 2015): 18.

¹¹² Anderson, “36th CRG After Action Report,” 3.

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ “Nepal Earthquake - Fact Sheet #15,” US Agency for International Development.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ “A Brief Review of Military Response to the 2015 Nepal Earthquake,” Center for Excellence in Disaster and Humanitarian Assistance, 2.

¹¹⁷ Nepal Army Headquarters Staff, “Mission First and People Always,” 15.

efficiently conduct rescue and relief operations, so they asked the international community for help. Thirty-four countries responded to the request for assistance, seventeen of which also sent their respective military teams to assist in HA/DR operations.¹¹⁸ Japan and Thailand were the only US allies in the Indo-Asia-Pacific region to send military forces to Nepal. The foreign military teams deployed to Nepal included engineers, air support personnel, medical professionals, and search and rescue experts.¹¹⁹ Nepal's regional partners responded quickly, India was the first neighbor to react with its teams arriving within the first twelve hours.¹²⁰ NGOs from sixteen countries sent personnel to Nepal.¹²¹ In addition, many United Nations agencies and other IGOs participated, such as the World Food Programme. Many smaller private sector commitments contributed to the relief effort as well.

US Operational Successes

The overall USPACOM HA/DR mission was a success although US Marines, Nepali soldiers, and civilians were killed during a US helicopter crash. In addition to the contributions made to save countless lives and relieve suffering, the US military had three major successes. First, the Special Forces that were in Nepal before the earthquake proved to be very beneficial to rescue operations. In addition to their organic linguists and extensive cultural experience, the Green Berets were equipped with robust satellite communications and alpine equipment that enabled them to perform several high-altitude rescues of people trapped by avalanches and landslides in the mountainous areas.¹²² The ODA teams used their Mahabir Ranger liaisons to coordinate and share valuable information with host nation (HN) military and police units. The

¹¹⁸ Cook, Shrestha, and Htet, "International Response to 2015 Nepal Earthquake," 6.

¹¹⁹ "Nepal Earthquake - Fact Sheet #15," US Agency for International Development.

¹²⁰ Cook, Shrestha, and Htet, "International Response to 2015 Nepal Earthquake," 6.

¹²¹ Khatri, "Civil-Military Coordination after the Nepal Earthquake," 22.

¹²² Elwood, "US Army Green Berets Save Lives in Nepal," 11.

ODAs rescued fifty-five people from thirteen different countries.¹²³ They saved lives and helped strengthen the US-Nepal partnership.

Second, US-Thai cooperation was another major success during the HA/DR mission and highlighted the importance of alliances. The long-term USPACOM-Royal Thailand Armed Forces relationship facilitated the rapid establishment of an Intermediate Staging Base (ISB) at Utapao Air Base, Thailand.¹²⁴ The United States used the military base to facilitate American disaster relief flights in and out of Nepal. The two countries established a joint Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief Combined Coordination Center for Nepal to coordinate and synchronize US military operations with Thailand's civil air operations.¹²⁵

Third, the US Joint Force's ability to share information and coordinate with the Host Nation, foreign militaries, and numerous civilian international organizations was another major success. Partnering with the host nation and international agencies on each level maintains proper guidance channels and prevents confusion. JTF-505 assigned liaisons within the JCC and HuMOCC to facilitate civil-military information sharing and coordination. The US also had a robust presence at the MNMCC to support military-to-military information sharing, coordination, and synchronization. Civil-military and military-to-military information sharing and synchronization between JTF-505, MNMCC, JCC and UN Clusters led to shared understanding, situation awareness and improved the efficiency of relief operations.

US Operational Challenges

One significant operational challenge for US forces was getting access to Nepal, which is a land-locked country. US deployments were delayed due to the slow process of requesting and receiving overflight permission from Nepal's neighboring countries, specifically China and India.

¹²³ Elwood, "US Army Green Berets Save Lives in Nepal," 11.

¹²⁴ Anderson, "36th CRG After Action Report," 5.

¹²⁵ Ibid., 7.

In addition to overflight, immigration and border-nation coordination was a continuous challenge that required proactive action by the USPACOM staff and US country teams. The delay of lifesaving HA/DR supplies and equipment it increases the risk of casualties.

The tyranny of distance in the Indo-Asia-Pacific region was also a logistics challenge. US Joint forces supporting Operation Sahayogi Haat had to travel thousands of miles to get to Nepal and Thailand from Alaska, Guam, Hawaii, and Japan. The long distances required to get HA/DR assets into Nepal necessitated the establishment of an intermediate staging base (ISB) in Thailand capable of supporting logistics and sustainment operations.¹²⁶ The use of an ISB reduced the expenditure of resources and the risk to USAF personnel.

Once US forces were in Nepal, another operational challenge was getting access to the disaster-stricken areas. Nepal has some of the most challenging terrains on Earth. Nepal's highest point is on Mount Everest, which is also the highest peak in Asia and the highest point on earth above sea level.¹²⁷ A significant portion of the people affected by the two earthquakes resided in mountainous, remote, difficult-to-reach areas.¹²⁸ Access to remote villages by overland routes was severely limited due to the destruction caused by a combination of earthquakes, aftershocks, avalanches, landslides and naturally restrictive terrain. As a result, air support was a priority to the HA/DR effort. US personnel providing air support faced many challenges in conducting air operations due to the problematic nature of the terrain and limited aviation technology available in Nepal. Limited access to remote areas delayed the HA/DR effort and increased the risk of casualties.

¹²⁶ Alexander Martinez, "Nepal Final Report: Air Force Support for Operation Sahayogi Haat," US Air Force, June 17, 2015, accessed November 29, 2017, <http://www.af.mil/News/Article-Display/Article/600689/nepal-final-report-af-support-for-operation-sahayogi-haat/>.

¹²⁷ "Nepal," *The World Factbook*, Central Intelligence Agency, last modified April 7, 2016, accessed November 29, 2017, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/np.html>.

¹²⁸ Global Logistics Cluster, "A Backbone of Lessons from the Response: Logistics Cluster," *Liaison* 8, no. 1 (Spring 2016): 40.

Another operational challenge for JTF-505 forces was the small size of Tribhuvan International Airport (TIA), which is Nepal's only international airport and consists of only one runway, limited cargo handling capacity, and parking slots for nine jets.¹²⁹ The airport is not equipped for a significant influx of heavy planes carrying tons of relief supplies. As a result, on May 3 officials closed the airport to large planes after the runway sustained damage from the incursion of flights delivering assistance.¹³⁰ The lack of useable airfields was a significant logistics and transport challenge and increased the risk of mission failure.

Case Study #2 Summary

The findings from this case study show how USPACOM can improve its capability to conduct multinational operations. By sustaining the successes exemplified during Operation Sahayogi Haat, US forces can increase the likelihood of success during future operations. USPACOM was able to take advantage of the US forces who were in Nepal prior to the disaster. In addition to their knowledge of the operational environment, the relationships and cultural experience that these forces established during pre-crisis activities were beneficial during real-world operations. Although disaster relief is not an area of expertise for US forces, the United States should capitalize on their providential presence.

Another success was the United States' ability to use its longstanding alliance with Thailand to quickly establish an ISB that allowed personnel and equipment to flow into Nepal. Personnel and supplies traveled thousands of miles to reach Nepal. Due to the vastness of the Indo-Asia-Pacific AOR, it is apparent that US assets will need ISBs during future operations. Therefore, USPACOM should work to increase the number of foreign sea ports, aerial ports, and bases available for its forces to use during future operations.

¹²⁹ Liaison Staff, "Airfield Operations after the Nepal Earthquake," *Liaison* 8, no. 1 (Spring 2016): 37.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

Lastly, JTF-505 used liaisons to facilitate civil-to-military and military-to-military information sharing and coordination. This case study shows that US forces will work not only with the host nation government and military forces, but will share the operational environment with many other foreign militaries (allies and non-allies), IGOs, and NGOs. Hence, US commanders should continue to establish a robust liaison network with host nation, coalition partners, IGOs, NGOs, and other US government agencies to support information sharing, coordination, and synchronization.

There were also operational challenges during Operation Sahayogi Haat that should be eliminated or mitigated to improve USPACOM's capability. One challenge was the requirement to get overflight permissions. In addition to Nepal, Bhutan, Laos, and Mongolia are all landlocked countries in the Indo-Asia-Pacific AOR. Time is a critical factor during HA/DR operations, so a delay in overflight permissions increases the risk of casualties, the expenditure of resources, and the risk of mission failure. USPACOM should work with relevant US agencies and foreign governments to streamline the process to get overflight permission, especially during emergency operations.

The lack of functional transportation infrastructure in Nepal presented another challenge to US forces. Nepal only has one large airport, which only has one runway and limited cargo capacity. Outside of Katmandu, the road network is very restrictive due to rugged geography. The quake damaged the airport, roads, bridges, and other key infrastructure, thus exacerbating the transportation problem. Many other nations throughout the region also have limited transportation infrastructure that is vulnerable to natural disasters. To improve US forces' capability to conduct operations in post-disaster environments, USPACOM should prepare to rely heavily on rotary wing aircraft. These assets can operate in austere environments, require minimum infrastructure, and can access remote populations. The findings from this case study illustrate several ways USPACOM can increase its ability to conduct multinational operations in the region.

Case Study #3: Operation Damayan (Philippine Super Typhoon)

Background

On 8 November 2013, Super Typhoon Haiyan, which was the strongest storm on record to make landfall, made its first arrival on land in the Visayas region along the central east coast islands of the Philippines. Haiyan had winds up to 200 mph with gusts up to 225 mph.¹³¹ USAID estimated that Typhoon Haiyan caused 6,300 deaths, displaced 4.1 million people, damaged or destroyed 1.1 million houses, and affected 16 million people.¹³² Haiyan severely impacted nine out of the seventeen regions in the Philippines and destroyed large swathes of territory spread across many islands.¹³³ The typhoon would prove to be the deadliest natural disaster in Philippine history. The storm destroyed transportation and telecommunications infrastructure, cut off food supplies, and blocked roads while leaving millions of people with no running water or electricity.¹³⁴

The Government of the Republic of the Philippines (GRP) and the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) led the country's rescue and recovery efforts. Complicating their disaster response to Typhoon Haiyan was the government's armed struggles with Muslim insurgency groups operating in the impacted areas in the southern portion of the country. In Mindanao and adjacent islands, fighting erupted between the AFP and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front

¹³¹ Super Typhoon Haiyan is known as Typhoon Yolanda in the Philippines. Thomas Parker et al., "An Inside Look into USPACOM Response to Super Typhoon Haiyan," Center for Excellence in Disaster Management and Humanitarian Assistance, February 1, 2015, accessed October 21, 2017, <https://www.cfe-dmha.org/Publications/Reports>, 6.

¹³² "Philippines- Typhoon Yolanda/Haiyan Fact Sheet #22," US Agency for International Development, April 21, 2014, accessed December, 7, 2017, <https://www.usaid.gov/haiyan/fy14/fs22>

¹³³ Parker et al., "An Inside Look into USPACOM Response," 6.

¹³⁴ Thomas Lum and Rhoda Margesson, *Typhoon Haiyan (Yolanda): U.S. and International Response to Philippines Disaster*, Congressional Research Service (CRS) Report # R43309 (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 2014), accessed November 13, 2017, <https://digital.library.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metadc282292/m1/>, 1–2.

(MILF), Abu Sayyaf, and the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF). Jemaah Islamiyah (JI), the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF), and the Communist New People's Army (NPA) intensified the conflict due to violent attacks.¹³⁵

The Philippine government's response relied heavily on its National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Center (NDRRMC) and the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), which are the two agencies that primarily plan and administer the country's disaster relief.¹³⁶ The NDRRMC oversees national-level activities, and the DSWD and its field offices coordinate relief efforts at the regional level. The NDRRMC also works with private sector disaster management networks. The Department of Foreign Affairs was the point of contact for countries and international organizations wanting to provide disaster relief assistance.¹³⁷ Most of the international humanitarian organizations responding to the disaster based their operations in Manila, with cluster coordination meetings occurring in each of the major cities in affected areas.¹³⁸ The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) established the Multinational Coordination Center (MNCC) on Camp Aguinaldo in Manila. The MNCC was collocated with the NDRRMC to facilitate information sharing and common situational awareness between the GRP, AFP, and foreign militaries.¹³⁹

¹³⁵ Chris Dolan and Alynna Lyon, "Operation Damayan: A Critical Examination of the U.S. Humanitarian Response to Typhoon Yolanda (Haiyan) in the Philippines," May 3, 2014, accessed December 5, 2017, https://www.academia.edu/9861966/Operation_Damayan_A_Critical_Examination_of_the_U.S._Humanitarian_Response_to_Typhoon_Yolanda_Haiyan_in_the_Philippines_Presented_at_NEPSCA-Vermont_2014, 21.

¹³⁶ Lum and Margesson, *Typhoon Haiyan (Yolanda)*, 5.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ Parker et al., "An Inside Look into USPACOM Response," 6.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

The Philippine government issued a request for humanitarian assistance to the US government on November 9.¹⁴⁰ After the US Department of State (DoS) approved the request, the DOD launched “Operation Damayan” on November 10, which means “helping each other” in Tagalog.¹⁴¹ USPACOM directed Marine Corps Forces Pacific (MARFORPAC) to lead military HA/DR operations and deployed USS George Washington and elements of Carrier Strike Group 5 (CSG 5) to the Philippines. An USAF Contingency Response Group (CRG) and Special Operations Forces (SOF) also provided significant support to the relief mission.¹⁴² US military units were able to respond quickly due to their forward-postured locations throughout the region. The United States established its Command Operations Center (COC) in Manila at Villamor Airbase. The base is home to the Philippine Air Force (PAF) and shares runways with the Ninoy Aquino International Airport.¹⁴³ On 16 November, Joint Task Force-505 (JTF-505) was activated and would direct US joint forces involved in the HA/DR mission until the unit was deactivated on December 1, 2013.¹⁴⁴

Participants

The Philippine government requested help from the United Nations, so the Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) and UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) teams were sent to the Philippines.¹⁴⁵ In addition to UN agencies, numerous

¹⁴⁰ Thomas Parker et al., “The US Pacific Command Response to Super Typhoon Haiyan,” *Joint Force Quarterly* 82, (3rd Quarter, 2016): 56.

¹⁴¹ Tagalog is the primary language spoken in the region hardest hit by the typhoon. Shane Muscato and Joey Sullivan, “Death, Taxes, and Disasters: AFSOF’S Utility in Disaster” (Master’s thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, 2015), accessed December 12, 2017, <https://www.hsdl.org/?view&did=790503>, 46.

¹⁴² Muscato and Sullivan, “Death, Taxes, and Disasters,” 54.

¹⁴³ Parker et al., “An Inside Look into USPACOM Response,” 6.

¹⁴⁴ Lum and Margesson, *Typhoon Haiyan (Yolanda)*, 9.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 5-6.

other IGO, NGOs, multilateral organizations, and private sector agencies sent staff into the country. At least twenty-five humanitarian organizations operated in and around Tacloban.¹⁴⁶ Furthermore, fifty-seven nations sent personnel to assist, including twenty-nine foreign military elements of varying sizes.¹⁴⁷ Four out of five US regional allies sent military elements to participate in the HA/DR operations. More than twenty-five foreign military aircraft from eleven different countries delivered relief items to various areas in the Philippines. Additionally, more than twelve foreign naval vessels from ten partner nations supported the relief effort.¹⁴⁸ The aircraft and maritime capabilities provided by foreign militaries to the devastated island country were essential to the success of humanitarian operations in the aftermath of the typhoon.

US Operational Successes

One major success was the fact that forward deployed US assets provided the Philippine government an almost immediate response that saved lives. US personnel from Joint Special Operations Task Force-Philippines (JSOTF-P), which is based in the Philippines, reacted quickly to assist in assessments, personnel evacuation, and airfield procedures.¹⁴⁹ On 9 November, JSOTF-P utilized their organic air assets to conduct vital aerial surveys of the hardest hit areas and they shared critical, unclassified information to host nation, IGOs, NGOs, and USPACOM.¹⁵⁰ Another benefit of the SOF teams was their ability to rapidly establish strong relationships with host nation civil authorities, the Armed Forces of the Philippines, the Philippine National Police, and NGOs, and to then utilize those relationships to connect with others arriving on the scene.¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁶ Lum and Margesson, *Typhoon Haiyan (Yolanda)*, 6.

¹⁴⁷ Parker et al., “An Inside Look into USPACOM Response,” 5.

¹⁴⁸ “Lessons from Civil-Military Disaster Management and Humanitarian Response to Typhoon Haiyan (Yolanda),” Center for Excellence in Disaster Management and Humanitarian Assistance (CFE-DMHA) (Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam: CFE-DMHA, 2014), 39.

¹⁴⁹ Elwood, “US Army Green Berets Save Lives in Nepal,” 12.

¹⁵⁰ Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute, “Foreign Humanitarian Assistance,” *SOLLIMS Sampler* 6, no. 2 (September 2015): 16.

These relationships opened doors and forged a trusting partnership with the Philippine government that helped facilitate effective HA/DR operations.

An additional operational success was the use of the Deployable Joint Task Force Augmentation Cell (DJTFAC), which helped III MEF establish an operational joint headquarters.¹⁵² The DJTFAC, which was comprised of service members from all the different armed services, augmented the III MEF staff to make JTF-505 a joint organization. DJTFAC personnel provided joint experience, host nation and regional expertise, and comprehensive knowledge of USPACOM organization and processes.¹⁵³ The deployable organization increased the JTF's capability to command and control US forces during the operation.

Another key success during Operation Damayan was the massive amount of disaster aid US forces provided through their coordination with GRP, AFP, and USAID. Despite extensive damage to aerial and sea ports of debarkation (APODs and SPODs), US forces were able to deploy ships, aircraft, personnel, and equipment to the Philippines within days of the catastrophe. In addition to medical support and other types of humanitarian assistance, USPACOM units delivered water to 200,000 individuals, distributed 2.7 million food parcels, supplied 20,000 families with hygiene kits, and assisted 20,000 families with emergency shelter.¹⁵⁴

Another success during the HA/DR operation was the use of the All Partners Access Network (APAN) as an open source means of sharing information among HN, foreign militaries, civilian organizations, and others involved in the HA/DR effort.¹⁵⁵ APAN provided US

¹⁵¹ Muscato and Sullivan, "Death, Taxes, and Disasters," 81.

¹⁵² Parker et al., "US Pacific Command Response to Super Typhoon Haiyan," 57.

¹⁵³ Ibid.

¹⁵⁴ Arthur Behnke, "Operation Damayan – US Marine Corps Forces, Pacific (MARFORPAC) After Action Report (AAR)," Stability Operations Lessons Learned and Information Management System (SOLLIMS), December 9, 2013, accessed December 12, 2017, <https://www.pksoi.org/resource/view/id/5714>, 8.

¹⁵⁵ "About Us," All Partners Access Network.

personnel, foreign governments, IGOs, and NGOs participating in the response effort a forum for collaboration. The “Typhoon Haiyan Response Group” community on APAN provided organizations and militaries a centralized location to share information, increase situational awareness, and reduce duplicated efforts.¹⁵⁶ As communications stabilized, USPACOM established APAN and the MNCC used it extensively.¹⁵⁷ APAN helped to reduce the risk of casualties through information sharing and collaboration while simultaneously decreasing the expenditure of resources by making operations more efficient.

US Operational Challenges

One challenge for US forces was the fact that the AFP did not establish the MNCC until several days after Super Typhoon Haiyan had made landfall.¹⁵⁸ The lack of a MNCC impeded information sharing and common situational awareness between the GRP, AFP, and foreign militaries. Initially, foreign militaries arriving in the Philippines operated relatively independently from different geographic locations. Until the AFP established the MNCC days later, there was no unity of effort between the international forces.

A second challenge during the operation was a lack of joint planning between the responding MEF staff and the JSOTF-P unit already stationed in the country. Joint planning experience is not resident within the MEF. As a result, the MEF staff lacked a full understanding of US SOF capabilities, leading to a less than optimal employment of Special Forces during the operation.¹⁵⁹ There was not enough communication between the two elements to produce a

¹⁵⁶ “Philippines Typhoon Haiyan Response,” All Partners Access Network, accessed November 12, 2017, <https://www.apan.org/pages/case-study-haiyan>.

¹⁵⁷ “Foreign Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief: Operation Damayan Support to the Republic of the Philippines after Typhoon Haiyan in November 2013,” *Marine Corps Center for Lessons Learned* 10, no. 5 (May 2014): 4.

¹⁵⁸ Gloria Jumamil-Mercado et al., “Advances in Civil Military Coordination in Catastrophes,” Center for Excellence in Disaster Management and Humanitarian Assistance (CFE-DMHA) (Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam: CFE-DMHA, 2015), 14.

¹⁵⁹ Muscato and Sullivan, “Death, Taxes, and Disasters,” 63.

coordinated US relief effort. By not having a joint planning session early in the operation, US forces did not move aid as efficiently as was possible which increased the risk of casualties and mission failure.

An additional challenge that US forces encountered during the operation was a lack of shared communication platforms. To compound the problem, there was a lack of exchange of liaison officers (LNOs) between participating organizations compared to previous HA/DR operations of similar magnitude.¹⁶⁰ As a result, it was challenging to integrate national assets, IGOs, NGOs, and military agencies into the planning and decision-making of international relief coordinating bodies. Thus, US forces and other foreign militaries mostly relied on bilateral communication with the Philippine government. The responding foreign militaries did not exchange liaison offers (LNOs), and their communication systems were not interoperable, so foreign militaries were unable to maximize cooperation based on unity of effort.

A challenge was the failure to use the existing Multinational Forces Standard Operating Procedures (MNF SOP) or the GRP-US Military Humanitarian and Disaster Relief Concept of Operations (CONOP) during Operation Damayan.¹⁶¹ The two products contain the longstanding command, control, and coordination tactics, techniques, procedures, and processes that the two allies had previously agreed to use during combined operations. While the documents are the foundation of and exercised in USPACOM's Theater Security Cooperation exercises, many deployed US personnel were unfamiliar with SOP or the CONOP.¹⁶² Widespread distribution and use of these documents to all participating service components and nations would have resulted in more efficient planning and conduct of operations.

¹⁶⁰ "Lessons from Civil-Military Disaster Management," 38.

¹⁶¹ Behnke, "Operation Damayan – MARFORPAC AAR," 17.

¹⁶² Ibid., 18.

Medical teams from the Carrier Strike Group (CSG) were also presented with an operational challenge. Medical personnel began providing medical aid to victims before the arrival of USAID, which is the lead federal agency for coordinating US government (USG) Foreign Humanitarian Assistance (FHA) responses. Once USAID staff arrived, they wanted the CSG medical teams to stop providing medications because medicine was in route from other non-USG sources. The medical teams faced an ethical dilemma between following the orders of the LFA or continuing to provide medications that would help mitigate human suffering and possibly save lives. Lack of clarity about the principles of humanitarian relief and medical ethics present a challenge to US HA/DR medical responders.¹⁶³

Case Study #3 Summary

The findings from this case study highlight ways that USPACOM can improve its capability to conduct future multinational operations with allies and partners. Achievements attained between the US military and other foreign entities during Operation Damayan should be sustained to facilitate success during future operations. For example, USPACOM capitalized on the presence of US forces stationed in the Philippines. Similar to operations in Japan and Nepal, US military personnel in the Philippines used their organic assets, preexisting relationships with host nation forces, and subject matter expertise to enable effective HA/DR operations. Another operational success that should be continued is the use of APAN to share information among HN, foreign militaries, and civilian organizations. APAN provides participants an unclassified network for information management, collaboration, and coordination.

There were operational challenges during Operation Damayan that hindered effective operations between the US joint force and other agencies. For example, the MNCC was not established until several days after the disaster struck, so initially the international response was

¹⁶³ “Lessons from Civil-Military Disaster Management,” 42.

not well coordinated. Responding agencies coordinated with GRP and AFP on a bilateral basis and there was no a unity of effort amongst all the participating military forces. Another challenge during the operation was a disconnection between US forces already in country (JSOTF-P) and US forces deploying into the country (JTF-505). After JTF-505 forces arrived in country and assumed responsibility for US forces participating in the disaster relief mission, there was a lack in communication and coordination between the two units. Lastly, an additional challenge was a deficit of interoperable communication platforms between JTF-505 and other disaster relief organizations. The communication problems impeded unity of effort. These operational challenges should be fixed or mitigated to improve USPACOM's capability to conduct multinational operations with allies and partner nations in the future.

Conclusion

USPACOM is responsible for security in the Indo-Asia-Pacific AOR, which is a region that continues to be important to US national security, foreign policy, and economic interests. The three biggest security threats in the region are North Korea's nuclear and ballistic capabilities, Chinese militarization in the South China Sea and Violent Extremist Organizations. The key aspect of USPACOM's strategy to overcome these security challenges is multilateral cooperation. Regional allies and partners provide US forces operational and strategic advantages. Because other nations will fight alongside US forces during future US military operations, it is important that USPACOM and its subordinate units are capable of conducting effective multinational operations.

This monograph sought to answer the following research question: How can USPACOM improve its capability to conduct multinational operations in the Indo-Asia-Pacific region? To arrive at an answer to this question, this monograph examined the recent history of multinational operations in the Indo-Asia-Pacific region. The findings from the three case studies identified operational successes that can be sustained to promote effective multinational operations. The

findings also highlighted operational challenges that should be eliminated or reduced because they hinder multinational operations. Analysis of the three case studies showed several ways USPACOM could improve its capability to conduct multinational operations in the Indo-Asia-Pacific region. This information may help to minimize the risk of casualties, reduce the expenditure of resources, and/or decrease the risk of mission failure during future combined operations in the region.

Implications

There are many implications for the Indo-Asia-Pacific region based on the three major threats and the fact that multinational operations underpin USPACOM's security strategy. The United States should keep a significant number of US forces forward-deployed throughout the region. US military presence deters adversaries, while reassuring allies and partners that the United States is committed to the region. Strong relationships with USPACOM's five mutual defense treaty allies serve as a bulwark for regional stability. In addition, it is advantageous for USPACOM to develop or strengthen partnerships with other like-minded nations who are will to work toward common goals. Adequate resources are important to enhancing USPACOM's theater security cooperation activities, such as bilateral and multilateral exercises. It is beneficial for US forces to help allies and partners improve their military capabilities. Strong relationships between capable nations are not only a deterrent, but are also valuable to future military operations. Lastly, US relations should progress from the traditional bilateral approach to a multilateral approach. US allies and partners must be able to conduct operations with each other, not just with US forces, to fully benefit from multilateral cooperation.

Further Research

This monograph focused on the effectiveness of USPACOM's military response during HA/DR operations. Further research should study the efficacy and efficiency of the United States' whole-of-government response to disasters and crisis in the AOR. Similarly, a complete

examination of the regional and international response to humanitarian assistance and disaster relief efforts would further inform future operations. The aim of the research should be to improve future response to disasters in the Indo-Asia-Pacific region.

This monograph reveals that command and control, communications, and coordination is always challenging during multinational operations. Finding better ways to integrate IGOs and NGOs into pre-disaster activities would reduce challenges during real-world operations. In addition, further research should also address whether USPACOM, along with allies and partner nations, would benefit from the establishment of a Multinational Training Center within its AOR. The aim of the research should to improve pre-disaster planning, training and exercises for all relevant participants, thus further enhancing security in this pivotal theater.

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