



JEANNE M. HOLM CENTER

USPACOM Area of Responsibility

Activity Statement:

- Deliver briefings and participate in discussions about various aspects of culture and US interests in the US Pacific Command (USPACOM) area of responsibility (AOR).

Affective Lesson Objective:

- Respond to the importance of Air Force officers understanding US national security concerns in the AOR, regional cultural perspectives, and the Combatant Command's mission in the AOR.

Affective Samples of Behavior:

- Voluntarily discuss US national security concerns in the USPACOM AOR.
- Value that an understanding of regional cultural perspectives is key to relating and communicating with partners in the USPACOM AOR.
- Assert the importance of the Combatant Command's mission in light of US national security concerns in the USPACOM AOR.



OVERVIEW OF UNITED STATES PACIFIC COMMAND AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY

The United States Pacific Command (USPACOM) is the oldest and largest of the established United States unified commands. Established on January 1, 1947, the area now covered by USPACOM includes territory that was originally assigned to the Far East Command and Alaskan Command. Following the events of September 11, 2001 and the establishment of United States Northern Command (USNORTHCOM), Alaska and the West Coast of North America were reassigned to USNORTHCOM and USPACOM assumed responsibility for Antarctica.

Since its inception, USPACOM has played a critical role in ensuring a secure environment in the Asia-Pacific region that allows the regional countries to focus on developing their economies and creating strong governments. The USPACOM region plays host to five of the “Top Ten” trading partners of the United States. Most of the nations within the region actively contribute to the security of the region and willingly seek to advance their alliances, partnerships, and friendships with the United States.

Territory

The territory covered by USPACOM covers approximately half the surface of the earth and is one of the most diverse regions of the world, stretching from the waters off the US Pacific Coast to the western border of India, and from the North Pole to Antarctica. USPACOM is responsible for 36 nations that are home to more than 50% of the world population. Over 3,000 languages are spoken in the region. Two of the three largest economies in the world, two of the three most populous nations in the world (China and India), the largest democratic Muslim-majority nation in the world (Indonesia), and the smallest republic in the world (Nauru) are all part of USPACOM.

Australia	Bangladesh
Bhutan	Brunei
Burma	Cambodia
China	Fiji
India	Indonesia
Japan	Kiribati
Laos	Malaysia
Maldives	Marshall Islands
Micronesia	Mongolia
Nauru	Nepal
New Zealand	North Korea
Palau	Papua New Guinea
Philippines	Samoa
Singapore	Solomon Islands
South Korea	Sri Lanka
Thailand	Timor-Leste
Tonga	Tuvalu
Vanuatu	Vietnam

History

The history of the USPACOM region is ancient and rich. For centuries, China was the dominant influence in the history of the Asia-Pacific region, while two major religions emerging out of India made a significant impact. China developed into settled agricultural communities and was producing silk and pottery in notable forms by 4000 BCE and possibly as early as 12000 BCE. Around 2000 BCE, the Aryan people settled in the Indian subcontinent, mingled with the local people, and composed the Vedas, the founding philosophy of Hinduism. In 560 BCE, Lord Gautam Buddha was born in India, and the second major religion of India, Buddhism, was founded. Buddhism, in particular, rapidly spread from the Indian subcontinent across the Pacific, where it was one of the primary religions in China, and remains one of the dominant religions in Japan.

Western Imperialism

Western Imperialism in the nineteenth century greatly influenced the Asian-Pacific region. In a period of approximately 100 years, China's position in the world rapidly altered from one of the leading civilizations in the world to a subjected and divided nation due to a combination of internal struggles and the inability of the Chinese military to compete with the military power of the West.

As a result of the terms of the treaties following the Opium War of 1839, China was subjected to foreign control of tariffs, ports, and trade, as well as an influx of Christian missionaries from a series of foreign powers competing for influence in the East. Ultimately, foreign activity and internal strains led to the Chinese Revolution of 1911 which overthrew the unpopular Qing dynasty, widely seen as a "foreign" dynasty under Western control.

In response to the foreign influence in China, Japan abandoned their isolationist policies that had been in place since 1600 and made a deliberate effort to adapt to the opening of its ports to the West in the mid-nineteenth century. Japan's ability to adapt to Western imperialism allowed the country to establish itself as a competitor for colonial rights in Asia. They defeated China in a war over Korea in 1894-1895, which reversed the traditional balance of power in East Asia, and went on to defeat Russia in 1905-06 over rights in Manchuria and Korea.

The first recorded European contact with the continent of Australia was by Dutch explorers in 1606, though European influence in Australia did not truly begin until James Cook claimed the territory for Britain in 1770. Britain initially used Australia as a penal colony, and it remained a territory of Britain until 1901 when the Commonwealth of Australia was formed. Discriminatory practices against the native population and highly restrictive immigration laws that limited immigration to those of European descent (ended after WWII) developed Australia into the most European of all of the Pacific countries.

France and Britain had impact in other parts of the area as well. France took control of Vietnam in 1862 and divided it into three separate countries: Tonkin, Annam, and Cochin-China. Colonial rule of Vietnam lasted until Japan invaded during WWII. In India, the British and French East India companies, which were corporations that maintained their own troops and mercenaries, competed with various Indian regional powers for control of the country after the Mughal Empire declined in the eighteenth century. Britain emerged supreme and the British government gradually took over the entire subcontinent of South Asia. British officials were placed at the top of the political and social spectrum. Following WWI, a mass movement toward independence from Britain began under the nonviolent leadership of Mahatma Gandhi, though it would be another 30+ years before independence was granted.

World War II (WWII) in the Pacific

An unofficial war between Japan and China began in 1937 when Japan invaded Manchuria. When Germany defeated France and the Netherlands in Europe, Japan saw an opportunity to gain valuable natural resources in European-controlled territory in the Pacific. When Japan allied itself with Italy and Germany in September 1940 and seized Indochina, tensions with the United States increased considerably. Though negotiations continued between Japan and the United States, both countries believed war was inevitable. Japan massed troops near Malaysia, but it was the bombing of Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, on December 7, 1941 which led to the official declaration of war and brought WWII to the Pacific.

Of all of the Allied powers, the United States was the only one with the resources to fight Japan in the Pacific. Japan carried the momentum of battle in the first 6 months. The Battle of Midway in June, 1942 was a turning point in the war for the Allies. Approximately 1 year later, the United States began an “island-hopping” strategy that proved successful in a series of assaults on Japanese-held islands in the Pacific.

The war between China and Japan continued with a formal, and long overdue, declaration of war by China in 1941. Japan eventually controlled territory within China that was roughly equivalent in size to the entire territory controlled by the Axis powers in Europe. When Japan took control of Burma in 1942, China was virtually cut off from the rest of the world. Overpopulation, famine, disease, and civil unrest, in addition to constant Japanese air and ground assaults, took a heavy toll on the country. Nevertheless, China served as a critical launching point for US attacks on Japan.

In India, famine was a problem throughout WWII and the economy was overburdened by the strain of supporting the Allied military authorities. The Philippines were occupied by Japan for nearly 3 years during the war, and the American reconquest of the islands in 1944-45 took a great toll on the territory.

From 1868, Hiroshima was the military center of Japan. The heavy casualties in the campaigns at Iwo Jima and Okinawa in early 1945, and fears of even heavier casualties expected in a land invasion of Japan, led President Truman to authorize the atomic bombing of the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945. The bombing of Hiroshima destroyed 90 percent of the city and immediately killed approximately 80,000 people, with a far greater number of deaths over the years from radiation. Three days later, the bombing of Nagasaki killed an estimated 40,000. Japan signed a surrender aboard the USS *Missouri* in Tokyo Bay on September 2, 1945, and a second surrender with China a week later, formally ending WWII in the Pacific. Following the war, Hiroshima became a center for the peace movement for the banning of nuclear weapons.

Political Systems

The political systems found in the USPACOM region are highly diverse, which is to be expected in a territory that covers 50 percent of the Earth's surface. Even so, despite the finer details, the vast majority of countries in the USPACOM region are a form of parliamentary or representative government, whether it is a constitutional monarchy, republic, or democracy. The country of Nauru, with a total population of around 10,000, is both the 14th smallest nation in the world in terms of population and the world's smallest independent republic. China, meanwhile, has both the largest population in the world at 1.35 billion people and is one of two communist governments in the region (the other being Vietnam.) North Korea, an ally of China, is the only dictatorship in the region, while Burma remains under the political control of a military regime.

Though there are 36 nations in USPACOM, China and North Korea demand a great deal of attention from the United States. Their governmental systems and large standing armies combined with their possession of nuclear weapons makes these two nations a major concern to the national security of the United States. The vast majority of nations in USPACOM are allies or partners of the United States in some form. Five of the seven mutual defense treaties the United States is party to are with nations in USPACOM.

Religion & Spirituality

There is an enormous diversity of religious traditions in the USPACOM territory. Buddhism and Hinduism were both founded in the region. Other traditions arrived in the area through imperialism, war, and other means. A handful of nations have an official or state religion, but most are religiously diverse with the "dominant" tradition claiming as much as 98% of the population in Timor-Leste (Roman Catholic) or as little as 13.8% of the population in New Zealand (Anglican.)

As nineteenth century imperialism spread throughout the USPACOM region, the nations most heavily influenced by the West were also heavily influenced by Christian missionaries who arrived in the Pacific during the same period. Approximately half of all USPACOM nations claim some form of Christianity as their dominant religious tradition. Most notably, the smaller island nations embraced Christianity at a much higher rate than the larger, more internationally influential USPACOM nations.

A handful of USPACOM nations claim Islam as their dominant religious tradition, including Bangladesh, Malaysia, and Brunei, and while Islam is not the dominant religion in USPACOM as a whole, USPACOM does play host to the largest democratic Muslim majority nation in the world—Indonesia. Buddhism is the most dominant religious practice in most nations, including Thailand, Burma, and Cambodia. Approximately 71.4% of the population of Japan claims Buddhism as their primary religion; however, 83.9% of the population also claim Shintoism, demonstrating that one particular form of belief is not preferred even among individuals. Buddhism was also the state religion of China until

the Chinese government declared China officially atheist. In South Korea and Vietnam the largest religious preference is no religion at all (49.3% and 80.8% of the populations, respectively.)

Art (Aesthetics & Recreation)

The history of art in Asia-Pacific culture is ancient. For thousands of years, China was the dominant influence on art of all types throughout East Asia despite the efforts of nations to maintain their own identities; for example, Chinese influence has been found in Japanese art even during the height of Japan's isolationist period. Art forms found throughout Asian culture, heavily influenced by China, include narrative painting, wood-block prints, decorative clay pottery, and calligraphy. When Buddhism was adopted in China as the state religion in the fifth century CE, the influence of Buddhism on all Asian art was profound.

Dance and theater also play a large role in Asian culture. Unlike in the West where music, theater, and dance are a separate art form, known as performing arts, in East Asia these artistic expressions intermingle with each other and with the visual arts. Poems are written to be sung, songs are danced, and dances enact stories. Dramatic dialogue without music is rare; puppets, masks, highly stylized makeup and costumes are common. The influence of Buddhism, particularly Zen Buddhism, is largely responsible for the Japanese tea ceremony, ink painting, and rock-and-sand gardens. In Hindu tradition, the world was created by the Cosmic Dance of Lord Shiva; consequently, dance is a part of all Hindu rituals. Dance is seen and felt in everyday life in South Asia: farmers dance for a good harvest; festivals, marriages, and births are celebrated by community dancing; and rarely is an Indian film made without half a dozen dances. Beginning in India and spreading throughout East Asia, dance became highly stylized with conventional movements proscribed for every part of the body and with the eyes and hands being the most important. The 32 movements of feet, 24 single-hand gestures, 13 movements of the head, and 36 movements of the eyes, for example, all mean different things in combination and those meanings are understood not only in the dance, but are recognized in paintings, wood blocks, and other visual art forms.

Asia-Pacific music is distinguishable by the use of tones and pitches not commonly heard in Western scales. Additionally, Asian music in general lacks a concern for harmony. All instruments generally play the same basic melody. Unlike in the West, where the goal of an orchestra is to merge different instruments into one harmonious musical whole, East Asian instruments are meant to be heard individually. In keeping with the wholistic concept of art in Asian culture, East Asian music is rarely written without some form of musical or spoken word accompaniment.

USPACOM Mission and Current Posture

The official mission of USPACOM, headquartered in Honolulu, Hawaii, is to protect and defend the United States, its territories, Allies, and interests; to promote regional security and deter aggression alongside Allies and partners; and, if deterrence fails, to respond to the full spectrum of military contingencies to restore Asia-Pacific stability and security. USPACOM strategic guidance specifies that the major focus areas of USPACOM are as follows:

- Strengthen and advance alliances and partnerships
- Mature the US-China military-to-military relationship
- Develop the US-India strategic partnership
- Remain prepared to respond to Korean Peninsula contingencies
- Counter transnational threats

The USPACOM commander is the senior US military authority in the Pacific Area of Responsibility (AOR). He reports to the President of the United States through the Secretary of Defense and is supported by four component commands: US Pacific Fleet, US Pacific Air Forces, US Army Pacific, and US Marine Forces Pacific. These commands are headquartered in Hawaii and have forces stationed and deployed throughout the region. USPACOM military and civilian personnel number approximately 330,000, or about one-fifth of total US military strength. US Navy and Marine forces are numerically the largest elements in the AOR. US Pacific Fleet includes five aircraft carrier strike groups and US Marine Corps Pacific possesses about two-thirds of US Marine Corps combat strength. US Air Forces Pacific comprises approximately 39,000 Airmen and 350 aircraft; and US Army, Pacific has about 50,000 personnel, including four Stryker brigades. USPACOM also has more than 1,200 Special Operations personnel. Finally, there are more than 13,000 US Coast Guard personnel available to support U.S. military forces in the region.

Today the United States remains the preeminent power in the Asia-Pacific. US presence in the region is both welcomed and desired by the countries in the region; however, it is clear that the United States cannot afford to take our level of influence for granted. Many countries, such as China, see strategic opportunities in increasing their own influence in the region. It is critical that the United States maintains open channels of communication with China while working to build military cooperation with their armed forces. India—the largest democracy in the region—with its rapidly increasing economic power and global influence, also warrants particular consideration when examining the posture and influence of USPACOM.

Conclusion

USPACOM is characterized—above all else—by its geographic, political, and cultural diversity. Some of the closest partners and allies of the United States reside within its territory; likewise, some of the nations of greatest interest to US national security are found in this region. It is critical to examine these nations in detail to gain a better understanding of the strategic role of USPACOM and the capabilities and challenges inherent in this diverse region. Hopefully this overview has piqued your interest to learn more about this area of the world. To help you do that, refer to the next section for links to Internet sources that provide more specific information about the countries included in this command's area of responsibility.

STUDENT ASSIGNMENTS

Students will select a specific country from the list provided and deliver a 5-9-minute prepared briefing addressing the topic. Use the framework below to develop the main points, but to ensure the topics are covered you must submit your list of preferred main points to your instructor for approval prior to beginning your research. To assist in your research, a list of Web sites is provided on the next page.

Additionally, you must prepare a ½ to 1-page bullet background paper on your subject. You should provide a copy of your paper to your instructor prior to your briefing. You can then use the paper to give your briefing. The bullet paper will follow the format in *The Tongue and Quill*. Pick a country and two domains from the lists below:

Countries: China, India, North Korea, South Korea, Vietnam

Domains: Family & Kinship, Religion & Spirituality, Sex & Gender, Politics & Social Relations, Economics & Resources, Time & Space, Language & Communication, Technology & Material, History & Myth, Sustenance & Health, Aesthetics & Recreation, Learning & Knowledge

Main Point 1 (choose one from the list of cultural domains)

Main Point 2 (choose a different domain for your 2nd main point)

RESEARCH SITES

- **Defense Language Institute** <http://www.dliflc.edu/products.html>
- **Field Support Modules** <http://fieldsupport.lingnet.org/index.html>
- **Library of Congress** <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/profiles.html>

- **Military Policy Awareness Links** <http://merln.ndu.edu/index.cfm?type=page&pageID=3>
- **Miller Center of Public Affairs** <http://millercenter.org/scripps>
- **NATO** <http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/index.htm>
- **The World Factbook** <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/index.html>
- **United Nations** <http://www.un.org/en/>
- **US Department of State—Background Notes** <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/>
- **US Department of State—Regional Bureaus** <http://www.state.gov/p/index.htm>

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