Allied Constructive Kills Reinforce Philippine Archipelagic Coastal Defense Concept



From Marine Rotational Force – Darwin, June 27, 2025

MANILA, Philippines – In a demonstration of allied resolve, interoperability, and command agility, U.S. Marines with Marine Rotational Force – Darwin (MRF-D) 25.3, serving as I Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF) Forward, coordinated a simulated maritime strike operation in support of real-world movements and training across the Philippine archipelago during Exercise KAMANDAG 9, June 1, 2025. In a show of multinational capability, the regimental level headquarters of the forward deployed MRF-D 25.3 Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF) planned, coordinated and executed a true Combined

Joint All Domain Operation (CJADO).

The CJADO, centered around multi-phased “constructive kill” (CK) scenarios in support of real-world maneuver, showcased how a purpose-built and forward-deployed MAGTF synchronized fires and effects from joint and combined forces across multiple echelons and domains. A CK involves vectoring simulated fires onto notional targets to enhance training value for the combined forces in the Philippines. Spanning hundreds of nautical miles and integrating Philippine, U.S., Japanese and Republic of Korea maneuver forces, the training validated how precision fires, intelligence, communications, littoral maneuver, and distributed command and control can defend key maritime terrain in response to crisis or contingency.

“This is what combined operations looks like at the highest level – forward-postured, allied-enabled, and terrain-informed,” said U.S. Marine Corps Col. Jason C. Armas, commanding officer of Marine Rotational Force – Darwin 25.3 MAGTF. “What we achieved here wasn’t just a constructive kill. It was a deliberate act of allied integration, command agility, and maritime dominance. We showed unambiguously that the Marine Corps can apply precision fires and maneuver at scale, across vast distances, and in lockstep with our partners. This sets the precedent. This is how we fight.”

Adjacent to the MRF-D MAGTF, 3rd Marine Littoral Regiment (MLR) utilized the Navy Marine Expeditionary Ship Interdiction System (NMESIS) to conduct simulated maritime strikes in support of combined 3rd MLR and Philippine Marine maneuver forces in Batanes. To the South, the MRF-D MAGTF directly coordinated with the U.S. Army’s 1st Multi-Domain Task Force (MDTF) to execute simulated simultaneous strikes in support of real-world training with U.S., Philippine, Japanese, and Korean maneuver forces on Palawan. 1st MDTF’s simulated long-range precision fires neutralized notional maritime threats in the waters to the west of Palawan and north of Luzon, creating

maneuver corridors for the joint and combined force during KAMANDAG 9.

1st MDTF’s simulated strikes set conditions for the coordinated insertion of a rifle company with 2nd Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment, MRF-D 25.3, and the Philippine Marine Corps’ 3rd Marine Brigade, including subordinate Marine Brigade Landing Teams (MBLTs), along the western coastline of Palawan and near the port of Berong. Enabled by the successful second simulated strike, Soldiers with the Amphibious Rapid Deployment Brigade (ARDB), Japanese Ground Self-Defense Force (JGSDF), and Philippine Marines with 3rd Marine Brigade launched a bilateral ship-to-shore movement via Combat Rubber Raiding Crafts (CRRC) simulating a humanitarian disaster relief (HADR) insertion. Once ashore, forces began identification, triage and movement of simulated casualties to a Japanese Role I medical center and then a Role II medical center with MRF-D’s Combat Logistics Battalion 1 (CLB-1).

Adjacent to the HADR, the combined infantry force from MRF-D and the PMC established fortified positions on the Berong beachhead in preparation for a defense against simulated amphibious adversary landing forces following the successful joint MDTF strike. A few days later, that bilateral force conducted a counter-landing live-fire against that same simulated adversary force from fortified positions along the beach near Quezon, marking the culmination of the full kill chain – from sensing, to striking, to defending.

“The Philippine Marine Corps integrates joint and combined sensors to enhance its kill chain, enabling precision engagement and control of key maritime terrain and sea lines of communication,” said Maj. Sivel Sarmiento, an operations officer with the PMC. “This training under KAMANDAG’s constructive kill framework sharpens situational awareness and accelerates target acquisition in support of maritime denial operations.”

The success of the CJADO wasn’t just about fires or maneuver — it was made possible by the MAGTF enablers operating behind the scenes. Joint and combined ISR assets, including maritime surveillance platforms and unmanned systems, provided the data needed to find, fix, and track targets throughout the archipelago. MRF-D’s intelligence and communications teams, supported by defensive cyber operators, ensured that targeting data, movement coordination, and effects synchronization continued uninterrupted. The joint fires timeline was stitched together digitally in real time.

“The MRF-D MAGTF Defensive Cyberspace Operations-Internal Defensive Measures (DCO-IDM) element, organically embedded within the MAGTF’s Fires and Effects Coordination Center (FECC),” said 1st Lt. Jared Haynie, officer in charge of the DCO-IDM team with MRF-D 25.3. “As an integrated, organic MAGTF asset, the team’s focused defensive operations enabled uninterrupted execution of critical events during the CJADO and provided a postured incident response surge capability for the greater cyber community in the event of exploitation or compromise.”

All phases of the CJADO were enabled by MRF-D’s FECC, serving as the central node for timing, integration, and synchronization of MAGTF effects from command-and-control nodes in the Philippines and Australia. The FECC coordinated seamlessly with 1st MDTF planners and the Philippine Navy and Marine Corps personnel to deliver multi-axis, cross-domain effects across more than 1,000 kilometers of archipelagic terrain. Philippine Navy and Coast Guard vessels observed operations in key Philippine maritime corridors, integrating Philippine naval assets in building maritime domain awareness and completing the combined observation picture.

What took place during KAMANDAG 9 was a strategic demonstration of how the United States, the Philippines, and their allies support continued peace and stability within the Indo-Pacific. It showed how a regimental-sized Marine

headquarters – when enabled by supporting elements and allies and partners – can synchronize multi-domain fires, work with allied formations, and maneuver inside key maritime terrain in support of Archipelagic Coastal Defense Concept objectives and Philippine sovereignty.

“This CJADO proves that deterrence is not abstract,” said Col. Armas. “It’s observable. It’s measurable. And it’s executable in terrain that matters, alongside allies who can see, decide, and act faster than any adversary. Was this a rehearsal? No. It was a real-time demonstration of how we, as allied and partner forces, outpace, outmaneuver, and outthink those who would threaten peace and security in the Indo-Pacific.”