

SENIOR LEADER PERSPECTIVE

In step with Brigadier General Carl A. Buhler, Director of Logistics, Headquarters Pacific Air Forces.

Cost-Effective Readiness Across the Pacific Area of Responsibility

In late 2011, with the words “I have directed my national security team to make our presence and missions in the Asia-Pacific a top priority,” President Obama signaled the United States’ intention to rebalance to the Asia-Pacific region. Since then, many have asked how the Air Force, specifically Pacific Air Forces (PACAF), is supporting the rebalance.

The Pacific Rebalance is a task the Air Force is especially well-suited for, due to the range, speed, and flexibility of airpower.

It’s this combination that enables airpower to positively impact the region, as it’s currently doing. For instance, as General Hawk Carlisle, Pacific Air Forces’ Commander, has said, “every morning a potential adversary gets up and says, ‘You know what, I’m not going to mess with



Brig. Gen. Carl A. Buhler

America today'... that's a good morning."

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Enabling those good mornings are members of the PACAF combat support team who must do their part to ensure

persistent readiness. According to Air Force Doctrine Document 4-0, but more importantly for this article, combat support is “the foundational and crosscutting capability to field, base, support, and sustain Air Force forces across the range of military operations.”

FIVE LINES OF OPERATIONS

Less than a year after the United States’ declaration of a rebalance to the Pacific, Headquarters PACAF transformed itself into a warfighting headquarters role, merging Thirteenth Air Force with Headquarters PACAF under the maturing Component MAJCOM (C-MAJCOM) structure. Under this new structure and to better support the Asia-Pacific Rebalance, the entire PACAF team, from the Headquarters staff to the squadron level, is focused on PACAF’s strategy which is built upon five Lines of Operation (LOO). The five LOOs that make up PACAF’s strategy are

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Theater Security Cooperation (TSC), Integrated Air and Missile Defense (IAMD),



CSFC personnel take part in Exercise Keen Edge 2014. Keen Edge is an annual theater exercise, but this year marked the first test of the CSFC construct in this type of scenario. Photo by MSgt Matthew McGovern, PACAF/PA.

Power Projection (PP), Agile and Flexible Command and Control, and Resilient Airmen.

To keep this article focused on where we, as logisticians, spend the bulk of our time, I’ll focus on three of the five LOOs -- IAMD, TSC and PP -- which drive our day-to-day efforts. Under this LOO-based strategy, PACAF’s logistics community has adjusted its combat support

approach by prioritizing its efforts to get the ‘biggest bang for the buck’ and by developing processes to ensure agility, responsiveness, and efficiency.

Additionally, as the C-MAJCOM structure matures, a natural next-step was tentatively soft-merging the A4 and A7 operations and planning staffs to synergize efforts. By doing so, we created the Combat Support Integration Division whose core is the Combat Support Fusion Cell (CSFC). The CSFC synchronizes and streamlines capabilities ensuring we substantively impact evolving operational requirements. In its short existence, the combined A4 and A7 contingency planning staff has already yielded several benefits, especially in base resiliency and base opening activities.

THEATER SECURITY COOPERATION (TSC)

Every PACAF Airman, whether stationed here or rotating through the region, is an American Ambassador and part of one of our biggest LOOs, Theater Security Cooperation. This LOO increases the sharing of theater security responsibilities and provides the United States with an unmeasurable amount of access and influence. This, in turn, enables each of the five PACAF LOOs and is paramount for success in the Pacific. With that in mind, over the past year, PACAF logisticians have held robust engagements with over 20 nations across the Asia-Pacific region, including senior leader exchanges, humanitarian assistance/disaster relief (HA/DR) operations, exercises, and subject matter expert exchanges.

These engagements have shaped real-world operations, with the most common being natural disaster response, whose frequency is best marked by the words “not if, but when.” For example, when Super-Typhoon Haiyan hit the Philippines in November, 2013, it was the most destructive typhoon in their history. PACAF, as part of the larger worldwide effort, responded almost immediately with combat support personnel helping to establish airheads for Department of Defense, Non-Governmental Organizations, and our Asia-Pacific partners to airlift critical relief supplies. In coordination with III Marine Expeditionary Force rotary-wing units, these

airheads provided a hub-and-spoke distribution system providing time-sensitive support for thirteen million people affected by the super-typhoon.

Another of PACAF's ongoing initiatives is the necessity to preposition HA/DR materiel, which we've coined HA/DR-M, in the Philippines. This initiative directly supports PACAF's strategy and uses the Enterprise Logistics Strategy's 'Posturing Logistics Resources' Strategic Priority as its cornerstone. Under this initiative, the "tyranny of distance" will be mitigated while partnerships will be modernized and strengthened in the critical East China Sea region. Another benefit is building adaptable partnerships for reliable and sustainable crisis response.

Lastly, another initiative is the development of the 'Enhanced Preparedness Partnership Program (EPPP).' This program will identify and provide sources of supply and services while simultaneously codifying contractual procedures in peacetime, so they're ready during a contingency, when time is short. We see EPPP increasing flexibility, reducing response times, and reducing transportation costs while also strengthening relationships between participating nations.

INTEGRATED AIR AND MISSILE DEFENSE (IAMD)

As our nation faces the realities of Anti-Access/Area Denial (A2/AD), PACAF is intently focused on integrating the various elements of IAMD. The thrust of our work in this LOO is to match aircraft refueling, reserve materiel/equipment, and airfield damage repair capabilities against requirements. These synchronized capabilities will ensure faster airfield recovery and redundant fuels storage and distribution. Additionally, taking a holistic approach, Pacific warfighters are prioritizing required capabilities to ensure the US has the ability to influence the full spectrum of military operations. To accomplish this, now, and in the future, PACAF will need to operate from a wide array of locations. However, instead of having more fixed locations,

PACAF will support dynamic operations under what Gen Carlisle calls “places, not bases.” Under this construct, combat support personnel are intently focused on ensuring PACAF is able to execute airpower and maximize combat capability from a variety of places. This, combined with recent fiscal pressures, has refocused our efforts to adapt processes while reducing expenditures...two core pillars needed for success.

POWER PROJECTION

At the core of the US Air Force’s overarching mission is the ability to project power. One example of this is rotating bomber, tanker, and fighter aircraft to the region to ensure the Pacific Command has trained and ready forces. To facilitate power projection and to reduce, or even eliminate costs, PACAF is leaning forward to preposition aircraft support equipment to key areas, like in Northern Australia, where Air Force assets are operating with USMC rotational units. Similarly, as part of Continual Bomber Presence (CBP) rotations, PACAF and Global Strike Command have successfully prepositioned equipment at Andersen AFB, reducing the number required rotational down from six C-17 equivalents in 2010 to one in 2014.

Another method of ensuring flexibility is through the active use of Acquisition Cross-Servicing Agreements (ACSA), with 14 agreements currently in-place. ACSAs detail the exchange of mutual logistics support between two nations and are useful during exercises and real-world operations, as they reduce logistical burdens and provide commanders increased interoperability, enhanced operational readiness, and cost effective mutual support. An example of its use was when the Royal Thai Air Force, participating in Red Flag-Alaska, had a propeller problem on one of their C-130s. Using an ACSA to procure the propeller, the RTAF went on to successfully complete Red Flag with less than 24 hours of down time.

Lastly, another focus area has been to improve weapon system reliability by investing in corrosion control capabilities, such as dry-air dehumidification equipment at Andersen AFB, Kadena AB, and Kunsan AB, which are among the Air Force's most corrosive locations. Through this effort, readiness rates have improved while maintenance requirements have been reduced.

CONCLUSION

It's an exciting and challenging time to be a PACAF Airman. Under reduced funding levels and facing an uncertain fiscal environment, linking resources to readiness is more important now, than ever. To fully provide capabilities critical to the Pacific Rebalance, combat support professionals and processes must be adaptive and creative. PACAF is stepping up to meet these challenges. By modernizing strategic alliances, planning expeditionary logistics to meet operational demands, and training and empowering combat support warfighters, PACAF is helping to ensure peace and prosperity throughout the Asia-Pacific region.

About the author: Brig. Gen. Carl A. Buhler is the Director of Logistics, Headquarters Pacific Air Forces, Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Hawaii. He is responsible for the maintenance and support of fighter, reconnaissance, and support aircraft, as well as the management of supplies and equipment valued at more than \$3.3 billion. Additionally, he is responsible for the allocation and maintenance of vehicles, plus the storage and maintenance of PACAF's war reserve materiel. He also provides guidance and management assistance for 16,400-plus military and civilian logistics personnel assigned to PACAF. Lastly, he is responsible for oversight of PACAF's conventional munitions stockpile, which is stored and maintained at locations in the U.S. Pacific Command area of responsibility.

General Buhler received his commission in 1989 from the ROTC program at Valdosta State College. During his career, he has deployed to the cease-fire phase of Operation Desert Storm, served as the U.S. Air Force Air Demonstration Squadron "Thunderbirds" maintenance officer for the 1997 and 1998 seasons, served as Commander, 379th Expeditionary Maintenance Group, Southwest Asia, and as the Commander, 78th Air Base Wing and Installation Commander, Robins Air Force Base, Ga. He has also served as a Foreign Military Sales training program manager, as a Congressional Liaison Officer, and as Chief, Legislative Liaison for the Secretary of the Air Force's Executive Issues Team.