

Executive Summary

In the fall of 2014, the I Corps commander requested the U.S. Army War College (USAWC) provide an outside assessment of U.S. Army Pacific Command's (USARPAC) initial iteration of the "Pacific Pathways" concept as an "application of regionally engaged Landpower during Phase 0 operations."¹ In response, the USAWC Pacific Pathways 2014 Study Group was established.² Consisting of student volunteers and faculty advisors, the Study Group examined the Pathways concept, explored its planning and execution, and considered its implications for the Army, the Joint Force, and the Indo-Asia-Pacific region. The results of that inquiry are presented in this compendium.

In May 2015, The House of Representatives Committee on Armed Services directed the Comptroller General of the United States to "provide a report . . . on the Pacific Pathways Initiative."³ With Pathways 2014 and 2015 concluded and Pathways 2016 underway, the Pathways concept continues to evolve. Assessment of the initial demonstration suggests that development and pursuit of Pathways is an important component of the U.S. rebalance to the Pacific. Pacific Pathways 2014 (Pathways 14) was a USARPAC security cooperation initiative. Designed to reinforce engagement and partnership efforts while setting the theater, Pathways 14 successfully tested feasibility of the larger Regionally Aligned Force (RAF) concept in the Indo-Asia-Pacific region. Through Pathways:

We're able to understand a lot about the human domain out there that our people, our soldiers, our leaders are going to have to understand if they're asked to operate in those countries in support of those nations . . . When you have real people, with real materiel, real training, and they're out doing real operations, you just can't replicate that.⁴

As an innovative, efficient deployment of elements of an I Corps Regionally Aligned Force Brigade Combat Team, Pathways 14 demonstrated U.S. commitment and capability in response to strategic guidance. By leveraging the RAF unit, partnerships, and existing exercises, USARPAC and I Corps accessed foreign training environments, conducted military-to-military exchanges, familiarized USARPAC and I Corps units with the operational environment, and positioned a forward-deployed U.S. force west of the International Date Line. Major General Charles Flynn explains: "What we get is readiness . . . We get relationships, we get a form of reconnaissance, and we get a form of rehearsal." By increasing interoperability with Joint and Host Nation partners and improving relationships, Pathways builds an environment of mutual confidence, trust, and good will. Pathways' efficient innovation stemmed primarily from a change in the USARPAC Theater Security Cooperation Plan (TSCP) Exercise paradigm. Rather than deploying and redeploying *ad hoc* units and individual augmentees to support separate exercises, USARPAC deployed a single RAF Brigade Combat Team (BCT) along a "pathway" of three sequential, yet overlapping, exercises over a four-month period from August to November 2014. Pathways 14 effectively transformed these three TSCP exercises into

one unified operation starting with *Garuda Shield* in Indonesia, transitioning to *Keris Strike* in Malaysia,⁵ and culminating with *Orient Shield* in Japan. This compendium provides an overview of Study Group conclusions regarding the Pathways initiative and presents detailed analysis of (a) the evolution and communication of the concept from inception to execution, (b) partner nation cultures, priorities, and objectives, and (c) alignment of Pathways with Army Operating Concept (AOC) core competencies in ways that can assist USARPAC to overcome future challenges.

Several themes emerge: First, Pacific Pathways operationalizes U.S. strategic guidance towards the Indo-Asia-Pacific region found in the National Security Strategy, Defense Strategic Guidance and Quadrennial Defense Review. These areas include building partner capacity, enhancing interoperability, demonstrating commitment to the region through presence, and developing personal relationships. Pathways also employs core competencies of the Army Operating Concept, supports the USPACOM Theater Security Cooperation Plan, and enhances the Joint Force's capability to Prevent, Shape and Win in the Indo-Asia-Pacific region. Suggestions for future refinement focus on the design of the force packages, specific areas of engagement, capabilities-based training, the use of pre-positioned stocks, and utilization of the Total Force.

Second, although many countries in the region highly value their ground forces, they also desire a force with joint capabilities that can provide maritime security in defense of their sovereign territory. Because the U.S. also seeks to enhance its joint capabilities, Pacific Pathways offers a tremendous opportunity to train and develop such capacity by integrating Joint Force scenarios. As Major General Edward Dorman III notes: "Our Army mariners are here to stay and Pacific Pathways is here to stay because we see the tremendous benefit, not just for the Army, but for the Joint Force."⁶ Providing the opportunity for Joint Force enablers to participate in Pacific Pathways may expand opportunities for Army enablers to also participate more frequently in other service-led Pacific exercises, thus further enhancing readiness and creating a more adaptive force.

Third, USARPAC's operational design of Pacific Pathways must consider all aspects of the Joint, Interagency, Intergovernmental, and Multi-national (JIIM) environment, with coordination beginning well in advance of execution. Building specific types of partner capacity requires years of advanced planning and proper identification/collaboration of key stakeholders to coordinate meaningful training objectives and scenarios. In terms of acquiring resources in the out years, aligning Pathways planning to a construct similar to the budgeting process that considers the current year, the budget year, and the out years may prove beneficial. Detailed up front coordination will ultimately improve interoperability during execution, resulting in a more meaningful and beneficial exercise. A longer planning horizon would also allow time to develop a strategic communication plan for the entire Pacific Pathways concept—an improvement over simply developing a commander's communication strategy for each iteration.

Fourth, Pathways offers a way to build and sustain training readiness within Army formations. Maintaining long-term benefits within USARPAC, however, may require habitual alignment of units with specific countries to retain knowledge within organizations as opposed to within individuals who will rotate out of the region. Integration of the Total Force and established State Partnership Programs in the region also contribute to maintaining this consistent relationship. Additionally, tailoring the

force to train a variety of mission sets integrates support forces outside the Brigade Combat Team construct based on host nation needs for the identified operation.

Finally, the Pathways force helps to build partner capacity in Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief—a priority for nearly every country in the region. This type of training may be outside the currently established USPACOM exercise structure, but nonetheless provides an excellent opportunity to involve partners with whom a mature security cooperation arrangement does not exist. Pathways also builds upon common interests, opens communication, and develops trust among the U.S., its regional partners, and other nations that may find themselves working together to promote regional support. The design of the force for each particular Pathways operation may not, however, be suitable for immediate redirection to crises areas.

Pacific Pathways, as with all new initiatives, provides both opportunities and challenges. As future iterations operationalize both the Regionally Aligned Force and Army Operating Concepts, the Pathways design must continually evolve to meet the changing demands in the strategic environment. Pathways is an innovative approach to meet the Geographic Combatant Commander's (GCC) steady state and Phase Zero requirements as ends remain fixed and means are reduced. As such, planners must continually assess Pathways to ensure it nests with the GCC Theater Campaign Plan and supports U.S. interests in the region as outlined in the National Security Strategy. As Lieutenant General Stephen Lanza notes: "Any time you have something that's good like this, you want to see how you can enable it."⁷ By establishing a more efficient, effective means of helping to deter aggression and maintain regional stability, the U.S. Army Pacific Pathways program is fast becoming an integral and essential component of the U.S. rebalance to the Pacific.

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Notes

¹ Stephen R. Lanza, I Corps Commander, email to William E. Rapp, Commandant, U.S. Army War College, October 1, 2014.

² Consisting of 9 integral members: six USAWC students—Colonel Jerry A. Hall, Lieutenant Colonel Dennis R. Hawthorne, Lieutenant Colonel Joseph E. Hilbert, Jr., Lieutenant Colonel Edward A. Kovaleski, Colonel Lori L. Robinson, Lieutenant Colonel Mitchell O. Watkins—and three faculty—Colonel Timothy C. Frantz, Colonel James Frick, and Colonel James C. Sharkey.

³ National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2016, Report of the Committee on Armed Services House of Representatives on H.R. 1735, 116, May 5, 2015.

⁴ As quoted in Michelle Tan, "Soldiers on New Pacific Pathway to Visit Mongolia, Japan," *Army Times*, June 4, 2015, <http://www.armytimes.com/story/military/2015/06/04/army-confirms-third-pacific-pathways/28418765/>.

⁵ For a discussion of Pathways logistics, see Michael McMillan and Brian W. Tuttle, "Logistics for Pacific Pathways: Malaysia," *Army Sustainment* 47, no. 2 (March-April 2015) 42-45.

⁶ As quoted in Nicole Howell, "Army Mariners Complete Trans-Pacific Voyage Supporting Pacific Pathways," U.S. Pacific Command, October 26, 2015, <http://www.pacom.mil/Media/News/tabid/5693/Article/625938/army-mariners-complete-trans-pacific-voyage-supporting-pacific-pathways.aspx>.

⁷ As quoted in Michelle Tan, "3-Star: Army Grows Pacific Pathways, Ties with Asian Armies," *Army Times*, October 24, 2015, <http://www.armytimes.com/story/military/careers/army/2015/10/24/3-star-army-grows-pacific-pathways-ties-asian-armies/74230144>.