

**A Deployable New Headquarters that can
Command the 4 branches of Service during an Asian Contingency**

Camp Zama, I Corps FWD HQ, The Organization and Mission

During peacetime, the headquarters is only a small organization but its mission and function are flexible can be greatly expanded. That is my impression that I have received of the forward headquarters. They have two missions: The first is to coordinate with the deployed reinforcing units during contingencies, provide operations support, and provide intelligence to the Self Defense Force; the other mission is to deploy as needed and conduct exercises and/or operations with the Self Defense Force or other East Asian countries. (Documentation provided by U.S. Army Japan, I Corps FWD Public Affairs Office)

Military Commentator: Taisei Ugaki

Photo: 2nd Infantry Division's Stryker Brigade providing security for the Iraqi Presidents' helicopter at Baqubah.

The Army Theater Headquarters that was Established on Camp Zama

In October 2009, I was given the opportunity to be a part of the crew that was given access to the I Corps Forward Headquarters of the U.S. Army in Japan. This Forward Headquarters was established as a result of the Japan-U.S. agreement in 2005 which covered the transformation of the U.S. Forces in Japan. In this agreement, it is clearly written that the U.S. Army Japan Headquarters will be modernized into a deployable, joint-capable, operational headquarter element. The main body of this new headquarter is the U.S. Army I Corps, which is stationed in Fort Lewis, Washington. (I Corps FWD) was activated on Camp Zama, Kanagawa-prefecture on December 19, 2007. This organization was called the UEX until then.

The main body, the I Corps, is the main combat unit that is subordinate to USARPAC in Hawai'i, and is also one of the four Corps that exists today. The I Corps has approximately 40 thousand Soldiers. But the I Corps Forward located in Camp Zama has actually established itself as an independent unit that is subordinate to PACOM/USARPAC. So in reality, it is a completely new, deployable, and forward, theater headquarter.

Therefore, in the event of a contingency or an emerging threat, it is capable of commanding not only the units from I Corps but depending on the situation, it can command other Army units as tenant units. In a contingency situation within Japan or neighboring nations, the I Corps Forward can be appointed to be the JTF headquarters by PACOM. It will command and control Ground, Navy, and Air Forces. It can literally function as a large-scale theater headquarters.

Because of this, the command and control capability of this forward headquarters is much more robust than I have imagined. This headquarters is capable of much more than just commanding and controlling the 2,455 Soldiers of the Army units in Japan but also the reinforcement units that will be deployed from the United States. This shows the increased commitment of the U.S. Army regarding the defense of Japan. So exactly what are the details of this organization? Let's take a close look.

Photograph:

Soldiers from the Okinawa-based PAC-3 unit, the 1-1 Air Defense Artillery conducting PT.

The Role and Mission of the I Corps FWD Headquarters

So now that the U.S. Army is increasing its efforts in the defense of Japan, what exactly is the mission and function of this newly established forward operational headquarters? According to the official briefing that was given by the I Corps FWD, its vision is to become an organization that will support the strong Japan-U.S. alliance at the organization/unit level and continue to be relevant to the stability of the Far East. Its mission is to contribute to the defense of Japan and conduct and support full-spectrum operations with the Japan Ground Self-Defense Force in order to maintain peace and stability in the Far East.

In order to meet these objectives, during peacetime, the I Corps FWD will support the requirements of PACOM's OPLAN and simultaneously maintain/develop bilateral relations with the Japan Ground Self Defense Force. Senior commanders will engage with Self Defense Force commanders to coordinate and cooperate as needed. And in preparation of a bilateral contingency operation, bilateral training/exercises will be conducted.

Additionally, on order, the I Corps FWD may be deployed worldwide as a tactical operational headquarters in the interests of U.S. security.

So that's the official explanation regarding the mission and role. In summary, (the I Corps FWD) normally spends its time preparing for contingencies in Japan and nearby countries while getting ready for bilateral operations with the Ground Self Defense Force and other U.S. Army units. On order from mainland U.S., they may deploy to other nations in Asia or even outside of this region.

Photograph:

UH-60 Blackhawk from the 78th AVN BN, a unit under direct command of the headquarters.

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U.S. Army Unit Locations

Next, what is the function of I Corps FWD during peacetime or even during small-scale contingencies? In our current state(peacetime), the I Corps FWDs positioning within the organizational chart is directly under the USARPAC headquarters. It is at the same level as the 25th Inf DIV, USARAK, 8th TSC, and 94th AAMDC. It consists of approximately 300 personnel and the only units under its command are the 78th AVN BN which has UH-60 Tactical Transport Helicopters, the USARJ MP BN, and the 296th Army Band.

However, whether peacetime or during contingency, they are able to receive support from tenant units such as USARJs 10th Support Group in Okinawa (subordinate to 8th TSC), 1-1 ADA BN which is also in Okinawa (PAC-3 unit, subordinate to 94th AAMDC), the JTAGS unit stationed in Misawa and Shariki (subordinate to 94th AAMDC), the FBX-T Unit (X-band TBM tracking radar, subordinate to 94th AAMDC), U.S. Army 1st Special Operations Group, 1st Battalion (nicknamed the green beret), USARJ MEDDAC-J (subordinate to Pacific Region Medical Command), 58th and 78th Signal Battalion (subordinate to 516th Signal BDE), 835th and 836th Transportation Battalion (subordinate to U.S. Army TRANSCOM), JED (subordinate to U.S. Army Corps of Engineers) etc.

During peacetime, it seems that the U.S. Army has placed many critical units in Japan, those that are able to function as a deterrent. If a contingency or a limited-scale emergency is to occur, (I Corps FWD) will coordinate with these units and any other reinforcements that will arrive from the United States. They will also simultaneously provide mainly intelligence support to the Japan Ground Self Defense Force.

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USARJ & I Corps FWD Command
Relationship Chart

The other functions of this headquarters is to conduct bilateral exercises/operations with the Ground Self Defense Force, conduct exercises/operations with other East Asian nations, and also to deploy to critical locations as needed. With our Ground Self Defense Force, they already conduct the Yama Sakura CPX, North Wind, Orient Shield, and Rising Thunder. They also participate in the multilateral field training exercise, Cobra Gold in Thailand. In this upcoming December, they will participate in Yama Sakura at Hokkaido with the Ground Self Defense Force Northern Army as a deployable headquarters. Their capabilities as a forward deployable headquarters will be put to the test.

The Function and Capabilities of the Headquarters as Seen in the Command Center

Detailed information on the command and control capabilities of I Corps FWD during a real-life contingency is classified so we cannot print any information with accuracy. But we can describe what we saw in our tour of the command center as we were escorted through with the U.S. Army PAO officer. On the rows of desks in this room, there were many computer terminals. Several of these terminals were designated for the Commanding General, Staff, and key leaders. It is easy to see that this room is functional as an Army Theater Headquarters.

There are several large-screen monitors on the front wall which allows information including streaming video from other command posts to be displayed on screen. With the approval of the commanding general, live feeds from reconnaissance satellites and UAVs may be displayed as necessary. It is probably safe to assume that the commanding general and the staff will be able to see near-real-time information of the field without ever leaving the room.

Deep inside the Command Center, there is a conference room where the Commander and his staff officers can all meet together. I mentioned earlier that in a contingency situation, a JTF would be formed under PACOM. If the Navy or Air Force is to organize a JTF, the I Corps FWD will become the HQs of the ground component. If the

(The photograph with people storing large ammunitions.) The logistic capability of USARJ: maximum storing capacity: 64,320 short tons, Current stock: 32,834 short tons.

JTF is tasked to the Army, I Corps FWD will become the forward-stationed brain of the whole JTF. This explains why the Command Center is so well-equipped clearly beyond the capability of one tactical HQ. It has been designed with such situations in mind.

Possible contingencies that we can think of which can directly impact Japan are ballistic missile attacks or local SOF attacks by countries such as North Korea. We can also think of large scale disasters such as earthquakes, tsunami and typhoons. In situations like these, obviously the Ground, Maritime and Air Self Defense Force will be dispatched, so for the time being, the U.S. Army will not likely need heavy combat power such as armor units consisting of tanks and infantry fighting vehicles or artillery units.

(The photograph with many tents in an open field.) The size of the area including storage buildings and the fields for storing sustainment stocks is as large as 200 football fields

(The U.S. Forces) already has the 3rd Marine Expeditionary Division stationed in Japan This unit forms the core of the 3rd Marine Expeditionary Force of the U.S. Marines in Japan. So the Army does not have much need to bring their own large combat force.

When considering which units may be sent to Japan as reinforcements, it is possible that the tenant units from the I Corps, the parent organization (of the I Corps FWD), may be deployed. Theoretically, active-duty units such as 25th ID, 3rd Bde of 2nd ID, 4th ID (Mechanized), 101st Abn Div. (Air Assault), 2nd Army Cavalry Regt, I Corps Artillery Unit of the National Guard, 66th Avn Bde, 111 ADA Bde, and 35th Engineer Bde may also be deployed as tenant units.

However, if we think of a realistic contingency, the actual units necessary for reinforcement will probably be units such as 1st or 2nd Bde of 25th ID, Bde Combat Teams with Strykers such as 3rd Bde of 2nd ID, 75th Ranger Regt or reinforcement from 1st Special Operation Group to counter enemy Special Operations, 555 Engineer Group, and missile

defense units such as PAC3 and THAAD.

Necessary preparations during peacetime includes: the maintenance of the logistics

infrastructure to support USARJ and the U.S. reinforcing tenants units that will come from mainland U.S. in case of a contingency; to establish coordination with the Self Defense Force; and to improve the JTF command capability.

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GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION

The current personnel strength of the U.S. Forces in Japan is about 47,000. Out of this number, the Army is 2,450, Navy 17,600, Marine Corps 14,880, Air Force 12,170 and Coast Guard 14. The main units of the U.S. Forces in Japan are, in addition to the Army units mentioned earlier, a nuclear aircraft carrier which is the core of the 7th Fleet, Battle Force (CTF-70), Carrier Air Wing (CVW-5), Amphibious Force (CTF-76), Submarine Force (CTF-74), Patrol Reconnaissance Force (CTF-72), USMC 3 MEF and Landing Force (CTF-79), 1st Marine Aircraft Wing, 18th Air Wing (5th Air Force), 35th Fighter Wing, and 374th Airlift Wing.

When a large scale contingency or an emergency breaks out, the Air Force, Marines, and Navy, obviously, will also receive additional reinforcements. The total strength of personnel within Japan and out at the sea around Japan will expand to 80,000 to 100,000. Since the JTF I mentioned earlier is a theater joint force which crosses over all the service components mentioned above, this task force will literally

(Photograph showing a line of many tracked vehicles.) Heavy Brigade Combat Team of the 4th ID which will be used as reinforcement during a large scale contingency.

become a single, massive, combat force. The purpose of the I Corps FWD is to prepare for these types of potential future contingencies. Therefore, the capability of the Command Center is highly designed to be able to provide operational command and control, coordination capability, and information analysis capability to the forces during such contingencies.

Challenges of the Future

The main facilities of the I Corps FWD include not only the Command Center, but also the Battle Command Training Center whose construction started in April 2009 at Sagami Depot. It is rather an incredible simulation training facility which can hold 300 people in a one-story, 3,300 square meters wide building.

(Photograph showing Soldiers entering the building.) The Soldiers of the A Company, the 4/9 Infantry, 4th SBCT, 2nd ID, searching for weapons in Baquba.

The expected completion time is around September 2010. This Training Center will

become a bilateral training facility for the U.S. Forces and the JGSDF where the U.S. and

Japanese units can improve the effectiveness of bilateral operations by conducting multiple simulation trainings without bringing vehicles or equipments. In conjunction with this establishment, the HQs of the JGSDF Central Readiness Force will move to Camp Zama from Camp Asaka in late 2012. In that event, the new training facility will be utilized as a symbolic structure for the strengthening of the defense cooperation between Japan and U.S. as intended in the U.S. Forces Transformation.

At this point, we suspect that the following training scenarios are being considered: the defense of Japan, regional conflicts including remote islands, anti-guerilla/SOF operations, and missile defense. We also heard that large-scale disaster relief operation scenarios are being considered as well.

In these types of contingencies that may happen in Japan, it is critical to be able to quickly find things that are out of the ordinary. At the same time, it is essential for the 1st line units to maintain the highest level of proficiency and readiness possible. In this sense, it is ideal for the CRF of the JGSDF and the I Corps FWD to co-locate in one place so that they can physically and technically coordinate very closely for bilateral exercises, command and control, and information sharing. From the perspective of the quality of our nation's defense, these changes are very desirable.

On the other hand, this also exposes a challenge for our country. The U.S. Army has been steadily developing the I Corps FWD and its related facilities. If our JGSDF wants to cooperate with the U.S. Army in the defense of Japan, JGSDF will obviously need to clearly define the future vision of where the JGSDF is headed. In a nutshell, as long as Japan-U.S. alliance exists, (any changes resulting from) the U.S. transformation will bring new challenges and requirements to its partner, the Ministry of Defense and Self Defense Force.

In this sense, this interview with the U.S. Army made me painfully aware of the need to think more about the defense of our country. I would like to keep my eyes on the further development of the relationship between the U.S. Army and the GSDF.