CHAPTER I – OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES

1. GENERAL

Routine services provided by the Joint Typhoon Warning Center (JTWC) include the following: (1) Significant Tropical Weather Advisories issued daily describing all tropical disturbances and their potential for further development; (2) Tropical Cyclone Formation Alerts issued whenever interpretation of satellite and synoptic data indicates likely formation of a significant tropical cyclone; (3) Tropical Cyclone Warnings issued four times daily whenever a significant tropical cyclone exists in the Pacific area; (4) Tropical Cyclone Warnings issued twice daily whenever a significant tropical cyclone exists in the Indian Ocean area; and (5) Prognostic Reasoning messages issued twice daily for tropical storms and typhoons in the Pacific area.

JTWC responds to changing requirements of activities serviced. Therefore, contents of routine services are subject to change from year to year usually as a result of the Annual Tropical Cyclone Conference deliberations.

2. DATA SOURCES

a. COMPUTER PRODUCTS:

FLEWEACEN Guam provides computerized meteorological/oceanographic products for JTWC. In addition, the standard array of synoptic-scale computer analyses and prognostic charts are available from the Fleet Numerical Weather Central (FNWC) at Monterey, California via FLEWEACEN Guam. With the installation of the Naval Environmental Display Stations (NEDS) during 1978, JTWC now has very timely access to necessary FNWC products and is thereby able to more efficiently and effectively use this information.

b. CONVENTIONAL DATA:

Conventional meteorological data are defined as surface and upper air observations from island, ship and land stations plus weather observations from commercial and military aircraft (AIREPS). Computer plotted charts of 0000Z and 1200Z conventional data are produced daily for the surface, 700 mb, and 500 mb levels. A chart of upper air data is produced which utilizes 200 mb rawinsonde data and AIREPS above 29,000 ft within 6 hours of the 0000Z and 1200Z synoptic times.

c. AIRCRAFT RECONNAISSANCE:

Aircraft weather reconnaissance data are invaluable in the positioning of centers of developing systems and essential for the accurate determination of the eye/center, maximum intensity, minimum sea-level pressure and radius of significant winds exhibited by tropical cyclones. Winds and pressure height data at the 500 and/or 400 mb level, provided by reconnaissance aircraft while enroute to, or returning from, fix missions, is also used to supplement the sparse data in the tropics and subtropics. These data are plotted on large-scale sectional charts for each mission flown. A comprehensive discussion of aircraft weather reconnaissance is presented in Chapter II.

d. SATELLITE RECONNAISSANCE:

Meteorological satellite data from the Defense Meteorological Satellite Program (DMSP) and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration played a major role in the early detection and tracking of tropical cyclones in 1978. A discussion of this role is presented in Chapter II.

e. RADAR RECONNAISSANCE:

During 1978, as in recent years, land radar coverage was utilized extensively when available. Once a storm moved within the range of a land radar site, reports were usually received hourly. Use of radar during 1978 is discussed in Chapter II.

3. COMMUNICATIONS

a. FWC/JTWC currently has access to three primary communications circuits:

(1) The Automated Digital Network (AUTODIN) is used for dissemination of warnings and other related bulletins to Department of Defense installations. These messages are relayed for further transmission over U. S. Navy Fleet Broadcasts, U. S. Coast Guard CW (continuous wave morse code) and voice communications. Inbound message traffic for JTWC is received via AUTODIN addressed to FLEWEACEN GUAM.

(2) The Air Force Automated Weather Network (AWN) provides necessary weather data to JTWC through a dedicated circuit from the automated digital weather switch (ADWS) at Clark AB, R.P. The ADWS selects and routes the large volume of meteorological reports necessary to satisfy JTWC requirements for the right data at the right time. Weather bulletins prepared by JTWC are inserted into the AWN circuit by the Nimitz Hill Naval Telecommunications Center (NTCC) of the Naval Communications Area Master Station Western Pacific.

(3) The Naval Environmental Data Network (NEDN) connects FWC/JTWC with the computers at FNWC. FWC/JTWC is able to both receive environmental data from FNWC and access the computers directly to run various programs.

b. Besides providing forecasters with the ability to rapidly access computer products from FNWC, the NEDS has recently become the backbone of the FWC/JTWC communications system. AUTODIN and AWN message tapes can now be prepared by JTWC personnel for insertion into the AUTODIN and AWN circuits by the NTCC. The NEDS is also used by the TDO to request forecast aids which are

processed by the computers at FNWC Monterey and transmitted back to the TDO over the NEDN circuit.

4. ANALYSES

A composite surface/gradient level (3000 ft) manual analysis is accomplished on the 0000Z and 1200Z conventional data. Analysis of the wind field using streamlines is stressed for tropical and subtropical regions. Analysis of the pressure field is stressed for higher latitudes and in the vicinity of tropical cyclones.

Manual analysis of the 500 mb level is accomplished on the 0000Z and 1200Z data when significant tropical cyclones exist. Although the analysis of the 500 mb height field is stressed, analysis of the wind field to more clearly delineate steering currents is equally important.

A composite upper-tropospheric manual analysis, utilizing rawinsonde data from 300 mb through 100 mb, wind directions extracted from satellite data by Det 1, 1WW and AIREPS (plus or minus 6 hours) at or above 29,000 feet is accomplished on 0000Z and 1200Z data daily. Wind and height data are used to arrive at a representative analysis of tropical cyclone outflow patterns, of steering currents and of areas that may indicate tropical cyclone intensity change. All charts are hand plotted over areas of tropical cyclone activity, to provide all available data as soon as possible, to the TDO, and then augmented by the computer plotted charts for the final analyses.

Additional sectional charts at intermediate synoptic times and auxiliary charts such as checkerboard diagrams and pressure change charts are also analyzed during periods of significant tropical cyclone activity.

5. FORECAST AIDS

a. CLIMATOLOGY:

Climatological publications utilized during the 1978 typhoon season include previous JTWC Annual Typhoon Reports and climatic publications from Fleet Weather Central, Guam, Naval Environmental Prediction Research Facility, Naval Postgraduate School, Air Weather Service, First Weather Wing and Chanute Technical Training Center, plus publications from other Air Force and Navy activities, various universities and foreign countries.

b. OBJECTIVE TECHNIQUES:

The following objective techniques were employed in tropical cyclone forecasting during 1978. A description of these techniques is presented in Chapter IV.

(1) TYFN75

(2) MOHATT 700/500

(3) FCSTINST

(4) 12 HR EXTRAPOLATION

(5) CLIMATOLOGY

(6) HPAC

(7) TROPICAL CYCLONE MODEL

(8) INJAH74

(9) CYCLOPS

(10) TYAN78

6. FORECASTING PROCEDURES

a. INITIALIZATION:

In the preparation of each warning, the actual surface location (fix) of the tropical cyclone eye/center just prior to (within three hours of) warning time is of prime importance. JTWC uses the Selective Reconnaissance Program (SRP) to levy an optimum mix of aircraft, satellite and radar resources to obtain fix information. When tropical cyclones are either poorly defined or the actual surface location cannot be determined, or when conflicting fix information is received, the "best estimate" of the surface location is subjectively determined from the analysis of all available data. If fix data is not available due to reconnaissance platform malfunctions or communication problems, synoptic data or extrapolation from previous fixes is used. The initial forecast (warning time) position is then obtained by extrapolation using the current fix and a "best track" of the cyclone movement to date.

b. TRACK FORECASTING:

An initial forecast track is developed based on the previous forecast and the objective techniques. This initial track is subjectively modified based on the following:

(1) The prospects for recurvature are evaluated for all westward and northward moving storms. This evaluation is based primarily on present and forecast position and amplitude of middle tropospheric mid-latitude troughs from the latest 500 mb analysis and numerical prognoses.

(2) Determination of steering level is partly influenced by maturity and vertical extent of the system. For mature storms located south of the 500 mb subtropical ridge, forecast changes in speed of movement are closely correlated with forecast changes in the intensity of the ridge. When steering currents are very weak, the tendency for cyclones to move northward due to their internal forces is an important consideration.

(3) The proximity of the tropical cyclone to other tropical cyclones is evaluated to determine if there is a possibility of Fujiwhara interaction.

(4) Over the 12- to 72-hr forecast spectrum; speed of movement during the early time frame is biased toward persistence (12 hr extrapolation) while that near the end of the time frame is biased towards objective techniques and climatology.

(5) A final check is made against climatology to ascertain the likelihood of the forecast track. If the forecast deviates greatly from climatology, the forecast rationale is reappraised and the track adjusted as necessary.

c. INTENSITY FORECASTING:

In forecasting intensity, heavy reliance is placed on aircraft reconnaissance reports, the Dvorak satellite interpretation model, wind and pressure data from ships and land stations in the vicinity of the cyclone, and the objective techniques. Additional considerations are the position and intensity of the tropical upper-tropospheric trough (TUTT), extent and intensity of upper-level outflow, sea surface temperature, terrain influences, speed of movement and proximity to an extratropical environment.

7. WARNINGS

Tropical cyclone warnings are issued when a definite closed circulation is evident and maximum sustained wind speeds are forecast to increase to 34 or more knots within 48 hours, or the cyclone is in such a position that life or property may be endangered within 72 hours. Warnings are also issued in other situations if it is determined that there is a need to alert military and civil interests to conditions which may become hazardous in a short period of time. Each tropical cyclone warning is numbered sequentially and includes the initial warning time, eye/center position, intensity, the radial extent of 30, 50 and 100 knot surface winds (when applicable), the levied fix position used, the instantaneous speed and direction of movement of the cyclone's surface center at warning time and the forecast information. The forecast intervals for all tropical cyclones, regardless of intensity, are 12-, 24-, 48- and 72-hr. Warnings within the JTWC Pacific area are issued within two hours of 0000Z, 0600Z, 1200Z and 1800Z with the constraint that two consecutive warnings may not be more than seven hours apart. Warnings in the JTWC Indian Ocean area are issued within two hours of 0800Z and 2000Z with the constraint that two consecutive warnings may not be more than fourteen hours apart. These variable warning times allow for maximum use of all available reconnaissance platforms and more effectively distribute the workload in multiple storm situations. If warnings are discontinued and a cyclone reintensifies, warnings are numbered consecutively from the last warning issued. Warning forecast positions are verified against the corresponding post analysis "best track" positions. A summary of the verification results for 1978 is presented in Chapter IV.

8. PROGNOSTIC REASONING MESSAGE

In the Pacific Area, prognostic reasoning messages are transmitted based on the 0000Z and 1200Z warnings or whenever the previous reasoning is no longer valid. This plain language message is intended to provide field meteorologists with the reasoning behind the latest JTWC forecast. Prognostic reasoning messages are not prepared for tropical depressions nor for the cyclones in the Indian Ocean area.

For the 1978 season, JTWC included confidence statements for the 24 and 48-hour forecasts. The confidence values were percentage probabilities that the 24-hour forecast position error would be less than 100 nm and less than 150 nm, respectively; and that the 48-hour error would be less than 200 nm and less than 300 nm, respectively. These probabilities were based on objective data from error analysis studies of past cyclones and were a function of latitude, longitude, storm intensity and organization. The forecaster added objective data based on the subjective analysis of the synoptic situation and the variance in the objective forecast aids available.

Prognostic reasoning information applicable to all customers is provided in the remarks section of warnings when significant changes are made or when deemed appropriate.

9. SIGNIFICANT TROPICAL WEATHER ADVISORY

This plain language message, summarizing significant weather in the entire JTWC area of responsibility, is issued by 0600Z daily. It contains a detailed, non-technical description of all significant tropical disturbances and the JTWC evaluation of potential for significant tropical cyclone development within the 24-hour forecast period.

10. TROPICAL CYCLONE FORMATION ALERT

Alerts are issued whenever interpretation of satellite and other meteorological data indicates significant tropical cyclone formation is likely. These alerts will specify a valid period not to exceed 24 hours and must either be cancelled, reissued or superseded by a warning prior to expiration of the valid period.