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Seabees are versatile instruments of power projection because of their capabilities to execute disaster relief operations, engineering civic action, and overseas construction that contribute to National Security Strategy's (NSS) efforts in diplomatic, information, military, economic, development, strategic communications, and homeland security. Unfortunately, the recent reduction in Seabee force structure is detrimental to national security. Further reduction would create capacity degradation with direct impact to US power projection. Degraded Seabees will result in a capability gap that would not be readily filled by any existing units. In spite of current fiscal constraints, the Department of Defense should prevent future reduction of Seabee strength in order to preserve a unique capability of power projection. The United States must continuously engage and adapt to the ever-changing global military, economic, and the borderless non-state transnational entities.

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Acknowledgment

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Executive Summary

Title: SEABEES: INSTRUMENTS OF POWER PROJECTION

Author: Lieutenant Commander Wernher C. Heyres, Civil Engineer Corps, USN

Thesis: Seabees are versatile instruments of power projection because of their capabilities to conduct disaster relief operations, engineering civic action, and overseas military construction that contribute to National Security Strategy's (NSS) efforts in diplomatic, information, military, economic, development, strategic communications, and homeland security.

Discussion: The recent reductions in Seabee force structure are detrimental to national security. Further reductions would create capacity degradation with direct impact to US power projection. Degraded Seabees will result in a capability gap that would not be readily filled by any existing units. For over 70 years, Seabees have been an active player in the national power projection. Since WWII, Seabees have been involved in most major conflicts, stability operations, civic action construction, and contingency disaster relief operations. The Seabee construction projects, in support of Humanitarian Civic Assistance (HCA), contributes to international development with the secondary effect of producing a positive strategic communication message and diplomatic relations improvement. The contingency disaster recovery and relief operations enable Seabees to support domestic emergencies and international disaster response efforts. Seabees provide rapid response expeditionary construction in support of combat operations, stability operations, and forward deployed presence in overseas locations. Various government agencies employ Seabees in their daily operations. Seabees work in the Presidential Retreat Facility in Camp David, US State Department Embassies worldwide, US Department of Defense Facilities, and US Combatant Commander's area of operations. The 2010 National Security Strategy envisioned a consolidated "whole government approach" in implementing the wide spectrum of means. Seabees contribute to the diplomatic, informational, military, economic, homeland security, and strategic communications in both direct and indirect way.

Conclusion: The Navy Seabees have been a valuable and proven instruments of US power projection. Seabees deploy year round across the globe: conducting engineering civic action, contingency disaster relief operations, and combat support operations. In spite of current fiscal constraints, the Department of Defense should prevent future reductions of Seabee strength in order to preserve a unique capability of power projection. The United States must continuously engage and adapt to the ever-changing environment of modern warfare, global economy, and the emergence of borderless non-state transnational entities that disrupts the equilibrium of global peace and stability.

Introduction

Navy Seabees, military engineers deployed worldwide in support of contingency operations, are valuable national resources. Seabees are versatile instruments of power projection because of their capability to conduct disaster relief operations, engineering civic action, and overseas military construction that contribute to National Security Strategy's (NSS) efforts in diplomatic, information, military, economic, development, strategic communications, and homeland security. Unfortunately, the Naval Construction Force (NCF) lost three Seabee battalions in the 2012 and 2013 budget cuts. These were the same battalions that responded to the Hurricane Katrina disaster in between deployments from Iraq and Afghanistan in 2005. [1] Seabees cleared debris from roads and harbors, restored power, and rebuilt infrastructures after the Katrina devastation. Although the 14,000 Seabees make up just 5% of the Navy and appropriate 1% of Department of Defense personnel budget,[3] they are valuable assets possessing unique capabilities. The 33% reduction of the Naval Mobile Construction Battalions (NMCB) degraded the Seabee's capacity to respond to national emergencies. Seabees declined from 325,000 in 1945; then 26,000 in 1968; and now - to a projected strength of 12,800 military personnel in 2014. Further reductions may erode their capabilities necessary for U.S. power projection. For instance, they could lose their drilling, rock blasting, and battle damage assessment capabilities if further reduced in strength. Eventually, equipment and training will irreversibly deteriorate.

Despite clamor to consolidate all military engineers, [4] including the Navy Seabees and the Air Force Red Horse, into the US Army Corps of Engineers[5], Seabees fill a capability gap that no other units can readily takeover. Seabees are deeply entwined with the Marine Corps in

amphibious operations, the Navy in worldwide theater security cooperation, and other government agencies in myriad of global engineering missions. The Seabees' unique underwater construction capabilities, amphibious bridging skills, and rapid deployment engineering skills enables them to support US "soft power and hard power"[6] projection. With these capabilities, Seabees deploy worldwide and contribute to various aspects of the national security.

Arguably, decision-makers could prevent further reductions if they can be convinced that Seabees provides tangible support to the nation's top priority – the NSS[7]. The latest NSS, issued in 2010, advocated an integrated whole government approach[8] in international development, public diplomacy, strategic communications, homeland security, and national defense. [9]

a. Overview

Succinctly, Seabee capabilities plus mission execution equals to benefits to national security. First, the successful disaster relief operations contribute to domestic homeland security, international humanitarian assistance, economic recovery, and diplomacy. Secondly, the engineering civic action contributes to international development, diplomacy, and strategic communications. And lastly, the overseas military construction supports combat operations, empowers stability operations, and provides security for economic trade.

Figure 1 – Seabee capabilities produce missions that support National Security Strategy.

In as much as Seabees have been valuable in the past, fiscal reality forced a reduction in military personnel structure. Budget cuts across military services affected various units including the Seabees. In 2007, Seabees increased its strength by one battalion in support of the surge in Iraq and Afghanistan, and then reduced by three battalions in 2013, including the disestablishment of the First Naval Construction Division[10]. Although reduction is justified, new challenges require the United States to adapt to the changing environment.

In today's era of globalization and persistent conflict, strategy takes priority to cope with a dynamic world. Strategy is defined by the Department of Defense as a "prudent set of ideas for employing all the instruments of national power in a synchronized and integrated fashion to achieve theater, national, and multinational objectives."[11] Instruments are concrete capabilities to achieve these objectives.[12] Seabees provide capabilities that contribute to sustained efforts in areas of economic development, strategic information, diplomacy, homeland security, and defense. This paper will show how the Seabee capabilities produce mission sets that directly and indirectly support the National Security Strategy.

b. Origin of Navy Civil Engineers

To understand the Seabees, the connection with Navy Civil Engineer Corps Officers must be established. Seabees and CEC officers are inextricably linked together in history and functionality. The Navy Civil Engineer Corps (CEC) officers commanded the Seabee organization. Not all CEC officers are considered Seabees, only those who are assigned to Seabee units. Seabee officers are qualified professional engineers, federal acquisition professionals, and joint warfighters. The US Navy established the CEC in 1841 to plan, design, construct and maintain dry docks and shore facilities worldwide.[13] Prior to the creation of the

Seabees, the Civil Engineer Corps hired civilians and contractors to build and maintain naval facilities worldwide. Approximately 70,000 civilian workers were engaged in construction projects overseas when Pearl Harbor was attacked[14]. The dilemma of employing civilian personnel in a combat zone was insurmountable. Under the Geneva Convention of Armed Conflict, civilians were not permitted to resist enemy military attacks. If they did, they could be executed as guerrillas.[15] This dilemma was exacerbated in Wake Island on December 23, 1942 - when Japanese soldiers killed 50 civilian workers and sent 1,200 civilian prisoners to labor camps in China. Civilian construction workers in Guam and the Philippines suffered the same fate, after the enemy captured their construction camps. This predicament highlighted the need for a military construction force.

c. Origin of Navy Seabees

Seabees were born in adversity, out of necessity. The Chief of Civil Engineer Corps obtained congressional authorization to enlist construction workers in the military to allow workers to exercise self-defense. Basic units were formed into **C**onstruction **B**attalions with initials of "CBs" that evolved into the name "Seabees". Enlistments came from "mountain-movers who built Hoover Dams; sandhogs who had tunneled under East River; human spiders who had spun the steel web of the Golden Gate Bridge and New York skyscrapers"[16]; men who built the national highway system; workers who built dry docks, wharves, ocean liners, and aircraft carriers; and other workers comprising 60 different trade skills.

The average age of the first 100,000 recruits was 37 years old, with ages ranging from 30 to 60 years old.[17] Although proven tough in construction, these skilled civilian workers with no military experience were unproven in combat. During the amphibious operations in the Pacific, Seabees built airfields around the clock under intense enemy fire. They fought back with

weapons and bulldozers in destroying enemy pillboxes and bunkers. In Guadalcanal, US fighter planes would take off to engage Japanese fighters escorting their bombers; and whenever Japanese bombs destroyed the airfield, Seabees would patch up the airfield before US fighter planes were forced to land on low fuel, thus, saving lives and planes.

In the process, 111 major airstrips, 441 piers, 2,558 ammunition magazines, 700 square blocks of warehouses, hospitals to serve 70,000 patients, tanks for the storage of 100,000,000 gallons of gasoline, and housing for 1,500,000 men. In the Pacific theater of operations, Seabees participated in all major amphibious operations with the Marines and suffered over 2,000 casualties. A Seabee battalion in Iwo Jima assault suffered 35% casualty rate.

A famous U.S. Marine Corps general, Lieutenant General Holland "Howling Mad" Smith, summarized his experience with the Seabees during WWII:

> In my humble opinion, the formation of the Seabees was one of the finest developments of this last war. The outstanding work of the Seabees and their magnificent courage in battle played a most important part in the successful prosecution of the war. It is not an unusual sight to witness the Seabees performing their duties under fire. It was an inspiring sight, for instance, to see Marines were fighting on the other end. The spirit of brotherhood existing between the Marines and the Seabees was forged in the holocaust of battle. Perhaps I can sum up this brief message in these few words, " THE SEABEES NEVER LET US DOWN" ~ LTGEN Holland "Howling Mad" Smith ~

In the Atlantic, Seabees built pontoon causeways in the invasion of Sicily, Salerno, and Anzio in Italy. Seabees built the 2-mile pontoon causeway that transported 75% of vehicular traffic during the first three days of the Normandy invasion. During the early hours of 6 June 1944, the Seabees were among the first to go ashore as members of naval combat demolition units (NCDU).[18] NCDU cleared the mine-laden obstacles on Omaha and Juno beach under murderous enemy fires. Official report of NCDU described the mission with this narrative: "Despite the casualties, surviving units continued working, with general disregard for personal

safety. A notable example of courage was given by men who voluntarily placed charges on mines atop obstacles, 10 or 12 feet above the beach, in the face of accurate rifle and machine-gun fire, they climbed on each others shoulders and or shinnied up the pilings and ramps."[19] Today's Navy SEALs (Sea, Air, and Land, commandos) are direct descendants of these men.

In 1952, Seabees built amphibious causeway and expeditionary airfields during desperate hours in the Korean War[20]. Seabees managed to build a 2,400-foot emergency airstrip, on the small island called Yo at Wonsan Bay, while under heavy enemy fire. They were forced to repair new shell holes made daily by the enemy batteries across the bay. Seabees saved precious lives and valuable resources. More recently, Seabees built emergency airfields during the initial invasion of Afghanistan.

e. Capabilities and Force Structure

The Seabee's three major capabilities are underwater construction and demolition, amphibious bridging and transportation, and rapid expeditionary construction and maintenance. Three major units are: Underwater Construction Team (UCT), Amphibious Construction Battalions (ACB), and Naval Mobile Construction Battalions (NMCB). Currently, there are two UCT's, two ACB's, and six NMCB's divided between the Pacific Fleet and the Atlantic Fleet.

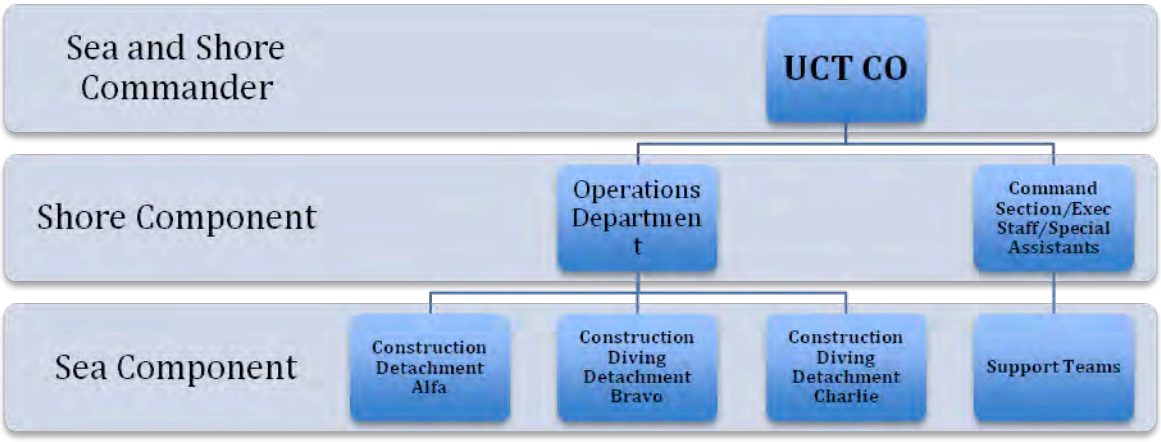

Figure 2 – Underwater Construction Team Organization Chart

The first unit, Underwater Construction Team (UCT), is capable of underwater reconnaissance, demolition, and construction. UCT build underwater structures such as piers, wharfs, and harbors. UCT was established as an independent unit of the Naval Construction Force, in support of U.S. Pacific Fleet and Atlantic Fleet. The team's mission is to provide a responsive military capability for underwater and waterfront engineering, construction and repair in support of Navy and Marine Corps operations.[22] UCT conducts covert or clandestine hydrographic surveys and topographic side scan of ocean floors of ports, beaches, and other landing sites to provide intelligence for amphibious operations. Surveys include bottom mapping of sea lines of communications, and surveys of seaports of debarkation/embarkation and routes to support mine countermeasures operations. UCTs also conduct timely observation of local surf conditions and enemy positions to provide commanders with necessary information to determine the ability of landing forces to execute the mission successfully. Additionally, UCTs construct

permanent piers, wharfs, underwater cable systems, underwater pipelines, and mooring systems.[23]

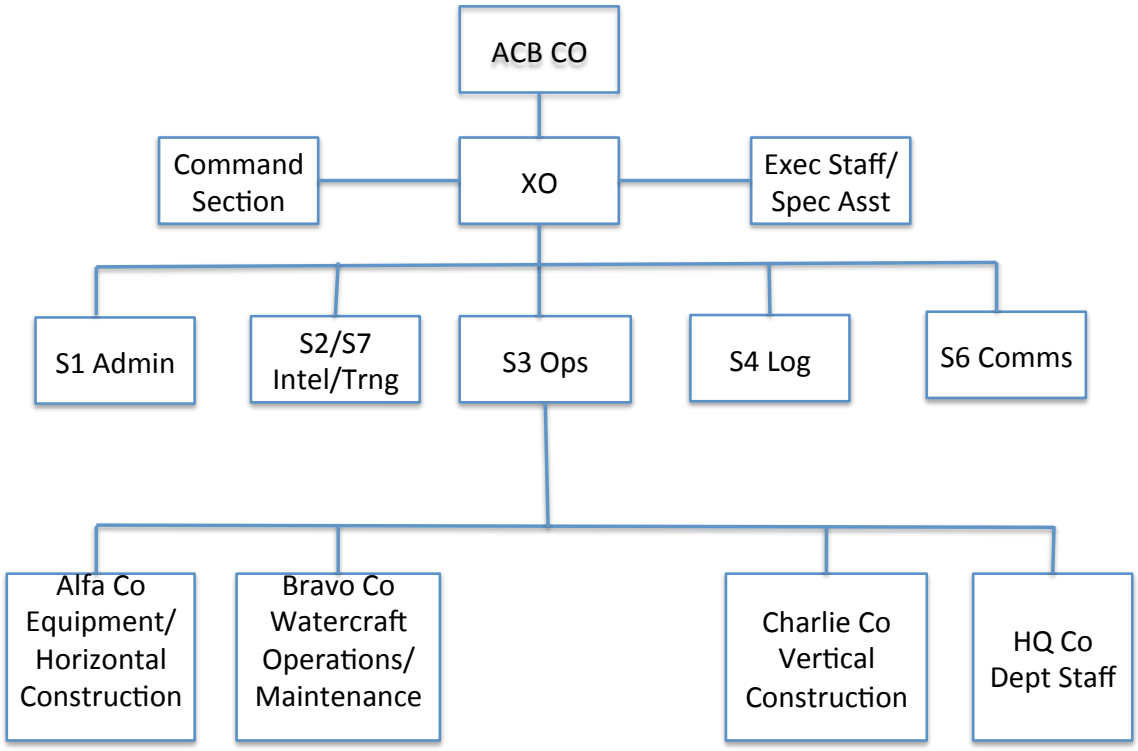

Figure 3 – Typical ACB Org Chart

The second unit, Amphibious Construction Battalions (ACB) provides ship to shore connection during contingency and amphibious operations. These have been successfully demonstrated during the landing at Inchon Bay in Korea, Sicily and Salerno Italy, and Omaha Beach in Normandy. ACB supports amphibious task force, maritime pre-positioning force (MPF), and joint logistics over-the shore (JLOTS) operations during initial assault and the assault follow-on phases of the amphibious operations. They also support offshore petroleum discharge systems, Modular Elevated Causeway (ELCAS-M), and amphibious bulk liquid

transfer system. In addition, they function as beach support units and conduct ship to shore transportation of fuel, water, supplies, materials, and equipment in support of amphibious operations. ELCAS is a mobile pier system[24]

Figure 4 - Elevated Causeway (ELCAS) Photo[25]

The third unit, Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) is a fully deployable war-fighting unit, capable of rapid response to contingency operations and expeditionary construction. Organic personnel skills in the battalion includes: engineers, surveyors, builders, steel workers, electricians, plumbers, mechanics, equipment operators, communications technicians, intelligence personnel, computer specialists, logisticians, medical practitioners, and combat warfare specialists. Its personnel and equipment are a modular task organization capable of being deployed using a combination of personnel and equipment. NMCBs build roads, bridges, piers, airfields, buildings, facilities, and pipelines. They also drill wells, blast rocks,

dismantle fortifications, construct water purification and build special projects. The modular task organizations are capable of being deployed using a combination of air, ground, and sea assets. NMCBs organize, train, and equip for rapid deployment via non-organic strategic air assets to perform engineer planning and conduct horizontal, vertical, and specialized construction.

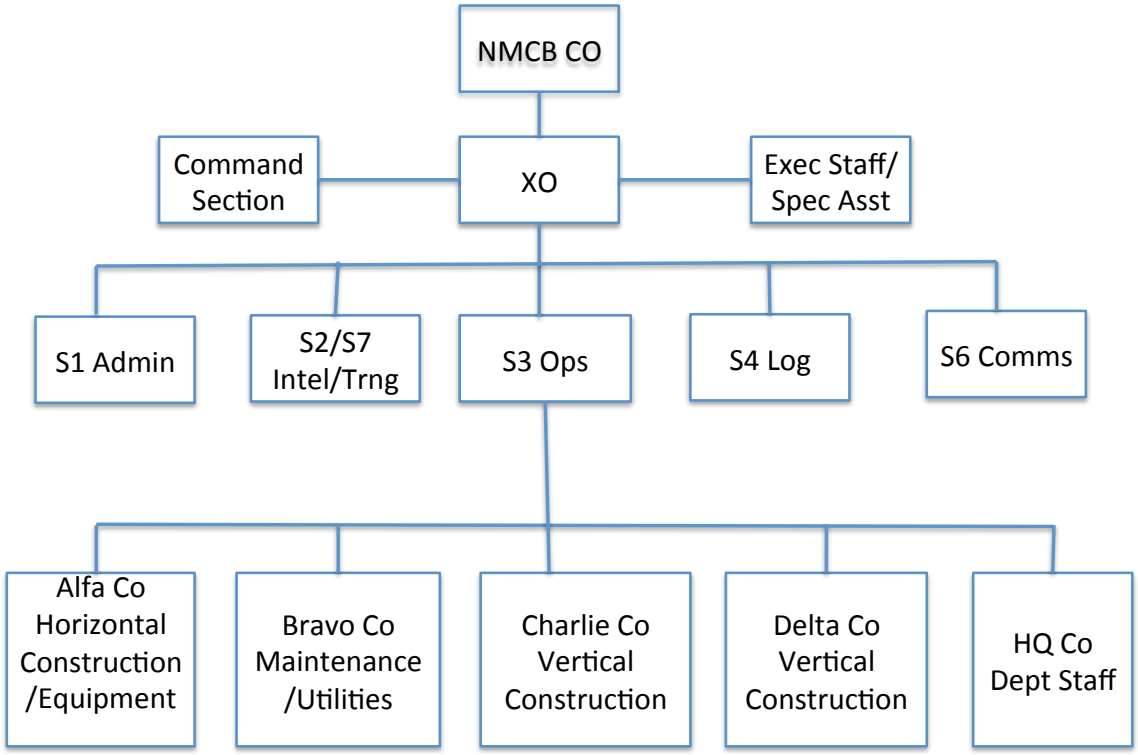

Figure 5 – Typical NMCB Org Chart

A typical Seabee battalion is organized according to company's function in order to facilitate training and equipment maintenance. In contingency operations, NMCB organizes into a modular structure tailored to support the Marine Air Ground Task Force mission.[26]

The Navy, through Seabees, provides general engineering support to MAGTFs.[27] These NCF units are necessary to reinforce and augment the MAGTF's limited civil engineering capability. With any reduction of the NMCBs the CSS/civil engineering capability to the Marine Corps will be impacted.[28]

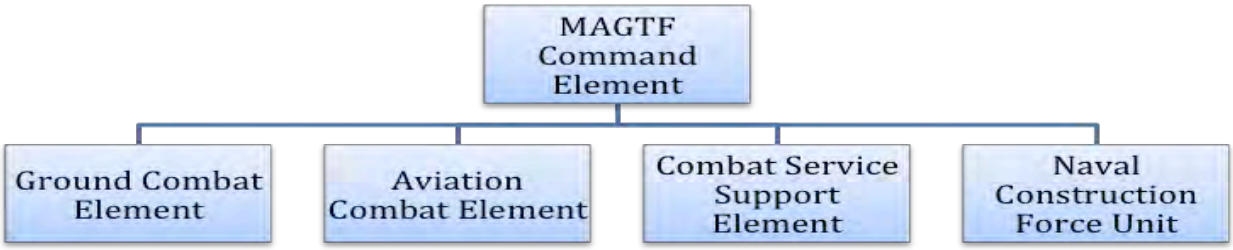

Figure 6 – MAGTF Command Relationship with Seabees

The Air Detachment (AIRDET) within NMCB deploys within 48 hours[29] worldwide during contingency missions. Team members are carefully selected based on skills, experience, and training, and they maintain a high level of readiness and receive priority in meeting individual and training requirements. The NMCB AIRDET is organized to plan, coordinate, and execute rapid-response expeditionary contingency missions. It is structured to facilitate task organization for operations in support of a Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU).[30] Figure 7 shows the MEU command relationship.

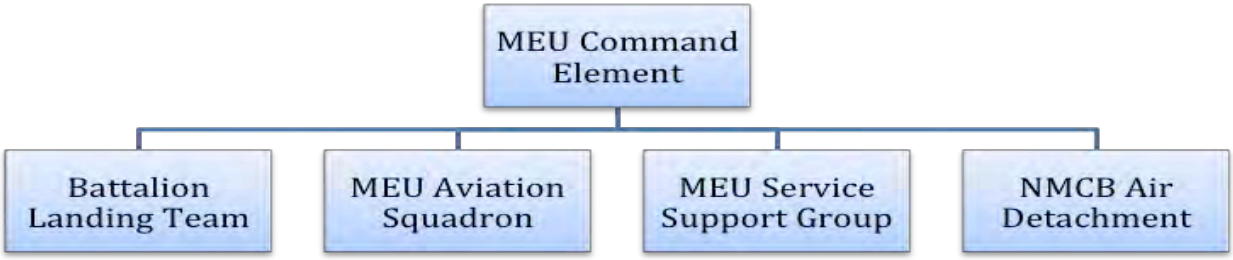

Figure 7 – MEU Command Relationship with NMCB Air Detachment

1.0 Seabee mission on Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief Operations

The succeeding discussions will describe the Seabee contribution to disaster relief operations support, homeland emergency relief assistance, international disaster response, and economic recovery. These discussions will provide arguments that connect the Seabee mission accomplishments to contributions to the National Security Strategy's effort in various fields.

1.1 Homeland Emergency Relief Assistance

> U.S. Forces will continue to defend U.S. territory from direct attack and will provide assistance to domestic civil authorities in response to a very significant or catastrophic event. ~ 2012 National Military Strategy [35] ~

Homeland security is the top priority of the National Security Strategy. In the event of catastrophic disaster, emergency personnel may be overwhelmed beyond normal capacity. During the biggest and costliest natural disaster in recent history, Hurricane Katrina demonstrated the difficulty of local and federal agencies in controlling the quagmire effectively. More than 3,400 Seabees conducted engineering damage assessments of 2,600 miles of roadway,

cleared more than 800 miles of usable roads, collected and disposed more than 20,500 tons of debris,[36] constructed more than 30 public buildings, repaired 85 schools to bring back 47,200 students in their classrooms, delivered 237,000 gallons of water and fuel to 1,600 families a day.[37] Seabees operated bulldozers, dump trucks, diving equipment, and construction equipment in order to rapidly clear the roads, harbors, and buildings of debris and hazardous materials. Seabees brought large emergency generators[38] to provide electrical power and Ruggedized Deployable Satellite (RDSAT) for communications and Internet connection via satellite uplink.

In the aftermath of the latest national disaster, Hurricane Sandy, the US Northern Command[39] (USNORTHCOM) dispatched Seabees rapidly from NMCB Five, NMCB Eleven, CBMU Two, and UCT One conducted disaster relief operation to provide relief for the Atlantic Northeast. Seabees brought diving equipment, emergency generators, dewatering pumps, and earthmoving equipment to assist in disaster relief operations.[40] NMCB 11 dewatered tunnels and provided relief assistance in local communities. Seabees provided assistance for other domestic disasters including; Minnesota Bridge collapse,[41] Hurricane Ivan in Pensacola Florida, Loma Prieta earthquake in San Francisco Bay Area, Hurricane Hugo in Florida, Northridge Earthquake in Southern California, Hurricane Andrew in Homestead Florida, and many other significant operations. Seabees provide rapid support for Homeland security.

Various State Regional Emergency Response Teams included Seabees in emergency plans. This was extremely beneficial during a real region-wide power outage in San Diego, CA on 8 September 2011; Seabees provided the emergency generator to support a nuclear submarine reactor in the dry dock to ensure a back up against nuclear meltdown. A terrorist's detonation of a radiological dispersal device (RDD) or improvised nuclear device (IND) would be catastrophic and devastating.[42] In the event of terrorist attacks using nuclear, biological, and chemical

weapons local responders will be overwhelmed by mass panic and massive contamination. Seabees are trained to conduct recovery operations in a nuclear, biological, chemically contaminated environment (CBRN). Detection equipment and specialized training are inherent to all Seabee units. State and Federal Emergency management should incorporate the Seabees and other military engineers in their Catastrophic Disaster Response plans[43] – including the public and private partnership response.[44]

Seabees could build expedient force protection to prevent damage from terrorist attacks. Seabees built emergency barriers and bunkers to entry control points of military installations worldwide. In the aftermath of massive destruction and loss of lives at the Marine Barracks terrorist bombing in Lebanon in 1983, Seabees built " bomb proof" bunkers for the Marines by burying steel cargo containers underground with complete ventilation and utility connections. Currently, Seabees exclusively support the Presidential retreat at Camp David and US State Department Embassies abroad. In the event of total loss of power and basic services due to natural disaster, terrorist attack, and nuclear detonation, Seabees will be in high demand but low in number as a result of steady decline in force structure and strength.

1.2 International Humanitarian Disaster Relief

On international disaster, Seabees traveled through air and sea to provide assistance right after the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami in Sumatra, Thailand, Sri Lanka, and Indonesia. Seabees provided assistance after the 7.6 magnitude earthquake in Pakistan in 2005 and more recently, for Japan's devastating 8.9 earthquake and catastrophic tsunami in 2011. Seabee Divers from Underwater Construction Two assisted the Japanese Coast Guard with salvage recovery. [45] Seabees also provided humanitarian disaster assistance to Djibouti, Haiti, Indonesia, Kosovo, Japan, Pakistan, Philippines, Portugal, Somalia and other countries in the world. International

HADR overseas provide media attention that translates into a positive image of the United States. The powerful influence of media creates a perception of reality clearly described as: "The narratives produced by the media, especially those constructed around one or more images, do create a reality effect which impact the public and the policy makers"[46] Access to reclusive states like Myanmar, Laos, Cambodia, East Timor, Sudan, Somalia, Venezuela, Russia, China, and North Korea are only possible during disaster relief operations and humanitarian assistance operations.

1.3 Economic Recovery

The impact of economic recovery brought by Seabee assistance is significant. Seabee divers restored a fishing marina that produced $20 million seafood annually in the Gulf region after Hurricane Katrina.[47] On November 5, 2012, Seabees from UCT 1 repaired the Hoboken pier facilities in New Jersey after Hurricane Sandy[48]. Seabees made a tremendous impact to the economic recovery of domestic communities and foreign countries affected by catastrophic disasters.

Unfortunately, NMCB 7, NMCB 40, and NMCB 74, battalions who made tremendous contributions in the massive disaster relief operations will no longer be available for future employment due to decommissioned status. Talents, skills, and lessons learned were lost.

2.0 Engineering Civic Assistance

Seabees deploy to six continents to conduct humanitarian civic action construction and technical assistance. Seabees started the civic action construction and technical assistance program in Vietnam. A famous Seabee builder, Marvin Shields, received the Congressional Medal of Honor posthumously in 1966 during his civic action deployment Dong Xoai, Vietnam.[49] Over 26,000 Seabees and 8,000 CEC officers participated in nation building.

2.1 International Development and Capacity Building:

President John F. Kennedy described the US obligation to international development in order to preserve security and freedom:

> There is no escaping our obligations: our moral obligations as a wise leader and good neighbor in the interdependent community of free nations – our economic obligations as the wealthiest people in a world of largely poor people, as a nation no longer dependent upon the loans from abroad that once helped us develop our own economy – and our political obligations as the single largest counter to the adversaries of freedom.
>
> ~ John Fitzgerald Kennedy ~

International development is one of the most important steps to address regional instability and global security. Seabee engineering civic assistance produces development of local communities overseas. Seabees are agents of international development across unstable regions of the world. They build ordinary facilities with exponential benefits, especially among the poor communities worldwide. Extreme poverty breeds a weak society and a weak society creates unstable states. Unstable states pose potential risk to the global community. The security and well being of the United States are directly impacted by regional instability. Seabees are successfully contributing to the international effort to stimulate growth and development in sub-Sahara region, Southeast Asia, and South America. Their work supports the State Department missions and the overall strategy of the United States. United States Ambassador Penn wrote a powerful message regarding the Seabees' role on 10 January 2013 Embassy's blog:

> In Cambodia, the Seabees play an important role in selected communities, providing infrastructure support by drilling wells, and building schools, health clinics, community centers, and photovoltaic power system. Their projects significantly improve the lives of over 37,000 Cambodians, including 3,600 school-age children who now have new water sources, and 3,200 students who will enjoy a better learning environment.[50]

Civic action constructions are tangible infrastructure projects with direct economic impact to local communities. Seabees build water wells, irrigation canals, harbors, underwater infrastructure, schools, hospitals, rock quarry, roads, bridges, and other basic infrastructure

necessary for economic development. Economic engines ride on infrastructure; basic infrastructures provide the catalyst to jumpstart a stagnant or inconsequential economy. Roads and bridges provide mobility for trade and commerce. Mobility stimulates trade and creates stability. Seabee divers can map hydrographic and topographic profiles of harbors, rivers, and coastal waters for shipment and water transportation. Electricity fuels the economy and creates an engine for growth and development. Providing sewage and trash collections ensure good health and enhances livability for a decent life. Existing maps of human terrain reveals instability to be directly proportional to poor economic conditions of the population.

Drilling water wells is one of Seabee's most beneficial projects for international development. It quenches the thirst and prevents disease. "Nearly a billion people do not have access to drinking water and 2.6 billion have no access to basic sanitation. Every year, 2.2 million people die from diseases linked to the lack of water or poor water quality."[51] Lack of water has been the spark plug of regional conflicts in developing nations. Water was the primary source of conflict between farmers and animal herders that boiled into festering conflict and sparked a civil war in Darfur, Africa. The new US Secretary of State, John Kerry, remarked: "Developing water capacity for people in some parts of the world keeps people from killing each other. It keeps tribes from going out and disintegrating and creating a failed state."[52]
Most agricultural society depends on water for survival and economic growth. Seabees are capable of drilling between 1,500 feet[53] to supply water to the world's unstable nations. Seabees drill water wells for people in Asia, Africa, South America, and in Afghanistan.[54]

Seabees are in a good position to support development due to robust construction and demolition capabilities. Development assistance by Seabees provides basic means to improve living conditions and wellbeing. Seabees have been actively partnering with other US agencies

and International Organizations to support sustained economic development. Seabees provide technical assistance to host nation's military or local government in developing construction skills and winning the hearts and minds of the population. The successful implementation of development projects contributed to the tremendous success of Columbian counterinsurgency . Seabee construction like the medical clinic in La Sierpe, Columbia produces a positive impact. Since the completion of the project, people do not have to travel very far anymore in order to get medical aid. [56] Additionally, Seabees aboard amphibious ships provided engineering civic action support to various cities in Columbia in support of Continuing Promise Partnership.[57]

2.2 Positive Informational and Strategic Communications

Seabee assistance projects are winning the "hearts and minds" of people around the world. Simple acts of kindness produce deep sentiment and goodwill. The Seabee memorial monument at the entrance of Arlington National Cemetery shows a Seabee statue (Figure 8) holding a child's hand, containing words inscribed in granite: "With compassion for others, we build and fight for peace with freedom." Throughout the years, Seabees showed compassion by helping others. Seabee projects and humanitarian assistance are stories of compassion. They convey a powerful message of American kindness. "The message is the sum of action and word."[58] Kindness is the simplest form of communication understood by any language. In the war of opinions and battle for influence, whoever has the best story wins. The schools, hospitals, water wells, roads, bridges, and other infrastructure constructed by Seabees contribute to the positive image of the United States abroad. Seabee projects and humanitarian assistance attract media attention and generate goodwill. "We live in an era in which the global image of the U.S. can affect policies and actions in many, if not most nations of the world."[59]

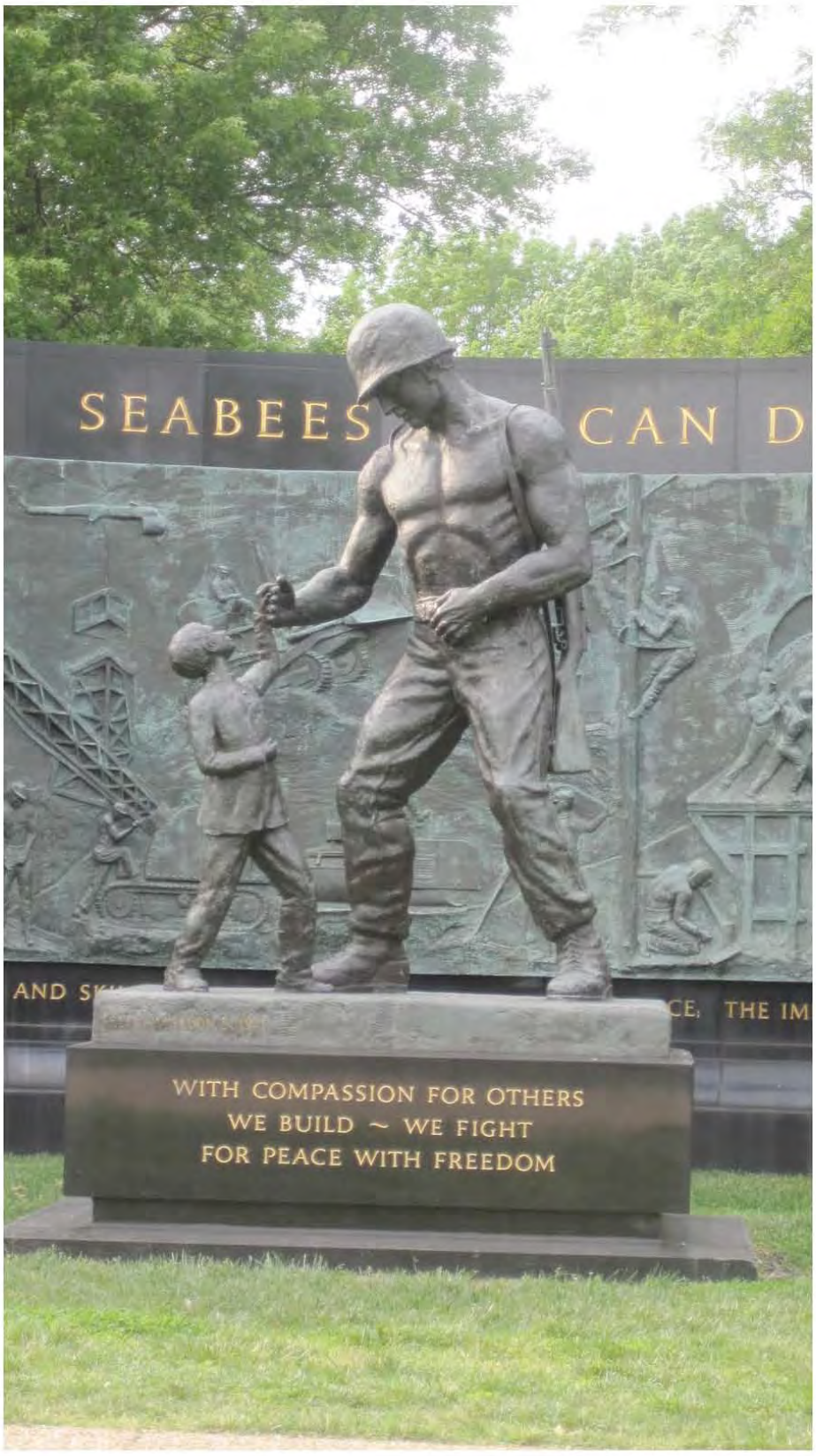

Figure 8 – Seabee Memorial in Arlington National Cemetery

Today's information age brought lightning speed communications with global coverage. Perception matters and good reputation gains influence. "Reputation affects US policy and strategy around the world."[60] Aspiring world powers and regional players are vying for influence among independent nations.

> Cambodia is one example of the Seabees' clout, where the U.S. and China vie for favor. Though impoverished and still recovering from the massacres of the Khmer Rouge's "Killing Fields," it holds a strategic position while bordering Vietnam, Laos and Thailand.[61]

Competitors use soft power to influence alliances. "Soft power is the ability to get what you want by attracting and persuading others to adopt your goals."[62] Soft power is a battle of influence. China has placed special emphasis on the soft-power aspects of its foreign engagement, playing both to regional audiences and to a broader global gallery to whom it seeks to portray itself as a nonthreatening and responsible international power.[63] "Often, the Seabees were the only U.S. military presence in these developing nations."[64] The Seabee story is a powerful message. Seabees contribute to winning the battle of influence to advance US interests.

2.3 Improved Diplomatic Relation

Seabee construction to assist remote communities worldwide promotes grassroots diplomacy. "Seabees are America's on-the-ground ambassadors, fighting for hearts and minds by putting new schools, clinics and water projects in places where aid money and diplomacy aren't enough to foster favorable policy."[65] Seabees routinely deploy overseas and build community projects such as schools, health clinics, roads, bridges and water wells. The impact of these civic action projects is immediate and long lasting. This engineering diplomacy proves that Seabees are a versatile military force capable of projecting hard power and soft power to advance US interests overseas. School construction is one of the most powerful community projects that

Seabees can ever build. Young American Seabees interact daily with local children, residents, merchants, contractors, teachers, administrators, businessmen, and military personnel during the entire duration of the project. This face-to-face interaction produces friendship and builds trust. Seabees play sports games with children and youth during construction breaks, and at the end of the day. "This positive daily interaction between young Americans and the host nation's youths builds mutual trust and goodwill."[66] This intangible investment in diplomacy builds a lasting friendly relationship with unquantifiable benefits. "Relations must be built and maintained, and the maintenance of relations is itself an important function of diplomacy."[67] This lasting legacy promotes diplomacy. Local residents and children tell stories of Seabees and the generosity of American people. A ribbon-cutting ceremony would highlight a commemorative plaque in the school façade with the words "A gift from the American people". All Americans receive credit for the good things Seabees do. They are America's ambassadors of goodwill. "Bringing foreign populations to our side depends on building long-term, people- to-people relationships, particularly among youth."[68]

Two of the most distinctive advantages of construction projects compared to other civic action programs, such as medical or dental, are the lasting impact and the length of interaction with local resident. School buildings last for many years and builds human capital through education. "Researchers have found that by building human capital, education contributes significantly to economic growth, through two avenues: (1) More education raises the capabilities of individuals to follow more complicated directions, operate machines and, also, discover better ways of performing a set of steps in production. (2) Education also raises the amount of knowledge that resides in society, knowledge that can be used in innovation and invention."[69] The US national security strategy specifically highlighted the need to build

alliances. Seabees routinely participate in annual military exercises to establish alliances and strengthen relationships. This trust and relationship is crucial in building alliances and theater security cooperation. By enhancing regional networks, US can rely on allies instead of maintaining an expensive military presence in the area.

"The latest group of Seabees focused their efforts on humanitarian assistance and construction projects. They have established and strengthened relationships with the Royal Cambodian Armed Forces Engineers, community leaders, and partner organizations, alongside which they work closely every day." (United States Ambassador Penn)

Seabees regularly participate in annual training exercises to enhance security cooperation and interoperability. The Regional Pacific Partnership program strengthens diplomacy. Seabees board Navy Ships and visit various countries to conduct civic action construction and repair of local buildings. This diplomatic gesture enhances Theater Security Cooperation (TSC). "*Military without diplomacy is mere posturing*."[70] (George C. Marshall)

3.0 Expeditionary Engineer Operations

Seabees of ACB, UCT, and NMCB provide rapid expeditionary engineer support for (1) combat support operations, (2) stability operations, and (3) overseas construction.

3.1 Combat Support Operations

The Pacific Basin is the most dynamic region in the world, covering 50% of the earth's surface, containing 50% of the world's population, having the 5 biggest economies and 6 largest militaries in the world. Approximately, there are 20,000 to 30,000 islands in the Pacific Basin, including 53 countries and territories.[71] The Pacific is vital to US national security and prosperity. Future wars may spark from conflicts involving access to resources and trade routes

in the quest to support growing populations of competing nations. Dispute over territorial claims – rich with natural resources, will most likely spark future regional conflict that could evolve into a global conflict.. These wars will involve advanced warplanes, stealth submarines, hypersonic missiles, and high altitude spy satellites in the thermosphere. The Navy, Marines and Seabees are best suited to operate in littoral zones and remote islands. Littoral zones are areas within 200 miles of the sea and comprise the biggest concentration of the world's population. Future air war in the Pacific will require emergency airfields for drones and warplanes in the engagement area. Seabees can build expeditionary airfields on remote islands throughout the world's oceans. In the event of total war in the Pacific, Seabees are highly capable of building expeditionary airfields, underground bunkers, satellite tracking stations, communication facilities, and amphibious causeways in support of the national security strategy.

Airports are ubiquitous worldwide but may not be readily available for US and Allied planes during the war as a result of damage, distance, and difficulty in gaining access due to political reasons. In the event of war, building expeditionary airfields will preserve lives and assets of the US Armed Forces. In regional war, advanced missiles will deny access to aircraft carriers and long-range planes in the conflict zones. Large numbers of long-range ballistic missiles such as: the Ramjet Anti Ship Missile (YJ-12) and the Chinese Dong-Feng 21 variant "D" missile (DF-21D) - dubbed as "aircraft carrier killer"[72], could destroy amphibious ships and aircraft carriers within 600 nautical miles of the conflict zone. This is a "game-changer" in U.S. military strategy and modern warfare operation. Hypersonic missiles, based on enemy's defensive rings, could negate the superior advantage of 12 US aircraft carriers. The possibility of losing an aircraft carrier, costing $13 Billion each, would be strategically catastrophic and financially disastrous. In this scenario, long-range bombers and tankers will be tracked by

constellations of enemy satellites and advanced radars, [73]then shot down or destroyed. Consequently, fighter jets will run out of fuel without tankers in the vast expanse of the Pacific Ocean. Building landing strips on remote islands during the initial escalation of emerging conflict will provide the US and its allies an "unsinkable aircraft carrier". This will preserve the US Fleet for maneuvers and ultimate defense of the homeland.

Modern war depends on satellites for communication and imagery. In the event of war, missiles will destroy ships, aircraft, and satellite receivers on the ground. "Many strategists argue that the most vulnerable parts of the American space system are the ground stations and control centers, particularly those of commercial operations.[74] In addition to cyber and laser attacks, destroying satellite stations on the ground would be simpler than hitting a moving satellite at high altitudes, in the thermosphere, at 100,000 feet. This plausible scenario will impact satellite links for IMINT, MASINT, and SIGINT operations. Seabees, through submarine or air transport, could perform expeditionary construction. The construction force can built bunkers, airfields, underground submarine stations, and satellite tracking stations. The complexities of these projects will challenge other military engineers and the combat nature of the job will preclude civilian engineers from constructing these vital facilities. Seabees are experts in building specialized projects in remote islands overseas. For example, Seabees built the first nuclear power plant in Antarctica. In spite of harsh environmental conditions, Seabees built the airfield on ice and the support infrastructure at McMurdo scientific research station in the South Pole. This was a vital mission for US security during the height of the Cold War. A declassified document revealed that Seabees built a secret submarine dry dock in Scotland to counter the Soviet submarine threat.

Seabees are capable of underwater construction to build underground bunkers for missiles and submarines in remote islands. Admiral Donitz, of Nazi Germany, sheltered his submarine fleets in the ocean under the rocky cliffs in Europe for ultimate protection from allied plane attacks.[75] With undersea listening devices and dedicated satellites tracking submarines, US forces will need to explore all innovative technological advantages. A network of underwater submarine caves will provide sanctuary for submarine forces in avoiding detection and destruction. Submarines will be highly effective in the Pacific Theater of operations when surface crafts, aircrafts, and space systems have a high attrition rate. As such, history proved that US submarines sunk 51% of Japanese shipping during WWII, although, they only accounted for 5% of the entire US Naval Force. Submarines operated effectively on the vast island chains, ferrying soldiers, supplies, and equipment. In addition to enemy's long range missile and advanced warfighting machines, the Paracel Islands in the Western Pacific could serve as a radar, satellite communication, and submarine haven for the opposing forces.[76] Seabees are the specialists capable of supporting Navy and Marine Corps Operations throughout tens of thousand islands in the region.

3.2 Stability Operations

Seabees are important instruments of stability operations and reconstruction. The peacekeeping operations in Kosovo and the Balkans employed Seabees for construction and rebuilding of infrastructure destroyed by a four-year civil war. After the 9/11 terrorist attacks, Seabees deployed to Afghanistan[77] on November 2001 to support a major military operation against the Taliban and the terrorist perpetrator – Al Qaeda. They supported the US Marine Corps MAGTF from beginning to the end of combat operations. Seabees built and maintained expeditionary airfields used extensively by allied planes during the initial phase of bombing the

Taliban forces. They also constructed base camps for the friendly forces and prisoner camps for enemy combatants. On March 2003, Seabees participated in another major operation during the Iraq war. Seabees built bridges for the US Marine Corps spanning major rivers and waterways. This enabled the Marine Corps to rapidly deploy forces throughout the combat zone without the limitation of terrain and obstacles. Seabee divers recovered weapons, equipment, and personnel lost underwater during extensive combat operations. Then, seamlessly, Seabees transitioned from major combat operations to stability operations and reconstruction.

Seabees have been in continuous stability operations in Afghanistan, Iraq, Djibouti, Philippines, Cambodia, East Timor, and other unstable regions in the world.
Engineer support is inherent in the tasks of stability operations to restore or provide essential services, such as water, power, and transportation, and to repair critical infrastructure.[78] Department of Defense Instruction (DODI) 3000.05, Stability Operations, establishes stability operations as a core mission of the US military and requires proficiency equivalent with combat operations.[79] Seabees support the irregular warfare plan of the Navy Expeditionary Combat Command.[80] Future employment of Seabees in major military operations and counterinsurgency is very promising. Seabees offer special capabilities unique to the Navy and Marine Corps mission.

3.3 Overseas military base protecting economic trade

> Sea power means more than the combatant ships and aircraft, the amphibious forces, and the merchant marines. It includes also the port facilities.
> ~ Fleet Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, Chief of Naval Operations, 1947 ~

The secret of sustained naval operations is the infrastructure support complex that provides the backbone of naval power projection. Seabees and the Civil Engineer Corps from Naval Facilities Engineering Command (NAVFAC) construct and maintain overseas Navy and

Marine Corps bases, including joint military bases. Strong military promotes strong economy. Remarkably, the United States is only 4 % of the world's population but it controls 26% of the earth's resources.[81] This prosperity and power comes from global commerce and free flow of trade with global security provided by the US military. The Navy, in particular, provides maritime security to more than 90% of economic trade that transit through the world's biggest oceans. A strategic thinker wrote, "Whoever controls the Pacific and Atlantic Ocean controls the world."[82] For the first time in history, the United States became the first nation to control both oceans. "For over half a century now, America is a global power with global interest and these interests includes maintaining access to key trading partners and resources."[83] Nations trade freely while US maintains security of trade routes. America's unimpeded access to trade routes may be challenged in the near future by rising regional powers. One of the emerging regional powers, China, increased its military spending by 233% in the span of ten years.[84] With China's alliance with Russia[85], the control of Western Pacific Region will be at stake. In light of current economic difficulties and budget constraints, a conflict in Western Pacific will be challenging. Therefore, security commitments with allies overseas should be maintained and strengthened. Overseas bases provide the flexibility and sustainability for continuous power projection.[86]

Navy Civil Engineers and Seabees provide engineering capabilities in construction and maintenance of naval facilities worldwide - in order to sustain forward presence and maintain command of the commons. Command of the global commons is the ability to project military power and engage in trade at times and places of its choosing.[87] Modern commons are domains in sea, land, space, and cyber space through which information, commerce, trade, and people flow. By commanding the commons, the United States simultaneously protects its own interests and provides a series of global public goods in form of secure, stable, modes of commerce,

communications, and correspondence. The commons constitutes the sinews of modern politics.[88] Seabees support the Navy as emphasized by James Forrestal, the Secretary of the Navy, when he said in 1945 – "The Seabees have carried the war in the Pacific on their backs."[89] As the Seabees support the Navy, the Navy supports the U.S. military in maintaining the command of global commons. With these vital contributions, Seabees are versatile instruments of U.S. power projection in pursuit of national security and prosperity.

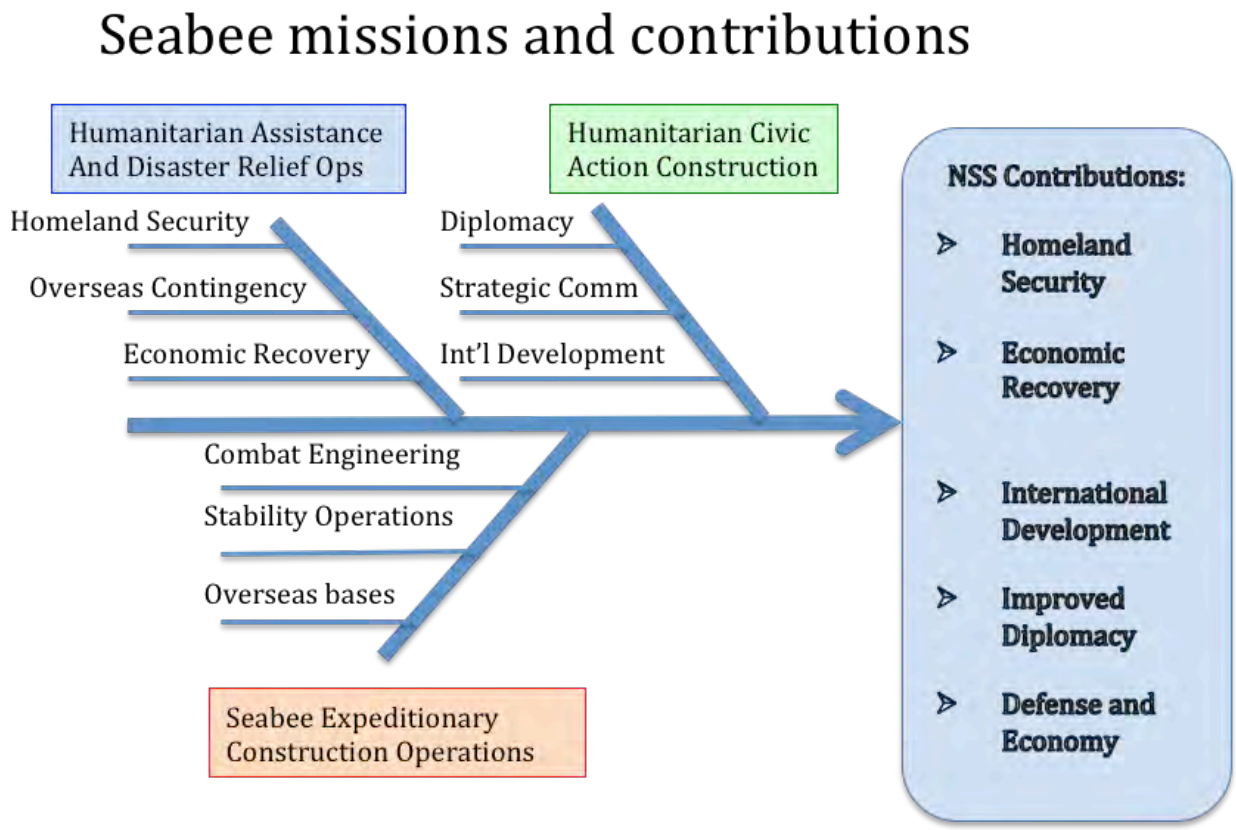

Figure 9 – Seabees missions contribute to National Security Strategy

III. Conclusion

In spite of fiscal reality, we currently live in a world of globalized interdependency.[90] The United States is the lone superpower in the military arena, with some

contenders in the economic realm, and a large number of competitors in the global stage of interconnected entities. This reality is best illustrated by Joseph Nye's metaphor of a three-dimensional chess game in the book "Soft Power". Nye asserted that the first board is peer-to-peer conventional warfare. Right now, there is no apparent peer competitor facing the United States – only possible challengers in the future. The second board is economic competition and there are credible peer competitors. "The third board is the realm of transnational relations that crosses borders outside government controls."[91] International media, multinational corporations, world banking, non-state actors, terrorists, transnational criminals, pandemic, global climate are some examples of this realm that are difficult for state government to control. He concluded that the United States should be able to play the three boards simultaneously, in order to succeed. However we view power, the metaphor is a perfect illustration of current and future struggle for world influence. With globalization, economic competition, cyber domination, and war of opinions, the United States must engage in all domains and win in order to maintain influence and power.

> At the dawn of the new millennium, the United States enjoyed preeminence unrivaled by even the greatest empires of the past. America exercises an unparalleled ascendancy around the globe and its preponderant position rendered it the indispensable component of international stability.[92] - Henry Kissinger -

Regardless of economic constraints, the United States must not abrogate its leadership responsibility on the world stage. Alliances built on trust support common security and strong security builds strong economy. In 2012, the US Joint Chiefs of Staff described, "The complex security challenges of the future almost invariably will require more than the military instrument of national power."[93] Moreover, the "whole of government approach"[94] of the US National Security Strategy is a vital framework to maintain leadership and security.

Seabees have been effective in military and civilian support missions throughout the generations. They have fought in all the major battles since the last world war. Seabees fill capability gaps in underwater construction, amphibious bridging, and expeditionary construction of complex projects. As versatile instruments of power projection, Seabees support the national security strategy. Out of necessity to deal with fiscal constraints and automatic sequestration, decision makers or comptrollers can unknowingly create capability gaps by arbitrarily cutting budgets across the board. Unlike its predecessors in WWII, Korean War, Vietnam War, and the Cold War, today's Seabees are shrinking smaller but still tasked to accomplish a broad range of missions. Seabees strength peaked at 325,00 at the height of WWII and shrunk to 14,739 in the current figure. The steady decline, undoubtedly, diminished the Seabees' robust capabilities demonstrated in the previous years. In the age of information, quest for influence, persistent conflicts and catastrophic wars, Seabees can make a difference. Regardless of budget constraints, US should preserve the Seabees because they are versatile instruments of national power with vital contributions to economic development, diplomacy, strategic communication, homeland security, and national defense. Therefore, Seabee capabilities must be preserved for national security and prosperity of future generations.

IV. Recommendations

The Department of Defense should reevaluate the capability gaps in current and future contingencies to preserve valuable resources to meet multiple challenges simultaneously. Recommend protecting the Seabees from future reduction in order to avoid decimating the force structure and depriving the nation of highly technical and resilient combat engineers. The metaphor of three-dimensional battle in the age of information is real, and rapid globalization requires the United States to use all the means, instruments, and capabilities in order to prevail.

Seabees provide the engineer and combat capabilities that contribute to national security and power projection. The United States must preserve the Seabees to maintain the capabilities of rapid expeditionary construction, humanitarian disaster relief engineering, and civic action construction to win the conventional wars, battles of public opinion, and the quest for global influence. In light of the changing environment and character of war, a versatile force will be more sustainable in an austere economy. Arguably, Seabees are versatile instruments of power projection. Prudent choices will ensure success for the nation and posterity. May we, as a Nation, execute the right decision to protect our future generation.

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