

SPECIAL WARFARE

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1ST SFG(A) WORKING WITH
PARTNER FORCES IN PACOM

A LOOK AT PACOM
AUGMENTATION TEAMS



**SPECIAL OPERATIONS
— IN THE PACIFIC —**

THE OFFICIAL PROFESSIONAL JOURNAL OF U.S. ARMY SPECIAL OPERATIONS FORCES

ARTICLES

- 06 | SOCPAC Overview and Map
- 08 | In Depth: SOCPAC Commander
- 11 | Asia Threat Overview
- 15 | Remaining First in Asia
- 20 | Tailoring Logistics Support
- 22 | **SECTION: NEPAL**
 - 22 Nepal Overview
 - 31 Maiti Nepal
 - 32 SOF Mountaineering and Training
 - 34 Mahabir Rangers
 - 40 Left of Zero: SOF Crisis Response
- 44 | **SECTION: SRI LANKA**
 - 44 Sri Lanka Overview
 - 54 Crisis Response: Floods and Landslides
 - 56 Flood Response
- 58 | Photostory: India
- 60 | **SECTION: PHILIPPINES**
 - 60 Operation Enduring Freedom
 - 62 Sustaining Partnerships
 - 64 Processing, Exploitation and Dissemination
 - 66 The Philippine Primer
- 72 | Narrative Fusion Cell
- 74 | Republic of Korea: Engagements that Last
- 76 | **SECTION: THAILAND**
 - 76 Photostory: Thailand
 - 78 SOF Roots in Thailand
 - 80 Cobra Gold 2017
- 83 | Japan: Permanent Partners in the Pacific Rim
- 84 | Effectiveness of a Forward-stationed Special Forces Battalion
- 86 | Mongolian SOF
- 88 | Photostory: Singapore
- 90 | Maritime FID in Bangladesh

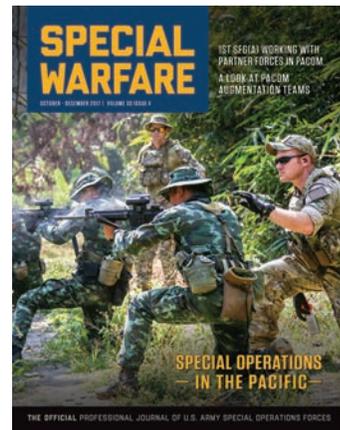
DEPARTMENTS

- FROM THE COMMANDANT **04**
- UPDATE **05**
- CAREER NOTES **95**

ON THE COVER

Special Forces team members from 1st Special Forces Group (Airborne) conduct training alongside Thai partners as part of a Joint Combined Exchange Training exercise in Thailand.

U.S. Army Photo by SGT. Wes Conroy



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SPECIAL WARFARE

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VISION Forging experts in special warfare to adapt and succeed in a complex, multi-dimensional world through innovative training and education.

from the COMMANDANT



Without question, if you were to ask any military leader what the next big threat is, the answer would be North Korea. That being said, much of the world's attention, specifically that of the military, is focused on the U.S. Pacific Command area of operations.

This issue of *Special Warfare* focuses on the work of U.S. Special Operations Forces within the area and more specifically on the mission of the U.S. Special Operations Command-Pacific. SOCPAC has a vast area of operations with many cultures, religions, languages and forms of government. Many of the areas in SOCPAC have fought decades-long civil wars and are in rebuilding phases. For countries such as these, peace is fragile and stability is threatened by state actors, non-state actors, the economy and even Mother Nature. The myriad threats to the peace and stability in many of these countries makes the successful fulfillment of the SOCPAC mission tough.

Part of the SOCPAC mission is deterring aggression, responding to crisis and defeating threats against the United States and its interests. In this issue, you will see how small teams of special operators fulfill the mission by working by, with and through their host-nation partners. While our team only got a snapshot of a few areas, they were able to enlist the 1st Special Forces Group (Airborne) to give the magazine a wider lens on the types of training and partnerships that exist in the AOR — many of which go back decades.

One of my priorities here at SWCS is that we, as the school house, maintain relevance within the SOCOM enterprise, and more particularly, a connection to current operations. *Special Warfare* is one of the tools we use to do that. I encourage you to keep reading and to submit papers, book reviews and opinion pieces. This is your professional development publication and our way of staying in step with you.


KURT L. SONNTAG
MAJOR GENERAL, USA
COMMANDING GENERAL

“The United States seeks to integrate diplomatic, economic and military approaches to regional concerns. It is the role of the military to set the conditions for diplomacy to succeed. The United States has consistently endeavored to use its armed forces to support stability to the Asia-Pacific, and to reinforce our diplomatic efforts.”

— Secretary of Defense
James N. Mattis

MEDAL OF HONOR AWARDED TO CAPTAIN GARY M. ROSE FOR ACTIONS IN LAOS

More than 47 years after his heroic actions in the nation of Laos, during the Vietnam War, Capt. Gary Michael Rose was awarded the Medal of Honor.

"This will enshrine him into the history of our nation," said President Donald J. Trump, during the Medal of Honor ceremony at the White House on Oct. 23, 2017.

During the Vietnam War, Rose served as a combat medic with the Military Assistance Command, Vietnam-Studies and Observations Group. He was recognized for actions during a four-day period that spanned Sept. 11-14, 1970. The mission, "Operation Tailwind," was classified for many years.

Trump said Operation Tailwind was meant to prevent the North Vietnamese Army from funneling weapons to their own forces through Laos, along the Ho Chi Minh Trail. The operation involved about 136 men, including 16 American Soldiers and 120 Montagnard fighters. The operation inserted the men by helicopter deep inside the Laos border.

"Once they landed in the clearing, they rushed to the jungle for much needed cover," Trump said. "Soon, another man was shot outside their defensive perimeter. Mike immediately rushed to his injured comrade, firing at the enemy as he ran. In the middle of the clearing, under machine gun fire, Mike treated the wounded Soldier. He shielded the man with his own body and carried him back to safety."

That was just the start of the four-day mission, Trump said. There was much more to come.

"Mike and his unit slashed through the dense jungle, dodged bullets, dodged explosives, dodged everything that you can dodge because they threw it all at him, and continuously returned fire as they moved deeper and deeper and deeper into enemy territory," Trump said. "Throughout the engagement, Mike rescued those in distress without any thought for his own safety. He crawled from one Soldier to the next, offering words of encouragement as he tended to their wounds."

Rose would repeat those selfless actions throughout the mission. Rose was himself injured, Trump said. On the second day, Rose was hit with a rocket-propelled grenade, which left shrapnel in his back, and a hole in his foot.

"For the next 48 excruciating hours, he used a branch as a crutch and went on rescuing the wounded," Trump said. "Mike did not stop to eat, to sleep or even to care for his own serious injury as he saved the lives of his fellow Soldiers."

On the fourth day in Laos, Rose and others boarded the third of four helicopters that had been sent in to evacuate them. It appeared to be the end of the mission and a return to safety. But it was not. The third helicopter was already damaged by enemy fire when it picked up Rose and the remainder of the fight-



ers, and it took off with only one engine operational. Shortly after lifting off, its remaining engine failed, meaning the aircraft would have to be "auto-rotated" to the ground. Ultimately, that helicopter crashed to the ground, and the resulting wreckage would provide yet another opportunity for Rose to prove his valor.

"Mike was thrown off the aircraft before it hit the ground, but he raced back to the crash site and pulled one man after another out of the smoking and smoldering helicopter," Trump said.

All 16 American Soldiers were able to return home, although they did so with injuries. All but three of the Montagnard fighters returned as well.

During those four days in Laos, "Mike treated an astounding 60 to 70 men," Trump said, adding that the mission was a success, as the company disrupted the enemies resupply of weapons, which saved countless American lives.

Ten of the men who fought alongside Rose during the operation were in attendance at the ceremony. They included Sgt. Maj. Morris Adair, Sgt. Don Boudreau, 1st Sgt. Bernie Bright, Capt. Pete Landon, Sgt. Jim Lucas, Lt. Col. Gene McCarley, 1st Sgt. Denver Minton, Sgt. Keith Plancich, Spc. 5 Craig Schmidt, and Staff Sgt. Dave Young.

Rose said he believed the medal was not his alone, but for all those who served — especially those who had fought in combat but remain unrecognized due to the mission's classification.

"This award, which I consider a collective medal, is for all of the men, to include the Air Force and the Marines who helped us," Rose said. "This is our medal. We all earned it. And to a great extent, it is for all the men who fought for those seven years in MACVSOG, and even further than that, for all the Special Forces Groups that fought and died in that war. In honor of all those individuals that went for so many years, when the military didn't recognize the fact that MACVSOG even existed, and all of those men that fought — this kind of brings it home. And now our story has been told, and now with this award I am convinced that they have been recognized for the great service they provided to this country. Thank you and God bless the Republic of the United States." 

President Donald Trump places the Medal of Honor around the neck of Capt. Mike Rose, during an Oct. 23, 2017 ceremony at the White House, in Washington, D.C. U.S. ARMY PHOTO BY C. TODD LOPEZ

SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND PACIFIC



MISSION SOCPAC is a sub-unified command of the U.S. Special Operations Command under the operational control of the U.S. Pacific Command and serves as the functional component for all special operations missions deployed throughout the Indo-Asia-Pacific region. SOCPAC coordinates, plans and directs all special operations in the Pacific theater supporting Commander, USPACOM objectives of deterring aggression, responding quickly to crisis and defeating threats to the United States and its interests.

VISION Provide flexible response to contingencies in the Indo-Asia-Pacific region. Integral to this capability is our forward-deployed posture and continuous engagement with partners and ally forces, heightening mutual interoperability and our regional expertise. Mission command of our forces is founded on trust and enabled when responsibility resides at the lowest possible level — with competent SOF elements empowered to maximize the command's diverse team. Creative solutions leverage the breadth and depth of the interagency network, informed by consideration of the regional context and inherent complexity of the mission sets. SOCPAC's success is predicated upon a healthy, motivated force, trained, educated and fully supported by its programs and processes.

STRATEGY SOCPAC's strategy rests on a synchronized concept of operations called the Indirect Approach. The Indirect Approach focuses on three lines of operation:

- » Increasing partner-nation security capacity
- » Improving information gathering and sharing
- » Securing the support of the population

Specific tools used by SOCPAC in support of these lines of operations include:

- » Joint and Combined Exchange Training
- » Counternarcotics Training
- » Foreign Internal Defense
- » Subject-Matter Expert Exchange
- » Humanitarian Assistance/Disaster Relief
- » Humanitarian Civic Action Programs
- » Humanitarian Mine Action
- » Information Operations and Public Affairs
- » Pacific Area Special Operations Conference
- » Joint Chiefs of Staff/PACOM Exercises.

CORE TASKS

- » Deter Aggression
- » Advance Regional Security Cooperation
- » Crisis Response

JTF-510 Part of SOCPAC's capability is based around Joint Task Force 510 (JTF-510), a rapidly deployable JTF Headquarters, which is nested within the command. When activated at the direction of the Secretary of Defense via Pacific Command, JTF-510 provides the PACOM commander with the ability to quickly establish command and control in support of emerging crises, such as disaster relief for tsunamis or earthquakes, humanitarian assistance for civil strife, or non-combatant evacuation operations, or threat situations involving terrorist incidents.

SOCPAC AREA OF FOCUS

SOCPAC's area of focus includes 36 countries and encompasses half of the earth's surface. SOCPAC divides its area of focus into four sub-regions:

NORTH EAST ASIA (5)

SOUTH ASIA (6)

SOUTH EAST ASIA (11)

OCEANIA (14)



IN DEPTH



Q&A WITH THE SOCPAC COMMANDER MAJOR GENERAL DANIEL D. YOO, USMC



Q: It's impossible to talk about SOCPAC without first talking about your unique history. Can you share your story with our readers?

A: Over the past 30 years, I've had the honor of commanding at every level within the U.S. Marine Corps and serving as the Director for Operations in both Marine Special Operations Command and U.S. Special Operations Command. I have been exposed to planning and decision making at the tactical, operational and strategic levels to include coalition and inter-agency, and have been able to work with some great leaders along the way. I am humbled to be selected as the first Marine to lead a Theater Special Operations Component.

Having commanded SOCPAC for three-months now, I am even more excited working with our partners throughout the region than I was upon learning I was coming back to the theater. I began my career in this area and have multiple tours in the U.S. Pacific Command region. I've had the opportunity to work with several of the USPACOM countries to include the Japan, Korea and the Philippines and have developed relationships and a deeper understanding of their systems, governments, policy and culture. Through these interactions, it is hard not to establish an appreciation of the various cultures, history, perspectives and capabilities that our partner nations bring to the table. I look forward to future endeavors alongside our partners and cultivating those relationships.

Q: SOCPAC's AOR covers almost half the surface of the earth. How do you keep your pulse on everything that is going on?

A: Communication is the key to keeping the pulse of what is going on. USPACOM is such a large geographic area

that I have to rely on our network of forces that are established in various countries within the region to provide real-time ground truth. In addition to our own forward network, we stay closely linked with our Department of State and other agency partners in the various U.S. Embassies. This partnership is critical for understanding what is occurring locally and abroad. Everything we do involves our Indo-Asia-Pacific partners, and SOCPAC works closely with host-nation governments and U.S. interagency partners to coordinate our activities and gain a deep understanding of influences, trends and movements within the region. This enables awareness of what is occurring from all perspectives.

In order to accomplish our mission as USPACOM's Theater Joint Force Special Operations Component Commander, we must plan and execute a wide spectrum of missions across the Indo-Asia-Pacific. These mission are designed to advance the broader theater objectives of deterring aggression, responding quickly to crisis, enhancing regional security cooperation and defeating threats to the U.S. and its interests. Special Operations is one subset of what is occurring within the broader scope of national interest in this theater, so it is important to understand how we fit into the picture. Keeping our finger on the pulse of the region allows us to tailor our operations, aligning them with theater and national objectives, while gauging how they are perceived by the host-nation government and populace.

The Indo-Asia-Pacific region is as diverse as it is expansive. That diversity brings various perspectives on how to tackle regional concerns. Our partnerships are extremely valuable to us as we learn from their experiences and gain valuable insights from our frequent engagements. While some of the most complex challenges facing America are a resurgent China and defiant North Korea that both lie within USPACOM borders, we also have to maintain awareness of Russia and Iran, both of which are just outside the borders but can influence the region. Additionally, we work to monitor and counter violent extremist groups that try to disrupt the theater. SOCPAC works alongside the other USPACOM components to enhance stability by promoting security cooperation, responding to contingencies, deterring aggression and, when necessary, fighting to win.

Q: For several years, the Philippines have been seen as a success story in the AOR, what is happening there now? And what is the plan to keep the peace?

A: The Republic of the Philippines is a sovereign nation that for more than five decades has faced a wide-range of armed internal threats by different separatist and insurgent groups with different ideologies culminating in violent action. They have faced communist ideology focused groups such as the Communist Party of the Philippines-New People's Army; Islamic focused groups such as the Moro National Liberation Front, Jemaah Islamiyah and Abu Sayyaf; as well as organized criminal groups.

Each group has different grievances that require different solutions. The Government of the Philippines is dealing with each group and has been largely successful in securing the

peace. However, with some of those violent groups, there is still work to do. The Philippine Government has won over large parts of the nation through their whole-of-government approach to solving problems that involve the local populace. U.S. Special Operations remains committed to advising and assisting the Philippine government through training and intelligence, allowing the Philippine military and police to act upon the problems within their nation using their own forces.

We recently held the Pacific Area Special Operations Conference in Honolulu where military, law enforcement and government representatives from 26 nations throughout Indo-Asia-Pacific rim, including Pacific South American nations, came together for a common goal. The main focus of this symposium was solving internal problems at their root cause before they fester into violent extremism. Representatives from Malaysia and Colombia spoke and gave concrete examples of how they used the whole-of-government approach to combat insurgencies and other armed internal groups to produce peace and maintain sovereignty. The Philippines was heavily represented from many internal agencies that spoke about their successes in some regions and insurgent groups.

Q: The problem plaguing the Philippines is also moving over to other areas like the Maldives. Is Islamic extremism on the rise and how do we counter it in this AOR?

A: It's important to understand that each nation is different with unique problems and challenges. While extremism is one issue every country must address, the broader challenges a nation faces varies from country to country. This presents a distinctly different problem set. The Maldives, along with many of our partner nations, is dealing with the growth of violent extremism, along with threats to public health, crime, natural disasters and political unrest. Violent extremist organizations are using social media to spread their message, recruit and become ideologically connected with otherwise disparate groups that are displaced geographically. The Maldives now has to deal with the Islamic State



01

Maldives, which appeared in 2014 after a pro-ISIS rally in the capital of Malé.

USPACOM and SOCPAC work with our partner nations within the rule of law to assist our partners in defeating any violent extremist organization within their borders. We are just one small part in the whole-of-government approach to resolving these issues.

Q: We recently traveled throughout the AOR and visited Nepal and Sri Lanka. Both of these countries have fairly recently ended decades of war — how do we help them maintain stability and grow as strong democracies?

A: We are well postured to support our Sri Lankan and Nepalese partners through the long-term and enduring relationships we have built through many years of cooperation and training together. These relationships give us particular insights and access to our partners, allow training to match U.S. SOF capabilities, and assist in resourcing or support. These actions are deliberately coordinated with both our U.S. Embassy interagency teammates as well as our host-nation partners' interagency, civilian and military forces. For example, to support our Sri Lankan partners, our Civil Military Support Element within Sri Lanka recently re-missioned a Special Forces Operational Detachment Alpha, which was in country on a Joint Combined Exchange Training to support flood relief efforts. Their tasks included confirming ground access to remote sites and providing ground assessments. Those assessments registered 698,289 people affected in 15 districts, with 224 deaths, 78 missing, 2,093 houses fully destroyed and 11,056 houses partially damaged. Though small, the ODA was a key component of the larger U.S. and foreign relief aid provided to Sri Lanka. The continued engagement with Sri Lankan military forces afforded us both access and capable response forces to assist with this disaster, which in SOCPAC's case, was

continued on page 10

01

Maj. Gen. Daniel Yoo, Commander of Special Operations Command Pacific, talks with the commanding officer for 1st Marine Raider Support Battalion, U.S. Marine Corps Forces, Special Operations Command and discuss special operations mission support during a tour of 1st MRSB's Tactical Readiness Exercise. U.S. MARINE CORPS PHOTO BY SGT. SALVADOR R. MORENO

IN DEPTH



Q&A WITH THE SOCPAC COMMANDER MAJOR GENERAL DANIEL D. YOO, USMC

continued from page 09

01
A Critical Skills Operator with 1st Marine Raider Support Battalion, U.S. Marine Corps Forces, Special Operations Command gives a tour of a modified SUV to the commander of Special Operations Command Pacific, Maj. Gen. Daniel Yoo and SOCPAC Command Sgt. Maj. Shane W. Shorter during a tactical readiness Exercise at Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, California.
U.S. MARINE CORPS PHOTO
BY SGT. SALVADOR R. MORENO

already on the ground training with our counterparts.

We have maintained an enduring engagement with Nepal for more than 15 years. This relationship was put to the test during the Gorkha earthquake in April 2015, which devastated large swathes of the Kathmandu Valley killing nearly 9,000 people and injuring nearly 22,000. Again, two U.S. ODAs were already in Nepal and were quickly re-missioned to support the recovery effort partnered with the Nepalese Army Mahabir Rangers. Our SOF elements in Nepal worked hand-in-hand with the U.S. Embassy and Government of Nepal to conduct surveys in order to confirm access to remote areas that helped focus the foreign relief effort and aid. That aid also included leading the lone civilian helicopter to Everest Base Camp to recover stranded moun-

taineers who were isolated after the earthquake-induced avalanche cutoff ground access. The access to the affected area and the quick assistance we offered to the Mahabir Rangers were only possible after years of persistent engagement.

Q: Speaking of Nepal, the Rangers there are consistent partners to the U.S., and are growing, how do we support units like this throughout the AOR?

A: Using the agility SOF is known for, we leverage our unique capabilities to maintain daily contact with our partners and to shape our engagements. Within Nepal we do so through our relationship with the Mahabir Rangers; in fact they are a case study in building partner capabilities through persistent engagement with the premier force in the Army of Nepal. In close concert with the DoS and interagency partners SOCPAC has built trust and interoperability with the Mahabir Rangers, largely through the SOCOM Joint Combined Exchange Training program. The lesson for the larger DoD or interagency enterprise is the SOF engagements' relative low cost and footprint, scaled to both the U.S. Embassy policies and our partners capabilities or capacity, to provide a response capability to support our partners' national security objectives.

Q: Natural disasters are frequent in the AOR, one of SOF's many missions is crisis response, what are some of the successes in this AOR?

A: SOCPAC personnel have supported various USPACOM disaster and recovery efforts, a few of which I've already mentioned. One of the major efforts was Operation Tomodachi, which was the disaster relief aid following the March 11, 2011 Tōhoku earthquake and tsunami. SOCPAC personnel were already in country preparing to begin a routine training exercise when a 9.0 earthquake struck off the east coast of Japan resulting in a 133 ft. tsunami traveling up to six miles inland in some locations. SOCPAC personnel were ordered to assist with recovery and cleanup efforts, with one of the immediate priorities being to reopen Sendai Airport to allow military aircraft to bring in supplies.

This is in addition to the two natural disasters in Nepal and Sri Lanka spoken about above that demonstrate SOCPAC's ability to rapidly transition into relief efforts from any other mission they may be conducting.

Q: What are your primary missions and how are your forces contributing to success and stability in the AOR?

A: As USPACOM's TJFSOCC, SOCPAC coordinates, plans, and executes the full range of special operations across the Indo-Asia-Pacific region, which encompasses 36 nations and is home to more than 50 percent of the world's population. We align our operations to support USPACOM's objectives of deterring aggression, responding quickly to crisis, enhancing regional security cooperation, and defeating threats to the U.S. and its interests. SOCPAC is committed to enhancing stability in the Indo Asia-Pacific region through promoting security cooperation, encouraging peaceful development, responding to contingencies and deterring aggression. 



01

ASIA THREAT OVERVIEW

The 36 nations that comprise the Asia-Pacific region are home to more than 50 percent of the world's population, 3,000 different languages, several of the world's largest militaries, five nations allied with the U.S. through mutual defense treaties, and two of the world's major geopolitical flash points in the South China Sea and on the Korean Peninsula. Two of the three largest economies are located in the Asia-Pacific along with 10 of the 14 smallest. The AOR includes the most populous nation in the world, the largest democracy and the largest Muslim-majority nation. The Indo-Asia-Pacific region is a large and diverse area with numerous challenges; terrorism being among them.

More than 60 percent of the world's Sunni Islamic population lies within the Indo-Asia-Pacific region; primarily in an arc that runs from Pakistan through India down the Malay Peninsula into the islands of Indonesia and the Philippines.

The Indo-Asia-Pacific Sunni Islamic population has historically provided very little support to Salafist Jihadist transnational terrorist organizations. Over the past few years there has been a marked increase within the Indo-Asia-Pacific region of support to jihadist-linked activities and an increase in individuals willing to leave the region in support of extremist operations in the Middle East.

The PACOM AOR has approximately 45-55 terrorist groups. The most dangerous transnational entities with a presence in the PACOM AOR include: the Islamic State of Iraq and ash-Sham, al-Qaeda Allies and Associates and Lashkar-e Tayyiba. There are also numerous smaller terrorist groups and insurgents active in India, Burma, Southern Thailand, the Philippines, etc.



ISIS — SOUTHEAST ASIA

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ



The increasingly fertile ground for jihadi expansion in Southeast Asia means the Islamic State may pose as big a future threat to the East as the West. Islamic State operatives inside Syria and Iraq have leveraged existing local networks in Southeast Asian countries to remotely enable terrorist plots in their home countries, and there is concern that foreign fighters, and not simply Southeast Asian returnees, will export terrorism to the region as the Islamic State suffers setbacks in Syria and Iraq. Thus far, ISIS has shown its most potential in the Southern Philippines, as demonstrated by the siege in Marawi, which began on May 23, 2017 and continues as of late-August. A group of jihadists, centered on ISIS-Southeast Asia emir Isnilon Hapilon held the city hostage, gaining worldwide media attention and the ISIS core in Iraq and Syria.

Individuals from Southeast Asia have traveled to Syria (and to a lesser extent, Iraq) to take part in the armed struggle against the Assad regime and then subsequently joined the Islamic State or other jihadi groups.

ISIS — SOUTH ASIA

لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ



As in Southeast Asia, South Asian foreign fighters have enabled or attempted to enable attacks at home. Nevertheless, South Asia has not likely contributed as many foreign fighters to support jihad in Iraq and Syria.

ISIS Core has publicly recognized a network of supporters in Bangladesh, and while Bangladeshi CT efforts have disrupted several threats, they have not eliminated the network of ISIS supporters. ISIS-affiliated extremists have targeted foreigners, including Westerners, along with local security forces and minority religious groups. The most notable ISIS-supported attack in the PACOM-AOR up until May 2017 was the July 1, 2016 attack on the Holey Bakery in Dhaka, when five militants took hostages and opened fire on the Holey Artisan Bakery in the diplomatic district of Dhaka. The assailants entered the bakery with crude bombs, machetes and pistols, taking several dozen hostages (foreigners and

continued on page 12

locals). While Dhaka Metropolitan Police tried to regain control of the bakery, two police officers were shot dead by the assailants. During the attack 29 people were killed, including 20 hostages (18 foreigners and two locals), two police officers, five gunmen, and two bakery staff. Bangladeshi security force raids from mid-2016 to August 2017 have complicated the Bangladesh ISIS network's ability to operate; however, attacks on March 17, 18 and 24, 2017 in Dhaka indicated that the network is beginning to reconstitute itself.

The ISIS Core recruits India-based supporters mainly through social media. ISIS's online influence varies, and it is unclear which India-based supporters are linked with one another through social media or through other means of communication. ISIS supporters in India planned attacks against government officials, festivals, places of worship and areas frequented by tourists. India CT pressure has disrupted several attack plots. Although New Delhi has identified ISIS threats, arresting at least 80 ISIS-adherents since mid-2015, Indian media still reports that Indians who have traveled to the Middle East are trying to direct attacks back at home. The one ISIS-linked attack in India to date was the March 7, 2017 train bombing in Madhya Pradesh that injured 10 people.

AQIS



Al-Qaeda exerts considerably less influence in the Indo-Asia-Pacific than it did in the early 2000s, yet allied and affiliated groups still

maintain a presence. Indonesia based Jemaah Islamiyah is the most notable allied group while al-Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent is the newest affiliate.

In the Indian Subcontinent al-Qaeda was founded on September 3, 2014. The group's formation was announced in a video released by AQ Central, in which al-Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahiri declared that this new Pakistan-based AQ-affiliate would oversee expanding AQ operations in Pakistan as well as India, Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Myanmar. Zawahiri also pledged that the group would recreate the Islamic caliphate that once stretched into these regions.

AQIS has largely been unable to gain traction outside of Pakistan and has been largely unsuccessful in carrying out

large-scale attacks of the type anticipated by AQC leadership. Although the group has carried out assassinations of Pakistani military officials and anti-al-Qaeda bloggers, it has yet to carry out a major attack on Indian soil. This may be in part because of the general hostility of Indians, including Indian Muslims who account for roughly 13 percent of the country's population, towards radical jihadist ideologies, especially when they originate from India's traditional rival, Pakistan. The group has faced a different problem in Bangladesh, where the hard-line Islamist terror group Hefazat e-Islam has monopolized local extremism and has pledged to deny AQIS a foothold in the country. AQIS has even begun to experience difficulties in Pakistan, where it has not carried out an attack since October 2014. U.S. drone strikes and the Pakistani military's Operation Zard-e-Azb, which was launched in late 2014 to combat militant extremism in Pakistan's tribal regions, have decimated AQIS's ranks. According to the U.S. and Pakistani militaries, more than 50 AQIS members have been killed in U.S. or Pakistani strikes since September 2014.

The few notable AQIS attacks include the Sept. 6, 2014 attempt to attack U.S. warships after hijacking a Pakistani military frigate. The attack failed and the hijackers were apprehended. On Feb. 26, 2015, AQIS militants killed Avijit Roy, an atheist Bangladeshi-American Blogger living in Dhaka, Bangladesh. Between February and May 2015, AQIS killed three other secular Bangladeshi bloggers. The last AQIS attack in Bangladesh was on May 12, 2015 when it claimed credit for the assassination of Ananta Bijoy, a secular Bangladeshi blogger.

J



Jemaah Islamiyah is an Islamist extremist group in Indonesia that seeks to overthrow the government and create a pan-Islamic state

in Southeast Asia. It has ideological origins in the Darul Islam movement of the 1950s and 1960s. In the late 1980s, evading prison sentences for their ties to DI, Yemeni-born Indonesian clerics Abdullah Sungkar and Abu Bakar Ba'asyir fled to Malaysia. There, they began to form a collective of Islamists and facilitated travel to Afghanistan for Southeast Asian Muslims seeking to join the fight against

the Soviets. Experts disagree on the exact date that JI was founded as an organization, but estimates range from the late 1980s to the early 1990s, suggesting that the group coalesced over time before formalizing.

In the 1990s, JI transformed through relocations and training. By the mid-1990s, Sungkar had established training camps in the Philippines, which led to a strong relationship between JI and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front. The group was responsible for a string of church bombings in Indonesia in December 2000, which killed 18, as well as a series of bombings in Manila in that same month, which killed 22.

In the early 2000s, JI began to focus its attacks on Western and U.S. targets, a shift that was reflected in its actions and then publicly announced by Ba'asyir in 2002. In December 2001, Singaporean officials foiled a JI plot to attack U.S., Israeli, British and Australian diplomatic buildings in Singapore. Subsequent attacks on public spaces like malls, hotels and restaurants demonstrated that the organization also seemed to become more willing to accept collateral loss of Muslim life. In October 2002, JI perpetrated its most notorious attack when it bombed two Bali nightclubs popular with foreign tourists, especially Australians, killing 202.

Following the Bali bombing, Indonesian authorities joined other governments in cracking down on JI, and in response, some JI leaders wanted to abandon mass-casualty terrorism and attempted to distance themselves from AQ's calls to attack Western targets. Despite increased security efforts and new goals among JI's leaders, associated cells and members continued to carry out attacks. In Jakarta, JI bombed the J.W. Marriott Hotel in August 2003 and the Australian Embassy in September 2004. In October 2005, a suicide bombing in Bali killed twenty-six.

By the mid-2000s, national security efforts had begun to seriously degrade JI's operational capabilities. Since 2002, governments of Southeast Asia have arrested more than 400 suspected terrorists tied to the group, including JI's operational chief in 2003 and two senior leaders in 2007. Security forces have killed a number of JI's leaders as well.

The increased security efforts not only decimated organizational leadership, but also forced the remaining leaders to rethink the group's strategy, resulting in increased fracturing through 2010. When JI's leaders seemed to set the

group on a firm path to becoming a nonviolent organization, Ba'asyir left in 2008 to form a new organization, Jemaah Ansharut Tauhid. In 2011, Ba'asyir was arrested and convicted for operating a militant training camp in Aceh, which was funded by JAT, and was sentenced to 15 years in jail. The last attack associated with JI came in July 2009, when suicide bombers linked to JI again attacked the J.W. Marriot in addition to the Ritz-Carlton in Jakarta, killing seven and injuring more than 50. Since then, JI splinter groups and other Indonesian militant organizations have been more active and received more media attention than JI. In 2014, Ba'ayshir allegedly declared his support for ISIS from prison, but what remains of JI's leadership today is firmly anti-ISIS.

LT



Formed in 1990 in the Kunar province of Afghanistan, Lashkar-e Tayyiba (also known as Jama'at-ud-Da'awa) is based in Muridke near Lahore in Pakistan and is headed by Hafiz Muhammad Saeed.

LT's most notable attack was the Nov. 26, 2008 attack in Mumbai, India, which held the city hostage for three days and killed 164 people. LT has conducted operations in Jammu & Kashmir since 1993.

LT's professed ideology goes beyond merely challenging India's sovereignty over the state of J&K. LT's agenda includes the restoration of Islamic rule over all parts of South Asia. Further, the outfit seeks to bring about a union of all Muslim majority regions in countries that surround Pakistan. Towards that end, it is currently most active in J&K and Afghanistan.

While LT's primary area of operations is J&K, the group has carried out attacks in other parts of India, including in New Delhi, Mumbai, Bangalore, Hyderabad, Varanasi, Kolkata, Gujarat, etc. It reportedly has cells in many cities/towns outside Jammu and Kashmir.

LT is closely linked to Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence agency, the Afghan Taliban and al-Qaeda. LT maintains ties to various religious/military groups around the world, ranging from the Philippines to the Middle East and Chechnya primarily through the al-Qaeda fraternal network.

continued on page 14

PHILIPPINES TERRORIST AND MILITANT GROUPS

Four main militant entities operate in the Philippines: the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, the Abu Sayyaf Group, the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters and the Communist Party of the Philippines-New People's Army. While the former is in the midst of peace negotiations with the government, the latter two remain on an operational footing.



MILF



MILF is the largest and best-equipped Islamist militant group in the Philippines. The organization was initially founded under the leadership of Hashim Salamat

with the aim of establishing an independent Islamic state in all areas of the southern Philippines where Muslims have traditionally been the majority. Following Salamat's death in 2003, his more pragmatic successor, al-Haj Murad Ebrahim, moderated the objective over time. He felt a guarantee of comprehensive autonomy rather than outright independence was the most realistic concession that could be extracted from Manila. To this end he signed a cessation of hostilities agreement in 2003 and has since participated in Malaysian-sponsored talks aimed at resolving an array of concerns about a future self-governing Moro homeland.

ASG



The Abu Sayyaf Group was established in 1991 by Abdurajak Janjalini, a veteran of the Afghan mujahideen campaign against the Soviet Union during the 1980s. Its stated goals are the purge of all Christian influence in the southern Philippines and the establishment of an independent Islamic State of Mindanao. From the outset this agenda was tied to larger, transnational extremist plans, mostly rhetorically but occasionally substantively.

In its early years ASG operated as a cohesive and explicitly religious organization. The loss of several senior commanders, however, has progressively seen the group degenerate into a fractured and criminalized entity. Today, the organization, which numbers no more than 100 members, is split between roving kidnap-for-ransom bands operating on the islands of Basilan and Jolo. Isnilon Hapilon, an elderly cleric who now goes by the name of Sheikh Mujahideen Abdullah al-Philippine, leads the largest and most active of these factions, which is based on the island of Basilan.

BIFF

The Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters is a spin-off of MILF formed in December 2010 by Ustadz Ameril Umbra Kato, a scholar and former leader of the Front's 105th Command. Among other things, he contended

that the MILF had strayed from the Bangsamoro's original goals and undermined the Moro Islamic cause by negotiating only for Mindanao's autonomy and not full independence. After Kato died from pneumonia in April 2015, BIFF's command passed to Ismael Abu Bakar, a somewhat more radical leader who also goes by "Bonmgos." BIFF is larger and better equipped than the ASG, although its influence remains highly localized largely within two *barangays* (hamlets) in Maguindanao.

CPP-NPA



The Communist Party of the Philippines–New People's Army seeks to overthrow the Philippine government, expel U.S. influence from the Philippines, and establish a new state.

The CPP was founded in 1968 and has two related units: its armed wing, the New People's Army, which was established in 1969; and its political arm, the National Democratic Front of the Philippines. Because the party and its armed wing are so closely intertwined, they are often referred to together as the CPP-NPA. Since 1986, more than 40 rounds of talks under five Philippine presidents have been conducted by five government panels. The talks have been disrupted more than 15 times for various reasons, but mainly on the issues of sovereignty and the release of the captured Communist Party and NPA leaders who the NDF invariably claim to be its consultants in the peace negotiations. The government of President Duterte recently ceased negotiations with the National Democratic Front, as Duterte and CPP founder Jose Maria Sison grow increasingly hostile towards one another.

OTHER PHILIPPINES GROUPS

Besides MILF, ASG, BIFF, CPP/NPA there are at least three smaller groups that have emerged in the Philippines in the last few years: Jamaal al-Tawhid Wal Jihad Philippines, Ansar Khalifah Sarangani (AKS or Supporters of the Caliphate) and Khilafa Islamiyah Mindanao. While information on these entities is scant, none are believed to have more than a handful of followers. 



01

REMAINING FIRST IN ASIA

The importance of SOF maintaining access and influence in contested domains.

BY COLONEL GUILLAUME BEAURPERE

“The center of military power in the world is moving to Asia. The reason: sustained capitalist expansion leads to military acquisitions. As states consolidate their institutions at home and do more trade and business abroad, they seek militaries in order to defend their new interests. Asian states like China, Japan and Vietnam are no longer internally focused, but projecting power out — and thus their territorial claims clash and overlap.”

— Robert Kaplan, *“Asia’s Cauldron: The South China Sea and the End of a Stable Pacific”*⁰¹

Philippine Soldiers assigned to the 18th Special Forces group and U.S. Army Special Forces Soldiers assigned to the 1st Special Forces Group (Airborne) board a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter to conduct helocast operations during Exercise Balikatan, at Fort Magsaysay, Philippines.

U.S. ARMY PHOTO BY SGT. MARTY BORTON

United States strategic access and influence in the Indo-Asia-Pacific region is slowly eroding. The post-Cold War hegemonic power no longer enjoys military, economic or even information supremacy in this complex region. Adversaries are asserting their influence, and even deliberately undermining U.S. access, while traditional partners, including allies, are balancing and hedging amidst increasing great power competition. Alfred Thayer Mahan’s geopolitical study *“The Problem of Asia”* foresaw a strategic shift in the 20th century geopolitical map from the West to Asia.⁰² This ground-breaking work highlighted the impending competition between the land power of Central Asia and the Western colonial and trading nations whose interests lay along the periphery of the Asian continent. Today, in the early decades of the 21st century, we begin to grasp the strategic meaning of Mahan’s lucid visualization of the world map.

Asia’s economic resurgence and financial strengths as both consumer and producer over the last two decades have reinforced the international relations theory of a shift in global power. Asian leaders and even U.S. politicians have regularly referred to the Asian Century and scholars often argue the merits of this theory based on population demographics, economic performance and growth of science and technology. Global power shifts are strategically significant, since historically they seldom occur without major changes in international norms. A pivot to Asia as a new center of global power will inevitably displace or restructure existing Western-led security and economic orders. The so-called ‘Thucydides Trap’ that ensues poses a challenge to the U.S. as the status quo power. Should the U.S. contain or resist the power shift or adapt and adjust its strategy to accommodate the rise of peer adversaries?⁰³ The U.S. is now at a critical strategic junction in Asia.



01

01 A newly constructed classroom building at the Jaffna Hindu Ladies College in Sri Lanka is decorated for an opening ceremony. The Civil Military Support Element nominated the project for funding through the U.S. Embassy.

02 Immediately following the groundbreaking on the U.S. building, the Chinese began construction of a classroom building overlooking the U.S. facility. The giant structure towers over the other buildings on the campus but the construction was done quickly with little attention to detail or quality. The college now teaches the students English and Chinese.

U.S. ARMY PHOTOS BY JENNIFER G. ANGELO



02

To effectively trace a path forward, the U.S. National Command Authority needs to maintain a deep understanding of the Asian environment and wield influence. This requires persistent access and engagement with key indigenous partners in the region, expanding well beyond the five major U.S. non-NATO allies. Small, discrete forces must remain forward postured able to quickly aggregate with key enablers to respond to potential crisis or conflict. Army Special Operations Forces can provide this range of capabilities to both Joint Force Commanders and U.S. Ambassadors. This article will describe the complexity of the threat environment in Asia and the application of ARSOF capabilities through cross-functional teams.⁰⁴ It then offers a range of critical readiness tasks at a time of increased tension in the region. Bringing years of combat experience and innovative approaches to modern warfare with indigenous forces, USSOF enjoys a significant level of respect among many Asian nations. ARSOF brings cultural and language expertise, an important factor in navigating the diverse Human Domain of the region. This allows for SOF employment in the seams, or gray areas, of great power competition in a region fraught with challenges to U.S. interests.

THE THREAT ENVIRONMENT IN ASIA

State adversaries, violent extremist organizations and transnational criminal networks all combine to make Asia one of the most complex regions for our military to operate. All four adversaries described in the National Military Strategy — China, North Korea, Russia and Iran — as well as the ubiquitous threat from terrorist groups such as

al-Qaeda and the Islamic State (better known as ISIS) are to varying degrees present in the Indo-Asia-Pacific region. Among these, the most prevalent challenge to U.S. access and influence is the re-emergence of the Chinese 'Middle Kingdom'. The People's Republic of China is nearing regional economic, informational and military hegemony. Across Asia, the U.S. military is now persistently operating in its sphere of influence. Chinese is becoming the *lingua franca* of Asia, studied and spoken by many of Asia's educated populations. The PRC, simply by its sheer size and proximity, can shape the actions of its neighbors through diplomatic or economic power bolstered by human movement that permeates the very fabric of regional societies. Overseas Chinese, especially in Southeast Asia, shape the social and economic landscape in the operational environment. But the challenge from China is not the only a threat to U.S. interests, and certainly not the most imminent.

Over the past decade, the Kim Jung-Un Regime in North Korea has rapidly developed long-range ballistic missile capabilities. Most worrisome is its apparent race to demonstrate to the world that it is now a fully-capable nuclear power. As increased UN sanctions against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea take their toll, many observers believe the Kim Regime will increasingly turn to transnational criminal networks and illicit trafficking to sustain its economy and weapons development program.⁰⁵ The danger is in the DPRK deliberately selling its weapons of mass destruction to violent extremist organizations or to other U.S. adversaries with equal aspirations towards nuclear weapons. So not only does the U.S. face a threat of North Korean nuclear weapons being launched towards the homeland, it also faces the complexities of proliferation in the region and beyond.



In South Asia and through the archipelago nations of Southeast Asia, the threat of rekindled violent Islamic extremism looms large. As the seat of the ISIS so-called Caliphate collapses in the Middle East, returning Foreign Fighters combined with a hyper active globalized media network are slowly serving to coalesce previously disparate violent extremist organizations under one common banner. Whether truly ideologically linked or franchising off of a perceived successful radical Islamic cult, the threat has clearly migrated to Asia. The region witnessed the latest manifestation in the seizure of the Muslim city of Marawi in the Southern Philippines by the Maute Group who declared allegiance to ISIS. There are decades-old tensions between Buddhists and Muslims in places like the Northern Rakhine State of Burma or in the separatist violence of Thailand's southern provinces, all of which threaten to undermine the spirit of cooperation in ASEAN and create environments ripe for radicalization. For the USSOF, opportunities abound for counter violent extremism and counterterrorism partnerships with several Asian nations.

There are other potential flash points in this vastly complex and dynamic region. Asia's economic growth has directly contributed to an increase in regional military modernization and expansion. India, when not preoccupied by the threat from its nuclear neighbor Pakistan, is keen to counter the rise of Chinese influence on its periphery.⁸⁶ Japan and China continue to maneuver over conflicting interests in the Senkaku Island chain in the East China Sea. Similar disputes exist between China and several Southeast Asian nations in the South China Sea. Democracy in Thailand remains a fragile proposition and military dominance in Myanmar's

internal affairs is once again resurging. Any one of these potential crisis points could drag the U.S. into regional conflict. Given deep and growing economic interdependence in the region, the need for U.S. forward posturing and situational awareness is more critical than ever.

CROSS FUNCTIONAL ARSOF TEAMS

The integration of the only Active Duty 95th Civil Affairs Brigade as well as the 4th and 8th Military Information Support Groups under the 1st Special Forces Command now provides USSOCOM and geographic combatant commanders a unique Army Special Operations Forces Division capable of training, equipping and deploying cross-functional, purpose-built Special Warfare teams across the globe. The cross-functional ARSOF team is now consistently exercised and validated through combat training center rotations where Special Forces Operational Detachments-Alpha, Civil Military Support Elements and Military Information Support Teams are achieving effects — often in denied areas — to enable the movement, maneuver, fires and intelligence functions of conventional forces. These teams are also critical to shaping the environment for stability and support operations post-conflict or hostilities and provide commanders a deeper understanding of the security, governance and informational aspects of the human terrain. The teams are regionally aligned and bring a depth of language and cultural expertise unique to these formations. The 1st Special Forces Group (Airborne), headquartered at Joint Base Lewis-McChord with one battalion forward-stationed in Okinawa, has been regionally aligned in Asia since June 1957.

The employment of these SOF teams in Asia is a central component of a theater-engagement strategy and support to campaign activities. CMSE and MIST teams are now operating in areas where U.S. military-to-military security cooperation is restricted or limited due to host-nation policy constraints. These teams are skilled at nesting

UNITED STATES STRATEGIC ACCESS AND INFLUENCE IN THE INDO-ASIA-PACIFIC REGION IS SLOWLY ERODING ... ADVERSARIES ARE ASSERTING THEIR INFLUENCE, AND EVEN DELIBERATELY UNDERMINING U.S. ACCESS, WHILE TRADITIONAL PARTNERS, INCLUDING ALLIES, ARE BALANCING AND HEDGING AMIDST INCREASING GREAT POWER COMPETITION.



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Members of 1st SFG(A) conduct joint training with partner forces in Thailand.
 U.S. ARMY PHOTO BY
 JASON GAMBARELLA

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with Ambassador and U.S. Country Team objectives, and usually enjoy broad freedom of movement across the host nation. SFODAs and SFODBs are the foundational elements that have sustained decades-long SOF partnerships across Asia. These SOF engagements reinforce alliances with units such as the Republic of Korea Special Warfare Command, the Special Operations Command of the Philippine Army and the Royal Thai Army Special Warfare Command. More recently, U.S. Special Forces Soldiers have helped build and train specialized units from the ground up like the Mahabir Rangers in Nepal. With the assistance of USSOF, this unit has grown into a Regiment and possesses some of the most capable crisis response and humanitarian assistance capabilities of the Nepal Army. Similar initiatives exist across the region from counterterrorism units in Indonesia and Malaysia to crisis response and UN Peacekeeping support units in Mongolia.

ARSOF cross-functional teams also bring very recent combat experience from Operations Inherent Resolve and Resolute Support. The tactics, techniques and procedures developed during these conflicts are now transferring back into Asia to advise, assist and in some cases enable U.S. indigenous partners to be more effective against a range of threats from terrorist groups to state adversaries. The complexity of the 21st Century battlefield now requires SOF to support a range of military operations from combat and information operations to support to stability and governance.

The integration of Psychological Operations and Civil Affairs experts into traditional SOF teams led by SFODAs is now increasingly the template for supporting the Joint Force. The ability to posture teams across the theater, who can quickly aggregate at a crisis point and time, provides an important asset to theater commanders and U.S. Country Teams. First and foremost, these small teams

can provide immediate situational awareness by virtue of persistent presence. Looking at local and regional problems through the eyes of indigenous partners can provide a depth of understanding and even influence on a crisis that national security decision makers may not have considered. This was the case during the 2015 Nepal earthquake that struck while ARSOF was on the ground training with the Nepalese Army. Second, the forward positioning of SOF teams provides advanced support to a Joint Force response. This is increasingly exercised in Asia with ARSOF supporting U.S. Army's Pacific Pathways, an initiative to posture Army forces to shape the theater through rotational partner engagements. ARSOF teams have provided local or regional expertise to the brigade prior to the execution of a Pathway event, or have integrated with U.S. conventional forces as advisors or to provide SOF unique capabilities.

BUILDING SOF READINESS FOR OPERATIONS IN ASIA

The complexity of the Indo-Asia-Pacific Theater requires SOF to constantly reassess training and equipment readiness. The sensitivity of the political and economic environment, combined with irregular threats from terrorist groups and the ever-present challenge for SOF to build and maintain small and discrete units of action able to maneuver in denied or semi-permissive environments. The readiness demands on units can be daunting given the range of possible crisis or contingency that may arise. Leaders must synthesize the range complexity and focus training on those critical skills and capabilities required to dominate in Asia.

The first challenge is operationalizing language training. The vast cultural and language diversity across

Asia, where roughly 60 percent of the world's population lives and works, has complicated SOF language acquisition and sustainment. SOF formations charged with maintaining regional alignment have often struggled with designating and training target languages. Should units focus on a broad spectrum of languages to maintain flexibility, or should they instead narrow the aperture to a select few critical languages? The way ahead is debatable, but it is clear that ARSOF teams with members trained in up to four to five languages find it difficult to integrate foreign language into collective training. Instead, language is seen as an individual skill trained through annual mandatory classroom instruction and testing. An alternative approach is to build more language homogeneity on teams, and since Mandarin Chinese is spoken and understood widely across Asia this should arguably be the dominant SOF language. The 1st Special Forces Group, for example, is taking steps — with the support of the U.S. Army JFK Special Warfare Center and School at Fort Bragg — to build a deeper Chinese speaking capability amongst Special Forces Soldiers, having a goal of 50 percent of the group manned with Mandarin Chinese speakers in the next five years. The group is maintaining some flexibility with no more than two secondary languages that can be adjusted as needed based on theater requirements.

Advise and assist tasks are the bedrock of many indigenous-partnered operations. In Asia SOF is actively engaged in these tasks with the Armed Forces of the Philippines as they fight violent Islamic extremists in the city of Marawi and across the southern archipelago of Mindanao.⁰⁷ If there is a crisis or conflict on the Korean Peninsula, ARSOF units will likely find themselves advising, assisting, enabling and possibly accompanying ROK SWC forces in a range of special operations. Tasks could include facilitating mission command, planning and intelligence fusion to enabling terminal guidance operations. The evolution in modern indigenous warfare requires SOF units to prioritize C4ISR⁰⁸ and joint terminal attack control capabilities and skills. This may include having to advise and assist a partner force virtually, with organic means, to maintain positive control and situational awareness of the indigenous close fight remotely. It may also involve advising and accompanying partnered forces in support of large-scale conventional maneuver, which requires an appreciation for the growing capabilities of the Joint Force to fight in multi-domain battle. ARSOF's experience in precision, networked-based targeting will also be critical to partner force success on any battlefield.

Conflict with a U.S. peer competitor or adversary presents readiness challenges not seriously considered since the end of the Cold War. Yet in Asia, the Joint

Force may very well have to fight a conflict with very capable opponents like the DPRK, the PRC or even a resurgent Russia. For SOF, this will mean having to operate in denied space, where the local populace may be displaced or sympathetic to U.S. adversaries. Movement to and within this denied operational environment will require less traditional, perhaps disaggregated, techniques often dependent on local indigenous networks. USSF skills in unconventional warfare, CA understanding of governance and counter-governance and MISO abilities to shape and influence key leaders and populations will all be paramount to successful ARSOF operations. Teams will find themselves operating in degraded communications and high-risk survivability environments. Adversaries in Asia have known capabilities to disrupt satellite communications or even to employ weapons of mass destruction. Communications will not be instantaneous and senior leaders will ask teams to assume much greater risk than the U.S. has experienced in the past 16 years of irregular warfare.

All of these challenges place primacy on rapid technological evolution to more effectively integrate and interoperate with partner forces. The current process is slow and cumbersome. A more responsive capabilities development and fielding program is an absolute necessity with authorities for procurement delegated to lower levels than traditionally accepted. The Indo-Asia-Pacific Theater is often touted by senior leaders in PACOM as a 'Theater of Innovation'. SOF units by nature enable a culture of innovation at the lowest levels based on the seniority and maturity of its operators. Commanders should nurture and enable this culture and create mechanism to rapidly respond to critical needs. U.S. strategic interests depend on it.

CONCLUSION

For several decades SOF has engaged across Asia to forge what are now enduring, indigenous military partnerships. This remains a tremendous comparative advantage for the U.S. in the face of adversaries competing for access in influence. SOF must continue to nurture and solidify these relationships, even as national governments face difficult security cooperation decisions that may drive some of their interests towards China or other adversaries. All pillars of ARSOF capability are required to maintain this comparative advantage and provide U.S. senior military and government leaders a range of options to respond to crisis or conflict. 

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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01

TAILORING LOGISTICS SUPPORT FOR SPECIAL OPERATIONS FORCES IN THE PACIFIC

BY CAPT. KEDRICK PALMER AND 1ST LT. NICHOLAS BONA VIA

01, 02
Members of the 1st SFG(A) Forward Support Company conduct slingload training.

03
A member of the 1st SFG(A) Forward Support Company teaches drivers Hilux self-recovery procedures in Dhaka, Bangladesh.

U.S. ARMY PHOTOS COURTESY OF 1ST SFG(A)

Forward stationed in Okinawa, Japan, the 1st Battalion, 1st Special Forces Group (Airborne) Forward Support Company is charged with providing multifunctional logistics to sustain 1st Battalion's Operational Detachment Alphas as they conduct missions to meet SOCPAC and PACOM objectives, dispersed throughout South and Southeast Asia. The most important resource — people — is a finite one. That said, the unit must maximize the investment in SOF support Soldiers to ensure support requirements do not exceed capacity.

The unit provides sustainment support with a small footprint by employing a deliberate “multi-skilling” Soldier training methodology.

During the last year, it aided deployments for more than 750 SOF to 12 countries and shipped 12,500,000 lbs. of equipment by air and sea in support of 55 Joint Combined Exchange Training Events, two Joint Chiefs of Staff exercises and five Subject Matter Expert Exchanges.

Alongside the ODAs, the FSC builds partner logistics capacity throughout the region with SOF support SMEEs, by assessing partner forces' maintenance and distribution systems, and by helping to implement practices designed to prolong endurance and increase operational reach required to sustain operations.

The SOF support Soldier must possess a level of maturity and

competence exceeding rank, age or Military Occupational Specialty. Because SOF operations require minimal footprint, each Soldier must be a force multiplier for the ODA.

1st Battalion's enabler training program is a six-month pipeline designed to maximize each Soldier's effectiveness in the unit. Within 90 days of arrival, new support personnel attend a battalion-led, 14-day Special Forces Basic Combat Course-Support, which equips Soldiers with a baseline set of skills required to integrate with an ODA.

Students learn Tactical Combat Casualty Care, advanced marksmanship, communication equipment operation and advanced driving techniques. New personnel also undergo extensive MOS cross-training to provide various technical skills in forward locations. For example, wheeled vehicle mechanics learn small-boat operations and engine repair, multi-modal load planning and small unmanned aircraft operation.

While MOS cross-training is enduring, Soldiers are also selected for institutional training. Examples include Static Line Jumpmaster course, HAZMAT certifier, foreign weapons repair training and Family of Special Operations Vehicles (FOSOV) maintainer course. Six months after arrival to 1st Battalion, support Soldiers are prepared to deploy with an ODA. This is where “tailoring” occurs. Based on an ODA's mission set, the FSC provides the best suited Soldier, with the specific suite of skills to integrate with the ODA. As a result, more than 150 FSC Soldiers have deployed to 12 countries in support of SOF missions in PACOM.

One example of this concept in action is a FOSOV mechanic who

deployed to Mindanao, Philippines, to provide maintenance support to an ODA. A native Tagalog speaker, SFBCC-S graduate, FOSOV Mechanic, USASOC Static Line Jumpmaster and HAZMAT certifier, this enabler assisted with partner-force training in TCCC, convoy/recovery procedures and ensured that all mobility platforms remained fully mission capable. Since the partner force used similar vehicles, he taught preventive maintenance procedures to extend the lifecycle of the partner force's platforms. This is just one example of the multi-skilled Soldier adding value in each phase of the deployment.

The FSC increases partner forces' sustainment capability through SOF Support SMEEs. Foreign weapons repairmen from the armament section conducted three engagements in 2017, with counterparts from the Japanese

Special Operations Group and the Philippine Army Special Operations Command. The maintainers have been instrumental in inspecting partner-force sniper weapons systems and identifying solutions for these forces to sustain their organic equipment.

A recent example of successful partner-force integration was in July 2017, when the FSC dispatched a two-man maintenance repair team from Okinawa to the U.S. Embassy in Dhaka, Bangladesh. The team provided a non-standard vehicle recovery and operator course to Bangladeshi drivers who support the PACOM Augmentation Team-Bangladesh. A heightened threat level and constant travel on unimproved roads to remote locations dictates that assigned drivers must be equipped to increase survivability in emergency situations. Defensive driving

and vehicle self-recovery training are necessary skills to protect U. S. Embassy and U. S. Special Forces personnel. This three-day SMEE proved highly effective.

Units never feel as if they have enough people. However, constant investment in the SOF support Soldier with additional institutional and non-standard training increases our capability to support operations, independently or in conjunction with the ODAs. Producing multi-skilled Soldiers to support SOF is the method by which to provide scalable, tailorable logistics support forward in a "zero-growth" environment. No Soldier is limited by his or her MOS; one Soldier equals at least two. Minimal footprint. Maximum impact. 

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Capt. Kedrick Palmer is the Commander of the Forward Support Company, 1st Battalion, 1st Special Forces Group (Airborne).

1st Lt. Nicholas Bonavia is the Executive Officer of the Forward Support Company, 1st Battalion, 1st Special Forces Group (Airborne).



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THE SOF SUPPORT SOLDIER MUST POSSESS A LEVEL OF MATURITY AND COMPETENCE EXCEEDING RANK, AGE OR MILITARY OCCUPATIONAL SPECIALTY... EACH SOLDIER MUST BE A FORCE MULTIPLIER FOR THE ODA.



NEPAL



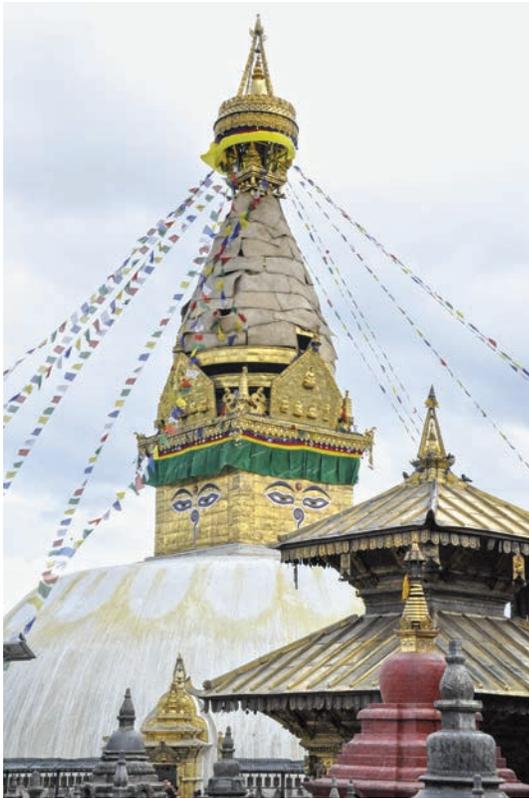


The heart of Nepal is its capital city, Kathmandu. There is only one main road that leads into Kathmandu, and that road is also the only way out. Situated in a valley surrounded by soaring mountains, Kathmandu has a population of about 1.4 million and about 6 million more people inhabit the small towns that share the Kathmandu Valley with the city. The ancient city is called the “gateway to the Himalayans,” and welcomes the throngs of tourist who give a big boost to the economy.

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Prayer flags frame the view of Kathmandu valley from the top of the famous "Monkey Temple" situated on a hilltop northwest of the city.

STORY PHOTOS: U.S. ARMY PHOTOS BY JENNIFER G. ANGELO



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The ancient temple of Swayambhunath Stupa, which overlooks Kathmandu Valley, is commonly known as The Monkey Temple due to the hundreds of monkeys that live inside the temple and the lush vegetation that surrounds it.

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Monkeys from the temple sometimes venture into the city and look for open windows to steal food or shiny objects. The monkeys are disliked by the locals for their tendency to be violent and mischievous.

04. 05
The streets of Kathmandu are crowded with people, vehicles and animals. Damage from the earthquake is evident by visible ruins where buildings crumbled and large amounts of construction. Dust still regularly clouds the city causing high levels of dirt and pollution.

For more of its history, Nepal's governance has been in flux. In 1768, Gurkha ruler Prithvi Naryan Shah conquered Kathmandu and laid the foundations for a unified kingdom. Some 45 years later, the Anglo-Nepalese War (1814-1816) culminated in a treaty that established the current boundaries of modern Nepal, and in 1923 a treaty with Britain affirmed Nepal as a sovereign nation. From 1950 to 1955 Nepal was an absolute monarchy; however, that changed when a multi-party constitution was adopted in 1959. Up until 1972, the government fell under the rule of the king, who was advised by councils. That ended in 1980, when a Constitutional referendum was passed and direct elections for the national assembly were held. In 1990, pro-democracy groups joined by leftist groups forced the King to agree to a new democratic constitution, with the Nepali Congress Party sweeping into power in the elections. In the middle of the decade, a Maoist revolt started which lasted more than a decade and resulted in the deaths of thousands of people. In 2006, a peace treaty was signed between the Maoists and the government, which formally ended the insurgency, although political strife continued. In September 2015, the parliament finally passed a constitution which defines Nepal as a secular country and free elections were held making Nepal a federal secular parliamentary republic, with elections occurring again in February 2018.

The heart of the republic is its capital city, Kathmandu. The city is unique in many ways, hous-

ing palaces, bazaar type marketplaces and ancient temples; the most famous of which is Swayambhunath Stupa, or as it is more commonly known, The Monkey Temple. Situated on a hilltop northwest of the city, the temple is an ideal place to get a look at Kathmandu as it sprawls out across the valley. The temple, known as one of the holiest Buddhist temples in the country, is also home to hundreds of monkeys, who sometimes leave the temple and venture into the city. They can be seen crossing the crowded streets via the electricity lines that hang haphazardly across the road. Down below the streets are flooded with vehicles — many of which are now driven by women to the great consternation of some older male drivers — and the sidewalks are flooded with people.

Walking the streets, you can still see signs of the devastating earthquake that rocked the city on April 25, 2015. Demolished buildings are still part of the landscape and new construction is evident. The 7.8 magnitude earthquake was the worst quake to hit the area in more than 80 years, and was followed by two major aftershocks that were of a slightly lower magnitude. The earthquake affected more than 8 million people and took the lives of more than 8,000 people, injured more than 20,000 and left countless families homeless.

In the days and months following the earthquake, U.S. Army Special Operations Soldiers stepped in to assist where possible to meet the





immediate needs and to make plans for long-term solutions. At the center of those actions were members of the PACOM Augmentation Team that is based out of the U.S. Embassy in Nepal. Comprised of Special Forces, Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations Soldiers, the PAT works directly with the embassy staff and other U.S. Government agencies to build enduring relationships and to help promote stability in the sometimes chaotic governance of the country.

Working with local Nepali agencies and with members of the country team and other U.S. government agencies, the PATs have been able to build lasting relationships with the Nepali military, particularly with the Mahabir Rangers, and other non-government organizations — like Maiti Nepal — to make a difference within the country in the days, weeks and months following the 2015 earthquake.

Capt. Stefani Forgiione, a Civil Affairs Planner on the PACOM Augmentation Team in Nepal, has worked closely with many Nepali agencies on building infrastructure that is necessary during emergency situations. One of the team's key partners is the USAID's Disaster Risk Reduction, Reconstruction and Resilience (DR4) Office, which is also based out of the embassy.

Over the most recent rotation of the PAT, the team worked hand-in-hand with Santosh Gyawali, a Senior Development Program Specialist in the DR4 office. Gyawali spent some time talking with Special Warfare about the efforts of not only the PAT, but the embassy as a whole, in the days following the earthquake.



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WALKING THE STREETS, YOU CAN STILL SEE SIGNS OF THE DEVASTATING EARTHQUAKE THAT ROCKED THE CITY.



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“Shortly after the Haiti earthquake, the ambassador here in Nepal, started looking into the entire mission’s portfolio, and realized that there were many sources of U.S. Government funding going into the local government in various way and through various agencies,” said Gyawali, adding that the Department of Defense and non-governmental organizations were all working on a similar theme of reducing disaster in Nepal.

“Nepal is a hotspot for natural disasters,” Gyawali explained. “Basically we have landslides, flooding, earthquakes, forest fires — you won’t even believe it but 50 to 60 deaths every year are due to lightning strikes.”

In an effort to consolidate all disaster-focused projects, the D4R office started coordinating all disaster relief/preparedness projects for the embassy and brought together representatives from the Department of Defense, the Food and Drug Administration and USAID.

“We started with that notion of coordinating disaster risk-reduction efforts in the country. Following the 2015 earthquakes, we added to that the reconstruction and resiliency aspects of our planning,” said Gyawali, explaining that any projects planned would be resilient, i.e. built in such a way that they could withstand earthquakes and efforts would be made to ensure that the people could bounce back to normalcy as well.

“It has been a wonderful experience because of the beauty of collaboration. All of our (the different partner agencies) money has certain things we can do and things we cannot do. For instance,

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with some funding we can’t do infrastructure, so we have to work with local NGOs. The money the Pat team brings in can be used for infrastructure,” he explained.

With the projects the PAT takes on, all projects are built with very strict building codes, and in fact, helped create and implement building codes for the country. “With the PAT money, we practice what we preach in terms of infrastructure. We make sure building codes are implemented and train the builders on those codes, so that when they finish that project and move on to another



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The Crisis Management Center built on the Mahabir Ranger Base in Kathmandu has generators to supply power in case of power loss. It also has deep water wells for clean drinking water, fuel for vehicles and emergency communication systems.

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A plaque above the entrance to the Crisis Management Center dedicates it to the people of Nepal from the U.S.

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A Nepali Ranger and the PACOM Augmentation Team's Civil Affairs Planner discuss future needs for the Ranger base and the Crisis Management Center.

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Col. Anup Jung Thapa, commander of the Mahabir Ranger Regiment, and the PACOM Augmentation Team Director prepare to sign a training agreement.

site, they will take those best practices with them to the next site,” Gyawali explained.

The nature of the funding that USAID brings to the table allows them to train people to work within the new facilities and to react to the problems that arise with natural disasters. In the case of the earthquake, the PAT’s project was the construction of a Crisis Management Center in Kathmandu. The center was built on the Mahabir Ranger’s Base. The CMC has huge generators that will supply power to the center and the base if the main power systems go down. It also has deep water wells that can provide clean drinking water, fuel for vehicles and emergency communication systems in place. To complement the center, USAID’s previous projects provide people who know how to use the systems, how to conduct collapsed structure search and rescue, hospital preparedness for emergencies and training first responders. Following the earthquake, the Rangers opened their base to people who were left homeless and allowed them to stay there until they could find other housing options. The Rangers created programs to keep the people, especially the children, happy and healthy and shared their food with them.

“Let me take you back before the earthquake show you how previous projects helped. We have been doing human capacity building since 1998. We’ve been running courses for medical first responders, collapsed structure search and rescue, hospital preparedness for emergencies. We brought in trainers from the United States for the initial training and then trained locals to be instructors,” explained Gawain.

The training program, known as the Program for Enhancement of Emergency Response provides regional training for 11 countries, and uses a cadre of trainers from throughout the region. The first iterations of training cost about \$30,000 per trainer, now because locals are trained as instructors, the cost is less than \$3,000. Additionally in the years leading up to the earthquake, the



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Members of the PACOM Augmentation Team talk to Mahabir Rangers outside the Regional Crisis Management Center located on the Ranger base in Kathmandu.

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A Mahabir Ranger practices search and rescue techniques, lowering down from a rope on a high wire to reach a casualty.

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Mahabir Rangers practice repelling, a critical skill for search and rescue.

04
Mahabir Rangers showcase high-water rescue equipment.

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A Mahabir Ranger carefully guides a stretcher cradling a casualty as they are hoisted to safety during search and rescue training.

embassy did a study on open spaces in Kathmandu and they deconflicted those open spaces with the International Organization for Migration and found 83 places where they could set up Internally Displaced People Camps in the event of a natural disaster. At those locations, they already had deep water wells and built a hospital nearby that could withstand earthquakes and supplemented it with a blood bank that was designed with structural mitigation that would not be effected by seismic activity. Additionally, the U.S. Military conducted a Disaster Response Exercise and Exchange, which taught hospital staff how to react to widespread damage. All of these efforts paid off in the days and weeks following the earthquake.

Within 45 minutes of the earthquake, the doctors at the teaching hospital who had attended the training established field hospitals and were doing field surgeries within three hours. The Ministry of Affairs was able to welcome international assistance within a matter of hours because of the training, including a search and rescue team from India that arrived within four hours of the training. More than 90 percent of that team had taken the regional PEERS training, and could work in concert with the Nepali security forces who had also taken the same training.

“All of that past work allowed us to save a lot of lives and reduce human suffering and save property

and economic loss to the country when the earthquake hit,” said Gyawali.

With the success of those previous projects, the PAT was able to get an idea of what projects would work and what would build on the previous successes. Forgione explained that her team took a lot of recommendations in order to make the project more substantial.

Gyawali said the success of the PATs project is impressive concerning their short tenure in the country.

“When you get into the country, you are supposed to understand the culture and the social activities and the economy — but that is going to take a lot of time,” he said. “We expect the PAT to be experts in 48 hours and take over a project and go with it. They have been doing that because they have a very good structured hand-over process that has been a lifeline of continuity.”

Once in country, Forgione said the team has to integrate itself into the embassy and build rapport with other agencies in order to share ideas. Once they get a grasp on what needs to be done, they can nominate projects for funding, most of which are public infrastructure. Through the nomination process, the team looks at what projects the embassy is already supporting, the priorities of the Office of Defense Cooperation and do assessments throughout the country to determine where the need is. The



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01 The treacherous single mountain road leading to the Nepal Police Force Disaster Management Training Center near Pokhara lacks proper infrastructure and multiple accidents occur daily.

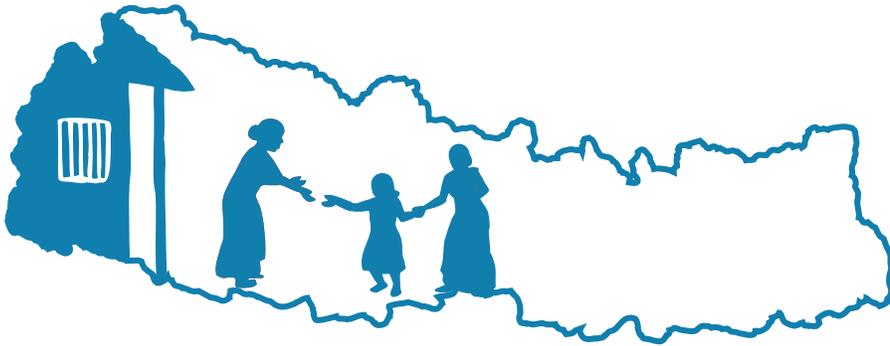
02 An overturned vehicle that plummeted off the road into the churning river serves as the only reminder of the four people killed in the incident.

projects also have to meet the objectives of PACOM and Special Operations Command Pacific. In Nepal, one of the key targets for improvement is the schools. A colossal number of the schools was damaged in the earthquakes, had the event happened on a school day instead of a Saturday, more than 30,000 students would have probably been lost. Improving the sustainability of the schools is high on the list or projects because the schools are the lifeline to the communities and can be used to account for people and to determine who may have been lost in an emergency. Another key area is the creation of emergency operations centers throughout Nepal. One key center is located on top of a mountain on the road going into and out of Kathmandu. Lo-

cated halfway between Pokhara and Kathmandu, the site is the Nepal Police Force Disaster Management Training Center. The center was built using PAT funds but is sustained by funding from the police force. It is called the PEER Center based off of the training supplied to the police. The facility also has a trauma center which is staffed by members of the force.

The center is important because of its location. The road going between Kathmandu and Pokhara is the main artery and everything going into Kathmandu is trucked to the valley via the winding mountain road. Numerous accidents happen on the road every day, with an average of four people getting killed every day in traffic accidents that result from driver error or from natural disasters like rock slides. While the Special Warfare magazine staff was in Nepal, a visit to the center was derailed when a landslide blocked the road completely. Cars were backed up for miles and people left their vehicles to talk and wait for the road to reopen. On the left side of the road is a mountain, on the right side of the road is a cliff overlooking the river. Earlier that evening, a truck ran off the road and plummeted down the cliff, landing upside down in the river — four people died in that accident.

To build capacity to react to those kinds of incidents, the police forces are trained in collapsed structure search and rescue, swift water rescue and they become first responders. Every day one or two sessions of training occur at the center making it a practical staff college for the armed police force. 



माइती नेपाल • Maiti Nepal

On any given night, hundreds of cars approach and cross the border between Nepal and India. On some nights, a group of women stand watch at the border. They are not awaiting a family member or a friend, but instead are looking for women who may be in danger . . . women who have been sold into the sex trade by human traffickers.

The women, who work in close coordination with the border police and the Nepalese Government, are part of an organization known as Maiti Nepal. Organized in 1993, by Anuradha Koirala, a former English teacher, now activist and lecturer, who has dedicated her life to the fight against exploitation of women and children.

In Nepal, attitudes concerning women are changing, but in the villages — far removed from Kathmandu — many women are still treated like property. Women are second-class citizens, both legally and socially. In areas like this, it used to be commonplace for women who are having their menstrual cycle to be locked in boxes or beneath the floor of the barn because they were considered “unclean.” Even today, women and girls die from fires or snake bites that they cannot escape because of their isolation in the box. It has only been in recent years that women have been allowed to drive. It is this low value that is put on the lives of women that has made them targets for human traffickers, and also why the government, for many years, turned a blind eye to the problem.

Young girls are a financial liability to their families who must often pay a dowry for their daughters to marry. The female population between the ages of 8 and 18 is approximately 4,000,000 — most of them are at risk of being trafficked. The basic literacy rate among rural women is about 30 percent. An estimated 20,000 Nepalese girls were trafficked into brothels in India last year

and the number is increasing rapidly.

This was the harsh reality Koirala was introduced to in 1990. Koirala found herself visiting the same temple every day. On her way there, she encountered many women and children begging in the streets. She wanted to help. She stopped to talk to them and found that all of the women were survivors of domestic violence who had been thrown into the streets. She asked them why they didn't get a job instead of begging. They explained that because their husbands had thrown them out, they had no references and no one would give them a job.

She vowed to make a difference. Using her teaching salary, she gave the women jobs in a small store in the market place. The eight women she helped out told her about young girls who were being exploited by the sex trade, and sold into prostitution in brothels and dance clubs. Koirala again thought she had to help, and purchased a small house with two bedrooms and took in 10 young girls — children really — whom had been sold into the sex trade.

She soon realized that the problem was too big for her, and began organizing people to join her. She registered her organization Maiti Nepal with the government. Maiti means “mother's home.” The next year, in 1994, UNICEF agreed to help Maiti Nepal by providing funding. Today the PACOM Augmentation Team, which works in the embassy in Kathmandu, also supports the efforts of Maiti Nepal.

Koirala used the initial donation by UNICEF to go out into the villages and talk to people about what was really happening to their daughters. She didn't go alone. She had members of the police force, journalists, doctors, lawyers and nurses. They explained to the villagers that they were being

deceived. They let them know that the people who came to the village offering jobs to young women, were in fact, criminals. In the past the parents accepted the money, thinking their daughters were working in hotels or restaurants — never knowing that they had, in fact, been sold.

Statistics show that about 150,000 Nepalese women have been sold into the sex trade in India, but Maiti Nepal believes that number is much higher because many people still do not report their children as missing. Since its inception, Maiti Nepal has helped in the conviction or more than 425 people for selling children, and have a like number of cases still open.

Operating out of Kathmandu, the organization has number of prevention homes in areas where trafficking is very prone. The people are very poor in these areas and lack job training. At the homes, they receive training and are integrated into society.

At 10 of the border crossings into India, Maiti Nepal has transition homes for women and children who have been rescued. In each home, five women who were once imprisoned in the sex trade, monitor the border crossings, looking for women who are potentially being trafficked. The women will point individuals out to the border police who stop them and often arrest the traffickers. The women whom they have rescued are given options. They can go into training for a job or they can be reunited with their families. The latter is usually harder because many families see their daughters as shamed and do not want them in the home, particularly if they have had children or have contracted diseases like HIV.

Many of these women find their way to the organization's headquarters in Kathmandu. Tucked in the middle of the sprawling city, the organization's headquarters provides housing and training for the women who have been trafficked and education for their children. More than 315 students who had the potential of being trafficked also attend the school.

Recently more than 44 women were returned to Nepal from Qatar. All of the women had been sold into the sex trade in Qatar, and were arrested because the passports they were given were fake. Maiti Nepal volunteers were waiting with open arms to shelter the women and help them rebuild their lives. 



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NEPAL SOF MOUNTAINEERING AND TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

BY CAPTAIN SEAN CHANG

As a result of Nepal's unique environment and infrastructure, this small landlocked country offers a variety of training opportunities for special operations forces that extend beyond doctrinal Army Special Operations Forces mountaineering skills. Although only the size of New York State, Nepal's notable elevation change results in significantly varied terrain, from densely vegetated mountains, to sparse alpine environments. Furthermore, Nepal's developing infrastructure presents particular logistical challenges that demands the development of unconventional logistics. This diverse terrain enables SOF units to execute a full spectrum of SOF mountaineering training. Nepal's relatively small size allows SOF units to conduct a multitude of geography-dependent training within a single joint combined exchange training.

Nepal JCETs frequently focus on developing SOF mountaineering skills, with an emphasis on navigating vertical obstacles. However, beyond training opportunities to refine skills on infiltration via mountain climbing techniques, Nepal's truly unique offering to SOF mountaineering training is the environment. Often overlooked, SOF mountaineering encompasses

the skills necessary to successfully survive and operate effectively in high-altitude alpine mountain terrain — that are necessary for the successful execution of unconventional warfare.

In a UW campaign, Special Forces Operational Detachment-Alphas must be able to live and operate in terrain that is difficult to control, e.g. the mountains. To

effectively operate in the mountains, SOF Soldiers must maintain mobility to facilitate successful infiltration and movement through the duration of the campaign. SOF Soldiers must also develop a logistics system that enables continuous operations within the austere mountain terrain.

While mountain climbing techniques are a crucial component to vertical obstacles, they only address a small portion of infiltration into high-altitude mountainous, alpine environments. Like navigating around a draw instead of through a draw, attempting to negotiate a vertical obstacle should be reserved until absolutely necessary. Long distance foot movements at high-altitude and under heavy loads would likely comprise 90 percent of infiltration, especially considering a UW context where partner forces are involved during the movement.

Conducting such a foot movement requires knowledge and experience of traveling at high-altitudes to properly manage acclimatization. Acute Mountain Sickness can effect even the most experienced mountaineers, thus understanding the progressive nature of ascent and the amount of elevation change the human body can tolerate in one day is crucial to infiltration route planning. Acclimatizing



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to altitude can potentially take weeks to complete, depending on the distance and altitude.⁰¹ The time required for the human body to adjust must be factored into the overall movement plan.

Dozens of mountain trails spiderweb Nepal, each spanning 100 miles with average altitudes of 10,000 feet, reaching up to 25,000 feet in elevation. These trails offer the ideal environment to conduct long-range movements under heavy loads while the body manages dramatic changes in altitude. Steep rock formations along the trails allow SOF units to intersperse technical climbing with long foot movements to effectively simulate infiltration in a UW environment. The trails also provide the opportunity to live safely in an austere environment, while having the capability to reach back to established mountain villages for support.

SOF Mountaineering does not end after infiltration. Once in the mountains, SOF units must operate in austere, high-altitude mountainous terrain for extended periods of time. This requires the use of non-standard logistics that are unique to a mountain environments that lack the infrastructure to support large supply trains.⁰²

Fortunately, the small villages scattered along the mountain trails of Nepal perfectly demonstrate the requirements for developing a semi-dependable supply train. These mountain villages have little to no infrastructure and most lack roads that would bring in critical supplies, but they all have developed multiple systems to ensure delivery of supplies. The more remote villages operate a simple system of pulleys to transport supplies from lower altitudes. Even more remote villages utilize supply drops where

an individual travels to a designated location and places supplies for the next person to pick up and move it to the next supply drop. The villages located closest to the mountain trails use smaller cargo vehicles, inexpensive motorcycles and pack mules to create dependable supply systems.

SOF units training in Nepal can develop and train on some of these same systems while conducting high-altitude training. The Nepalese Army's premier SOF Mountaineering and Mountain Warfare School in Jomsom provides an excellent launching point to safely conduct high-altitude mountaineering training in a real-world environment.

From densely vegetated mountains, to austere alpine environments, JCETs conducted in Nepal take advantage of unique training opportunities that span the full-spectrum of SOF mountaineering. Nepal's austere mountain terrain provides the opportunity to experience living and operating at high-altitudes, in addition to negotiating technically challenging ascents. Furthermore, Nepal's challenging terrain requires the employment of non-standard logistics, which can be observed and practiced while traversing the many mountain trails of the country. Nepal is a valuable JCET partner within the Special Operations Command Pacific area of responsibility. 

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Capt. Sean Chang is a Detachment Commander in 2nd Battalion, 1st Special Forces Group (Airborne). He has deployed in support of operations in Afghanistan and Nepal for JCET Balance Nail 16-4. He holds a bachelor's degree from the University of Southern California.

01
Members of the 1st SFG(A) alongside Nepalese Partner Forces conduct high-altitude training in the mountains of Nepal during a JCET.

02
A Special Forces team member from 1st SFG(A) scales a steep mountain-side during a mountaineering training exercise in Nepal.

01
Members of 1st SFG(A) and Nepalese Partner Forces hike through a small mountain village in Nepal during mountaineer training. Villages such as this provide an opportunity for Soldiers learn the requirements for developing supply chains in the austere mountain environment.

U.S. ARMY PHOTOS
COURTESY OF 1ST
SFG(A) PAO



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MAHABIR RANGERS

BY JANICE BURTON

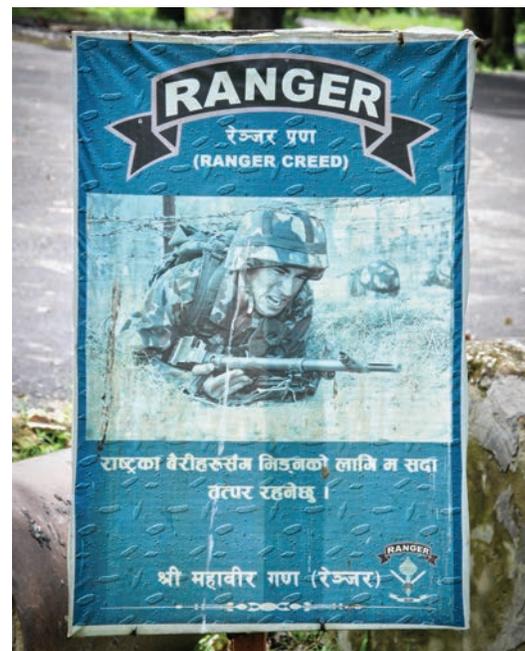
On Oct. 27, 2017, Col. Anup Jung Thapa oversaw the reflagging ceremony of the Mahabir Ranger Battalions into the Mahabir Ranger Regiment. For Thapa, the ceremony had great significance. Thapa was among the first group of Nepalese Rangers trained, and oversaw the training and creation of the remaining companies. As the head of the Mahabir Ranger Regiment, Thapa has much to be proud of, and takes a great deal of joy in discussing the evolution of his force from one company to a regiment. During a recent visit to Nepal, the *Special Warfare* staff had the opportunity to visit the Ranger base in Kathmandu and talk with Col. Thapa about the creation of the unit and its evolution.

“If you saw it this place back then, when it all started, it was all just overgrown elephant grass,” he said. “There was nothing here — no electricity — nothing.”

At that time, the country of Nepal was still immersed in what would be a decade long Civil War, which saw Maoist dissidents fighting against the government. Thapa, who had previously trained at the U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School, completing the Special Forces Qualification Course and the Civil Affairs Course, was tasked with building soldiers to defend the nation during this turbulent time.

He explained that a number of soldiers who had already been recruited for the Infantry and were about to complete their own training were called on to start training a new breed of soldiers — Rangers.

“This was the beginning of the conflict,” he recalled. “So there was a huge surge in the number of soldiers. Teams were training everywhere — all over Nepal. We took our teams, basically gave them a pep talk, gave them some tests and picked the best and brought them with us here. We started with 512 and graduated 203. At this time, the U.S. was only conceptually involved in our training, as we were just building up. Once this first lot graduated, 43 of us went to our first joint combined exchange training through the U.S. It was the Ranger Instructor Course.”



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01
A Mahabir Ranger stands guard outside the barracks on the Mahabir Ranger Compound in Kathmandu, Nepal.

02
A poster on the compound boasts the Ranger Creed.

PHOTOS BY:
U.S. ARMY PHOTOS BY JENNIFER G. ANGELO



Thapa, along with the first command sergeant major assigned to the Rangers went through the JCET.

“We then created a cadre with your help. By the second series, we all had already had U.S. training,” he continued. “That’s how we started out and what really reflects the close relationship and benefit of this long-term partnership with U.S. Special Forces.”

Much to Thapa’s surprise, the first company of Soldiers from the 1st Special Forces Group (Airborne) that came to train he and his fellow Rangers was headed up by a Soldier whom he had made friends with during his attendance at the SFQC in 1994.

“We went through the course together and graduated together, and then he comes here with his B Team to help us set this training up. You can imagine the synergy there, he said. “That talks to the effectiveness of the outreach between the U.S. Special Forces and our Rangers. When we built this training, we did so drawing upon a lot of our U.S. experience and the rest, you could say is history.”



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Following the training, the Rangers raised the first company, and those who led training and those who were being trained all went to war together. A little less than a year later, the second company completed training.

“That was particularly effective because the leadership of the company had already fought alongside us,” he said. “In 2004, the Rangers were trained so well, were so effective and so much in demand that the army sanctioned the raising of two companies at once,” Thapa recalled. “By this time, we already had a lieutenant colonel who was in charge of the Rangers, and I came out of operations and became the chief instructor to raise Companies C and D together. We were lucky that the events required us to raise everything from rifleman to company commander all together. The commander who took charge of Delta company trained alongside his troops, graduated with them and went to war with them — in fact they didn’t even graduate because one of their soldiers had been abducted while at home on leave and they went and got him back — that was their graduation.”

He noted that at that time, the organization had already claimed its name: Mahabir Rangers. Mahabir means bravest of the brave, but was also the name of the great monkey god in Hindu literature.



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“It was perfect because by that time we already had our colors. We had gone from nothing. Started out as four companies, and the officers from the first four companies started training Echo Company with fresh recruits who came in,” he explained.

In completing its expansion and organization, the Ranger Battalion pulled from its SF heritage and link to build each company with a geographical orientation. Company A was a mobility, Company B was mountain, Company C was jungle and Company D was urban. Urban was the new kid on the block, nobody had units trained for that or even the SOPs. The battalions sent out mobile training teams to more than 100 units.

“They play a huge role in the Nepal Army now. Our training teams are touching all these units and spreading their expertise and making more professional soldiers and it trickles throughout,” he said. “Because our JCETs were pretty spread out, we had to do some things ad hoc. We did not take everything the U.S. Special Forces taught us and put it out, instead, we internalized it and made it Nepali. We did our lesson plans in our language and we modified our TOE and tactics, techniques and procedures through the Army training cells. A lot of what we passed on with our mobile training teams came from you, through us.”



The teams were so successful that when the Army Chief visited the training, he asked for two more companies, which resulted in eight companies in the battalion.

“The intent was always to go into a Regiment concept,” he said. “It makes sound logic. Three or four companies would be out in operations and the others would be in garrison, otherwise we wouldn’t have room for everyone. The idea was to raise the fighting companies first because they were designed for war time. When the peace agreement was reached, part of the deal was that we were restricted to the barracks for quite a while.”

It was during that time that Thapa came back as a battalion commander and “inherited this huge organization that was finding its way.”

In 2009, the Rangers conceptualized the need for a special purpose engagement and reconnaissance squadron that would focus on networks targeting the city and sensitive site exploitation that could feed information to the other companies. Members of the 1st Special Forces Group were instrumental in helping make the SPEAR teams a reality through their mentorship. For Thapa, another link from his past came into play when he encountered a member of his Robin Sage cadre.

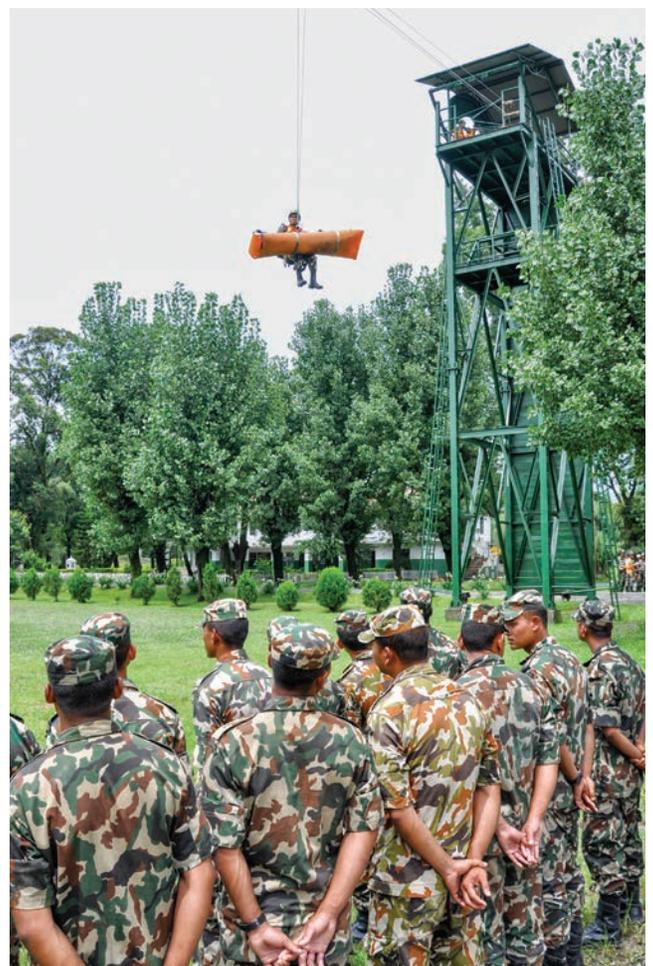
“I knew I knew him, and he knew me, so we started comparing notes. It’s sad to say he didn’t remember me for my capabilities but rather my wife. He remembered her from graduation because she was only one wearing a sari. That wasn’t very encouraging to me,” he joked.

Once the peace agreements were in place, Thapa realized the men still needed realistic training. So he turned to the jungles of Nepal and his soldiers started working on anti-poaching efforts. They

stayed in the jungle for two months — he added that the average tick bite count was eight per Ranger. After two years of the partnership with the Rangers, Nepal celebrated 1,000 days of no poaching.

With Mount Everest drawing many visitors to the country, the Nepalese Army did a lot of rescues and conducted relief operations when natural disasters occurred.

“We did not have a fly away team to respond to these crises,” he said. “We began working through this problem set and the U.S. Special Forces brought members of the Air Force to our aid. We were feeling our way and



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Col. Anup Jung Thapa, commander of the Mahabir Ranger Regiment talks about the formation and history of the regiment.

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Col. Anup Jung Thapa and other members of the Mahabir Ranger Regiment talk with the PACOM Augmentation Team in Nepal.

03

Mahabir Rangers conduct training on the repel tower at the Ranger base in Kathmandu.

trying to figure out what we needed. We set up our first DART teams in 2015 and by God, it was timely.”

In 2015, Nepal was impacted by the most devastating earthquake in 75 years. There were two U.S. Special Forces teams on the ground that immediately went into action with their Ranger counterparts.

“It’s worth noting that the single biggest numbers of lives saved was by the Rangers at that time,” said Thapa. “We took unbelievable risks to pull people out from underneath collapsed structures. A mountain crashed down into the valley and completely covered a village and an Army post. Only three people survived and that was because they lived in a house tucked behind a huge rock. The DART flew in to confirm it was true.”

The landslide carried the force of a small nuclear device. Thapa, flying in one of the first helicopters on the scene was shocked. After crashing to the ground, the debris bounced so high that 2,000 meters above the valley the pine trees were completely debarked. In the surrounding area, the Rangers evacuated more than 800 people from 14,000 feet altitude. Down below, Kathmandu had the largest number of casualties.

Thapa noted that the success of the Rangers was in part due to the support of their partners.

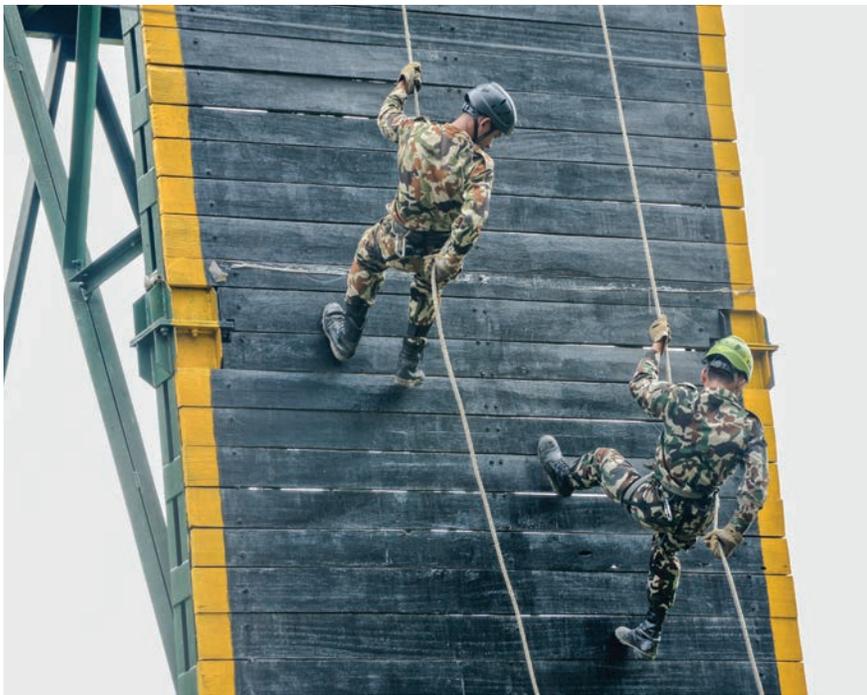
“We are incredibly indebted and grateful to the significant but quiet support that was and is rendered by the PACOM Augmentation Team at the embassy and by the Special Operations Command-Pacific. They did not make a lot of noise, but had quite an impact on us becoming a Regiment. They had an impact on our missions and they helped save lives,” said Thapa. “We applaud your involvement and hope it continues.



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- 01 Mahabir Rangers conduct training on the repel tower at their base in Kathmandu.
- 02 Troops stand in formation during the Mahabir Ranger Regiment flagging ceremony on October 27, 2017.
- 03 Members of the Mahabir Ranger Disaster Assessment and Response Team practice operations for search and rescue — vital skills that are often put to the test in the mountains of Nepal.
- 04 Mahabir Rangers showcase many of the tools they use for operating in a variety of disaster assistance operations.

THE SOLDIERS ARE KNOWN FOR THEIR DEPENDABILITY AND RELIABILITY. "WE DEPLOY WITHOUT CAVEATS ... WE DEPLOY IN AREAS WHERE YOU WANT TO GO – BUT CANNOT."



04

On our side, we are committed to ensure that we fight hard, smart and clean and maintain the ethos and values that have permeated down from our ancestors — the traditional values of Nepalese Army service to the people and nation. As proper warriors, there is no place for human right violations. They are the same values that you pass on to us not only through teaching, but through your actions. When our teams operate side by side, that is where the main teaching is. Our troops see how your officers treat your noncommissioned officers and they see how capable they are and it comes to us through osmosis."

The Rangers and the members of the 1st Special Forces Group see their relationship as a partnership.

"It is not a one way trade, it's a partnership, although we get the lion's share of the benefit," said Thapa. "But we are happy to conduct mountain training with the U.S. troops, as well as jungle training.

They have not only learned the mountains from us, but also the jungles," he said.

The Nepalese pass on the very nuanced training drills they used while training to fight the insurgency. As an example, Thapa pointed out that in many of the jungle villages, the women go out at 3 a.m. in the morning to get water. The U.S. Soldiers could mistake them for enemy combatants. So teaching them what to look for in the jungle is very important. Additionally the U.S. Soldiers have the opportunity to practice their FID skills working with the Nepalese soldiers and through interpreters. SF troops who have trained in the mountains and the jungles commented on how realistic the training is.

"They have very legit jungles and mountains. It's the real deal. No-where else can you go for training and have a wild elephant chase you ... but the Rangers can offer you that," said one U.S. Special Forces Soldier.

As an organization, the Rangers want to pay it forward and have done so through their involvement in UN operations through hands-on training with other armies, and through passing on lessons learned. Tappa noted that he was fortunate to deploy to the Special Task Force in Darfur, and other Rangers deployed to Burundi. There they helped train

the native soldiers and are now in their 12th iteration of training. Nepalese soldiers were also requested to help in Sudan as a regional protection force. The Nepalese Army is the sixth largest contributor to peace keeping in the world. The Soldiers are known for their dependability and reliability.

"We deploy without caveats," said Thapa. "We take orders from the force commander. We are the most usable force for the UN. We help with training centers. We deploy in areas where you want to go — but cannot. In a way it is force multiplication for yourself. We are happy as a military of a relatively small nation to actually carry our weight and use our expertise and professionalism to contribute to the international peace-keeping missions. The latest is in Libya, and is a political mission. The UN feels it is too dangerous to send workers there without protection. We are the only troops guarding the entire UN Mission."

The Special Forces soldier noted that it is an honor to work with the Rangers and to receive mentorship from their senior leaders who have been working with the international community. "We are grateful for this partnership and are very proud of the Mahabir Rangers and the role they are taking on throughout the world." 



NEPAL

LEFT OF ZERO

A glimpse of Army Special Operations Forces performing crisis response following a 7.8 magnitude earthquake in Nepal.

BY MASTER SERGEANT MITCHELL ELWOOD

April 25, 2015 started out as a beautiful, high-mountain morning in Nepal as a Special Forces Operational Detachment-Alpha waited near the tarmac at Kathmandu's Tribhuvan airport for the arrival of a second SFOD-A on a C-130. It was the peak of the year's first climbing season with several trekkers and climbers returning to Nepal optimistic after the previous year's devastating snowstorm. The avalanches in 2014 killed at least 41 people during a season optimal for mountaineering and tourism. The 2014 disasters prompted Nepal's Mahabir Rangers and a partner SFODA to schedule a joint combined exchange training event focusing on high-alpine search and rescue to bolster the Mahabir Ranger's technical mountain rescue capability. The detachment also wanted to train and test its own high-alpine capability as the only mountain team assigned to 1st Battalion, 1st Special Forces Group (Airborne) forward-stationed in Okinawa, Japan. This JCET included counter-terrorism training conducted by another SFODA concurrently in Nagarkot, while the forward deployed SFODA contin-

ued training with the Mahabir Rangers near Jomsom on glaciers at 16,000 feet.

In preparation for working at high elevations, the SFODA trekked with members of the Mahabir Rangers to Everest Base Camp and Kala Patthar up to 18,519 feet. Specialized communications equipment and de-centralized operations planning were incorporated into the mission to mitigate risk should the detachment's three-man rope teams become separated. Each rope team had multiple satellite and VHF communications systems. The detachment also requested avalanche experts stationed at the Special Forces Advanced Mountain Operations School in Fort Carson, Colorado, to the event. The SFAMOS mountain detachment was eager to provide its non-commissioned officer in charge, to assist. An American Institute for Avalanche Research and Education instructor and Bergfuhrer mountain guide, the NCO was a welcome addition to a challenging JCET. After the EBC trek, the detachment sent three members to Pokhara to receive the new SFODA's gear and transition it to Jomsom aboard Nepal military aircraft while the rest of the team awaited the arrival of the other SFODA at Tribhuvan airport.

The beautiful April day suddenly took a turn for the worse. The earth began to shake violently and the tarmac began to undulate as the wings of parked aircraft moved up down. As nearby walls began to crumble, the SFODA moved to an open area close to the tarmac and watched as many of Kathmandu's



SOF CRISIS RESPONSE

buildings collapsed into puffs of dust and smoke. During this 7.8 earthquake, the C-130 carrying the arriving SFODA was on final approach, and had no choice but to land in the middle of the chaos. The pilot's expertise ensured the safe landing of the C-130. The SFODA detachment commander, team sergeant and chief warrant officer ran to greet the arriving team, informing them about the earthquake. It was then that all the Green Berets knew the JCET's original plan would drastically change.

The SFODAs regrouped at the U.S. Embassy in Kathmandu and immediately offered their services to the Ambassador, Peter Bodde, and Department of State personnel. Initially, the Embassy personnel were concerned with their families, personal survival and "dusting off" their disaster SOPs. Ambassador Bodde watched as the local national staff left the embassy en masse to check on their loved ones, while an influx of U.S. citizens seeking shelter steadily flowed into the Embassy's compounds. The senior Defense Attaché Officer acknowledged the desire of the SFODA's to help; however, he noted that the U.S. Government's official Humanitarian Assistance Disaster Relief and SAR response was in the hands of the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance with their Disaster Assistance Response Teams. The DART team would fly from the U.S. mainland to the Kathmandu airport, which was not yet receiving airplanes due to damage from the earthquake. The Green Berets knew they needed to provide their capabilities in order to

assist in the growing crisis while DART teams were still days or weeks away.

The Green Berets first opportunity came from talking to the Regional Security Officer. His dilemma was securing the U.S. Embassy compound after the local security guards left their posts. The RSO also needed to respond to trapped U.S. school children separated from their parents, worked at the U.S. Embassy. The detachment's weapons sergeants quickly volunteered to help secure the Embassy's compounds while other members of the SFODAs used the RSOs vehicles to rescue the school children and bring them safely back to the U.S. Embassy.

Upon their return to the embassy, the Green Berets realized the embassy's clinic was unmanned. The clinic's nurse would take a while to get there due to the destroyed roads and bridges. The detachment's medical sergeants began treating patients flowing into the embassy with injuries. These same men would later conduct multiple hospital assessments in support of the U.S. Government's response and worked closely with the U.S. Embassy's clinic nurse to treat the injured.

As hundreds of U.S. citizens poured into the embassy, another dilemma quickly came to light: the local nationals who worked in the kitchen had departed, leaving the kitchen empty with hundreds of people to feed. A culinary specialist assigned to the newly arrived SFOD-A took over the U.S. Embassy kitchen and assigned duties to Peace Corps volunteers and displaced U.S. citizens to feed the masses. The Soldier

PHOTOS ABOVE FROM LEFT Members of the 1st SFG(A) observe the damage following a 7.8 magnitude earthquake in Nepal in April 2015; SFODA members consult with first responders to determine what assistance was needed; A Special Forces Medical Sergeant prepares a stretcher to evacuate a survivor from the rubble.

U.S. ARMY PHOTOS COURTESY OF 1ST SFG(A) PAO



01

01 Damage to buildings in Pokhara, Nepal. The 7.5 magnitude earthquake struck 50 miles east of Pokhara.

02 Damage to the village of Kyangin Gumpa caused by an air blast from the Langtang Valley below. The earthquake caused a landslide that flattened the Langtang village and sent an airblast up the mountain leaving destruction in its wake.

U.S. ARMY PHOTOS COURTESY OF 1ST SFG(A) PAO

ensured thousands of meals were prepared for U.S. citizens and rescue workers.

After the Green Berets and their enablers secured the compound, rescued school children and fed the masses, Ambassador Bodde and key DoS staff took notice. During a late night conversation between the Ambassador and detachment leadership, he asked the Green Berets how else they could help. The leadership explained their capabilities to conduct detailed assessments of the hard hit areas in Nepal and rescue U.S. citizens trapped in the Himalayan high-mountain regions. The Ambassador then said he would do anything he could to support them.

As the SFODAs were demonstrating their value to the DoS and coordinating with the Mahabir Rangers to develop search and rescue plans, situation reports were sent to the 1st Battalion, 1st SFG(A) battalion commander and Special Operations Command Pacific informing them of their capabilities and challenges. With the support of the battalion commander and then-SOCPAC Commander, Rear Admiral Colin Kilrain, the SFOD-A planned to execute high-altitude SAR in the Himalayas as well as conduct assessments and SAR in Kathmandu and surrounding areas.

The support from higher headquarters emulated the concept of mission command's decentralized command and control. The detachments proved to their commanders they could plan for contingencies and adjust to decentralized operations with maturity. These SOF-capable operations in Nepal would lay the groundwork in preparation of the U.S. military's planned response with Task Force 505. Task Force 505 is activated for humanitarian assistance and disaster relief in the PACOM area of responsibility from the Marines of the III Marine Expeditionary Force. With the support of Ambassador Bodde, Lt. Col. Raetz and Rear Adm. Kilrain, the Green Berets were poised to be the initial action arm of the U.S. Government's response in Nepal.

By this time, everyone was aware that 7.8 earthquake devastated portions of Nepal, cut off many trekkers and killed several thousand people. The detachments quickly set up an operations center in order to pool information with the U.S. Consulate staff using a common operating picture. Detachment communications sergeants established lines of communication with all U.S. and host-nation entities. The detachment engineer worked logistic issues with vehicles and equipment to ensure the ODAs were able to mobilize. DoS provided funding for SFODA 1121 to use host-nation helicopters provided by Minga Sherpa's helicopter company. Minga is the first Nepali to climb all 14, 8,000 meter peaks and a concerned citizen. The RSO supplied vehicles to SFODA 1126 to perform assessments of Kathmandu, surrounding areas and assist in urban SAR operations. The PACOM Augmentation



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Team, along with the Civil-Military Support Element leader, were crucial for the effective support of the ARSOF elements in-country. .

The SFOD-A's first high-altitude SAR was to Mt. Everest Base Camp, which was hit by a large avalanche during the earthquake, killing 22 people. The detachment was able to recover an injured U.S. doctor and the remains of Google executive, Dan Fredinburg. Due to limited space on the helicopter, two members of the team remained in Lukla and returned later when aircraft became available. This became standard practice on the rescues. Space was limited on the small, high-altitude capable helicopters and the Green Berets remained behind as rescued personnel returned to safety. Only after all rescued personnel were evacuated on each SAR mission, would the Green Berets return to Kathmandu and refit for the next mission. Members of the SFOD-A were acclimatized, trained, equipped to self-sustain and remain in communication for several days in the Himalayas.

Following the EBC rescue, the SFOD-A SAR teams dispatched to the hardest hit areas of Lantang and Gorkha while assessment teams moved through the Kathmandu and Nagarkot areas. The detachment commander and team sergeant worked closely with the PAT, CMSE and consulate staff to pass information to DoS officials, coordinate with Mahabir Ranger leadership and incoming TF-505 Commander, Brig. Gen. Paul Kennedy. The team coordinated SAR operations in the Himalayas and led assessment teams in Kathmandu Valley. The teams also worked closely with Nepal's helicopter and airplane companies to

SFODAs AND THEIR ENABLERS RESCUED 55 PEOPLE FROM 13 DIFFERENT COUNTRIES ON 11 HIGH-ALTITUDE SAR MISSIONS, ASSESSED FIVE HOSPITALS, TREATED DOZENS OF CASUALTIES, PREPARED NEARLY 4,000 MEALS, ACCOUNTED FOR MORE THAN 500 U.S. CITIZENS AND SECURED THE U.S. EMBASSY'S COMPOUNDS FOR TWO WEEKS.

coordinate rescue efforts and schedule SAR windows. Green Berets, working closely with DoS, conducted decentralized planning and execution while responding to five regions of Nepal simultaneously.

Robust communications planning proved to be crucial as Nepal's cell and Internet providers crashed from infrastructure destruction and network saturation. When the earthquake hit, three Green Berets in Pokhara quickly reported in using satellite phones. They were instructed to provide ground truth assessments that would be used to facilitate HADR operations. Members of the team worked closely with Pokhara officials to conduct feasibility assessments of the airport, hospitals and infrastructure. Their assessments helped coordinate appropriate incoming airplanes with relief goods. They also advised and accounted for U.S. citizens during the evacuation process while helping the Nepalese in the aftermath.

SFODAs 1121 and 1126 and their enablers rescued 55 people from 13 different countries on 11 high-altitude SAR missions, assessed five hospitals, treated dozens of casualties, prepared nearly 4,000 meals, accounted for more than 500 U.S. citizens and secured the U.S. Embassy's compounds for two weeks. The detachments only returned to their homestation in Okinawa after conducting a handover with TF-505 and the DART. The PACOM AOR is no stranger to catastrophic natural disasters and this successful display by Green Berets illuminated the need to consider SFOD-As as viable crisis response elements during Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Response. 

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Master Sgt. Mitchell Elwood is the battalion operations non-commissioned officer for the 1st Battalion, 1st Special Forces Group (Airborne). With 22 years of Army service, Ellwood has deployed to numerous countries throughout the world in support of U.S. national interests. In addition to combat operations in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Philippines, he has also worked closely with civil-military agencies during humanitarian crises in the Philippines and Nepal.





SRI LANKA



A typical city street in the heart of the Colombo, Sri Lanka. The capital city streets are a constant stream of people, vehicles and small taxis called tuk tuks.

U.S. ARMY PHOTO BY JENNIFER G. ANGELO



U.S. Army Special Operations Forces are rarely operating in places that are easy to get to. This is particularly true when you look at the Pacific area of operations. The tyranny of distance applies to more than how long it takes U.S. Soldiers to get there. It also applies to the ability and inability of U.S. forces to shape or change the environment, which is often predicated on its remote location.

Such is the case in Sri Lanka. To travel from one end of the island to the other, it is more than an 18-hour drive and the diversity of the population changes from town to town — not just region to region — as do the temples, shrines and churches. The country, still healing from decades of civil war, is a study in contradictions.



01

01 The sprawling Sri Lankan capital city of Colombo looks like any other bustling metropolitan city from a birds eye view with towering skyscrapers and new construction on nearly every street. U.S. ARMY PHOTO BY JENNIFER G. ANGELO

02, 03 In contrast to the towering city from the panoramic view of Colombo, closer inspection reveals small, colorful alleys where children play and the elderly sit and talk or slowly work on housekeeping chores in the unrelenting Sri Lankan heat. U.S. ARMY PHOTOS BY JASON GAMBARELLA

In Colombo, the capital city, you are met with towering skyscrapers and elegant hotels; however, if you walk a few blocks away, you are in a warren of small alleyways and streets where children play cricket, while old men and women sit indolent in the heat of the afternoon; their conversations interrupted by a constant stream of tuk tuks.

It is in this complex environment, that a small PACOM Augmentation Team works to address a very diverse problem set.

UNDERSTANDING THE ENVIRONMENT

The Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka is large island in the Indian Ocean. It is a presidential republic, and is a little smaller than 66,000 kilometers or just a little bigger than West Virginia. Strategically located near major Indian Ocean sea lanes, chain of limestone shoals known as Adam’s Bridge, is situated off the southeastern coast of India and northwestern Coast of Sri Lanka. It has been hypothesized that up until the 15th century people could travel from India to Sri Lanka via the land bridge, which was destroyed by a cyclone. Those travelers created the diversity



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that now exists within the small country.

More than 22 million people call Sri Lanka home, with the largest group being Sinhalese, which makes up almost 75 percent of the population. Sri Lankan Tamil and Indian Tamil make up another 15 percent, while Sri Lankan Moors comprise 9.2 percent of the population. There are two official languages: Sinhala and Tamil. English is referred to as the “link language” in the constitution and is commonly used in government circles.



From 1983 to 2002, a Civil War raged throughout the country as a result of tensions between the Sinhalese and Tamil separatists. Their disagreements set into motion a war that lasted more than two decades. In 2002, a cease fire was formalized between the government and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Elam. The ceasefire ended in 2006, when intense fighting began again, which resulted in the defeat of the LTTE by the government in 2009. In the years between the end of the war and today, the Sri Lankan Government pushed for economic development projects, often leveraging loans from China to pay for them. Today, more than 79.3 percent of the country's GDP is used to cover the government's debt.

With more than 95 percent of the civilians displaced by the war resettled, the government released many of the former LTTE combatants.

SRI LANKA — QUICK FACTS*

66,000 KILOMETERS

Slightly larger than West Virginia

22 MILLION PEOPLE

4 ETHNIC GROUPS

74.9% Sinhalese
11.2% Sri Lankan Tamil
9.2% Sri Lankan Moors
4.2% Indian Tamil

2 OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

74% Sinhala and 18% Tamil
approximately 10% also speak English

4 MAIN RELIGIONS

70.2% Buddhist
12.6% Hindu
10% Muslim
8% Christian

**2012 estimates, CIA World Fact Book*



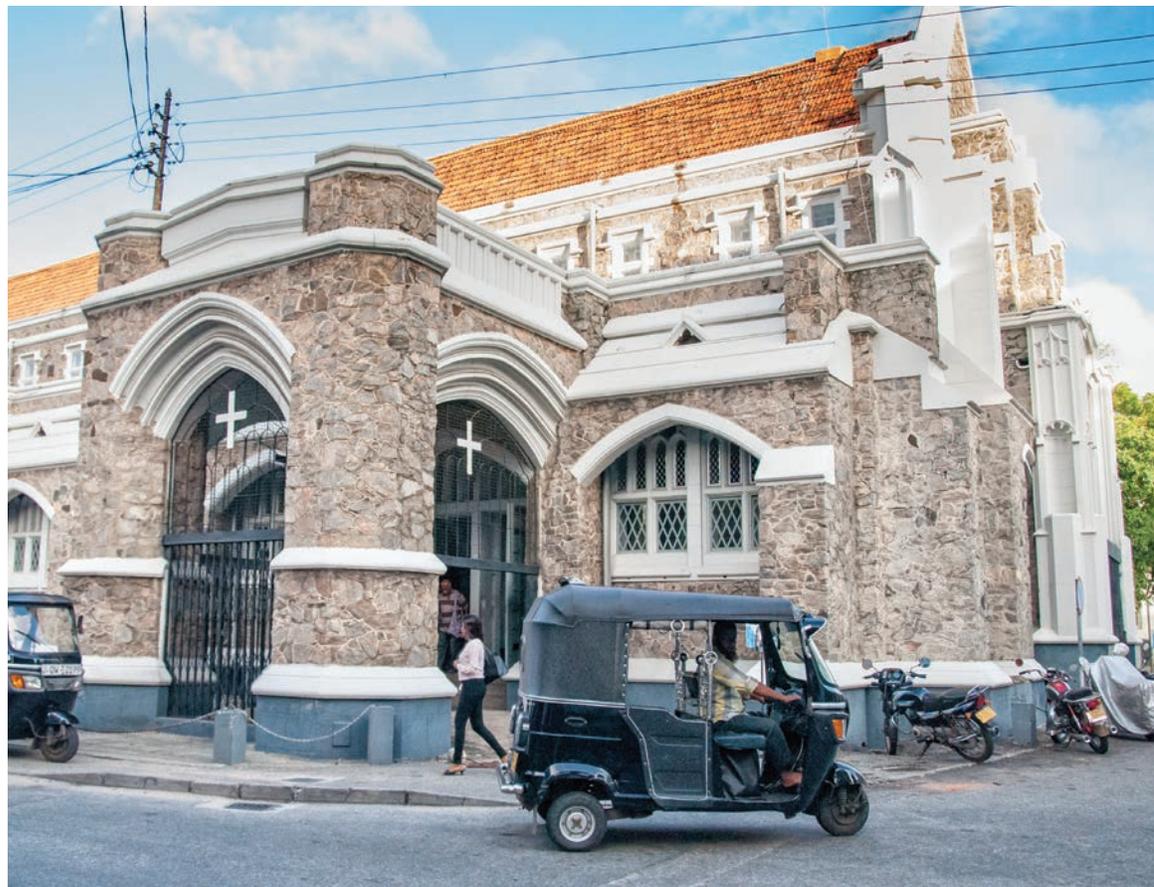
While the current government is comprised of people from both sides of the fight, tension still remains and issues concerning human rights violations and other abuses during the war are still major talking points.

Religion plays a central role in the country, with places of worship abounding throughout. The majority of the people are Sinhalese Buddhist at 70 percent of the population. Ethnic Tamils are predominantly Hindu. Christians make up roughly 8 percent of the population and Muslims, many of whom are refugees, make up 10 percent of the population. Until recently, religion was not a source of conflict within the country; however, over the past several months, tensions have grown between Buddhist monks who follow Galagoda Aththe Gnanasara, a monk, who leads the *Bodu Baia Sena* or the Forces of Buddhist Power, and members of the Muslim community.

Members of *Bodu Baia Sena* believe the Muslim population is a threat to their way of life, and on Nov. 18, the two groups clashed in the town of Ginthota, which is located on the coast, south of Colombo. The clash, which resulted in numerous people injured and 19 arrested, resulted



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The Kollupitiya Jumah Mosque in Colombo (01) is located just one city block from the Church of St. Michael & All Angels, Polwatte (02) an Anglican Church in the heart of Colombo. U.S. ARMY PHOTOS BY JENNIFER G. ANGELO

03
The Seema Malaka is a Buddhist Temple is located on the Beira Lake in Colombo. The temple, used for meditation and rest, is constructed on three platforms over water which are connected to the mainland by pontoon bridges.



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from a rumor that the Muslim populace had plans to attack the Buddhist temple. The Nov. 18 skirmish was the last of many smaller engagements, which are impacting the political climate and stability of the country because *Bodu Baia Sena* has a fairly large support base.

The same could be said for failure of the government to address transitional justice as it relates to finding permanent solutions for the 44,000 internally displaced people who were affected by the war and addressing claims of war crimes against government forces, which are currently under international scrutiny following a visit by the UN's special rapporteur for transitional justice in October 2017. The report acknowledged that some progress is being made; however, it is inadequate to address the issues of disenfranchisement of the Tamils, which left unchecked could also reignite the conflict.

INCREASING STABILITY

In Sri Lanka's Northern Province, about a 12-hour drive from the bustling streets of Colombo, is Jaffna, a city of less than 90,000 people, making it the country's 12th largest city.

RELIGION PLAYS A CENTRAL ROLE IN THE COUNTRY, WITH PLACES OF WORSHIP ABOUNDING THROUGHOUT... UNTIL RECENTLY, RELIGION WAS NOT A SOURCE OF CONFLICT WITHIN THE COUNTRY; HOWEVER, OVER THE PAST SEVERAL MONTHS, TENSIONS HAVE GROWN.

Jaffna is rich in history, serving a center of trade during the Colonial period. The Jaffna Port, which stands sentinel, over the coastal town, was built by the Portuguese in the late 1500s and was later occupied by the Dutch East India Company and later fell under British rule. Free from the rule of outsiders, the Tamil majority in the north grew in political power, leading to the takeover of the city by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Elam in 1987.

Jaffna played a central role throughout the civil war, which resulted in many people fleeing the city and the loss of industry and infrastructure. Some of the fiercest battles were fought in the district, in-





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cluding a massacre of patients and medical workers by Indian Peacekeeping forces in the late '80s and the forced removal of all Muslim residents from the city by the LTTE. Today, the city is slowly returning to its role as a center of economic influence.

Key to stability in the region, which is heavily influenced by India and China, is education. On a heavily traveled street in the middle of Jaffna sits the Jaffna Hindu Ladies College. Opened in 1943, the school serves girls from middle school to high school. With more than 2,000 students, it holds a place of great importance not only to the people of Jaffna, but also to the government. Daily, students travel from small villages and towns surrounding Jaffna to attend classes at the school, with some girls traveling more than an hour each way.

For the Government of Sri Lanka, ensuring that education is available for all of the children in the country is important, particularly so in Jaffna. To that end, the PACOM Augmentation Team operating out of the Embassy in Colombo, reached out to the Jaffna Hindu Ladies College to form a partnership. That outreach resulted in the construction of a new classroom building at the school and a proposed dormitory for those girls who travel long distances. The school has more than 50 classrooms, many of which are open-air classrooms. The buildings are older and are filled to overflowing. The construction of the school supports reconciliation and stabilization



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efforts within Sri Lanka, as well as providing better education for girls in Jaffna.

The project, which took four years to complete, was constructed utilizing money from the U.S. Pacific Command and was overseen by the PACOM Augmentation Team, and was completed in July 2017. The three-story building contains 12 classrooms and is built to U.S. standards. In addition to the classroom building, the project included the construction of a stand-alone bathroom building. The new bathrooms are enclosed and have both western toilets and the traditional Sri Lankan squat toilets. The U.S. invested \$91 million rupees or \$597,000.

01 Students perform a traditional dance during the classroom building opening ceremony at the Jaffna Hindu Ladies' College.

02 Students prepare for class to start in one of the Jaffna Hindu Ladies' College open-air classrooms.

03 A new bathroom facility for the college campus was part of the U.S. construction project.

U.S. ARMY PHOTOS BY JENNIFER G. ANGELO



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The Jaffna Hindu Ladies College drum major leads the parade of dignitaries, including the U.S. Deputy Chief of Mission and members of the Civil Military Support Element, through a garland draped walkway lined with hundreds of students while the band plays celebratory music.

03
Students decorate the entrance to the new school building with traditional decor in preparation for the grand opening ceremony.

U.S. ARMY PHOTOS BY
JENNIFER G. ANGELO

Not long after the U.S.-sponsored building came under construction, China offered to build another classroom for the school, which is just a stone's throw away from the U.S. building. In Sri Lanka, China often tries to match or beat efforts of the U.S. and its capacity-efforts. The Chinese building, although similar in design from the outside is not built to code and lacks many of the options included in the U.S. building.

On July 31, 2017, the school hosted an opening ceremony for the new building, which garnered attention across the country. The students were extremely excited on the day of the event and the teachers had a hard time keeping them focused. As American visitors passed through the school making ready for the ceremony, the girls giggled and waved shyly from their seats. As the day went forward, they became bolder and blew kisses at photographers, with a small group of girls pulling *Special Warfare* staff members aside to question them about life in America. The school band dressed in kilts and blazers despite the sweltering humidity, escorted visitors to the site with precision and pride.





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In attendance at the opening was the U.S. Deputy Chief of Mission in Sri Lanka, the Honorable Robert Hilton. Hilton was joined by representatives of the Sri Lankan Ministry of Education and by the Chief Minister of the Northern Province C.V. Wigneswaran and members of the Northern Province Ministry of Education. Shortly after cutting the ribbon, Hilton noted, “We believe there is no better investment of higher calling than educating young minds, especially young women. Sri Lanka and the United States are daily deepening our partnership, and this is another demonstration of our continued commitment.”

Despite the excitement of the day, a speaker took the opportunity to note that schools all over the Northern Province were in need because of the Civil War and called on the government to do more to rebuild the northern province, proving that the peace in Sri Lanka was hard won and will be even harder to keep. 



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A member of the Civil Military Support Element greets school administrators at the Jaffna Hindu Ladies College to finalize details for the grand-opening ceremony of the new school building and bathroom facility.

05
Prior to the opening ceremony, excited students ran up and down the road in front of the new school building eagerly awaiting the ceremony's beginning.

U.S. ARMY PHOTOS BY
JENNIFER G. ANGELO



CRISIS RESPONSE IN SRI LANKA



02

01
Members of the PACOM Augmentation Team salvage items from a schoolhouse following the crisis.

02
A crowd gathers at the shocking site of a landslide that leveled a village.

03
Villagers gather to survey the damage as they wait for flood waters to recede.

04
Following the crisis, schools were used as a prime location to account for families.

U.S. ARMY PHOTOS

The PACOM Augmentation Team responds to crisis after floods and landslides ravaged Sri Lanka in June 2017.

BY JANICE BURTON

In May 2017, the southwestern monsoons proved to be particularly heavy. Coupled with a cyclone, which brought more water into the area, the affected areas faced severe flooding and mudslides. Within hours, people lost all they had, many lost their lives. More than a half a million people were affected by the deadly storms, with more than 200 people dying and an additional 79 missing.

Sitting in the embassy in Colombo, the PACOM Augmentation Team comprised of one Special Forces Soldier, three Civil Affairs Soldiers and two Psychological Operations Soldiers started making plans to assist their host country. The Civil Military Support Element, comprised of the Civil Affairs Soldiers, took the lead on behalf of the PACOM Augmentation Team. The CMSE in Sri Lanka leveraged their far-reaching network of government officials, military leaders, UN and non-governmental organizations in the relief community

to effectively parallel disaster response vis-a-vis regional powers like India, Pakistan and China. This rare opportunity allowed a tactical element to help the Department of Defense and State Department achieve strategic objectives and reaffirm U.S. Government status as a partner of choice.

Within hours of being notified, the team began leveraging all of the U.S. Special Operations assets in the country. According to the CMSE Team Leader, the team knocked out six months' worth of work in a three week period. The team began assessing where they could be the most effective and what they could do to best assist the host-nation forces who had already deployed to the area. Getting to the area was tough. Many of the main roads and rice paddies were already flooded. Villages were cut off with no way to evacuate. Many of the villagers did not know what was headed their way because there was not an emergency communication plan in place. As the rain



continued to fall, soil gave way and the sides of hills and mountains began to crumble, with whole villages being buried beneath the flow. It was a crisis of epic proportion.

The PAT decided to focus on the schools because they were the best way to gain accountability for families and to determine who was missing. To that end, they went to work locating the schools and doing what needed to be done to make them usable. Then they began reaching out to the villagers to let them know to come to the school for aid. The CMSE was able to coordinate with the Sri Lankan Disaster Management Center and to deconflict relief efforts with the UN Humanitarian Country Team's Sector System of NGOs organized by focus of relief by location. This aided the aggregate effort by mitigating undesired second and third order effects and preventing the duplication of efforts.

Team members reached out other Department of Defense assets in the country for assistance. As luck would have it, an annual Joint Combined Exchange Training was ongoing. The exercise is a large-scale multi-lateral event, which enabled the team to leverage the assistance of a variety of units. The PAT team linked up with the Special Forces Soldiers who were involved with the training, as well as ROTC Cadets. They also connected with their partner forces, particularly Sri Lankan Marines. Together the group began making their way through the flooded district getting to know the people, finding out where people lived, who was missing, what the people were concerned with. And they cleaned — everything. Schools, wells, hospitals — all

with the goal of getting things back to normal as soon as possible. In three weeks, the teams cleaned more than 1,000 wells and reinstated five major irrigation systems of bundts, levees and drainage canals.

The PAT, along with the Special Forces team, conducted damage and needs assessments, while the cadets and other U.S. military focused on the schools. At one school, 30 of the ROTC Cadets worked hard to get the school open as soon as possible and the children back in the schools so they could begin accounting for the people.

Standing near a bridge spanning a river that is crossed frequently by the people in the area, the team watched helplessly as debris in the flooded river swept the bridge away. They also saw the first mud slides from across the river and saw a whole mountain fall and bury the village beneath it.

For the PSYOP NCO attached to the team, one thing became perfectly clear: many of the people who died did not have to. The government had no means of emergency communication. The cell phones were not working. Working with members of the Sri Lankan Emergency Management, he began a project to ensure that emergency communication systems would be put in place to give people something they didn't have — a chance. The CMSE was able to assess the capabilities and identify gaps in procedures, personnel, equipment and organizational structure. Moving forward, the CMSE and USAID were developing programs to address the shortcomings and improve crisis response capacity with host nation partners. 

JUNE 2017

Southwestern Sri Lanka

213 DEAD

.....

73 MISSING

.....

700,000+
People Affected

.....

30,000+
Homes Damaged

.....

170,000+
Families Affected

.....

3,000+
Houses Destroyed

.....

21,000+
Evacuation Centers



03



04



01

Flood Response

SOF in Sri Lanka ideally positioned to provide rapid assessment and response during crisis.

BY CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER TWO JASON PHILLIPS

Persistent presence from special operations forces abroad allows Special Forces, Civil Affairs Teams and Military Information Support Teams to respond rapidly to crises, as well as provide a commander worldwide situational awareness. These small teams are often ideally positioned to provide quality observation and assessment especially in the context of humanitarian aid and disaster relief emergencies. During these high-impact events on the Human Domain, Army Special Operations Forces immediate response demonstrates that the United States is a faithful friend.

Joint Special Operations Task Force-Philippines was actively advising and assisting the Armed Forces of the Philippines in 2013 when Typhoon Haiyan (also called Super Typhoon Yolanda) carved a path through the region. JSOTF-P sent the first U.S. military personnel responders to the afflicted area. It also provided critical needs and damage assessments to the operational plans of the responders.⁰¹

In 2015, Green Berets training in Nepal transitioned instantly from joint combined exchange training to disaster relief when a deadly earthquake affected a major population center.⁰² The two Special Forces Opera-

tional Detachments-Alpha were training in mountaineering when the earthquake occurred, but after recognizing the extent of the damage, began helping to find survivors in hard to reach areas, such as Mount Everest's base camp.⁰³

In late May of 2017, an ODA from the 1st Special Forces Group (Airborne), was in the final days of a JCET when heavy rains caused severe flooding and landslides in southwest Sri Lanka affecting more than 600,000 people and killing more than 200. The rains quickly turned otherwise low volume waterways into raging torrents capable of destroying infrastructure such as in the adjacent photo taken south of Ratnapura.⁰⁴

Maj. Joseph Quinn, Special Operations Command-Pacific, already in Sri Lanka as part of SOCPAC's persistent engagement with key countries throughout Asia, immediately began planning the relief effort even as agencies outside Sri Lanka started to mobilize far from afar. Recognizing the planning, organization, and broad range of emergency response skills organic to a Special Forces ODA, Maj. Quinn coordinated with the 1st SFG(A) Command Team, SOCPAC, and the U.S. Embassy for ODA 1333 to stay and help lead relief efforts.

The ODA and Maj. Quinn demonstrated flexibility and perseverance in working through not only the analysis and execution of relief efforts, but also the



authority and funding challenges inherent in transitioning to relief efforts from JCET funding. The official request for support from the U.S. Embassy to Sri Lanka and command effort from the 1st SFG(A) were crucial to rapidly overcoming the legal challenges and funding constraints. This delivered the immediate support needed to combat human suffering while Maj. Quinn and the U.S. Country Team secured PACOM follow-on forces. Partnering with the CAT and the MIST, the ODA split into two elements and assisted in restoring essential services with the Government of Sri Lanka in re-establishing governance through

efforts such as re-opening an elementary school and rehabilitating critical drinking wells with the Sri Lankan International Committee of the Red Cross. The ODA along with the CA, MIST and the ICRC to rehabilitate 34 wells by the end of the first day, providing potable water to area families.⁰⁵

Able to operate effectively with minimal external support, the teams moved away from the population centers as additional relief forces arrived. As they moved out, they could address areas not typically traveled by foreigners and beyond the operational reach of many aid agencies. Additionally, the teams visited local district centers to conduct assessments, then they surveyed local medical facilities and possible helicopter landing zones to facilitate delivery of supplies from inbound U.S. Navy vessels.

During emergencies, relief workers and aid agencies rely on established relationships and area familiarization to limit loss of life and restore essential services. Special operations forces are unique in their ability to work with interagency, host nation and local residents to identify problems and implement solutions. As both natural and man-made crises will continue to impact the Human Domain, it is more important than ever to have an enduring global SOF presence to maintain situational awareness, minimize human suffering post-disaster and support governance in partnered nations. **SW**

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Chief Warrant Officer Two Jason Phillips is currently a 1st Special Forces Group (Airborne) company operations warrant officer.

NOTES 01. Thomas Parker, 2016. 02. Harper, 2015. 03. Schogol, 2015. 04. Phillips, 2017. 05. Ibid.



02



03

01
A Special Operations team member works with a local villager to repair damage to village well.

02
A main bridge was destroyed during the flood, making it difficult to evacuate people and move supplies.

03
SOF personnel work with the local population to get water to the affected areas after the flood.

U.S. ARMY PHOTOS

A group of soldiers in wetsuits are silhouetted against a bright, cloudy sky at sunset or sunrise. They are positioned on several inflatable rafts on a body of water. The scene is captured in a high-contrast, low-key style, emphasizing the shapes of the soldiers and the rafts against the bright background. The water in the foreground is dark and reflects the light from the sky.

Special Forces Soldiers from 1st Special Forces Group (Airborne) work with partner forces from India to conduct underwater operations as part of joint training at Joint Base Lewis-McChord in Washington State.

U.S. ARMY PHOTO BY SPC CODIE MENDENHALL



OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM - PHILIPPINES

BY MAJOR ROBERT SHUMAKER

Philippine history is rife with insurgency — both religious and political — since its colonization by the Spanish in 1521.⁰¹ When the United States assumed control of the Philippines after the Paris Treaty of 1898, it inherited both rebellion and insurgency.⁰² The relationship between the two countries ebbed and flowed until the United States recognized Philippine independence in 1946 and pulled all military bases out of the country in 1992.

The relationship didn't end, it changed. Over time, a number of Muslim insurgencies grew in strength, while the capabilities of the Armed Forces of the Philippines waned.⁰³ Organizations in the southern Philippines, such as the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, the Abu Sayyaf Group and Jemaah Islamiyah, exploited the security situation and expanded their operations.⁰⁴

U.S. involvement in the Philippines from 2001-2015 was directly connected to the attacks of 9/11, terrorist kidnappings of U.S. citizens in the Philippines and the activities of trans-regional terrorist groups. Official U.S. involvement under the umbrella of Operation Enduring Freedom-Philippines ended in 2015, with the dissolution of Joint Special Operations Task Force-Philippines and the transfer of future SOF operations authority to embassy-based personnel.⁰⁵ 1st Special Forces Group's participation in OEF-P employed the full-spectrum of irregular warfare under a stand-alone SOF headquarters.

Although the United States never broke military ties with the AFP following the closure of U.S. bases in 1992, American involvement was limited to bilateral exercises and joint combined exchange training.⁰⁶ ASG kidnappings of multiple U.S. citizens in 2000 and 2001 served as a catalyst for the evolution of the nascent American counterterrorism policy in Southeast Asia.⁰⁷ In early 2000, the State Department counterterrorism coordinator called for SOF to initiate a training program under Title 22, Chapter 22 to build CT capability in a new AFP unit, the Light Reaction Company.⁰⁸ The attacks of 9/11 defined U.S. policy in the Philippines, where the U.S. Government opened a second front in the war on terror, which was launched under Congressional authorization for military force.⁰⁹



01

The initial employment of SOF in the Philippines can be divided in three phases. The first phase was the 2000 decision to employ SOF to develop a Philippine CT capability; the second phase was the response to 9/11 and use of SOF to create a second front in the war on terror. The third phase was the decision to continue supporting OEF-P, using SOF as the primary force.

Following the kidnappings of early 2000, the U.S. took a stronger interest in the potential of the AFP. Members of the U.S. embassy team, headed by Maj. Joseph Felter,¹⁰ devised a plan to increase AFP capability and briefed Ambassador-at-large for Counter Terrorism, Michael Sheehan.¹¹ As Ambassador Sheehan pushed for a policy change to increase SOF involvement, the plan called for Title 22, Chapter 22 authorities to build an indigenous CT force.¹²

1st SFG(A) became the clear choice for Special Operations Command-Pacific planners as the only component force capable of meeting such a mission requirement.¹³ 1st Battalion, 1st SFG(A) deployed a company to train the Philippine Light Reaction Company in February 2001 and completed training in July. Although the AFP command struggled to properly establish the Light Reaction Company, the foundations of the modern U.S. and Philippine SOF relationship were set.¹⁴

As 1st SFG(A) prepared a second round of training with the Light Reaction Company, 9/11 changed the



scale and approach employed. The Bush Administration called for a second front in the Philippines to target groups such as the ASG and MILF.¹⁵ Clear connections between these groups and al-Qaeda drove the creation of this second front, while the kidnappings strengthened the decision.

Maj. Gen. Donald Wurster, the Special Operations Command Pacific commander, assigned 1st SFG(A), led by Col. David Fridovich, to form a terrorism coordination and assistance visit. The visit consisted of Fridovich and select individuals from 1st SFG(A) including Lt. Col. David Maxwell, the commander of 1st Battalion, 1st SFG(A).¹⁶ The TCAV assessed the capabilities of Philippine SOF partners and the willingness of the various Philippine commands to collaborate.¹⁷

The TCAV's ability to communicate directly up the chain of command allowed them to clearly articulate the operational and intelligence requirements. On Feb. 2, 2002, Gen. Richard Myers, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, approved the employment of Joint Task Force 510, SOCPAC's deployable headquarters, under the authority of OEF-P.¹⁸

Execution fell under the title of "Exercise Balikatan 02-1," so dubbed to appease members of the Philippine government and not startle the local population. Balikatan is the title for the annual U.S.-Philippine Joint Chiefs of Staff Exercise. With Brig. Gen. Wurster as commander, more than 1,300 U.S. service members from SOCPAC, 1st SFG(A), Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations deployed to train, advise and equip the AFP.¹⁹

The mission on Basilan, as described by Maxwell, was "to conduct unconventional warfare operations in the southern Philippines through, by, and with the AFP to help the Philippine government separate the population from, and to destroy, terrorist organizations."²⁰ Balikatan 02-1 was widely seen as a success. It eliminated the majority of the ASG on Basilan Island and increased the operational capabilities of the AFP. With U.S. support, the AFP conducted successful operations to degrade the ASG capability and effect a rescue mission to free the remaining American hostages held by the group.

When Balikatan 02-1 concluded in late July 2002, one Special Forces company and four ODAs remained in the Philippines with less than 70 personnel.²¹ These forces remained in the country under the authority of OEF-P, as JTF-510 redeployed and JSOTF-P commenced operations as the OEF-P executing agent. 

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Maj. Robert Shumaker is the operations officer for 2nd Battalion, 1st Special Forces Group (Airborne).

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Philippine security forces and U.S. Special Forces conduct a joint patrol on a busy city street. U.S. ARMY PHOTO BY SPC. JUAQUIME WRIGHT

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01

SUSTAINING PARTNERSHIPS

Lessons learned from Operation Enduring Freedom - Philippines to support sustained partnerships.

BY CAPTAIN CHUCK CROWDER

Beginning in 2001, the Soldiers of 1st Battalion, 1st Special Forces Group (Airborne) began an enduring effort to support the Philippine Security Forces. U.S. Army Special Forces provided indirect and direct support to both Armed Forces of the Philippines and Philippine National Police against transnational terrorist threats in the Southern Philippines. Thus, Operation Enduring Freedom-Philippines was created and required the ability to adapt and disrupt the progress of violent extremist organizations that operated with impunity. With the conclusion of OEF-P in 2015, lessons learned continue to be reexamined to better craft, plan and implement future solutions and policies. While new relationships are continually being

built, decisive relationships continued to rekindle and grow in support of defeating this shared threat.

The U.S. SOF mission during OEF-P was to support the PSF in countering the transnational terrorist threats in the Southern Philippines, which had been plagued by increasing violence since the mid-1990s. OEF-P was especially unique in that bilateral relationships and guidance directed that the mission was conducted under terms of reference and rules of engagement that prohibited a U.S. combat role, but permitted a wide array of U.S. special operations activities. These activities facilitated tactical operations through find, fix, finish, exploit and disseminate focused efforts, operational planning as-

sistance and synchronized institutional-level development. Today, OEF-P provides an important case study in the extended employment of U.S. special operations in support of host-nation military forces.⁰¹

U.S. Special Forces actively worked to maximize mission effectiveness by openly sharing information throughout various communities, working to increase joint and interagency collaboration. Additionally, the Green



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Berets developed creative ways to involve U.S. goals and counterterror objectives in host-nation operations. Persistent engagements allowed leaders at all levels to drive changes within the AFP and PNP. Operations that would have normally started with indiscriminate gunfire were replaced with civil military operations projects. PSF understood that enhancing overall security and maintaining these effects for the long term meant that



01, 03
A U.S. Army Soldier from 1st Special Forces Group and a Philippine Army Special Forces freefall jumper prepare to conduct a High Altitude Low Opening military freefall jump in the Philippines. U.S. MARINE CORPS PHOTO BY LANCE CPL. ALLISON DEVRIES

02
A Special Forces Soldier from 1st Special Forces Group conducts training with Philippine counterparts. Through training exchanges such as this, long-term relationships are forged with partner forces. U.S. ARMY PHOTO BY SPC. JUAQUIME WRIGHT

they could provide the safe passage for non-governmental organizations to begin the rebuilding and rehabilitation process. This was especially important to the thousands displaced by violent extremist organizations throughout the Southern Philippines.

Lessons learned from OEF-P are still revisited in the present day. 1st Battalion, 1st SFG(A) Soldiers conduct operations through various areas of responsibility in non-lethal roles that are critical to shaping host-nation environments and building long-lasting relationships with state and non-state actors vital to countering transnational terrorist threats. While SF thrive at the tactical level, sometimes what's best on the tactical level does not yield the results that leader's desire at operational and strategic levels. A VEOs ability to quickly change and create chaos sometimes proves too

proved to be instrumental in the disruption of enemy networks. Most importantly, operations carried a Filipino face and gave the population confidence that their fellow countrymen could conduct operations and fight on their own.

Although the overall number of 1st Battalion, 1st SFG(A) Soldiers working in the Republic of the Philippines has declined since OEF-P, the relationships have not. Often U.S. forces will be invited back for military conferences, regimental celebrations and even weddings. The early bonds created continue to grow and carry a trust that cannot be replicated overnight or by episodic engagements. SOF units and the 1st SFG(A) should remain the primary premier force used to support counterterrorism operations in the Philippines. The ambiguous operating environment, lessons learned from strict OEF-P mission guidance,

OEF-P STILL PROVIDES AN IMPORTANT CASE STUDY IN THE EXTENDED EMPLOYMENT OF U.S. SPECIAL OPERATIONS IN SUPPORT OF HOST NATION MILITARY FORCES.

erratic for the most seasoned leaders. Although these tactics do sometimes result in severe constraints, most 1st Battalion, 1st SFG(A) leaders continuously find creative ways to accomplish their mission.

During OEF-P, U.S. SOF enabled the AFP to exploit one of its most valuable commodities: the human network. The infrastructure developed throughout various *barangays*, or villages, was an intricate web that only natives could follow. The advantage of U.S. assistance paired with an understanding of native networks

and decisive relationships have fostered a battalion of critical thinking, flexible and intensely focused Green Berets that will face future counterterror threats head on. 

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Capt. Charles Crowder is a detachment commander in 1st Battalion, 1st Special Forces Group (Airborne). He has deployed in support of operations in Afghanistan, the Republic of the Philippines and conducted a JCET in the Kingdom of Thailand. He holds a bachelor's degree from the Virginia Military Institute.

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01

PROCESSING, EXPLOITATION AND DISSEMINATION

BY CAPTAIN JULIO TORRES III

It's a dark night, with little illumination provided by the moon, the conditions are perfect for movement through the dense, Philippine jungle. "Most [people] do not operate at night in the Philippines," said a staff sergeant assigned to the 1st Special Forces Group (Airborne) Processing, Exploitation and Dissemination Cell. "It's dark and scary and no one can afford night vision."

The screen relays in real-time the infrared feed from a 1st SFG(A) RQ-7, bringing tactical awareness to both the American operators and their Philippine partners. "Activity observed from 2300 and on should be considered shady — if it is seen outside of city limits," he added. The long column of fighters they are tracking continues to march along in single file through the bush, until a salvo of rockets fired by the Philippine Air Force causes the screen to momentarily black out due to the intense heat.

ISIS AT THE GATES

The Armed Forces of the Philippines have experience confronting armed insurgencies. The separatist insurgencies seeking to establish a state under Muslim rule have existed under different names and banners for several hundred years. Though the Government of the Philippines signed a 2014 cease-fire agreement with the largest separatist group, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, several violent extremist organizations persisted. Kidnap-for-ransom of foreign nationals, direct-fire attacks and improvised explosive devices remain a threat in the region of Mindanao where these violent extremist organizations operate. Two of these VEOs, Jemaah Islamiyah and the Abu Sayyaf Group, declared allegiance to, and eventually became, recognized subsidiaries of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria the Levant.

With the threat of ISIL on its doorstep, the AFP's Western Mindanao Command turned to their counterparts in the U.S. Special Operations Command for assistance. The islands of Basilan, Jolo, Zamboanga and the mountainous region of Cotabato are the homes of JI and ASG. With these VEOs operating in geographically separated regions of Mindanao, WESTMINCOM had a critical need for near real-time intelligence support.

Special Operations Command Pacific helped fill this need in June 2015 by deploying the 1st SFG(A) Unmanned Aerial System Detachment from Joint Base Lewis-McChord to Camp Navarro, Zamboanga.



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01
Soldiers hike through mountainous jungle terrain at night during an exercise at Fort Ramon Magsaysay, Philippines.
U.S. MARINE CORPS PHOTO BY LANCE CPL. SHALTIEL DOMINGUEZ



ENABLING ALLIES

Although commonplace in the U.S. Army, the RQ-7 Shadow 200 air vehicle and its ground control architecture have no analogue in the AFP. While the asset was a potential game changer for WESTMINCOM, there were some significant challenges with initial implementation. The seasoned AFP J2 lacked the infrastructure and technical expertise to rapidly capture, process and distribute the information that the 1st SFG(A) UAS Detachment captured.

Although it was clear to U.S. advisors and their Philippine partners that the Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance platforms were a valuable asset, there was clearly a missing linkage to the overall common operating picture. At the suggestion of the UAS Detachment noncommissioned officer in charge, the 1st SFG(A) Processing, Exploitation and Dissemination Cell was deployed to provide the connective tissue between the ISR platform and the battle space commander. Having the PED Cell directly integrated into UAS flight operations allowed for the proper utilization of the information collected.”

The PED Cell ensured timely and effective dissemination of the information collected and allowed for enhanced planning for future operations. A welcome secondary effect of the PED Cell’s efforts was increased situational awareness amongst AFP tactical commanders. Leaders in

the field saw the value of near-real-time overhead ISR coverage, which spiked the demand for USSOF advise and assist teams on Basilan and Jolo islands. After two rotations spanning a year, 1st SFG(A) ISR flew 130 sorties for 573 hours in support of eight named operations.

THE WAY AHEAD

A model for success has been established and validated, but the high operations tempo and USSOF ISR Tactical Control of the systems meant that the knowledge of how to properly task, employ and exploit ISR was confined to those operators. To help build knowledge among AFP counterparts, the next step is the establishment of training teams to educate the AFP soldiers through subject matter expert exchanges. Elements of ISR, such as production requests and expectations, asset planning and synchronization, airspace deconfliction and real-time tactical control will need to be taught and validated. These efforts will help the AFP broaden its understanding and use of ISR, and set the stage for the successful implementation of its own ISR program. **SW**

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Capt. Julio Torres III is the 1st Special Forces Group (Airborne) Military Intelligence Company Commander in the Group Support Battalion.

02 An expeditionary set up for the PED section with workstations mounted in the rear of a 5-ton truck.

03 Soldiers at their workstations constructing products from UAS feed.

04 PED soldiers identifying possible enemy combatants on real-time UAS feed.

U.S. ARMY PHOTOS COURTESY OF 1ST SFG(A)



03



04

THE 1ST SFG(A) PROCESSING, EXPLOITATION AND DISSEMINATION CELL WAS DEPLOYED TO PROVIDE THE CONNECTIVE TISSUE BETWEEN THE ISR PLATFORM AND THE BATTLE SPACE COMMANDER.



THE PHILIPPINE PRIMER

Cultural considerations critical to success.

BY MAJOR DUSTIN DELCOURE

The Republic of the Philippines is a long-standing U.S. ally and former colony with common ground in World War II, government and military structure, an English school system, and is the only foreign country with a U.S. Veterans Affairs Clinic. While important in shaping a close, even familial history, our shared experience disguises a wide cultural gap.

This article addresses that gap by explaining cultural considerations critical to success in the Philippines, yet routinely overlooked or misunderstood by U.S. partners. In line with the Army Special Operations Forces approach to capacity building, in an environment where mission accomplishment is directly tied to relational success, maximizing that effort should be a priority, thereby enabling strategic goals through military partnership.⁰¹

These considerations are relevant to anyone who routinely interacts with Filipinos, regardless of purpose. Lessons shared were gleaned through 14 years of living, working and traveling in the Philippines, studying the language, marriage and the counsel of friends and relatives in business, military and government. Masters research on cross-cultural interpersonal skills aided in translating real-world experience into the considerations offered here. More than one, if not all, apply to any situation related to the Philippine context, whether preparing or analyzing reports, reading a news article, attending a meeting with partners or joining a military exercise. They will not always ease frustrations experienced by U.S. partners, but will explain and reduce their occurrence, and help find a path to better partnership and reasonable solutions.

COLLECTIVIST (PHILIPPINES) VS INDIVIDUALIST (U.S.) CULTURES

In research on cross-cultural negotiation, the most commonly cited aspect is the difference between collectivist and individualist cultures.⁰² Collectivist cultures behave in a way that will best retain harmony for the group, which is more important than solving a specific

issue or problem.⁰³ Individualist cultures are more intent on solving the issue at hand, and less concerned about impacts of a solution on the larger relational situation.⁰⁴ Many people never think about how their natural behavior translates to decision and action, so these terms help digest them in context.

As one example, we employed a local worker who had spent more than 10 years working overseas. While there, he funded education for five siblings, built his parents a home, helped an aunt with medical bills and supported routine family expenses; all selfless actions for the good of the greater family. This large difference in motivation for people's actions translates to many activities and relates to each of the considerations mentioned here. The logic and rationale for decisions in this context, in some cases life changing in nature, are very different from that of most Americans.

INDIRECT (PHILIPPINES) VS DIRECT (U.S.) COMMUNICATION STYLE

The Philippines' collectivist cultural identification translates to a subtle, indirect form of communication. It is common for people to say yes, despite intention to act otherwise. Whereas, Americans are more likely to directly confront a problem or identify someone's failure in a given situation. This often results in Americans suspecting dishonesty on the part of their partners, when really, they overlooked what would have been routine interaction among Filipinos.

It takes time to capture these subtleties of communication; but understanding will help manage expectations and prevent a blunder. For example, I once witnessed an American request support to a training event in a somewhat directive manner. The Filipino replied with something like, "Okay, but we are very busy at that time," coupled with less confirming body language indicating what I characterized as a "no" in that context. Later, the American scolded his counterpart in a meeting for failing to uphold that "agreement."

That was a non-functional relationship until the American departed. In the Filipino context, it is often





polite to acknowledge support for something, while offering a very subtle hint that it will not happen. This is how Filipinos deal with one another; it is not an effort to slight American partners. Watch how partners communicate internally, including body language, eye contact, etc. This will be helpful in gauging how to act in different situations.

UTANG NA LOOB: THE CYCLE OF DEBT REPAYMENT

When you help someone out in the Philippines, they are expected to return the favor. The Filipino world is very cyclic in nature, every action requires a reaction. This is a double-edged sword often misunderstood by Americans. On the positive side, when you help someone out, give them a small gift, render an act of kindness or assist with a request, they will feel compelled to return that favor.

This is especially true if someone genuinely likes you or considers you a friend. They will often instinctively return a favor in much larger capacity than it was issued. It is one of many complementary aspects of the culture. However, when you ask someone for assistance, you should understand they might naturally arrive at the conclusion that you should provide them help in return.

Additionally, be aware that someone might leverage a situation to achieve their own agenda, offering a small favor, forecasting an intended return down the road. This is very common and folks should be aware that in many cases even friends would use their relationships to facilitate mutual needs more so than in the U.S. As an example, on many occasions I have seen Americans frustrated when a Filipino did not follow through with a request, or displayed some anger towards them. When, in reality, their Filipino counterpart had fulfilled numerous requests that were perceived as expectations of U.S. assistance.

For example, I had a senior officer inform commanders we should tell Filipino leadership they had to share plans for upcoming operations on which we would advise them. With good intention, he explained that the Philippine government requested U.S. assistance, which meant we should hold partners accountable to share information supporting our effort. Many Americans have requested assistance or information from individual Filipino partners, with the expectation that U.S. funding and support at the organizational level legitimized the request. In reality, organizational agreements factor very little into individual action.



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One-sided individual requests are abusive to the relationship and can become disrespectful. Organizational level agreements are often necessary but not sufficient for transactions at the individual level. Another example would be the common experience of Americans visiting counterparts in their office, almost always being welcomed. On the other hand, Philippine counterparts have limited access to U.S. areas, often only for special occasions, upon invite, and receive little in the way of hospitality. When problems arise, or hospitality declines, relook your actions or those of your predecessors and adjust accordingly.

KAGANDAHANG LOOB: PHILIPPINE HOSPITALITY

Philippine hospitality is challenged by few, respected by many, and is a highly complementary aspect of the culture. However, this can also be a double-edged sword due to perceived relational success. If you are the guest of a Filipino person, family or organization, extra efforts will be taken to extend hospitality. This will occur on many occasions even if people don't know or like you.

Similar to debt repayment, if someone does know you and genuinely likes or respects you, they will go to exceptional lengths to extend hospitality. It would be common to visit a small home and have someone give up their only bed for a guest. People would take a loan if needed to buy the food and snacks to treat a guest at a level appropriate to their title or respect. It is important to understand what lengths people and organizations would go to on the account of guests.

General courtesy aside, this is also why accepting whatever might be offered is the right idea. Someone

WATCH HOW PARTNERS COMMUNICATE INTERNALLY, INCLUDING BODY LANGUAGE, EYE CONTACT, ETC. THIS WILL BE HELPFUL IN GAUGING HOW TO ACT IN DIFFERENT SITUATIONS.



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A Special Forces Soldier from 1st SFG(A) assists with doctrine development at the Philippine Army Special Forces School in Fort Magsay, Philippines.

U.S. ARMY PHOTOS BY JENNIFER G. ANGELO

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A U.S. Army Special Forces officer talks to a student at the Philippine Army Special Forces School in Fort Magsay, Philippines.



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likely put themselves or their organization in a bind to provide that courtesy and it could be disappointing, even offensive, if refused. As one example, when observing U.S. units coordinate for staff training, they commonly failed to see that a primary planning factor for their partners was providing snacks, drinks and lunch. Ultimately, that was considered secondary to planned training.

Misperception is the primary concern with hospitality. It is rendered in the process of formal and informal meetings, then taken as an indicator of relational success, misleading Americans as to their standing with a person or a group. As an example, one of our element leaders dealt with counterparts on the use of airfield space. Engagement had been limited to short duration meetings where hospitality was rendered, assistance requested for issues and counterparts agreed to help. When no change took place he became frustrated, explaining his efforts and the indicators of success. In the U.S., his actions would have been more than acceptable. Part of this process is understanding success in a different context.

UTAK TALANGKA: CRAB MENTALITY

Most aspects of Philippine culture are positive in nature, and if issues arise they are because of misunderstanding or misperception by outside visitors, not mal-intent from Filipino partners. Crab Mentality is negative in nature, but it is essential to understand when attempting to foster interaction among competing groups in a shared workspace, such as law enforcement and military. I am also sharing this because

it was learned from mentors in the Philippines and explained as a barrier to success. This is the willingness to undermine another person or group in order to retain a better standing, even if that “better” only results in maintaining status quo while moving your opponent to a lower level.

For example, not helping another person or organization because it could result in them gaining credit for a success that could be yours or place them in higher standing. This translates to the military in the form of issues with intelligence sharing, joint operations and planning. Savvy leaders in the Armed Forces of the Philippines understand this, manage information accordingly and either leverage existing relationships or forge new ones to overcome these limitations. Americans routinely misunderstand the history and complexity of these situations, and pressure organizations to operate with one another without setting conditions.

I would recommend finding or establishing common ground between key leaders before placing organizations in a constrained partnership. This can also be seen within conversation in various forms such as: work, family businesses or personal background. With good intention, people want to represent themselves and their family to the highest degree possible, so descriptions of money made, business holdings, interactions with people of power or awareness of ongoing events might be used to influence someone’s standing. Information could be inflated to maximize the reputation of the speaker or an ally, or to scar the reputation of a rival.

For example, a local government employee was invited to a U.S. headquarters for social events. During visits, he would share knowledge of recent U.S. efforts, or ask



about things to come. The information was not sensitive and something we would routinely ask of counterparts. With good intention, the questions were seen as posing a security risk, created concern and resulted in his exclusion from further events. In this example, U.S. security protocol was not aligned to cultural norms. This effort on the part of a guest to maintain and increase standing in relation to other visitors was misunderstood.

SOCIAL INTERACTION: PLAY FIRST, WORK LATER

In the Philippine culture people rarely interact just for work. Whether handling a military, government or business deal, most if not all, successful transactions occur in an informal social setting or directly because of bonds formed in that context. As such, personnel interacting and partnering with Filipinos need to understand that short, work-focused interactions alone will not translate to success without investment in the social space. Even in the Philippine only context, where successful partnership is found, social engagement is always one step away.

Where failure and conflict exists, there will be a gap in social interaction and common ground among leaders. Previously established relationships and mutual friendships help reduce the time and effort involved in forging new ground, but those are exceptions, not the rule. When an individual or group is new to your network or suspect of your intentions, the best way to improve the situation is to engage in genuine social interaction, disregarding work-related goals for the meantime. Expect for this to take hours and days, not minutes, in some cases weeks or months.

As a close friend in the Philippine intelligence community often jokes, “If Americans only understood this is a 99 percent play, one percent work environment, they

would be exponentially more successful in working with us.” This factor is the most important one mentioned here. With genuine human interaction, over time rapport will develop. With rapport comes the ability to solve the myriad of other issues encountered, and overcome a deficit in other areas mentioned.

When true friendship is earned and extended, each of the positive considerations mentioned are amplified and understanding of the environment increases. This consideration is highly critical to mission success, yet counter-intuitive in terms of U.S. cultural norms and military or organizational culture, even in SOF. As an example, during multiple deployments to the Philippines, whether in 2005 or 2016, U.S. counterparts typically spent a majority of their down time in U.S. only spaces. If they left, it was generally for a specific work reason. When social events did occur, U.S. partners tended to congregate, missing out on the opportunity.

It is common humor among U.S. citizens working in the Philippines that less work will be accomplished during the Christmas Holiday season, due to extensive celebration. In fact, participation in related events with partners is perhaps the best possible time to forge relationships, which directly translates to mutual success. Here are some options for increasing social interaction: sports (shooting, badminton, basketball, biking, golfing), coffee, meals, drinking and singing karaoke. For Filipinos, relaxation with family or friends and enjoyment of social time cannot be underestimated.

IMPORTANCE OF JEALOUSLY AND FACE

If a person is scolded or embarrassed in front of their peers, it will be more harmful to their reputation than in the U.S., both emotionally and socially. That could also cause someone to be less eager to assist at an unexpected time down the road. This is especially important for people in leadership positions and should be considered in terms of gift giving and praise. Giving gifts to a group of folks or one person, and not others could create jealousy and resentment or in the least a misinterpretation about where they stand in larger context.

An example comes from a friend in the Philippine Army where tension developed between unit leaders and their U.S. counterparts. During an exercise, the U.S. partners had given training material requested by an Army unit to another participant in front of the collective group. This created tension between the units and U.S. partners that took time to repair. It appeared that U.S. partners saw this as an inconsequential mishap over cheap training items. By not addressing the issue it was exacerbated. A recommended approach is to be aware of group, personality and positional dynamics and consider an equitable approach in sharing or gift giving. Where exceptions exist, such as a performance award, ensure partners understand their context.



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A U.S. Army Special Operations Soldier works with Philippine partner forces during a training exercise. U.S. ARMY PHOTO

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A classroom of young Filipino children sit at their desks during class. When teaching and training partner-nation forces, their group dynamics and learning style should be considered and methods should be adjusted accordingly. U.S. MARINE CORPS PHOTO BY STAFF SGT. JEFFREY D. ANDERSON

TEACHERS TEACH, STUDENTS LISTEN

In Asia in general, and the Philippines specifically, the classroom environment is usually one where teachers teach and students listen, take notes, memorize material, then reproduce it during a test. Classroom scenarios are less dialogue based. As such, if you teach a class and expect to call upon students to demonstrate understanding, this could be embarrassing or awkward to them. Consider your approach before teaching and training personnel. U.S. methods can be employed to a degree but the instructor should be aware of individual and group dynamics, and adjust accordingly.

PHILIPPINE ENGLISH

English is one of two official languages in the Philippines and it is used in the education system. On one hand, most Americans are comfortable working there because basic communication is not an issue. On the other hand, common language makes it easy for people to overlook the cultural gaps explained here.

Folks should be aware that English is used within the local linguistic and cultural context, including idioms, so meanings are not always exactly the same as U.S. colloquial English. Likewise, a significant majority of Filipinos carry out their daily business using a native dialect, not English, because it is their true comfort zone and a means of identifying with others from the area. Consider these differences as you engage with partners.

When teaching a class or interacting with personnel, be aware that when you speak fast and use odd vocabulary words people may have difficulty understanding you, requiring people to rely only on context.

Yet, because of the collectivist cultural norm, people will be less likely to acknowledge the issue. This does not mean Filipinos should be spoken to like elementary students or small children, which would be rude. Know the audience, keep a reasonable pace, leave out colloquial sayings unless explained, and reinforce key points before assuming communication is not a problem.

In closing, this is my effort to broaden awareness of missed potential with a key ally. It is also an opportunity to shed some light on difficulties our Philippine partners experience in accepting U.S. assistance, but might be too courteous to mention. Finally, in relation to the considerations mentioned here, respect many Filipinos have for Americans in general, and our military experience in specific, ignorance of these principles is sometimes overlooked by partners. While good intentioned, this results in implementation of advice within a context governed by these principles, creating the potential for unintended consequences. 

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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NARRATIVE FUSION CELL

Psychological Operations Forces harness advanced influence capability expertise in the Pacific.

BY MAJOR SHARON ENGELMEIER

Half a world away — before 9/11 brought international awareness to the growing terrorist problem and a decade before the Arab Spring highlighted the digital ecology— U.S. Special Operation Forces witnessed first-hand the growing extremist ideology and the strategic implication of harnessing digital information in the Pacific.

In January 2001, the Philippines became the first nation in history to effectively oust a head of state by mobilizing the discontent of millions of citizens through digital technology. The case against President Joseph Estrada was initially fueled by accusations of “accepting bribes, mishandling public funds and using illegal income to buy houses for his mistresses.” However, when impeachment efforts stalled, an effective network connected by mobile phones toppled the president within four days. The relatively peaceful demonstration paved the way for a new government.⁰¹

Recognizing the alarming rate of extremist ideology and the nation’s corresponding rate of increased terrorist activities, the new Philippine government invited U.S. SOF to

reintegrate in the Philippines. The U.S. responded by forming Joint Special Operations Task Force-Philippines, as part of Operation Enduring Freedom-Philippines, to advise the Philippine forces’ pursuit of the transnational terrorist organization Abu Sayyaf Group, through foreign internal defense operations. Army Special Operations Forces’ Psychological Operations teams were instrumental in improving the population’s “perception of the government of the Republic of the Philippines’s legitimacy and enhancing support for the rule of law.”⁰² Targeting key audiences, three PSYOP teams effectively increased the population’s support for the Government of the Republic of the Philippines, while simultaneously reducing the Abu Sayyaf Group’s populous support. The teams effectively highlighted the Armed Forces of the Philippines Civil Military Operations efforts, and emphasized the transnational terrorist organization’s transgressions in the southern Philippines since the mid-1990s to diminish support for the group’s safe havens.⁰³

While the basics of communication and influence remain the same, the

information environment has become richer and more complex.⁰⁴ Today, the 5th Psychological Operations Battalion, 8th Psychological Operations Group is regionally aligned with operations in the Asia-Pacific realm within U.S. Pacific Command’s area of operations. The battalion’s focus on the region allows the officers and noncommissioned officers to focus their cultural studies and language skills on this particular region of the world. The essential components of Psychological Operations, requires an understanding of the internal and external conflict dynamics that motivate individuals or populations to actively support or reject a belief. While the basic principles of influence activities are transferable across the world, effective influence in unconventional warfare requires an understanding of regionally-specific, social-political factors and an ability to respond based on a strategic vision. Fundamental incompatibility exists between speed and irreversible influence.

The Philippines is only one of 36 nations in the Asia-Pacific realm. The region contains 50 percent of the world’s population, and its inhabitants speak more than 3,000 different languages. It spans 16 time zones that “include the most populous nation in the world, the largest democracy and the largest Muslim-majority nation.”⁰⁵ Considering the expansive area and intergovernmental partnerships and relationships, synchronizing influence efforts is no easy task.

5th PSYOP Battalion’s focus is on providing the best trained and equipped Psychological Operations officers and NCOs in support of Special Operations Command-Pacific’s and Special Operations Command-Korea’s objectives. The Soldiers deploy in Military Information Support Teams to multiple partnering nations, each region presenting a distinct background of physical, cultural, social, economic and political factors that are relevant and important to understanding the social-cultural climate that results in current and future conflicts.

For 5th PSYOP Battalion’s officers and NCOs scheduled to deploy to the region, the Narrative Fusion Cell at

Fort Bragg, North Carolina, serves as the nexus for preparedness. Within the expansive Pacific theater, 5th PSYOP Battalion's NFC is actively integrating narratives with capabilities in pursuit of the Theater Special Operations Command's operational lines of influence.

In 2015, 5th PSYOP Battalion piloted the first-of-its-kind NFC, within the battalion operations section, as a proof of concept in leveraging advanced influence capability expertise from stateside to strengthen support to SOCPAC and SOCKOR. Members of the team were selected due to their exceptional performance records across multiple Psychological Operations experiences. Their rolodex of experiences provided a foundation that, when coupled with advanced analytical analysis training and information-related capabilities, allowed them to understand which ideas were transferable and which were not, depending on circumstances. Additionally, the individuals selected were required to commit to serving a minimum of two years in the assignment so as to establish continuity of expertise within the mission.

From its inception, the NFC has been supplemented by a team of doctoral scholars who possess expertise on a variety of subjects in the Asia-Pacific area of responsibility. Another critical addition to the cell was intelligence analysts to enhance the team's ability to fuse operations, intelligence and information-related capabilities. The fusion of these capabilities allows 1st Special Forces Command (Airborne) to deploy the NFC when required to support a task force element from a near cold-start within the area of operations. The NFC has participated in a multitude of exercises ranging from joint combined training exercises and Joint Chiefs of Staff exercises, which are designed to hone and validate influence capabilities including military

deception, electronic warfare, special activities and analytical analysis.

SOCPAC has leveraged the NFC across the spectrum of influence operations. Allowing for continuous operational dialogue between the NFC and Theater Special Operations Commands, the NFC deployed MISTs with expertise during pre-mission training and mission support. The NFC's expertise ensured continuous planning efforts and focused adherence to multi-year efforts during multiple rotations.

Charged with bridging the TSOC's strategic vision with constant rotations, 5th PSYOP Battalion's NFC provides advanced operational expertise and serves as a data knowledge repository. The NFC integrates with the Theater Special Operations Command's strategic vision and provides guidance and continuity to the MISTs. The NFC is an enabling effort feeding the TSOC's decision-making process through regional-specific analysis that allows the TSOC to keep pace and understanding of emerging influence activities. Simultaneously, the NFC provides continuity for current and future MIST operations as an auxiliary during missions and provides in-house expertise during pre-mission training. Within the Army's 18-month training cycle, the NFC remains the continuity before, during and through team transitions to ensure information and influence activities are nested within the TSOC's vision and synchronized with special activities. 

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Maj. Sharon Engelmeier is a Psychological Operations Officer currently assigned as the Executive Officer to the Deputy to the Commanding General, U.S. Army Special Operations Command. In 2016, she served as the 5th PSYOP Battalion's Operations Officer with responsibility for the Narrative Fusion Cell.

NARRATIVE FUSION CELL HIGHLIGHTS

The NFC maintains full operational vision through SOCPAC and SOCKOR's country-specific MISO operational approaches and integrates with OPTs, in order to extend and maintain relevant regional MISO activities.

INTEGRATION IN THE TSOC'S OPERATIONAL FOCUS/ FRAMEWORK

- PSYOP Teams deploy in support of Special Operations Theater Command's Vision
- NFC's capabilities allow for direct integration and support to TSOCs
- NFC provides guidance for MISO series development/ execution and MISO activities during PMT-based on integration with SOCPAC and SOCKOR
- Synchronizes with the Regional Information Support Team to receive assessments to further refine SOCPAC's mid-term MISO strategy and maintain a repository of data
- NFC ensures that MIST develop and execute series aligned with SOJ37's mid- to long-term strategy by maintaining trajectory of TSOC's operational approach through multiple MIST rotations

NFC SUPPORT

- Joint Combined Service Exercises
- Country-specific assessment plans
- Country-specific information preparation of the environment

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REPUBLIC OF KOREA ENGAGEMENTS THAT LAST

BY CAPTAIN CHRIS PINKERTON

United States Army Special Forces routinely conduct Theater Security Cooperation Program events using tactical-level engagements that enhance both the host nation and the executing USSF units' training proficiency, while enhancing operational and strategic interoperability between partnered forces. These tactical-level engagements deliver immediate increases in capability of partner-nation special operations forces, yet typically fail to inform or spark change outside of the participating tactical element. This creates disconnects between localized training and the host-

nation's institutional process.

Whether this is due to knowledge-management issues, or the inability to express the importance of change to improve the entirety of the institution, it presents an obstacle to growth and advancement. Company C, 2nd Battalion, 1st Special Forces Group (Airborne) took these institutional challenges into consideration during planning and execution of its last rotation as Advanced Operating Base-Korea in support of Special Operations Command - Korea. Four Operational Detachment Alphas partnered with four operational Republic of Korea SF

Brigades, while one ODA partnered with the Republic of Korea Special Warfare Schoolhouse.

AOB-K's engagement strategy was built around three main lines of effort: expand tactical-level engagements to train and affect the largest amount of partnered forces available; elevate engagements to battalion staffs to improve planning and advance battle-focused analysis; and use the schoolhouse to influence and shape training priorities in order to increase the operational capability of the ROK SF. This approach to simultaneously engage both the institutional level and units of action served to provide lasting benefits for both the host nation as well as the international SOF enterprise by providing more capable and interoperable SOF partners.

This concept is not new or groundbreaking, however its effectiveness is found in the breadth and number of units and institutional elements engaged throughout the rotation. In prior AOB-K rotations, the engagements were limited to one SFOD-A engaging and training with a single RODA. Through understanding that the warfighting function of Mission Command is held at higher levels within the ROK military, Company C looked to employ the doctrinal relationship of a SFOD-A with the battalion level of command.

The intent was to elevate the level of engagements by USSF to advise and assist at the battalion and brigade levels while presenting opportunities to improve the institutional training organization. Using this task organization, AOB-K took current information from the tactical level engagements and used them to inform the engagement strategy with the SWS. This created tangible goals to initiate quantitative long-term changes in the ROK SF training doctrine and programs of instruction. The application of this strategy established a feedback continuum model.

The model begins with "Finding the Gap" by working with host-nation tactical elements and making recommendations to improve their training to increase capability. These observations became the



input and were compared across the breadth of engagements to develop a common operational picture. “Fix the Gap” used the common themes to feed the ODA working at the institutional level with the SWS to suggest immediate changes with the cadre committees and begin institutional influence at higher levels (i.e. lasting doctrine changes). In the final phase of the model “Fill the Gap” references the loop being completed through doctrinal updates and POI changes, providing forces that have received enhanced training. This step can only be evaluated over the long term through continued engagements allowing time for the changes to take effect.

Historically, almost all USSF engagements with ROKSF have been at the Republic of Korea ODA level. The first hurdle was for the USSF ODA’s partnered with ROK SF Brigades to advance beyond one ODA aligned with RODA. All four ODAs succeeded, in not only engaging battalion staffs and commanders on a daily basis, but also by enabling partnered training with the entirety of the battalion. This engagement level allowed the ODAs to identify training gaps at the tactical level across a larger pool and refine recommendations for focus and attention. This proved to be the first step in the feedback loop process.

Observations common to all of the ROK partnered brigades were compared with observations made at the SWS, through constant engagement with the training cadre committees, which were coalesced to provide training priorities at the institutional level. Thus, the SWS engagement was the key to begin the process of creating long term fixes to tactical observations. Partnering at the institutional level enabled the ODA to work with each of the training cadre committees to observe and suggest changes to the baseline training POI, providing recommendations based on the gaps identified across the breadth of the AOB-K’s engagement. This approach encouraged institutional change to address the cause of the observed training deficiency, rather than treat the symptoms that are present

at the tactical level, as is often the focus of many TSCP events.

Though the effectiveness of this strategy can only be judged by future rotations, AOB-K did observe evidence of change in its time in Korea. During the six month rotation to Korea, AOB-K participated in multiple combined planning events. One such event involved SFOD-A 1235 and their partners planning a full mission profile operation and providing a brief back to the ROK Special Warfare Command Commander. The ODA trained their partner RODA on the Military Decision Making Process and used it to develop a detailed and thorough brief back that was well received by both the ROK SWC commander as well as the SOCKOR commander.

The brief and planning process left such a positive impression that the SWC Commanding General immediately directed his organization to use the brief and products as the standard for all future brief backs. MDMP is in a form, part of ROK SWC doctrine, but by fully committing to the process and using it to its full potential the ROK SWC commander recognized the benefits and through guidance renewed the ROK SOF’s commitment to such doctrinal detailed planning. The remainder of AOB-K confirmed that the changes were effective immediately with their counterparts the following day and immediately began working with them to incorporate the guidance into their future training. This is one example of how effective combined training and planning, when exposed to the proper levels of command and institutions, can have comprehen-

sive effects that shape institutional changes for host-nation units beyond the immediate engagement.

Persistent engagement at the tactical level while simultaneously elevating the partnership to battalion-and brigade-level commanders and staffs created a comprehensive operational picture that led to a more nuanced understanding of partner capabilities. This shared understanding enabled the development of recommendations to increase operational capability. Coupled with engagements at the institutional level, it provided the avenue to address and implement the acceptance of these recommendations by creating a viable path for institutional change.

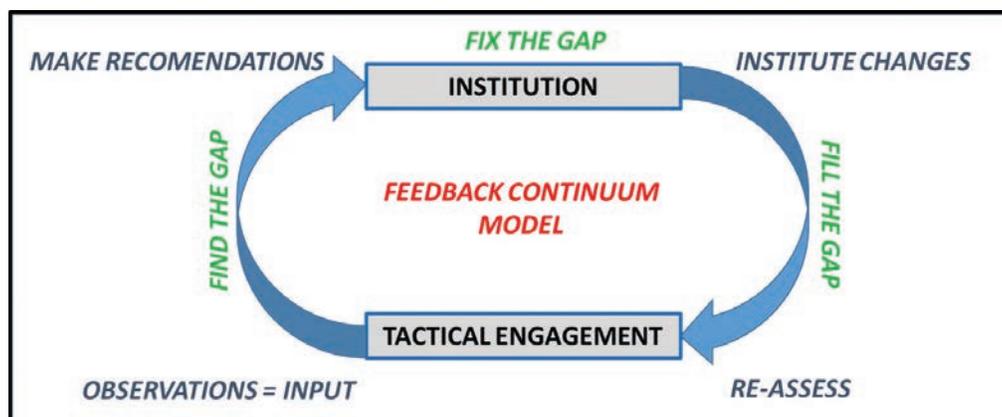
Although the measure of effectiveness can only be judged over the course of time, this engagement strategy serves as a platform to promote institutional change, and a way to defeat the problem of reoccurring engagements at the tactical level with partner forces that rotate and change, thus taking their experiences and hampering the progress made as new recruits repopulate their ranks with the same training deficiencies. Over time, this model will better serve to meet the ever-changing and demanding challenges of our strategic environment, and is necessary to build more effective and capable SOF partners which benefits the international SOF enterprise. 

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A Special Forces Soldier conducts a machine gun familiarization class with Korean SOF partners. U.S. ARMY PHOTO COURTESY OF 1ST SFG(A) PAO

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The feedback continuum model.



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Special Forces Soldiers from 1st Special Forces Group (Airborne) conduct weapons training with Thai partners during a Joint Combined Exchange Training exercise.

U.S. ARMY PHOTO BY SGT WES CONROY



SOF ROOTS IN THAILAND

BY MAJOR TODD MARABLE

Gen. (Ret.) Douglas MacArthur famously told a group of cadets in the United States Military Academy Mess Hall, that old Soldiers never die, they just fade away. As the 1st Special Forces Group (Airborne) operates throughout the Pacific region, it has begun to preserve the legacy of special operations in Asia and record firsthand accounts of its forefathers.

Many Green Berets were assigned to Southeast Asia in the 1950s and 1960s as a permanent presence. For example, the 46th Special Forces Company activated in Thailand on April 15, 1967, redesignated from Company D, 1st Special Forces Group (Airborne). At the time, the unit was comprised of an all-volunteer force that assembled and trained at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, before deploying to Asia as the 1st SFG(A)'s permanent presence in Thailand. The company based at Camp Pawai near Lopburi with three subordinate B-detachments at Sakon Nakhon, Camp Nong Takoo (Pak Chong), and Ban Kachon with A-teams at multiple locations across the Kingdom of Thailand.



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The skills these men learned in the Vietnam era, battling communist insurgencies are especially relevant to today's fight, and leveraging those lessons learned are important. Several alumni who remained in Thailand serve as advisors to indigenous partners whom they met

in uniform. Their stories are crucial in preserving SF's legacy.

Master Sgt. (Ret.) James Williams is a 46th Company alum who still lives in Thailand. His unpublished memoirs provide colorful layers of context to the storied history of special operations forces

01, 02
Special Forces Soldiers in Thailand in the 1950s and 1960s.

03
An aerial view of Camp Pawai, located near Lopburi, Thailand, where the 46th Special Forces Company was headquartered.

U.S. ARMY PHOTOS COURTESY OF 1ST SFG(A) PAO



03

in Thailand. He recounts that the 46th Company activated because the 1st SFG(A)'s other three companies were stretched thin in and around Vietnam. The Kingdom had been an ally to the U.S. since Gen. (Ret.) "Wild Bill" Donovan signed a mutual defense treaty in his role as U.S. Ambassador to Thailand following the bifurcation of the Office of Strategic Services after World War II.

When the 46th Company arrived in Thailand, the country faced communist insurgencies on all borders. Laos and Cambodia eventually toppled, in addition to Vietnam. Along the southern border, forces faced another insurgency as an effective British-led Gurkha counterinsurgency force aggressively pursued them in Northern Malaysia.

One of the first missions the 46th Company conducted was to

coordinate with the British and then advise and assist the Royal Thai Army Special Forces to form a blocking force during major Gurkha operations that successfully prevented the insurgencies from finding safe haven in the Chinese dense populations that existed in southern Thailand at the time.

This, and many similar examples, demonstrate how early forward-stationed Special Forces helped the Royal Kingdom of Thailand develop its own COIN capability, protecting a strategic U.S. ally from falling to communist revolution. The legacy of these efforts are still present in Thailand, scattered on artifacts across the Kingdom on markers, monuments and tombstones. Camp Carrow in Trang near the Malaysian border is named after Billy E. Carrow, a 46th Company member who was lost in Laos in 1967.

As these legacies surface, the 1st SFG(A) is leveraging the expertise of its alumni to capture the history and incorporate lessons learned to form training opportunities, specifically the expertise in jungle warfare, COIN and unconventional warfare. 1st SFG(A) continues to work with alumni, the Thailand defense attaché and USA-SOC's history office to ensure early efforts are properly honored. 

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Maj. Todd Marable formerly commanded Bravo Company, 3rd Battalion, 1st Special Forces Group (Airborne), and is currently assigned to Special Operations Command Europe (SOCEUR). He has served combat tours in Iraq, Afghanistan and the Republic of the Philippines and numerous JCETs in Southeast Asia. Maj. Marable holds a master's degree from Columbia University.

THE SKILLS THESE MEN LEARNED IN THE VIETNAM ERA BATTLING COMMUNIST INSURGENCIES ARE ESPECIALLY RELEVANT TO TODAY'S FIGHT, AND LEVERAGING THOSE LESSONS LEARNED ARE IMPORTANT.



01

COBRA GOLD 2017

A New Approach to “Realistic” Training.

BY CAPTAIN MATTHEW TALLEY AND CAPTAIN SCOTT HOWE

INTRODUCTION

Joint Chiefs of Staff exercise Cobra Gold 17 marked the 30th consecutive year of its execution. The exercise involved more than 5,000 soldiers, marines, airmen and seamen from 12 important partners and allies in Southeast Asia. 1st Special Forces Group (Airborne) sought to return Cobra Gold to its unconventional warfare roots as seen in 1965 when Company D, now 3rd Battalion, 1st SFG(A) assisted the newly formed Royal Thai Army Special Forces defeat multiple Chinese-backed communist insurgencies.⁰¹

During Cobra Gold 17, the 1st SFG(A) implemented a new approach by embedding combined U.S. and Thai Special Forces into local Hmong villages for a UW field training exercise that indirectly supported counter-narcotics efforts along the northern Thailand border. In preparation for the FTX, 3rd Battalion, 1st SFG(A) detachments creatively nested a joint combined exchange training event to train participating Thai Special Forces units on concepts and techniques specific to Cobra Gold 17.

The training scenario was unique in that it leveraged 5th Thai Special Forces Regiment’s cultural expertise and relationships to superimpose the current threat environment over several Hmong villages. This innovative approach drew accolades because it significantly enhanced training value for both U.S. and Thai Special Forces while simultaneously achieving tangible effects.

01, 02
Special Forces
Soldiers work
with partner
forces in
Thailand. U.S.
ARMY PHOTOS
COURTESY OF
1ST SFG(A) PAO

MIMICKING CONDITIONS ALONG THE BORDER

The flow of illicit drugs within the Kingdom of Thailand has reached epidemic proportions in recent years. Continued armed conflict between ethnic groups and Myanmar security forces along the contested Thai border has created ideal conditions for criminal organizations to thrive and flourish. Unchecked armed militias produce large amounts of opium, heroin and methamphetamine pills known as “yaba” which are smuggled throughout Southeast Asia.

Within Northern Thailand, Thai police and counter-drug units have tightened security along the border and increased operations to combat these activities. Despite these efforts, drug smugglers continue to adapt and find unique ways to channel drugs through Thailand’s borders.⁰² Given this context, U.S. and Thai Special Forces planners developed the Cobra Gold 17 scenario, a mimic of the real-world environment within Northern Thailand.

The tenets of the scenario were reflective of the current threat environment along Northern Thailand’s border. Decreased security in the region had sparked the rise of illicit drug trafficking groups. As these groups pursued a more robust drug trade, they asserted control over local Hmong villages.

Within the scenario framework, Thai Special Forces planners received information that several of these villages were in the early stages of creating a local guerrilla force to combat these drug trafficking groups, sparking Special Operations Command Pacific to issue guidance to U.S. Special Forces teams to assist their Thai counterparts in counter-narcotics operations.

COBRA GOLD 2017: UNCONVENTIONAL WARFARE FIELD TRAINING EXERCISE

With support from across the 1st SFG(A), a combined U.S.-Thai Special Forces Operational Detachment-Alpha



02

planned and infiltrated the operational area to make initial contact with the village guerrilla force. The U.S. team advised and assisted Thai Special Forces during a split-team operation and provided detailed reporting to combined U.S.-Thai SFOD-As to enable their successful infiltration and link-up with partner forces.

After arriving into their respective Hmong villages, two ODAs conducted meetings with key leaders to include the guerrilla chief and underground cell leader. After assessing the fighters, the ODAs developed an expedited training plan focused on reconnaissance, non-standard communications and jungle small-unit tactics.

Due to the progressive UW-specific training delivered during the JCET immediately prior to Cobra Gold 17, Thai Special Forces were able take lead on training, assisting and accompanying guerrilla fighters. As a result, SFOD-As were postured to advise and assist the Thai Special Forces' efforts with the guerrilla fighters.

Under this construct, the U.S. Special Forces advisors had more freedom to develop auxiliary and underground support capabilities through positive, meaningful interactions with the local Hmong populace. During one of SFOD-A 1326's key-leader engagements with the village elder, the detachment learned of a historical initiative instituted in the 1960s by the late King Bhumibol Adulyadej. This 20-to-30 year initiative concentrated on the eradication of poppy and positively transformed the village's agricultural industry to food crops and livestock. However, hundreds of poppy fields continue to populate on the village's northern boundary every year.

The elder shed light on his volunteer security team's struggles to assist the Royal Thai Army in locating and eradicating these poppy fields. In an effort to increase effectiveness, the U.S. Special Forces trained the Hmong volunteer security team on map reading, land navigation and other basic skills.

Additionally, SFOD-A 1326 conducted a medical civic-action program. More than 100 villagers (22 percent of the village population) received professional medical care by U.S.-Thai Special Forces medical sergeants. Overall, the navigation training and the MEDCAP demonstrated the distinctive ability of ODAs to support SOCPAC's line of effort to gain visibility and understanding of an environment.



ABOUT COBRA GOLD

Exercise Cobra Gold is a recurring multinational and multiservice exercise hosted annually by the Kingdom of Thailand and developed by the Thai and U.S. militaries, executed throughout Thailand. Cobra Gold 2017 was designed to advance regional security by exercising a robust multinational force from nations sharing common goals and security commitments in the Asia-Pacific region.

PARTICIPATING NATIONS

- Kingdom of Thailand
- United States
- Singapore
- Japan
- Indonesia
- Republic of Korea
- Malaysia

2017 HIGHLIGHTS

- Utilized JCET to train Thai SF on UW concepts and techniques
- Superimposed current threat environment into training scenario
- Embedded combined U.S. & Thai detachments into Hmong villages
- Increased Thai SF counter-narcotics capabilities
- Increased USSF readiness for contingency operations



01

THE WAY AHEAD

The realism applied to the Cobra Gold 17 scenario had significant value in ways that were not predicted by exercise planners or participants. By using real-world conditions, 3rd Battalion, 1st SFG(A) minimized the need for a robust staff to create layered scenarios necessary for isolated teams to plan effectively.

More importantly, the scenario was executed utilizing existing Joint Chiefs of Staff Exercise funding. The dynamics and cultural complexities of village life are incredibly difficult to replicate; nothing can mirror situations as well as real-world, overseas training venues such as Cobra Gold in Thailand.

The effects gained in embedding combined SFOD-As into Hmong villages demonstrate the value of this natural complexity. Cobra Gold 17 enabled Green Berets to develop rapport with an indigenous population in order to enhance its readiness for contingency operations. The progression of UW training, coupled with the experience of embedding in a local Thai village, increased the Thai Special Forces' counter-narcotics capability.

The momentum created by 3rd Battalion, 1st SFG(A) will serve as the new baseline for Cobra Gold 18 exercise planners, but is worth consideration by other SF Groups for applicability in their respective areas of responsibility. Third Battalion, 1st SFG(A) returned Cobra Gold to its UW roots by creating an operational design that embedded combined detachments into local villages in an effort to combat illicit drug smuggling or

organizations. At zero additional cost, Cobra Gold 17 proved to have a synergistic effect through its ability to increase not only the training value and capacity of exercise participants but the operational effects provided to SOCPAC. 

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Capt. Matthew Talley is a detachment commander in 3rd Battalion, 1st Special Forces Group (Airborne). He has served multiple combat tours to Afghanistan and deployed multiple times across Asia to include JCETs in Thailand, Malaysia and Joint Chiefs of Staff Exercise Cobra Gold. He is a graduate of the United States Military Academy.

Capt. Scott Howe is a detachment commander in 3rd Battalion, 1st Special Forces Group (Airborne). He has deployed in support of operations in Afghanistan and Thailand to include Joint Chiefs of Staff Exercise Cobra Gold. He is a graduate of the United States Military Academy.

01
Special Forces Soldiers work with partner forces in Thailand. U.S. ARMY PHOTO COURTESY OF 1ST SFG(A) PAO

02
A U.S. Army Special Forces Soldier from 1st SFG(A) talks to a Japanese Special Operations Group partner during a training exercise. U.S. ARMY PHOTO BY SPC. VICTOR RICHMOND

NOTES 01. Williams, James C. MSgt, USA (ret.). (2017). *A Green Beret's Journey*. Unpublished manuscript. 02. Fuller, Thomas. "Thai Border on Guard for Drugs from Myanmar." November 6, 2009. <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/11/07/world/asia/07thai.html> (accessed 08 10 2017).



JSDF units. Recently, the PACOM CRF conducted a JCET with SFGp at both Camp Narashino, Chiba on mainland Japan, and on Okinawa, to train various missions including DA, hostage rescue, urban movement and mobility on rotary wing and vehicle platforms.

In May 2017, members of the 1st Battalion, 1st SFG(A) participated in a military freefall SMEE focusing on both organizations working in the wind tunnel together to improve tactics, techniques and the optimization of equipment for such operations. Aside from counterterrorism, future training between an Special Forces Operational Detachment-A and 1ABN pathfinders will involve additional special operations missions including special reconnaissance and target interdiction as part of JCS Exercise Orient Shield 17 focusing on the integration of SOF and conventional forces from both the U.S and Japanese.

The cooperation between the 1st SFG(A) and SFGp epitomizes the notion of “iron sharpens iron.” Although young in organization, this collaboration is longstanding through personnel and relationships that can be seen in the framework and operational capability of both units involved. This is a partnership that will continue to grow in Asia, beyond personal relationships, through training, cooperation and collaboration to increase security and stability in the Pacific Theater. 

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Capt. Gibson Sale Jr. serves as a Detachment Commander in 1st Battalion, 1st Special Forces Group (Airborne). He is currently stationed at Torii Station, Okinawa, Japan, and has planned, coordinated, and executed operations with the Japanese Ground Self Defense Force.

NOTES **01.** Japan Ground Self Defense Force (JGSDF). (n.d.). *Dynamic Joint Defense Force*. **02.** Ministry of Defense (MOD). (n.d.). *Central Readiness Force*.

02

PERMANENT PARTNERS IN THE PACIFIC RIM

Relationship between U.S. and Japanese Special Forces.

BY CAPTAIN GIBSON SALE II

The relationship between 1st Battalion, 1st Special Forces Group (Airborne) and the Japanese Special Forces Group began long before the official establishment of the Japanese Special Operations Group in 2004. Organization, training and cooperation has existed from its inception as JSOG, its transition to the Central Readiness Force and its current organization as the SFGp. The strongest relationship exists between the SFGp and the U.S. Pacific Command Crisis Response Force.

The 1st Battalion, 1st SFG(A) was established in Okinawa, Japan, in 1984 and since that time has worked closely with the Japan Self-Defense Forces, which consists of premiere units on Okinawa and mainland Japan, including the 1st Airborne Brigade, which was established in 1958 as an Airborne Infantry unit and later helped establish the special operations community in the JSDF and is a quintessential part of the Central Readiness Force. 1ABN serves multiple roles including direct

action, reconnaissance, air assault and special operations.

In 1998, the JSDF established a counterterrorism unit. Members of the 1ABN were chosen to form this unit. Based on the relationship built between the 1st Battalion, 1st SFG(A) and the 1ABN, the foundation for JSOG was established in 2004, with a similar framework of their Green Beret partner force. Within one year of its formation, JSOG was deployed to Iraq as security forces in support of Japanese Iraq Reconstruction and Support Group. In 2007, JSOG formed the Central Readiness Force, teaming with the 1ABN, 1st Helicopter Brigade and 101st NBC Protection units as needed, and then changed its name again in 2008 to the SFGp.

Currently, the 1st SFG(A) and SFGp both benefit from joint-combined training events. The 1st SFG(A) regularly conducts joint-combined exchange trainings, joint chiefs of staff exercises, as well as subject matter expert exchanges with the SFGp as well as other



01

EFFECTIVENESS OF A FORWARD-STATIONED SPECIAL FORCES BATTALION

BY CAPTAIN NICHOLAS EIDEMILLER

1st Special Forces Command (Airborne) is comprised of 20 active-duty Special Forces battalions. Of these battalions, only two are stationed abroad: 1st Battalion, 1st Special Forces Group (Airborne) in Okinawa, Japan and 1st Battalion, 10th Special Forces Group (Airborne) in Panzer Kaserne, Germany. This article will utilize 1st Battalion, 1st SFG(A) as a case study to discuss the overall effectiveness of forward-stationed Special Forces battalions. Five benefits: cost, response time, situational awareness, relationship management and training opportunities will be contrasted by four disadvantages: complex command environment, combat experience, operational overutilization and training difficulties.

COST

A forward-stationed battalion is more cost efficient for regional operations. To utilize a 1st SFG(A) Special Forces Operational Detachment Alpha, stationed at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Washington, for operations within the Pacific Command Area of Responsibility, is substantially more expensive than a 1st Battalion, 1st SFG(A) SFODA that is already sta-

tioned in Japan. Even though 1st SFG(A) is comprised of four battalions, 1st Battalion, 1st SFG(A) conducts the majority of the group's annual Theater Campaign Plan activities. This course of action saves the U.S. taxpayer millions of dollars each year.

RESPONSE TIME

Due to distance, the response time of a forward-stationed battalion is superior. Should a situation in the PACOM AoR arise necessitating Special Forces involvement, forces stationed in the Continental United States and Okinawa are separated by approximately 6,000 miles, necessitating at least 10 hours of air travel. In order to deploy, CONUS-stationed forces require Secretary of Defense approval while forward-stationed forces require Global Combatant Commander approval. These are some of the reasons why the PACOM Commander's Crisis Response Force is assigned to 1st Battalion, 1st SFG(A). Response time has been pivotal for several recent incidents including the April 2015 Gorkha Earthquake in Nepal and the July 2016 Holy Artisan Bakery attack in Dhaka, Bangladesh.

SITUATIONAL AWARENESS

Forward-stationed forces possess heightened situational awareness. 1st Battalion, 1st SFG(A) Soldiers and their families live in the PACOM AoR. Regional politics, holidays and tensions are simply a part of everyday life. When given the opportunity, 1st Battalion, 1st SFG(A) Soldiers frequently travel to all corners of the Asia-Pacific region on pass and leave. This enables 1st Battalion, 1st SFG(A) Soldiers to have enhanced operational effectiveness because they live in the AoR they support.

RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT

Being forward-stationed makes it much easier to conduct regional relationship management. While ties are important globally, they are critical in the PACOM AoR due to five of the seven U.S. Collective Defense Arrangements. For a CONUS-stationed SFODA, partner-force interaction is usually limited to TCP activities that generally last from three to six weeks. When operationally valid, 1st Battalion, 1st SFG(A) SFODAs maintain continuous partner-force interaction through in-county subject-matter expert exchanges and off-post training events. When diplomatically feasible, 1st Battalion, 1st SFG(A) hosts partner forces on Okinawa for exposure to training venues and the exchange of tactics, techniques and procedures. When invited, 1st Battalion, 1st SFG(A) leadership routinely attends partner-force ceremonial functions around the PACOM AoR.

TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

A forward-stationed battalion has access to enhanced training opportunities. In addition to 1st Bat-

talion, 1st SFG(A), Okinawa is the home to the Joint Special Operations Air Component-Pacific, the United States Air Force's 18th Wing and the III Marine Expeditionary Force. Additionally, several theater aviation assets support the battalion on a daily basis including non-standard aviation in Singapore, C-12s in Korea and UC-35s in Mainland Japan. As the only permanently stationed ground-based SOF in the PACOM AoR, these units rely upon 1st Battalion, 1st SFG(A) to meet their training requirements that include Airborne, fast-rope insertion and extraction system and helocast.

COMPLEX COMMAND ENVIRONMENT

While being forward-stationed provides unique opportunities, there are four distinct disadvantages that challenge the effectiveness of a forward-stationed Special Forces battalion. First, these units are susceptible to the negative externalities of a complex command environment. 1st Battalion, 1st SFG(A) is under the operational control of the Special Operations Command Pacific and under the administrative control of 1st SFG(A), in addition to other non-standard command relationships. The strategic vision, philosophy and priorities of these organizations tend to seldom align. Issues occur, at times, when a leader's supervisor is not the one telling them what to do.

COMBAT EXPERIENCE AND OPERATIONAL OVERUTILIZATION

A second disadvantage for a forward-stationed battalion, specifically for 1st Battalion, 1st SFG(A), is combat experience. Save for a few individuals, 1st Battalion, 1st SFG(A) has not deployed units at the SFODA-level or higher to the Central Command AoR since 2013. Combat experience is starting to diminish within the ranks, resulting in a gap of institutional knowledge and a rise in retention issues. A third disadvantage is operational overutilization due to ease of employment in the PACOM AoR. Multiple entities within 36 countries mandate a litany of engagements throughout the calendar year to sustain progress.

TRAINING DIFFICULTIES

Finally, positioning a force overseas can exacerbate the difficulty to train. Training is harder to conduct, due to partner-nation considerations. In Okinawa, 1st Battalion, 1st SFG(A) is only allowed to conduct Airborne training on Ie Shima Island. Even if the unpredictable weather, to include sea state, cooperates to allow training, a single Solider can cancel an entire battalion's training iteration by landing mere feet from the drop zone. Certain tactics and skillsets, such as terminal guidance and electronic warfare, are either not allowed to be trained or require national-level approval. The majority of the U.S. Special Operations Command's

training, to include military schools, are located CONUS, costing at least \$2,000 for a plane ticket alone.

MITIGATIONS

Each of these disadvantages can be effectively mitigated. Given technological advances, it is easier for leaders within a complex command environment to synchronize than ever before. When a Special Forces Group enters a sustained combat rotation, each subordinate force needs to participate. Otherwise, individuals will start to migrate internally or leave the unit altogether. Operational overutilization can be quelled by leaders carefully monitoring PERSTEMPO. The regional and individual country campaign plans need to be adhered to and commanders need to ensure that each engagement is viable. Commands need to recognize skillsets that are exceedingly difficult to train abroad and implement annual programs of record, such as USASOC's Arch Angel program, to sustain proficiency.

CONCLUSION

After carefully assessing the configuration and working within the ranks of 1st Battalion, 1st SFG(A), analysis suggests that each active-duty Special Forces Group should have a forward-stationed Special Forces battalion. U.S. Army Special Forces work "by, with and through" local forces to conduct operations. Without a permanent presence in an assigned region maintaining relationships can exceedingly difficult, if not impossible, to implement. **SW**

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Capt. Nicholas Eidemiller is assigned to the 1st Special Forces Group (Airborne) as the PACOM Crisis Response Force Troop Commander.

01
U.S. Soldiers assigned to 1st Battalion, 1st SFG(A), conduct a static line jump from U.S. Navy HH-60G Pave Hawk on Ie Shima drop zone, Okinawa, Japan.
U.S. ARMY PHOTO BY SPC. AARON AGEE

02
Soldiers from 1st Battalion, 1st SFG(A) and Royal Thai Army Special Forces conduct a stress shoot training in Bangkok, Thailand as part of Balance Torch 17-7.
U.S. ARMY PHOTO BY STAFF SGT. KWADWO FRIMPPONG



02

MONGOLIAN SOF

BURGEONING PARTNERSHIP

BY CAPTAIN GORDON RICHMOND

The fighters dismount at dawn, moving swiftly and silently through valleys shrouded by morning fog. They creep towards an isolated stone building, where they know an enemy lies in wait. Using jagged ridgelines to conceal the column, the leader sets his men in a rough line and takes a small party forward to get within sight of the small building. With a hoarse shout, he signals the attack. Ragged lines sprint forward, and the battle begins.

The scene took place in 2016 during the culminating mission of a training exercise in Western Mongolia's Bayan-Ulgii Province, but the year just as easily could have been 1216. The attackers are members of Mongolian Armed Forces 084 Special Task Battalion, accompanied by Soldiers from 1st Special Forces Group (Airborne). Eight centuries after Mongolia's birth, the linkage between the Soldiers of STB 084 to the elite Mungadai horsemen who fought in the vanguard of Genghis Khan is clear.

Instead of the territorial conquest of the Khan's days, today's Mongolian soldiers focus on national defense, disaster response and contributing to international counterterrorist and peacekeeping efforts. Mongolian SOF glean extensive experience from their support to Operation Iraqi Freedom, their contribution to the NATO mission in Afghanistan, their participation in UN peacekeeping efforts in South Sudan and a multitude of bilateral military training events.

Mongolian SOF employ this incredible breadth of experience in regular combined training with U.S. Special Operations Forces. Soldiers from 1st SFG (A) train alongside STB 084 in Joint Combined Exchange Training Balance Magic, a SOF-specific bilateral exercise. At the direction of Pacific Command and Special Operations Command-Pacific, 1st SFG (A) deployed to Mongolia to train with STB 084 and other SOF units, to share lessons learned from training and combat in other theaters, and to build interoperability between the two elements. The Mongolians give as much as they receive, providing a unique training experience by demonstrating survival techniques, how to ride and pack camels and horses and sharing tactics derived from their military history as a Soviet satellite.

MONGOLIA IN CONTEXT

The Mongol Empire once stretched from Europe to the Pacific, encompassing most of the Eurasian land mass. The Mongol warrior prowess was legendary — known for the skill of their mounted archers and for their ability to manage large herds of ponies that were positioned to provide



01

01
Mongolian SOF Soldiers conduct dynamic close-quarter battle training with 1st SFG (A) Soldiers.

02
A 1st SFG (A) Soldier checks his anchor during mountaineering training with Mongolian SOF partners.

U.S. ARMY
PHOTOS
COURTESY OF
1ST SFG (A) PAO

the “horde” incredible tactical mobility and to extend the Khan's operational reach. Though many histories paint the name “Khan” as representative of incredible cruelty, Genghis Khan's reputation has seen a renaissance, of late.

Jack Weatherman's *Genghis Khan and the Making of the Modern World* argues that, while the Mongol's were unquestionably ruthless in war, their rule was sensible and did more good than harm in most of the hemisphere. “In nearly every country touched by the Mongols, the initial destruction and shock of conquest by an unknown and barbaric tribe yielded quickly to an unprecedented rise in cultural communication, expanded trade, and improved civilization,” Weatherman wrote.⁰¹ Genghis Khan remains the central figure in Mongolian culture 800 years after his death. His name adorns everything from the international airport to the national brand of vodka.

Sandwiched between Russia and China, with a population of about three million, today's Mongolia is considerably smaller in scale than it was at the height of the empire. Twentieth and 21st century Mongolia's greatest struggle is and has been balancing the relationships between their northern and southern neighbors. Over the course of the 20th century, Russia held the most sway, as Mongolia fell within its sphere of influence. Mongolia, fearful of a Chinese invasion during the Sino-Soviet split, requested Soviet forces to defend Mongolian borders, and more than 80,000 Soviet soldiers were stationed in the country at its peak during the late 1970s.⁰²

The 1991 dissolution of the Soviet Union turned Mongolia's domestic and relation on its head. Though Russian

cultural influence is still strong as many Mongolians speak Russian and consume Russian media; however, Chinese economic influence grew exponentially in the 2000s. This is due, in no small part, to Mongolia's extensive mineral deposits, which were inaccessible to multinational mining corporations during the Soviet years.

"Dubbed 'Minegolia,' Mongolia is no longer peripheral to China's rise," writes anthropologist Franck Billé. "With its seemingly endless mineral resources — the world's largest untapped coal deposits were discovered in Tavan Tolgoi, also in the south Gobi — its role has now become central."⁰³ While Mongolia's first and second priority remain China and Russia, respectively, the post-Soviet foreign policy is based upon a "third neighbor" policy, wherein they cultivate friendships beyond their land borders to balance their two primary partners.⁰⁴

TODAY'S MONGOLIAN MILITARY

Though they trace their lineage to, and embody the spirit of Genghis Khan's armies, today's Mongolian Armed Forces direct a laser focus toward peacekeeping operations. Most of the operational experience of 084 STB and other Mongolian SOF elements comes from working under the UN's mandate in South Sudan. Mongolia takes national pride in its capacity for peacekeeping; hosting an annual summer peacekeeping exercise called Khaan Quest. While the event began as a bilateral exercise with the U.S., Khaan Quest grew to include participants from some 25 additional countries.⁰⁵

In late spring, Mongolia hosts Gobi Wolf, a disaster response exercise with U.S. Army Pacific and other international partners.⁰⁶ On the whole, though Mongolia conducts regular training exchanges with both China and Russia, their bevy of multilateral military engagements reflects the "third neighbor" philosophy.⁰⁷

Mongolia JCETs offer USSOF unique opportunities to train in radically different terrain. The Five Hills Training Center, outside Ulaanbaatar, has the quintessential grassy, open steppes of Central Asia. Western Mongolia holds opportunities for military mountaineering and patrolling amongst jagged shale peaks reminiscent of Eastern Afghanistan, while Southern Mongolia's Gobi Desert allows training units to practice maneuver and survival in arid terrain. Each venue provides its own challenge — all suit the employment of pack animals and extended operations in austere environments.

Merely reaching the remote Western Mongolia training area is an expedition itself. The air movement from Joint-Base Lewis-McChord to Bayan-Ulgii requires at least three flights and a transition to a smaller airplane for the final leg of the movement. The ground movement that STB 084 has

to make from Ulaanbaatar is more than 1,600km (1,000 miles) over unproven — often nonexistent — dirt roads. The roundtrip distance amounts to at least a week of travel time on the part of both USSOF and Mongolian SOF to make the training work. The fact that both countries make the training work, despite the time requirement, is a testament to the mutual commitment to the SOF partnership.

Mongolian SOF maintain an extremely high tempo of bilateral engagements and a commitment to regular participation in peacekeeping efforts around the world. Their training and operational tempo makes it difficult for USSOF to increase the frequency of training exchanges in Mongolia. The effort, however, is a worthwhile one, as USSOF stands to benefit significantly by working alongside warriors who have such a proud lineage, such a diverse body of operational experience, and who will work so extensively to make bilateral training come together. 

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Capt. Gordon Richmond is the Assistant Operations Officer for 2nd Battalion, 1st Special Forces Group (Airborne).



02

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A Special Forces Soldier from 1st Special Forces Group (Airborne) works with Commandos from the Singapore Armed Forces to conduct close-quarter battle drills at Joint Base Lewis-McChord in Washington State. The Rangers are the elite combat force for the Singapore Armed Forces.

U.S. ARMY PHOTO BY SPC CODIE MENDENHALL





MARITIME FOREIGN INTERNAL DEFENSE IN BANGLADESH

01

An Interagency-SOF Success Story BY MAJOR ARI A. COHEN, PH.D.

"The security of the United States is tightly bound up with the security of the broader international system. As a result, our strategy seeks to build capacity of fragile or vulnerable partners to withstand internal threats and external aggression while improving the capacity of the international system itself to withstand the challenge posed by rogue states and would-be hegemons."

— *National Defense Strategy, U.S. DoD 2008*

In early 2007, the Government of Bangladesh faced a crisis that would potentially undermine its economic growth and the development of its growing export sector. In 2006, the International Maritime Bureau, a division of the International Chamber of Commerce,⁰¹ named Chittagong, Bangladesh's main commercial port, "the world's most dangerous port" because of its high levels of piracy and maritime criminal activity. The unstable maritime security environment threatened to significantly damage Bangladesh's evolution from a poor agrarian state into a dynamic export-based economy. Criminal predation against international merchant shipping within the emergent piracy hot spot encompassing the Chittagong Anchorage and Port became an issue of national economic security.⁰²

HISTORY & BACKGROUND

Having fought a bloody Liberation War⁰³ in order to secede from Pakistan in 1971, Bangladesh has been a "state in the making," struggling with rule of law and internal security issues for more than 45 years.

As such, the state has struggled to bring order to under-governed spaces, particularly within its vast coastal area, territorial waters and exclusive economic zone on the Bay of Bengal. The challenge of effectively controlling this large and environmentally complex area of sea, mangrove and coastline against the depredations of seaborne criminals is not new. What is new is that the global linkages established through international trade have made Bangladesh's struggle with piracy a very public security issue of significant national and international importance.

The historical record of pirate attacks against maritime commerce on the brown waters of the Bay of Bengal goes back more than 2,000 years. As the Muslim and Hindu kingdoms of the Ganges delta waxed and waned and colonial powers began to build trading outposts for their empires beginning in the late 1400s, piracy and maritime conflict on the Bay flourished over long periods of time. The Mughals, Portuguese, Arakanese and British fought brutal sea and land battles for control over both legitimate trade and illicit plunder on a body of water that today is within Bangladesh's territorial waters and EEZ. Burdened by an incredibly complex shoreline of 714km, consisting of rivers, inlets, islands and mangroves, the waters of the Bay of Bengal have continued to harbor a stubborn maritime piracy problem even as piracy in much of the rest of the world has become a topic of historical study rather than modern policy consideration.⁰⁴

In 2010, As a result of increasing lawlessness on the Bay of Bengal, particularly in the vicinity of Chittagong, the U.S. Government began a comprehensive, whole-of-government, foreign internal defense program to support the development of a more capable Bangladesh Coast Guard. U.S. Special Operations Forces, including U.S. Army SOF and U.S. Navy SOF, played key roles in the planning and implementation of the FID program, which nested within the Depart-

01
Boats line up at sunset at the Port of Chittagong in Bangladesh.

ment of State's Mission Strategic and Resource Plan for Bangladesh. In line with this plan, the USG supplied the BCG with more than two dozen fast patrol boats capable of conducting 24 hour patrols within the Chittagong Anchorage and adjoining territorial waters of the Bay of Bengal. Additionally, U.S. SOF began to train the BCG on a range of security operations, including civil-military operations in under-governed coastal areas, disaster relief, medical skills, vessel interdiction techniques, marksmanship and visit, board, search and seizure techniques. The USG also made substantial investments in security, disaster management and maritime domain awareness infrastructure for the BCG. Positive results from these investments in equipment, training and infrastructure became clear in a relatively short period of time.

Comparing the mean number of attacks from 1999 to 2010 and from 2011 to 2015, after the inception of the USG FID program, reported incidents of maritime piracy declined by 45 percent on an average annual basis. Other measures of maritime law enforcement efficiency improved significantly post-policy intervention, with criminal apprehensions increasing by 110.6 percent and the value of illicit goods seized by almost 14 times on an average annual basis. As a result of effective program planning and execution, maritime FID in Bangladesh significantly decreased the number of pirate attacks against international merchant ships and positioned the BCG as a far more adept maritime security force capable of securing key ports, anchorages and sea lines of communication.

FID IN BANGLADESH: A WHOLE OF GOVERNMENT APPROACH

Once considered by many to be the “province of Special Forces” alone,⁰⁵ FID, the training and development of partner nation military and security forces to “free and protect its society from subversion, lawlessness, insurgency, terrorism and other threats to their security,” is best realized as a whole-of-government effort. This approach to FID, detailed in the U.S. Department of Defense Joint Publication 3-22, means that SOF plays a leading role as the executor of FID; concurrently requiring the support of the DoS, the Department of Justice, the USAID, and other U.S. government agencies. In the case of maritime piracy and criminal activity in Bangladesh, DoD elements within the U.S. Embassy, Dhaka, including the Office of Defense Cooperation and the PACOM Augmentation Team, planned a response to a worsening maritime security situation on the Bay of Bengal as early as 2008. As these plans began to take shape, the entire U.S. Embassy country team swiftly stepped forward to support a comprehensive maritime FID program in support of the BCG.

Working under the guidance of the U.S. National Defense Strategy (2008), The Strategic Plan for the Department of State and USAID (2007), and the U.S. Embassy Dhaka's Mission Strategic and Resource Plan,

the ODC planned and resourced security assistance for the BCG. Initially, the ODC was able to provide the BCG with five 25-foot patrol vessels delivered in 2010 under the auspices of the foreign military financing program. As the USG provided patrol vessels began to facilitate BCG operational success, the ODC and the Civil Military Support Element, consisting of SOF Civil Affairs Soldiers from the 97th Civil Affairs Battalion (Airborne), began an intense and fruitful collaboration working with other USG partners and the BCG to develop their capabilities as a maritime and coastal security force.

In addition to providing patrol vessels and operator training, using multiple funding sources, the ODC and CMSE worked with the BCG to designate more than two dozen locations across Bangladesh's remote coastline for the development of Coast Crisis Management Centers. Each CCMC was planned and designed to include a fresh water well, generator, solar power array and communications package. Additionally, some were equipped with Automatic Identification System receivers and base stations in order to improve BCG maritime domain awareness. These cyclone, tsunami and earthquake resistant buildings are used as staging areas for the BCG to bring law-enforcement coverage to previously under-governed coastal areas. Using CCMCs as their base of operations, the BCG began to more effectively counter maritime piracy and smuggling in the remote coastal terrain and peripheral areas where criminal groups had previously functioned with impunity.

Figure 01
Chittagong Anchorage
and its Environs

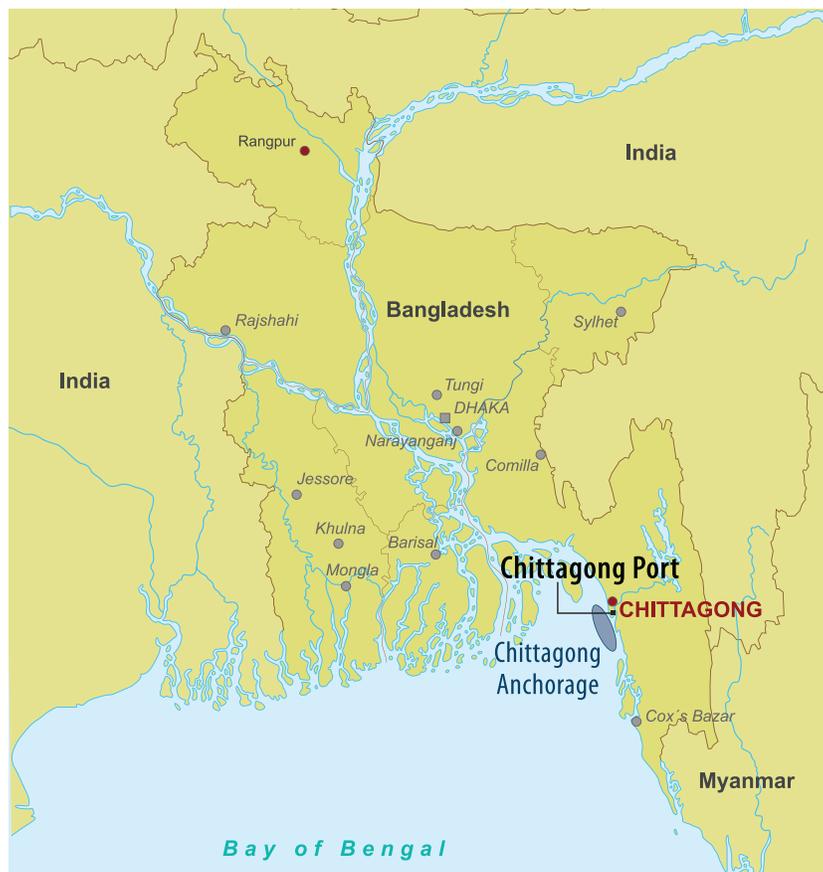


Figure 01



01

CCMCs also doubled as humanitarian assistance nodes for remote coastal populations. In the event of a cyclone, a common event in South Asia, people in proximity to the CCMC can take refuge in the building until the storm passes. Across the coastal region of Bangladesh, cyclones have killed hundreds of thousands since independence. In some areas of coastal Bangladesh, the CCMC is the only hard-stand, cyclone-resistant building and the only viable refuge for local people during the almost yearly cyclones, storm surges and floods.

As the CCMCs were completed by the contractor and handed over to the BCG, SOF CA Soldiers from 97th Civil Affairs Battalion (Airborne) conducted training with BCG sailors, focusing on disaster response, emergency medical care and civil-military operations. During these training exercises, CA Soldiers worked with the BCG to understand and improve their relationship with remote communities that had previously experienced minimal contact with, and benefit from, the Government of Bangladesh. These civil-military operations training events also reinforced the importance of understanding the local human terrain in order to better recognize the underlying causes of instability and develop sound contingency plans for natural disasters, which so often impact Bangladesh's coastal region.

In addition to the development of CCMC infrastructure along Bangladesh's coast, the ODC resourced and oversaw the installation of integrated communications and AIS⁰⁸ monitoring stations in selected CCMCs, enabling the BCG to track the locations of international merchant ships on the Bay of Bengal. These capabilities enabled the BCG to vector patrol

vessels to aid merchant ships reporting suspicious vessel activity or pirate attacks.

These technical capabilities were significantly enhanced during Fusion Buffalo 2013, a counter-narcotics training developed in the U.S. Embassy Dhaka by the CMSE, the senior law enforcement official from the DoJ, and the Joint Interagency Task Force West, headquartered in Hawaii. This training brought Navy SOF operators to Bangladesh, including SEALs and Special Warfare Combat Crewmen to teach the BCG VBSS, small vessels tactics, weapons training, tactical first aid and ship clearing techniques. The training also brought members of the Naval Criminal Investigative Service and the Portland, Oregon, police department to Bangladesh to teach law enforcement techniques, ranging from the use of chemical drug identification kits to perpetrator arrest procedures. This whole-of-government approach to FID sought to significantly improve maritime security on the Bay of Bengal by reducing pirate attacks and clamping down on the volume of illicit goods smuggled into the country via the Bay of Bengal.

THE RESULTS⁰⁷

The integrated, interagency approach to FID, fully supported by the U.S. Ambassador, the Defense Attaché, ODC and multiple elements within U.S. Special Operations Command Pacific, had a significant impact on reducing piracy on the Bay of Bengal. The integration of a comprehensive security assistance program and training delivered by SOF operators resulted in a reduction of reported piracy incidents in the Chittagong Anchorage and Port area by more than 45 percent on an average annual basis. In January 2012, the efforts of the USG to train and equip the BCG were formally recognized by the IMB, with the removal of Bangladesh from its list of "high risk" piracy prone areas." It was a major victory for the country, which spent two decades on the IMB's piracy watch list.

As a result of stepped-up operations with highly capable USG-provided patrol vessels, SOF and law enforcement training, the BCG was able to make significant inroads against the tide of illicit goods flooding into Bangladesh's porous sea borders. These items included narcotics, alcohol and consumer products that fueled profits for organized criminal syndicates throughout Bangladesh. Prior to the transfer of USG provided patrol boats in 2010, the BCG's most successful year seizing smuggled goods was in 2007 when it seized more than \$16.5 million in contraband. The second most successful year, pre-intervention, was in 2008 when the BCG seized less than \$14 million in illicit goods. In 2011, the first full year after the FID program began, the BCG seized \$38.7 million in contraband. By 2015, the BCG had more than tripled this result, seizing \$124.8 million in smuggled and illegal

01

A 97th Civil Affairs Battalion (Airborne) medic provides care to a child burnt in a kitchen accident. U.S. ARMY PHOTO

goods. The pre-intervention average annual value of illicit items seized was \$7 million; while the post-intervention average was \$96.8 million, an astounding increase of almost 14 times. Maritime FID, with US SOF and other agencies partnering with the BCG, had a significant impact on the success of smugglers and the ability of organized criminal groups to utilize sea infiltration routes for the transport of illicit goods.

Moreover, the additional capacity to rapidly cover sea-space in USG provided high-performance patrol vessels significantly increased the number of pirates and smugglers the BCG was able to apprehend. Prior to 2011, the BCG had never arrested more than 177 suspects in a single year; however, after the FID program began (2011-2015), the BCG made 255 or more arrests in four of five years. Another way to look at this considerable change in operational capacity is that the BCG made more arrests in the five years between 2011 to 2015 (1,409 arrests) than they had in the previous 10 years, from 2001 to 2010 (1,311 arrests). In the period following the FID program implementation, the BCG more than doubled the average number of suspects apprehended on an average annual basis, increasing arrests by 110 percent. This result, in addition to IMB piracy data and other indicators, provided the ODC, the U.S. Embassy Dhaka and other key stakeholders another indicator of encouraging FID program results.

CONCLUSION

As defined by DoD Joint Publication 3-22, FID is a joint, interagency activity that works most effectively when conducted with a competent PN force. The maritime FID program partnership with the BCG was a success; not only because program planning included key SOF and U.S. Embassy stakeholders, but also be-

cause the BCG was effectively integrated into the planning process from the beginning in order to collaboratively map out its own organizational development. The close planning and development relationship, spearheaded by the ODC and the CMSE, significantly impacted security outcomes on the Bay of Bengal.

Reported attacks against international merchant shipping declined by 50 percent according to the International Maritime Bureau, when comparing data from the 2010 to 2015 (International Maritime Bureau, 2016). During the same period of time, indicators of BCG maritime policing efficiency also improved, with the average annual results for arrests and the value of illicit goods seized more than doubling and increasing by almost 14 times respectively. According to senior BCG officers, these outcomes resulted in reduced insurance rates for merchant vessels making port calls in Chittagong.⁰⁸ With U.S. partnership and support, the Government of Bangladesh could effectively

THE INTEGRATED, INTERAGENCY APPROACH TO FID, FULLY SUPPORTED BY THE U.S. AMBASSADOR, THE DEFENSE ATTACHE, THE OFFICE OF DEFENSE COORDINATION AND MULTIPLE ELEMENTS WITHIN U.S. SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND PACIFIC, HAD A SIGNIFICANT IMPACT ON REDUCING PIRACY ON THE BAY OF BENGAL.

RESULTS — BY THE NUMBERS

40%

**DECREASE IN REPORTED PIRACY
CHITTAGONG ANCHORAGE AND PORT AREA**

1999 - 2010 (PRE-INTERVENTION):
20.5 - median number of reported incidents per year

2011 - 2015 (POST-INTERVENTION):
11.0 - median number of reported incidents per year

173%

**INCREASE IN VALUE OF ILLICIT GOODS
SEIZED BY THE BCG**

1999 - 2010 (PRE-INTERVENTION):
\$7 Million - annual average

2011 - 2015 (POST-INTERVENTION):
\$96.8 Million - annual average

71%

**INCREASE IN CRIMINAL APPREHENSIONS
BY THE BCG**

1999 - 2010 (PRE-INTERVENTION):
133.8 - annual average

2011 - 2015 (POST-INTERVENTION):
281.8 - annual average

** ALL NUMBERS ARE APPROXIMATE. USG Material support to BCG began June 2010.*



expand its maritime security capabilities, protecting vital commercial shipping lanes and the Chittagong Anchorage, while providing the security environment necessary to support a burgeoning export-based economy.

The success of the maritime security FID program in Bangladesh is a little known U.S. SOF-interagency success. With guidance from DoS and DoD strategy documents, the ODC and U.S. Embassy country team identified and effectively addressed an important PN internal security issue. Incorporating long-term SOF and non-SOF military engagement, the ODC and CMSE developed an integrated, training, equipping and infrastructure development plan with significant input from the PN security organization. The success of the plan also depended on ongoing interagency support, particularly from the DoS and DoJ. The interagency support and close collaboration sustained by the ODC and CMSE with the BCG achieved definitive positive outcomes and set in motion a highly successful, whole-of-government approach to maritime FID in Bangladesh. 

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Major Ari A. Cohen graduated the Civil Affairs Qualification Course in the spring of 2011. Upon completion of the CAQC, he was assigned to the 97th CA Battalion (ABN), 95th CA BDE (ABN) where he completed an assignment as the Civil Information Management Chief. He was then assigned to serve as a Civil Affairs Team Leader where he completing the training, deployment and redeployment of a Civil Affairs team assigned to support the PACOM Augmentation Team in Dhaka, Bangladesh. At the completion of his team leader assignment, Maj. Cohen was selected to participate in a doctoral program sponsored by the U.S. Army JFK Special Warfare Center and School. He completed his Ph.D. in August 2017, and is currently assigned to the 1st Special Forces Command (Airborne) as a planner.

NOTES **01.** International Chamber of Commerce 2006. **02.** By 2006, Bangladesh had become the eighth largest exporter (by value) of ready-made garments in the world. This sector, contributed over 70% of Bangladesh's export income (World Trade Organization, 2015). The garment sector has been, and continues to be, the largest employer in the country (Shonchoy & Tsubota, 2013). Any threat to garment exports, from a security standpoint or otherwise, could have a negative economic impact with ripple effects throughout the population and government of Bangladesh. **03.** Estimates vary, but between 500,000 to a million Bangladeshis perished during the 1971 Liberation War. Many deaths, both during and after the conflict, can be attributed to individual and groups vendettas, criminal activity, and general lawlessness (Gerlach, 2010). **04.** Martin Murphy (2009) described seven factors which engender a favorable environment for maritime piracy: 1) Favorable geography; 2) Cultural acceptability; 3) Legal and jurisdictional opportunities; 4) Conflict and disorder; 5) Under-funded law enforcement; 6) Permissive political environment; 7) Reward. It can be argued that Bangladesh has suffered under the burden of all seven of these factors. **05.** Joint Publication 3-22 quotes Secretary of Defense Robert Gates: "The standing up and mentoring of indigenous army and police—once the province of Special Forces—is now a key mission for the military as a whole" (U.S. Department of Defense, 2010, pp. II-1). **06.** The maritime Automatic Identification System (AIS) is a collision avoidance and navigational assistance system required for all international merchant vessels of over 300 tons. The system utilizes GSP technology and VHF channels to broadcast the identity of a ship, its type, position, speed, course, and other important navigation information to other ships and land based systems (U.S. Coast Guard, 2016; Vesper Marine, 2016). **07.** This section draws heavily upon, including verbatim passages from, my doctoral dissertation: *Maritime Piracy on the Bay of Bengal: A Case Study of Maritime Crime, Targeted Intervention, and the Diffusion of Guardianship* (Cohen, 2017). **08.** Senior BCG officers stated that merchant vessel insurance rates declined by approximately 30% after the IMB removed Bangladesh from its "high risk" watch list (Bangladesh Coast Guard Officers, 2014).

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- > Counterintelligence

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

3RD QUARTER SELECTION BOARDS

Board	CONVENE DATE	ADJOURN DATE
LTC ARMY (OPS, OS, FS, ID) Promotion Selection Board (PSB) & MAJ SELCON	01/24/18	02/16/18
Reserve Components LTC APL PSBs & MAJ APL SELCON	01/30/18	02/16/18
RA-USAR (AGR) MSG Promotion/SFC QSP	02/06/18	03/02/18
COL ARMY (OPS, OS, FS, ID) PSBs	02/13/18	03/02/18
RESERVE COMPONENTS MAJ APL PSBs & CPT APL SELCON	03/07/18	03/28/18

DA PAM 600-25, U.S. ARMY NONCOMMISSIONED OFFICER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT GUIDE

The Career Management Field chapters of DA Pam 600-25 will soon be on MILSUITE, <https://www.milsuite.mil/book/groups/smartbook-da-pam-600-25>. The first three chapters of the Pam are a standalone publication with each CMF having its own page.

For CMFs 18 and 37, both chapters contain a complete revision of Sergeant Major Professional Development Proficiency Codes.

CMF 37 KEY CHANGES

- > Updated duties to include three primary Military Information Support Operations missions of Military Information, Interagency/Intergovernmental Support and Civil Authority Information Support.
- > Updated requirements for ARSOF NCO PDS.
- > Added JSOU, JKO, and ARRTC courses to recommended career management self-development for each rank.
- > Updated key and developmental positions for each rank.
- > Identification of Security Forces Assistance Brigade PSYOP NCO as a broadening assignment.
- > Update to the best qualified schools for CMF 37 SFCs.
- > Attendance of Summit and possibly Keystone prior to competing for a nominative CSM assignment.

CMF 18 KEY CHANGES

TRAINING

- > Under Active Duty ASIs associated with CMF 18, modified: Special Forces Sniper (W3) was modified to reflect eligibility for all CMF 18s who successfully complete either the Special Operations Target Interdiction Course or U.S. Marine Corps Sniper Course.
- > 9-3. Recommend Career Management Self-Development by Rank: Added Special Operations Target Interdiction II, Special Forces Mountaineering and Advanced Special Operations Techniques (ASOT II), for Staff Sergeant best qualified under paragraph 9-3, b, 11.
- > 9-3. Recommend Career Management Self-Development by Rank: Added Advance Special Operations Techniques (ASOT III) for Sergeant First Class Best qualified under paragraph 9-3, c, 11.

UTILIZATION

- > U9-3. Recommend Career Management Self-Development by Rank: Added 1st Special Forces Command (A) 4th BN to Office of Special Warfare under paragraph 9-3, c, 12; and any duty within a sensitive activities designated position, including the Joint Interagency, 1st Special Forces Command (A) 4th BN and a Special Mission Unit position.

Staff Sergeant

- > 9-3. Recommend Career Management Self-Development by Rank: Took out the requirement for Staff Sergeants to have 12 months successful SFODA time in order to be fully qualified. This 12-month requirement was moved to best qualified for a SSG which replaced for the SSG to have

24 months consecutive time spent on an SFODA or 12 months as a senior on a Special Forces Operational Detachment-Alpha. This is found under paragraph 9-3, b, 10 and 11: (10) While a Fully Qualified CMF18 Active Duty Component SSG meets the requirements within the promotion board MILPER message, CMF 18 SSGs must have a Foreign Language Proficiency Rating with a Defense Language Proficiency Test, and or Oral Proficiency Interview of 1/1 or better, 240 APFT score (80 percent in each event), meet height/weight requirement IAW AR 600-9, have a DA Photo IAW AR 640-30, and have an accurate Enlisted Record Brief.(11) The Best Qualified CMF 18 Active Component SSGs must have at least 12 months of successful service on an SFODA or SMU.

Sergeant First Class

- > 9-3. Recommend Career Management Self-Development by Rank: A fully qualified SFC time requirement on an SFODA was changed from 42 months to 36 months in paragraph 9-3, c, 10: CMF18 SFC must have at least 36 months of accumulative active component service on a SFODA, SFODE, SFODG, or SMU.
- > 9-3. Recommend Career Management Self-Development by Rank: Added 12 months as a Senior or Intelligence Sergeant for SFC Best qualified under paragraph 9-3, c, 11: CMF 18 Active Component SFC should have 12 months rated time as an SFODA senior weapons sergeant, senior engineer sergeant, senior medical sergeant, senior communication sergeant and/or intelligence sergeant; or be rated as a SFODA, SFODE, SFODG or SMU Team/operations sergeant for no less than 12 months in order to gain valuable experience prior to

being promoted to master sergeant.

- > 9-3. Recommend Career Management Self-Development by Rank: Added that the 24 months consecutive time counts whether the Soldier is promotable or not for SFC Best qualified under paragraph 9-3, c, 11: If that rated time as a team/operations sergeant is 24 months consecutive then that time counts as successfully rated time whether the Soldier is a SFC or a SFC (P).

Master Sergeant/First Sergeant

- > 9-3. Recommend Career Management Self-Development by Rank: Added under master sergeant best qualified the requirement to have 24 months successful rated time on an SFODA in paragraph 9-3, d, 11: MSG will have 24 months or more of active component service as the team/operations sergeant on a SFODA, SFODE, SFODG or SMU.
- > 9-3. Recommend Career Management Self-Development by Rank: Added Military Assistance Training Academy for E8 Non-commissioned Officer in Charge positions under MSG best qualified paragraph 9-3, d, 11: Military Assistance Training Academy.

Sergeant Major/Command Sergeant Major

- > Under paragraph 9-10 for SGM added the PDPC codes and took out the in-depth narrative of each code and condensed to numerical listing: 9-10. CMF 18 SGM/CSM Professional Development Proficiency Code Table Numerical listing of skills 6S,6K,6C,6P,7S,7K,7C,7P,8S,8T,8U,8V,8A,8C,8D,8E,8F.

ALL

- > For all pay grades, 36 months is now the minimum required time on an SFODA to be eligible to go to USAJFKSWCS as well as be eligible to be considered for promotion to MSG.

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