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MASTER OF MILITARY STUDIES

**Service Rebalance In The Pacific:
A Case for Rotating Combatant Command Leadership Between the Services at the United
States Pacific Command**

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF MILITARY STUDIES

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Executive Summary

Title: Service Rebalance In The Pacific: A Case For Rotating Combatant Command Leadership Between The Services At The United States Pacific Command

Author: Major Kevin M. Ryan, United States Army

Thesis: A multi-service flag and general officer rotation plan at the senior leadership level in the USPACOM GCC headquarters serves the national interest by improving the knowledge base of the GCC's leadership in the areas of strategic land, air, and sea power to accomplish the primary ways in which USPACOM accomplishes its mission: security cooperation; encouraging peaceful development; deterring aggression; responding to contingencies; and fighting to win.

Discussion: A center-of gravity analysis of the primary ways in which USPACOM executes its mission, reveals that in the contemporary environment, each of the four services provide critical capabilities that facilitate the mission's primary *ways*. The analysis also identifies that the US Army is the service most critical to the mission's center of gravity.

Conclusion: The operating environment in the Asia-Pacific theatre is far more complex than its nautical dimensions and tyranny of distance suggest. "Security cooperation", "peaceful development", "deterrence of aggression", "contingency response" and developing the capability to "fight and win" in the contemporary operating environment, will shape security issues in the region for the foreseeable future. The US Army's operating concept uniquely postures its leadership to understand the complexity of the Pacific AOR as it relates to the challenges of the land and human domains;¹ the US Navy's sea power strategy document focuses the cooperative naval force on the development of new techniques and technology to dominate the global sea commons;² and the USAF's airpower strategy postures its future force to become more capable and agile in the aerial delivery of combat power and cyberspace. These strategies serve vital interests for the nation and the Pacific, but the command's institutional knowledge of the air and land domain has suffered due to a lack of emphasis on salient security issues that affect the region, in favor of a stagnate focus on the maritime issues of the command and naval proficiency. A GCC commander and staff rotation that features the strategic land and air power-focus of US Army, Marine Corps and Air Force generals with the naval focus of a four-star admiral, allows the command to retain its maritime character while broadening its approach to security by periodically investing in the strategic air and land domains.

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INTRODUCTION

*“Adapt or perish, now as ever, is nature’s inexorable imperative.”
- H. G. Wells³*

Since the creation of the United States Pacific Command (USPACOM) in 1947, a United States (US) Navy four-star admiral has commanded it.⁴ The naval dominance of this command makes sense from an intuitive standpoint, since water accounts for over 80% of the more than 100 million square mile area of responsibility (AOR)⁵ as well as containing many of the world’s major maritime commerce routes. However, it is important to consider that the AOR also accounts for over 50% of the global population including the “most populous nation, the largest democracy, and the largest Muslim-majority country”⁶ in the world, along with six of the planet’s ten largest armies.⁷ In fact, five out of the region’s top seven security concerns, as expressed by the USPACOM commander, are land-dominated issues;⁸ and the Asia-Pacific region is home to more than half of the world’s megacities, a number which is expected to double in the next thirty years.^{9 10}

The security state of the Asia-Pacific is undoubtedly dynamic, but since the turn of the twentieth century conflict in this region has occurred primarily on land with the notable exceptions of the Russo-Japanese War (1904-05) and World War II (WWII, 1941-45).¹¹ The US Geographic Combatant Command (GCC)¹² established in the aftermath of WWII with a naval character, has remained this way for the entirety of its existence. The Department of the Navy has filled primary leadership and key staff positions within the headquarters based on traditional grounds with little regard for the evolution of the USPACOM mission. This raises the question: to what extent would USPACOM benefit from a service rotation in leadership at the GCC headquarters? The nation’s strategic rebalance to the Pacific offers an opportunity for the Joint

Staff to consider adjusting the senior leadership and staff billets for USPACOM to reflect the realities of the environment and develop a more effective command.

A multi-service flag and general officer rotation plan at the senior leadership level in the USPACOM GCC headquarters serves the national interest by improving the knowledge base of the GCC's leadership in the areas of strategic land, air, and sea power to accomplish the primary ways in which USPACOM executes its mission: security cooperation; encouraging peaceful development; deterring aggression; responding to contingencies; and fighting to win.

USPACOM OVERVIEW

“Hindsight is notably cleverer than foresight.”
- Admiral Chester W. Nimitz¹³

Brief History. USPACOM is the nation's oldest combatant command, and it draws its lineage from the first Unified Command Plan (UCP) of 1946. In fact, the development of a UCP “stemmed from the Navy's dissatisfaction of a divided command in the Pacific.”¹⁴ At the time, the Pacific AOR was divided between the navy dominated and geographically focused Pacific Command (PACOM) and the functionally focused Far East Command (FECOM), which was army-centric and organized to occupy Japan. The Bonin and Mariana Islands were the main point of contention between these two commands, until 1951 when the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) disbanded FECOM and shifted the responsibility of the islands under PACOM to the chagrin of the US Army.¹⁵

The two major US-involved conflicts in the region following WWII were decidedly land campaigns: the Korean and Vietnam Wars. Vietnam in particular served to identify significant issues with regard to command structure in the Pacific theatre. One example of how the bifurcation of command authority during the Vietnam War disrupted mission effectiveness can

be seen in the target approval process: Commander of the Military Assistance Command, Vietnam (COMUSMACV) had to approve targets through the Commander-in-Chief, Pacific (CINCPAC) who would refine and seek final approval from Washington, DC.¹⁶ The US Navy's dominance of the AOR exasperated the other services and after an unsuccessful bid by then-Chief of Staff of the Army (CSA), General (GEN) William Westmoreland to elevate the COMUSMACV, GEN Creighton Abrams to the position of CINCPAC, Abrams assumed duties as CSA and campaigned to dissolve PACOM in favor of the establishment of four unified commands across the Pacific region based on function. GEN Abrams efforts ultimately failed when Secretary of Defense (SECDEF) James Schlesinger concluded that the command was geographical and subdividing it into four regions would convolute command throughout the region, instead Schlesinger further expanded PACOM's AOR to include the Indian Ocean,¹⁷ but the sentiment remained: the Pacific operating environment was taking on a different character than it had in the 1940's. In 1954, as part of President Dwight D. Eisenhower's DoD reorganization, the SECDEF established service-level executive agents for each combatant command, assigning executive agency of PACOM to the Department of the Navy.¹⁸ Today, GCCs are no longer controlled by the service chiefs through executive agency, however the indelible legacy that US Navy executive agency impressed on USPACOM has stood the test of time.

By 1976, the PACOM AOR expanded to include the entire Indian Ocean bounded by the east coast of Africa and Gulfs of Aden and Oman. Through the 1980's, the JCS expanded PACOM's AOR to include China, North Korea, Japan, Mongolia, Madagascar and Alaska, while transferring the Gulfs of Aden and Oman to the newly established US Central Command (USCENTCOM).¹⁹ This configuration remained until the 2001 Quadrennial Defense Review

(QDR) established a new plan to assign a geographic combatant commander to every portion of the earth's surface. This precipitated the establishment of US Northern Command (USNORTHCOM), which assumed responsibility for the western coast and territorial waters of the United States and Alaska. The 2001 QDR also assigned USPACOM responsibility of the Antarctic continent.²⁰

The only serious post-Vietnam era challenge to the naval leadership of USPACOM came in 2004, when US Air Force (USAF) General Gregory Martin was nominated to replace Admiral (ADM) Thomas Fargo. Senator John McCain, a retired US Navy captain and son of a former USPACOM Commander blocked GEN Martin's confirmation citing GEN Martin's connection to an acquisition scandal involving a former subordinate. The allegations were eventually disproven, but were enough to cause GEN Martin to withdraw his nomination and allow ADM William Fallon to replace ADM Fargo, extending the naval command continuum in the Pacific.²¹

Asia-Pacific Rebalance. On November 17, 2011 in an address to the Australian Parliament, President Barack Obama unveiled his strategy for the US rebalance to the Asia-Pacific region. The rebalance to the Asia-Pacific Region, as articulated by the President's National Security Advisor Tom Donilon, includes five pillars: "strengthening alliances; deepening partnerships with emerging powers; building a stable, productive, and constructive relationship with China; empowering regional institutions; and helping to build a regional economic architecture that can sustain shared prosperity."²²

The president's rebalance strategy relies heavily on military involvement in each of the five pillars. Accordingly, the 2012 Defense Strategic Guidance reflects the military's own rebalance to nest with the president's strategy stating, "We will of necessity rebalance toward the

Asia-Pacific region.”²³ The defense guidance references each pillar: strengthening existing alliances; developing a stronger defense relationship with India, an emerging Asia-Pacific power; understanding military intentions and reducing friction with China; and promoting rules based international law in the region to stimulate economic growth.²⁴ USPACOM is the de-facto main effort for execution of the DoD’s strategic guidance.

USPACOM Today. USPACOM is the largest of the combatant commands, responsible for safeguarding US interests in thirty-six countries, it is also uniquely postured as the only combatant command to share boundaries with every other geographic command. Of the more than 360,000 military and civilian personnel in the command, 140,000 belong to the US Navy Pacific Fleet (PACFLEET); the US Army Pacific Command (USARPAC) is responsible for more than 106,000 soldiers and civilians; there are 86,000 US Marines in the Pacific (MARPAF); and almost 30,000 airmen and 300 aircraft belong to US Air Forces Pacific (AFPAC).²⁵

The current distribution of leadership at USPACOM for command and primary staff is heavily influenced by the naval service. The Department of the Navy fills the Geographic Combatant Commander (CCDR) position; the Commander, Special Operations Command-Pacific (SOCPAC); the Director of Intelligence (J2); the Director of Operations (J3); the Director of Strategic Plans and Policy (J5, which is filled by the US Marine Corps); the Director of Command, Control, Communications, and Cyber (J6); the Director of the Joint Interagency Task Force-West (JIATF-W); and the Command Senior Enlisted Advisor (SEA). The US Army fills the command of US Forces in Korea (USFK); GCC Deputy Commander (DCDR) position; GCC Chief of Staff (CoS) position; and the Director of Logistics, Engineering and Security

Cooperation (J4); while the USAF provides the commander for US Forces Japan (USFJ); and the Director of Manpower and Personnel (J1). Its important to note that the key staff positions of J2, J3, and J5, are traditionally manned by the naval service, effectively marginalizing the other services contribution to arguably the most influential staff sections of intelligence, current, and future operations.

Through virtue of its senior leader distribution, USPACOM is still a heavily naval focused combatant command. But this focus is rooted in late-19th century and early 20th century thinking. The teachings of Alfred Thayer Mahan that influenced the likes of President Roosevelt and many naval strategists of the era reverberate in today's approach to security in the Pacific theatre as a seascape to project America's dominance in the global sea commons.²⁶ A large naval force in the Pacific proved invaluable to the national objectives during World War II, but since GEN Douglas MacArthur began reconstruction in the late 1940s, the theatre has shifted its focus to the land domain. In the 20th century alone, the US Army participated in sixty-three campaigns in the Pacific.²⁷ The region's land-based characteristics have increased in importance to American interests in recent years and an analysis of the command's mission in terms of which service provides the expertise to safeguard American interests in the contemporary operating environment may indicate that a naval dominant focus in the region is flawed.

MISSION ANALYSIS

“Fit no stereotypes. The situation dictates which approach best accomplishes the team's mission.”

- General Colin Powell²⁸

The nomination process for a GCC commander and staff is not officially established in joint doctrine. Available insights on this process suggest that nominations for joint senior leader

positions are based on personal reputation and recommendations from the Joint Chiefs of Staff to the SECDEF who in turn makes a recommendation to the president.²⁹ This type of nomination process neglects to acknowledge the mission of the GCC and seems to depend more on perception than on thoughtful and objective analysis, which may indicate why USPACOM is so thoroughly controlled by the US Navy. Each of the services has a culture derived from their strengths and traditions as a service; this culture defines how the members of each service develop as professionals. Alternatively, analyzing the GCC mission against the acknowledged strengths of a military service can help objectively identify a service that possesses the *means* or “primary source of moral or physical strength and power,”³⁰ otherwise known as *center-of-gravity* (COG), to accomplish the GCC mission. A nomination process that acknowledges service strengths in relation to the COG of a GCC removes personal or professional bias and perception from the nomination process and helps select senior leaders that can best accomplish the mission.

The Mission. The USPACOM mission is to “protect and defend the territory of the United States, its people, and its interests, (while) enhancing stability in the Asia-Pacific region by promoting security cooperation, encouraging peaceful development, responding to contingencies, deterring aggression, and, when necessary, fighting to win. This approach is based on partnership, presence, and military readiness.”³¹ A thorough analysis of this mission can be accomplished by applying the strategic framework of *ends, ways, and means*.³² The strategic framework identifies “partnership, presence, and military readiness” as the *means* in which USPACOM implements its *ways*: “security cooperation, encouraging peaceful development,

responding to contingencies, deterring aggression and fighting to win” in order to achieve its *ends*: “protecting US interests in the region.” (See Figure 1)

Methodology. Colonel (COL) Dale Eikmeier, U.S. Army (Retired), developed a method of analyzing center-of-gravity (COG) using the strategic framework as a guide. This method of analysis uses Dr. Joseph Strange’s definitions for *centers of gravity*: primary sources of moral or physical strength, power, and resistance; *critical capabilities*: primary abilities which merit a center of gravity to be identified as such in the context of a given scenario, situation, or mission; *critical requirements*: essential conditions, resources, and means for a critical capability to be fully operative.³³ Eikmeier’s COG analysis model will be the methodology used to identify the critical capabilities and requirements that USPACOM needs to execute its mission in the contemporary Pacific environment, and by extension identify the service component best suited to lead USPACOM in that execution.

Eikmeier’s model suggests that in order to identify the COG, one must first identify the goal (or the *ends*).³⁴ In USPACOM’s case this is “protecting US interests in the region”. Next, one must identify the primary way.³⁵ As suggested in the previous section there are five *ways* that USPACOM achieves its *ends* so identifying the *ways* in relation to the USPACOM mission depends on the state of the operating environment. This analysis will examine USPACOM’s *ways*: “security cooperation, encouraging peaceful development, responding to contingencies, deterring aggression and fighting to win” individually (as if each were the primary). This will allow the analysis to identify which of the services is best postured to accomplish each *way* regardless of the state of the operating environment. Furthermore, Eikmeier’s model identifies the COG by determining which of the *means* can best accomplish the primary *way*.³⁶ The *means*

identified in the USPACOM mission statement are “partnership, presence, and military readiness.” The analysis presented in this paper will determine which of the services best accomplishes the identified COG by observing current operations, service strengths, and disposition of forces. This observation will lead to recommendations on what types of changes to USPACOM leadership and staff is needed in order to create a more efficient and better-focused command. Lastly, the United States Marine Corps (USMC) is included as a member of the joint naval team when analyzing which service can best accomplish each of the *ways*.

Security Cooperation. “Security cooperation involves all DoD interactions with foreign defense and security establishments to build defense relationships that promote specific US security interests, develop allied and friendly military and security capabilities for internal and external defense and for multinational operations, and provide US forces with peacetime and contingency access to the host nation.”³⁷ Of the *means* identified in the USPACOM mission statement, “partnership” is the *means* that can most effectively accomplish security cooperation in the region and is therefore identified as the COG. Multinational exercises offer the most tangible example of “partnership” in the region and will serve as the metric to measure service contribution to the COG for security cooperation.

The US Navy’s most significant contribution to security cooperation in the AOR is the “world’s largest international maritime exercise,”³⁸ known as *Rim of the Pacific* (RIMPAC). While it is indeed the largest exercise of its kind, nearly half of the twenty-one militaries participating come from countries outside of the USPACOM theatre.³⁹ Additionally, the size and scope of RIMPAC inhibits it from being conducted more frequently than bi-annually, making it difficult for the nations participating to build true familiarity with each other’s operating

procedures.⁴⁰ On a more positive note, RIMPAC is a testament to the navy's ability to coordinate a multinational exercise on a truly massive scale; and most recently the inclusion of the Chinese Navy in RIMPAC shows the potential this type of exercise has in attaining one of the president's Asia-Pacific Rebalance pillars of "building a stable, productive, and constructive relationship with China."

The other half of the navy team in the Pacific represented by the Marine Forces in the Pacific (MARFORPAC), partner on a more frequent basis across the Pacific, albeit on a much smaller scale than their US Navy counterparts. MARFORPAC coordinates and participates in three major annual exercises with regional partners. In the Philippines, USMC and Philippine service members participate in two annual exercises: *Balikitan*, which is a combined staff exercises and field training focused on foreign humanitarian assistance;⁴¹ and *Philippines-US Amphibious Landing Exercise* (PHIBLEX), which is a three week staff and amphibious landing train up.⁴² *Cobra Gold* is a combined US-Thailand exercise, run by the US and Thai Marines and includes participation from the US Army and Navy. *Cobra Gold* also represents the largest of the USMC's annual partnership events, involving forces from 1st and 3rd Marine Expeditionary Forces.⁴³ While these exercises all represent a significant contribution to partnership activity in the AOR, the challenges of size and capability limit the USMC to relatively small-scale exercises with very few partners. In total the Department of the Navy take the lead in habitual multinational training exercises with eleven of the thirty-six nations in the Pacific theatre.

By contrast, the US Army established habitual training relationships in over thirty Pacific countries and currently leads more than 250 security cooperation events annually in the AOR.⁴⁴ The newly established *Pacific Pathways* aims to exercise the army's regional alignment through partnership in the region as outlined in the latest US Army operating concept.⁴⁵ The US Army

Pacific Command (USARPAC) recently hosted the ninth annual *Pacific Armies Chiefs Conference* (PACC IX) in Indonesia, which gathered top army officials from twenty-six of the thirty-six nations in the Pacific AOR,⁴⁶ twenty-one of whom are the Defense Chiefs of their respective countries.⁴⁷ PACC IX focused on "strengthening regional cooperation, understanding local wisdom in conjunction with regional cooperation, and engaging in multilateral cooperative efforts to build and sustain peace."^{48 49}

Like the US Navy, the USAF's major annual multinational training exercise is limited in partners due to the capacity of partner nations in the Pacific. *Cope North* is poised to conduct its 87th iteration in the AOR. The exercise once held several times a year in Pacific countries such as Japan and the Philippines is now conducted annually out of Alaska and includes airmen and observers from the partner nations of Japan, Republic of Korea, New Zealand, Philippines, Singapore, and Vietnam.⁵⁰ While *Cope North* exercises the critical capabilities of responding to contingencies and dominating the air as a combined force, its scale and scope falls short of positioning the USAF as the critical service in security cooperation through the *means* of partnership.

Analysis of service contribution to security cooperation highlights the advantage the US Army has in partnering across the AOR. The relatively low cost and experience needed to train on the land, coupled with the pervasiveness and tradition of partner nation land forces in the AOR, gives the US Army a significant advantage over its sister services in the security cooperation arena. The US Army is the service that can best accomplish the COG of "partnership" in the USPACOM AOR.

Encourage Peaceful Development. In the president's plan for Pacific rebalance, the emerging powers in the Pacific are identified as India and Indonesia, the plan also pays specific attention to the influence that China has on development in the region.⁵¹ Therefore, an analysis of how the US military can impact development should focus on its engagement with these three nations. USPACOM can use all three *means* identified in its mission statement to influence peaceful development in the region, but the one that is likely to have the most influence and is identified as the COG for "encouraging peaceful development" is "presence".

Indonesia is the world's largest Muslim nation and a significant partner with the US to combat radical Islamic ideology. Over the last six years the US has authored two different defense partnership agreements with Indonesia, strengthening everything from foreign military sales to increased multinational exercises and professional military education opportunities. Indonesia's military culture heavily favors its army according to a 2014 report from the Center for a New American Security (CNAS).⁵² This favoring of the land forces comes from its overwhelming concern for internal security but neglects the external considerations of Indonesia's global position along major sea trade routes. The CNAS report recommends future US investment focus on naval capability improvement, which will require the US Navy's presence in ensuring this capability is used efficiently and peacefully as Indonesia develops its capabilities. While the US Army is currently the service with the most "presence" in Indonesia, further bilateral agreements that strengthen Indonesia's naval capability will dramatically increase the US Navy criticality and "presence" in and around the island nation.

India is the world's largest democracy and since 2005 India has participated in more bilateral exercises with the US than any other nation in the region.⁵³ Of the US services involved in engagements with India, the US Navy enjoys a considerable advantage in terms of "presence",

“of all the areas for bilateral military cooperation, the naval dimension has witnessed the greatest advancement in recent years and holds the most promise for future progress. The convergence of strategic maritime interests in the Indian Ocean Region to include the security of critical energy and trade routes, the denial of free passage to terrorists and weapons proliferators, and the need for effective responses to natural disasters have led to a greater mutual desire for deeper naval and maritime cooperation on both sides (US & India).”⁵⁴ The US Army presence in India pales by comparison to the US Navy, mainly due to the lack of access and bureaucratic hesitancy of partnering with the US directly for internal security issues. Therefore, the US Navy is the service that can best accomplish the COG of “presence” in the efforts to encourage peaceful development in the Indian Ocean region.

Any peaceful development in the Asia-Pacific region is inextricably linked to China. Much of the Obama administration’s engagement on this issue is diplomatic, but USPACOM has a significant role to play in ensuring China’s adherence to international law, specifically as it relates to development in the South and East China Seas. According to former-National Security Advisor Tom Donilon, the US’s “consistent policy has been to improve the quality and quantity of our cooperation (with China); promote healthy economic competition; and manage disagreements to ensure that U.S. interests are protected and that universal rights and values are respected.”⁵⁵ The US Navy is a critical component in this strategy. China’s unilateral challenges to maritime sovereignty in the Senkaku Islands and China’s land reclamation efforts are anything but peaceful development measures. While China’s aggressive development in these areas remains relatively unchecked, the US Navy “presence” in these areas has helped to deter escalation to armed conflict between China and its neighbors.

While the USAF may serve as a strategic deterrent to China and other belligerents in the AOR, their contribution to peaceful development is relatively minor due to underdeveloped relationships with the emerging Asia-Pacific powers and a lack of forces and forward operating bases to establish “presence” throughout the AOR. The US Army also suffers from an under developed relationships in the region, making the US Navy the service that can best accomplish the COG of “presence” in terms of US military contribution to peaceful development in the Asia-Pacific region. Positive naval interaction with the regions dominant powers will help to stabilize development in the region and serve American interests.

Deter Aggression. “Military readiness” and “presence” in the Pacific represent the COG for US military deterrence in the region. These equally important COGs have secured a relatively peaceful rise and economic revival in the Asia-Pacific. As Donilon posits in his remarks to the Asia Society, “Without the U.S. guarantee of security and stability, would militarism have given way to peace in Northeast Asia? Would safe sea-lanes have fueled Pacific commerce? Would South Korea have risen from aid recipient to trading powerhouse? And would small nations be protected from domination by bigger neighbors?”⁵⁶ However, this does not imply the US has eliminated aggressive actors in the Asia-Pacific region. In fact, the two most aggressive actors in the world are from this region, China and North Korea.

China’s maritime aggression outlined in the previous section is one component of their military aggressiveness in the region, and the US Navy’s presence in the Pacific Ocean is the most effective deterrent in the US military arsenal for this aggression. However, China’s aggressive tactics in cyberspace are arguably more prolific and harmful to US interests both in and out of the AOR. Cyber espionage and cyber crime were top agenda issues when President

Obama and Chinese President Xi Jinping met in the fall of 2015 and continues to be a point of contention between the two countries. The US recently established a sub-unified functional combatant command, US Cyber Command (USCYBERCOM), charged with: “defending the DoD information network, providing support to combatant commanders for execution of their missions around the world, and strengthening the nation's ability to withstand and respond to cyber attack.”⁵⁷ US Pacific Air Forces Command (PACAF), includes “the rapid and precise delivery of cyberspace capabilities”⁵⁸ as part of their mission within the AOR and the USAF as a service has taken great strides toward creating a truly prolific cyber force. However, of the four services, the US Army has made the most significant investment in cyber capability and institutionalization of cyber warfare. The US Army is the only service to have identified a cyber warfare military occupational specialty and have matured US Army Cyber Command (ARCYBER) to become USCYBERCOMs most robust component command. The institutional cyber knowledge in the US Army and the “military readiness” that the US Army as a service provides in this domain, uniquely position it as the service that can direct USPACOMs efforts in deterring Chinese aggression in this domain.

Since the 1953 Armistice that effectively ended the Korean War, North Korea has aggressively provoked its neighbors to the south and the Western world writ large by repeatedly violating treaties and agreements. The Republic of Korea (ROK) is one of our nations oldest and strongest military allies. Together, ROK and US Forces make up the Combined Forces Command (CFC) of Korea, which a US Army general has historically commanded in a relationship that dates back to the Mutual Defense Treaty of 1953. From a “military readiness” standpoint, there is no question that the US Army provides a positive impact to deterrence on the peninsula. SECDEF Ashton Carter remarked in a visit to the ROK in the spring of 2015 that

Korea “is the place where we ask our forces to be the most ready all the time. We know ‘fight tonight’ is not just a slogan, it’s the real deal.”⁵⁹ The US Army represents the bulk of the US “presence” on the peninsula and the army’s Thirty-fifth Air Defense Artillery Brigade is a pillar in the Tailored Deterrence Strategy (TDS) developed by the Extended Deterrence and Policy Committee (EDPC) of the ROK-US alliance.⁶⁰

However, US troop “presence” on the Korean peninsula has declined since the start of the global war on terror and even with a symbolic increase of 800 troops as part of the Asia-Pacific rebalance, the current posture of 30,000 troops is approximately 10,000 less than its average commitment since the Armistice was signed. This fact coupled with the relocation of most American military assets south of the Seoul metropolitan area and the impending operational control (OPCON) hand off from the US to the ROK military, means US Army “presence” on the peninsula may not have the same deterrent effect that it once had. These factors will place an increased importance on the US Navy and US Air Force “presence” in this part of the Pacific in order to deter the threat from the belligerent North Korean state poses in the region.

“Military readiness” and “presence” are equal COGs in deterring aggression in the Pacific theatre. China and North Korea aim to provoke American and partner response in the region through aggressive tactics that target the land, air, sea, and cyberspace domains. The US Army represents the service with the “military readiness” in cyberspace while the US Navy and USAF “presence” in the AOR grows as US Army presence declines on the Korean peninsula. Therefore, all three services represent capability to accomplish the COGs related to deterring aggression in the region.

Contingency Response. The most frequently executed contingency response in the USPACOM AOR is Foreign Humanitarian Assistance (FHA) and the trends seem to indicate that this will continue for the foreseeable future. In 2014, more than 50% of the world's natural disasters occurred in the Asia-Pacific region, affecting nearly eighty million people and causing approximately \$60 billion in damage.⁶¹ These trends repeat year after year and the US military responds routinely with FHA missions. "Military readiness" represents the COG for this particular *way* and highlights the importance of a force that can respond quickly to an affected area with the proper assets to accomplish the mission.⁶²

The Department of the Navy's key component in contingency response to FHA is the USMC's Special Purpose Marine Ground Task Force (SPMAGTF). SPMAGTFs are intended to be scalable to meet the specific needs of a GCC Commander in a crisis, particularly useful when responding to a natural disaster.⁶³ One example of how effective the USMC is at leveraging its expeditionary character is the USPACOM response to the May 2015 Nepal earthquakes. The GCC established Joint Task Force (JTF) 505, a USMC-led JTF that successfully integrated USAF and USMC aircraft and personnel to provide overwhelming support to the devastated nation. Within days of the disaster, the 300-personnel JTF executed "Operation Helping Hand" which delivered 120.2 tons of supplies, integrating 19 rotary and fixed winged aircraft to transport over 550 personnel in and out of effected areas.⁶⁴ The Deputy Assistant SECDEF for Stability and Humanitarian Affairs, Anne A. Witkowsky, testified to Congress that the efforts of JTF 505 had powerful impacts on the Nepali recovery and helped to better focus international aid to the region.⁶⁵ The expeditionary mindset of the USMC and the capability of the SPMAGTF in USPACOM are critical to the GCCs ability to respond to crisis in the region. However, it is worth noting that the USAF was a significant partner in this particular operation. Furthermore,

the SPMAGTF's linkage to the Amphibious Ready Group (ARG), means that the supplies available for the SPMAGTF are limited to what they have afloat, additionally, if the ARG is out of position it may take days for the SPMAGTF to arrive off shore when a natural disaster strikes.

The USAFs "military readiness" in the area of FHA is unquestionably superior to its sister services. The C-130 and C-17 offer the capability to respond to contingencies across the entire AOR through forward operating bases and the use of aerial refueling.⁶⁶ This means that elements of PACAF can respond to a contingency faster than any other service component command and are flexible with regard to what types of supplies they can bring to an effected nation. The USAFs ability to establish airfields and direct air traffic in foreign nations, as evidenced in *Operation United Response*,⁶⁷ is an invaluable service the USAF provides to a disaster stricken theatre, allowing the flow of aid to enter the country regardless of the development level of the host nation and scale of the disaster. What the USAF lacks is an ability mass ground forces in an affected area to provide support on a human to human level, this is where the US Army becomes a critical component to USPACOMs FHA "military readiness". FHA is a human-centric enterprise, and the US Army maintains the logistical architecture to provide a more sustained presence than their USMC counterparts in an effected AOR. However, for the US Army to participate in an FHA, especially in the USPACOM theatre, they need the support and the "military readiness" provided by the USAF. For these reasons the USAF represents the service with that is most capable in terms of "military readiness" to respond to contingencies in the USPACOM AOR.

Fight to win. "Megacities are unavoidable. The accelerating migration of humanity to cities is undeniable. They are the centers of gravity for the human domain where drivers of instability

converge.”⁶⁸ Megacities, defined as urban centers with a population of ten million or more, represent a significant challenge to any military force that wishes to operate in them. “Military readiness” represents the COG for the US military and its allies to fight and win in the megacity operating environment, especially in the USPACOM AOR, which hosts fifteen of the world’s largest megacities.^{69 70}

The US Navy as a maritime force is not structured for, nor do they have the mandate to operate within, a densely populated urban environment. There is no mention of the urban or megacity operating environment in the US Navy’s strategic seapower strategy,⁷¹ and only token acknowledgement in the US Marine Corps’s *Expeditionary Force 21*, which mentions that many of the densely populated urban centers are located in the littoral region.^{72 73} The USAF also has a limited role in operations within the megacity due to the restrictive nature of the operating environment and the USAFs current capabilities. Improvements to aerial intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) platforms as part of the USAFs science and technology modernization plan may prove useful for ground forces in this environment, but until that time the USAF will play a supporting role in a megacity oriented conflict. Furthermore, in recent addresses to the US Congressional House Armed Services Committee (HASC), the USPACOM leadership has failed to address the challenges related to military operations in the megacity and the capability shortfalls that exist; capabilities that could be addressed as part of the Pacific rebalance strategy.⁷⁴ To disregard the megacity is to neglect the “blind spot from which a strategic surprise could emerge,”⁷⁵ and USPACOM must take advantage of its global position as the GCC with the most megacities, to lead military innovation in the megacity-operating environment, especially if it expects to fight and win when necessary.

In the latest US Army Operating Concept: *Win in a Complex World*, acknowledgement of the densely populated urban environment is prevalent, and influences much of the capability and concept development advocated in the strategic guidance.⁷⁶ For this reason, and many others, Colonel (Retired) William G. Adamson states in his megacities *Parameters* article that he agrees with the results published in the Chief of Staff of the Army (CSA) Strategic Studies Group (SSG) report on megacities that: executive agency (EA) for operations in urban terrain and the megacity should be assigned to the Department of the Army as part of its Title X responsibilities.⁷⁷ However, the SECDEF has the authority to designate the head of any DoD component (including Combatant Commands) as an EA for a given program.⁷⁸ This distinction coupled with the proliferation of megacities in the USPACOM AOR, make a strong case that USPACOM should assume at least part of the EA role for urban operations once held by the now defunct US Joint Forces Command (JFCOM).⁷⁹

JFCOM's EA mandate bestowed "technology-transfer authority allowing it to structure partnerships with industry, exchange technical data, make technology assessments, and collaborate on research and development efforts,"⁸⁰ and designated JFCOM as the "focal point for developing strategy for improving US urban operations capability; identifying doctrine, training, and equipment shortcomings; proposing and prioritizing investments; and coordinating service and Joint efforts in this regard."⁸¹ Such an EA mandate may be too large for a GCC to handle with its other responsibilities, but assigning specific portions of the original EA to USPACOM may help to sharpen the DoD approach to operations in megacities and focus USPACOM on the development of effective operations plans (OPLANS) for the densely populated urban environments in the Asia-Pacific region. Specifically, USPACOM should be assigned to develop strategy, identify training and equipment shortcomings, and coordinate

service and Joint efforts, with regard to the urban and megacity environment. This assignment could influence the occurrence of exercises with partner nations such as South Korea, Indonesia, Thailand and the Philippines, whose capitals all offer permissive and semi-permissive megacity environments. These exercises can identify, test, and verify DoD procedures for megacity operations and increase partner capacity to do the same. If the DoD were to assign such a mandate to USPACOM, the GCC and the Joint force writ large would benefit from the strategic landpower expertise of a US Army general at the helm.⁸²

Renowned Australian military strategist David Kilcullen contends, “Since the places where people live are getting increasingly crowded, urban, coastal and networked, the wars people fight will take on the same characteristics.”⁸³ “Military readiness” to operate in the megacity environment is the COG that accomplishes USPACOMs *way* of fighting to win in the contemporary operating environment. The US Army is the service with the greatest capacity to accomplish this particular COG, as it is the only service with the impetus to train and remain ready for this type of operating environment.

Summary. Each of the services bring unique characteristics to the AOR that help accomplish USPACOMs mission and deserve recognition for their ability to lead the organization through its centers-of-gravity. To recap, the US Army is the most capable service to execute USPACOM’s primary *ways* of: “promoting security cooperation”, “deterring aggression”, and “fighting to win”. The US Navy and Marine Corps are critical in executing the primary *ways* of: “encouraging peaceful development” and “deterring aggression”; while the US Air Force is crucial to the *way* of “responding to contingencies”.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

“Change is the law of life. And those who look only to the past or present are certain to miss the future.”
- President John F. Kennedy⁸⁴

Analyzing a GCCs mission using the Eikmeier COG methodology allows for a dispassionate identification of the critical capabilities needed to accomplish the mission in a given AOR. For almost seventy years the leadership and key staff billets within the USPACOM headquarters have been filled based on a tradition that assumes the US Navy is the service with the best capability and institutional knowledge to protect American interest in the Asia-Pacific region. But as the COG analysis suggests, the mission in the USPACOM AOR calls for a far more diverse service role in executing the primary *ways* in which USPACOM accomplishes its *end*. *Figure 2* highlights the importance of a shared responsibility between the services in the accomplishment of USPACOMs mission. The character of a unit is derived from its leaders and for this reason the SECDEF and JCS should approach nomination of leaders to key command and staff billets at the USPACOM headquarters in a manner that acknowledges the diversity of the AORs mission and the strengths of each service to accomplish it.

Recommendations. USPACOMs current senior leader construct should change to reflect the COG analysis and advocate for the importance of each service in the command. The most significant of these changes should occur within the command and key staff positions. Specifically, the CCDR should rotate between the services; when it does, the J2, J3 and J4 should be from a different service than the CCDR, while the J5 is a member of the same service. This will allow the CCDR to shape the environment from a service perspective for the next command through plans and policy, while maintaining advocacy from the other services in the

present day through his current operations and intelligence teams. The SEA and DCDR should come from a different service than the CDR, in order to balance the CDR's approach to mission command. The CoS should be of the same service to orient the staff and advocate for the CDR's service focus with the staff. Commander, SOCPAC should also rotate between the services to orient SOF forces in the theatre and can do so irrespective of the CDR's service rotation. Finally, USFK leadership should begin to rotate between services once the transfer in CFC leadership is executed between the ROK and US forces. This will allow the services to orient their deterrence posture in a more realistic way on the peninsula. (See *Figure 3* for an example of the recommendation provided above).

Conclusion. The operating environment in the Asia-Pacific theatre is far more complex than its nautical dimensions and tyranny of distance suggest. "Security cooperation", "peaceful development", "deterrence of aggression", "contingency response" and developing the capability to "fight and win" in the contemporary operating environment, will shape security issues in the region for the foreseeable future. The US Army's operating concept uniquely postures its leadership to understand the complexity of the Pacific AOR as it relates to the challenges of the land and human domains;⁸⁵ the US Navy's sea power strategy document focuses the cooperative naval force on the development of new techniques and technology to dominate the global sea commons;⁸⁶ and the USAF's airpower strategy postures its future force to become more capable and agile in the aerial delivery of combat power and cyberspace. These strategies serve vital interests for the nation and the Pacific, but the command's institutional knowledge of the air and land domain has suffered due to a lack of emphasis on salient security issues that affect the region, in favor of a stagnate focus on the maritime issues of the command and naval

proficiency. A GCC commander and staff rotation that features the strategic land and air power-focus of US Army, Marine Corps and Air Force generals with the naval focus of a four-star admiral, allows the command to retain its maritime character while broadening its approach to security by periodically investing in the strategic air and land domains.

FIGURE 1 – Mission Statement: *Ends – Ways – Means*

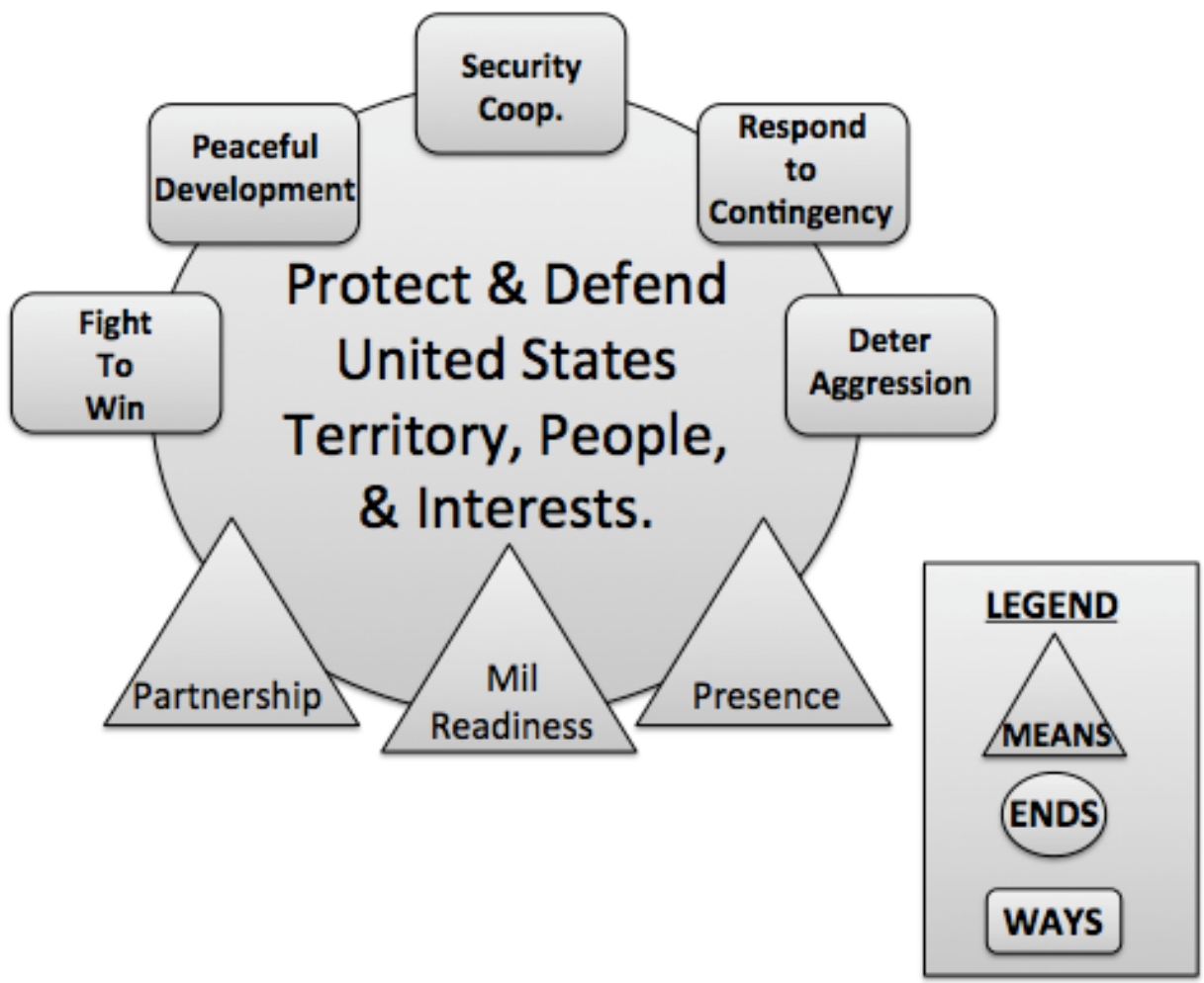


FIGURE 2 – Service COG Diagram

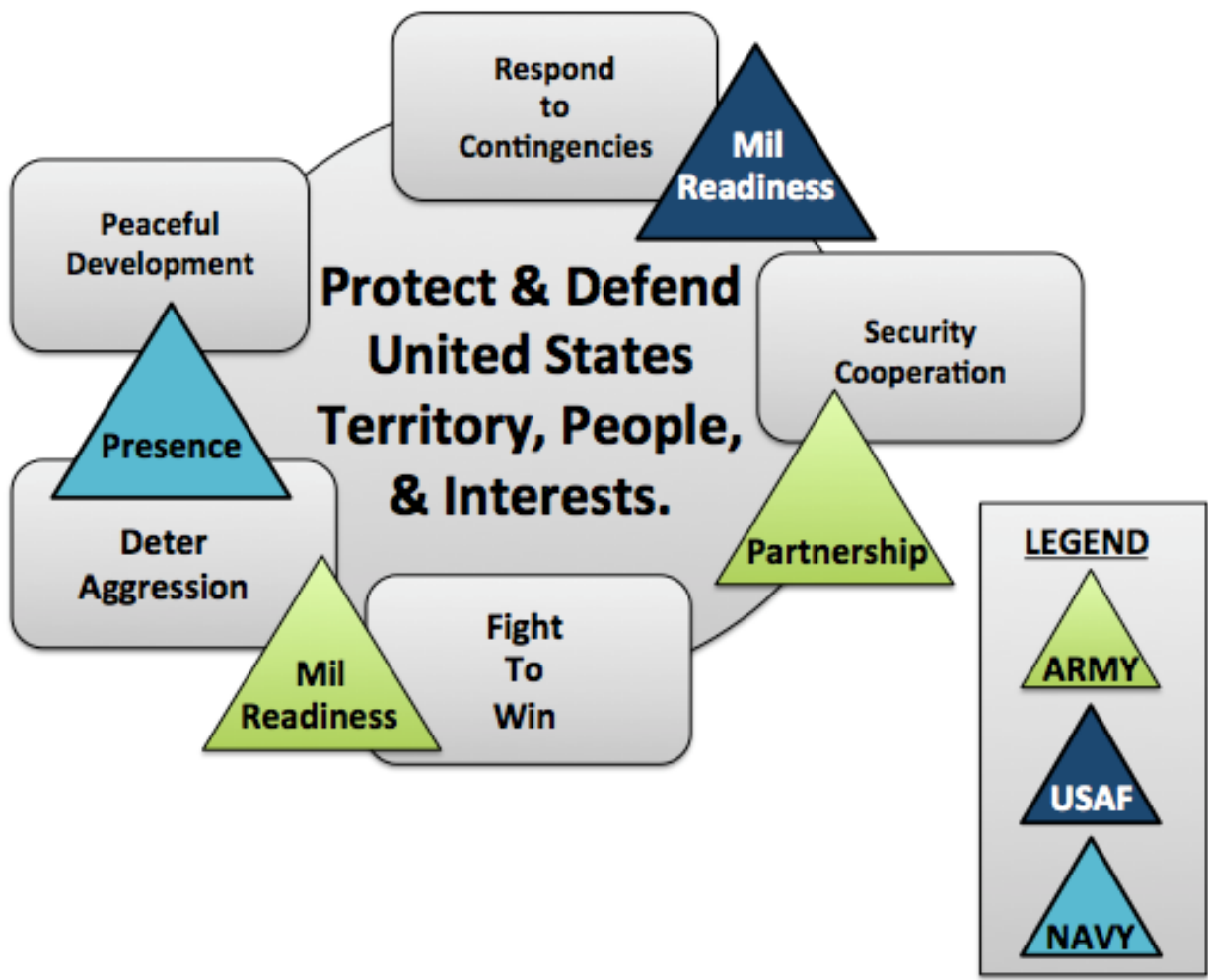


Figure 3 – Example Command and Staff Recommendations

| <u>ROTATION</u> | <u>CCDR</u> | <u>DCDR</u> | <u>CoS</u> | <u>SEA</u> | <u>J2</u> | <u>J3</u> | <u>J5</u> | <u>SOC PAC</u> | <u>USFK</u> | <u>USFJ</u> |
|-----------------|-------------|-------------|------------|------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|----------------|-------------|-------------|
| CURRENT | USN | USA | USA | USN | USN | USN | USMC | USN | USA | USAF |
| 1 | USA | USAF | USA | USMC | USMC | USN | USA | USA | USAF | USMC |
| 2 | USN | USA | USN | USAF | USAF | USA | USMC | USAF | USN | USA |
| 3 | USAF | USMC | USAF | USN | USN | USMC | USAF | USN | USA | USN |
| 4 | USMC | USAF | USN | USA | USA | USAF | USN | USA | USAF | USAF |

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- ⁷⁸ JP 1, III-2.
- ⁷⁹ Ryan, 6.

⁸⁰ Adamson, 46.

⁸¹ US General Accounting Office, *Military Capabilities: Focused Attention Needed to Prepare US Forces for Combat in Urban Areas*, NSIAD-00-63NI (Washington, DC: US General Accounting Office, February 25, 2000) (derived from Adamson, 46).

⁸² Ryan, 6-7.

⁸³ David Kilcullen, *Out of the Mountains: The Coming Age of the Urban Guerilla* (New York: Oxford Press, 2013), 27-28.

⁸⁴ As Quoted by the HON Brad Sherman in Congressional Record, V. 144, Pt. 1, January 27, 1998 to February 13 1998, pg 347.

⁸⁵ *U.S. Army Operating Concept: Win in a Complex World*, 12

⁸⁶ “A Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower”, 2.

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