

Pathways and the Army Operating Concept

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Innovation is the ability to see change as an opportunity – not a threat.

—Unknown¹

Tomorrow's global uncertainties will test the capability, capacity, and innovative nature of the United States Army. The Army must, therefore, invest in the readiness, training, leader development, and operational employment of its force. Diminishing resources and force structure, however, will require a more cost effective approach to meet future commitments. Thus, the Army's leadership created a framework to mitigate such constraints while maintaining its relevance to the nation in the *Army Operating Concept: Win in a Complex World (AOC)*.² The Army Service Component Command (ASCC), U.S. Army, Pacific (USARPAC), has combined this framework's core competencies with a forward-thinking approach referred to as "Pacific Pathways." This operation provides U.S. Pacific Command (USPACOM) an adaptive solution that builds regional competence while concurrently positioning forces forward to enhance security and stability. USARPAC's innovative use of the Total Force in operations such as "Pacific Pathways" embodies these core competencies within the Army Operating Concept.

If Pacific Pathways truly represents the AOC framework, then a comparison of this approach alongside the concept is necessary. This essay examines the reasons for a new framework and how the Army will attempt to mitigate future challenges. It then identifies the trials facing USARPAC's operational implementation of the framework, evaluates Pacific Pathways 14 to determine if it was an innovative method worth replicating, and provides recommendations.

Army Operating Concept

The U.S. Army Operating Concept provides a set of core competencies to ensure that the Army provides the capability to meet tomorrow's security requirements. Needed competencies do not merely focus on how to fight and win a conflict, but include methods to shape the environment and deter aggression. Because "our adversaries will continue to close the capability gap in the future."³ The AOC addresses this ever-changing environment and explains how the force can adapt to these challenges by emphasizing seven essential competencies. They include: 1) shape the environment, 2) set the theater, 3) project national power, 4) combined arms maneuver, 5) wide area security, 6) cyberspace operations, and 7) special operations.⁴

1. Shape the Environment: An adaptive force must shape the environment by deterring possible threats while simultaneously building partnerships that promote peaceful collaboration. The National Guard Bureau's State Partnership Program (SPP), for example, joins States and their Guard forces with a partner nation to develop long-term relationships that promote Theater Security Cooperation (TSC)

goals. Of the seventy-four nations participating in the SPP, eight reside in the USPACOM Area of Responsibility (AOR).⁵

2. **Set the Theater:** The Army sets the theater by establishing conditions that enable a joint force to function once in a disaster or conflict zone. Providing secure infrastructure, communication nodes, logistics, and command and control capabilities reduces operational risk while enabling future operations. Dependent on the threat level, this force must adapt as the environment changes. Afterwards, the Army must “deploy and sustain itself rapidly and effectively from multiple locations.”⁶
3. **Project National Power:** An adaptive force incorporates planning, reconnaissance, rehearsal, and appropriate use of forward-deployed forces and pre-positioned equipment to effectively project power.
4. **Combined Arms Maneuver:** Once deployed, the force must employ combined arms maneuver to achieve an operational advantage over a threat, or in response to a disaster. Because today’s operational environment encompasses adversaries who apply asymmetric means to traverse all domains, Army capabilities must operate in a joint environment and integrate with air, sea, cyber, and space capabilities.
5. **Wide Area Security:** The next competency, wide area security, facilitates stability by protecting private, business, and governmental infrastructures and the populace until local governance has the capacity to maintain order.
6. **Cyberspace Operations:** Today’s advanced technology is not without its own weaknesses; as an adaptive force must provide defenses through the development of both offensive and defensive cyberspace capability. Doing so provides the Army greater value in peacetime, conflict, and war.
7. **Special Operations:** The last competency, special operations, performs across the full range of military operations. This highly adaptive force performs both open and clandestine missions, and has great utility in a complex environment.⁷ In theory, accomplishing these core competencies deters potential aggression and maintains stability in today’s operating environment.

By leveraging the integration of the Total Force Policy (TFP)⁸ and Regionally Aligned Forces (RAF),⁹ the AOC seeks to provide an adaptive force. Doing so, however, requires commitment. Proper resourcing of the total force will provide Army Service Component Commands (ASCCs) with sufficient committed regional (theater) forces to achieve AOC core competencies and develop/maintain a truly adaptive force. Several obstacles (e.g., budgetary constraints, emerging operational requirements, and a lack of complete integration of TFP and RAF), however, threaten to minimize this capacity and create gaps in consistent surge capability. In the face of these challenges, maintaining Total Force readiness—the fundamental characteristic of any adaptive force—is essential.

Readiness is the critical requirement that permits execution of AOC core competencies in support of the regional CCMDs. Equivalent standards in personnel management, equipping, training, and sustaining are also critical for the Total Force to adapt concurrently.¹⁰ To facilitate this effort, TFP and RAF leverage the capacity of both forward deployed and rotational forces to enhance readiness. This allows ASCCs to train forces while simultaneously performing core competencies, ultimately supporting national interests. Consistent theater security engagement using active, National Guard, and reserve units, for example, develops AOC directed individual and leader skills while concurrently maintaining readiness and enabling capacity to “prevent, shape, and win” in concert with U.S. partners.¹¹

ASCC Challenges

Many challenges affect the ASCCs ability to maintain readiness and attain the operational effects required in theater. These include fiscal and geographic constraints, Force and equipment stationing, and integration/interoperability within the Joint Interagency, Intergovernmental, and Multinational (JIIM)

environment. Should permanent stationing continue or can rotational force deployments provide an acceptable level of commitment and deterrence? Substantial arguments support either option.

Fiscal Challenges

By creating gaps in unit “training and maintenance,” for example, an austere fiscal environment increases the level of risk involved to protect national interests within the region.¹² Thus diminishing budgets, force reductions, and deferrals in modernization continue to complicate today’s operational environment. The approved 2015 Army budget shrank by approximately \$4.5 billion from 2014, including an initial reduction of 27,000 personnel followed by a cut of another 92,000 personnel (minimum) through 2019. Additionally, modernization expenditures dropped by \$6.1 million.¹³ These reductions affect training resources not related to scheduled deployments, thus precluding units from training at the collective level. Additionally, Army personnel must become more familiar with tasks formerly conducted by civilians released during this constrained environment. Total Army Analysis, for example, cut both vertical and horizontal engineer assets from USARPAC and placed them in BCTs Army wide.¹⁴ Such reductions severely affect USARPAC’s ability to sustain readiness, participate in regional exercises, and conduct operations. Furthermore, these budget reductions result in only two of the six USARPAC Brigade Combat Teams being maintained at the highest level of readiness.¹⁵ This alone presents USARPAC with a significant challenge in responding to USPACOM demands. Currently, USPACOM directs USARPAC to provide a total of four BCTs to support the following tasks: Contingency Response Force (CRF), Theater Security Cooperation (TSC), Rapid Response Force (RRF) and a Quick Reactionary Force (QRF).¹⁶ USARPAC must therefore develop innovative solutions by which to accomplish these demands with only two BCTs at the highest readiness, and the remainder spread across the Army Force Generation Model (ARFORGEN) training levels.

Geographic Challenges

One of the greatest challenges for USARPAC is the utter magnitude and maritime nature of the Pacific theater which comprises of “over half of the world’s surface.”¹⁷ Yet, USARPAC’s ability to project forces across USPACOM’s AOR is critical in molding the region in support of U.S. strategic interests. As President Obama stated in the 2015 National Security Strategy, “American leadership will remain essential to shaping the region’s long-term trajectory to enhance stability and security.”¹⁸ Significant obstacles exist, however, to accomplish this objective, including the sheer expanse of the Pacific and the time necessary to traverse it, along with multiple annual natural disasters. The Pacific Ocean is larger than all combined landmass in the world, is approximately 15 times larger than the United States, and includes 16 time zones. Additionally, movement of the Earth’s crust along the “Pacific Ring of Fire” results in multiple tsunamis, volcanic activity, and earthquakes annually.¹⁹ To complicate the environment even further, four of the world’s top ten megacities are in this region, with millions more living in and around the littoral areas.²⁰ Unrestrained, this volatile and complex physical environment can create leadership vacuums and a general lack of security, potentially giving rise to violent extremist or terrorist activities. USARPAC must remain involved with regional partners to help mitigate these risks and to promote military security within Indo-Asia-Pacific nations.

This region has no permanently positioned U.S. Army forces other than those in Japan and Korea, making travel time a major hindrance to USARPAC’s ability to provide immediate support. The closest available USARPAC forces are in Hawaii, Alaska, or Fort Lewis. To provide but one example, time for a USARPAC unit in Fort Lewis, Washington to travel to Darwin, Australia, is approximately 16 hours by air or 12 days by sea.²¹ As the Army itself has no long-range transport capability, these times assume the availability of adequate contract or sister service airframes and/or ships. Forward deployed units can mitigate this time challenge. In

2013, for example, Typhoon Haiyan struck the Philippines. USPACOM forces from Japan deployed to support the Republic of the Philippines in just two days. It took three additional days for naval forces to arrive from Hong Kong.²² In comparison, it would have taken a force from Fort Lewis approximately 10 days.²³ Even without the issue of travel time, supporting a multi-island nation is a significant challenge. As it was, it took two weeks for humanitarian relief to reach most of the affected populace.²⁴

Force Stationing

The difficulty of traversing such a vast area in a timely manner raises questions concerning forward stationing of Army personnel. U.S. posturing of permanent forward force stationing has changed little since the end of World War II. Post-Cold War Pacific basing focused on deterring communist aggression by the USSR, China, and the Democratic Peoples' Republic of Korea (DPRK). DPRK remains a significant threat to regional stability justifying a large permanent U.S. presence in Northeast Asia. Yet as Alexander Cooley explains, most Indo-Asia-Pacific nations are hesitant to allow permanent stationing of U.S. forces:

Although U.S. policymakers and scholars have consistently overlooked the internal political dimension for host countries, U.S. overseas bases and their governing arrangements repeatedly have been implicated in those countries' democratic struggles, authoritarian propaganda, populist election campaigns, and political infighting and factionalism. In short, I found that the U.S. basing presence means different things to different actors and that these views, even for the same actor, vary considerably over time.²⁵

Permanent basing requires strong support of U.S. presence from the host nation. Many factors have created barriers to the U.S. establishing a permanent presence in South and Southeast Asia. As a result, USARPAC's ability to shape the South China Sea is diminished due to its lack of forward positioned forces in this area. If USARPAC could establish permanent forward stationing, Army forces would be in a better position to respond to crises. In addition to strong support from host nations, forward basing would require significant startup costs to establish infrastructure, training areas, lodging and security. Based upon a 2006 Army estimate for overseas bases, a replacement cost varied from \$1.61 billion for a large base to \$862 million for a small installation.²⁶ Day-to-day operational costs would also be high.

The greatest benefit of a permanent force is a long-term presence. Rotational forward stationing, however, may provide a less threatening, more cost effective solution. In most cases, a rotational force will not require the same infrastructure footprint resulting in a lower cost due to the rotation's limited timeframe. A rotational force also presents less negative connotations than a permanent U.S. presence. Unfortunately, lack of permanence also means less guarantee of continued host nation commitment. A host nation may suspend the invitation for rotational forces at any time. Historically, re-establishment of such a presence has proven difficult.²⁷ Either stationing option will provide interaction with the populace, awareness of an emerging threat, and may reduce "black swan" or unforeseen events that could change U.S. strategic direction.

Pre-Positioned Equipment

Force access to equipment in the region is also a concern. A product of the Cold War, Army pre-positioned stocks (APS) may provide options in the wake of budgetary constraints. Various levels of pre-positioned equipment are placed in critical geographic positions around the world—normally within 1000 miles of a strategic hotspot. USPACOM's ability to rapidly project and sustain forces may depend upon stocks located afloat, on the Korean Peninsula, and in Japan.²⁸

The Department of Defense (DoD) originally established APS to support major contingencies, but the new strategy includes “activity sets” for HA/DR, building partner capacity, and equipment to further support port opening and combined arms operations.²⁹ Upgrading the capability of APS solves only one problem, however. The next hurdle is to expand APS availability for use during TSC training events. The ability to train with this stock will help mitigate transportation costs while maintaining APS operability. USARPAC use of these activity sets, within APS, allows for some deliberate integration. Geographic challenges, however, are not so easily overcome. Additional locations and full use of available equipment are needed to avoid delayed response.

Joint, Interagency, Intergovernmental, and Multinational Integration (JIIM)

Due to the size of the AOR and other geographical challenges, USARPAC must operate within a JIIM environment. Land forces (Army, SOF and Marines) alone do not have the capability to reach across the Pacific. They are dependent upon the Air Force and Navy, specifically in regards to projection and sustainment. The Army also has joint responsibilities under the heading of Army support to other service (ASOS) to provide “force protection, theater-level logistics, command and control, joint reception, staging, onward movement and integration.”³⁰ USARPAC’s integration and interoperability within the JIIM environment, therefore, will determine its ability to support theater security cooperation.

Interagency and intergovernmental coordination is especially critical in the preparation, response, and recovery subsets of a HA/DR mission. A Department of State representative is present in almost every Pacific nation to manage the diplomatic efforts, and to assist in the integration of military operations with the host nation. Additionally, the Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA), in coordination with USAID and other U.S. agencies, serves as the lead U.S. governmental representative during overseas disasters.³¹ Thus, USARPAC must include these agencies during HA/DR exercises to ensure each have a common understanding of roles and responsibilities, and that any interoperability challenges are mitigated. Lastly, the multinational facet is the foundation of building partner capacity and includes senior leader engagements, HA/DR missions, multi-lateral and counter-terrorism training, and SPP events. A greater integration of JIIM during Phase 0 and Phase 1 operations will shape the environment, and expectantly provide a strong deterrent for violent extremist and terrorist organizations.³² If deterrence is unsuccessful, relationships formed between USARPAC and JIIM participants will provide greater cooperation during a crisis or conflict.

Analysis of Pacific Pathways Implementation

In an attempt to resolve the aforementioned challenges while nesting within the AOC framework, USARPAC implemented Pacific Pathways. As assessed during USARPAC’s 2014 proof of concept, Pathways 14 embodied most of the AOC core competencies and successfully mitigated many of the challenges that USARPAC faces in its operating environment. This essay identifies recommendations for future improvements from the 2014 proof of concept experience.

Pacific Pathways is an innovative concept that employs AOC core competencies. Prior to 2014, USARPAC conducted numerous bilateral exercises that were unassociated with other regional events. This did not, however, fully employ the resources available to meet USPACOM goals. USARPAC therefore linked three of these exercises into the single Pacific Pathways operation, which allowed them to affect multiple lines of effort in their support of USPACOM’s goal to maintain a stable and secure environment.³³ The following review examines Pathways 14 by applying the seven AOC core competencies as criteria for success.

Shape the Environment

The AOC suggests the necessity of shaping the environment to deter possible threats and build partnerships that promote peaceful collaboration. This message is consistent with former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's emphasis on the importance of constant engagement to fully implement President Barack Obama's "shift to the Pacific."³⁴ USARPAC has attempted to embrace this "constant engagement" vision to shape the environment through Pacific Pathways.

Historically, bilateral exercises focused solely on training arrangements with one nation's army, and rarely impacted other exercises. Additionally, TSC exercises typically comprised battalion-sized elements or smaller for short durations. Pacific Pathways changed this way of operating by conducting multiple exercises as a single operation over a sixteen-week period, with division and brigade level leadership providing mission command.³⁵ Through training that included Humanitarian Assistance / Disaster Relief (HA/DR) support, Non-Combatant Evacuation (NEO) operations, Security Cooperation, and Diplomatic Reinforcement, Pathways further emphasized collaboration and building partner capacity to foster long-term relationships.³⁶ To enable this training, USARPAC also adjusted the type and amount of equipment it brought forward. Focusing on these mission types helps to transcend national boundaries by allowing for shared understanding that further develops trust.

During the execution of its first Pacific Pathways operation, USARPAC learned several security cooperation lessons. Initially, participant countries lacked a clear understanding of the operational intent. They failed to comprehend that Pathways 14 exercises constituted one continuous operation, requiring unity of effort across all the involved nations, not a string of individual training exercises.³⁷ Given the recent stationing of Marines in Darwin, Australia, participants like Indonesia were suspicious as to the motives of the operation.³⁸ Key leader engagement was therefore necessary to clarify the intent of the rotational operation and better achieve operational integration between participating countries.³⁹ Future Pathways iterations should seek to better inform participants at the outset and to strive for better integration of civilian and military stakeholders during both planning and execution. Incorporating existing relationships like the State Partnership Program between the Hawaii National Guard and the Republic of Indonesia was also instrumental in mitigating lack of understanding. The hierarchy of participating headquarters carries significant weight with the host military. As General Iwata, Chief of Staff of the Japanese Ground Self-Defense Force, remarked: "It is critical to establish these relationships early to stabilize the region in efforts to prevent contingencies from occurring."⁴⁰ This increased level of leadership, combined with a longer continuous operation, underscores U.S. military commitment and ability to support during a crisis. Bottom-line: partnerships are established through trust. Although the operation was ultimately well received, USARPAC must ensure partner understanding and buy-in at the onset to adequately shape the environment. To meet this goal, participating countries may need to be brought together early in the planning process.

Set the Theater

A majority of Army personnel and equipment are positioned in the continental United States. As a result, providing an appropriate response can be difficult depending on the nature and location of a crisis. Challenges range from force projection and sustainment to coordinating the arrival, reception, staging, and interoperability with the host nation. The Army therefore has prioritized setting the theater as necessary to mitigate these challenges. Pacific Pathways has the potential to be a beneficial means of supporting this competency.

Because the Army does not have a permanent presence in either South or Southeast Asia, USARPAC's first iteration of Pathways encountered integration challenges when preparing infrastructure to receive forces.

Pathway 14 units lacked knowledge in partner port capability and vessel type features complicating reception, staging, onward movement, and integration (RSOI).⁴¹ The host nation was similarly unprepared to facilitate this process.

Historically, USARPAC did not deploy TSC exercise forces either with aviation assets or with such a high density of wheeled-vehicles requiring multiple carriers. USARPAC's integration of forces and essential enablers created a larger footprint than previously utilized. This was further complicated by the duration of the operation and the movement between countries. Because previous TSC exercise units had not employed like equipment across the theater, Pathways 14 tested established systems and procedures.⁴² Additionally, USARPAC staff focused on supporting each of the exercise goals with logistics left primarily to ASCC sustainment personnel.⁴³ After realizing this was insufficient, headquarters adapted by implementing alternative measures such as: (a) expediting requests through individual Country Teams at each Embassy, (b) cross-leveling of equipment between units, (c) adjusting work priorities to train port crews, (d) funding additional commercial ships and rental vehicles, and (e) the letting of contingency contracts.⁴⁴ Future operations will require greater Joint, Interagency, Intergovernmental, and Multinational (JIIM) integration to mitigate challenges (e.g., fuel procurement, contracting, force movement, and port operations). Additionally, 593rd Expeditionary Sustainment Command may serve as a better option to coordinate the previously noted sustainment requirements for future Pathways.⁴⁵

Interoperability was also a challenge due to the expanse of the operating area, and various levels of partner nation modernization. Historically, USARPAC units only required long-range communication capability between home station and the exercise country. With Pathways 14, however, USARPAC had to establish communications across four separate countries as the brigade headquarters deployed forward, leaving a rear operation center at the home station.⁴⁶ I Corps units also found a need for more "non-standard systems" to mitigate interoperability issues between military and commercial technology.⁴⁷ The force adjusted by using basic tactical communications with the partner's military until they could establish enhanced network interoperability. Overall, this proved to be a challenging aspect of the operation. Expanding operations will clearly require enhanced command and control nodes, as well as a more robust network capability to sustain communications.⁴⁸

Preparation and execution of Pathways 14 also provided valuable information for future operations in that location, including site reconnaissance and rehearsed maneuvers. In addition, the first iteration generated a database of participating host nation port information and required enablers, and allowed for refinements in standardized mission equipment lists and port procedures that can improve operational and sustainment efficiencies.⁴⁹ This is exactly within the AOC expectations for setting the theater.

Project National Power

USPACOM requires specific capabilities postured to effectively shape the theater and enhance force projection. Fiscal challenges and force cuts degraded some of USARPAC's ability to provide a complete force package to meet these needs. During Pathways 2014, USARPAC sought to mitigate some of these concerns by deploying from multiple locations and integrating Army Reserve and National Guard units from Hawaii and Washington to achieve a Total Force mix.⁵⁰ This allowed USARPAC to employ units both familiar with the operating area and possessing low density capabilities required for theater operations not resident within a BCT.⁵¹ This operation required the same rear operations construct used during deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan. Specific tailoring of the stay behind force to leverage reach-back capabilities such as the Intelligence Readiness Operations Capability (IROC) helped meet operational requirements without the deployment costs.⁵² The first iteration had some setbacks: late force requests, availability of enablers, and

inadequate funding, equipping, and manning of reserve component forces all reduced operational effectiveness.⁵³ Future iterations must identify/coordinate Total Force requirements early in the planning cycle.

APS is another factor that supports force projection. Its availability can reduce the amount of equipment that needs to be deployed, as well as decrease deployment times, costs, and number of transport platforms. Well placed APS can allow a force to deploy by air when normally the amount of equipment would require sea lift. Historically, DoD has used APS for “unexpected contingencies.” USARPAC did not use the full complement during Pathways 14. Future strategies will include the use of “activity sets to support building partnership capacity events.”⁵⁴ Not only will employing APS during future iterations of Pacific Pathways reduce costs and transportation timelines, its availability will also provide USARPAC with planning options for use during crisis response. Such adjustments will require the Army to make policy adjustments on the use of pre-positioned stocks.

Although desiring “transport that would enable operations across the vast expanses of the Pacific,” USARPAC is also restrained in its projection of forces.⁵⁵ Historically, Air Force and Navy transport has often been unavailable or too costly. Consequently, U.S. Transportation Command (USTRANSCOM) would bid out the contract to a civilian vessel.⁵⁶ Under the Pathways construct, USARPAC was able to reduce costs and expand type and amount of equipment within this transportation framework by employing as a single operation compared to previous exercise participation where they conducted separate transport to and from each exercise. Further improvements are needed. First and foremost, joint operations should occur during steady state, not just during contingency. The Navy employs a Joint High Speed Vessel (JHSV) in USPACOM’s AOR where this vessel recently “participated in Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC) Exercise 2014.”⁵⁷ Historically, USARPAC has used the three Logistic Support Vessels (LSVs) and ten Landing Craft Utility (LCU) vessels from APS during Combined/Joint Logistics Over the Shore (C/JLOTS) exercises. Future exercises should also consider and coordinate for these vessels, along with other Joint transport, to support Pacific Pathways, especially in RSOI and regional mobility.⁵⁸

Combined Arms Maneuver

The Army is very capable of developing its ability to conduct combined arms maneuver within its own force structure during home station and CTC training. Theater operations, however, encompass a greater requirement for integration. In theater, all services must rely on JIIM capabilities to operate. Pacific Pathways expands the development of this core competency while also integrating other critical enablers and simultaneously expanding readiness.

Before Pathways, USARPAC conducted bilateral exercises with a much smaller footprint that did not include air capability. Pathways, however, integrated a much larger force and equipment package. With such a diverse force package, USARPAC was able to expand its options to achieve combined arms integration with each of the Indonesian, Malaysian, and Japanese Armies, as well as the U.S. Navy.⁵⁹ While in Indonesia, USARPAC conducted a live-fire exercise that joined AH-64 Apaches, HH-60 Pave Hawks, UH-60 Black Hawks, and Strykers with the Indonesian Army’s MI-35 and their land forces.⁶⁰ They conducted similar training in Malaysia and Japan. Additionally, while in Japan, USARPAC aircrews trained with the U.S. Navy on “over-water operations” conducting “hundreds of deck landings.”⁶¹ In Malaysia, combined arms training allowed USARPAC to test and share tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTPs) to counter-improved explosive devices (C-IEDs). The dense jungle required modification of these TTPs developed from OEF/OIF.⁶²

The efficiencies gained through the Pathways concept increased training opportunities and actually enhanced joint and multinational integration. Previously, Army leaders believed that CTC was the capstone event for training their brigade combat teams (BCTs), and were concerned readiness would drop during the

operation. USARPAC's first iteration of Pathways in 2014 proved to the contrary—units actually built upon the CTC experience—in ways the Army could not provide through that venue.⁶³ Additionally, employing the CTC trained BCT in Pathways adheres to the deployment training methodology over the last decade of using CTC as the Mission Readiness Exercise in preparation for OEF/OIF. Instead of deploying to Iraq or Afghanistan, the BCT deployed to the Pacific. This operation also proved important to the readiness of those organizations unable to train at a CTC. Future iterations should continue to employ enablers like rotary capability and seek joint integration in addition to the accustomed multinational training exercises. USARPAC should also consider incorporating its Joint Pacific Multinational Readiness Capability (JPMRC).⁶⁴ Utilizing this capability in support of a Pathways operation offers a CTC-like experience to those units unable to attend a CTC rotation before deployment, as well as joint and partner nation participants.

Wide Area Security

Pathways better develops an adaptive force to conduct wide area security missions (e.g., HA/DR, NEO, and Diplomatic Reinforcement). Specifically, it provides ready forces forward in the event of disaster or crisis while also improving upon readiness and JIIM interoperability. Immediate response capability mitigates the challenge of forward force stationing and the extended travel time required from the U.S. to a crisis. Pathways 14 also allowed USARPAC to better support USPACOM crisis response directives by tailoring forces to include a CTC trained BCT as the Pacific Pathway's unit serving concurrently as the Contingency Response Force (CRF). This will help mitigate the two of six BCT training challenges previously discussed. USARPAC's force construct for this operation parallels CRF requirements, so in theory, such an action would equate to forward positioning the CRF under the Pathways umbrella. Additionally, with a training focus on crisis response type missions and with the availability of the aforementioned JPMRC, USARPAC can further develop the CRF for future missions. Since not every Pathways operation may be able to employ a CTC trained BCT, this operation still remains a vehicle for training and projecting a crisis response force forward, thus, reducing time in which a security vacuum could occur and lead to a new stability threat.

Cyberspace Operations

USARPAC did not categorize cyberspace as a separate area during Pacific Pathways. Its units maintained both tactical and operational communications across protected networks with no interruptions from a "hack." Nonetheless, USARPAC worked in collaboration with each host military to ensure information security throughout the operation.⁶⁵ Pathways' greatest cyber challenge, however, potentially derives from the interoperability between civilian and military architecture on a secure network. Although not mentioned as a specific challenge, USARPAC may become vulnerable to future cyberspace threats if defensive measures are not in place while Pathways operations seek to sustain mission command across a region.

Special Operations

The first iteration of Pathways failed to integrate the capabilities of Special Operations Forces (SOF), even with mission sets that included HA/DR, NEO, Security Cooperation, and Diplomatic Reinforcement. USARPAC requested 351st Civil Affairs Command (CACOM) support, but did so too late within the command's training timelines for it to participate during the Pathways 2014 operation.⁶⁶ Utilizing SOF capabilities like Civil Affairs during a Pathways operation is not the only way USARPAC can nest with this competency. Opportunities also exist to enable ongoing SOF operations. Special Operations Command, Pacific (SOCPAC) requires support from a number of enablers. SOCPAC, for example, contracts out rotary-winged

aviation support in the Philippines. A future Pathway that includes this country could employ rotary-winged aviation in support of a real world operation as well as a military-to-military exercise. Future integration of SOF will provide opportunities for joint interoperability within JIIM and demonstrate this AOC core competency.

Summary

Pacific Pathways provides an innovative solution for building partner capacity while projecting rotational forces in efforts to maintain theater stability and security. Readiness and operational effectiveness were increased as USARPAC built regional competence and developed leaders during the operation. There is, however, room for improvement. Future Pathways should: (1) incorporate early and efficient use of key enablers across the Total Force, (2) be more closely integrated with the SPP, (3) facilitate improved stakeholder understanding of Pathways, (4) insist upon JIIM integration during Pathways planning, (5) include iterative request for full use of APS, (6) engage in JPMRC integration with Pathways partners, (7) better integrate cyber and SOF into Pathways planning and execution, and (8) entail Pacific Pathways BCT serving concurrently as the CRF. In conclusion, USARPAC's use of the Total Force in operations such as Pacific Pathways embodies the core competencies of the Army Operating Concept while mitigating many of its theater challenges.

Endnotes

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- ⁴ *Ibid.*, 20-22.
- ⁵ National Guard Bureau, *Posture Statement: Trusted at Home, Proven Abroad* (Washington, DC: National Guard Bureau), 25-26.
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- ⁷ *Ibid.*, 20-22.
- ⁸ TFP is the combination and steady participation of all three components (Active, National Guard, and Army Reserve) to meet operational requirements.
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