



## U.S. Army Pacific Contingency Command Post: A Theater-Army Expeditionary Capability

*Our leaders at every level have displayed unparalleled ingenuity, flexibility and adaptability. Our Soldiers have displayed mental and physical toughness and courage under fire. They have transformed the Army into the most versatile, agile, rapidly deployable and sustainable strategic land force in the world.*

General Raymond T. Odierno, Chief of Staff, Army  
“Initial Thoughts,” 7 September 2011

### Introduction

In April 2011, U.S. Army Pacific (USARPAC) certified a theater-army contingency command post (CCP), the final step in a process that began in 2009. This provides the commanding general of USARPAC with a small, rapidly deployable cell that brings prompt command, control and liaison capability to U.S. and allied forces in the region. It will increase the response options for combatant commanders and decrease response times for regional contingencies.<sup>1</sup>

### Background

In 2004, the Army’s modularity plan called for a deliberate theater-opening capability—the ability to receive, stage and push forward Army forces entering a new theater. Originally, the modularity concept called for the theater-level army to provide a rapid deployment capability to a contingency—to include combat operations—in the form of an early entry command post (EECP). The EECP was then to receive follow-on augmentation in the form of the theater army’s larger and organic operational command post (OCP). The OCP was designed to provide an expandable base that would then form a joint-component headquarters for major operations.

In 2009 the Army revised the theater army’s role in regional operations and redefined the need for early deployment capability. The resulting decision was that modular corps headquarters would deploy in alignment with the Army Force Generation cycle and form the joint-force land command in large operations and the theater army would retain its normal function as force provider headquarters for the

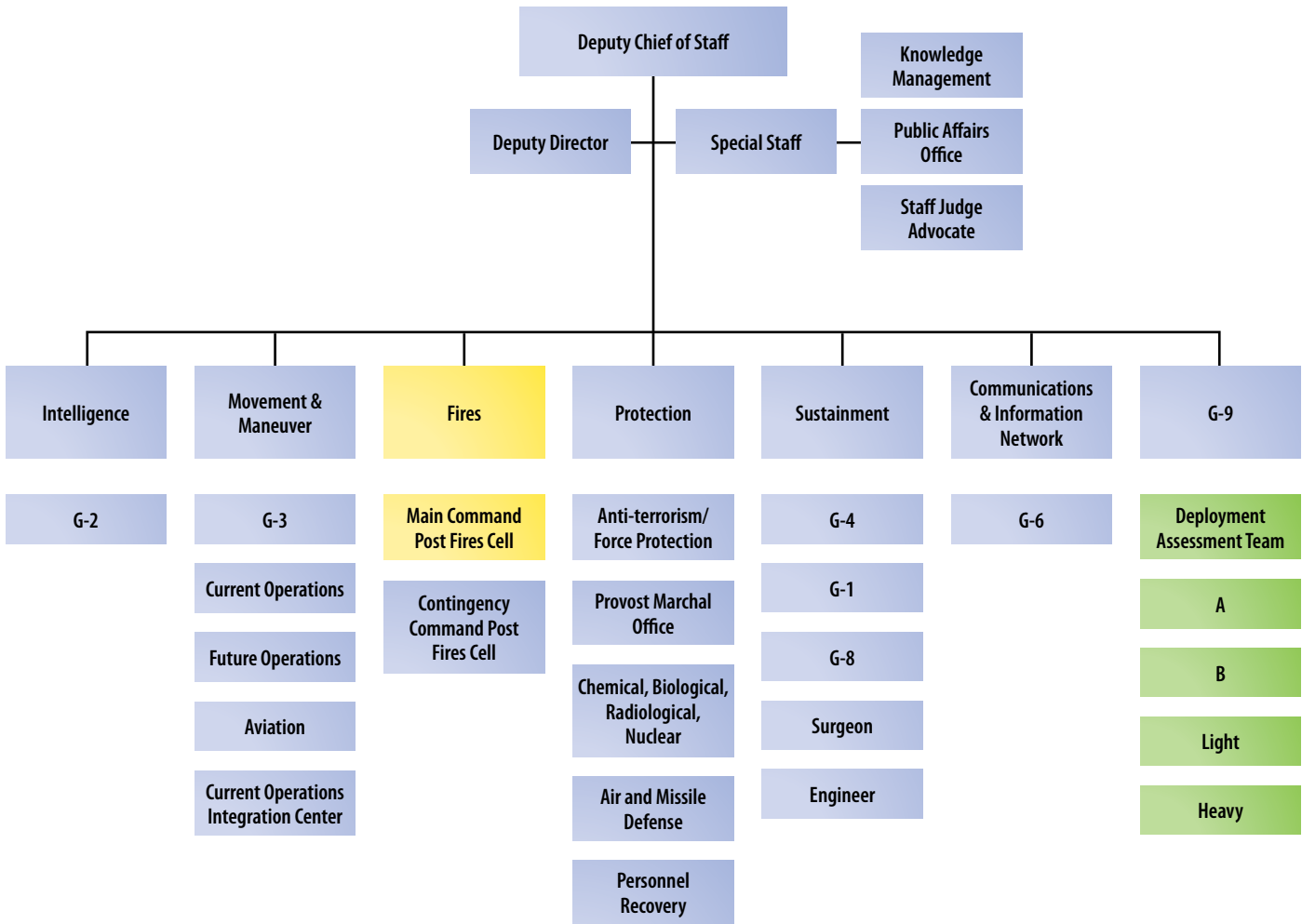


specific theaters. However, the theater armies were to retain an early response capability to be employed in smaller contingencies or when a corps was not immediately available. Given the force demands for Afghanistan and Iraq, it is entirely probable that a corps could be otherwise engaged and that the theater army would be the only high-level entity available to respond to a regional crisis.

The CCP is the streamlined execution of theater-army expeditionary capability. It consists of a 96-person cell representing, not duplicating, the major staff functions of the theater army headquarters. Within the 96 personnel are two sub-elements—deployment assessment team (DAT) A with nine personnel and DAT B with 14 personnel. The two teams can respond to a regional event within 24 and 48 hours, respectively, with the remainder of the command post arriving within 72 hours. The CCP can command and control up to two brigade-size elements conducting low/non-kinetic operations, such

<sup>1</sup> U.S. Army North has a standing CCP, but it is configured in a much different manner and can respond to different events given its unique area and intergovernmental responsibilities within the United States.

# Contingency Command Post



- Personnel from main command post
- Humanitarian assistance and disaster response (includes multiple sections)

Deployment Assessment Teams Organized by Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Response Situation

<b>Team A</b>	24 hours	Initial response (Assessment Team)
<b>Team B</b>	48–72 hours	Added technical positions based on Team A assessment
<b>Light</b>	Infrastructure available	Additional Contingency Command Post passengers based on situations
<b>Heavy</b>	No infrastructure	Full Contingency Command Post with additional augmentation support required

Source: Headquarters, U.S. Army Pacific

as noncombatant evacuation, humanitarian assistance, consequence management, peace operations or theater security cooperation. The CCP is capable of round-the-clock operations for 30 days without additional augmentation. However, it is dependent on either other theater units or subordinate units for security—it has no organic force protection. When not deployed to a contingency, the CCP serves as a separate but subordinate command

and control function within the theater army’s main command post (MCP). This is because the CCP personnel are not taken out of existing positions within the MCP but are assigned specifically to the CCP. This allows an added measure of flexibility or oversight for the theater-army commander that might not otherwise exist if the contingency command post had to be drawn from organic MCP personnel.



## USARPAC CCP

The USARPAC CCP is one part of USARPAC's theater-army reorganization and capability improvements undertaken since 2006, an effort that included the transformation of Eighth U.S. Army in South Korea into a warfighting headquarters (now called Eighth Army), the activation of the 8th Theater Sustainment Command and the creation of I Corps (Forward).<sup>2</sup>

Based out of Fort Shafter, Hawaii, the USARPAC CCP has been preparing for operational certification in configuration since 2009. In June of that year the DATs participated in Makani Pahili 2009—an annual, inter-agency exercise in Hawaii that simulates a hurricane disaster. In December of that year the command post participated in Yama Sakura 57 in Japan—its first event as a whole unit. Yama Sakura is an annual bilateral command post-level training event with the Japan Ground Self Defense Force designed to simulate a joint defense of Japan. In this particular case, the CCP concept was tested as a partner with I Corps (Forward), stationed at Camp Zama, Japan; the two units combined to simulate the conduct of a major combat operation. The ability of a theater CCP to combine with a similarly sized corps forward headquarters to provide major combat command and control functions is a critical tool for combatant commanders to rapidly respond to any level of crisis.

In February 2010, the command post and I Corps (Forward) combined again to conduct a command-post exercise as part of Cobra Gold 2010, an annual multinational, multi-echelon partnership exercise sponsored by the United States and Thailand. Airlift loadout and operations center set-up drills in September, a validation exercise in October and Yama Sakura 59 in January 2011 prepared the command post for its final certification exercise and full operational capability in April 2011. The USARPAC CCP was declared fully operationally capable



(FOC) in April 2011 following exercise Balikatan 11—a bilateral training event between the United States and the Philippines that simulated a multinational combined task force. The two-week exercise began with the command post deploying from Joint Base Pearl Harbor–Hickam, Hawaii, with the support of the U.S. Air Force, to Clark International Airport, Philippines. Within 24 hours the unit was fully operational and providing situational updates to USARPAC headquarters in Hawaii. The conclusion of the exercise rewarded the CCP with FOC status, making it available for contingency response at the direction of the U.S. Pacific Command (PACOM) commander.

The unique advantage of the USARPAC CCP is that the recurring annual exercises, such as Cobra Gold, Yama Sakura and Balikatan, provide regular joint-force training and cooperation opportunities with other services. The command post is ultimately a resource for the whole Pacific region and all services, not just the Army. The CCP's role as a possible joint task-force headquarters and as the premier contingency response tool for the PACOM commander, coupled with the enduring presence of sister services in the Pacific, means it will most likely execute interservice operations in response to a contingency. Habitual large-scale joint exercises reduce operational friction for the USARPAC CCP, resulting in faster and more efficient responses to emergencies.

It is important to note that the CCP did not deploy to Japan in the aftermath of the earthquake and tsunami of March 2011. At the time, it was not certified as FOC and was thus not recognized as a functional tool for the PACOM commander to use in support of relief operations. Had the command post been diverted, the bilateral training goals between the United States and the Philippines would have been unmet and FOC certification delayed. In contrast, the U.S. Army South (ARSOUTH) CCP formed the nucleus of Joint Task Force–Haiti in 2010 despite being

<sup>2</sup> For more on U.S. Army Pacific's changes, see AUSA's Torchbearer National Security Report "Transforming U.S. Army Pacific," June 2009, <http://www.ousa.org/publications/torchbearercampaign/tnsr/Documents/TBNR-Pacific.pdf>.





in the middle of the validation process. Post-Haiti, the ARSOUTH CCP finished its formal validation process during Integrated Advance 2011, a humanitarian assistance/foreign disaster response exercise held at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba. Today, the USARPAC CCP continues its comprehensive training and preparedness drills, having completed exercise Makani Pahili 2011 in partnership with Joint Task Force-Homeland Defense in May 2011 and exercise Ulchi Freedom Guardian in August 2011 as part of a capability package for Eight Army in South Korea.

## Implications

As the Army reevaluates its worldwide mission post-Iraq and post-Afghanistan, the contingency command post and other small, rapidly deployable units will become more central to plans and operations. The themes of partner building and rapid response will form the core of future unified land operations via full-spectrum operations doctrine.<sup>3</sup> Although an incidental capability rather than a deliberate one, the CCP's ability to partner with allied nations above the brigade level is critical. Arguably, it is easier to build specific skills at the unit level with traditional unit exchanges than it is to build command, control and support synchronization for staffs at higher echelons. The CCP fills a need to help allied nations prepare for the complex and difficult task of managing a modern fight. Furthermore, its rapid deployability will be a key characteristic. The Pacific, South America and Africa do not have a large U.S. presence compared to Europe or the Middle East. The command post's ability to act as a first responder to natural or man-made disasters and then potentially transform initial response into enduring partnerships will be important to building U.S. good will and strategic security while countering negative regional influences of rival states or groups. Additionally, the CCP is an excellent tool for the Army to expand its partnership opportunities; this is especially true in the Pacific region, where partnering exercises have historically involved participation by other services. Finally, the deployment of the ARSOUTH CCP to Haiti prior to operational certification highlights the strategic resourcing challenges of the major commands. During the Japan earthquake and tsunami, the PACOM commander had a significant amount of resources and personnel—from all services—already positioned



in and around Japan from normal stationing routines and did not need to interrupt the unit validation cycle and mission schedule. U.S. Southern Command had comparatively fewer resources near Haiti and in theater in general, which required deployment of the CCP—certified or not—to replace the initial ad hoc joint task force headquarters.

Worldwide events often defy U.S. strategic priorities. All theaters require the ability to react quickly to regional contingencies with minimal friction, regardless of concurrent operations in other theaters or force-wide distribution of resources. As the U.S. national strategy elevates the importance of assistance and response, the CCP's flexible mission capability, small size and ease of deployment will prove invaluable. The opportunities to expand operations and partnerships in historically economy-of-force theaters, even if they start small, must be pursued to give the United States the global relationships required for strategic flexibility. Ultimately the question is not whether the contingency command post will be useful but whether one per theater will be enough.

<sup>3</sup> For more information on unified land operations and full-spectrum operations, see AUSA's Torchbearer National Security Report "U.S. Army Training for Unified Land Operations," September 2011, [http://www.ousa.org/publications/ilw/Documents/TB\\_Full-Spectrum\\_web.pdf](http://www.ousa.org/publications/ilw/Documents/TB_Full-Spectrum_web.pdf).