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Form Approved
OMB No. 0704-0188

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1. REPORT DATE 2007		2. REPORT TYPE		3. DATES COVERED 00-00-2007 to 00-00-2007	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE Moving the Throttle Forward in the Pacific				5a. CONTRACT NUMBER	
				5b. GRANT NUMBER	
				5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER	
6. AUTHOR(S)				5d. PROJECT NUMBER	
				5e. TASK NUMBER	
				5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER	
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) National Defense University, Institute for National Strategic Studies, 260 Fifth Avenue SW Bg 64 Fort Lesley J. McNair, Washington, DC, 20319				8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER	
9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)				10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)	
				11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)	
12. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Approved for public release; distribution unlimited					
13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES					
14. ABSTRACT					
15. SUBJECT TERMS					
16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT	18. NUMBER OF PAGES	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON
a. REPORT unclassified	b. ABSTRACT unclassified	c. THIS PAGE unclassified			

USS *Russell* plows through the South Pacific on deployment



U.S. Navy (Spike Call)

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Moving the Throttle Forward in the Pacific

The opportunities are immense, they're profound, and we're going to capitalize on them. . . . That is what we will be about in the Pacific Command—service. Service to our friends, to our allies, to all departments, and we will be working hard with our commercial partners to ensure a better quality of life, to ensure free lines of communication, to ensure the development of free and democratic societies throughout our area of responsibility.

—Admiral Timothy J. Keating

By **TIMOTHY J. KEATING** and
TERRANCE J. McCAFFREY III

have been privileged to serve in the Pacific before. But now, from my vantage point as commander of U.S. Pacific Command (USPACOM), I have gained a fuller appreciation for the vibrancy, diversity, and complexity of the Asia-Pacific. You can sense the optimism among the region's 43 nations. I also see a region with security challenges, where the U.S. military continues to play an indispensable role in preserving stability. But in the main, I judge the future as one in which opportunity outweighs risk. In this article, I convey my sense of the area of responsibility—both the challenges and opportunities. I am proud to lead the men and women of USPACOM as we work—along with the interagency and allies and partners—to help shape a bright future for the nations and people of the Asia-Pacific.

U.S. Pacific Command capabilities have facilitated the region's recovery from multiple crises—from major wars to natural disasters—by establishing conditions of security and stability. Security and stability have been at the foundation of the economic boom in the Pacific, particularly over the last three decades. Since World War II, Japan, South Korea, India, and now China have joined the United States at the top of the list of the world's largest economies.

Among the leaders of the Pacific, there is unquestionably a sense of enormous potential for continued economic growth. At the same time, more and more regional countries see the value of fostering mutual security through cooperative approaches between nations and their militaries. USPACOM welcomes this shared sense of responsibility for meeting mutual security goals. As such, the command is actively pursuing military-to-military activities within existing bilateral frameworks, while encouraging more multilateral venues and supporting the development of new strategic partnerships. These efforts are vital to our security, compatible with our national interests, and beneficial to the entire Asia-Pacific region.

U.S. Pacific Command envisions a future of peace and prosperity among all members of the Asia-Pacific community. To be successful in this regard, USPACOM must leverage the great advantages of the region—diversity, economic strength, healthy alliances, strong partners—while overcoming the challenges of vast distances and weak governmental institutions in some nations. We operate within a geopolitical environment characterized by:

- 43 diverse, independent nations, with over 100 languages and 1,000 dialects
- varied government systems, including democracies, constitutional monarchies, communist states, and military regimes

Admiral Timothy J. Keating, USN, is Commander, U.S. Pacific Command. Lieutenant Colonel Terrance J. McCaffrey III, USAF, is Deputy Director of the Commander's Action Group, Headquarters U.S. Pacific Command.



New navigation, seamanship, and ship-handling trainer provides state-of-the-art, realistic bridge team simulation

U.S. Navy (Ben A. Gonzalez)

Leading the way toward creating this opportunity and enhancing regional stability is our Theater Security Cooperation (TSC) program. The goal is to work with the inter-agency community, allies, and partners to strengthen relationships, build capacity, and set the conditions for regional security and prosperity. For those nations in the area of responsibility with which we do not historically have close relationships, we will encourage healthy engagement. Recent applications of this approach include the deployment in 2006 of the USNS *Mercy* and USPACOM support during the 2004 tsunami that devastated coastlines across the Indian Ocean and South-east Asia (Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Sri Lanka, and portions of India). U.S. leadership and demonstrated compassion for the victims helped foster better relations, especially with Indonesia. Although our approach is not limited to humanitarian assistance or disaster relief missions, this experience will continue to be a model as USPACOM develops region-wide multinational operational ties. We will continue to expand our engagement in areas such as the Multinational Planning Augmentation Team Program, exercises, and other educational venues.

Moving forward to confront challenges posed by terrorists and nonstate actors who are intent on threatening security in the Asia-Pacific region will remain at the top of our priorities. We place a premium on working by, with, and through our allies and partners to strengthen their capacity to create secure and stable environments. USPACOM employs both near- and long-term approaches to prevent terrorist exploitation of at-risk environments. In the near term, our objective is to stop the violence. In the long term, we seek to reinforce the region's democratic, economic,

- many of the world's major religions, including Buddhism, Christianity, Confucianism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, Sikhism, and Taoism

- nearly 60 percent of the world's population, including the 4 most populous nations (China, India, Indonesia, and the United States)

- 5 of the top 10 economic powers (the United States, Japan, China, Canada, and India)

- mutual defense treaties with Australia, Japan, the Philippines, South Korea, and Thailand (five of the seven U.S. mutual defense treaties)

- vast distances, spanning 51 percent of the Earth's surface and covering 16 time zones

- extensive littoral areas and sea approaches.

As an engaged member of the community, we have laid a healthy foundation for our future efforts. We see opportunity in abundance. We also know that the USPACOM force posture and operational methods must adapt if we are to make common progress with our allies and partners. Significant conventional and longstanding regional flashpoints are well known, but we must address broader, nontraditional threats as well. We must also fully leverage growing U.S. and allied military capabilities, particularly the agile and responsive nature of our forces. Collaborative work with allies to improve our military alliances indicates the command's intention to contribute to a more peaceful, prosperous Asia-Pacific. We will seek to harness the leadership, partnership, and support of the Pacific nations as we move forward to achieve mutual security goals.

Roles

U.S. Pacific Command plays an important role in realizing the future. We plan to build that future on three foundations:

- support of U.S. national interests as established in the National Security Strategy and National Military Strategy

- force capability and readiness for all levels of activity, from humanitarian relief to winning wars

- cooperation with other U.S. Government departments and agencies, as well as our allies and partners, to create the conditions for regional security and prosperity.

the command is pursuing military-to-military activities within existing bilateral frameworks, while encouraging more multilateral venues and new strategic partnerships



U.S. Navy (Jhoan M. Montolio)

U.S. and Australian soldiers discuss amphibious landing rehearsal during Exercise Talisman Sabre 2007

social, and security institutions through the *indirect approach*. Using these principles, USPACOM has trained and assisted the Armed Forces of the Philippines in their successful efforts to counter terrorist activity and improve conditions in the Southern Philippines. We will build on this positive outcome and expand the use of these winning concepts elsewhere in the area of responsibility.¹

China's rise will be important to USPACOM. While we must maintain our mili-

our interaction with China must focus on what we can do to influence China's development as a responsible global stakeholder

tary capabilities to preserve regional security, interaction with China must also focus on what we can do to influence China's development as a responsible global stakeholder. Through continued dialogue and military-to-military initiatives, such as mid-level officer exchanges, we improve understanding and reduce the potential for miscalculation during contingencies or emergencies. Our future efforts will emphasize opportunities for cooperation with China rather than areas of competition.

The security conditions on the Korean Peninsula represent another area where USPACOM must keep its focus. North Korea remains an enigma with unknown intentions, particularly with its nuclear and missile programs. The Six-Party Talks have been helpful in getting the issues on the table and providing a venue for discussions with the regional stakeholders. Whether the talks will result in the permanent shutdown of the Yongbyon reactor and eventual denuclearization of the peninsula, however, is far from clear. Should success occur, the talks may form a foundation for future dialogue discussing reunification—an outcome that may be in our interest if carried out constructively. Independent of diplomatic results, however, the growing capability of Republic of Korea ground forces allows us to continue to transfer the lead for South Korean defense to our allies. The United States will continue to reduce its military footprint on the peninsula, freeing up forces for availability elsewhere.

Our relationship and alliances with both Australia and Japan will remain cornerstones of stability and security. As regional events shape the changing world, it is likely

Gen Peter Pace and PLA General Liang Guanglie observe honor guard ceremony



DOD (D. Myles Cullen)

our mutual arrangements will continue to mature as well. Australia will surely maintain its leading role in Oceania while Japan will expand its defense capabilities and build closer ties with the United States—its only military partner. Both have been stalwart participants in the war on terror around the globe; their partnerships will remain vital to our mutual efforts.

Our partners Singapore, Malaysia, and Indonesia have been helpful by improving maritime security in the critical Strait of Malacca. We will continue to encourage such combined approaches and regional multinational programs.

Relationships with both India and Indonesia have expanded over the last several years and have potential to grow even stronger. This is significant. India is the world's largest democracy, and Indonesia is a thriving democracy with the world's largest Muslim population. We have made great strides toward positive military-to-military relations with these nations.

Challenges such as natural and manmade disasters will occur around the region and may require U.S. military support. These inevitabilities, along with the potential for military confrontation, will require USPACOM to remain ready, forward, and vigilant into the future.

The Way Ahead

The rise of China has been of keen interest to the world. For USPACOM, our outlook must be broad if we are to help the

Asia-Pacific—fully 43 countries—achieve their potential.

Our healthy alliances, positive economic trends, and potential for regional cooperation make it clear that opportunity is abundant in the Pacific. We are confident that, working together, we can achieve peace, stability, and prosperity. We will continue the long legacy of fostering lasting friendships and strive to build and strengthen new partnerships as well. We will pursue robust and frequent engagements throughout the region. Our aim is to create the conditions for security and prosperity across the entire region, leading to peace and political liberalization. This requires forward-based U.S. forces that will prevail in any conflict as well as operate and cooperate with regional allies, partners, and friends. Thucydides said, “The bravest are surely those who have the clearest vision of what is before them, glory and danger alike, and yet notwithstanding go out to meet it.” The future, though unsure, is nonetheless optimistic, and the men and women of U.S. Pacific Command will go out to meet it. **JFQ**

NOTE

¹ For more on the war on terror in the Pacific and the role of Special Operations Command, Pacific, see David P. Fridovich and Fred T. Krawchuk, “Winning in the Pacific: The Special Operations Forces Indirect Approach,” *Joint Force Quarterly* 44 (1st Quarter, 2007), 24–27.