

Organization and History of the Unified Commands of the United States: Focusing on the Pacific Command (PACOM)

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1. Introduction

This paper provides an overview of the organization and history of the unified commands of the United States, and of the nine unified commands, focuses on the United States Pacific Command in particular.

While the United States Armed Forces is known for the four branches: the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps, the actual combatant commands are organized into “unified commands.” In other words, if there is real combat, rather than the Army, Navy, and so on each participating independently, the participation is by forces that are integrated by region or by function. Of the nine unified commands, six are by region and three are by function, and the one with jurisdiction over the Asia-Pacific region is the “United States Pacific Command (PACOM),” which is the largest of the nine unified commands, and it is said to rely on 300,000 people and more.

In considering the security of East Asia including Japan, the presence of United States Forces Japan (USFJ) and United States Forces Korea (USFK) has garnered attention. Nevertheless, the USFJ Headquarters and USFK Headquarters are, to put it frankly, only branch offices of the Pacific Command, and the office that takes command of operations in the event of an emergency is the Pacific Command Headquarters located in Oahu, Hawaii, United States. Expressed symbolically, if the USFJ Commander is a three-star general, then the PACOM Commander is a four-star general. The PACOM Commander only takes orders from the U.S. President and Secretary of Defense, and

therefore has a tremendous level of authority with regard to security in the Asia-Pacific region.

In considering security in Asia-Pacific region, the presence of the Pacific Command cannot be ignored, and in spite of this, there is not very much academic research taking a straightforward look at the Pacific Command either in the United States or other countries.¹ The maritime expansion of China and existence of North Korean nuclear weapons and missiles are destabilizing the security of the Asia-Pacific region. This is also a region where cyber attacks frequently occur. In 2015, Admiral Harry B. Harris, Jr., a Japanese-American, was appointed PACOM Commander, and it appears that there have been new developments since then. This paper will look at what the unified commands are in the organization of the United States Armed Forces, the history of these starting from their establishment, and their current organizational structure.

2. Formation of the Unified Commands

When looking at the United States Armed Forces, the general perspective seems to be that these are “force providers.” Under U.S. law, the United States Armed Forces consist of five branches: Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps under the Department of Defense, and the United States Coast Guard under the Department of Homeland Security.² Each of these armed forces has a secretary. The secretaries of the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps are under the Secretary of Defense, and the chief of the United States Coast Guard is under the Secretary of Homeland Security. All of these individuals are ultimately under the command of the President who is the Commander in Chief of the United States Armed Forces.

The unified commands covered in this paper are one type of “combatant command.”³

¹ Military journalists have the following books. Beigun Tokubetsu Shuzaihan, *Amerika Taiheiyogun no Shin Senryaku (New Strategy of the United States Pacific Command)* (Ariadne Kikaku, 2004). Also, in regard to the United States Forces Japan Headquarters, there are details in Tsuyoshi Sunohara, *Zainichibeigun Shirei-bu (United States Forces Japan Headquarters)* (Shinchosha, 2008). A book focused on the transformation (reorganization) of the United States Armed Forces is Masahiko Hisae, *Beigunsaihen: Nichibei “Himitsu Kosho” de Nani ga Atta ka (Reorganization of the United States Armed Forces: What Happened in the “Secret Negotiations” between Japan and the United States?)* (Kodansha’s New Library of Knowledge, 2005). A book that covers both the United States Armed Forces and the Chinese People’s Liberation Army is Satoru Fuse, *Beigun to Jinmin Kaiho-gun: Amerika Kokubososhō no Taichū Senryaku (The United States Armed Forces and the People’s Liberation Army: The United States Department of Defense’s Strategies for China)* (Kodansha’s New Library of Knowledge, 2014).

² United States Code, Title 10, §101.

³ Referred to the following regarding the history and structure of combatant commands. Cynthia A. Watson, *Combatant Commands: Origins, Structure, and Engagements 1st Edition*, Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, 2010.

There are cases in which a combatant command is referred to as a “force user” rather than a force provider. There is a relationship in which the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps prepare and provide the necessary personnel and equipment, and the combatant commands use these.

Combatant command can be divided into “unified combatant command” and “specified combatant command.” Unified combatant command is defined as “a command that has a broad and continuing mission and is composed of forces from at least two military departments.” Specified combatant command is defined as “a command that has a broad and continuing mission and is usually composed of forces from one military department.”⁴ This means that a unified combatant command may be composed of forces from the Navy and Army, for example, while a specified combatant command may be composed of forces from just the Army. The unified commands covered in this paper are this type of “unified combatant command.”

The unified commands are established by the President through the Secretary of Defense receiving advice and support from the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.⁵ On a regular basis of “not less often than every two years,” the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff reviews the missions of each unified command, their responsibilities (including geographical boundaries), and the frameworks of their military potential, and if necessary proposes changes to the President through the Secretary of Defense.

The outcome of this review is a “unified command plan” (Chart 1). The provision regarding reviewing on a regular basis of “not less often than every two years” is based on the Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of October 4, 1986, Pub. L. 99-433. Prior to this act, reviews were sometimes conducted at shorter intervals. In the era of President Dwight D. Eisenhower, when the Cold War was becoming increasingly severe, reviews were carried out especially frequently. After this, most of the Presidents conducted reviews, but President Lyndon Johnson, who took office when President John F. Kennedy was assassinated, and President Jimmy Carter did not.

Even after the establishment of the Goldwater-Nichols Act of 1986, the time between “Unified Command Plan SM-143-88” of March 1, 1988 and “Unified Command Plan SM-712-89” of August 16, 1989, was short at about one year and four months. This is thought to be due to the fact that it was around the time of a change of administrations, from President Ronald Reagan to President George H. W. Bush. Similarly, the time between “Unified Command Plan MCM-64-92” of April 24, 1992 and “Unified Command Plan MCM-57-93” of April 5, 1993—which was around the

⁴ United States Code, Title 10, §161.

⁵ *ibid.*

time of the change of administrations from President George H. W. Bush to President Bill Clinton—was also short at less than one year. President Clinton approved unified command plans six times during his eight years in office, so it seems that the two year rule is not being followed in practice.

The unified command plans that were issued under the administrations of Reagan, George H. W. Bush, and Clinton were classified and not released to the public. (The two unified command plans of the most recent Barack Obama administration were not classified.) These three administrations were during the transition from the Cold War end to the post-Cold War period, and it is not directly clear what the United States Armed Forces was intending to change at that time.

Following the end of World War II in the summer of 1945, U.S. President Harry S. Truman on December 14, 1946 approved the “Outline Command Plan,” the first unified command plan, and established seven unified commands. These were the Far East Command (FECOM), Pacific Command (PACOM), Alaskan Command, Northeast Command, U.S. Atlantic Fleet, Caribbean Command, and European Command. Of these, only the Pacific Command and European Command remain today.

An issue after the end of the World War II was jurisdiction regarding Japan and its coastal waters.⁶ Japan was under the jurisdiction of the Far East Command, but there was dispute regarding whether to place the Ogasawara Islands and Mariana Islands under the jurisdiction of the Far East Command or the Pacific Command. The result was that jurisdiction over the armed forces and equipment on the land of these islands was given to the Far East Command headed by the Army and jurisdiction over the seas around the island and logistics was given to the Pacific Command headed by the Navy. In 1951, following the outbreak of the Korean War in 1950, jurisdiction over the Ogasawara Islands and Mariana Islands, as well as the Philippines and Taiwan was transferred from the Far East Command to the Pacific Command. Then the Korean War ended, and after the Peace Treaty of San Francisco of 1951, Japan returned to the international community in 1952. In line with this, the Far East Command was dissolved in 1956 and the Pacific Command took over its jurisdiction.

⁶ This section is based on the following document. Edward J. Drea, Ronald H. Cole, Walter S. Poole, James F. Schnabel, Robert J. Watson, and Willard J. Webb, *History of the Unified Command Plan 1946–2012*, Joint History Office, Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Washington, DC, 2013, pp. 1-6.

Chart 1 Unified command plans of the United States Armed Forces

| Plan | Date of issuance | President | Superseded plan |
|--------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| (U) Outline Command Plan | Approved by President Truman on December 14, 1946 | Harry S. Truman | SM-180-55 of March 9, 1955 |
| (U) SM-1419-53 | July 24, 1953 | Dwight D. Eisenhower | SM-180-55 of March 9, 1955 |
| (U) SM-180-55 | March 9, 1955 | Dwight D. Eisenhower | SM-749-57 of October 24, 1957 |
| (U) SM-548-56 | July 3, 1956 | Dwight D. Eisenhower | SM-749-57 of October 24, 1957 |
| (C) SM-749-57 | October 24, 1957 | Dwight D. Eisenhower | SM-643-58 of September 8, 1958 |
| (C) SM-643-58 | September 8, 1958 | Dwight D. Eisenhower | SM-105-61 of February 4, 1961 |
| (C) SM-105-61 | February 4, 1961 | John F. Kennedy | SM-1400-63 of November 20, 1963 |
| (C) SM-1400-63 | November 20, 1963 (effective December 1, 1963) | John F. Kennedy (Lyndon Johnson at time of effective date) | SM-422-71 of June 30, 1971 |
| (C) SM-422-71 | June 30, 1971 (effective January 1, 1972) | Richard Nixon | SM-356-75 of June 27, 1975 |
| (C) SM-356-75 | June 27, 1975 (effective July 1, 1975) | Gerald R. Ford | SM-729-83 of October 28, 1983 |
| (S) SM-729-83 | October 28, 1983 | Ronald Reagan | SM-143-88 of March 1, 1988 |
| (S) SM-143-88 | March 1, 1988 (effective April 1, 1988) | Same as above | SM-712-89 of August 16, 1989 |
| (S) SM-712-89 | August 16, 1989 (effective October 1, 1989) | George H. W. Bush | MCM-64-92 of April 24, 1992 |
| (S) MCM-64-92 | April 24, 1992 (effective June 1, 1992) | George H. W. Bush | MCM-57-93 of April 5, 1993 |
| (S) MCM-57-93 | April 5, 1993 (effective April 15, 1993) | Bill Clinton | MCM-144-93 of October 6, 1993 |
| (S) MCM-144-93 | October 6, 1993 | Bill Clinton | MCM-080-95 of June 21, 1995 |
| (S) MCM-080-95 | June 21, 1995 | Bill Clinton | MCM-011-96 of January 17, 1996 |
| (S) MCM-011-96 | January 17, 1996 | Bill Clinton | MCM-024-98 of February 9, 1998 |
| (S) MCM-024-98 | February 9, 1998 | Bill Clinton | MCM-162-99 of October 12, 1999 |
| (S) MCM-162-99 | October 12, 1999 | Bill Clinton | MCM-0016-03 of February 4, 2003 |
| (S) MCM-0016-03 | February 4, 2003 (with Change-1 and Change-2 incorporated) | George W. Bush | MCM-0012-05 of March 17, 2005 |
| (FOUO) MCM-0012-05 | March 17, 2005 | George W. Bush | MCM-0004-06 of May 31, 2006 |
| (FOUO) MCM-0004-06 | May 31, 2006 | George W. Bush | MCM-0044-08 of December 23, 2008 |
| (U) MCM-0044-08 | December 23, 2008 | George W. Bush | MCM-0013-11 of April 20, 2011 |
| (U) MCM-0013-11 | April 20, 2011 | Barack Obama | DJSM-0604-11 of September 21, 2011 |
| (U) DJSM-0604-11 | September 21, 2011 (with Change-1 incorporated) | Barack Obama | |

Source: The names of the Presidents have been added to the chart in the following document. Edward J. Drea, Ronald H. Cole, Walter S. Poole, James F. Schnabel, Robert J. Watson, and Willard J. Webb, History of the Unified Command Plan 1946–2012, Joint History Office, Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Washington, DC, 2013, pp. 117-118.

Note: (U) is Unclassified, (C) is Classified, (S) is Secret, (FOUO) is For Official Use Only, SM is

Secretary's Memorandum (Secretary of Defense), MCM is "Memorandum issued in the name of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff," and DJSM is Director Joint Staff Memorandum (Director of the Joint Staff).

When the Vietnam War started in 1960, the Army attempted to create an independent unified command to cover Southeast Asia, but instead of this, the post of Commander of U.S. Military Assistance Command, Vietnam, was created under the Commander of U.S. Pacific Command, and the use of the Pacific Command component commands Pacific Air Forces (PACAF) and Pacific Fleet (PACFLT) was approved. This experience related to the Vietnam War gave the Army reservations about the Pacific Command headed by the Navy, so the Army proposed dividing the Pacific Command into four parts. Nevertheless, James R. Schlesinger, who served as Secretary of Defense at the end of the Richard Nixon administration and during the first half of the Gerald R. Ford administration, did not support this proposal for a split-up, and instead accepted the assertions of the Navy that the Pacific Ocean is a single geographical entity. This idea has been inherited by the current Pacific Command.

A similar dispute over authority arose with regard to control over the strategic nuclear arsenal. In 1946 immediately following World War II, the Army Air Forces (AAF) created the Strategic Air Command (SAC), and called for this to be run globally by one commander (from the Army), but the Navy opposed this. Then in 1947, the Air Force was created as a separated entity from the Army, and a dispute took place between the Air Force and Navy. When the submarine-launched ballistic missile Polaris was developed in the 1950s, discussions between the two sides became overheated. The result was that the Air Force was placed in charge of bombers and intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBM), and the Navy was placed in charge of submarines equipped with nuclear weapons via Navy forces under the Atlantic Command (LANTCOM; in existence from 1947 to 1993), European Command, and Pacific Command.

3. Goldwater-Nichols Act

Something that brought about major reforms regarding the operations of the unified commands was the Goldwater-Nichols Act, which was established in 1986 during the Reagan administration. The name of this act comes from the sponsors, Senator Barry Goldwater and Representative William Nichols.

As mentioned earlier, in the integrated operation of armed forces, there have been serious disputes over authority among the four branches, and this was strongly recognizable in the context of

the Vietnam War and the failure of the mission to rescue hostages at the U.S. Embassy in Iran in 1980. In particular, the failure of the latter had an effect on the outcome of the 1980 presidential election, and thus, President Carter was not reelected and the Reagan administration started.

The Goldwater-Nichols Act organized the relationships between the President, Secretary of Defense, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and each of the armed forces, and made integrated operation smoother. According to Shigeo Kikuchi of the National Institute for Defense Studies,⁷ a key point regarding the reforms is first of all the strengthening of the authority of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The Chairman was made independent from each of the armed forces, and given roles and responsibilities in a concentrated manner as the chief military advisor to the President and so on. Second, officers with specialized knowledge regarding “integration” started being cultivated as Joint Specialty Officers (JSO). It was established that JSOs cannot be held back with regard to the speed of their promotions, and as such, they are not biased toward ideas and actions giving precedence to advancing their career in their branch of the armed forces. Third, the commanders of the unified commands were given broader authority.

As a result of strengthening the functions of the unified commands, the characteristic of the unified commands being force users and each of the armed forces being force providers was strengthened.

When the Goldwater-Nichols Act was established, the Joint Chiefs of Staff began organizing and strengthening the unified commands. First, the U.S. Transportation Command (USSTRANSCOM) was established in 1987, and it was placed in charge of transport and procurement. In 1982, 1983, and 1987, discussions were held on integrating the strategic nuclear forces, but this was not realized. Nevertheless, after the Berlin wall fell in 1989 and the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991, the disputes over authority between the Air Force and Navy disappeared, and U.S. Strategic Command (USSTRATCOM) was formed on June 1, 1992.

The outcomes of the Goldwater-Nichols Act were tested during the Gulf War in 1991 that followed the 1990 Gulf Crisis, and the result was that the overwhelming strength of the United States Armed Forces was demonstrated to other countries.

Nevertheless, concerns soon surfaced in the 1990s, and thus amendments to the Goldwater-Nichols Act and revisions to the system of the unified commands have frequently been

⁷ Shigeo Kikuchi, “Strengthening Integration in the United States: Review and Discussion of the Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986,” *Boei Kenkyusho Nyusu (National Institute for Defense Studies News)*, July 2005 issue (total of 90 issues). Also referred to the following. Gordon Nathaniel Lederman, *Reorganizing the Joint Chiefs of Staff: The Goldwater-Nichols Act of 1986*, Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1999, pp. 106-107.

discussed. Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter of the Obama administration mentioned revisions to the Goldwater-Nichols Act multiple times in early 2016. Then, on April 5, 2016 Secretary Carter outlined a proposal for revisions in a speech. In this speech, he presented a negative view regarding the organization and integration of the unified commands by region, as follows:

Instead of combining these commands to the detriment of our friends, our allies, and in fact our own command and control capabilities, we intend to be more efficient by integrating functions like logistics, intelligence, and plans across the Joint Staff, the combatant commands, and subordinate commands, eliminating redundancies while not losing capability, and much can be done here.⁸

Secretary of Defense Carter has acknowledged the need to revise the Goldwater-Nichols Act in regard to other points, so there is still a possibility that the act will be amended and the unified commands will be changed in some way.

4. Positioning of the Pacific Command

According to the official homepage of the Pacific Command, its history is as follows.⁹ The Pacific Command was established on January 1, 1947, not long after World War II. While the other unified commands have undergone various organizational changes, the Pacific Command has remained as the oldest and largest of the unified commands. As mentioned earlier, the Far East Command was created in the area centering on Japan on January 1, 1947, and it was dissolved on July 1, 1957 and all of its responsibilities were transferred to the Pacific Command. At the same time, part of the Alaskan Command was also transferred to the Pacific Command.

Three months later in October 1957, the headquarters of the Commander in Chief, Pacific Command (CINCPAC) was moved from Makalapa on the east coast of Pearl Harbor to Camp H. M. Smith on high ground in the northeastern part of Pearl Harbor. The headquarters of U.S. Marine Forces Pacific is also located here. At that time, the Commander in Chief, Pacific Command concurrently served as commander of the U.S. Pacific Fleet. These positions were separated in January 1958, and a different person was appointed as the commander of U.S. Pacific Fleet. Since

⁸ Ash Carter, "Secretary of Defense Speech, Remarks on 'Goldwater-Nichols at 30: An Agenda for Updating,'" CSIS Building, Washington, D.C., April 5, 2016.

⁹ PACOM, "History of the United States Pacific Command," PACOM <<http://www.pacom.mil/AboutUSPACOM/History.aspx>>, accessed on March 6, 2016.

that time, the commander of the Pacific Command has always come from the Navy.

On January 1, 1972, the Indian Ocean, South Asia, and the Arctic Ocean were placed under the jurisdiction of the Pacific Command. In 1975, the Alaskan Command was abolished and incorporated into the Pacific Command. On May 1, 1976, the jurisdiction of the Pacific Command was further expanded to the east coast of Africa, so over 50% of the Earth's surface came under the Pacific Command's jurisdiction. In 1983, China, Korea, Mongolia, and Madagascar entered the Pacific Command's jurisdiction, and again its commander concurrently served as the commander of the U.S. Pacific Fleet.

Nonetheless, as stated earlier, Goldwater-Nichols Act was passed by the U.S. Congress in 1986, and thus regulations regarding the nature of the unified commands were set to be revised.

On July 7, 1989, the Alaskan Command (ALCOM) was reestablished and became a subunified command under the Pacific Command. Nevertheless, based on the unified command plan of August 16, 1989 under the George H. W. Bush administration, the Gulf of Oman and Gulf of Aden in the Middle East were transferred to the Central Command. The unified command plan of January 1, 1996 under the Clinton administration transferred Seychelles and its adjacent marine area to the Central Command. Similarly, the unified command plan of October 1, 2000 that was issued under the Clinton administration transferred Tanzania, Mozambique, and the Indian Ocean on the coast of South Africa to the European Command.

After the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks against the United States (9/11) occurred, the focus of the United States shifted to "war on terror," and has brought about major changes regarding the United States Armed Forces as a whole. This transition was covered in a study released that same year called the "2001 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR)." The Northern Command was established in order to defend the homeland of the United States, and the U.S. West Coast was transferred from the Pacific Command to the Northern Command. Alaska itself came under the jurisdiction of the Northern Command, but the subunified command Alaskan Command was left under the Pacific Command. The Arctic Ocean also stayed under the jurisdiction of the Pacific Command.

Based on an order by the Secretary of Defense on October 24, 2002, the title of "Commander in Chief, U.S. Pacific Command (USCINCPAC)" was changed to "Commander, U.S. Pacific Command (CDRUSPACOM)." This was an idea of Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, who stated that the President is the only "Commander in Chief."

Based on the unified command plan of December 17, 2008 at the end of the George W. Bush administration, part the Indian Ocean, westward of 68 degrees east longitude, was transferred

to the newly established African Command. As a result, the four island nations of Comoros, Madagascar, Mauritius, and Reunion came under the jurisdiction of the African Command. The current jurisdiction area of the Pacific Command is shown in Figure 1.



Figure 1 Scope of Jurisdiction of the United States Pacific Command

Source: <http://www.pacom.mil/AboutUSPACOM/USPACOMAreaofResponsibility.aspx> (accessed March 6, 2016)

During the Cold War, the Pacific Command held the function of containing the Soviet Union together with five allies of the United States in the Asia-Pacific region: Japan, South Korea, Thailand, the Philippines, and Australia. Commander of U.S. Pacific Command Ronald J. Hays, testified at a hearing of the United States Senate Committee on Armed Services on January 27, 1987, and explained that, in regard to the balance of conventional military potential between the two superpowers the United States and the Soviet Union in the Pacific Ocean, the United States is in a slightly disadvantageous position in terms of numbers, but it is contributing sufficiently in terms of nuclear deterrence so the situation is favorable overall. He also mentioned that the importance of the Pacific Ocean with regard to the strategic interests of the United States will continue to grow in the

future.¹⁰

After the end of the Cold War, the United States Armed Forces started a “transformation.” It is said that this word came to be used around late 1997 to 1998 at the time of the Bill Clinton administration.¹¹ “Transformation” is not simple rearrangement. The military critic Keiichi Nogi has stated that “transformation” involves “converting the United States Armed Forces from its current form into a future form, and this is by no means simply a reallocation of units,” but he has also pointed out that this is essentially the same as the “revolutions in military affairs (RMA)” that had taken place in the past.¹²

Changes in East Asia were a major factor with regard to the transformation of the United States Armed Forces, but Navy Admiral Dennis Blair, who has served as Commander, U.S. Pacific Command, stated in an interview in early 2005 that there were also geopolitical factors and military technology factors. He divided the geopolitical factors into four elements: first, Japan’s maturation as an alliance partner, second, the enhancement and expansion of China’s military strength, third, changes regarding the United States Armed Forces’ handling of emergency situations on the Korean Peninsula, and fourth, the emergence of terrorism by Islamic fundamentalists in Southeast Asia. As for military technology factors, he commented that the information networks of the United States Armed Forces have been developing tremendously. Specifically, he mentioned military information gathering, communications, military decisions using computers, long-distance precision weapons, and so on.¹³

As a result of this transformation, the United States Armed Forces is considering a shift to Guam. Concerns have been expressed that if this is realized, Japan could be placed in a lower position. In this regard, it has been said that the three bases on the Japanese archipelago Kadena (Okinawa Prefecture), Yokosuka (Kanagawa Prefecture), and Misawa (Aomori Prefecture) are essential to the East Asian strategy of the United States. Some have also commented that Japan will continue to play a central role in the strategic framework of the United States.¹⁴

¹⁰ “Testimony of United States Commander in Chief Hays, U.S. Pacific Command, at Hearing of Senate Committee on Armed Services <Excerpt>: Front Line Deployment of U.S.-Soviet Operational Readiness Potential,” *Sekai Shuho (World Weekly)*, March 10, 1987, pp. 34-40.

¹¹ Taisei Ugaki, “Overview of the United States Pacific Command Transformation,” *Gunji Kenkyu (Japan Military Review)*, Vol. 39 No. 12, December 2004, pp. 38-49.

¹² Keiichi Nogi, “The True Nature of the ‘Transformation,’” *Gunji Kenkyu (Japan Military Review)*, Vol. 39 No. 12, December 2004, pp. 28-37.

¹³ Dennis Blair, Yoshihisa Komori, “Increasing the Military Strength of Japan Would Be Beneficial for the Peace and Stability of East Asia,” *SAPIO*, March 23, 2005, pp. 101-103.

¹⁴ Mitsumasa Saito, “Walking the Front Line of United States Armed Forces Restructuring: Strategic Preparations Hidden in Air Force Headquarters Guam Transfer; United States Pacific Command Headquarters,” *SAPIO*, January 19 / February 2, 2005, pp. 110-112.

In a separate interview, when asked about the positioning of Japan in the transformation in the Asia-Pacific region, Admiral Blair stated, “If I had to assign a ranking of importance, Japan would be first, South Korea would be second, and the other parts of Asia would be third. The reason that I think Japan is the most important is that if United States Forces Japan is appropriately reorganized and the United States Armed Forces and the Self-Defense Forces share facilities like at Yokosuka, Misawa, Sasebo, and Yokota, having the United States Armed Forces maintain a steady presence in Japan will be of the utmost importance for the long-term strategic interests of the United States.”¹⁵

The current organization of the Pacific Command is as shown in Figure 2. The Commander is at the top, and below are the Deputy Commander and the Chief of Staff. There are nine departments consisting of Directorate 1 (J1) through Directorate 9 (J9). These are Directorate 1: Manpower and Personnel, Directorate 2: Intelligence, Directorate 3: Operations, Directorate 4: Logistics, Engineering & Security Cooperation, Directorate 5: Strategic Planning & Policy, Directorate 6: Command, Control Communications and Cyber, Directorate 7: Training & Exercises, Directorate 8: Resources & Assessments, and Directorate 9: Pacific Outreach.

The subunified commands under the Pacific Command include United States Forces Japan, United States Forces Korea, and Special Operations Command Pacific.

There are also component commands under Pacific Command: U.S. Marine Forces Pacific, U.S. Pacific Fleet, U.S. Army Pacific, and U.S. Air Forces Pacific. U.S. Marine Forces Pacific has a base at Kaneohe in northern Oahu, Hawaii. U.S. Army Pacific has a base at Fort Shafter close to Honolulu on Oahu. U.S. Pacific Fleet and U.S. Air Forces Pacific use Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, which is a combination of Naval Station Pearl Harbor and neighboring Hickam Air Force Base. Hickam Air Force Base is integrated with Honolulu International Airport. The islands of Hawaii also have many other bases and facilities related to the Pacific Command.

There are also affiliated experts and organizations, including the education and training institute the Daniel K. Inouye Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies (DKI-APCSS), which is close to Waikiki beach, Honolulu.

It is said that including all units and personnel, the Pacific Command is made up of about 300,000 people or more, and this would make it the largest of the nine unified commands of the United States Armed Forces.

¹⁵ Yuki Tatsumi, “Interview with Former United States Commander, U.S. Pacific Command Blair Regarding How to View the United States Armed Forces Restructuring; Lessening the Burden on Okinawa Not Impossible; Hoping that the Self-Defense Forces Will Independently Protect Japan,” *Ronza (Viewpoints)*, September 2005 issue, pp. 178-183.

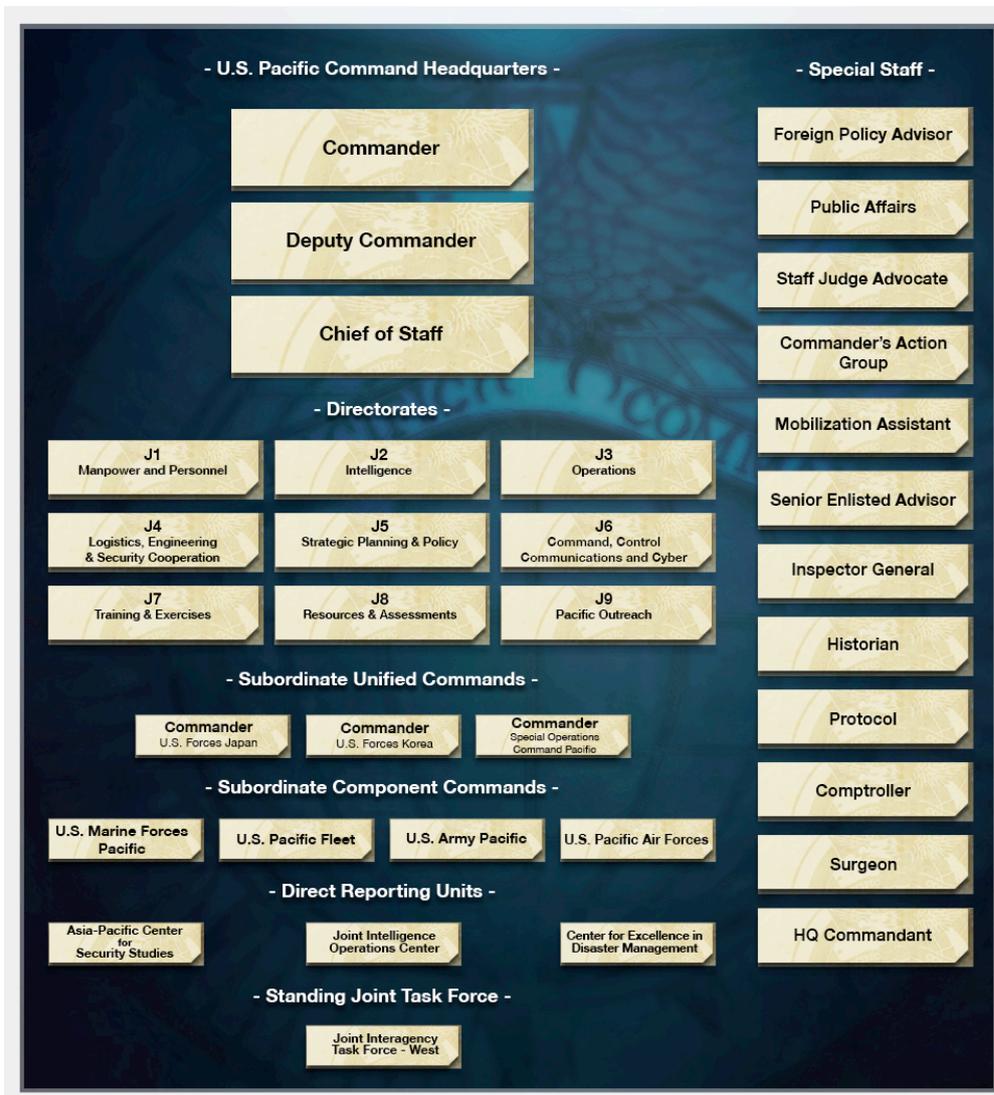


Figure 2 Organization of United States Pacific Command

Source: <http://www.pacom.mil/Organization/OrganizationChart.aspx>

5. Conclusion

When the Japan-U.S. Alliance is discussed, people often refer simply to the “United States Armed Forces,” but the United States Armed Forces has an extremely complex structure that is constantly changing. An anonymous former official of the Pacific Command who was interviewed for the writing of this paper, pointed out, “The organization is changing on almost a monthly basis, so it is difficult even for people who have been on the inside to get a grasp of the overall picture of the Pacific Command.”

Another major issue with regard to research is the question of what operations the Pacific Command would carry out and how it would command and control these, in the event of an actual emergency happening in Asia-Pacific region. As mentioned earlier, under the Pacific Command, there are the United States Forces Japan, United States Forces Korea, and Special Operations Command Pacific. The relationship between the Pacific Command and these subunified commands is complicated and not always primarily determined. It seems the reality is that judgments would be made on a case-by-case basis in situations such as large-scale battles, small battles, natural disaster responses, and warning and surveillance activities.

Since the latter half of 2015, the Chinese Navy appears to have been making aggressive movements in the South China Sea, and tensions have been rising, with Commander, U.S. Pacific Command Harris deploying freedom-of-navigation operations, etc. On the Korean Peninsula as well, North Korea appears to have been engaging in provocative actions. While the quarrels between the Army and Navy over the Goldwater-Nichols Act have quieted, the commander of the Pacific Command comes from the Navy, and the commander of United States Forces Korea comes from the Army. In terms of organization, United States Forces Korea is under the Pacific Command, but if an emergency were to actually occur on the Korean Peninsula, it would be possible for the President and the Secretary of Defense in Washington, D.C. to directly give orders to the United States Forces Korea commander. That said, the units of United States Forces Korea do not have very many personnel, and there is a complex organizational structure in which the United States Forces Korea commander concurrently serves as the commander of the United Nations Forces.

The Department of Defense in U.S. capital Washington, D.C. needs to keep an eye on around 190 countries worldwide, while the Pacific Command only watches just below 30 countries in the Asia-Pacific region, and it has been pointed out that this causes a divide in perception between the two organizations. The Pacific Command shows strong interest in the activities of China and North Korea, but the President and the Secretary of Defense in Washington, D.C. are not always highly responsive to the requests and advice of the Commander, U.S. Pacific Command. In a proposal at a hearing of the Senate Committee on Armed Services on February 23, 2016, Commander Harris pointed out that the rebalancing of the Asia-Pacific by the Obama administration has been insufficient.

Understanding the United States Pacific Command is necessary when considering the security of the Asia-Pacific region and the security of Japan. As a step toward such understanding, this paper has outlined the organization and history of the unified commands, and looked at the positioning of the Pacific Command.