

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



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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

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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

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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-



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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. 