

**STATEMENT OF**  
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**BEFORE THE SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE**  
**ON U.S. INDO-PACIFIC COMMAND POSTURE**  
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## INTRODUCTION

Chairman Reed, Ranking Member Inhofe, and distinguished members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you to discuss the Indo-Pacific Region. The Indo-Pacific is the most consequential region for America's future and remains the Department of Defense's priority theater. This region contains four of the five priority security challenges identified by the Department of Defense and includes frequent natural and man-made disasters, the negative impacts of climate change, rapid population growth, and of course, disease and pandemics.

The Indo-Pacific accounts for 60 percent of the world's current Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and contributes more than two-thirds to the present global economic growth. Trade and investment in this dynamic region are vital to the security and prosperity of the United States and reflective in more than \$1.9 trillion in two-way trade with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), serving as the number one destination for U.S. foreign direct investment (FDI). In 10 years, the region will host two-thirds of the world's population and two-thirds of the global economy.

Our Nation's vision for peace and prosperity in a Free and Open Indo-Pacific continues to resonate in the region and serves as an important reminder to all nations that the U.S. remains committed to free and fair trade, shared access to global markets, good governance, and human rights and civil liberties. The region's economic prosperity and security are inextricably linked and part of the competitive landscape.

The greatest danger for the United States in this competition is the erosion of conventional deterrence. A combat-credible, conventional deterrent posture is necessary to prevent conflict, protect U.S. interests, and to assure our allies and partners. Absent a convincing deterrent, the People's Republic of China (PRC) will be emboldened to take action to undermine the rules-based international order and the values represented in our vision for a Free and Open Indo-Pacific. The combination of the PRC's military modernization program and willingness to intimidate its neighbors through the use, or threatened use of force, undermines peace, security, and prosperity in the region.

U.S. Indo-Pacific Command's approach for addressing Great Power Competition centers on advancing a Free and Open Indo-Pacific by focusing on four critical areas:

1. Increasing Joint Force Lethality
2. Enhancing Design and Posture
3. Strengthening Allies and Partners
4. Modernizing our Exercises, Experimentation, and Innovation Programs

In 2019, I reported to this Committee we had lost a quantitative advantage and our qualitative advantage was shrinking across several domains as the People's Liberation Army (PLA) fields higher quality systems.

However, with this Committee's efforts to establish the Pacific Deterrence Initiative (PDI), along with resourcing our advanced undersea warfare capabilities and 5<sup>th</sup> generation fighters, I am optimistic you have created the opportunity to *Regain the Advantage*, but we must remain diligent. PDI provides the foundation for establishing a forward-deployed, defense-in-depth posture that defends our interests abroad, deters aggression, assures allies and partners, and provides flexible response options should deterrence fail. PDI also provides the requisite budget transparency and oversight to ensure resources are prioritized appropriately. Thank you for your continued support.

On top of PDI support, investing in our most critical and resilient resource – our people – is a national security imperative. USINDOPACOM is staunchly committed to promoting the health and well-being of our teammates. In addition to providing necessary warfighting tools, we remain deeply focused on cultivating a safe environment for our DOD professionals to thrive, execute their mission, and fulfill their oath to the Constitution. We must take deliberate action to protect and sustain the force to meet the demands of strategic competition. Indeed, our Defense-wide priorities – dedicated to combating COVID-19, extremism, and sexual assault and sexual harassment within our force – are at the foundation of our efforts to *Regain the Advantage*.

For the past twelve months, protecting and sustaining joint force readiness began with our efforts to mitigate the effects of the **COVID-19 pandemic**. We have worked extensively with the local,

state, and national leadership to combat this contagion and successfully minimized the impact on USINDOPACOM's ability to perform its mission in the short term. However, COVID-19 has had a moderate effect on the readiness and budgets of our allies and partners. We will continue to support their efforts to maintain readiness and minimize any further negative impact.

USINDOPACOM conducted a Headquarters-wide Stand-Down to **address extremism within the ranks of our force** in line with guidance from the Secretary of Defense (18 Feb). The program included virtual training modules featuring subject matter experts, presentations by our most senior leaders, and facilitated small-group discussions to build awareness and help prevent actions associated with extremist behaviors that go against the fundamental principles of our oath. The message provided a clear reminder that we are required to obey all lawful orders, support civil authorities to protect lives and property, and ensure public safety in accordance with the law. There is more to be done in our endeavor to eradicate extremism and the corrosive impact it has on our entire force. The senior leaders at USINDOPACOM will continue to host regular one-on-one listening sessions with volunteers from across the Headquarters to perpetuate this meaningful dialogue. We will capitalize on well-established, routine activities to broadly and frequently communicate/interact with our workforce to better educate our team about the scope of this problem and to develop sustainable solutions. Indeed, operating in an environment free of discrimination, hate, and harassment while accomplishing our mission is paramount to our success.

USINDOPACOM is fully committed to the **prevention of sexual assault and sexual harassment** – something we absolutely must get right and cannot afford to fail. Over the past three years, we have improved our sexual assault and sexual harassment prevention efforts through a number of initiatives based on feedback received from several Command-wide surveys. To fully back-up this leadership imperative, I committed Headquarters resources and established a fully dedicated, on-site Sexual Assault Prevention Response (SAPR) program and a newly created Equal Opportunity (EO)/Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) program. This novel approach is unique to USINDOPACOM and it transforms the traditional design – which relies on individual services to provide external SAPR and EO/EEO support to combatant command personnel – into a more immediate, more insightful, and more involved response mechanism. As a result of these initiatives, we have built trust, credibility, and awareness in these vital programs throughout the

Headquarters. We continue to seek every opportunity to combat, prevent, and eliminate sexual assault, harassment, and violence to keep safe all those who keep America safe.

For the future, combat credible deterrence depends on our ability to achieve four specific outcomes: 1) develop an agile and distributed Joint Force designed to deter and deny our adversaries of their objectives in the first and second island chains; 2) regain positional advantage by evolving our posture and balancing key capabilities across South Asia, Southeast Asia, and Oceania resulting in a more dynamic and distributed presence; 3) establish a network of compatible and interoperable allies and partners who are willing and able to protect their sovereignty from coercion; and 4) reassure our allies and partners of our commitment by revealing the capacity to conduct complex operations and concealing capabilities that provide a decisive advantage. A strategy of deterrence supported by a command climate that places the dignity and respect of each individual as a vital aspect in how we train, maintain, and sustain the force is an imperative for the Joint Force's ability to deploy and perform assigned missions.

## **INCREASE JOINT FORCE LETHALITY**

### **Integrated Air and Missile Defense**

For the past three years, I have repeatedly stated the most important action we can take to increase the joint force's lethality is to introduce a **360-degree, persistent, air and missile defense capability on Guam (Guam Defense System (GDS))**. This system and the associated architecture must be robust enough to address the emerging threats, including hypersonics and the ability to integrate existing weapon control systems within this decade.

**The GDS could be established cost effectively with mature Programs of Records consisting of Aegis Baseline (B/L) 10, solid-state radar (SPY-6 or SPY-7 variant), MK-41 VLS, Aegis Ashore, and SM3/SM6.** This system is critical for defending the Homeland, including our most important American operating location in the western Pacific. America's day begins in Guam, and it is not only a location we must fight-from, but one we must also fight-for given the threats we face in the near term and the foreseeable future.

NDAA-2016 directed the Missile Defense Agency (MDA), Army, and Navy to evaluate Aegis Ashore (A.A.) capabilities and costs worldwide to provide the Homeland's adequate protection. The MDA report identified several Indo-Pacific locations where fixed and persistent integrated air and missile defense (IAMD) are desired. Of the four sites identified, one is a test site (Hawaii), two are facilities in Japan, and the fourth site is Guam.

Any recommendations for additional studies, including a requirement for only mobile systems, disregard the immediacy and complexity of the threat (2026) and the absolute need to integrate fires across the region from a forward multi-domain command and control node west of the International Date Line (IDL).

The GDS would provide a foundation for a joint solution to this warfighting problem. No individual service can include decentralized architecture, automated processes using standard fire control functions across the Joint Force, and a force-wide perspective in managing resources. In January 2021, the MDA was directed by the Office of the Secretary of Defense to reprogram up to \$29M in FY21 RDT&E funding to begin the architecture design for the GDS. The critical metric of success is the ability to shrink the decision-to-execution cycle for U.S. forces fighting inside—or close to—the enemy's traditional safe-havens, thus improving the joint force's survivability.

The Army's Integrated Air and Missile Defense Battle Command System (IBCS) and the Air Force's Advanced Battle Management System (ABMS) are not yet fully developed and do not currently enable joint interdependencies or satisfy the requirement to integrate fires across domains, services, or weapon platforms.

Funding provided by Congress in 2021 for **Homeland Defense Radar-Hawaii** as a **fixed sensor capability** supports the best-programmed solution to enable a credible, in-depth, under layer defense for our forces in Hawaii. This perspective is consistent with independent assessments from the MDA and supported by U.S. Northern Command (NORTHCOM) and requires sustained funding throughout the FYDP.

The persistent **Tactical Multi-Mission Over-the-Horizon Radar (TACMOR)**, located in Palau will dramatically increase our air domain awareness by providing persistent, long-range, detect

and track capability of air and surface targets in the western Pacific and increase our ability to “shoot the archers.”

### **Long Range Precision Strike**

In addition to Homeland defense in Hawaii and Guam, USINDOPACOM requires **highly survivable, precision-strike fires** featuring increased quantities of ground-based missiles and improved air and long-range naval fires capable of ranges over 500 km. These fires must be supported by electronic warfare, space, cyber, and over-the-horizon radar capabilities. They must also be operationally decentralized and geographically distributed to provide a credible, offensive, and conventional deterrent to assure U.S. freedom of action.

Our adversaries continue to field advanced Anti-Access Area Denial (A2AD) systems, aircraft, ships, space, and cyber capabilities that threaten the U.S. ability to project power into the region. Increasing joint force lethality means developing and fielding systems and capabilities to ensure U.S. freedom of action or access to vital waterways and airspace, while preserving our critical asymmetrical advantages to deter aggression and prevail in armed conflict should deterrence fail.

### **Joint Fires Network**

The advances being made in long-range, precision fires are significant and will require an integrated cross-service/cross-system network architecture to exploit the full spectrum of capability these programs provide the Joint Force. **The desired end state is a combined/joint- integrated environment where ubiquitous battle management and automated engagement decision-making** using standard target, track- quality, control functions, and a joint force approach for managing weapons resources can occur.

A network of sensors that fuse information using actionable and distributed fire control data must support Integrated Air Missile Defense (IAMD) and long-range, precision-strike weapons systems. This Joint Fires Network enables *any* sensor from *any* platform (air, land, sea, space, and cyberspace) to provide targeting guidance to *any* weapon.

USINDOPACOM requires a warfighting architecture that fuses the maritime, land, air, cyber, and space domains to enable timely and actionable delivery of our emerging weapons. This capability, coupled with the lethality of current and future munitions, underpins conventional deterrence and provides the Joint Force with the necessary distributed lethality to maintain combat credibility in a contested environment.

## **ENHANCE FORCE DESIGN AND POSTURE**

Our enhanced force design must enable the convergence of capabilities from multiple domains, and our posture must create the virtues of mass without the vulnerability of concentration. This scenario is accomplished by distributing a forward-deployed, joint force across the battlespace while balancing lethality and survivability. It requires a deterrent posture that possesses the sustainment and force protection to be resilient, survivable, and supportable.

Persistent presence through **forward-based and rotational joint forces** is the most credible way to demonstrate our commitment and resolve to potential adversaries while simultaneously assuring allies and partners.

A force posture and joint force laydown west of the IDL correctly positioned to defend in-depth while possessing the capabilities and authorities is needed to decisively respond to contingencies across the region. More distributed combat power increases survivability, reduces risk, and ensures our ability to *Fight and Win*.

Infrastructure projects must enhance resilience and support multi-domain, joint operations vice Service-prioritized activities. U.S. ground formations must have long-range weapons in the western Pacific to include SM6 and Maritime Strike Tomahawk. Additionally, the Army and Marine Corps should employ High Mobility Artillery Rocket System (HIMARs) outfitted with Precision Strike Missiles (PSM) and Naval Strike Missiles (NSM) specifically for the Army and Marine Corps, respectively.

The ability to deploy an integrated Joint Force capable of employing the full spectrum of capabilities across all domains remains the joint requirement. The repositioning of Marines from



Okinawa, Japan is ongoing and must ensure a preponderance of combat power remains west of the IDL. Continuing the Defense Posture Realignment Initiative (DPRI), while understanding how USMC modernization will affect its foundations, should proceed without delaying execution based on the dynamic nature of the theater.

Additionally, forward-based air and naval forces need to be able to disperse to expeditionary airfields and ports as part of a distributed force posture. This requires adequate command and control, munitions, and fuel distribution to create temporary windows of localized air and maritime superiority to enable maneuver, while amphibious and ground forces create and exploit temporal and geographic opportunities to impose costs.

The critical investments necessary to provide adequate dispersion to preserve deterrence options include:

- **U.S. Territories.** Key strategic locations to project power, deter adversaries, and respond to crises across the Indo-Pacific. Investments are focused on divert and dispersal locations as part of a distributed joint force laydown and new training facilities.
- **Oceania and the Pacific Island Countries (PIC).** Investments focused on alternative facilities for training and dispersion opportunities that increase airpower capacity.
- **Southeast Asia.** Investments focused on alternative facilities to support modernized and dispersed power projection airfields, sustain forward forces, and enhance logistics capability with prepositioned stores and infrastructure.

These specific requirements are outlined in USINDOPACOM's Independent Assessment directed by the committee report accompanying Section 1251 of NDAA-21.

## STRENGTHENING ALLIES AND ENHANCING PARTNERS

Strong alliances and partnerships represent the most essential components of U.S. national power beyond our nation's economic and military strength. One of the significant advantages these relationships provide is a common foundation based on the core principles of a Free and Open Indo-Pacific. This foundation fosters long-term mutual trust, understanding, respect, interoperability, information sharing, and a common view of the regional security landscape.

Our relationships are the building blocks for establishing an enhanced, networked security architecture that promotes interoperability and coordination from the strategic to tactical levels. The critical investments necessary to strengthen our alliances and enhance our partnerships to enable this increased interoperability include:

- **Mission Partner Environment (MPE).** In FY21, PDI authorized \$50M as the critical investment for providing resilient and redundant joint/multinational command and control that delivers the same functionality of a data center and hosts multiple, unique mission sets. MPE provides universal battle management and automated decision-making by accessing a multi-domain sensor network. This environment uses cloud-based technologies, integrated systems, and secure access controls to command, control, and communications (C3).
- **Fusion Centers.** In FY21, PDI authorized \$2M for partial funding of the fusion centers needed to improve information sharing and build trust. We are amplifying these resources to one of three fusion centers identified by USINDOPACOM as part of *Regain the Advantage*. Each of these fusion centers is a crucial enabler for strengthening our alliances, enhancing partnerships, and utilize MPE for contextual analytics and computing model assessments to extrapolate conclusions and identify patterns of life associated with transnational threats and other pernicious behavior.
  - *Southeast Asia (Counter Terrorism Information Facility, CTIF)*, hosted by Singapore, represents USINDOPACOM's first participation in an operational partnership in Southeast Asia to identify trends and anomalies that could lead to a

terrorist event or other transnational threat. The multi-lateral facility has commenced operations and has brought together like-minded countries to share information and provide early warning, monitoring and analysis capabilities in a centralized and coordinated manner.

- ***Indo-Pacific Maritime Coordination.*** Navy is exploring additional concepts with allies and key partners to increase situational awareness in the maritime domain across the Indo-Pacific and Indian Oceans.
  
- ***Oceania Fusion Center*** represents an initiative to provide Pacific Island nations, including the Freely Associated States – the Republic of Palau, the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), and the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) – a means to improve common understanding of challenges such as climate change; illegal, unregulated, and unreported (IUU) fishing; transnational crime; and other specific Oceania-based challenges.

For almost 36 months, I have spent much of my time focused on strengthening our current alliances and enhancing our emerging partnerships across the region. This effort begins with the five bilateral treaty alliances where we have mutual defense responsibilities:

- **Japan.** The U.S. – Japan Alliance is the cornerstone of peace and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific Region. The alliance reassures the region by setting the example through our operations and collaborative efforts to build partnership capacity with other like-minded partners. As the most recent National Defense Program Guidelines (NDPG) indicate, Japan has embarked on expanding its military capabilities to better align U.S. and Japanese defense strategies by liberalizing rules for military equipment export, expanding the scope of possible Self Defense Force (SDF) missions to facilitate integration and interoperability, and advancing the DPRI. Increased defense spending purchasing some of our most advanced systems is a clear indication Japan seeks to improve its national defense posture and the U.S. - Japan alliance.

- **Republic of Korea (ROK).** The United States and ROK alliance remains the linchpin in maintaining a stable, security environment and ready to address the North Korean regime's threats. The ROK's purchase of advanced platforms and munitions, such as F-35A, Global Hawk, P-8A, and upgraded PAC-3 missiles improves our combined interoperability and enhances ROK's defense posture. Seoul has made progress toward transitioning wartime operational control (OPCON) to a Future-Combined Forces Command led by a ROK Commander. The United States and ROK are currently addressing a lapse in the Special Measures Agreement (SMA), which we expect to be finalized in the near term. The lack of an SMA negatively impacts USFK's ability to "fight tonight."
- **Australia.** Australia is a critical ally, partner, and leader contributing to international efforts promoting a Free and Open Indo-Pacific. Australia actively supports U.N. Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) enforcement operations to curb illicit North Korean activity while making substantial efforts to improve relations with India and increase engagement to build open and resilient societies in ASEAN. Under its "Pacific Step-Up" policy, Australia is enhancing its assistance and infrastructure investments in Fiji, Papua New Guinea, and the Solomon Islands. They also assist the United States in maintaining a strong force posture, hosting the seventh Marine Rotational Force-Darwin (MRF-D) deployment and Enhanced Air Cooperation, where we reached the agreed upon deployment number in 2019 (2500) and a reduced target in 2020 (1290) due to COVID-19. This has provided the U.S. Marine Corps opportunities to train and integrate while displaying significant combat power west of the IDL. In July 2020, Canberra released two major national security documents that complement U.S. national security objectives: the 2020 Defence Strategic Update and the 2020 Force Structure Plan. Along with the subsequent release of the classified Defence Planning Guidance, these documents confirm our strategic alignment, highlight the challenges in competition, and place greater emphasis on deterrence across the Indo-Pacific.
- **The Philippines.** The Republic of the Philippines remains a strategic treaty ally and partner. The Government of the Philippines' decision to temporarily suspend the termination of the Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA) presents opportunities to address

mutual concerns and reinvigorate joint and interoperability training opportunities as we seek full reversal of the VFA termination process, which would facilitate deeper military cooperation and integration. The AFP is committed to investing in high-quality U.S. defense equipment as they modernize their force and conclude a General Security of Military Information Agreement (GSOMIA). The Philippines are partnered with the Guam and Hawaii National Guards in the State Partnership Program.

- **Thailand.** The U.S.-Thai alliance has the opportunity to expand in substantial ways since a democratically elected government took seat in 2019, as outlined in the U.S.-Thai co-signed "Joint Vision 2020." To modernize its force, Thailand has purchased more than \$2.5 billion in U.S. foreign military sales with over 200 active foreign military sales cases. Additionally, the reinstatement of international military education and training funding (IMET) encourages increased mil-mil engagements as our militaries train and exercise side-by-side. Our exercise program provides an opportunity to explore new access agreements as part of our bilateral and multilateral exercises such as *COBRA GOLD*, *HANUMAN GUARDIAN*, *COPE TIGER*, and Cooperation Afloat Readiness and Training (*CARAT*). Even during COVID-19, U.S. Army Pacific (USARPAC) conducted Exercise *COBRA GOLD 2020* supporting readiness training for approximately 6,560 U.S. troops along with 26 participating nations. Thailand is also partnered with the Washington State National Guard in the State Partnership Program.

Enhancing multilateralism is a critical aspect of USINDOPACOM's engagement in the region. We operate with Australia and Japan extensively during multilateral exercises and are working diligently to expand this collaboration to other like-minded nations to increase their level of interoperability and cooperation.

We also continue to advance strategic partnerships with India and Singapore:

- **India.** The current state of the U.S. –India relations presents a historic opportunity to deepen ties and solidify what I consider the "defining partnership of the 21st century." We concluded several agreements, including the Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement (COMCASA) in 2018, which has greatly enhanced information

sharing and interoperability; the Industrial Security Annex (ISA), signed in December 2019 that allows for the transfer of technologies in support of defense production; the Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement (BECA) to share unclassified geospatial information; and the agreement on Navy-to-Navy Information Sharing in October 2020. The U.S. and Indian navies are now securely sharing information, and India has substantially increased its acquisition of U.S. defense equipment. Defense sales are at an all-time high with India operating U.S.-sourced platforms such as P-8s, C-130Js, C-17s, AH-64s, CH-47s, Precision Guided-Excalibur Munitions, and M777 howitzers. In February, India agreed to acquire Apache and MH-60R multi-mission helicopters worth \$3.1 billion and is considering other U.S. systems. The United States strongly supports India's establishment of an information fusion center focusing on maritime domain awareness, which will improve maritime security in the Indian Ocean Region and Bay of Bengal. USINDOPACOM defines the security relationship with India as a strategic imperative. We expect substantial progress on interoperability and information sharing, service-level and joint military-to-military cooperation and exercises like *TIGER TRIUMPH* and *MALABAR*, and an increase in quadrilateral collaboration between India, Australia, Japan, and the United States as the relationship continues to mature.

- **Singapore.** Military to military relations with Singapore are excellent, with an average of 300 Distinguished Visitor engagements and 40 operations, activities, and investments (OAIs) taking place annually. Over the last 20 years, no other Southeast Asian country has done more to facilitate U.S. presence in the region. In December 2019, the U.S. and Singapore announced the establishment of a permanent Republic of Singapore Air Force (RSAF) fighter detachment on Guam and foreign military sales exceeding \$7 billion, including Singapore's request to purchase F-35s. Singapore and the United States worked together multilaterally with five other ASEAN nations, Australia and New Zealand, to establish a fusion center focused on countering terrorism. In 2019, the U.S. and Singapore reinforced their commitment to this partnership when they renewed the Memorandum of Understanding regarding Facilities' Use in Singapore. The combination of continued support for a U.S. presence in Southeast Asia, a deep and broad defense relationship based on shared principles, and a strong desire for continued

defense diplomacy enables the United States and Singapore to focus on shared regional challenges.

**Other Indo-Pacific Nations (Canada, New Zealand, United Kingdom, France).**

USINDOPACOM is working with the FVEY-Plus (United Kingdom, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and France) to explore how we can build on bilateral and multilateral relationships to align our various efforts to assist Oceania in addressing the transnational challenges that present a significant threat to their way of life.

- **Canada.** Canadian policy in the Indo-Pacific focuses on expanding cooperation and partnership building throughout the region. Through consistent engagement with its regional partners and allies, Canada is advancing relationships in the region, especially with the other FVEY-Plus construct participants to assist in Oceania and Vietnam. Ongoing support and troop contributions to the Republic of Korea and North Korea-focused UNSCR enforcement operations remain priorities for Ottawa.
- **New Zealand (N.Z.).** New Zealand remains a steadfast and key partner that continues to increase investment, foreign assistance, and infrastructure support in the South Pacific. Wellington's "Pacific Reset" policy highlights a reinvigorated focus in the Southwest Pacific. These efforts provide valuable leadership and expertise to the region. New Zealand also provides ongoing support to North Korea-focused UNSCR enforcement operations in the region. We are committed to deepening our partnership to advance the vision for a Free and Open Indo-Pacific.
- **United Kingdom (U.K.).** The U.K. remains committed to the region as a champion of the Free and Open Indo-Pacific. They continue to sustain a healthy defense posture in the region, having renewed the Brunei Garrison Agreement to maintain around 700 troops in the Sultanate (at H.M. Sultan's expense) since September 2019 and establishing a Royal Navy presence with HMS ENTERPRISE. The U.K. also continues to be a primary contributor of personnel and assets for North Korea-focused UNSCR enforcement operations. This year, the U.K. will deploy a Carrier Strike Task Group spearheaded by its new aircraft carrier, HMS QUEEN ELIZABETH, with U.S. Marine

Corps F-35s embarked, joining an international group of ships that includes the Five Eyes Defense Arrangement, Netherlands, Denmark, Japan, Republic of Korea, and Indonesia.

- **France.** France has increased operational activities across the Indo-Pacific under their own Indo-Pacific strategy emphasizing rule of law and freedom of movement. It is a pivotal contributor to FVEY-Plus multilateral efforts on IUU fishing; drug and human trafficking; and community resilience related to natural disasters and climate change. France maintains an active role in regional security, protecting fisheries, and countering transnational crimes, including narcotics destined for Australia and New Zealand. Additionally, France exercises and operates in the South China Sea and supports North Korea-focused UNSCR enforcement activities.
- **Germany.** In 2020 Germany adopted new guidelines for engagement in the Indo-Pacific region. These guidelines include a willingness to support the international rules-based order. In the most visible demonstration of this commitment, the German Ministry of Defense announced the 2021-2022 deployment of a German frigate to the region. This frigate will support UNSCR sanction enforcement activities against North Korea and cooperate with the U.S. Navy.
- **Oceania.** Oceania is critical to ensuring a Free and Open Indo-Pacific, as it contains strategic sea lines of communication linking us with our allies and partners in the Oceania region and Asia. We prioritized key leader engagements during the pandemic to offer assistance to Pacific Island Countries (PICs) and ensure coordination on pressing challenges including IUU fishing; drug and human trafficking; addressing the effects of climate change; natural disasters; and a range of health issues that plague these nations. We have also used security cooperation programs, such as Woman, Peace, and Security (WPS) assistance, to build resilience across the region. In contrast, the PRC is actively engaged in coercive economic and diplomatic tactics in Oceania. These predatory activities undermine good governance and promote corruption. While we continue to strengthen our bilateral relationships with countries that have militaries (Fiji, Tonga, and Papua New Guinea), our engagement begins with the Freely Associated States (FAS) –



the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI), and the Republic of Palau (heretofore Palau), with which the United States has signed Compacts of Free Association (COFA). We are also working on an additional multilateral effort with like-minded nations (FVEY, France, and Japan) to synchronize and improve the alignment of our security cooperation efforts across Oceania.

- **Compacts of Free Association.** The FAS are small island countries located along our strategic lines of communication and are critically important to the U.S. ability to project power, sustain forward presence, conduct commercial trade, defend the Homeland, and ensure access. The 2019 meeting between the U.S. President and the Presidents of Palau, Marshall Islands, and the Federated States of Micronesia, and the subsequent visits by several cabinet members and senior U.S. officials to these countries, demonstrate the importance our Government places on these relationships and our commitment to greater cooperation to ensure a Free and Open Indo-Pacific.
- **Papua New Guinea (PNG).** USINDOPACOM's engagement with PNG improves regional posture and demonstrates the U.S. commitment to the region. PNG plans to grow its defense force from 3,600 troops to an end strength of 10,000 by 2030. The USINDOPACOM team and State Partnership Program (SPP) partner (Wisconsin National Guard) will help the PNGDF achieve this goal by identifying force development, enlisted training, and education opportunities.
- **Fiji.** We are expanding the defense relationship with Fiji through exercises, ship visits, defense dialogues, and the ongoing discussions with the Nevada National Guard to formalize a State Partnership Program relationship. U.S. and Fijian forces are collaborating with Australia and New Zealand to develop the Black Rock Integrated Peacekeeping Center to help advance the capabilities of Fiji's armed forces. U.S. support to Fiji includes helping to build a more capable, resilient force by supporting the State Department's provision of Foreign Military Financing (FMF) for small patrol boats and dive equipment. Additionally, DOD established two seats each at West Point and Annapolis for Fijian candidates, expanded the Defense Attaché Office and the Office of Defense Coordination in Suva, and added a Ministry of Defense Advisor. In 2019,

USINDOPACOM hosted a defense dialogue with Fiji in Suva to solidify our defense relationships and provide guidance for security cooperation efforts over the next five years. In 2020, Fiji co-hosted the USINDOPACOM Chief of Defense (CHOD) Conference, held virtually, and will co-host the 2021 CHOD Conference in Suva.

- **Tonga.** In 2019, USINDOPACOM hosted the first formal Trilateral Defense Talks between the United States, Tonga, and Fiji. Both Tonga and Fiji expressed a clear desire for increased U.S. engagement tailored to their needs, scaled to their capacity, and coordinated with Australia and New Zealand. Tonga is partnered with the Nevada National Guard in the State Partnership Program.
- **Southeast Asia.** We must strengthen the region's ability to deny adversaries' attempts to dominate or disrupt the gateway between the Pacific and Indian Oceans. The DOD defines Southeast Asia as the ten Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) member states, plus Timor Leste. The ASEAN member states under Brunei's leadership in 2021 continue to seek ways to improve multilateral security engagements and advance stability in the Indo-Pacific. USINDOPACOM participates in ASEAN exercises, key leader engagements, and practical multilateral cooperation related to the spectrum of shared transnational challenges such as the ASEAN-U.S. Maritime Exercise conducted in 2019. USINDOPACOM also co-chairs, along with Thailand, the ASEAN Defense Ministers' Meeting-Plus Experts' Working Group on Maritime Security from 2020 through 2023. We continue to express our concern over the PRC's pressure on ASEAN members to conclude negotiations on the Code of Conduct in the South China Sea in a way that contradicts international law and accedes to Beijing's territorial and maritime claims, and pressures ASEAN member states to limit activities with third-country partners. We are working with the State Department on the U.S.-Mekong Partnership to address environmental degradation and the related concerns with water and food insecurity caused by upstream damming operations. Our engagement with Southeast Asia and with ASEAN strengthens relationships and conveys the United States' commitment to the region.

- **Burma.** The United States stands firmly with the people of Burma in their aspirations for democracy, peace, and respect for human rights. We are alarmed regarding the military's coup against the democratically elected government in Burma, and the detention of State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi, President Win Myint, and other government officials, as well as political leaders, journalists, human rights activists, and members of civil society. Prior to the military coup, USINDOPACOM had minimal interaction with Burma's military due to a number of restrictions based on Burma's human rights record, and USINDOPACOM will continue to monitor the developing situation, and specifically how the Burma military responds to the peaceful protests.
- **Indonesia.** Indonesia's status as the globe's third-largest democracy, the world's largest Muslim population, the fourth most populous country, and its significant economy all underscore its essential role in the regional security architecture. USINDOPACOM is committed to enhancing its partnership with Indonesia through robust exercise and training programs that take advantage of our shared interests and common platforms. We continue to support the Indonesian military's focus on external threats to national defense, particularly maritime domain awareness and security regarding Beijing's excessive maritime claims around Natuna Island. USINDOPACOM is well-positioned to support increased demand for enhanced military-to-military bilateral cooperation and emerging multilateral training opportunities in 2021. Indonesia is partnered with the Hawaii National Guard in the State Partnership Program.
- **Laos.** After decades of stagnation in the bilateral relationship following the Vietnam War, we have seen some signs of progress since the United States and Laos signed a Comprehensive Partnership. Engagements focus on unexploded ordnance clearance, POW/MIA recovery, and military medicine. Laos actively supports the DPAA in the search for 286 missing U.S. service members to conclude war legacy issues honorably, and aims to address unexploded ordnance issues by 2030. In October 2020, the U.S. government delivered Laos' first FMF case for field ambulances, building trust and confidence in the relationship. To continue building trust, we will focus on English language training and work to expand security cooperation.

- **Malaysia.** Last year marked our 35th iteration of the Bilateral Training and Consultative Group discussions between USINDOPACOM and the Malaysian Armed Forces (MAF). This forum continues to serve as the bedrock for security cooperation between our two militaries. USINDOPACOM continues to execute essential exercise and training opportunities with Malaysia. We have a robust security cooperation relationship with over \$850 million in ongoing U.S. foreign military sales cases. USINDOPACOM engagements in Malaysia focus on maritime security, counterterrorism, Humanitarian Assistance / Disaster Relief (HA/DR), peacekeeping, transnational crime and border protection, and educational exchanges such as the International Military Education and Training program (IMET). We support OSD and the Malaysian Ministry of Defense's effort to develop a Memorandum on Defense Cooperation and future opportunities to support the new administration's security priorities. Malaysia is partnered with the Washington State National Guard in the State Partnership Program.
- **Cambodia.** In early 2017, Cambodia suspended all military-to-military exercises with the United States. However, USINDOPACOM continues to cooperate in: humanitarian mine clearance actions, medical research, and MIA personnel accounting engagements through the DPAA. During these limited engagements, the command reaffirms the importance of Cambodia strengthening its democratic institutions and maintaining an independent foreign policy. In September 2020, Cambodia razed a U.S.- built facility on Ream Naval Base that served as the headquarters for the National Committee on Maritime Security, reportedly in order to make way for a PRC naval base. The United States and other countries in the region are concerned about the expansion of PRC influence in Cambodia and its implication for regional security.
- **Vietnam.** USINDOPACOM's defense partnership with the Vietnamese military is among the most substantial aspects of our growing bilateral relationship. In 2019, USINDOPACOM and the Vietnam Ministry of National Defense (MND) agreed to renew our terms of reference; update our 2011 Memorandum of Understanding; and finalize negotiations for our GSOMIA. Our military-to-military engagements prioritize enhancing Vietnam's maritime capacity to include the delivery of 24 Metal Shark boats, the upcoming delivery of the Scan Eagle unmanned aerial system, and the imminent

completion of the Region 3 Coast Guard center. Vietnam sent a cadet to the Air Force Academy who will graduate in 2024 as the first-ever Vietnamese cadet to attend a Service Academy. Vietnam shares our concern with PRC actions in the South China Sea, and remains a vocal supporter of U.S. Freedom of Navigation operations. Vietnam is partnered with the Oregon National Guard in the State Partnership Program.

- **Timor-Leste.** While not a part of ASEAN, Timor-Leste remains strategically located as a bridge between Southeast Asia and the Pacific. The Government of Timor-Leste has formally requested U.S. co-development of Baucau Airfield, which will offer the opportunity to build partner capacity with Timor-Leste to support its nascent air component and maritime security capabilities. To date, funding for project scoping, approval, and global training and equipment has been allocated to support the completion of minor improvements. Timor-Leste was selected for the State Partnership Program and is assisted by the Rhode Island National Guard. The SPP will help Timor-Leste build capacity to address transnational threats and counterterrorism, as well as help them to provide maritime security, and deliver HA/DR.
- **Northeast Asia.** Northeast Asia continues to benefit from long-term economic growth, and this prosperity remains dependent upon free trade, free navigation, and open communication. At the same time, Northeast Asia is at a crossroads where historical and geopolitical forces weigh on mutual security cooperation. As the region becomes more stable, we will encourage Japan and South Korea to take a more significant role in the alliances related to their security and contribute to the broader security efforts across the Indo-Pacific region.
- **Mongolia.** Mongolia is a strong partner and contributor to U.S. regional and global policy objectives. Mongolia supports missions in Afghanistan and other regions of the world through United Nations Peace Keeping Operations (UNPKO), making Mongolia a model for emerging democratic countries that want to be more active globally. Ulaanbaatar's "Third Neighbor Policy" intends to balance Russian and PRC influence by developing relationships with the United States and other like-minded countries. In the past two decades, more than 50 percent of Mongolia's senior leadership attended

International Military Education and Training courses creating an influential cadre of U.S. educated officers. USINDOPACOM components and Mongolia held inaugural Land Forces Talks and Airman-to-Airman Talks, while also developing a five-year security cooperation plan. The United States is helping Mongolia improve its special operations forces, peacekeeping operations, and air mobility. Mongolia is partnered with the Alaska National Guard in the State Partnership Program.

- **Taiwan.** The United States and Taiwan maintain a substantive relationship consistent with the One China Policy, based on the Taiwan Relations Act (TRA), three U.S.-China Joint Communiques, and the Six Assurances. Taiwan's values reflect our own—an open economy with a free and democratic society that respects human rights and the rule of law. The United States continues to support the peaceful resolution of cross-Strait issues in a manner consistent with the wishes and best interests of the people of Taiwan. The U.S. provides Taiwan defense articles and services in such quantity to allow Taiwan to maintain sufficient self-defense capabilities—and in a manner commensurate with the threat that Taiwan faces. To help accomplish this, USINDOPACOM focuses on improving the Taiwan military's joint interoperability, training, readiness, and professional development. Beijing is pushing across the globe to diplomatically isolate, economically constrain, and militarily threaten Taiwan. Taiwan has only fifteen diplomatic partners remaining, recently losing Kiribati and Solomon Islands in 2019. General Secretary Xi Jinping's 2019 New Year's speech made it clear that Beijing is focused on achieving unification as a part of the PRC's national plan of rejuvenation, stating "We do not promise to renounce the use of force and reserve the option to use all necessary measures." The United States has a deep and abiding interest in peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait and welcomes steps from the PRC to reduce tensions and improve cross-Strait relations. The cross-Strait situation is of increasing concern given the harsh rhetoric from Beijing toward Taipei. Taiwan is strengthening its reserve forces and continues to fund foreign and indigenous acquisition programs and near-term training and readiness.
- **South Asia.** USINDOPACOM's goal in South Asia is to identify and seize opportunities to broaden critical partnerships and ensure that shared domains remain free

of coercion and open to all. In conjunction with India's contributions to regional security and the free and open international-based order, U.S. actions are aimed to prevent adversaries from establishing an adequate military presence in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) and the Bay of Bengal.

USINDOPACOM will continue to help these nations develop economically, resist threats to their sovereign interests, provide sufficient security to their land borders and maritime boundaries, and contribute to global peace and stability.

- **Bangladesh.** Bangladesh is an important security partner with the potential to enhance regional stability and advance U.S. interests in South Asia on maritime security, counterterrorism, HA/DR, and support to UNPKO. Over the past decade, steady and significant economic growth has enabled more foreign military sales as it pursues middle- income status by 2024. Transnational terrorism and crime remain internal security issues, as evidenced by five ISIS-claimed IED attacks in 2019. In August 2019, Bangladesh took receipt of the first of five C-130J aircraft from the United Kingdom. Bangladesh also signaled its interest in buying advanced U.S. military aircraft in the near future. Over the next year, there is potential to expand U.S.-Bangladesh maritime security cooperation through navy-to-navy engagement and security cooperation programs that enhance Bangladesh's maritime domain awareness. We intend to deepen our interoperability with Bangladesh once our two countries move forward on two important foundational agreements: a General Security of Military Intelligence Agreement (GSOMIA) and an Acquisition and Cross Services Agreement (ACSA). These would strengthen our bilateral relationship, deepen defense cooperation, and generate opportunities for interoperability. Bangladesh is partnered with the Oregon National Guard in the State Partnership Program.
- **The Maldives.** The Maldives sits along crucial sea lines of communication. A highly dispersed population spread across 200 islands and an immense exclusive economic zone (twice the size of California) make the Maldives vulnerable to transnational threats and illicit trafficking. The United States executed nascent security cooperation activities and engagements with the Maldives from 2015 to 2018, and the PRC substantially

increased economic and security investments during this time. The Solih government is a strong supporter of upholding the international rules-based order and desires improved relations with the United States, especially related to addressing transnational crime. USINDOPACOM's areas of interest for engagement include counterterrorism, maritime domain awareness, IUU fishing, counternarcotics, and combatting human trafficking. In September 2020, we signed the “Framework for U.S. Department of Defense-Maldives Ministry of Defense and Security Relationship” setting forth both countries’ intent to deepen engagement and cooperation in support of maintaining peace and security in the Indian Ocean. The most significant U.S.-Maldives military interaction occurs during the Joint Combined Exchange Trainings that take place twice a year to enhance Maldives’ ability to respond to terrorism.

- **Nepal.** The United States maintains a robust and growing relationship with Nepal’s security apparatus. Internal unrest continues, owing in part to unresolved grievances from the 1996- 2006 Maoist insurgency. PRC influence is growing, with Nepal agreeing to become a member of China's Belt and Road Initiative. Also, natural disasters such as earthquakes, flooding, and melting glaciers threaten the livelihood of this democracy. USINDOPACOM orients our programs against these challenges. The Nepal Army continues to improve its institutions and professionalize its force. Through capacity-building programs from the DOD and USINDOPACOM, the Ministry of Defense, historically separate from the Army but now responsible for it, is growing its ability to lead and improve civil-military relations. USINDOPACOM's primary focus areas for engagement remain HA/DR capacity building, peacekeeping operations (PKO), and strengthening the military and civil security institutions. Nepal is the world's sixth-largest contributing nation to United Nations Peacekeeping, deploying over 5,600 troops to 13 different missions. Nepal hosts an UN-certified international PKO training center, primarily funded by the State-DoD Global Peace Operations Initiative. In December 2019, the State Department delivered the first two C- 146J Skytrucks to Nepal, a small, fix-winged cargo aircraft that immediately improved their HA/DR capacity. Nepal is partnered with the Utah National Guard under the State Partnership Program.



- **Sri Lanka.** Maintaining, and in certain areas expanding, military-to-military engagement with Sri Lanka will continue to be an area of USINDOPACOM focus. Sri Lanka shows a continued willingness to seek security cooperation with the United States; however, the bilateral defense relationship will encounter challenges, particularly given allegations of senior military officers' involvement in gross violations of human rights during the country's civil war. The United States must continue its defense cooperation with Sri Lanka and assist in professionalizing its military and further building its maritime security capacity. There is potential to increase collaboration with maritime and air forces on various issues, including counterterrorism, counter narcotics, human trafficking, HA/DR, and maritime domain awareness. The transfer of an excess U.S. Coast Guard cutter to Sri Lanka in August 2018 and additional platforms from the United States, Japan, and India, provides the Sri Lankan Navy greater capabilities to contribute to regional maritime domain awareness initiatives. Sri Lanka is partnered with the Montana National Guard in the State Partnership Program.

### **MODERNIZE EXERCISES, EXPERIMENTATION, & INNOVATION**

Currently, the Joint Force lacks the training capacity to integrate Service recommended weapons and capabilities into a warfighting concept that deters the adversary and aligns positional advantage. U.S. forces must be capable of fighting in highly contested environments against technologically advanced opponents while also preserving our freedom of action across all domains. We must continue to expand the capability of our ranges the same as we advance our platforms and weapons.

NDAA-21's \$2 million authorization for the **Pacific Multi-Domain Test and Experimentation Capability (PMTEC)** clarifies the requirements for the development of the necessary, fully – instrumented, live-virtual training areas throughout the Indo-Pacific by networking the test and training ranges from the west coast of the U.S., across the Pacific, to Japan and Australia.

This capability begins the process to develop the training capacity to integrate Service recommended weapons and capabilities into a joint warfighting concept that deters the adversary

and trains our most capable warfighting force while expanding the breadth and scale of experimentation.

Many of the ranges in the Indo-Pacific have the potential for addressing USINDOPACOM's requirements:

- Joint Pacific Alaska Range Complex (JPARC), Elmendorf, Alaska, U.S. Air Force – allows for all domain integration.
- Pacific Missile Range Facility (PMRF), Barking Sands, Kauai, Hawaii, U.S. Navy – the world's largest instrumented multi-environmental range complex capable of supporting surface, subsurface, air, and space operations simultaneously.
- Pohakuloa Training Area (PTA), Hawaii Island, Hawaii, U.S. Army – provides a quality joint/combined arms facility that supports company level live-fire and battalion level maneuver training. If we prioritize further investments here, PTA could support battalion-sized live-fire, brigade maneuver, and most importantly provide a training environment for a Division to synchronize joint and multi-domain effects.
- Kwajalein Ranges, Kwajalein Atoll, U.S. Army – provides missile and missile-interceptor development, space surveillance, and satellite tracking.
- Combined/Joint Military Training (CJMT) Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI), U.S. Marine Corps – would allow company size units to conduct training. We continue to work with key CNMI leaders to develop a way ahead.

PDI also authorized \$128 million in FY21 for USINDOPACOM's **Joint Exercise Program** that will begin to transition into *Operation Pacific Resolve* – a series of coalition and joint exercises deliberately linked over time and space in the western Pacific to provide a persistent presence in the form of an *Integrated Joint Force*.

*Operational Pacific Resolve* will provide the platform to integrate the existing ranges, training areas, and test facilities to support a coherent Joint Exercise Program. This platform will generate force readiness, test emerging capabilities, and drive theater-appropriate requirements in a fully instrumented live-virtual training area.

### **Special Enablers and Authorities.**

- **Building Partner Capacity (BPC) Authorities.** USINDOPACOM relies on these authorities to support security cooperation initiatives or activities, such as counterterrorism and bolstering our partners' land, maritime, and air forces to resist coercion and protect their people's critical information. We also rely on State Department authorities such as FMF, IMET, and the Global Peace Operations Initiative (GPOI) to meet capacity-building requirements that promote the tenets of a Free and Open Indo-Pacific.
  - **Title 10, Section 333 - Global Man, Train and Equip.** In FY21, USINDOPACOM received \$254.6M for building partner capacity for our allies and partners. This amount accounted for approximately 26 percent of the total funding for global Title 10 (Section 333) activities. While the United States is still the preferred partner of choice for the vast majority of countries, PRC's soft power will continue to negatively influence Indo-Pacific governments without additional direct investment. Congress' continued advocacy, support, assistance, and constructive oversight are critical for these tools to be used to their maximum potential.
  - **Maritime Security Initiative (MSI).** MSI continues to be one of the most popular enablers with partner nations and is currently overprescribed based on the associated progress partner countries are now making. Security cooperation in the maritime domain remains one of our highest priorities. MSI is our primary tool for building partnership capacity with governments to advance our allies and partners' ability to sense a threat, share the information, and contribute to a coordinated interagency and sometimes multilateral responses.

- **Joint Interagency Task Force – West (JIATF West).** Transnational organized crime (TOC) has strategic implications for U.S. national interests and for our allies and partners. I am concerned about the destabilizing impact of organized crime, its impact on our Nation, and indications that China is using TOC to surreptitiously advance its agenda across the region and beyond. In response to the growing TOC threat in the Indo-Pacific, JIATF West has expanded its counternarcotic operations and activities and is well- positioned to carry out broader counter TOC activities. Through the Section 1022 authorities, JIATF West works with an interconnected network of U.S. and foreign partners to counter networks that traffic illicit drugs, goods, and commodities, to include precursor chemicals. However, I am concerned with the potential lapse of DoD’s Section 1022 authority, which will expire at the end of FY 2022. This authority allows our counter-threat finance analysts at USINDOPACOM to continue helping our law enforcement partners disrupt the finances of terrorist groups and transnational criminal organizations, including those that operate in Asia and the Pacific. Congress has provided annual extensions of the Section 1022 authority ever since it first provided the authority in the FY 2004 NDAA.
  
- China's unwillingness to address the illicit trade and distribution of fentanyl into the U.S. represents a clear and present danger to our national security. JIATF West is now using new processes that analyze, illuminate, and identify threat networks for U.S. and foreign law enforcement for action. The drug trafficking and transnational crime supply routes pass through multiple countries in Southeast Asia and across the vast Oceania region before reaching destinations in Mexico and the United States. **JIATF West is a vital instrument in aligning a significant interagency effort – not only to counter drugs – but to fine-tune our ability to disrupt transnational criminal networks that are inflicting immense harm on our country.**
  
- **Center for Excellence on Disaster Management (CFE-DM).** USINDOPACOM works with other nations to build partnership capacity to engage where our unique military capabilities can help develop our partners' military capacity in the area of

HA/DR. A U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) Mission Civilian-Military Coordinator is paired with our Security Cooperation Officers to ensure security and development activities are aligned in each country they operate in. Infectious diseases like the novel Coronavirus (COVID-19), Tuberculosis (the most significant global killer), Dengue Fever, and Measles are examples of growing threats to stability in the region. USINDOPACOM's efforts in health security promote the U.S. government's commitment to the Global Health Security Agenda for promoting community health and capacity through numerous engagements and interactions.

- **Natural & Man-made Disasters.** The Indo-Pacific remains the most disaster-prone region in the world. More than 75 percent of the earth's volcanoes and 90 percent of earthquakes occur in the "Ring of Fire" surrounding the Pacific Basin. The U.N. estimates economic losses in the region due to disasters could exceed \$160 billion annually by 2030. Other regional and global threats, including climate change, pandemics, and IUU fishing, further threaten our precious shared natural environments and economic sustainability. Many countries across the region still lack sufficient capability and capacity to manage large-scale disasters; however, some have made steady progress building capacity to deal with small-scale events. USAID leads federal responses to international disasters and preparedness and mitigation efforts. A key element of USINDOPACOM's global engagement strategy in the region, through the Center for Excellence in Disaster Management and Humanitarian Assistance, is building capacity with our allies' and partners' militaries to improve their resilience capability to conduct their HA/DR.
- **Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) Program.** USINDOPACOM is grateful for Congress' continued support for WPS programming, and USINDOPACOM remains committed to integrating WPS goals into USINDOPACOM's framework for security cooperation. From conflict prevention, stabilization, peacekeeping, to HA/DR, WPS is a unique smart power asset that advances a Free and Open Indo-Pacific. In support of the DOD's WPS Strategic Framework and Implementation Plan, USINDOPACOM's Office of WPS promotes a gender perspective across our theater plans, programs, and policies to develop security strategies inclusive of the entire population. WPS builds resilience

capacity, particularly through civil- military disaster response planning, coordination, and response. USINDOPACOM and partner nations highlight the significance of a gendered security approach to both steady state and emergency operations through programs such as the Women's Mentorship Program and the Rural Women Changemakers Program. These programs emphasize the unique protection needs of women, children, and other vulnerable populations but also underscore women's distinctive contributions to strengthening disaster preparedness and response. Furthermore, USINDOPACOM continues to engage with our Pacific Island Nation Partners through WPS and recently held a virtual summit focused on the nexus of gender, climate, and disaster risk and resilience through a Pacific lens. **WPS promotes the values and norms desired by all people: dignity, human rights, and equality under the law. The meaningful inclusion of women in peace processes** has led to longer lasting peace agreements, and factoring the perspectives and needs of an entire population into INDOPACOM's security cooperation framework **ensures a sustainable and practical approach to achieving lasting security outcomes.**

- **COVID-19 and Infectious Disease Response.** Natural and man-made disasters do not recognize national boundaries, as evidenced by the measles outbreak in Samoa, an outbreak of Dengue Fever in the Freely Associated States in 2020, and the global COVID-19 pandemic. These events remind us how interconnected and dependent the world is and the need to work together to solve some of our most challenging humanitarian problems.

We continue to carefully evaluate all operations, exercises, and training events to ensure we can safeguard our personnel, maintain the joint force's readiness, and conduct our defense support to civilian agencies and foreign humanitarian assistance missions. The proactive actions of the USFK and USFJ commanders' led to the mitigation of risks commensurate to their circumstance. Our forward-deployed personnel work closely with national and local governments to coordinate definitive, enforceable actions to combat the Coronavirus spread. Within the Department and across the Department, we have taken many far-reaching measures to slow the virus's spread by closing schools, restaurants, and on-base businesses. We implemented preventive measures to restrict the virus's spread with a telework program and flex schedules, modified meeting

protocols, and increased sanitation in communal areas. We have also implemented aggressive quarantine measures that range from individual Restriction of Movement procedures to hospitalization in a local treatment facility if a service member tests positive. To date, our forward stationed troops in Korea and Japan are maintaining appropriate levels of readiness. This is an unprecedented effort, and we remain flexible to meet the evolving challenges the spread of this virus presents. Lab-testing was established in Tripler Army Community Hospital (Hawaii), Brian Allgood Community Hospital (South Korea), U.S. Naval Hospital (Japan), and the Armed Forces Research Institute of Medical Science (Thailand). We will continue to proactively mitigate the negative impacts of this and all future cases.

The COVID-19 outbreak is a staunch reminder a ready medical force should not be exclusively designed to manage traumatic injuries; indeed, even in armed conflict, disease, and non-battle injuries still comprise the most significant number of casualties.

### **KEY ADVERSARIAL CHALLENGES**

As we pursue a Free and Open Indo-Pacific, we face significant challenges from four key adversaries. The PRC represents our greatest strategic threat. Its rapidly advancing capabilities and increasingly competitive posture underscore its drive to become a regionally dominant, globally influential power. Beijing is growing increasingly confident, and PRC leaders have demonstrated a willingness to accept friction to pursue a more expansive set of political, economic, and security interests. This growing assertiveness is particularly acute concerning sovereignty disputes, as Beijing seeks to steadily and incrementally shift the regional status quo to their advantage.

The United States' other great power competitor, Russia, also seeks to assert itself as a significant military, economic, and diplomatic power in the Indo-Pacific Region. Moscow pursues broad regional engagement, including military engagement, to advance its strategic interests and oppose, challenge, and thwart U.S. and allied interests.

Meanwhile, until the nuclear situation is resolved on the Korean Peninsula, North Korea will remain our most immediate threat. Pyongyang continues to develop Weapons of Mass

Destruction and asymmetric capabilities—including nuclear weapons and associated delivery systems, as well as advanced cyber operations—that threaten our allies and the U.S. homeland.

Finally, the regional threat from terrorism and violent extremism continues to evolve with global conditions. Global networks such as the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) inspire attacks motivated by ISIS' ideology or tactics remain a significant concern.

**People's Republic of China.** The PRC is pursuing rapid, comprehensive military modernization across land, sea, air, space, cyber, and information domains, with a clear focus on systems intended to expand its anti-access/area denial (A2/AD) envelope across the region and enhance the country's force projection and strategic deterrence. This far-reaching strategy aligns with the stated goals for People's Liberation Army (PLA) modernization, which PRC leaders remain highly resolved to achieve. In October, Beijing announced it would seek to accelerate military modernization initiatives in time for the PLA's 100th anniversary in 2027, advancing the PRC's progress toward its previously-stated milestones of completing military modernization by 2035 and transforming the PLA into a "world-class" military by the end of 2049. The PLA is pursuing several initiatives toward this end, including developing highly capable, advanced weapons systems, enhancing its training and exercise program's scope and complexity, and expanding the breadth of its operational space across the Region.

**PLA Modernization.** The PRC focuses particular attention on PLA Navy (PLAN) and PLA Air Force (PLAAF) modernization, which it sees as key to projecting power and achieving great power status. The PRC maintains the world's largest naval force, which has tripled in size over the past two decades. The PLAN commissioned more than 25 major ships in 2020 alone, including combatants, amphibious warfare ships, and two nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarines.

The addition of these new platforms – which include two new classes of modern warships, the RENHAI guided-missile cruiser, and the LUYANG III MOD guided-missile destroyer – provides the PLAN greater maneuverability and flexibility to perform a diverse set of missions, ranging from littoral warfare to far-seas operations. Meanwhile, the PLA has operationally fielded its first 5th generation stealth fighter, the J-20. It is advancing the development of its first aerial-



refuelable bomber, the H-6N, which will complete the country's nuclear triad's final leg. The PLAAF's Y-20 heavy-lift transport aircraft also conducted its first overseas missions in 2020, advancing the PLA's ability to quickly deploy forces and sustain operations across multiple fronts.

**PLA Long Range Weapons Development.** The PRC is simultaneously developing several modern, long-range weapons intended to strengthen the PLA's standoff precision strike and nuclear deterrence and counterattack capabilities. The PRC is pursuing a range of advanced weaponry, including electromagnetic railguns, hypersonic glide vehicles, and land-attack and anti-ship supersonic cruise missiles, and the PLA Rocket Force conducts more ballistic missile live-fires every year than the rest of the world combined. The PRC is also expanding and maturing its space and counterspace programs. Beijing continues to grow its space-based intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) constellation and is developing reusable launch vehicle and heavy space lift capabilities that facilitate the insertion of more and larger satellites into orbit. The PLA is also pursuing counter-space technologies such as satellite jammers and directed-energy and direct-ascent kinetic weapons. Significantly, the PRC's Beidou-3 global satellite system reached full operational capability in June 2020, providing the PLA an indigenous system for global positioning, navigation, and timing coverage. Collectively, these developments—particularly as they reduce the PRC's reliance on the United States' space-based infrastructure—facilitate the militarization of space and increase the threat that the PRC will employ counter-space weapons that deny the U.S. and allied access to space during a conflict or crisis.

**PLA Training and Exercises.** Notably, the PRC is not merely developing advanced weapons systems but is increasingly employing them in training and exercise scenarios to hone PLA warfighting skills and send an unmistakable message to regional and global audiences. In August 2020 for example, the PRC conducted coordinated DF-21D missile launches into the South China Sea. These mid-range, anti-ship ballistic missiles are capable of attacking aircraft carriers in the western Pacific, and their employment during a large-scale PLA exercise demonstrates the PLA's focus on countering any potential third-party intervention during a regional crisis. Likewise, the PLA conducts joint amphibious landing and maritime strike training to simulate a Taiwan invasion scenario and performs large-force maneuvers to demonstrate its ability to intervene in a Korean peninsula crisis. Through complex, realistic training and exercises that emphasize joint

tactics and incorporate advanced technologies, the PLA continues to refine organizational and process changes initiated as part of 2015's sweeping reforms. These reforms compensate for the lack of recent combat experience, both critical steps as the PLA prepares for modern warfare.

**PRC Threats in the Region.** The PRC has adopted an increasingly assertive military posture to exert pressure and expand its influence across the region. This is particularly stark concerning **Taiwan**. Over the past year, Beijing has pursued a coordinated campaign of diplomatic, informational, economic, and—increasingly—military tools to isolate Taipei from the international community and if necessary, compel unification with the PRC. Throughout 2020 the PLA has amplified its force posturing near and around Taiwan, to include using H-6 bombers to circumnavigate the island and conduct Taiwan Strait centerline crossings and flying military aircraft into Taiwan's air defense identification zone (ADIZ) at the highest rate in nearly 25 years. Over the past two years, the PRC has incorporated highly-publicized amphibious assault training into national-level exercises, almost certainly to exert pressure and signal resolve.

Beijing's authoritative messaging has also grown increasingly confrontational and has linked the PLA's military activities near the Taiwan Strait to "separatist" activities in Taiwan. On the diplomatic front, Beijing continues to impede Taiwan's meaningful participation in international organizations. In 2020 for example, Taiwan was blocked from participating as an observer in the annual World Health Assembly despite its success in managing the COVID pandemic. Such consistent employment of pressure tactics undermines the Chinese Communist Party claims that it desires a peaceful unification with Taiwan.

**Hong Kong** experienced a significant decline in autonomy following the PRC's imposition of the Hong Kong National Security Law in June 2020. At Beijing's behest, Hong Kong authorities used mass arrests to silence pro-democracy activists and curb further dissent by eroding the pro-democracy movement's political power, weakening Hong Kong's free press and promoting pro-Beijing education in Hong Kong's schools. Meanwhile, PRC security organizations have established an official presence in the city under the auspices of the Office for Safeguarding National Security, enabling Beijing to closely monitor Hong Kong residents and enforce the National Security Law. Through these heavy-handed efforts to impose authoritarian control over

Hong Kong affairs, the PRC has demonstrated the hollowness of its "one country, two systems" model.

The PRC's expansionary territorial ambitions are also on display along its western border, where the PLA has been engaged in a standoff with Indian forces along the **Line of Actual Control (LAC)** since May 2020. The standoff was predicated by clashes over construction activities near the disputed border PLA ground maneuver and support elements subsequently forward-deployed roughly 50,000 soldiers along the LAC, leading to a counter-deployment by the Indian Army. The PLA has not yet withdrawn from several forward positions it seized following the initial clash, and the consequent escalation of tensions between the PRC and India has resulted in casualties on both sides. This large-scale PLA mobilization—which is particularly notable considering the elevation, terrain, and distance involved—has stoked regional concerns that the PRC will increasingly use force to achieve desired outcomes.

The **South China Sea (SCS)** situation remains unsettled in light of the PRC's provocative behavior and expansive and unlawful maritime claims. The PRC continues to militarize the region, deploying new equipment to its artificial outposts in 2020 and using forward airfields to support a growing level of military operations by heavy transport, intelligence, and anti-submarine aircraft. The PLA also conducts large-scale exercises in the SCS with an emphasis on amphibious landing, joint fires, and maritime strike scenarios. PLA ships and aircraft maintain a consistent SCS presence and are augmented by an armada of China Coast Guard ships, fishing boats, and other para-military forces that serve as force multipliers. These actions—which are inconsistent with President Xi Jinping's and Defense Minister Wei Fenghe's assurances that the PRC would not militarize the SCS—threaten our allies and partners' autonomy, jeopardize freedoms of navigation, overflight and other lawful uses of the sea, and compromise regional peace and stability.

Meanwhile, the PRC continues to use intimidation to inhibit other claimant nations' access to offshore resources. Beijing maintains its excessive and unlawful maritime claims over a massive area in the SCS, contrary to international law as reflected in the 1982 Law of the Sea Convention. The PRC sought to further bolster its unlawful maritime claims last April, unilaterally renaming over 80 SCS geographic features and establishing two administrative districts with alleged

jurisdiction over the region. The PRC is also attempting to solidify its claims by imposing domestic laws across the disputed waters of the SCS. In April, its Coast Guard led an eight-month campaign—dubbed "Blue Sea 2020"—that seized nearly 700 vessels for violations of PRC laws, and in early 2021, the PRC passed legislation that expanded the Coast Guard's legal authority to use force against foreign vessels and destroy other countries' economic structures in disputed areas. Moreover, PRC ships and aircraft continue to harass and disrupt other nations' commercial fishing and resource exploration and extraction activities, even when conducted in areas where China cannot assert a lawful maritime claim within the respective countries' exclusive economic zones (EEZs). The PRC's pursuit of excessive maritime claims at the expense of neighboring states' EEZ rights negatively affects the economies of Southeast Asian nations and threatens to weaken the effectiveness of international laws and norms.

Beijing similarly seeks to advance its territorial ambitions in the **East China Sea (ECS)**, and consistently uses its Air Force, Navy, and Coast Guard to press its sovereignty claims vis-à-vis the Japanese-administered Senkaku Islands, test Japanese and U.S. resolve, and ratchet up tensions in Northeast Asia. China Coast Guard vessels routinely enter the territorial waters of the Senkaku Islands to assert PRC sovereignty, despite lacking international standing on the dispute. PRC ships conducted presence operations in the contiguous waters around the Senkakus for a record 333 days in 2020, an increase of nearly 20% from 2019. In a reprise of its earlier SCS maneuvering, in June 2020, Beijing unilaterally renamed 50 geographic features in the East China Sea, a number of which are near the Senkaku Islands. The PRC's simultaneous employment of military and administrative measures to pursue its ECS claims is indicative of its broader efforts to steadily and incrementally shift the regional status quo in Beijing's favor. Beijing is increasingly using all instruments of national power to fundamentally remake the rules-based international order into one more aligned with, and amenable to, the PRC. Its signature "One Belt, One Road" (OBOR) strategy, is predicated on building a global economic system that enforces PRC preferences and ideologies while eschewing transparency and internationally-accepted investment practices. Beijing utilizes loans, grants, and monetary gifts to **establish economic dependence, corruptly capture elite allegiance, and in some cases, consolidate control**. The PRC also leverages OBOR projects and economic pressure as part of a broader strategy to develop overseas PLA bases and support facilities; the naval base currently under redevelopment at Ream, Cambodia, is the latest example of the PRC's global basing ambitions.

To foster a Free and Open Indo-Pacific, the United States, alongside our allies and partners, must stand up to Beijing's coercive economic strategies while providing viable assistance and alternatives to borrowing countries.

**Russia** is building a better, more capable force in its Far East that is increasingly active across the Indo-Pacific Region. Ongoing Russian Federation Navy improvements include new platforms with advanced weapons systems, and we expect the Russian Pacific Fleet will add its first Kalibr cruise missile-capable ships and submarines to its inventory in 2021, giving it substantially increased anti-ship capabilities and the ability to conduct long-range strikes against land targets for the first time. Russia is also modernizing its Eastern Military District capabilities with air defense and land-based anti-ship cruise missiles, advanced fighters, and upgraded bombers capable of delivering improved and longer-range strikes. These improvements are designed to restrict access to regions of the Pacific Ocean near Russia's coast, while simultaneously expanding Russia's ability to project power across the Region and into the Arctic.

In the **Arctic**, Russia seeks to increase and routinize its presence through exercises and increasing military deployments. During Naval exercise Ocean Shield 2020, Russia tested its ability to defend the Eastern Arctic via amphibious landing training and a series of coastal defense cruise missile and artillery live-fire events. Russian strategic bombers regularly conduct long-range flights off the Alaskan coast and across Russia's northern periphery. In mid-2020, it flew for more than 25 hours in the most prolonged continuous bomber operation over the Arctic.

By late 2020, Russia deployed MiG-31 fighters and associated infrastructure to Anadyr airfield in the far northeast, enabling a continuous air defense, alert, and duty posture in the Arctic. This dynamic military posture underscores Moscow's determination to establish itself as the preeminent Arctic power, capable of controlling foreign access to Arctic resources and transportation routes.

Russia is pursuing military, political, and economic engagement across the Indo-Pacific Region, though **the PRC is increasingly Russia's most important partner**. This relationship has grown steadily closer since 2019, when the pair agreed to pursue a "comprehensive strategic partnership for a new era." In late December, Presidents Putin and Xi reaffirmed their desire to maintain

strong bilateral ties in 2021, which marks the 20th anniversary of the pair's "Treaty of Good-Neighborliness and Friendly Cooperation." The PRC and Russia conducted a combined bomber patrol over the Sea of Japan and East China Sea in late 2020, representing the second such mission for the two countries, following an initial patrol in July 2019. In mid-2020, the PLA also participated in Russia's capstone strategic exercise for the third consecutive year, demonstrating both countries' commitment to messaging bilateral military ties despite COVID concerns. Notwithstanding these symbolic engagements, we have yet to see true integration between Russian and PLA elements. We have no evidence Moscow and Beijing seek to build an interoperable military capability, and both nations have stated publicly they do not intend to create a formal, mutual defense alliance. Instead, we expect Russia and the PRC to continue pursuing limited, coordinated military operations that support both nations' interests.

**North Korea** poses a significant security risk to the United States and our partners in the Indo-Pacific Region. The country has taken no meaningful steps toward denuclearization, despite promising signs of de-escalation in 2018, and it continues to advance its strategic weapons program. Pyongyang maintains a diverse and growing missile inventory, and North Korea unveiled several new ballistic systems during military parades in late 2020 and early 2021, including two SLBMs and an ICBM. Meanwhile, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has re-adopted a bellicose posture toward the United States. In December 2019, Kim declared he was no longer bound by a self-imposed moratorium on nuclear and long-range missile tests. In early 2021 he characterized the United States as the North's biggest or principal enemy as he vowed to strengthen its nuclear arsenal. Kim also identified several new weapon modernization goals in early 2021, to include developing tactical nuclear weapons and hypersonic glide vehicles and improving the readiness and accuracy of North Korea's ICBMs. Pyongyang's missile research and development efforts, coupled with its ongoing pursuit of nuclear material and technology, are consistent with the regime's stated objective of being able to strike the U.S. Homeland.

**Kim Jong Un** has historically shown a willingness to undertake provocative, escalatory behavior that foments persistent regional tensions. In 2020, Pyongyang increased its bellicose rhetoric and posturing by destroying the inter-Korean Joint Liaison Office and threatening further retaliation for perceived South Korean transgressions. North Korea pursued a more moderated approach later in the year as it diverted attention toward flood recovery and COVID mitigation efforts.

Nonetheless, it continues to develop new – and upgrade existing – conventional weapons systems that threaten our regional partners' safety and security. At its October 2020 military parade, North Korea unveiled an anti-tank guided missile system, self-propelled artillery, a new SAM system and accompanying radar, and large-caliber rockets/missiles. Further, Kim continues to call for unilateral South Korean adherence to the 2018 Comprehensive Military Agreement—and has reiterated a reduction of U.S.-South Korean military ties as a precondition of improved inter-Korean engagement—while maintaining a provocative stance toward the South.

**In defiance of the United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCRs)**, North Korea continues to import refined petroleum through illicit ship-to-ship transfers and unreported direct deliveries by foreign-flagged vessels. USINDOPACOM supports UNSCR enforcement and works closely with our partners and allies to disrupt the illicit ship-to-ship transfers. Unfortunately, Pyongyang has been able to mitigate this effort's effects due to Beijing and Moscow's relatively lax sanctions enforcement. Pyongyang's sanctions-evasion strategy relies heavily on PRC shipping networks, and many of the illicit transfers occur in or near PRC territorial waters.

Further, North Korea mitigates the effect of UN-imposed sanctions through a variety of other illicit evasion tactics. Pyongyang exports coal in contravention of U.N. prohibitions, and North Korean laborers continue to work around the world, including in the PRC and Russia – either illegally or through visa loopholes– beyond the December 2019 repatriation deadline provided in UNSCR 2397. Additionally, malicious cyber activity remains a significant source of revenue for the regime. Through cyber-enabled financial theft, extortion campaigns, and cryptojacking – wherein North Korea uses compromised computing resources to mine digital currency – North Korea raises illicit revenue to support its weapons development programs.

**Violent Extremist Organizations (VEOs).** The Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) remains the most active and deadliest terrorist threat in the region, with branches in the Philippines and India and networks of supporters in Indonesia, Maldives, Bangladesh, Malaysia and Sri Lanka. The group's Philippines-based branch, ISIS East Asia, has conducted several high-profile attacks in recent years, including August 2020 twin suicide bombings in Jolo that killed at least 15 people. However, the group lacks the operational capability to plan sophisticated attacks, and its

loss of key leaders caused it setbacks in 2020. Notably, these disparate ISIS and ISIS-inspired groups are not cohesive; they do not collaborate or fall under the same command and control structure. They lack substantial connections to the ISIS core in Iraq and Syria. Although ISIS is the most pervasive VEO in the region, al-Qaida (A.Q.) has historical ties to and followers in several countries. However, the group's priorities remain concentrated in Afghanistan, and regional A.Q. supporters mostly refrain from operational planning due to limited capabilities and a focus on facilitation and recruitment activities. Local groups—such as Indonesia-based Jemaah Anshorut Daulah (JAD) and Jemaah Islamiyah (J.I.), who are aligned to ISIS and A.Q., respectively—continue to operate in the region, but pose a limited threat to U.S. interests. However, self-radicalized, ISIS- or AQ-inspired extremists remain a cause for concern.

Meanwhile, regional counterterrorism (CT) capabilities continue to improve. Several countries have modernized their CT legislation, empowering law enforcement to conduct more arrests that lead to convictions. Additionally, in places like the Philippines, host-nation security forces have maintained consistent pressure on extremist networks, further degrading the groups and disrupting planning and attacks. Looking ahead, regional cooperation initiatives, such as the Singapore-based Counterterrorism Information Facility (CTIF), will be critically important to lessening the threat from violent extremism on a multilateral basis.



## CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The greatest danger for the United States is the erosion of conventional deterrence. Without a valid and convincing conventional deterrent, the PRC will be emboldened to take action in the region to supplant U.S. interests. As the military balance in the Indo-Pacific becomes more unfavorable to the United States, we are accumulating additional risk that may embolden our adversaries and competitors to attempt unilaterally changing the status quo.

USINDOPACOM's focus is to ensure access, freedom of maneuver, and our ability to project power in the shared domains, which enables USINDOPACOM to deter and deny our adversaries' and competitors' ability to engage in acts of aggression, coercion, or other malign behavior towards our allies and partners along the First Island Chain. Ultimately, the steps we take must convince our adversaries and competitors they simply cannot achieve their objectives with force.

PDI provides a pragmatic and economically viable approach for implementing a deterrence strategy for defending U.S interests in the Indo-Pacific while mitigating risk and avoiding escalation. Funding levels in PDI for FY21 equates to seven-tenths of 1% of the DOD's Total Obligating Authority in FY21, and just two-thirds the amount spent on the European Defense Initiative in FY20 (\$5.9B).

USINDOPACOM must field an integrated Joint Force with precision-strike networks along the First and Second Island Chains; an integrated air and missile defense in the Second Island Chain; and an enhanced force posture that provides the ability to preserve regional stability, and if needed, disperse and sustain combat operations for extended periods.