



PACIFIC
ENVIRONMENTAL
SECURITY FORUM

PRESS RELEASE

Co-Sponsored by: | Australian Department of Defence and
the U.S. Pacific Command

PACIFIC FORUM HIGHLIGHTS MILITARY RESILIENCY TO CLIMATE CHANGE

Sydney, Australia, April 19th – As climate change continues to increase both the intensity and frequency of natural disasters, how should militaries respond to mitigate impacts in the Pacific region? That was the question 18 countries and 85 delegates addressed this week during the 2013 Pacific Environmental Security Forum.

The event, co-sponsored by U.S. Pacific Command (USPACOM) and the Australian Department of Defence (ADoD), was designed to build military readiness in response to this growing threat to regional peace, security and prosperity. Themes related to environmental sustainability, biosecurity, disaster management and climate change adaptation were presented and evaluated. Additionally, workshops on planning, environmental baselines and close-out surveys were conducted. The Forum also featured a facilities overview of Sydney Harbor, cultural awareness and pollution prevention tours, and an oil-spill response demonstration led by the Royal Australian Navy in partnership with the Sydney Ports Authority.

The senior U.S. delegation rep, Brigadier General Mark McLeod, described this year's Forum as a, "groundbreaking international security cooperation event." He continued, "Never before have we been able to bring together so many to draw attention to the importance of environmental security in military planning."

The list of participating nations included Japan, China, India, the Philippines, Bangladesh, Vietnam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Maldives, Papua New Guinea, Thailand, New Zealand, Timor L'este, and Nepal--ground zero for disasters in the region. And the results? "Crystal clear, unanimous consensus on the need to build cooperation and partner capacity to lower our risk," according to McLeod.

The Forum generated a number of lessons learned, which were shared to increase knowledge and facilitate collaboration. These included an admission that climate change requires a proactive military response, the sharing of information, and a common approach to capacity development including multi-lateral exercises and security assistance. These lessons learned now set the stage for the first-ever multi-lateral baseline for future environmental sustainability, biosecurity and disaster management collaboration. "What this week's Forum has shown us is that environmental security must be elevated to the forefront of planning," said McLeod.

As militaries further their knowledge and practical application of environmental security, USPACOM and ADoD will continue to lead awareness and capacity development opportunities. Towards that end, USPACOM has committed to continuing this important environmental security engagement next year by co-hosting a workshop in the Maldives, focusing on regional issues in South Asia.

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Photo 01 (photo1.jpg) – Brigadier General Mark McLeod (USPACOM J4) delivers comments during a panel session at the Pacific Environmental Security Forum held in Sydney, Australia 16-19 April 2013.



Photo 02 (photo2.jpg) – Colonel Raymond Tusi (USPACOM J4) leads an environmental sustainability work group discussion at the Pacific Environmental Security Forum.



Photo 03 (photo3.jpg) – Commander Steve Cole (Royal Australian Navy) discusses environmental issues with military representatives from Indonesia, Thailand, and China.



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