

# The Land Component Role in Maritime Security



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As the world's population and economies grow, so does the demand for resources. While pioneers like Elon Musk hope to one day exploit space for the additional resources required to support a ballooning population on Earth<sup>1</sup>, many nations have an interest today in competing for additional resources. This is particularly evident in the maritime domain where those nations exploit protein sources to feed their people, oil and natural gas to meet increasing energy demands, and seabed materials to support other economic sectors. Additionally, nations are looking to increase their access to maritime resources through both expansive and restrictive maritime claims and/or illegal harvest of resources. These activities can create increased tension between nations.

The South China Sea, transited by \$5.3 trillion in trade each year<sup>2</sup>, provides a salient example. Six claimants have competing, often overlapping claims. These disputes led to, and continue to lead to, incidents that fueled further competition. Currently China continues to militarize the South China Sea while the Philippines and Vietnam await a ruling from the Permanent Court of Arbitration on a case filed in hopes of resolving some of the legal issues surrounding these disputes. The Arctic region provides another example. There are less visible but equally significant disputed claims in the Arctic today. Competition there is sure to increase as the polar ice cap melts and the Arctic becomes increasingly navigable, increasing access to resources previously buried deep beneath the ice.

Nations have more at stake in the ocean, however, than simply competing with other nations for resources. They must also confront maritime threats, which include piracy, armed robbery, damage to the marine environment (i.e. pollution), and illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing. Nations have obligations to interdict human, narcotics, and arms trafficking as well as to provide for the safe operation of seagoing vessels. To accomplish these many tasks, many nations have developed national strategies for maritime security.

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<sup>1</sup> Mike Wall, "What 11 Billion People Mean for Space Travel," November 27, 2013, <http://www.livescience.com/41552-11-billion-space-travel.html> (accessed May 16, 2016).

<sup>2</sup> "Territorial Disputes in the South China Sea", May 16, 2016, linked from *Council on Foreign Relations Home Page* at "Global Conflict Tracker," <http://www.cfr.org/global/global-conflict-tracker/p32137#!/conflict/territorial-disputes-in-the-south-china-sea> (accessed May 16, 2016).

In the United States, implementation of a strategic approach to maritime security has at times been a focal point. For example, in August of 2015, the Department of Defense (DoD) published its *Asia-Pacific Maritime Security Strategy*,<sup>3</sup> which has generated attention both among U.S. allies and partners in the region, as well as on Capitol Hill.

Considering the attention provided to maritime security at the highest levels of leadership in the United States Government (USG) and DoD, each of the Military Services is examining how it can better contribute to the maritime security effort. This is no longer limited solely to the Navy and Marine Corps, which have traditionally focused on maritime operations, activities, and actions. Of note, in the U.S. Pacific Command (USPACOM) Area of Responsibility (AOR), U.S. Army Pacific (USARPAC) is designated as the Theater Joint Force Land Component Command (TJFLCC) and endeavors to support the PACOM Theater Campaign Plan (TCP) to include the maritime security line of effort. The very nature of the USPACOM AOR – with more than 50% of the Earth’s surface and the majority of it ocean, more than 50% of the world’s population, and several of the world’s largest militaries<sup>4</sup> – creates a maritime focus and demanding requirements for land forces who interact with the population. This article will explore, from a land component prospective, what maritime security is, who traditionally executes maritime security operations, and potential roles the land component can play in maritime security.

### **What Exactly is Maritime Security? Who Provides It?**

By many accounts, there is no clear definition of maritime security. Looking to U.S. military doctrine, there are definitions of maritime security operations, but not maritime security<sup>5</sup>. Christian Bueger of Cardiff University stated, “Maritime security is a buzzword. It has no definite meaning.”<sup>6</sup> It seems even the United Nations (UN) would agree. The UN published, “There is no universally accepted definition of the term “maritime security”. Much like the concept of “national security”, it may differ in meaning, depending on the context and the users. At its narrowest conception, maritime security involves protection from direct threats to the territorial integrity of a State, such as an armed attack from a military vessel. Most definitions also usually include security from crimes at sea, such as piracy, armed robbery against ships, and terrorist acts. However, intentional and unlawful damage to the marine

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<sup>3</sup> U.S. Department of Defense, *Asia-Pacific Maritime Security Strategy*, August 2015, available at [http://www.defense.gov/Portals/1/Documents/pubs/NDAA%20A-P\\_Maritime\\_Security\\_Strategy-08142015-1300-FINALFORMAT.PDF](http://www.defense.gov/Portals/1/Documents/pubs/NDAA%20A-P_Maritime_Security_Strategy-08142015-1300-FINALFORMAT.PDF).

<sup>4</sup> “USPACOM Area of Responsibility,” May 16, 2016, linked from *U.S. Pacific Command Home Page* at “About PACOM,” <http://www.pacom.mil/AboutUSPACOM/USPACOMAreaofResponsibility.aspx> (accessed May 16, 2016).

<sup>5</sup> U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, Joint Publication 1-02 (Washington, DC: U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, 15 February 2016; U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Command and Control for Joint Maritime Operations*, Joint Publication 3-32 (Washington, DC: U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, 07 August 2013).

<sup>6</sup> Christian Bueger, “What is Maritime Security?” *Marine Policy* 53, March 2015: 159-164.

environment, including from illegal dumping and the discharge of pollutants from vessels, and depletion of natural resources, such as from IUU fishing, can also threaten the interests of States, particularly coastal States.”<sup>7</sup>

Yet, amongst the nations that have developed maritime security strategies, there is hope for finding common understanding of the meaning of maritime security. Analysis of existing strategies, policies, and the law yields the following consolidated end state. “Maritime security – the global maritime domain (i.e. oceans) is secure and the maritime order is stable, so that: maritime threats are addressed/countered and maritime risks are managed/eliminated while the freedom of the seas is preserved/guaranteed and international law is respected/upheld/enforced.”<sup>8</sup> This is the definition of maritime security as it pertains to this paper.

Now that we know what maritime security is, who provides it? That question varies considerably from one country to the next. For example, local law enforcement, the United States Coast Guard, and the United States Navy all have a role in providing maritime security in waters subject to U.S. jurisdiction<sup>9</sup>. Other members of the joint force contribute to the national effort, especially air, space, and cyberspace assets. In a different example, Australia doesn’t have a Coast Guard, placing additional responsibility on its Navy for protecting its national interests related to maritime security. Australia also assists in building the maritime security capacity of Pacific Island Forum (PIF) nations through their Pacific Patrol Boat Program<sup>10</sup>. But, PIF nations are a good example of the disparity in maritime security capacity. Kiribati, as an example, has no standing military forces<sup>11</sup> and endeavors to patrol its economic exclusive zone (EEZ) – the 13<sup>th</sup> largest in the world<sup>12</sup> with an area of 1,370,663 square miles<sup>13</sup> – with the one patrol boat Australia furnished. Like many other island nations, Kiribati lacks the capacity to provide maritime security and adequately protect its national interests in the maritime domain.

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<sup>7</sup> United Nations General Assembly, *Report of the Secretary General, Oceans and law of the sea*, 63<sup>rd</sup> Session, March 10, 2008, 15.

<sup>8</sup> U.S. Navy Commander Jonathan G. Odom, “Maritime Security”, lecture, Daniel K. Inouye Asia Pacific Center for Security Studies, Honolulu, HI, May 10, 2016, cited with permission of Commander Odom.

<sup>9</sup> U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters, *Jurisdiction*, Model Maritime Service Code, (Washington, DC: U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters, September 09, 2008).

<sup>10</sup> Shahryar Pasandideh, “Australia Launches New Pacific Patrol Boat Program,” July 01, 2014, <http://thediplomat.com/2014/07/australia-launches-new-pacific-patrol-boat-program/> (accessed May 16, 2016).

<sup>11</sup> Central Intelligence Agency World Factbook, “Kiribati,” <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/kr.html> (accessed May 16, 2016).

<sup>12</sup> United Nations, “International Year of Small Island Developing States 2014,” c.2014, <http://www.un.org/en/events/islands2014/didyouknow.shtml> (accessed May 16, 2016).

<sup>13</sup> Bell JD, Johnson JE, Ganachaud AS, Gehrke PC, Hobday AJ, Hoegh-Guldberg O, Le Borgne R, Lehodey P, Lough JM, Pickering T, Pratchett MS and Waycott M, (2011) *Vulnerability of Tropical Pacific Fisheries and Aquaculture to Climate Change: Summary for Pacific Island Countries and Territories* (Secretariat of the Pacific Community, Noumea, New Caledonia), 89.

## **How the Land Component Fits**

There are many possible roles for the land component. Some, to include Members of Congress, have pushed for the Army to develop shore-based, mobile, long-range anti-ship missile (LRASM) systems and to increase air defense capabilities<sup>14</sup>. The idea is that those capabilities provide the land component better ability to strike enemy air and sea assets, helping to deter aggression by external threats. The efficacy of these systems may be limited during shaping operations. However, should high intensity conflict breakout in an area of many small islands or a littoral region, they will be critical for holding ground. In a fiscally constrained environment and with a continually diminishing end strength already at its lowest level since 1940<sup>15</sup>, however, the Army has limited options for fielding new units required to employ such capabilities. Cutting yet another Brigade Combat Team, while those units are deploying to the Central Command AOR and rotating through Europe and Republic of Korea, is a grim prospect. The U.S. Marine Corps faces similar challenges, to include decreasing budgets and end strength, persistent operational requirements, and increasing demand for new, niche capabilities.

Notwithstanding those challenges, there are ways the land component can contribute to maritime security with the force it has today. While the land component may not actively patrol oceans, it can set the conditions required to develop that capability in other nations. And, should cooperation fail and conflict emerge, the land component is critical to projecting the joint force. Should access be required in a denied environment, the land component can execute forcible entry to provide the access the joint force requires.

## **Supporting Maritime Security in Phase 0: Stability Operations in Support of Governance/Development and Building Partner Capacity**

As a basic premise to understanding how the land component can support maritime security through stability operations, one must accept that any effective government must focus on basic governmental functions – providing for the welfare of its people, economic and infrastructure development, instituting the rule of law, and ensuring participatory governance, and providing a generally secure environment – before it can justify allocating significant resources beyond its borders. From that premise, we can also extrapolate that nations will invest first in land forces – police and military – to secure their land-based populations before spending on forces for other domains. Indeed, of the 36 nations in the USPACOM AOR, the Army is

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<sup>14</sup> Sydney J. Freeberg Jr., “SASC Pushes Bigger Army Role in Pacific Vs. China,” May 27, 2015, <http://breakingdefense.com/2015/05/sasc-pushes-bigger-army-role-in-pacific-vs-china/> (accessed May 16, 2016).

<sup>15</sup> Jim Tice, Army Times, “Army shrinks to smallest level since before World War II,” May 07, 2016, <http://www.armytimes.com/story/military/careers/army/2016/05/07/army-shrinks-smallest-level-since-before-world-war-ii/83875962/> (accessed May 16, 2016).

predominant service in 26 of them.<sup>16</sup> Only once the terrestrial requirements of the developing nation-state are met will they look to secure their interests in other domains. For island or littoral nations, their very next focus is sure to be their maritime sovereignty. Thus, through stability operations and building partner capacity aimed at creating effective, efficient land forces, the land component enables developing countries to contribute to maritime security.

In U.S. doctrine, “stability operations are various military missions, tasks, and activities conducted outside the U.S. in coordination with other instruments of national power to maintain or reestablish a safe and secure environment, provide essential governmental services, emergency infrastructure reconstruction, and humanitarian relief.”<sup>17</sup> These operations assist other governments with execution of their duties, and in a best case scenario, bring the whole of the USG to bear in unified action. “Operations in the land domain... are most effective at achieving the human outcomes that are a prerequisite for achieving national objectives”<sup>18</sup>. These are land-based operations designed to create stability in human domain. Stability enables development, and development creates opportunities, including the opportunity to project force in the maritime domain.

Critics may argue that many of the functions the land component provides in stability operations are best provided by civilian agencies within the USG, especially in nations at peace. Ideally, that is always the case and those agencies are simply supported in unified action by military assets. However, in cases of conflict or where civilian agencies lack sufficient capacity or logistical capabilities, land component assets are quite capable of fulfilling the role until such time as the tasks can be transferred<sup>19</sup>. In fact, since 9/11, the DoD has been better resourced by Congress for foreign capacity building than the Department of State and USAID combined<sup>20</sup>. And, the land component is best suited to action those resources on behalf of DoD. After all, “Inasmuch as humans reside on land and political authority is exercised from within that domain, the actions of other U.S. government agencies to apply political, informational, and economic power against the human objective also occur primarily on land”<sup>21</sup>.

Building partner capacity in foreign land forces enables governments to secure their populations and borders, counter terrorism, and conduct humanitarian, disaster relief, and other operations. The land component can build the capacity required for those operations in a

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<sup>16</sup> U.S. Pacific Command Admiral Harry B. Harris, Jr., address to the Association of the United States Army LANPAC Symposium and Exposition, Honolulu, HI, May 25, 2016.

<sup>17</sup> U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Stability Operations*, Joint Publication 3-07 (Washington, DC: U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, 29 September 2011), vii.

<sup>18</sup> Odierno, Amos, and McRaven, *Strategic Landpower: Winning the Clash of Wills*, Strategic Landpower White Paper (Washington, DC: U.S. Army, U.S. Marine Corps, and U.S. Special Operations Command, May 1, 2013), 3.

<sup>19</sup> U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Stability Operations*, Joint Publication 3-07 (Washington, DC: U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, 29 September 2011), I-1 – I-2.

<sup>20</sup> Adams and Murray, *Mission Creep: The Militarization of Foreign Policy* 8, 69.

<sup>21</sup> Odierno, Amos, and McRaven, *Strategic Landpower: Winning the Clash of Wills*, Strategic Landpower White Paper (Washington, DC: U.S. Army, U.S. Marine Corps, and U.S. Special Operations Command, May 1, 2013), 4.

number of ways to include security force assistance, foreign internal defense, and security cooperation.

### **Supporting Maritime Security in Conflict: Force Projection, Assuring Access, and Forcible Entry**

In the flashpoint of the South China Sea, increasing militarization and confrontation of ships and aircraft could spawn conflict. A significant concern in the South China Sea is that China is setting conditions to create an Anti-Access/Area Denial (A2AD) Environment. The Chinese have placed advanced radars and surface-to-air missile systems on some islands, and have built artificial islands with airstrips that support sophisticated fighter jets. Adding to that concern are significant advancements in Russian and Chinese anti-satellite weapons, electronic warfare capabilities, and long range missiles to strike both ships and terrestrial targets. In the event of conflict, these systems, the mutually reinforcing nature of the positions, and the proximity to mainland China would present a significant A2AD challenge to their adversary's joint force.

In this hypothetical conflict, or any conflict for that matter, the Army Operating Concept argues, "Future Army forces will support joint force freedom of movement and action through the projection of power from land across the maritime, air, space, and cyberspace domains."<sup>22</sup> Operational access is required to project combat power. The Joint Operational Access Concept points out, "The requirement for operational access has existed since the first army crossed the sea to fight in a foreign land. For the United States, separated as it is from most of the world by two oceans, operational access has been an enduring requirement and a primary concern throughout its history."<sup>23</sup>

Ideally, operational access is gained peaceably in Phase 0, but in an opposed scenario, "Establishing operational access may require forcible entry, the projection of land forces onto hostile territory in the face of armed opposition." Forcible entry is "by nature a very challenging form of warfare, tending to impose higher-than-normal losses on the attacker, and therefore requiring the resolve to absorb those losses. Any concept for defeating opposed access should acknowledge that reality."<sup>24</sup> With the stakes so high, there must be a compelling reason to

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<sup>22</sup> U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC), *The U.S. Army Operating Concept: Win in a Complex World*, TRADOC Pamphlet 525-3-1 (Fort Eustis, VA: U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, October 31, 2014), iv.

<sup>23</sup> U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Joint Operational Access Concept*, (Washington, DC: U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, 17 January 2012), 4.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.



execute these sort of operations. As explained in the Joint Concept for Entry Operations, “The five purposes for conducting entry operations are:

- *To defeat threats to the access and use of the global commons.*
- *To find, control, defeat, disable, and/or dispose of specific WMD threats.*
- *To conduct other limited duration missions.*
- *To assist populations and groups.*
- *To establish a lodgment.”<sup>25</sup>*

The South China Sea or Arctic conflict scenarios directly involve defeating those who threaten access to the global commons, making forcible entry a real possibility. The joint force, and the land component in particular, must prepare for this prospect and present a credible option to assure access in support of national interests. Due to the reinforcing nature of positions in the South China Sea, the required operation would be even more difficult than the island hopping campaigns of World War II. Attacking forces may have to simultaneously attack multiple islands, and do so in the face of defending forces with high tech weaponry.

“The Armed Forces of the U.S. conduct forcible entry operations using various capabilities including: amphibious assault, amphibious raid, airborne assault, air assault, and any combination thereof.”<sup>26</sup> The Army maintains a highly trained, effective airborne capability, the USMC has a robust amphibious capacity, and both services are quite proficient in air assault operations. But, for the nearly 80,000 Soldiers assigned to U.S. Army Pacific (USARPAC), are airborne and air assault the right competencies? In conflict in the South China Sea, amphibious operations may be more feasible and effective. While the USMC rightfully sees this as their role, having Soldiers and Marines assigned to the Pacific trained in amphibious operations increases options, flexibility and speed. This is not an argument about turf. It’s squarely about ensuring the United States can more rapidly marshal and employ required combat power where and how it’s needed. Army forces would not supplant Marines as the littoral force of choice, but Soldiers could augment them and increase the overall capacity available. And there is historical precedence that supports this idea. During World War II, Marines executed many famous amphibious operations, but they also executed some alongside Soldiers, and there were other famous amphibious accomplishments executed with only Soldiers in the landing force.

Regardless of how the forces required are formed or which Service provides them, overwhelming force should be planned and applied in an effort to mitigate the inherent risk of forcible entry. Implied in overwhelming force are large numbers of service members, large to the point that they strain systems and stress headquarters at multiple echelons and that partner forces are required to provide additional personnel, equipment, and niche capabilities. In order

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<sup>25</sup> U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Joint Concept for Entry Operations*, (Washington, DC: U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, 07 April 2014), 6-8.

<sup>26</sup> U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Joint Forcible Entry Operations*, Joint Publication 3-18 (Washington, DC: U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, 27 November 2012), 1-7.

to rapidly execute a forced entry operation in support of national interests, the land component must routinely orchestrate large scale, combined joint training exercises that replicate a realistic environment, enemy, and the friendly force required to win.

### **The Bottom Line**

Though the land component doesn't patrol or maneuver on the oceans, they support combatant commanders and the joint force's execution of maritime security in Phase 0 through stability operations and building partner capacity and in conflict by projecting force into other domains, assuring access, and forcible entry. In the USPACOM AOR, USARPAC's Pacific Pathways program provides a good example of how to efficiently execute Phase 0 tasks, train to fight and win, and maintain readiness. In support of maritime security, land component commanders can endeavor to lead unified action in identified countries to improve governance, development, and land forces competency to set conditions for the nation to project resources and focus to the maritime domain. Land component commanders also have a vested interest in regularly conducting realistic, combined/joint forcible entry exercises that test partner interoperability. Ideally those exercises would be of a scale such that a division headquarters participates to control a combined/joint landing force – an Army Brigade Combat Team, a Marine Regimental Combat Team, and a Republic of Korea Marine Battalion as an example. While the resources required for these activities are significant, they must be allocated to ensure the joint force is prepared to fight and win in defense of our national interests, including those interests connected or related to the maritime domain.

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