

[H.A.S.C. No. 117-68]

**NATIONAL SECURITY CHALLENGES
AND U.S. MILITARY ACTIVITIES
IN THE INDO-PACIFIC REGION**

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS

SECOND SESSION

HEARING HELD
MARCH 9, 2022



U.S. GOVERNMENT PUBLISHING OFFICE

48-961

WASHINGTON : 2023

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

ONE HUNDRED SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS

ADAM SMITH, Washington, *Chairman*

JAMES R. LANGEVIN, Rhode Island	MIKE ROGERS, Alabama
RICK LARSEN, Washington	JOE WILSON, South Carolina
JIM COOPER, Tennessee	MICHAEL R. TURNER, Ohio
JOE COURTNEY, Connecticut	DOUG LAMBORN, Colorado
JOHN GARAMENDI, California	ROBERT J. WITTMAN, Virginia
JACKIE SPEIER, California	VICKY HARTZLER, Missouri
DONALD NORCROSS, New Jersey	AUSTIN SCOTT, Georgia
RUBEN GALLEG0, Arizona	MO BROOKS, Alabama
SETH MOULTON, Massachusetts	SAM GRAVES, Missouri
SALUD O. CARBAJAL, California	ELISE M. STEFANIK, New York
ANTHONY G. BROWN, Maryland,	SCOTT DESJARLAIS, Tennessee
RO KHANNA, California	TRENT KELLY, Mississippi
WILLIAM R. KEATING, Massachusetts	MIKE GALLAGHER, Wisconsin
FILEMON VELA, Texas	MATT GAETZ, Florida
ANDY KIM, New Jersey	DON BACON, Nebraska
CHRISSY HOULAHAN, Pennsylvania	JIM BANKS, Indiana
JASON CROW, Colorado	LIZ CHENEY, Wyoming
ELISSA SLOTKIN, Michigan	JACK BERGMAN, Michigan
MIKIE SHERRILL, New Jersey	MICHAEL WALTZ, Florida
VERONICA ESCOBAR, Texas	MIKE JOHNSON, Louisiana
JARED F. GOLDEN, Maine	MARK E. GREEN, Tennessee
ELAINE G. LURIA, Virginia, <i>Vice Chair</i>	STEPHANIE I. BICE, Oklahoma
JOSEPH D. MORELLE, New York	C. SCOTT FRANKLIN, Florida
SARA JACOBS, California	LISA C. McCLAIN, Michigan
KAIALI'I KAHELE, Hawaii	RONNY JACKSON, Texas
MARILYN STRICKLAND, Washington	JERRY L. CARL, Alabama
MARC A. VEASEY, Texas	BLAKE D. MOORE, Utah
JIMMY PANETTA, California	PAT FALLON, Texas
STEPHANIE N. MURPHY, Florida	
STEVEN HORSFORD, Nevada	

PAUL ARCANGELI, *Staff Director*

MARK MOREHOUSE, *Professional Staff Member*

FORREST McCONNELL, *Counsel*

BROOKE ALRED, *Clerk*

CONTENTS

	Page
STATEMENTS PRESENTED BY MEMBERS OF CONGRESS	
Rogers, Hon. Mike, a Representative from Alabama, Ranking Member, Committee on Armed Services	3
Smith, Hon. Adam, a Representative from Washington, Chairman, Committee on Armed Services	1
WITNESSES	
Aquilino, ADM John C., USN, Commander, U.S. Indo-Pacific Command	6
LaCamera, GEN Paul J., USA, Commander, United Nations Command; Commander, United States-Republic of Korea Combined Forces Command; and Commander, U.S. Forces Korea	7
Ratner, Hon. Ely S., Assistant Secretary of Defense for Indo-Pacific Security Affairs, U.S. Department of Defense	5
APPENDIX	
PREPARED STATEMENTS:	
Aquilino, ADM John C.	67
LaCamera, GEN Paul J.	101
Ratner, Hon. Ely S.	57
DOCUMENTS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD:	
Letter from Mr. Garamendi and Mr. Waltz	117
INDOPACOM clarification	119
WITNESS RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS ASKED DURING THE HEARING:	
Mr. Kahele	124
Mr. Khanna	124
Mrs. Luria	124
Mr. Moulton	123
Mr. Scott	123
Mr. Wittman	123
QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MEMBERS POST HEARING:	
Mr. Carbajal	135
Mr. Carl	147
Mr. Courtney	128
Mr. Crow	139
Mr. Gallagher	137
Mr. Horsford	151
Ms. Jacobs	141
Mr. Kahele	146
Mr. Kelly	135
Mr. Lamborn	127
Mr. Langevin	127
Mr. Moore	149
Mrs. Murphy	150
Mr. Panetta	150
Mr. Scott	129
Ms. Speier	128
Ms. Strickland	147
Mr. Turner	127
Mr. Waltz	140

NATIONAL SECURITY CHALLENGES AND U.S. MILITARY ACTIVITIES IN THE INDO-PACIFIC REGION

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES,
Washington, DC, Wednesday, March 9, 2022.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to call, at 9:00 a.m., in room 2118, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Adam Smith (chairman of the committee) presiding.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. ADAM SMITH, A REPRESENTATIVE FROM WASHINGTON, CHAIRMAN, COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

The CHAIRMAN. I am going to go ahead and call the meeting to order.

The full committee meets today on the national security challenges and the U.S. military activities in the Indo-Pacific region.

Three witnesses today: the Honorable Dr. Ely Ratner, Assistant Secretary of Defense for Indo-Pacific Affairs; Admiral John Aquilino, the Commander for U.S. Indo-Pacific Command, and General Paul LaCamera, the Commander for United Nations Command/Combined Forces/U.S. Forces Korea.

I realize at yesterday's hearing I did not read our little hybrid statement, which is very tempting, by the way, because everything seemed to go just fine, even though I didn't read it. But I will read it this morning.

We have a hybrid hearing. We have some members appearing remotely and other members here. So, members who are joining remotely must be visible on screen for the purposes of identity verification, establishing and maintaining a quorum, participating in the proceeding, and voting.

Those members must continue to use the software platform's video function while in attendance, unless they experience connectivity issues or other technical problems that render them unable to participate on camera. If a member experiences technical difficulties, they should contact the committee staff for assistance.

Video of members' participation will be broadcast in the room and via the television internet feeds. Members participating remotely must seek recognition verbally, and they are asked to mute their microphones when they are speaking—when they are not speaking. Sorry.

Members who are participating remotely are reminded to keep the software platform's video function on the entire time they attend the proceeding. Members may leave and rejoin the proceeding. If members depart for a short while for reasons other than joining a different proceeding, they should leave the video function on. If

members will be absent for a significant period or depart to join a different proceeding, they should exit the software platform entirely, and then rejoin it if they return. Members may use the software platform's chat feature to communicate with staff regarding technical or logistical support issues only.

Finally, I have designated a committee staff member to, if necessary, mute unrecognized members' microphones to cancel any inadvertent background noise that may disrupt the proceedings.

Thank you.

I want to thank our witnesses for being here. I look forward to their testimony and questions and answers.

The Indo-Pacific region is a crucially important region to the national security of the United States and to the peace and stability of the world. Obviously, we have learned that the entire world is a challenge. With Russia's unprovoked and devastating invasion of Ukraine, we have been reminded that we can't just focus on one part of the world, but the Indo-Pacific region is clearly one of the most important parts of the world. I think it will be important as we go through all of these hearings from all the different regions, how interconnected everything is.

It is not just great power competition, we're dealing with Russia, we're dealing with China. Russia and China, as we know, are actively engaged in many parts of the world. And the competition here really is to build broad support amongst partners, and that is a global endeavor to basically show that partnering with the U.S. and the West is the better option for frankly all countries than partnering with Russia and China. And the Indo-Pacific region gives us an outstanding opportunity to do that.

It has been described as the pacing threat. However you want to put it, China is, without question, the country most capable of competing with the U.S. in terms of their economic strength, in terms of their growing military strength, in terms of their global reach.

Now we all want a world where China and the U.S. peacefully coexist, and that is what we are working towards. But, over the course of the last decade at least, it has become clear that President Xi in China intends something more combative than that. They are trying to push us out and advance an authoritarian way of looking at the world that has very little respect for human rights or anything other than the blunt force of what they want economically.

We need to compete against that. We need to convince the world to go in a different direction, and to do that, we need a robust presence in the Indo-Pacific region. It is just that simple.

And our military is a huge part of that. We have important defense relationships, certainly, with Japan and South Korea, but with a number of other countries as well. We must maintain and strengthen those relationships, and we must attempt to be a balancing force to keep the peace in Asia.

Obviously, nowhere is that more important than on Taiwan. The belligerent language that China has been putting out recently is very, very dangerous. We could easily see a China-Taiwan situation in the same way we now see a Russia-Ukraine situation. We need to constantly remind China that that is not the way global powers are supposed to behave. Whatever dispute differences they have

with Taiwan, they should be resolved peacefully, not through the use of military force.

But a big part of making sure that happens is to have an adequate deterrence. It is to build partnerships and have a presence in the region that lets China know that that is not an acceptable or doable option. And that requires us to have a robust presence.

I am particularly interested this morning in, well, two big things. One, how are our relationships and partnerships going in the region? I think that is incredibly important. India, in particular; you know, it is the largest democracy in the world, but a country that has had a history in the past of being closer to Russia in many ways than to us, but is now moving in our direction. If we can enhance that relationship and strengthen it, I think that makes the world a better and more peaceful place.

And then, second, this committee has been briefed repeatedly over the course of the last 6 or 7 years about everything that China has done in their military modernization to try to counter us, to basically put our systems and our forces at risk, and to in essence push us out of the region.

We have known about that for some time. I know that we are working on how to adjust to that; how to change our force structure to better deal with what China has done. We need to put meat on those bones. What is it we are doing? What is it we need to be doing? What are the most important things to fund?

To me, it comes down to two words as a starting point, and that is information and survivability. China is very focused on improving their command-and-control information systems and, also, equally focused on making ours vulnerable—well, not making ours vulnerable—on taking ours down, on being able to basically blind us and shut us down by shutting down our communication systems and our information systems. How are we improving that?

On survivability, it is the platforms that can get into the region and survive—with China's missile technology, with their cyber technology, and their ability to shut down our information systems. And as we have talked about ad nauseam on that committee, this comes down a lot to innovation and new technology. And it is readily acknowledged that the Pentagon is not as good at that as they should be. Let's just put it that way. We have got to be able to find new technologies; make the best use out of them; figure out how to make them applicable faster, quicker, and better—something we are really focused on.

So, I look forward to hearing from our witnesses this morning on those topics and others.

And with that, I will yield to the ranking member, Mr. Rogers.

**STATEMENT OF HON. MIKE ROGERS, A REPRESENTATIVE
FROM ALABAMA, RANKING MEMBER, COMMITTEE ON
ARMED SERVICES**

Mr. ROGERS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And I would be remiss if I didn't acknowledge the entrance of one of our former colleagues, Ms. Bordallo of Guam. Good to see you again.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I do thank the witnesses for being here and the time that it took to prepare for this.

The conflict between the Chinese Communist Party and American democracy will be one of the greatest tests this Nation has ever faced. A modernized military, well-armed allies, and a lethal Taiwan are essential to countering China. But we also need operational concepts that are executable.

Over the past year, members of this committee have asked questions about INDOPACOM's [U.S. Indo-Pacific Command's] ability to carry out its operational requirements. To date, we have gotten few answers to serious questions about contested logistics; few answers on accelerating new infrastructure; and few answers on delivering new technology to the battlefield.

To make matters worse, the Secretary [of Defense] announced Monday his intention to close the massive Red Hill fuel depot within a year. Red Hill has serious problems, but the Secretary closed Red Hill without laying out the resources needed to replace that capacity. That is extremely shortsighted. Now the response from the Department has been the same. The answer is just one policy announcement away, and that is unacceptable.

What I would like to hear from each of you today is exactly how you will employ new operational concepts, build new systems, and ensure logistic support at new operating locations throughout the Indo-Pacific. But, most importantly, I want to know how you intend to do that in the next 5 years.

We all know China is not going to give us 10 or 20 years to prepare for conflict. We simply cannot procrastinate any further. The issues like Red Hill present an opportunity to modernize beyond the World War II logistics model. But I am deeply worried about the cycle of indecision and procrastination at the Pentagon. And I am also worried about getting this important work done in the timeframe that we have to act.

This committee has tried to provide the Department the capabilities it needs to deter China and ensure we prevail if conflict arises, but we can't move with purpose if the Department can't define its requirements. We have tried to nail those down in the PDI. Congress created the Pacific Deterrence Initiative to highlight and expedite the most essential capabilities, but the Pentagon kneecapped the PDI process last year with poor guidance and unclear plans. I hope the DOD [Department of Defense] can rectify that in this year's budget submission.

On top of all this, we have tasked General LaCamera with holding off North Korea. In any other year, North Korea's repeated missile test would be front-page news. General, you so happened to pick a very busy time to start trying to deal with your challenges over there. The South Koreans are essential allies, and deepening our defense cooperation with them makes us all safer. And we want to know what you need to secure the Korean Peninsula in the coming decade.

This committee is ready to make bold investments in our defense. I hope to hear today that the Department is ready to do the same.

With that, Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Dr. Ratner.

**STATEMENT OF HON. ELY S. RATNER, ASSISTANT SECRETARY
OF DEFENSE FOR INDO-PACIFIC SECURITY AFFAIRS, U.S.
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE**

Dr. RATNER. Well, Chairman Smith, Ranking Member Rogers, distinguished members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today, and it is a privilege to be here with Admiral Aquilino and General LaCamera.

As you know, the Indo-Pacific is the priority theater for the Department of Defense and we remain committed to upholding a free and open regional order. At the same time, the region faces mounting security challenges, particularly from the People's Republic of China, the PRC, which has adopted a more coercive and assertive approach to advancing its authoritarian interests. North Korea's weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missile programs also constitute a serious threat to the United States and our allies and partners.

Mr. Chairman, Secretary Austin has described the PRC as the Department's top pacing challenge. This prioritization will be reflected in the forthcoming National Defense Strategy and FY23 [fiscal year 2023] budget, as we continue to update our concepts, capabilities, and force posture to defend the homeland, deter aggression, and prepare to prevail in conflict.

We are prioritizing capabilities relevant to the China challenge, to enable a joint force that is lethal and able to strike adversary forces and systems at range; resilient and able to gain information advantage and maintain command and control through adversary disruptions; survivable and agile in the face of adversary attacks that seek to reduce combat power and mobilization speed; and able to provide the logistics and sustainment needed for operations in a highly contested environment. Alongside these capabilities, we are building a combat-credible force posture in the Indo-Pacific, working toward a more distributed, lethal, and resilient forward posture essential to addressing the full suite of challenges we face in the region.

We are also doubling down on one of our greatest strategic advantages: our network of allies and partners. As I look across the region, I see our defense ties growing at a rapid pace. With the U.S.-Japan alliance as the cornerstone of regional peace, we are deepening our defense cooperation with the Japan Self-Defense Forces, optimizing our alliance force posture, and integrating the alliance into a broader regional security network of like-minded nations.

We are also continuing to strengthen the U.S.-ROK [Republic of Korea] alliance—the linchpin of peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula and in the Indo-Pacific region—remaining focused on enhancing deterrence and alliance readiness.

The U.S.-Australia alliance is also surging forward with considerable momentum. Last year, we announced several new initiatives to substantially deepen force posture cooperation in land, air, and maritime domains, and we announced the historic AUKUS Trilateral Security Partnership with the United Kingdom and Australia.

We recognize the importance of our alliances with the Philippines and Thailand as well, as we are proud of the work we have

done to revive the Visiting Forces Agreement with the Philippines and the steps we are taking to strengthen our security cooperation with our Thai allies.

Likewise, we are seeing historic progress in our major defense partnership with India, as we continue to integrate and operationalize our day-to-day defense cooperation and logistics, enhance information-sharing, and grow our bilateral cooperation in emerging domains, such as space and cyberspace.

And we have been working throughout Southeast Asia to strengthen capabilities and improve our interoperability with partners, including Singapore, Vietnam, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Timor-Leste.

We are also bringing our partners together with colleagues across the U.S. Government to elevate the Quad [Quadrilateral Security Dialogue] as a premier regional grouping, while we remain committed to ASEAN [Association of Southeast Asian Nations] centrality.

Consistent with our commitment to our One China policy, the Taiwan Relations Act, the Three Joint Communiqués, and the Six Assurances, we are focused on maintaining peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait.

With the PRC as the Department's pacing challenge, Taiwan is the pacing scenario, and we aim to deter and deny PRC aggression through a combination of Taiwan's own defenses, its partnership with the United States, and growing support from like-minded democracies.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, I would like to close by thanking all of you for your strong, bipartisan support for the Indo-Pacific. It is my firm belief that this bipartisanship is one of our most powerful assets in rising to the China challenge and should be nurtured and treated as such.

Thank you for your time and attention, and I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Dr. Ratner can be found in the Appendix on page 57.]

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.
Admiral Aquilino.

STATEMENT OF ADM JOHN C. AQUILINO, USN, COMMANDER, U.S. INDO-PACIFIC COMMAND

Admiral AQUILINO. Chairman Smith, Ranking Member Rogers, and the distinguished members of the committee, thank you for also allowing me to appear today and have a conversation, and I really, truly appreciated our closed session yesterday. Thank you for that.

I also would like to thank all of you for your dedicated support to the Indo-Pacific Command, our service members, and their families.

The People's Republic of China is the most consequential strategic competitor that the United States has faced. They are executing a dedicated campaign that utilizes all forms of national power in an attempt to uproot the rules-based international order to the benefit of themselves and at the expense of all others.

Russia also presents some serious risks. As evident from their unprovoked and unjustified attack on the Ukraine, Russia has no regard for international law, its own commitments, or any principles that uphold global peace.

Similarly, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the DPRK, as well as violent extremist organizations, also pose acute threats to peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific region.

To address these threats, Secretary Austin has articulated clear priorities: defend the homeland, deter our adversaries, and strengthen our allies and partners. These priorities are advanced through integrated deterrence, which is the Department's approach to preventing conflict through the synchronization of all elements of national power, coordinated with the joint force across all domains, together with our allies and partners.

INDOPACOM's mission is to prevent conflict through the execution of integrated deterrence, and should deterrence fail, we must be prepared to fight and win. "Seize the Initiative" describes INDOPACOM's approach to accomplishing these missions. This approach requires the joint force to think, act, and operate differently by realigning our posture, advancing our warfighting capabilities, in order to provide the President and the Secretary with options across the entire spectrum of competition, crisis, or conflict.

Effective deterrence requires significant investment to defend the homeland, protect the joint force, operate in contested space, and provide all-domain battlespace awareness with an integrated fires network that synchronizes the joint force.

These initiatives are incorporated into the theater campaign plan. They are facilitated and supported by agile logistics, a robust experimentation program, as well as exercises and constant collaboration with our allies and partners to promote peace in the region.

We must take concerted efforts to increase our resilience and strengthen our capabilities through sustained investments, utilizing predictable budgets, a strong industrial base, and reliable supply chains.

I am optimistic we will see a strategy-based FY23 budget that takes the appropriate initial steps to address key adversarial challenges and increase our warfighting advantages. The resources we commit now and in the future will preserve a free and open Indo-Pacific, strengthen our deterrence posture, and provide us the ability to fight and win, should deterrence fail.

Thanks to the committee, and I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Admiral Aquilino can be found in the Appendix on page 67.]

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

General LaCamera.

STATEMENT OF GEN PAUL J. LaCAMERA, USA, COMMANDER, UNITED NATIONS COMMAND; COMMANDER, UNITED STATES-REPUBLIC OF KOREA COMBINED FORCES COMMAND; AND COMMANDER, U.S. FORCES KOREA

General LACAMERA. Chairman Smith, Ranking Member Rogers, and distinguished members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear with you today.

I appreciate your leadership and dedication in supporting our total force and our families who work with our Korean allies and United Nations Sending States in order to maintain a stable and secure environment on the Korean Peninsula.

I would also like to thank President Biden, Secretary Austin, and General Milley for their continued leadership and support, along with Admiral Aquilino, the functional combatant commanders who support us, my fellow component commanders, and my interagency colleagues. It is easy to stand on freedom's frontier with this tremendous support.

Finally, I want to thank our Korean hosts and their professional military.

I am pleased to update you on the great work done by our dedicated personnel who serve in the Republic of Korea. They are professionally executing the missions of the United Nations Command, Combined Forces Command, and the United States Forces Korea.

The United States-Republic of Korea alliance was forged in the crucible of battle. While the Democratic People's Republic of Korea continues to pose multiple threats to the region and international security, this alliance remains the linchpin of regional stability and has prevented a resumption of the hostilities that shredded peace on the Korean Peninsula some 72 years ago. It remains ironclad, and our service members, along with the Republic of Korea military, are trained and ready to respond to a provocation or crisis, if called upon.

Our three commands—United Nations Command, Combined Forces Command, and the United States Forces Korea—must remain vigilant, prepared, and ready. Under one commander, these three commands are empowered to maintain a stabilized security environment for the Republic of Korea, our regional allies, and our partners.

We have international legitimacy through the United Nations Command, whose mission is to enforce the 1953 Armistice Agreement, coordinate U.N. [United Nations] Sending State contributions, and execute assigned functions, directed by the United States National Authorities through the Joint Chiefs of Staff, to preserve peace and security on the Korean Peninsula.

We are proud of the combined teamwork of the U.S.-Korean alliance. The Combined Forces Command is the combined warfighting headquarters representing the U.S.-Korea Bilateral Military Partnership. Formed in 1978, it is a unique entity that takes policy direction and missions from the Combined Military Committee, and is governed by, and subject to, binational decisionmaking and consensus.

We maintain our strong U.S. commitment to Korea. U.S. Forces Korea is the premier joint force committed to defending the security of the Republic of Korea. It is disciplined, trained, and ready to fight tonight, respond in crisis, and win in conflict.

Central to meeting any threats is resourcing the strengthening of our force and best possible care of our families. I am grateful for your support and leadership in these no-fail tasks.

I know you are aware of South Korea's powerful economic, military, and technical standings. No doubt, you are aware of their social impact. All of this is part of the hard work, discipline, and ded-

ication of the Korean people—all done under the security umbrella of the U.S.-Korea alliance.

The Republic of Korea is an incredible ally, and it is a privilege to move into the future together with them in the Land of the Morning Calm. I am honored to command and serve this dedicated multinational combined and joint force in one of the most significant, dynamic regions of the world. Those who serve there are committed, capable, and well-supported. The force is postured to deter aggression, protect U.S. interests, and, if needed, defeat any adversary.

As long as the threat persists, the U.S.-Korean alliance remains vigilant, determined, and steadfast in defense of the Korean Peninsula and across the region. As the commander of these incredible service members, I appreciate this committee's continued support to fully prepare them to fight and win on the most dangerous piece of ground—the last 100 meters of land, sea, and air.

Under one flag. Katchi kapshida, we go together. Fight tonight.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide an opening statement. I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of General LaCamera can be found in the Appendix on page 101.]

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much.

One programming note before we get going with questions. There are going to be votes at some point. It is my intention to continue the hearing through the votes, because it would be impossible if we had to take that delay. There is about a half-hour, probably 40 minutes, between the two votes. So, we are just going to rotate people in and out, and we will figure out how we are going to do that. But we are going to keep going.

General LaCamera, so we talked a little bit about the alliances and the different pieces out there. First of all, I know South Korea has, I think, just completed their elections, as we are sitting here, or in the middle of them at any rate. So, curious how that is going, if you have heard.

But how do you see South Korea, not just in terms of North Korea, though I want to hear about that as well, fitting into the larger partnership? We have talked about the Quad that we have developed with Japan, Australia, and India, and other partners. How does South Korea view the competition with China in the region? And how can we best use them as a partner and an ally in the region for that?

And then, I would be curious to get your sort of latest take on what North Korea is thinking with their latest missile tests and how you evaluate that threat at the moment.

General LACAMERA. Thank you, Chairman.

I think the challenge with the Republic of Korea is, you know, the first thing they will tell you is their economic partner is China; their security partner is the United States. And that can be a little bit concerning because, as we go forward, the concern is always, are they or the North Koreans—and really, to your second question—are they trying to drive a wedge between us, the United States, and the Republic of Korea, as a way of winning without fighting?

THAAD [Terminal High Altitude Area Defense] was a perfect example in 2017, where they put some economic pressure on the Republic of Korea. We have seemed to come out of that. We have that up and running, and we continue to move forward.

I look at the Republic of Korea and, quite frankly, the United Nations Sending States and the ROK-U.S., or the Australian alliance or Japanese alliance, as opportunities to get the Koreans off the peninsula to do some additional training, as training becomes a little bit restricted, but also to expose them to other militaries.

When it comes to DPRK, I think he is focused solely internally on protecting his regime, and that is what this nuclear testing and the ROK—the missiles is really about protecting his position in the world.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

And, Dr. Ratner and Admiral Aquilino, when it comes to the big question of how we present a legitimate deterrence to China in the region, given what they have done in the last decade. And I know it is no one thing. But if you could sort of sum up how we need to change our military capability, in terms of where we should spend our money, what programs we should put the highest priority on, what are the capability or capabilities that we most need to get better at and develop to counter what China has done?

Admiral AQUILINO. Thanks, Mr. Chairman. I will go first, if it is okay with Dr. Ratner.

First of all, I think we must look through the PRC issue as not just today, right? So, it is a short-term problem, it is a medium-term problem, and it is a long-term problem.

So, I can tell you what we are doing today as it applies to adjusting our posture. Both the places we operate from, the amount and position of forces, where we put it is important. That power in a place that matters with the right capabilities today is the deterrent factor. Combine that with the exercising operations with our allies and partners, presents a pretty good deterrent force today.

On the capabilities side, in the mid and longer term, I appreciate the Department's support for some of the asks. And I highlighted a couple of them in my statement, right? So, the ability to operate in contested space consistently and survivably, as you highlighted in your statement. The ability to have persistent battlespace awareness of all things going on.

The CHAIRMAN. I guess we kind of know that part. The question is, what does that mean? Okay? So, to do that, we need to build this and not build that; we need to develop this technology; we need to develop that technology. What is going to survive in that environment? What do we need to put our money in, so that that happens?

Admiral AQUILINO. Yes. Integrated and resilient, sustainable ISR [intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance] capabilities; a network that links all of that together and displays it for all forces on the battlefield in a consistent way; and then, ultimately, the ability to close those kill chains with the correct weapons and fires.

The CHAIRMAN. Yes. Thank you.

Dr. Ratner.

Dr. RATNER. Mr. Chairman, the only thing I would add is, in addition to the capabilities that Admiral Aquilino mentioned, we are

working to update operational concepts. As you know, with the Joint Warfighting Concept, a more distributed force posture, and then, building our allies and partners into our deterrence frameworks as well.

The CHAIRMAN. So, basically, we need to make sure we don't have a few big, rich targets? We need to have, you know, sort of redundancy; spread-out, survivable systems. So that, no matter what China does, we can continue to communicate and continue to operate?

Dr. RATNER. Yes, I would say the characteristics of the force that I described in my opening statement are the ones that drive the capabilities investments—lethality, resilience, sustainability, survivability, and being agile and responsive, exactly as you describe, Mr. Chairman, in your opening statement.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Mr. Rogers.

Mr. ROGERS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

General, I never did get the answer to the chairman's question. Who won the election, or do we know the results?

General LACAMERA. When I came in here, Congressman, it is too close to call right now.

Mr. ROGERS. Sounds familiar. We have had that problem around here for a while.

You talked about the stepped-up testing by North Korea. How does a maturing North Korean missile capability affect your posture?

General LACAMERA. Ballistic missile defense is a top priority, protection, making sure that—Admiral Aquilino just brought it up—on the ISR typically, we say ISR is one noun, but, to me, it is three verbs, and making sure that we can see into what he is doing. And can we get after a kill web to interdict, prevent it from striking South Korea or striking any U.S. interests in the region.

Mr. ROGERS. Do you have adequate ISR, in your opinion?

General LACAMERA. Currently, I do. The challenge right now is placement and access, given the Comprehensive Military Agreement between the Republic of Korea and the DPRK.

Mr. ROGERS. When you look at your posture and your responsibilities, what is the one thing that we could help you most with in addressing capability issues? And one of the things that I am always mindful of is the huge number of rocket launchers he has near Seoul and how you would defend against that onslaught.

General LACAMERA. Yeah, there is two threats to that. There is the conventional threat, his artillery, long-range artillery that can range Seoul from the north; and then his theater ballistic missile capability that he is developing.

So, it is the Patriot-THAAD and making sure that we have the redundancy and the resiliency and the number of arrows. But to me, it is more than just trading arrows for arrows. We have got to make sure that we can get after the entire kill web, to be able to get into his systems. And I can provide a much better description of this in a secure environment.

Mr. ROGERS. I understand. Well, we need to know because we want to give you what you need. So, get it to us in whatever fashion you need to.

Dr. Ratner, we need to convince our allies and partners that we are in the Pacific for the long haul. I think that we on this committee genuinely mean that. How can we build that credibility in the region, in your view?

Dr. RATNER. Thank you, sir.

I think there are a few elements we can do to ensure that the region believes that we are going to be there for the long haul. Primarily, many of those occur outside the military domain, and certainly the jurisdiction of the Defense Department, in terms of active diplomacy and an active trade and investment strategy and leadership in the region. That is probably the most important thing we could do.

But from a military perspective, I think maintaining our forward posture, continuing to invest in our alliances, and working with partners on issues that are important to them, not just issues that are important to us, is the right formula.

Mr. ROGERS. Great.

And, Admiral, closing Red Hill is going to impact your operations. Can you tell me, or tell this committee, how you intend to address that closure?

Admiral AQUILINO. Thank you, sir. Absolutely.

As we looked and developed options for senior leader decisions with regard to Red Hill, again, we had three criteria that we had to make sure we were getting right. No. 1, clean water for the people of Hawaii, service members and their families. No. 2, we had to be able to meet the war plan and the warfighting requirements. And then, third, we obviously always look at costs and ensure we are good stewards of the taxpayers' money.

We developed a plan that actually goes in alignment with how we talked about a more distributed plan, both forward and land-based, combined with a sea-based component, to allow for a more distributed, survivable, resilient network of fuels, as well as meeting all the security and the strategic fuel reserve requirements. So, as we looked at this, I think we are actually going to be in a better place and we meet all three requirements, as I laid out.

Mr. ROGERS. What timeframe is going to be needed to make this transition?

Admiral AQUILINO. Congressman, I think we will go in coordination with all of the members that are working this. That is the EPA [Environmental Protection Agency], the Hawaii Department of Health, and the Department of Defense. We will go as fast as safe allows. We have to make sure the facility is safe to transfer that fuel into the places we are going to send it, but we are certainly not waiting. As soon as we can get it done, we will be ready to move, and as soon as we are able to contract some of those other facilities, as well as the sea-based option.

Mr. ROGERS. So, you are not closing Red Hill until you have this new capability in place?

Admiral AQUILINO. We will close Red Hill, I think the Secretary's announcement was within the year. And that just allows us to be able to distribute that fuel with the contract requirements, the sea-based requirements, and the need to put it in the correct spots.

Mr. ROGERS. That is my point, though. I want to make sure that you are going to be able to fuel your OPLANs [operation plans] when you close that place.

Admiral AQUILINO. Yes, sir, we will be able to do it, and we will be able to do it fairly quickly.

Mr. ROGERS. Great.

That is all I have, Mr. Chairman, sir.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Larsen is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. LARSEN. Thanks, Chair.

Admiral, earlier this year, the Army began developing and testing a tactical cloud system that would be deployed in the Indo-Pacific region. Can you in this setting explain why that would be important for the Indo-Pacific?

Admiral AQUILINO. Thanks, Congressman.

So, first of all, the ability to make sure that our data is safe/secure in a cyber environment is critical. So, that is one portion of it. Additionally, it is going to help to support one of our primary initiatives called a Mission Partner Environment, which is the ability in a cyber-safe environment to share information with all of our partners; to be able to coordinate events, operations, exercises through a single communication mechanism. So, really, it kind of comes down to the ability to defend our information and our data.

Mr. LARSEN. Yes. So, I want to build out from that for Dr. Ratner. Because this gets to the importance of the tyranny of distance, but also closing that through secure communications among friends and allies.

Building that, sort of using that hub-and-spoke model that we used post-World War II to build out our friends and alliances in the Pacific, how are we going to assess what countries earn their way into this communication network, into this one, as well as any others that we are trying to set up in that region?

Dr. RATNER. Thank you, Congressman Larsen.

And Admiral Aquilino may want to say another word on some of the communications networks that he is looking to build in the region.

I will just say we are in careful analysis and consultation with our partners on their information security, both assessing them, helping them improve and clean up their networks, and moving in ways that are deliberate and ensure that we are not building that network so fast that it is going to be compromised. So, this is something we take quite seriously. PRC penetration of networks throughout the region is quite severe, and it is something we need to manage.

Mr. LARSEN. Admiral.

Admiral AQUILINO. Yeah, thanks, sir.

So, we are, obviously, concerned about everyone's networks—and our and all of our allies and partners. This Mission Partner Environment allows us to work together with them to be able to develop the maximum security that we have access to, and then align it with all of our partners. So, it is really kind of two wins here in this objective.

Mr. LARSEN. Yeah. Let me take one more step on this conversation. Dr. Ratner alludes to it, what China, the PRC is doing in the last several years—we have talked about this earlier last year, per-

haps on a call—to reorganize the PLA [People’s Liberation Army] to include their strategic support forces [SSF], which are both networking and space, including cyber and EW [electronic warfare], and a variety of other things.

So, on this point, not to tell us what is in the budget, because in 22 years I realize that would be a waste of time to ask you before the budget got here. Could you generally say perhaps that the budget investment reflects the need to be responsive to the development of the SSF and what it is doing, and how the PLA is using the strategic support forces, as well as getting ahead of that? As well as doing the investments, regardless of whether or not the SSF existed?

Dr. RATNER. Yes, Congressman.

Without getting into details about the budget, I can assure you that the Department is very focused on these issues. We had an opportunity earlier this week to do a tabletop exercise with members of this committee, in which we focused specifically on some of these areas, including space and cyber.

And you will see in the Secretary’s concept of integrated deterrence, which Admiral Aquilino mentioned, part of the rationale there is that we, ourselves, need to be integrating across domains, including space and cyber, as we think about this competition.

Mr. LARSEN. [Inaudible] there. Just a little time left. If you can share this, given Putin’s unprovoked invasion of Ukraine, have you seen a change in Russian force posture in their east?

Admiral AQUILINO. Thanks, Congressman.

So, absolutely. In preparation, they pushed out 20 ships and submarines, as we can count. They placed them in defensive positions. They postured other forces to be able to defend their eastern flank. So, we absolutely have seen a change, and we continue to monitor those, like we do every day.

Mr. LARSEN. All right. Thanks.

I will ask the question, and take it for the record, but it has to do with India’s ambivalent role right now relative to U.S. security interests with regards to the Ukraine. And I will develop something specific for the record.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Mr. Turner is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. TURNER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Admiral, in your written comments, you reference the United Kingdom and joint exercises that were held with both the United States and others. And you also mentioned the F-35. I want to read to you the provision that is here, and I have two questions with you.

One is, could you tell us about the partner nations that are outside INDOPACOM that are assisting in the area and, also, the role of the F-35? You state that the U.K. [United Kingdom] has “demonstrated its immense capacity to project combat power into the region ... the *Queen Elizabeth* Carrier Strike Task Group which included embarked U.K. and U.S. Marine Corps F-35Bs...” So, I am assuming we both had F-35s; that there were escort ships from both the Netherlands and the United States. And then, you also cite the acquisition by the Republic of Korea for the F-35A. Could

you tell us of your work with other partner nations and the role of the F-35 in the area?

Admiral AQUILINO. Thanks, Congressman.

So, the importance of the F-35 can't be overstated, right? So, when we talked in the beginning, the PRC has developed a set of systems of systems in an attempt to keep the United States out of the Pacific. The F-35 from the air domain is critical to be able to operate in that contested space. That fifth-generation airplane with the highest technology available——

Mr. TURNER. You are referencing China's J-20?

Admiral AQUILINO. I am referencing our F-35.

Mr. TURNER. But, I mean, when you are talking about China, also, as a peer threat in the area, that you are looking to their equipment as an additional need for the F-35?

Admiral AQUILINO. Yes. Absolutely, sir. So, they have just begun production of their J-20, their first fifth-generation airplane, which ups the ante. And again, with the technology and the capability of the F-35, that is why it is so critical. As it applies to being able to operate in that contested space, the technologies that come with that airplane allow it to happen.

Mr. TURNER. And then, joint exercises, you reference the U.K. and Netherlands.

Admiral AQUILINO. So, when we talk about integrated deterrence, that is a pretty good example of one operation that we have done. The U.K., as you know, has built, and has now deployed, one of their aircraft carrier strike groups. We did an operation with seven nations, four big-deck ships—the Japanese provided one of their large-deck DDHs [helicopter-carrying destroyer]. The *Queen Elizabeth* was there and, as well, was the *Ronald Reagan* and the *USS Carl Vinson*. That was combined with all of our domain capabilities in the form of bombers, ground forces, cyber capabilities, space capabilities, and worked together with seven nations—the Netherlands, Australians, Canadians.

Again, I think the friends and partners outside of the region also understand the importance of the region, and we see them operate with us, hopefully, more frequently. The French come to the region. You most recently read about the Germans deploying to the Pacific. I am hoping and working to get more of that. And with those partners, we operate with them all the time.

Mr. TURNER. Well, my next question relates to exercises and, also, with the Republic of Korea. General, you mentioned trying to get people out of the area because of restrictions with respect to exercises.

As part of our 2021 NDAA [National Defense Authorization Act], we required, as part of the Pacific deterrence, an actual plan to be provided to us by your command, Admiral. And in it, it listed exercises as one of the primary focus and goals. It also, unfortunately, includes information that your funding was cut for exercises in 2022.

I am aware that there have been, I believe, some overconcerns about issues of provocation of exercises, when it is one of your primary goals, of exercises, and we know our partners that are in the region need exercises to be effective.

What are we doing to ensure that we are able to conduct exercises in the region and that we are investing appropriately, and we are ensuring that the Republic of Korea has the ability to exercise without an overconcern of being provocative in the region? And I will let all three of you answer that one.

Admiral AQUILINO. Thanks, Congressman.

So, for the exercises, we do over 120 exercises every year. COVID [coronavirus disease] has impacted some of those. We have scaled some down. We have reduced or we have postponed some because of the COVID piece. But bottom line is we haven't reduced any of those exercises. As a matter of fact, when I met with the chiefs of defense across the region most recently in July, what we have agreed to is actually to try to expand those into more mini—

Mr. TURNER. Mr. Secretary, do you have concerns about exercises in the region?

Dr. RATNER. Congressman, I do share—

Mr. LARSEN [presiding]. The gentleman's time has expired. If you can finish in about 10 seconds? Thank you.

Dr. RATNER. I would say I share Admiral Aquilino's view. I do have concerns about the readiness of our forces on the Korean Peninsula, and I know that is something we are working on.

Mr. LARSEN. Thank you.

The chair recognizes Representative Courtney for 5 minutes.

Mr. COURTNEY. Thank you, Rick. And thank you to the witnesses for being here today.

Dr. Ratner, David Ignatius, who has been sort of covering foreign policy and military policy for quite a few years, made the observation that, in terms of hard power, the AUKUS alliance with Australia and Britain is the most important strategic move in decades. And again, congratulations to the administration for helping make that come together.

The response in Australia, as you and I have discussed, is very positive; 60 percent approval in public opinion polls. The government announced just a few days ago that they are moving forward for an eastern—a navy base on the eastern side of Australia to complement Stirling, which is on the western side near Perth. So they clearly, it is all-in and that is a long-term, that is a long-game commitment that is there.

And I know Admiral Caldwell at Naval Reactors is hard at work with the transition. It's a big job to figure out the industrial base challenge, which is huge. But in the meantime, I mean, there is another piece of this, which is helping the Australian navy sort of make this transformation. And it seems to me, and a number of us, that having joint training at the Nuclear Power School in South Carolina for Australian sailors and officers would be—you know, we have to do it, and why don't we start? I mean, it is a good, visible, tangible way to really show our allies and the world that this is real, that it is not just a press release back in September.

I don't know if—you are nodding, Admiral Aquilino. What are your thoughts on that?

Admiral AQUILINO. Congressman, it really is an important step forward. I do concur with that. But I do want to remember that the submarine piece is one portion of it, right? So, we are cooperating in other domains to expand our capabilities and capacities with the

Australians and the Brits in the form of space and cyber, in the form of being able to develop posture and operate from there. And I am going to be in Australia the week after next with really great partners, General Nakasone and General Dickinson, to start on that space and cyber improvement.

On the submarine piece, as you know, they are studying the best way to go forward. Big decisions, and they want to go about it methodically. I spoke to Admiral Caldwell last night. We are on the same page. As soon as they are ready to start, Admiral Caldwell is ready to support with regard to the start of schooling, and then we have options to be able to bridge, right? How do we operate together, Australians on U.S., British submarines? We are going to work through that. Safety is clearly a concern from Admiral Caldwell. But we are doing everything possible to move this as fast as possible.

Mr. COURTNEY. Well, that is good to hear. And again, I think, certainly, this committee is going to want to do everything to enable the success of that in terms of whether there are ITAR [International Traffic in Arms Regulations] issues or whether there is, again, McMahon Act issues in terms of just clearing any legal obstacles.

Admiral, you talked about, again, the pivot away from Red Hill, and the at-sea component I think sort of spotlights the importance of sealift. Again, in a few hours we are going to vote on an omnibus which adds 10 U.S.-flag ships to the fleet, bringing it about to 90. And again, these are not new construction. These are used ships that are going to be U.S. flagged and with a stipend enabled to do that. But, I mean, it still seems like it is still a big enterprise to have that disbursement, which I do think makes sense.

I mean, can you talk about sealift in terms of just—it is sometimes overlooked in the grand strategy discussions.

Admiral AQUILINO. Yes, sir. It is critical to the approach and the position to be able to be more distributed in many different locations, both ashore and at sea. You are talking about the sea-based component of that.

And I thank the committee for the support for the TSP [Tanker Security Program]. A great partner, General Van Ovost, and her command identified in a previous study that there was risk with regard to the number and access to U.S.-flag tankers. This is a great step to start in that direction. And again, I believe it will contribute to the result and the way forward on Red Hill. So, it is really important across all sealift, not just fuel.

Mr. COURTNEY. Can you comment on what sealift means in terms of the North Korean Peninsula?

General LACAMERA. Yes, Congressman.

In [inaudible], when I had this conversation, you know, when does strategic movement become operational maneuver, and at what point is he responsible for delivering to a certain point, and then, I have got to secure it, bringing it in? You know, there is tremendous capacity on the peninsula right now for the Korean people, but we are going to rely on Japan to bring supplies in and forces, and we are going to rely on sealift and airlift to build our combat power for any crisis or conflict.

The CHAIRMAN [presiding]. Thank you.

Mr. Lamborn is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. LAMBORN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Secretary Ratner, in the last NDAA, I offered language, and the committee supported it, asking for a report on asymmetrical defensive capabilities on the part of Taiwan—ground-based anti-ship cruise missiles, ground-based cruise missiles, and anti-ship mines. And I believe that that got caught up in a larger report request that the Secretary is supposed to produce for this committee. And is that coming along satisfactory? Because the importance of these reports is so that we can make sure our industry partners are producing these kinds of armaments sufficiently and, secondly, that they are getting into the hands of our Taiwanese partners and friends. So, will that report be forthcoming soon?

Dr. RATNER. Congressman, I will have to check on the exact timing of that report. As you know, I was before this committee probably about 6 weeks ago and did an in-depth classified briefing on Taiwan, in particular, and we discussed each of these capabilities in-depth. The Department is extremely focused on ensuring we can get these in the hands of the Taiwans as quickly as possible, and I would be happy, in advance of the report, to provide your office with any additional information.

Mr. LAMBORN. Okay. Fantastic. Thank you so much.

Admiral Aquilino, There is a lot of concern by many of us about hypersonic weapons and how China, Russia, and even North Korea, are doing what they can in this area. What are your concerns about their progress, and what do we need to do better on our part?

Admiral AQUILINO. Thanks, Congressman.

So, the real concern is the speed and pace at which they are showing up, as you articulated. So, that is the issue. We have security challengers that are working towards capabilities that are challenging. We are getting after it through—my number one unfunded request, as articulated, was a defense of Guam system to get right after this issue.

Now, it is complex. We are coordinating with the Department. But we need to be able to defend both our people, right?—defend the homeland is the Secretary's number one priority—as well as the forces, and where we place them, to be able to operate.

Mr. LAMBORN. Now, you mentioned Guam. And you said in your posture statement that Guam's strategic importance is difficult to overstate. Can you elaborate on that, please?

Admiral AQUILINO. Absolutely, Congressman.

The area in the Indo-Pacific is expansive, half the globe, and a lot of it water. So, to be able to posture forces in places that matter, with the right capabilities, we have focused on Guam as a strategic hub, as you would expect.

Senator—or excuse me—Governor Guerrero is a wonderful partner and a patriot. And as you know, it is about \$11 billion worth of construction, as we work through posturing of our forces that will end up on Guam. So, we have to protect it.

Mr. LAMBORN. And lastly, can you enlighten us regarding the Department's progress—and this is for Secretary Ratner—the Department's progress in prioritization of missile defense funding for Guam?

Dr. RATNER. Yes, Congressman. The Department is currently in the final stages of the Missile Defense Review, which will lay out strategy and priorities. And that should be forthcoming alongside the National Defense Strategy, hopefully in the coming weeks.

Mr. LAMBORN. Okay. Thank you.

That is all I have for now, Mr. Chairman. I will yield back to you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Mr. Keating is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. KEATING. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Question: Just 2 days ago, U.K.'s Foreign Minister, Liz Truss, said to Parliament there in London that the reason that India abstained in the U.N. recently on the vote about Russian aggression was both economic- and defense-oriented. Could you enlighten any of us as to why, what areas of defense she could have been alluding to? And what is your opinion on how India's inability to vote at the U.N. in favor of condemning Russia for the aggression, how that could be defense-oriented on their part?

Dr. RATNER. Sure. Thank you, Congressman. I can start on that. And there was a reference earlier to this issue as well.

What I would just start by saying is that, from the U.S. perspective, I think India is an absolutely essential partner, as we think about our strategy in the Indo-Pacific, both in terms of how we are building coalition partners as well as dealing with potential adversaries.

We recognize that India has a complicated history and relationship with Russia, that the majority of their weapons they buy from the Russians. The good news is that they are in a multiyear process of diversifying their arms purchases away from Russia. That is going to take some time, but they are clearly committed to doing that, including increasing the indigenization of their own defense industry. And that is something we should support. So, I think in terms of the overall relationship, and in terms of their relationship with Russia, the trendlines are moving in the right direction.

Mr. KEATING. All right. You know, China has mentioned its investment, advancing their own technology. I am particularly interested in unmanned underwater technology that they might have. Can you talk to us about what they are doing, and what you think we should be doing, to expand our footprints in this kind of technology?

Admiral AQUILINO. Thank you, Congressman.

As we have watched, this is the largest military buildup that we have seen since World War II coming out of the PRC. And that includes all domains. It also includes all types of technologies. Congressman Moulton and I had a conversation yesterday about some of those.

So, we shouldn't be surprised to see them advancing their unmanned capabilities in all domains, and we continue to watch it. We would have to have additional conversations at a classified level.

Mr. KEATING. But is it an area that we, ourselves, are stepping up the game on?

Admiral AQUILINO. We absolutely are. As you know, we have been leading the path for unmanned. I think I saw the CNO [Chief

of Naval Operations] last week talked about a fleet that includes both manned and unmanned. As you know, we already operate Global Hawks, Predators, and other types of unmanned domains. So, it is an opportunity for us that we have to continue to explore and expand.

Mr. KEATING. Okay. Thank you again, Mr. Chairman, for having this important hearing, and I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Mr. Wittman is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. WITTMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I want to thank our witnesses for joining us today.

Admiral Aquilino, I want to go to you and go back a year when Admiral Davidson was here, as your predecessor. And he talked about the erosion of strategic deterrence in that region and how incredibly important that is to make sure we keep the Chinese at bay.

I know that you spoke about the battle force as it exists today with a PLA Navy of approximately 350 ships and submarines, and more than 130 of those are major surface combatants. You also spoke about them having a fleet of 420 battleships by 2025, and I will add that DOD says that, by 2030, the PLA Navy probably has about 460 ships.

That is very, very different than the course that we are on with the number of ships that we have. And it is not just the number of ships that we are building, but it is also the "A sub o," as you know, operational availability for the ships that we have. Many times, maintenance availability is extended or time at sea extended. So, we are wearing our ships out faster because we are double-pumping them on deployments.

From your perspective, if we are unable to accelerate the fielding of new vessels and maintaining the vessels that we have, to have a high level of A sub o, operational availability, what do you think will be the primary risks going forward in the next 5 years in INDOPACOM?

Admiral AQUILINO. Thanks, Congressman.

So, you know, you highlight one of the challenges and things we are watching very closely, is the expansion and growth in both capability and capacity of the security challengers in the region as it compares to ours.

So, let me start by saying, we still have the world's greatest navy. We need to maintain and keep that advantage, and there's a variety of ways that you can get to it. The CNO, again, just the other day, talked about the unmanned capacity and how does that plug in.

With regard to the A sub o, through the Global Force Management system, we are operating through a supply-based model. That supply-based accounts for the sustainability in the near-, mid-, and long-term aspects. So, we have operated in that construct, and we have to continue to watch the capability and capacity differences.

Mr. WITTMAN. To take that a step further, not just U.S. capability and capacity and presence in the Asia-Pacific, but also the ability for us to leverage much more in-depth relationships with friends and allies in the region. That is a big place, lots of things to do. If we don't have friends that can help us in certain ways,

our risk calculus becomes much, much more complex in order to place that risk on the Chinese.

Give me your perspective about what you think that we need to be doing. And I would love to hear Dr. Ratner's thoughts on this. But how we work with allies to a greater extent, like Japan, like Vietnam, like Australia. And we know AUKUS, and you talked about that agreement. But I wanted to get a sense about how do we do that.

And then, how do we get to the point where we are not just having that relationship on paper, but that has to be manifested in how we operationalize that agreement. How do we jointly not only operate, but train together at the highest levels, so that if something does happen, it is not, well, let's figure out how we communicate, and those sorts of things? Give me your perspective on that.

Admiral AQUILINO. I concur. So, you don't surge trust, and you don't just come together and operate. But what we are trying to do, again, over 120 exercises a year. And all of the chiefs got together. In our discussions, the intent was, hey, we need to increase complexity of these to be able to be interoperable, interdependable.

Some examples. We just finished Keen Edge with the Japanese. My partner, General Yamazaki, and I met every day for 10 days, in coordination with our forces. Really important, very high end.

As we sit here today right now, the Army and the Marine Corps are both on the ground in the Philippines and in Thailand to do Cobra Gold and Balikatan. Those relationships are solid.

We are about to do RIMPAC [Rim of the Pacific] in a couple of months, the largest maritime exercise on the planet. I think over 27 nations coming together, and again, we have increased the complexity every year of that. So, those are the big ones.

On the small front, every day we come together, if we come in contact with our allies and partners, the direction I have given the team is we are going to ensure we can quickly come together, be instantly interoperable, and then, work together at any point at anytime. That is the approach we have taken.

Mr. WITTMAN. Dr. Ratner.

Dr. RATNER. Congressman, I will just say we obviously have a very wide spectrum of partners, some of which we operate at a very high level; others which have less—

The CHAIRMAN. And I do apologize. The gentleman's time has expired. We try to move on. I should have said that upfront. Even if you are still in the middle of a question, 5 minutes is the limit, and we move on to the next member. So, we will have to take that last piece of it for the record.

[The information referred to can be found in the Appendix on page 123.]

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Kim is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. KIM. Yes, thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Dr. Ratner, I wanted to talk to you about allies and partners. It is something that you have raised, all of you have raised, in terms of the importance of what is happening in the Indo-Pacific. We have seen in the European theater right now what allies and partners means when it comes to response to Ukraine. And I feel like it is an important moment to take a step back and gauge what al-

lies and partners means in the Indo-Pacific, especially when it comes to a counterweight against the PRC.

Dr. Ratner, you were just talking about India, for instance. You talked about the Quad. You talked about some of the challenges there when it comes to India's relationship with Russia; that you feel like that is moving in a better direction.

I guess I just want to point blank ask you, do you assess that India is the reliable partner that we need? Is there any concerns on your end about the Quad, about India moving forward in terms of their actions when we would need them in the future?

Dr. RATNER. Congressman, I perceive the U.S.-India defense relationship is one with incredible momentum. We are going to hold our highest, most senior-level engagement with them in early April. That is a two plus two with Secretary Blinken, Secretary Austin, and their counterparts. And that meeting will discuss a number of activities that not only are unprecedented, but are the kinds of things that would have been unimaginable 10 years ago or even 5 years ago.

So, obviously, there are challenges with the relationship with India, but I think they are manageable, and we are moving forward very rapidly in deepening the partnership.

Mr. KIM. Yes, I see those partnerships strengthening our ability to communicate, have that dialog, do exercises. But I guess what I would like to just get a sense of from you is, what does it mean for the allies and partners under duress? What does it mean to have this tested?

So, in the event of some type of conflict with China, I wanted to ask you, what specifically are the objectives? What would we want to see come to fruition when it comes to our allies and partners? How do we test and assess what that would look like under those types of strain that we see right now in Europe?

Dr. RATNER. Congressman, it is, obviously, a very context-dependent question. In the case of India, we have seen a test case of this in the last several years, when the Indians were facing aggression from China on the Line of Actual Control, where the United States rapidly provided capabilities and intelligence. And in the context of trying to improve trust in the nature of the defense relationship, that was a defining moment. So, this is about them being ready to support our efforts, but also us being ready to support theirs. And these are exactly, precisely the kind of conversations that we are having at a political-military level with a number of our closest partners.

Mr. KIM. With the military, or with the arrangements that we have when it comes to our partnerships in the Pacific—AUKUS, Quad—am I correct that, and I just want to double-check on this, that none of these have any military requirements in the case that any of the other members get attacked, something that would be more akin to what we have with NATO [North Atlantic Treaty Organization]? Is that correct?

Dr. RATNER. Congressman, neither the Quad nor AUKUS is a mutual defense treaty, but we do have mutual defense treaties bilaterally in the Indo-Pacific that are akin to NATO.

Mr. KIM. So, when we are talking about some of the situations that may occur, the one that we have talked about the most is

about Chinese aggression upon Taiwan. I wanted to just ask what your confidence level is that the partners and the allies that we have in the Indo-Pacific, as of now, would step up in the way that we would need?

Dr. RATNER. Congressman, again, that varies from partner to partner, but I am confident that some of our closest partners would be with us in a Taiwan contingency.

Mr. KIM. So, in terms of the overall, I guess, trajectory and the health of our partnerships in the region, how would you grade it? I would like to just get a sense of your baseline right now and where we are trying to get towards.

Dr. RATNER. Congressman, strengthening our alliance and partnerships has been an absolute centerpiece of the Biden-Harris administration. And in the Indo-Pacific, I think we have made considerable strides, including building upon some of the progress that was made during the Trump administration. And again, when I look around the region, partner after partner after partner, I see relationships that are stronger than they have ever been and that are on an upward trajectory.

Mr. KIM. Okay. Mr. Chairman, I will yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Mr. Scott is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SCOTT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And, Dr. Ratner, I want to start with you. I mean, the illegal fishing from China is not limited to the INDOPACOM. It goes all the way around AFRICOM [U.S. Africa Command]. General Townsend has suggested that the illegal fishing in Africa was going to lead to political unrest. Is their illegal fishing, is that about money or is that because they need the fish to feed their people?

Dr. RATNER. Congressman, I think it is both an industrial interest as well as protein for their citizens.

Mr. SCOTT. Okay. I want to point out to you that—and I hope the Biden administration is paying attention to this; I hope we are all paying attention to this—Ukraine exports 50 million metric tons—50 million metric tons—of corn and wheat. Over a fourth of that goes into the Indo-Pacific region and Asia.

And I think that we need to be doing some type of analysis on what the political and economic disruptions look like when that food is no longer hitting the global supply. They would normally be planting their crops right now. I think it is unlikely, obviously, based on what Russia has done, that that food supply comes to the global network, for lack of better terminology. And I do think that all of our areas of responsibility need to be looking at what a reduction in food supply means for their particular areas.

There are two primary sources of belligerence in this world right now. They are Russia and China. Admiral, at the end of World War II, the Soviet Union claimed that they owned the Kuril Islands. Those islands, my understanding is, belong to Japan. This dispute has been going on for 77 years. It is not one that is talked about much, but I do think it is important that, as we try to resolve these issues on territories, that we talk about all of them.

Can you speak to what the United States can do to assist our Japanese ally, again, in that territory? Is this sovereign Russian

territory, as the Russians claim, or do these islands belong to Japan?

Admiral AQUILINO. Sir, I am going to defer that first part to Secretary Ratner because I believe the United States doesn't take a policy or a position on those, who owns what, right? What we would like to do is ensure that any of those disputes are taken peacefully and in accordance with international law.

But there are multiple disputes, as you highlighted. The Kurils are only one. The Japanese are also worried about the Senkaku Islands to the south. And there are hundreds of disputes throughout the South China Sea. So, the position is to ensure a peaceful resolution of those disputes, in accordance with international law. I don't know if Secretary Ratner has anything else.

Mr. SCOTT. Well, let me move to another area then. China is responsible for the majority, if not an extremely significant portion, of the fentanyl that is coming into the world. Dr. Ratner, what is the Biden administration doing to stop the Chinese in the fentanyl that is coming into the world that seems to be unrestricted by the Chinese government?

Dr. RATNER. Congressman, that is outside the purview of the Defense Department, but I will be sure to get you an answer on that question from the relevant departments and agencies.

[The information referred to can be found in the Appendix on page 123.]

Mr. SCOTT. All right.

Germany and other countries have been resistant to increasing their defense spending. Japan is one of our allies that spends about 1.3 percent of its GDP [gross domestic product] on defense. Are we seeing countries like Japan, based on the recent aggression from Russia and the conduct of China, are we seeing them move to increase their defense spending the way we have seen Germany and others recognize the current threats?

Dr. RATNER. Congressman, we will see. I know there are current discussions on that ongoing in Tokyo. These are, obviously, sensitive issues for them, given some of their constitutional issues, and otherwise. But, clearly, they are seized of the mounting threat and challenge from the PRC.

Mr. SCOTT. I think as we see increased spending from those that share our interests and our values, as Americans, I think we need to make sure that we are coordinating with them, so that we get the most for the dollars that are spent.

And with that, Mr. Chairman, I yield the remainder of my time.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Mr. Khanna is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. KHANNA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Dr. Ratner, could you briefly describe the United States role in the 1962 border conflict between China and India under President Kennedy?

Dr. RATNER. Congressman, I will have to get back to you on the precise history on that.

Mr. KHANNA. The gist of it is that President Kennedy and the United States supported India in that conflict.

And then, when there was the border conflict in June of 2020, when China violated the Line of Control, could you briefly describe the United States role at that point?

Dr. RATNER. Yes, Congressman, I wasn't in the seat at the time, but, as I recently mentioned, the United States did rapidly provide certain intelligence and capabilities.

Mr. KHANNA. Did Russia do anything to protect India when China was violating the Line of Control, to your knowledge?

Dr. RATNER. Not to my knowledge.

Mr. KHANNA. And did Russia, to your knowledge, do anything to protect India in 1962, when China violated the Line of Control?

Dr. RATNER. Congressman, I would be happy to get back to you on that.

[The information referred to was not available at the time of printing.]

Mr. KHANNA. To my knowledge, they didn't. And so, both times when there has been a border dispute with India and China, it is the United States, actually, that has come to India's defense.

And so, I guess I am perplexed why—and I say this as an Indian-American—why India has abstained three times from the Security Council and is unwilling to condemn Putin's unprovoked aggression into Ukraine. Do you have a view on this? And has this been raised at the highest levels with the Indian government?

Dr. RATNER. Congressman, I know we have been engaging with Indian leadership about this issue. And as I mentioned earlier in response to a question, we are aware that India has a long history and complicated economic and security partnership with the Russians. They receive a majority of their weapons from Russia, historically, and that is something they have been working hard to wean themselves from. But I would defer to them to speak on their own exact decisionmaking on this.

Mr. KHANNA. So, there is 60 percent of weapons from Russia, but I guess let me ask you this: Do you think the United States or Russia are more likely to come to India's defense if the Chinese were to invade beyond the Line of Control?

Dr. RATNER. The United States, Congressman.

Mr. KHANNA. Has that point been made to India?

Dr. RATNER. Congressman, we are in deep strategic conversations about the future of our partnership with India. Like I said, we have our most senior-level dialog with the Indians next month, in which Secretary Austin and Secretary Blinken will have an opportunity to speak with their counterparts about these critical issues.

Mr. KHANNA. What is the plan for India to get off the 60 percent reliance on Russian arms, and how fast can that happen, if they wanted to switch to getting weapons from the United States or European allies?

Dr. RATNER. Congressman, again, this is obviously a sovereign decision for the Indians. What we are encouraging them to do is to purchase more American capabilities, as you mentioned; work with other third parties, Europeans and others, and improve their own indigenization of their own defense sector. So, those trends together are already underway.

If you look over the last several years, I think the trendlines are moving in the right direction.

Mr. KHANNA. How quickly could—

Dr. RATNER. I don't have an answer for a particular day on the calendar as to when they achieve a certain benchmark.

Mr. KHANNA. But, putting aside what their own decisionmaking is, how quickly could it happen if they said, "We want to switch as fast as possible." I mean, what would you say is a reasonable rate of reducing Russian dependence? I mean, could we get that number down 10 percent every year? Or what is a reasonable target, if they said they wanted to do it?

Dr. RATNER. Congressman, I would be happy to get you a more precise answer to that question. I think it depends a lot on the nature of the specific capability, from munitions all the way up to much higher end capabilities.

[The information referred to can be found in the Appendix on page 124.]

Mr. KHANNA. I appreciate that.

I will just conclude by saying that I think it is obvious that the United States would stand against Chinese aggression on the Line of Control, far more than Russia or Putin would; and that we really need to press India to not be as dependent on Russian defense and to be willing to condemn Putin's aggression in Ukraine, just like we would condemn Chinese aggression beyond the Line of Control.

I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Dr. DesJarlais is recognized for 5 minutes.

Dr. DESJARLAIS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Dr. Ratner, let's shift our attention to the tension between the Chinese and Taiwan. As we know, the world is watching Ukraine and Russia conflict as we speak. And last October, President Biden made headlines when asked whether the United States would come to Taiwan's defense if China attacked, and the President replied in the affirmative and said that we have a commitment to do that. Is this the Department's official position on the perspective of the Taiwan-China conflict?

Dr. RATNER. Congressman, the Department's position is that the United States policies have not changed in terms of our One China policy, the Taiwan Relations Act, the Three Joint Communiqués, and the Six Assurances, as the foundation of our policy.

Dr. DESJARLAIS. Okay. A lot of people seem to have mixed feelings about what exactly the United States should be doing in Ukraine; what is our commitments there. Contrast our response in Ukraine to what it would look like in China. As we know, China has been unpredictable and probably expedited in most of what we have predicted about their capabilities and their advancement of their military forces.

So, with that in mind, if we see an unfortunate escalation in that region, what would Americans expect to see in our response there versus what they see in our response to Ukraine at this point?

Dr. RATNER. Congressman, we could spend all day talking about the differences and similarities between Ukraine and Taiwan, and there are some of both. What I will say is, when I look at the conflict in Ukraine, the lessons that I draw, number one, are the im-

portance of Taiwan developing its own capabilities and that's something—and its own defenses and deterrence. And that is something we are working with them on.

The power of the unity of the West and the international community coming together around this kind of aggression is an important signal to potential aggressors in the Pacific and, also, some of the economic measures that the United States and others have been willing to take to raise costs on Russia in this instance is also an important lesson.

Dr. DESJARLAIS. Okay. Admiral, on that same line, what can we do to learn from, if there were mistakes in Ukraine, what can we learn from that? And how can we better prepare deterrence to China from attacking Taiwan in terms of, what do you need for defense and what can we do better?

Admiral AQUILINO. Thanks, Congressman.

So, similar to what Secretary Ratner articulated, right, this is a real wakeup. There was some surprise over in Europe. I think that, number one, we have to look at this and say, hey, this could happen. And I have a sense of urgency to execute the missions the Secretary has assigned, which is to prevent this conflict.

But it just goes back to what we talked about before. So, there are some posture initiatives. We need to be more forward. We need to be more robust. So, the posture, positioning, and the credible capability forward is the best way today.

Dr. DESJARLAIS. Do we need to enhance their defense capabilities now?

Admiral AQUILINO. Absolutely, sir, in accordance with the Taiwan Relations Act, and that is something that we are doing at every opportunity.

Dr. DESJARLAIS. Okay. Admiral, let me finish with the disturbing aspects of China's modernization, and specifically, hypersonics. Going into the NDAA cycle, what do you need and what should we be focusing on in terms of research and development, in terms of us fielding both offensive and defensive hypersonic weapons and capabilities?

Admiral AQUILINO. So, the Guam defense system is the number one priority, as I have put forward in my unfunded list most recently, Congressman. That is on the defensive side.

But, to your point, right, in order to deter, there is both a defensive component and an offensive component. So, some of our long-range capabilities in the form of hypersonics are also critical to ensure that we have both of those capabilities to deter.

Dr. DESJARLAIS. Okay. I have just a few seconds. I will just note that my first question, Dr. Ratner, on what would it look like didn't get answered. And I understand that is a complicated question to answer, if a conflict did arise in Taiwan. But just to prepare our country for what it will look like, is the defense of Taiwan different than what we are doing for Ukraine?

Dr. RATNER. Yes, Mr. Congressman, I think it would be different.

Dr. DESJARLAIS. Okay. I will yield back.

Mr. LARSEN [presiding]. The gentleman yields back.

Before I recognize Representative Moulton, a reminder there is a vote on the floor of the House; 4,000 people left to vote. It is a

motion to adjourn. We will just continue through the vote, per the chair's instructions.

The chair recognizes Representative Moulton for 5 minutes.

Mr. MOULTON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Admiral Aquilino, do you agree with the Marine Corps expeditionary basing strategy to maintain pressure on China in the Pacific?

Admiral AQUILINO. Yes, Congressman, I do. So, as a part of deterrence against that competitor, it will take the entire joint force. I credit both the Commandant as well as the Chief of Staff of the Army to adjust their form, so the Marine littoral regiment concept to be able to be expeditionary, forward, and provide support from the land component—

Mr. MOULTON. Do you think the Navy has adequately resourced it?

Admiral AQUILINO. The Department of the Navy? I know the Commandant is moving very quickly. There are some capabilities we would like faster.

Mr. MOULTON. The Marine Corps would disagree. The Marine Corps feels that you don't have enough amphibious shipping devoted to this. And the reason is because, when the Navy does their planning for this, they have used a readiness factor of 80 percent availability. The Marine Corps looks at historic operational availability, which is more like 63 percent. I guess it has been about 43 percent, literally half the planning number that you used in the past year. So, I am not sure how we square the wheel here.

Admiral AQUILINO. Thanks, Congressman.

I will go back to the CNO and the Commandant and see where they believe they are. The initial setup of the littoral or the Marine littoral regiment is self-deployable via C-130 as they work through the—

[The information referred to can be found in the Appendix on page 123.]

Mr. MOULTON. I understand, Admiral.

Dr. Ratner, how do you plan to help resolve this disagreement? Because it is pretty fundamental. We don't need to leave Marines stranded on Pacific Islands because we don't have enough shipping.

Dr. RATNER. Yes, Congressman, it is an important point. I agree with Admiral Aquilino that these are important capabilities. I know they are beginning to stand up the first—

Mr. MOULTON. Yes, but my question is, how do you plan to resolve the dispute? This seems like a pretty fundamental disagreement if we don't have enough ships.

Dr. RATNER. I think, Congressman, I would be happy to get back to you in the context of the FY23 budget and the capabilities—

[The information referred to can be found in the Appendix on page 123.]

Mr. MOULTON. Okay.

Admiral Aquilino, just going back to you, 20 years ago, China had the largest land army in the world. It was a Cold War relic. And in fact, we barely paid it any mind because we weren't concerned about its effectiveness, and we probably took some solace in the fact that China was spending so much money to maintain it.

In the last decade and a half, they have radically transformed their military. And rather than making massive investments in a land army, they actually cut it. They are making massive investments in artificial intelligence, quantum computing, drones. If your kids have drones, they were probably invented and manufactured in China. They clearly lead us in a lot of these areas.

Do you believe that the Navy is transforming itself quickly enough to meet this rapidly transforming threat?

Admiral AQUILINO. Thanks, Congressman.

As I articulated before, I have a sense of urgency, and we absolutely need to move faster. I do believe the Navy has been focused on the PRC as the primary challenger, but there are some things that certainly could move faster.

Mr. MOULTON. Well, Admiral, I sincerely appreciate that answer, because I think there haven't been enough leaders like yourself in the Navy who have acknowledged that you really do need to move more quickly.

If the Chinese attack us with an AI [artificial intelligence]-enabled force, an autonomous weapon system of some sort, and we meet that with an American manned alternative, who do you expect to win? I know this is a highly theoretical question, but I am curious of your view on these—

Admiral AQUILINO. My view is the United States.

Mr. MOULTON. You are aware that, in a recent DARPA [Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency] simulation, an AI-enabled F-16 beat one of the Air Force's top F-16 pilots five to nothing? Now maybe Navy pilots are that much better, but that is not a good statistic.

Admiral AQUILINO. Yes, sir, I have heard of that, but I am unfamiliar with the details of the scenario or as it applied.

Mr. MOULTON. Well, I think we all need to be familiar with these details because this is the fight of the future. And if the Chinese beat us because they are more willing to invest in autonomous capabilities, and it proves that the autonomous capabilities are more effective than our manned force, as much as we love our manned force, we are going to be on the losing side of that equation.

Dr. Ratner, I am curious of your view on this situation, this matter.

Dr. RATNER. Yes, Congressman, I would just note that the Department in the FY22 [fiscal year 2022] budget made its largest ever investment in research and development and testing and evaluation on these advanced capabilities.

Just last month, in this area—

Mr. MOULTON. What percentage of the budget is that, Dr. Ratner?

Dr. RATNER. I don't know the percentage off the top of my head. I would be happy to get you that and—

Mr. MOULTON. It would be interesting to compare it to the percentage that China is investing in these capabilities, to understand if we are, in fact, transforming our force quickly enough.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. LARSEN. Thank you.

The chair recognizes for 5 minutes Representative Kelly of Mississippi.

Mr. KELLY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

My first question—and I was dealing with an approps [appropriations] bill today, and we are in March already—can you guys tell me the true impacts that these continuing CRs [continuing resolutions] that we do every time have had on your ability to maintain readiness? And what equipment do you have or don't have? Specifically, in this current fiscal year, what deprivations has it caused you?

Admiral AQUILINO. Thanks, Congressman.

So, in my statement I articulated the need for predictable and sustained budgets. Again, with China being a near-, mid-, and far-term problem, it is even more critical. There is a ton of loss of buying power as it applies to the CRs. Those impacts are well known.

From my perspective, though, it also prohibits any new starts. So, when I talk about the Guam defense system, Mission Partner Environment, and our ability to link our ranges, those are three top priorities that we are just unable to start on, based on that impact.

Mr. KELLY. And, General, real quickly?

General LACAMERA. It is the same, sir. I mean, we have had challenges with some maintenance issues, repair parts, and new starts.

Mr. KELLY. I am going to keep stomping my foot until some of these people around here listen to me and understand the disastrous consequences it has for our Department of Defense, especially, and all of our agencies, but especially the Department of Defense.

I want to talk a little bit about fleet management, and especially when we are talking about our merchant fleet and the ability to resupply in that region. Having flown and gone to that region, it is a long haul, which makes the logistical chain really, really tough.

What things, if you could ask, what do we need in our merchant fleet to get fuels, supplies, troops, equipment, all those things, to make sure that we can have a steady flow of equipment to maintain any type of defense, whether that be in Korea or in Taiwan or Japan, or any of our allies in the region?

Admiral AQUILINO. Thanks, Congressman.

Again, the distributed nature of the posture we are talking about, working with our allies and partners to be able to set up places that provide for exercise and interoperability, as well as logistic support, is critical across this broad area.

Additionally, on the airlift side, we need to ensure that we can both sustain it, refuel it, and keep it deliverable. Sealift, the TSP programs that Congressman Courtney talked about before was really a good first step, looking at the refueling piece. We need to look through that lens for all logistics capabilities.

Mr. KELLY. I think we have a tendency to hand-wave getting there, and a hand-wave—and, General, I am an Army guy. So, we always forget that we have to [inaudible] in the assembly area to get to the LD [line of departure], and we don't really plan on that. And then, we miss the LD by 2 hours because we didn't plan on that. And I think our logistical chain to that region specifically, guys, we have got to pay attention on the left side of war, not on the right side of war. Otherwise, we will find out what the Rus-

sians are finding out, a very hard way right now. People who win logistics win wars.

My next question is—and either of you all—do we have the right ships, and types of ships and numbers of ships, to do an Indo-Pacific plan? Do we have the right ships, combat ships, to execute this?

Admiral AQUILINO. As I said before, sir, absolutely. We have the right ships, but I am concerned about the growing capacity of the competitors in the region. So, we will have to continue to look at that.

Mr. KELLY. And then, I guess my final thing is, just double-tapping, Dr. Ratner, on Mr. Khanna, and we don't agree on a lot, but we do agree on this. We are a much better ally for India, and I hope the administration and everyone who is working—and I know they are—will work as hard as we can to convince them that we are their best ally, and we will be their friend in a time of need. And so, whatever we can do to hurry that along.

What other allies in the region, Admiral, are we not exercising that we could exercise better, that we could make a better ally? Whether that is Vietnam or the Philippines, that we used to have great relationships, not so much right now, what other countries in the region can we get some bang for?

Admiral AQUILINO. Congressman, thanks.

You know, we engage with all of them. But, clearly, really, we ought to focus or put specific focus on the five mutual defense treaty alliances. We are doing a lot with those teams, right? Those are relationships that are critically important, as well as the other multinational relationships that are in a region. So, we work with ASEAN, much trilateral relationship with the U.S.-Japan-Korean is extremely important, as we have identified the Quad and AUKUS. So, continuing to strengthen those and looking for others.

Mr. CHAIRMAN. The gentleman's time has expired.

Mrs. Luria is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. LURIA. Well, thank you.

I will start with Admiral Aquilino. My first series of questions is really rapid-fire, short-answer questions, because I want to be able to spend the most time on the last question.

So, yesterday, the Director of National Intelligence testified that Russia does not want a direct conflict with the United States. So, in your opinion, if Ukraine was a NATO member, do you think Russia would have attacked Ukraine?

Admiral AQUILINO. Congresswoman, again, I think that is a better question for General Wolters, as it is out of my AOR [area of responsibility].

Mrs. LURIA. Okay. So, then, this is not necessarily an opinion question, but does the President have the authority to put service members on the ground in Ukraine or establish a no-fly zone without coming to Congress for authorization?

Admiral AQUILINO. Again, Congressman, some of that is a policy issue, but I would defer that to General Wolters.

Mrs. LURIA. Okay. In your military opinion, is it easier to repel or stop an invasion in progress, rather than to come back later and try to expel an occupying force?

Admiral AQUILINO. Boy, I wish I could give you a yes or no. This one is really complex, right—the environment, the adversary, the capabilities. I will tell you my opinion is it would be very difficult to remove a force.

Mrs. LURIA. Okay. And do you think that China wants a direct conflict with the United States?

Admiral AQUILINO. Everything that has been articulated by China is that they would prefer, or that they are working towards, a peaceful resolution across the strait. That said, I also believe they said they haven't ruled out the use of force. And again, while I don't have the ability to inject their calculus, my task has been to be ready, should they choose the latter.

Mrs. LURIA. Okay. And so, with regards to Taiwan, does the ability to act quickly to deter an invasion make a difference to you, as the combatant commander?

Admiral AQUILINO. It absolutely does, which is why the posture that we have talked about is so important for forces in the region.

Mrs. LURIA. So, if China invaded Taiwan, how long do you think Congress would take to authorize the use of military force? And put that in the context of it is 140 nautical miles across the strait. Do you think they could do it within the time necessary for you to react?

Admiral AQUILINO. Congresswoman, again, I never would volley a question to the chairman. But, based on that question, on how fast Congress would react, I—

Mrs. LURIA. Okay. In my estimate, in my 3-plus years here, I think we could not act that quickly.

So, do you think China believes that the United States will defend Taiwan with U.S. forces, if they were to use force against Taiwan?

Admiral AQUILINO. I think I would take that for a classified conversation.

Mrs. LURIA. Okay. So, under the Taiwan Relations Act and the War Powers Act, does the President have the authority to intervene with U.S. forces, if it happened today, during an invasion of Taiwan, without seeking the authorization of Congress?

Admiral AQUILINO. I am going to defer that one as a policy question to Secretary Ratner.

[The information referred to can be found in the Appendix on page 124.]

Mrs. LURIA. Okay. Well, perhaps we can follow up on that because I wanted to get to sort of the last part of this.

So, this has been a debate that I think has been elevated recently. So, if the United States changed its policy of strategic ambiguity towards Taiwan to a policy of strategic clarity, and guaranteed that it would come to the defense of Taiwan to maintain the status quo, would this be a deterrent to China?

Admiral AQUILINO. I think, as this conversation continues, if I were to look at the alternative between strategic ambiguity and strategic clarity, there are some who believe it would be a deterrent and there are some that will believe it would be an accelerant. I think it is worthwhile of a deep, thoughtful conversation, as we look at that option. I think there are pros and cons to both, but we ought to look very closely.

Mrs. LURIA. Okay. And then, I know you didn't fully answer the earlier question, and this was the part I wanted to get to. If China thinks that the United States will come to the defense of Taiwan—and you described there are sort of two camps in the strategic clarity/strategic ambiguity—can you explain like why would it be viewed as a provocative act for us to just be clear, to provide clarity, to say that the United States will come to the defense of Taiwan to maintain the status quo? Can you explain the people who would see it as provocative, that camp and their thought process?

Admiral AQUILINO. I would say that, based on the One China policy, and the PRC's articulation of the importance, in the academic world, any movement towards the independence of Taiwan would be viewed very strongly by the PRC.

Mrs. LURIA. Okay. Well, I just want to reiterate in my last few seconds I think this is a very important debate. I think it is a debate that we need to be having now, because, as I highlighted, the shortness of distance—

The CHAIRMAN. The gentlelady's time has expired.

Mr. Gallagher is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GALLAGHER. Admiral Aquilino, if the President came to you and said, "You know, [inaudible], my top national security concern is preventing a PLA invasion of Taiwan, and I think it is going to happen in the next 5 years, but I am having trouble understanding how and whether the bureaucracy is executing my top priority. So, I need your help developing some metrics to help me understand if we are making progress, things that I could ask every morning when I get the PDB [President's Daily Brief], whether we are doing X, Y, and Z," what would those top measurable metrics be? What would you recommend the President do in that scenario?

Admiral AQUILINO. Congressman, thanks. Boy, that is really complex and we try to do it all the time, right? The assessment of where you sit is really complex, and there is a ton of variables.

First, I would articulate, are we postured in the right places with the right credible force to be able to respond quickly, and then, to dominate in all those domains? So, I would kind of do that type of measurement.

Mr. GALLAGHER. But things we can measure. I mean, I am talking—it doesn't need to be complex. It could be missiles; it could be ships; it could be Taiwan's own investments. What are the most important things the President needs to be tracking to gauge our progress on deterring a PLA invasion of Taiwan?

Admiral AQUILINO. Again, I don't want to make it—well, first of all, it is really complex, as I see it, right? I just can't say, "X missiles compared to Y missiles, and we are good," right? It is the capability of those missiles. It is the survivability. It is the ability to get to where they need to go to launch. It is the ability to understand the target sets that you are going after.

So, that is why I go back to, it would be a comparison of how do I execute compared to the challenge in each domain would give me a decent sense, and we try to do that all the time.

Mr. GALLAGHER. Well, you mentioned, your first response was basing or access. Could you talk, then, a little bit about it? I mean, as I look at your AOR, I see a lot of U.S.-flag possessions—Midway, Wake, territories of American Samoa, Northern Marianas. If we

were to invest in hardening these possessions and territories, how would that contribute to your ability to deter a PLA invasion of Taiwan?

Admiral AQUILINO. Yeah, it would absolutely allow us to both move further forward, right, west of the International Date Line—I have to be in place with the right capabilities to be effective. Second, it gets to the agile logistics piece that many of the members brought up, right—the ability to sustain forward such a long way from home.

And it is one of our asymmetric advantages. We are seeing it play in the Ukraine, right? There is nobody else in the world that can do what we have done. If you look at what would happen in the Middle East, it is a critical advantage, and we have to continue to mold it. That posture directly contributes to that.

Mr. GALLAGHER. Well, you see, we started to simplify a complex reality. Because, presumably, we in DOD and the President could measure the extent to which we are hardening our existing possessions or getting access agreements where we don't currently have them. And in terms of that latter issue, what is at the top of your priority list in terms of where you need access that we don't currently have?

Admiral AQUILINO. It is not necessarily where we don't have; it is where we might want to expand. Again, I start with the five treaty allies, which are critically important. So, Japan, we are in a very good place with Japan, and we have to maintain those places. The Philippines, critically strategic terrain, and we need to expand in the Philippines. We are expanding in Australia, as Secretary Ratner talked about. Thailand, also important; we have logistic support there from our ally.

New places. India, we are working towards logistic support in India and additional cooperation that has been articulated. Singapore, we have three ships there and a logistics site. So, to continue to sustain those and expand is the focus.

Mr. GALLAGHER. I think another thing we could measure, quite easily actually, is what the Taiwans are buying and investing in. We talked a little bit about asymmetric defense. Two questions: What do you want them to buy, and would a security assistance program, similar to what we have in Ukraine, beyond foreign military sales, help you accomplish your mission of defending Taiwan from a PLA invasion?

Admiral AQUILINO. Yes, sir. And, first, I left out Korea before—only because I don't want to step on my buddy General LaCamera's toes, but a critical treaty ally.

On the capability piece, I'm truly encouraged, right? The people of Taiwan bought 100 Harpoon systems. The focus there, we need to get them there quickly.

The other capabilities that Secretary Ratner talked about, we need to make sure we have programs and ability. Whatever mechanisms that can be delivered to produce those and deliver them more quickly under the current environment would be helpful.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman's time has expired.

Mr. Kahele is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. KAHELE. Mahalo, Mr. Chairman, and Dr. Ratner, Admiral Aquilino, General LaCamera, for appearing here today.

I would like to thank, personally, Admiral Aquilino for calling me 2 days ago to share the decision by Secretary Austin to defuel and permanently shut down the Red Hill Bulk Fuel Storage Facility in Hawaii.

Admiral Aquilino, real simple, do I have your commitment to work with myself and the Hawaii congressional delegation to ensure that Red Hill is safely defueled within the timeline set forth by Secretary Austin?

Admiral AQUILINO. Yes, Congressman.

Mr. KAHELE. Thank you for that commitment.

I would like to jump now, Admiral Aquilino, to your testimony, specifically, developing regional partnerships. You just answered a question from my colleague about sustaining that posture forward. And I understand you were just in Palau earlier this year. As you know, Compact negotiations with Palau and our other Freely Associated States and our allies there have stagnated. These nations are a critical part of U.S. national security policy, and our Compacts with them address economic assistance very important to these nations. Continuing that assistance is not only important as a national security matter, in light of the region's competing geopolitical realities, but also as a moral matter, in light of our shared history and the continued role that these nations continue to play in our national defense.

So, Admiral Aquilino, given Palau's strategic importance to our country, how important is it that these agreements are expeditiously completed before they expire? And secondly, what is the DOD's position on investing in their critical infrastructure, such as the Compact Road, which has fallen into disrepair?

Admiral AQUILINO. Thanks, Congressman.

As you and I have talked about before, the agreement or the Compact of the free association team is really important. I do want to highlight that the lead for that event is the State Department, and supported by Department of the Interior. It has got a DOD representative on it.

But it is critical. These are areas that we have deep people-to-people ties, and we are responsible for the defense of those nations. So, we need to work through these. They become—renegotiation needs to be done in 2023. DOD is supporting that event, but it would be critical to get those agreements worked through as soon as possible.

Mr. KAHELE. Any thoughts on the investment in critical infrastructure? Is it advisable to improve runways in Palau, in Peleliu, in Angaur, as well as their very, very important deepwater seaport for the U.S. military?

Admiral AQUILINO. Absolutely. And as a part of the posture improvements and distribution we have talked about, there are many of those that are on our list. Matter of fact, the Marine Corps, along with the Navy Seabees, actually extended one of runways in Palau, based on our own capabilities to start some of that work. So, some of it is in MILCON [military construction]; others we can do with other funds appropriated. And we continue to work to improve those places.

Mr. KAHELE. Thank you for that answer.

Dr. Ratner, the White House's 2022 Indo-Pacific Strategy document highlights the importance of building connections within and beyond the region through people-to-people exchanges. What are some of the soft power support systems and institutions that can help support this INDOPACOM national security requirement?

Dr. RATNER. Thank you, Congressman.

I would defer to the State Department and other agencies on specific programs, but we are certainly looking to build economic linkages, people-to-people linkages, youth exchanges, and other areas.

Mr. KAHELE. You know, in Hawaii, Dr. Ratner, the East-West Center is uniquely postured to expand exactly what you talked about, the people-to-people exchanges that are necessary to build capacity and expertise in the region and its challenges. Do you believe that the DOD can dedicate more resources to these types of professional exchanges, and that within the Pacific Island region, that this would be warranted?

Dr. RATNER. Congressman, I would be happy to get back to you specifically on the resourcing question. But, as a matter of policy and strategy, it is certainly in our interest to strengthen and maintain those types of relationships.

[The information referred to can be found in the Appendix on page 124.]

Mr. KAHELE. All right. Thank you and mahalo.

Chair, I yield back the balance of my time.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Mr. Wilson is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. WILSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And everyone, thank you for your service and dedication.

Dr. Ratner, I am very concerned as a friend of India. India is the world's largest democracy. America is the oldest democracy. My father served there in the Flying Tigers during World War II. So, I developed a great fondness for the people of India, the success of Indian-Americans. And so, it has become shocking that such a great country has abstained on the issues of the mass murder in Ukraine.

And I am concerned. A lot of this is because of foreign military sales and the different technicalities and whatever. What is being done to address issues to make sure, as has already been previously brought up by Democrats and Republicans of their fondness for India, that we are not their main support of military, which is in the interest of the people of India and the people of the Indo-Pacific.

Dr. RATNER. Congressman Wilson, we have had a chance to talk about this a little bit this morning. My response would be that I share your view of the importance of the U.S.-India relationship 100 percent. And we understand and recognize that they have a long, complicated history and security partnership with the Russians, but that they have been systematically diversifying away from that. And we have been engaging with them on that question, looking for them to purchase more U.S. systems, more European systems, and develop their own indigenous capabilities as well. And I think the trendlines are moving in the right direction.

Mr. WILSON. And it just seems so unnatural. The relationship with Prime Minister Narendra Modi should be with the United

States, not in any way associated by way of abstention with a megalomaniac, Putin, in Putin's war. Again, I saw our colleagues, Democrats and Republicans, appalled that there would be abstention by the great country of India.

Additionally, I appreciate the questions from Congressman Gallagher concerning the defense of Taiwan. My father served, Flying Tigers, in Kunming, Chengdu, Zhejiang, and had a great affection for the people of China. And out of that, I have such an appreciation. And my concern is for Chinese lives, Taiwanese lives. We have got to build up the defenses. I like the concept of a porcupine—that it would just be not in the interest of the CCP [Chinese Communist Party] to attack Taiwan.

And he was talking about the different levels of equipment, and you did, too. And I appreciate that which is being purchased. Should we also look into a lend-lease, just as America provided lend-lease to stop the Nazis' siege of Leningrad, which was successful for the people of Russia—that some of them have forgotten—but a lend-lease, as being proposed for Ukraine to defend Kyiv from Russian or Putin aggression? Should we look for lend-lease to expedite the providing of military equipment to Taiwan?

Dr. RATNER. Congressman, we are currently in the process of evaluating all tools and authorities possible to expedite the provision of the necessary asymmetric capabilities to the Taiwans, precisely to reinforce the kind of deterrence that you are talking about.

Mr. WILSON. And, General LaCamera, I had the extraordinary opportunity, due to Congressman Curt Weldon, in 2003. I am the only person left who had been on that delegation to DPRK, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, North Korea, to Pyongyang.

And the comparison of Seoul, if you ever want the greatest comparison between free market capitalism and socialist totalitarianism, obviously, it is the Korean Peninsula. Gosh, the success of South Korea. But I saw the Potemkin village, sadly, the horror of people subject to totalitarianism. And, of course, this is a dictatorship that had been set up for the Kim family by Joseph Stalin, and now we are in the third generation.

I share the concern of Congressman Turner and others about the artillery capability, particularly against Seoul. And how could this be addressed?

General LACAMERA. Well, thanks, Congressman.

Part of it will be addressed in close air support, if the fight kicks off, and how we would strike against it. But he has not just got the long-range artillery; he is developing other capabilities that give them really a 360-threat to the peninsula right now, which is concerning.

Mr. WILSON. And I share the concern about the great territory of Guam. So, please, every way you can—

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman's time has expired.

Mr. WILSON. Thank you. I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Gallego is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GALLEGO. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you to our witnesses for joining us today.

My question is for Mr. Ratner—Dr. Ratner, I should say. In your written remarks, you largely touch on the conventional capabilities

that China is developing. But I have increasing concern about the threat in the gray zone. If we draw any lessons from the ongoing war in Ukraine, it is that we need to ensure allies and partners are too prickly for an adversary or competitor to swallow. And I would kind of discuss this about irregular warfare, and I think it is very crucial training.

Do you believe the Department has the authorities, though, it needs for special operations forces to collaborate with allies and partners in irregular warfare? And where can we further deepen or expand irregular warfare programs with allied partners and forces in the Indo-Pacific?

Dr. RATNER. Congressman, maybe I will defer to Admiral Aquilino to talk a little bit about some of the work we are doing with partners currently in the region.

Admiral AQUILINO. Yeah. Thanks, Congressman.

As you know, we do many JCETs [Joint Combined Exchange Trainings]. The Special Operations Command is extremely valuable. The SOCPAC [Special Operations Command Pacific] commander is in many, many countries working to improve training capability and to support their special operations forces. At this point, I don't believe I need additional authorities.

Mr. GALLEGGO. Okay. So, you don't believe you need additional authorities? Well, just to be more specific, do we have the authority or the capability for us to do joint training with Vietnam, for example?

Admiral AQUILINO. We do, to do our JCETs exercises and training, absolutely.

Mr. GALLEGGO. Okay. Admiral, you describe the Seize the Initiative as the first step in building enduring advantages. And I would argue the maintaining of robust defense intelligence posture in the Indo-Pacific region must be one of those priorities. I look forward to leading a CODEL [congressional delegation] to the region next month to conduct oversight of defense intelligence equities. To the extent that you can share your perspective in this unclassified forum, what do you see as the biggest intelligence gaps in the region? And what steps should we take to deepen intelligence cooperation with allies and partners from Northeast Asia to the Freely Associated States?

Admiral AQUILINO. Thanks, Congressman. I hope you will come through Hawaii on your travel, and I look forward to meeting you and hosting you in person.

Obviously, as I talked about before, this persistent battlespace awareness is enabled by an all-domain ISR. And from what we have watched over the past 20 years, we never have enough. So, any capabilities—whether they be current, terrestrial, undersea, on the sea, above the sea, in space, or cyberspace—that delivers that persistent battlespace awareness are desirable.

Mr. GALLEGGO. Okay. Thank you, Admiral.

And then, General, I wanted to ask you about the Pacific Deterrence Initiative. As you know, this effort is designed to strengthen our presence in a region, our infrastructure, and our logistics and maintenance capabilities. It also is meant to enhance our exercise and security cooperation. How do you envision United States Forces Korea contributing to this initiative? And what role do you

think the Republic of Korea itself can play in furthering the goals of PDI?

General LACAMERA. Thank you, Congressman.

Our contribution or the PDI for the defense of the Korean Peninsula, for me, is our ability to train with allies and partners. We have talked about Cobra Gold, Balikatan, Talisman Sabre, RIMPAC, and our ability or my ability to get Korean forces and U.S. forces integrated as a combined element working with our allies and partners in the region.

Mr. GALLEGO. Excellent. Thank you.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back my time.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Waltz is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. WALTZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I would like to submit for the record a letter from the committee noting its concern about the lack of progress in the negotiations with Micronesia, Marshall Islands, the Republic of Palau, and the renewal of the Compacts of Free Association, particularly that there has not been a negotiator named yet. And we have had a lot of discussion about how critical that is to you, Admiral Aquilino and Dr. Ratner. But where is the negotiator? This is, obviously, a joint effort with Commerce and Interior and the Department. This is a letter to the White House, to the President, I would like to submit for the record, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Hearing no objection, so ordered.

[The information referred to can be found in the Appendix on page 117.]

Mr. WALTZ. Thank you.

General LaCamera, let me just—we have had a lot of discussion about allies, and I think we are moving in the right direction; I am worried we are not moving in the right direction fast enough.

The threat briefs in terms of what China is prepared to do, and overlaid with our pathway to get there to deter it, are off in terms of the timeline. But, in the event of a conflict, General, what is the government of South Korea—and I understand the votes are being counted, but, generally speaking, they have had a common position—is the government of South Korea prepared to allow U.S. forces to operate from South Korean territory in the defense of Taiwan, in your opinion?

General LACAMERA. I think it would depend on if there was a threat to the Korean Peninsula.

Mr. WALTZ. So, minus a threat to the Korean Peninsula, a threat to Taiwan, which would probably necessitate, from the Chinese perspective, attacks on Japan, are we going to be able to use those forces, 30,000 that are there, plus the associated air assets, from South Korean territory?

General LACAMERA. Well, Congressman, my best military advice would be, what is the threat to the Korean Peninsula and what can we afford? You know, we still require combat power to secure the peninsula. So, I think it would be a discussion with the South Korean government, with Admiral Aquilino, with the Secretary of Defense, on what our obligations are on the peninsula and what is needed for the Taiwan fight.

Mr. WALTZ. It sounds like a non-answer, General.

General LACAMERA. To me, it is a hypothetical. I don't know the incoming government, what——

Mr. WALTZ. Are we incorporating into our planning use of those forces, potentially, obviously with the acquiesce of the South Korean government?

General LACAMERA. Are we?

Mr. WALTZ. Uh-hum.

General LACAMERA. I have not been told——

Mr. WALTZ. Can Admiral Aquilino count on your forces in the case of that fight, when we are talking about forces forward?

General LACAMERA. Admiral Aquilino can count on me to execute my mission of protecting the Korean Peninsula.

Mr. WALTZ. Yes.

Dr. RATNER. Congressman, I would recommend taking this into a classified setting. I think we could give you a more fulsome answer to that question.

Mr. WALTZ. Okay. That would be great, and I wish we could have talked about that yesterday. However, I do think that we do need to take a public posture and with the new South Korean government on what we are prepared to do, and what they are prepared to do.

And an associated question there is, is China going to lean on the North Korean government to ramp up tensions and to tie those forces down in a Taiwan Strait scenario?

Dr. Ratner, we talked about Harpoons, and currently, the Harpoons are due to be delivered 2025, I believe. Is that sufficient? I mean, by the time they are delivered, and then, they actually have the training and the operational capability, we are looking at 2026, 2027 to have a full capability? Is that sufficient? And what is the Department going to do to accelerate that timeline?

Dr. RATNER. Congressman, I wish they were arriving there yesterday. So, I think as soon as we could get them there is better. And I can assure you we are turning over every rock to see how we can accelerate the provision of these capabilities.

Mr. WALTZ. Okay.

Dr. RATNER. We have dedicated personnel working across the Department, across the Security Cooperation department, and in discussions with partners about how we might be able to do that.

Mr. WALTZ. How can this committee help you do that?

Dr. RATNER. I will get back to you on that, Congressman.

Mr. WALTZ. Okay. Taiwanese need Harpoons.

Dr. RATNER. Yes.

Mr. WALTZ. As you said, yesterday, I agree. The Ukrainians needed Harpoons. That would have made a big difference in the defense of Odessa and Mariupol right now. We didn't, I don't think, do what we could to get those to them, and we are seeing the ramifications of that. I would hate to be having this conversation in 2025 or 2026——

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman's time has expired.

Mr. WALTZ. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Ms. Slotkin is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. SLOTKIN. Great.

Thank you, gentlemen. And sorry that we have been coming in and out with votes.

You know, I was in Taiwan over Thanksgiving. You guys have sponsored some really useful classified briefings and tabletop exercises that I have participated in. And it just keeps coming to me clearer and clearer that, while we have military options, and it is our job to prepare to counter China when, and if, we ever, God forbid, have a conflict, that we are just not using the other levers of American power; namely, economic power, our cultural power, just a whole bunch of other things.

And I don't want the Pentagon to feel like they are the lead foot in the debate and the engagement with China. So, tell me, when are we going to have a strategy that you all can fit under?

Dr. Ratner, help us understand how we are going to leverage the other things. Because, as you have seen, we are watching things play out with Russia right now in Ukraine. No one wants to see Taiwan be the next Ukraine, but it is not just about you all and the stick. So, what is the plan and the strategy?

Dr. RATNER. Yes, Congresswoman, I fully agree with you that this needs to be a whole-of-government approach. And I think, as Beijing is looking at the crisis in Ukraine, the conflict in Ukraine, it is important that they are seeing the kinds of economic measures that the United States is taking and the degree to which our diplomatic and economic and military actions are being done in concert with such a large group of countries from around the world. So, I fully agree that the full toolkit should be brought to bear here.

Ms. SLOTKIN. But we are going to see it, we're going to see the strategy and it is going to lay it out, and it is going to be—I mean, we had a whole strategy around the Soviet Union, right? Containment was our whole-of-government strategy, and the Defense Department was part of it, but it wasn't the only part. I am looking for that equivalent strategy on China. The country is looking for that equivalent strategy on China. I represent autoworkers that have been laid off for the better part of the last year because of a 14 cent microchip that they can't get. So, when are we going to see the global strategy that we are going to understand, simple, about what our plan is vis-a-vis China?

Dr. RATNER. So, my hope, Congresswoman Slotkin, is that the National Security Strategy will be out before too long. That is, obviously, not something that the Defense Department can control, and the National Defense Strategy as well will provide both the public and a classified version of how we are getting after this particular challenge.

Ms. SLOTKIN. Okay.

Dr. RATNER. There are other efforts underway along the lines of what you are describing that are currently classified, and we can speak about in a different setting.

Ms. SLOTKIN. Okay. Yeah, I would just say that the public strategy—the public needs to understand this issue, right? They are watching what is going on in Russia-Ukraine and wondering when is the next shoe going to drop with China and are we prepared.

To that end, we know that cyberattacks, attacks on our infrastructure, that those kinds of sort of short-of-traditional-conventional-war steps are things that we just have to assume the Chinese are thinking about, if we get into conflict. And the average American has been on the receiving end of some kind of ransom-

ware attack, cyberattack, and they don't understand what the government is doing to protect them. I know that is largely Homeland Security, but can you talk about cyber threats from China and what we are doing, in an unclassified setting, I know, to show the American people that we are protecting them when they are on the front lines?

Admiral AQUILINO. Thanks, Congresswoman.

So, that responsibility, as it applies to DOD, is in CYBERCOM [Cyber Command] Commander General Nakasone, and he is a great partner that we coordinate with all the time. So, for the DOD critical infrastructure, he is taking steps and he has got teams every day watching the defense of the global information grid and to ensure militarily. And as you articulated, the civilian aspect of that is done via Homeland Security.

Ms. SLOTKIN. Right. So, I would offer—because I understand that is not your mission, right? But it is going to be part of warfare; it is already part of warfare. And we are the Defense Department here. We are the Armed Services Committee. So, I would offer I would love to see a briefing on this, classified or unclassified, with the Department of Homeland Security sitting right next to you all. It probably wouldn't hurt to get the State Department in there. But something that shows the American people that, while we know we are the best fighting force in the world and we are going to kick some butt abroad, we are also coordinated when it comes to protecting back home. Just a gratuitous comment.

But, with that, I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Mr. Banks is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BANKS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I apologize, I had to step out to go cast a procedural vote. So, I missed a little bit of the testimony so far today.

But I did want to ask, immediately, Dr. Ratner, it seems that we have established today that the threat of a Chinese invasion into Taiwan is more than ever before. I mean, is that fair to say?

Dr. RATNER. I think there is a mounting threat of aggression from the PRC.

Mr. BANKS. More than before? More than ever before?

Dr. RATNER. With the capability that they have today, yes.

Mr. BANKS. Yes, that is the message today, more than ever—

Dr. RATNER. They have conducted acts of aggression in the past. So, I wouldn't say, "more than ever before."

Mr. BANKS. More than in recent years?

Dr. RATNER. Yes.

Mr. BANKS. Okay.

Dr. RATNER. The threat is—

Mr. BANKS. Fair enough.

Admiral, would you say that Taiwan is safer in 2022 than, say, just pulling something out of the hat, summer of 2019?

Admiral AQUILINO. Congressman, thanks.

I think they are seeing exactly what we are seeing, which is this increased aggression. I don't know how to measure whether they are safer or not. I think there is a growing concern, based on what they have watched the PRC execute over the last number of years.

Mr. BANKS. But we are here today because this increased aggression has—it is increasing; it is growing. It is more of a threat than it was before.

In August 2019, Jake Sullivan debated Michael Pillsbury from the Hudson Institute and he said, quote, “When it comes to the issue of Taiwan, 30 months into the Trump administration, it is more likely for the U.S. to be dragged into a war with China than 30 months ago. The Trump policy toward China is fundamentally not productive.” End quote.

Today, coincidentally, we are 14 months into the Biden administration, of which Mr. Sullivan is acting as President Biden’s National Security Advisor. Admiral, are we less likely today to be dragged into a war with China over Taiwan as compared to 2019?

Admiral AQUILINO. Sir, once again, I see increasing desire to build up and continue to grow their military capabilities. President Xi Jinping, in a public statement, said he wanted his forces modernized by 2027, but he didn’t articulate what he would do with them or when he would do it. But, from where I sit, my responsibility is to ensure we are ready, should that occur.

Mr. BANKS. So, Dr. Ratner, what has changed? What has changed between the summer of 2019 and where we sit today? What is the fundamental difference in our foreign policy today that has led to an increased aggression, as the Admiral defined it, in China’s posture toward Taiwan? What is different? Why now?

Dr. RATNER. Congressman, I don’t attribute Xi Jinping’s growing aggression and assertiveness to the United States.

Mr. BANKS. You don’t? Okay. Well, what has changed? What has changed? Why now? Why not then, if it doesn’t have anything to do with the United States?

Dr. RATNER. I would be happy to share that assessment in a classified setting. His capabilities are growing and his patience seems to be decreasing.

Mr. BANKS. But you don’t have an explanation for the American people about why?

Admiral AQUILINO. Well, if I could jump in, Congressman?

Mr. BANKS. Admiral, please.

Admiral AQUILINO. So, again, this is about what the PRC has done, not what anyone else has done, right? They have taken lives on the Indian Line of Actual Control. They have discounted their agreement as it applied to Hong Kong. They have locked up a million Muslims in Xinjiang. So, their actions, the PRC actions—not U.S. actions, not any other nation’s actions—are the things that give us concern. I think that is what you were getting to.

Mr. BANKS. What I am getting at is that Jake Sullivan said that this was more likely to happen on Donald Trump’s watch because of Donald Trump’s foreign policy. But, instead, Dr. Ratner, you conceded that the threat is more real today than it has been at any point in recent years.

Let me move on.

Dr. RATNER. And it will be, it will be, regardless of—

Mr. BANKS. Let me move on. North Korea restarted missile tests in 2021 after a 4-year pause in testing. In 2022, North Korea conducted a record number of missile tests. Last Saturday, it conducted the ninth missile test this year. In addition, recent satellite

images have shown North Korea seems to be building up nuclear testing. General, what factors do you think led North Korea to resume these provocative behaviors since 2021, after a rather long hiatus?

General LACAMERA. KJU [Kim Jong-un] claims it is because of sanctions and that we haven't come to the table. I think it is more internal for him. I think it is fairly complicated when you think of the Moon administration is on a transition. And I think, as we just talked about with China, I think he defers to China, but he is also looking for it to be autonomous. So, while this threat is to the south and to the U.S.—

[The information is classified and retained in the committee files.]

The CHAIRMAN. I am sorry, but the gentleman's time has expired. Mr. Panetta is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. PANETTA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate that.

Gentlemen, obviously, thanks to all three of you for being here and appreciate your patience, as well as your testimony and the information you are providing us.

The other night I had a good conversation with a representative of Taiwan. And obviously, we were talking about Ukraine, and we were talking about how inspired we are by the Ukrainian people and how their population is all in on this, obviously.

Obviously, then, that pivoted to the people of Taiwan and talking about the national guard and the conscription services that they have there. Obviously, that is something that I think is going to play an important part, if there is any sort of invasion by the PRC.

That being said, is there anything that we can do, is there anything that the Taiwanese should do, in order to increase the capacity, increase the will of the national guard or those who are under conscription service in regards to what they can do to be more involved in their service or in their will to respond to a PRC attack?

Admiral AQUILINO. Thanks, Congressman.

I believe—well, I know for a fact—that this is an initiative that is being developed and implemented to ensure that there is a robust, whether you want to call it national guard, reserve force, or capability outside of the uniformed service to be able to defend their nation. So, it is very important, and they are working diligently to develop that system.

Mr. PANETTA. Are we involved in any way in helping them in that?

Admiral AQUILINO. As a part of the Taiwan Relations Act, we contribute to the support of their defense, and that includes both weapons, via FMS [foreign military sales] capabilities that we've talked about, but also through services and training, yes.

Mr. PANETTA. Great. Thank you.

And, Admiral, you talked about—and I think it was in your questioning, in the question and answers to the chairman—you said, number one, we need a more integrated and sustainable ISR. Go into that a little bit, please. And how can we create a more robust exchange of our ISR with our allies?

Admiral AQUILINO. Yeah, thanks, Congressman.

Again, this persistent understanding in real time of the battlespace is critical, via contributions from all domains, with the ability

to share it with our allies and partners through what I articulated through this Mission Partners Environment. My number two funding priority, as you should have seen in my unfunded list. When you combine those together, those deliver a very strong capability, as it applies to both deterrence, and then, should deterrence fail, to be able to fight and win.

Mr. PANETTA. Dr. Ratner, anything to say on that?

Dr. RATNER. Nothing to add. I support exactly what Admiral Aquilino articulated.

Mr. PANETTA. [Inaudible].

Gentlemen, moving on to the violent extremist [VE] threat in the Philippines and in Indonesia, after our withdrawal from Afghanistan, did we see any uptick in either rhetoric or in capabilities by any VE groups in that area? And then, subsequent to that, can you give an assessment of the VE groups at this point?

Admiral AQUILINO. Thanks, Congressman.

As you articulated, specifically, in the southern Philippines, where we have helped our partner nation there to ensure they don't have a terrorist problem, those efforts continue, but I have not seen an uptick since the recent decision to depart Afghanistan.

That said, we are concerned about foreign fighter flow. The SOCPAC Commander has been tasked to ensure that we maintain vigilance, but I haven't seen a change as of now.

Mr. PANETTA. Thank you. And in Indonesia, anything, Admiral?

Admiral AQUILINO. Again, it is the area; we are always concerned about any increase in violent extremist organizations, and we continue to work with the Indonesians and support them, as they also watch this issue.

Mr. PANETTA. Great. Thank you. Gentlemen, thank you.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Ms. HOULAHAN [presiding]. The chair now recognizes Mr. Johnson for his 5 minutes.

Mr. JOHNSON. Thank you, Madam Chair.

And thank you all for being here.

In 2019, the U.S. Transportation Command conducted a no-notice readiness exercise to test the organic surge fleet capacity to quickly mobilize for war. Out of 61 ships, just 27 were ready for sea after 120 hours. These vessels are over 40 years old and readiness rates are likely declining further as they age, obviously.

Previously, the Department has indicated that it plans to rely on contract shipping to supplement logistics needs. So, the question is, do you think that international shipping companies now will risk access to the Chinese market to support the United States in a conflict? I suppose that is for Dr. Ratner.

Admiral AQUILINO. Congressman, this is Admiral Aquilino. If I could throw in here first.

Mr. JOHNSON. Sure.

Admiral AQUILINO. First of all, I thanked Congressman Courtney and the committee for the support to the TSP program. Completely effective.

I also endorse General Van Ovost's and Admiral Mewbourne's ability to go ahead and prove to us whether or not the system can respond. I think we highlighted some challenges that we have to fix. In my conversations with the CNO, he is working towards in-

creased sealift, the sustainability of the readiness. But all of those that come together help us to realize the distributed nature and the agile logistics that we need.

So, I don't know if I want to go hypothetically at your question. What I would say is we are doing the right things to ensure that those capabilities are ready/available when we need them.

Mr. JOHNSON. That is good.

Dr. Ratner, would you add anything to that?

Dr. RATNER. I would just say, Congressman, we have received a number of questions during the hearing today, and yesterday in the classified setting, about these questions of logistics and contested logistics. It is an area of focus for the Department and one that you will be seeing reflected in both the National Defense Strategy and the FY23 budget.

Mr. JOHNSON. Very good.

Let me move on to something else. And I suppose any of the three of you could respond to this.

But each of us, we all regularly see now the condemnation of Putin by Western governments in the media certainly now, but our exposure to the perspectives of the Indo-Pacific nations is more limited here. So, do you have insights for us on how Putin's invasion of Ukraine has affected Indo-Pacific perspectives on the American-led international order and the West's resolve to confront aggression in the Pacific? And I am chiefly interested in the nations of India, Thailand, Vietnam, and other developing partners, but, also, obviously, would love to hear about our treaty allies, South Korea and the Philippines.

And I apologize if you all tread some of this ground already. Many of us have multiple hearings this morning. So, we are bouncing in and out.

But would any of you want to jump in on that?

Admiral AQUILINO. Yes, Congressman, I would.

Again, I can't tell you at this point what the PRC has learned from watching the European issue. But what I would say is, I think I am seeing the right lessons that we would like to learn. Number one, you know, the investment of blood in order to prosecute this illegal event. Second, the international condemnation and the unwillingness to accept it. And third, the drastic economic impacts to the people. Those are the right lessons, should this switch over to the Indo-Pacific region. And I think I would leave it there.

General LACAMERA. Yes, Congressman, General LaCamera.

I can tell you that Ukraine asked the ROK for military and non-combat items, and they are providing \$10 million in humanitarian assistance. And this economic impact is calling the Russians now an unfriendly nation; the ROK is. So, there is \$12.5 billion in energy resources from Russia to the Republic of Korea. So, it is having an impact on Korea.

Mr. JOHNSON. Let me ask one more question. And I will direct this to Dr. Ratner. I am not sure how much time I have left.

But I am just curious—and I guess we all are interested in knowing—what investments we need to make in our allies and partners to protect against vulnerabilities that China may exploit in an effort to prevent them from offering us support in a conflict. And what specific investments in our defense industrial base, for exam-

ple, can we make that would simultaneously reduce the dependence of our allies and partners on Chinese technology and manufacturing and finance, and also enhance our readiness?

Dr. RATNER. Congressman, time is running out here before the chairman cuts me off. I will just say we are engaged in multiple discussions with allies and partners specifically on the types of asymmetric capabilities that we think they need to best deter and deny PRC coercion and aggression.

Mr. JOHNSON. Very good.

I will yield back. Appreciate it.

The CHAIRMAN [presiding]. The gentleman's time has expired.

Ms. Houlahan is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. HOULAHAN. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

And thank you, gentlemen. I really appreciate the chance to ask a couple of questions.

One of my questions has to do with Sino-Russian relationships, and just in my brief reading, understanding that there have been multiple statements made between the two states, multiple exercises, and cooperation of various forms, but that the large, and sort of the short, of it is that we don't see a real formal alliance, so to speak, at this point in time. What would it look like if we were seeing a more formal alliance gel? What sort of signals or indications would we be seeing that could or should alarm us?

Admiral, I was hoping you might be able to comment on that.

Admiral AQUILINO. Thanks, Congresswoman.

It has previously been described as a marriage of convenience. There are issues on both sides as to whether or not they trust each other. But we need to look very closely at what is happening right now and see if that has changed at all. That would be very concerning if those two authoritarian nations delivered or developed or went into something that looked like a treaty alliance.

So, we are watching it very closely. Again, we are on day 14 of this thing in Europe, and we are watching it to try to understand what does that translate into.

Ms. HOULAHAN. And, Dr. Ratner, you were shaking your head. What does that mean, would translate into? What are we looking for? Are there formal treaties or something else?

Dr. RATNER. I think probably not a formal treaty in the short term, but, as Admiral Aquilino said, we are watching very closely. At a minimum, I think we have seen Beijing's tacit support for Russian aggression in Ukraine. We have seen diplomatic support that they are providing. At home, they are censoring criticism of Vladimir Putin and support for Ukraine. So, we see what they are doing domestically politically.

In terms of the questions you had about what it would look like at an enhanced level, I think if we saw China taking steps to support or try to route around some of the sanctions or give economic support to Russia, as the rest of the international community was trying to apply pressure, that would be extremely concerning. And if they provided any military support in capabilities or otherwise, that would be extremely concerning.

Ms. HOULAHAN. Uh-hum. And, General, anything to add there?

General LACAMERA. Yes. What I call it is third-party intervention and influence on the Korean Peninsula. So, I don't separate

Korea, DPRK, China, Russia; I think there will be some kind of impact in any kind of hostilities on the peninsula that we are paying attention to.

Ms. HOULAHAN. Thank you.

And my next question is somewhat related. The DOD has been trying over time to rebalance the global allocation of intelligence and surveillance and reconnaissance assets to USINDOPACOM. How is that going and what are the gaps that still exist? If you, Admiral, might be able to elaborate on that?

Admiral AQUILINO. Thanks, Congresswoman.

So, the theme that we have watched over the last 20 years is there is never enough ISR. The globe is a big place, and we have multiple areas that we keep tracks on.

What I would say is, as we shift towards a focus to the Indo-Pacific, some of those resources have come to the Indo-Pacific, but we are still not meeting the total requirement. We are not meeting the total requirement anywhere.

What I will tell you is the Secretary has not pulled any assets from the Indo-Pacific, based on what is needed into Ukraine. So, again, the Department's focus in the right theater, but, boy, it is a complex world.

Ms. HOULAHAN. Uh-hum. And, General, in your area, is there any gaps still in ISR that you would like to talk about?

[Laughter.]

General LACAMERA. Most of it is in placement and access, given the comprehensive military agreement between the North and the South, and just our ability to collect over DPRK. We cannot fly our eyes directly over. So, we rely on the other the ends to develop the intelligence picture.

Ms. HOULAHAN. And with my last minute, my question regards the Philippines and the strategic importance of the Philippines amidst a lot of political uncertainty that you all mentioned yesterday. How are you viewing that, and what can we be doing to, I guess, firm up our relationship with the Philippines in the face of uncertainty?

Admiral AQUILINO. Thanks, Congresswoman.

Again, the Secretary went to the Philippines not long ago. And as you know, we were having issues with the visiting force agreement, and he got that problem corrected. So, the trend is in the right direction. We are doing more with them. We can continue to develop that posture there through our EDCA [Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement] sites. We are building out Basa Air Base to practice training with them; Fort Magsaysay. So, it is on the right trend. We need to continue and expand those initiatives.

Ms. HOULAHAN. Thank you, and I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Mr. Bergman is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BERGMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And thanks to everybody.

You know, this late in the hearing, pretty much most of the questions have been asked. So, rather than duplicate that just for the sake of saying it has not been said until I have said it, I would like to kind of dig down a little deeper on the ISR piece that Representative Houlahan just indicated.

Do you—"you" as in the Department of Defense—are you truly taking advantage of all of the capabilities that are out there, let's say, in, well, we use the term COTS, commercial-off-the-shelf? Are there any opportunities for increased robustness in ISR using things like, you know, again, already existing systems?

I will give you one example. Like SeaGuardian MQ-9B, that is just one example. Because we have got a lot of challenges, and you cannot have too much visibility. Any comments?

Admiral AQUILINO. Yes, Congressman.

We are certainly experimenting with anything that could provide additional capability. I will give you an example of a Saildrone with an ISR suite. So, through our experimentation program, we are working to deliver those maybe capabilities that haven't been applied militarily and figuring out how they deliver a warfighting outcome, those that are promising, we will work to accelerate and get in.

But, on the ISR side, it is all domains, whether it be undersea, on the sea, above the sea, space, and cyberspace. But we are trying to do that and take those opportunities to deliver an advantage.

Mr. BERGMAN. Okay. Well, I think, if you will, for the safety and security of not only the American people, but all of our allies around the world, we cannot waste time and money through our research labs trying to get just a little bit extra edge, when something that already exists will be good enough.

So, with that, Mr. Chairman, I am going to yield back the remainder of my time. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Mr. Langevin is recognized for 5 minutes. Are you with us there, Jim? Mr. Langevin.

Mr. LANGEVIN. Yes, I am, Mr. Chairman. Sorry about that.

The CHAIRMAN. Okay. Mr. Langevin is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. LANGEVIN. Okay. Thank you, gentlemen. I appreciate your testimony here today.

If I could start with Admiral Aquilino, can you talk about the role of information operations in INDOPACOM? It seems that there are a variety of information-related capabilities that are critical to our ability to compete in the region. How is INDOPACOM doing in the information domain, and how could Congress help?

Admiral AQUILINO. Congressman, thanks.

So, as part of the Seize the Initiative objectives that we have talked about, and through this lens of "think, act, and operate differently," it is certainly an area we have to get better at. Through the processes we developed, all of our operations are now integrated with the information space to ensure that we have the correct messaging—what we want to say when we want to say it, or whether we don't want to say something. So, we agree with you with regard to the importance, and we are working to try to strengthen that.

Additionally, on the special operations side, there are certain components that have, I would articulate, increased capabilities, and we are working to pull those in.

Mr. LANGEVIN. Thank you.

General LaCamera, so there is, clearly, a crisis unfolding across the world daily, it seems. And I am conscious of the fact that our

ongoing focus on the invasion of Ukraine may pull our attention from North Korea. But, General, can you please take a few minutes or so and discuss with us the most pressing needs on the Korean Peninsula that we simply cannot ignore?

General LACAMERA. Yes, thanks, Congressman.

For me, the top priority is maintaining the alliance with the Republic of Korea. And then, combat readiness is number two.

We have got an exercise program with focus mainly on command post exercises, but we need to make sure that we are training at the tactical level all the way up through the operational level. Based on the changes in the terrain, based on the changes of the enemy, and based on the changes of friendly capabilities, we're in the process of rewriting our op [operational] plan for the defense of the peninsula.

Mr. LANGEVIN. Thank you.

And let me turn to Dr. Ratner. In your posture statement, you mentioned that we are growing our cooperation in cyberspace with India and the Quad. Can you expand on this work more specifically? And has this cooperation been successful, and have there been any roadblocks to getting it done?

Dr. RATNER. Congressman, the vast majority of that work is classified. But I will just say we are working with the Indians, both to ensure that we are able to communicate better in classified settings and information related to space, cyber, and intelligence, and we are also working with them to help them better defend their own networks.

Mr. LANGEVIN. Okay. And, Admiral Aquilino, can you highlight some of the initiatives to advance cyber with our partners and allies in the Indo-Pacific region?

Admiral AQUILINO. Yes, Congressman.

As a part of the AUKUS agreement, again, if we look at that, everybody wants to talk about submarines, but it is really about advancing or improving our advanced capabilities. Cyber and space are clearly two of those.

We are working directly with Australia. And next week, again, I will be going there with General Nakasone and General Dickinson, along with the Chief of Defense, General Campbell, to frame and continue to move our capabilities forward. And we do that wherever we can safely and securely with our high-end allies and partners.

Mr. LANGEVIN. Thanks.

Then, Dr. Ratner and Admiral Aquilino, China plans to complete their modernization goals by 2035, and they continue to develop their capabilities across space, cyber, and nuclear domains. In this unclassified setting, can you generally explain how these modernization efforts compare to our own?

Admiral AQUILINO. Again, thanks, Congressman.

One update. So, President Xi Jinping has accelerated that timeline for his forces, and he has asked for modernization by 2027. That is concerning. Again, we still have the greatest military on the planet. We need to understand his acceleration, the capabilities he is developing, and not only stay on par, but exceed and generate overmatch in all those areas.

Mr. LANGEVIN. Thank you. I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Mrs. McClain is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. MCCLAIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you all for being here today.

Historically, India has had significant ties economically with Russia. New Delhi has been an expansive market for Russian oil and gas sales, and last year, Russia delivered the S-400 air defense system to India. In December 2021, the two plus two meeting between India and Russia, India made it clear that the future of the relationship was dependent on Russian investing in “Make in India” projects.

My questions for the admiral and doctor is, India clearly wanted to maintain its relationship with Russia, by its actions. However, now that Russia has invaded Ukraine, do you see the scenario where India will have to take a side in that conflict and distance itself from Moscow, and become more aligned with the Quad nations? Or do you see maybe India attempt to stay neutral? I am just curious on your thoughts on that.

Dr. RATNER. Yes, I would say, Congresswoman, a few of the other members of the committee have asked similar questions. I think we recognize that India has a long and complicated economic and security relationship with Russia. The majority of their weapon purchases come from Russia. But they have also been systematically diversifying away from Russian systems for years now in a way that we view as a positive trajectory.

I would also note that, at that December summit that you cited, there were very few announcements on new purchases. That was quite notable. And just last week, Prime Minister Modi joined the leaders of the Quad summit, including President Biden, for a leaders’ call to talk about some of their shared priorities.

So, I agree it is complicated, but the trendlines are moving in the right direction.

Mrs. MCCLAIN. Yes, don’t you wish it was easy sometimes?

So, you are confident in your opinion that you see it scaling back, the dependency in the relationship?

Dr. RATNER. India, on its own accord, as a sovereign decision, has been diversifying its arms purchases and development, including their own digitization and making some substantial purchases from the United States as well. So, I think the trendlines are in the right direction. And the importance of this relationship I think could not be overstated, and we ought to keep our eyes on that important fact.

Mrs. MCCLAIN. Agreed.

Sir.

Admiral AQUILINO. Yes, ma’am. Again, we are seeing the right actions with regard to foreign military sales, the capabilities that they desire, and the leaning towards the United States, as Secretary Ratner said. That is key.

Military to military, we operate together much more frequently. They have asked for capabilities support and help in areas that they haven’t before, based on what I believe is a common security challenge in the form of the PRC.

So, as this plays out, again, India gets to make its own decisions, but I would articulate the same; that from my lane in the mil-to-mil [military-to-military] piece, it is going in the right direction.

Mrs. MCCLAIN. Wonderful. Thank you, sir.

With that, I will yield my time back.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Mrs. Bice is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. BICE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you to the witnesses.

The good news is I believe I may be the last Rep [Representative] to question.

[Laughter.]

So, first of all, I want to say that I appreciated Mr. Langevin's comments and focus on cyber. As a member of the CITI [Cyber, Innovative Technologies, and Information Systems] Subcommittee, I think that that is something that we are looking at. I want to make sure that you all are engaging with CYBERCOM on a regular basis to foster a relationship there, because it will become more and more, I think, important, as we move forward.

My question is somewhat specific to my congressional district, which is the Oklahoma City Metro Area, and specifically, close to Tinker Air Force Base. And this is really directed at the admiral. A significant share of investment in weapon systems acquisition and modernization is now focused on deterring China, which makes your input in operational threats and capability especially important. I do understand that JROC [Joint Requirements Oversight Council] is in the process of reviewing the requirements for a number of programs, including the next arterial refueler, KC-Y. Can you tell me a little bit about INDOPACOM's engagement and possible input into the process?

Admiral AQUILINO. Thanks, Congresswoman.

So, as it applies to the continued assessment of being able to execute our mission, air-to-air refueling is identified in every event as critical, not only in INDOPACOM, across all the combatant commanders, to include the strategic commander, especially with all the things that are in Tinker that are under his realm.

So, we identify the requirements. We have to continue to ensure we have the capacity to execute all of our war plans. So, I do have input and it is a critical focus area.

Mrs. BICE. Excellent.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

At this point, we have nobody else here in line to ask questions. So, that is a fancy way of saying we are done.

I do want to thank the gentlemen for their testimony.

This is going to be a huge year, FY23. As we have seen, the world has clearly changed and our national security is going to be even more complicated than it was before. So, I look forward to working with all of you to make sure you have the tools you need to defend our interests.

And I thank you very much for your testimony.

And with that, we are adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 11:40 a.m., the committee was adjourned.]

A P P E N D I X

MARCH 9, 2022

PREPARED STATEMENTS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

MARCH 9, 2022

STATEMENT BY
ELY S. RATNER
ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR
INDO-PACIFIC SECURITY AFFAIRS
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

BEFORE THE 117TH CONGRESS
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
MARCH 9, 2022

Opening

Chairman Smith, Ranking Member Rogers, distinguished Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to testify on the Department's efforts in the Indo-Pacific region. I am pleased to be here with the Commander of U.S. Indo-Pacific Command, Admiral John Aquilino, and Commander of the United Nations Command, Combined Forces Command, and U.S. Forces Korea, General Paul LaCamera.

Challenges in the Indo-Pacific Region

The Indo-Pacific is the Department's priority theater. We are committed to maintaining a free and open Indo-Pacific region, where all nations, large and small, are secure in their sovereignty, and can pursue economic opportunity, resolve disputes without coercion, and exercise the freedoms of navigation and overflight consistent with an open and stable international order.

The United States continues to uphold these principles of territorial integrity, sovereignty, and respect for the international rules-based order around the world. Russia's invasion of Ukraine is a direct violation of these principles and we both recognize and appreciate that many of our Indo-Pacific Allies and partners, including Japan, Australia, and Taiwan, have condemned the invasion and offered assistance. This is in stark contrast to China's support for Russian aggression.

Today the Indo-Pacific region faces mounting challenges, particularly from the People's Republic of China (PRC), which has adopted a more assertive approach to advancing its interests in the region and beyond. Strategic competition with the PRC will be a defining feature of the 21st century and our collective efforts over the next decade will determine whether Beijing succeeds in undermining the rules and norms that have benefitted the Indo-Pacific region and the world for decades.

Over the last several years, the PRC has continued to escalate tensions with a number of its neighbors across the region. We've seen the PRC employ its military, maritime militias, and state-owned enterprises to intimidate regional states and assert unlawful maritime claims in the South China Sea. Further west, we're closely watching developments along the Line of Actual Control at the India-China border. All the while, the PRC continues to dial up pressure on Taiwan with People's Liberation Army (PLA) activities in and around Taiwan's air and maritime spaces, alongside other political and socioeconomic coercive tactics targeting the people on Taiwan.

The PRC is also projecting power further out from its periphery, positioning the PLA to command an increasingly global presence. The PLA is rapidly improving many of its capabilities, including strike, air, missile-defense, and anti-submarine warfare, as it focuses on integrating information, cyber, and space operations. The PLA has also been rapidly advancing its nuclear capabilities as documented in the Department's annual report to Congress on the Military and Security Developments Involving the PRC.

We are also concerned by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK)'s recent ballistic missile launches, which are destabilizing and a clear violation of multiple United Nations Security Council resolutions. The DPRK's weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missile programs constitute a serious threat to the United States and our allies and partners.

The security and stability of the Korean Peninsula is inextricably tied to regional security and stability. Our web of allies and partners in the region gives us a significant advantage, none more important than our Republic of Korea (ROK) and Japanese allies. To this end, we will continue to prioritize close trilateral and bilateral cooperation and information sharing as we address our shared threats. We will continue aiming to strengthen deterrence and readiness, while remaining committed to the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.

Defending Peace and Security in the Indo-Pacific Region

Secretary Austin has described the PRC as the pacing challenge for the Department of Defense. Meeting this challenge requires a comprehensive response: the Department is committed to working more seamlessly *across* domains, theaters, the spectrum of conflict; *across* all instruments of national power; and most importantly, *across* our network of allies and partners to coordinate our policies, investments, and activities to maximum effect. This is what the Department of Defense has termed “integrated deterrence.”

Our approach aims to build a broader security architecture in the Indo-Pacific region that can sustain a free and open order and deter aggression. The Department is building enduring advantages through developing new operational concepts and making the investments in the future warfighting capabilities necessary to deter, and if necessary, prevail against PRC aggression. We are focused on strengthening our military position over the long-term through deepening cooperation with our allies and partners in terms of planning, operations, and greater collaboration on capability development.

Building a Combat-Credible Posture

The Department is prioritizing capabilities for the future Joint Force to ensure that it is lethal and able to strike adversary forces and systems at range; resilient and able to gain information advantage and maintain command and control through adversary disruptions; survivable and agile in the face of adversary attacks that seek to reduce combat power and mobilization speed; and can provide the logistics and sustainment needed for operations in a highly-contested environment.

The rapidly changing military competition with the PRC is also driving our efforts toward a more distributed and resilient U.S. posture in the region. The Department concluded the Global Posture Review (GPR) that President Biden directed shortly after taking office to better align our

force posture with our strategic priorities. The GPR reinforced the importance of diversifying our presence and capabilities across the region – from enhancing our infrastructure in Guam, Australia, and the Pacific Islands, to pursuing new areas of access, new ways of operating, and broadening the scope of cooperation with old and new partners, adding risk and new dilemmas for potential adversaries.

Looking forward, we will continue to build upon our ability to operate forward and more flexibly with allies and partners in the Indo-Pacific region and we will adapt our approach as the strategic environment evolves, including through pursuing low-cost, short-duration rotational activities to enable future posture opportunities and create immediate operational advantages. Bottom line: we are optimizing our posture for denial, resilience, and collective cost imposition—key tenets of integrated deterrence.

Strengthening Alliances and Deepening Partnerships

As we realign our strategic priorities, we are also doubling down on one of our greatest strengths: our network of alliances and partnerships. The United States' ability to pursue common security and economic goals with like-minded nations is a cornerstone of our success.

For the U.S. military, our defense relationships and our ability to bind them more tightly together into coalitions that operate together – including through information-sharing, exercises, and common platforms – can make clear to any potential adversaries the unacceptable costs of aggression.

We are deepening our interoperability and developing and deploying advanced warfighting capabilities with our allies as we support them in defending their sovereign interests. We also continue to reinvigorate and modernize partnerships that were built years ago.

Recognizing the United States-Japan Alliance's critical role as the cornerstone of regional peace and stability, we are working in close partnership with Japan to modernize our alliance and strengthen integrated deterrence. As reaffirmed at the "2+2" Ministerial meeting earlier this year, we are deepening our defense cooperation with the Japan Self-Defense Forces; optimizing our alliance force posture, including by continuing to implement the realignment of U.S. forces in Japan; and integrating the alliance into a broader regional security network of like-minded nations.

We also continue to strengthen the U.S.-ROK alliance—the linchpin of peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula and in the Indo-Pacific region. Last December, we held the 53rd Republic of Korea – United States Security Consultative Meeting (SCM) where Secretary Austin and Minister Suh directed the Combined Forces Command to assess its force posture, capabilities, and plans to ensure the alliance remains postured to deter and defeat aggression now and into the future in light of advancing DPRK capability. We are continuing to focus on enhancing alliance readiness and are working together to address other shared security challenges in the region, including by seeking synergies between the U.S. Indo-Pacific Strategy and the ROK New Southern policy. Finally, our two sides reaffirmed a shared commitment to a conditions-based transition of wartime Operational Control (OPCON), which will enhance alliance capability to meet a range of regional challenges in a dynamic security environment.

Last September, we held the 31st Australia-United States Ministerial Consultations (AUSMIN), where we announced several new initiatives to significantly advance U.S. – Australia force posture cooperation: to enhance air cooperation through the rotational deployment of U.S. aircraft of all types in Australia and appropriate aircraft training and exercises; to enhance maritime cooperation by increasing logistics and sustainment capabilities of U.S. surface and subsurface vessels in Australia; to enhance land cooperation by conducting more complex and more integrated exercises and greater combined engagement with allies and partners in the region; and to establish a combined logistics, sustainment, and maintenance enterprise to support combined military operations in the region.

We also announced last year the historic Australia – United Kingdom – United States (AUKUS) trilateral security partnership. Under this partnership, our three nations are working to identify the optimal pathway for Australia to establish a conventionally armed, nuclear-powered submarine force, and deepen trilateral cooperation to develop other advanced capabilities that will be key to sustaining deterrence and stability in the region.

We continue to strengthen our treaty alliance with the Philippines, including through the reaffirmation of our bilateral Visiting Forces Agreement. Together with our Philippine allies, we developed a new alliance joint vision statement that lays out important advancements in our bilateral cooperation, including developing bilateral defense guidelines, a first for the alliance; concluding a bilateral maritime framework to coordinate and integrate maritime activities; and resuming infrastructure improvement projects at Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement agreed locations in the Philippines.

We are building security cooperation programs with our Thai allies and continue to focus on modernization and force professionalization efforts. We are also looking to emerging technical cooperation and other initiatives across the Thai military services.

We are also working with like-minded partners inside and outside the region to maintain peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait, including by supporting Taiwan's self-defense capabilities, to ensure an environment in which Taiwan's future is determined peacefully consistent with the wishes of the people on Taiwan. With China as the pacing challenge, Taiwan is the pacing scenario, driven by a strategy of denial. Over the last year, we have made significant progress with Taiwan in aligning priorities for defense cooperation and our provision of defensive arms and services with our shared understanding of the threat. We continue to support Taiwan's ongoing defense reforms, including to reserves and mobilization, as critical to building a credible self-defense. Our approach remains consistent with our One China policy, the Taiwan Relations Act, the Three Joint Communiqués, and the Six Assurances.

We are also seeing accelerated progress in our Major Defense Partnership with India as we continue to work alongside our Indian counterparts to better integrate and operationalize our day-to-day defense cooperation and logistics, enhance information sharing, and grow our bilateral cooperation in emerging domains such as space and cyberspace. We are expanding the geographic scope of military cooperation with India to include greater coordination and cooperation in the Western Indian Ocean and Southeast Asia, where we share common goals and security interests. This progress is particularly evident in our expanding naval cooperation – bilaterally and with regional partners – to promote freedom of navigation and enhance maritime domain awareness across the region.

The Department is also taking steps to deepen our relationships with like-minded partners throughout the Indo-Pacific region. In Southeast Asia, we have been working to strengthen capabilities and improve our interoperability with our Thai and Philippine allies and partners such as Singapore, Vietnam, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Timor-Leste.

Finally, we are building overlapping and complementary coalitions to address the defining challenges of our time. We are working with interagency partners to elevate the Quad as a premier regional grouping that delivers on issues that matter to the Indo-Pacific region – from global health, critical emerging technologies, climate change, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, infrastructure, and in cyber and space. At the same time, we remain committed to ASEAN centrality and are working to improve coordination on shared challenges such as maritime security, during our tenure as co-chair of the ASEAN Defense Ministerial Meeting Plus Maritime Security Experts Working Group.

We will also actively seek to foster security ties among our allies and partners in the Indo-Pacific region and those outside of the region, including by bringing together our Indo-Pacific and European partners in new ways, such as through the AUKUS partnership. This is a net positive for the region. From the Department's standpoint, we see AUKUS as complementing our existing network of Indo-Pacific partnerships as well as other allies and partners around the world to maintain a free and open Indo-Pacific, and build a future of peace and opportunity for all the people of the region.

Conclusion

I will conclude by noting that a powerful bipartisan consensus has emerged around the China challenge and the need for the United States to refocus its time, energy, and resources on the Indo-Pacific region. The reservoir of support for this approach is broad and deep, and we should continue working together to preserve this bipartisanship that is central to our ability to compete effectively in the region.

Thank you for your time and attention today, and I look forward to your questions and working together to meet our pacing challenge, ensure America remains an Indo-Pacific power, and uphold our vital national interests in the region.

Dr. Ely S. Ratner**Assistant Secretary of Defense for Indo-Pacific Security Affairs**

Dr. Ely Ratner serves as the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Indo-Pacific Security Affairs. Prior to confirmation, he served as the Director, DoD China Task Force and as a Senior Advisor to China to the Secretary of Defense. Before arriving at the Department of Defense, Dr. Ratner was the Executive Vice President and Director of Studies at the Center for a New American Security (CNAS), where he was a member of the executive team and responsible for managing the Center's research agenda and staff.

Dr. Ratner served from 2015 to 2017 as the Deputy National Security advisor to Vice President Joe Biden, and from 2011 to 2012 in the office of Chinese and Mongolian affairs at the State Department. He also previously worked in the U.S. Senate as a Professional Staff Member on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and in the office of Senator Joe Biden. Outside of government, Dr. Ratner has worked as a Senior Fellow for China Studies at the Council on Foreign Relations, a Senior Fellow and Deputy Director of the Asia-Pacific Security Program at CNAS, and as an Associate Political Scientist at the RAND Corporation.

Dr. Ratner received his B.A. from Princeton University's School of Public and International Affairs, where he graduated Phi Beta Kappa. He earned his Ph.D. in Political Science from the University of California, Berkeley.

STATEMENT OF
ADMIRAL JOHN C. AQUILINO, U.S. NAVY
COMMANDER, U.S. INDO-PACIFIC COMMAND
BEFORE THE HOUSE ARMED SERVICES
COMMITTEE ON U.S. INDO-PACIFIC COMMAND
POSTURE
9 MARCH 2022

Introduction / Opening Statement

Chairman Smith, Ranking Member Rogers, and distinguished members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you to discuss the Indo-Pacific Region. I also want to extend my thanks for your dedicated support to U.S. Indo-Pacific Command (USINDOPACOM), our service members, and their families.

The Department has identified the People's Republic of China (PRC) as the most consequential strategic competitor to the United States and our allies and partners throughout the world. The PRC is in execution of a dedicated campaign utilizing all forms of national power to uproot the rules-based international order in ways that benefit themselves at the expense of all others. Their will and their resources to contest long standing international norms are evident across every regional and functional domain.

Russia also presents serious risks to the United States as well as our allies and partners, and has the ability to threaten the homeland. As evident from their unprovoked and unjustified attack on the Ukraine, Russia has no regard for international law, its own prior commitments, or any principles that uphold global peace. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), and Violent Extremist Organizations (VEOs) also pose acute threats. I am optimistic we will see a strategy-based FY23 budget that takes the appropriate, initial steps to address these key adversarial challenges.

Secretary Austin has articulated clear priorities: defend the homeland, deter our adversaries, and strengthen our allies and partners. These priorities are advanced through integrated deterrence, campaigning, and actions that build enduring advantages. Integrated deterrence is the Department's approach to preventing conflict through the synchronization of all elements of national power, with joint force actions in all domains, together with our allies and partners. We will work to implement the Indo-Pacific Strategy to advance a free and open Indo-Pacific.

USINDOPACOM's mission is to prevent conflict through the execution of integrated deterrence, and should deterrence fail, be prepared to fight and win. ***Seize the Initiative*** describes USINDOPACOM's approach to accomplish these missions. This approach requires the joint force to *think, act, and operate differently* by synchronizing our operations, re-aligning our posture, and advancing our warfighting capabilities. ***Seize the Initiative*** establishes the necessary linkages between operations, activities, and investments (OAI) to enable the joint force, deter

aggression, and provide the President and Secretary of Defense with options should deterrence fail.

Effective deterrence of threats in the Indo-Pacific requires significant investment to defend the homeland, protect the joint force, operate in contested space, and provide all-domain battlespace awareness with integrated fires enabled by a joint fires network. These initiatives are synchronized as part of a theater campaign plan facilitated by agile, robust logistics and cooperation with allies and partners, including a robust exercise and experimentation program and deep collaboration to develop future capabilities and technologies that will support stability and deterrence in the region.

Seize the Initiative is the first step in building enduring advantages that ensure U.S. forces are postured in the right place, with the right capabilities to deter our security challengers in near-, mid-, and long-term competition. Predictable budgets, sustained investments, a strong industrial base, and reliable supply chains are needed to maintain the United States ability to defend the homeland, deter aggression, and build a resilient joint force.

Key Adversarial Challenges

The Indo-Pacific is the most consequential theater and home to four of the five identified national security threats. As stated by the Secretary of Defense, the most comprehensive and urgent challenge to U.S. national security interests is the increasingly provocative efforts to subvert the international system to suit its authoritarian preferences. Russia's modernization of Pacific military forces presents serious risks to the U.S. and our allies and partners through nuclear and conventional threats, malign cyber activities, information operations, and counter-space threats. The DPRK continues to expand its nuclear and missile capability to threaten the U.S. homeland and our allies and partners. Violent extremism remains an ever-present threat, and global effects of climate change are already increasing demands on the joint force for disaster relief, defense support to civil authorities, and affect security relationships with Indo-Pacific allies and partners.

People's Republic of China (PRC)

Strategic Intent

The PRC seeks to become a global military power and acquire the ability to seize Taiwan, while developing conventional weapons that can reach the U.S. Homeland. The PRC also seeks to establish a network of overseas military installations that would extend its reach, allowing support for an increasingly global People's Liberation Army (PLA) capable of power projection far beyond the Indo-Pacific.

Beijing's entwined economic and military influences are apparent in the coercive economic actions the PRC has taken against U.S. allies and like-minded partners. President Xi's signature One Belt, One Road (OBOR) initiative (more widely known as the Belt and Road Initiative or BRI) is one of Beijing's attempts to increase its influence and access globally. The PRC's military-civil fusion makes even academic research cooperation with PRC entities in certain sectors fraught with potential national security risk.

Modernization

The PLA is developing capabilities to project power outside of the PRC's immediate periphery. Xi Jinping has publicly directed the PLA to complete most elements of military modernization by 2027, and they continue to execute the most extensive military build-up since

WWII with a comprehensive modernization program across land, sea, air, space, cyber, and information domains. PLA modernization emphasizes systems that expand the PLA's anti-access/area denial (A2/AD) strategy across the region to enhance the country's force projection and strategic deterrence capabilities.

The PLA Navy (PLAN) boasts a battle force of ~350 ships and submarines, including more than 130 major surface combatants. Already possessing the largest navy in the world, the PRC is expanding this formidable force by adding new capabilities to a fleet expected to grow to 420 battle force ships by 2025. The PLAN's priorities are delivering aircraft carrier groups, building expeditionary warfare capabilities with Marine-like forces, expanding their surface force, and increasing undersea capacity.

The PLA's aviation force is the largest in the Indo-Pacific. More than half of its operational fighter force utilizes 4th generation aircraft or better, and the PRC commenced mass production of its first 5th generation J-20 aircraft. The PLA Air Force is also fielding the nuclear-capable H-6N, the first PLA bomber capable of aerial refueling. Overall, aircraft modernizations and improvements are increasing PLA's offensive air capabilities.

In addition to an extensive arsenal of advanced ballistic missiles, the PLA Rocket Force is pursuing land-attack, supersonic cruise missiles and other advanced weapons. The PLA's new generation of mobile missiles uses multiple independently targeted reentry vehicles (MIRVs) and highly capable hypersonic glide vehicles (HGV) designed to evade U.S. missile defenses.

The PLA is developing a nuclear triad designed to ensure a survivable, second-strike capability. This capability includes JIN submarines equipped with long-range sea-based nuclear missiles, H-6N bombers with air-delivered nuclear weapons, and a growing land force of mobile and silo-based nuclear missiles.

The PRC is expanding and maturing its space and counter-space programs, including intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) constellations, particularly its Beidou-3 global satellite navigation system. The PRC conducted 55 space launches in 2021, the most launches by any nation. The PLA is also developing a robust counter-space program by delivering directed-energy weapons, jammers, a direct-ascent kinetic kill capability, and on-orbit capabilities with the intent to employ these capabilities to deny U.S. and our allies access to space during a conflict or crisis.

PLA development of cyber capabilities are in direct support of intelligence collection against the United States, advanced PLA modernization goals, and intellectual property theft. From denial-of-service attacks to physical disruptions of critical infrastructure, the PRC desires to shape decision-making and disrupt military operations at the initial stages and throughout conflict.

Actions of Concern

The PRC's pressure campaign against Taiwan, deliberate undermining of autonomy in Hong Kong, activities along the Sino-Indian Line of Actual Control, and excessive maritime claims are creating instability and increasing the risk of unintended incidents.

Taiwan

Unification with Taiwan is among the PRC's top priorities. PLA forces have long exercised in areas around Taiwan, but the scale and sophistication of this training has drastically increased. Beijing has intensified pressure on Taiwan, using diplomatic, informational, military, and economic tools to isolate Taiwan from the international community in an attempt to force submission and weaken resistance.

Throughout 2021, the PLA amplified its force posturing near and around Taiwan. Over the past two years, the PLA continued flying aircraft into Taiwan's air defense identification zone, and incorporated highly publicized amphibious assault training into national-level exercises in or near the Taiwan Strait. While the PRC claims to still prefer a peaceful resolution of cross-Strait differences, it has never relinquished use of force as an option.

Line of Actual Control

Tensions along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) between the PRC and India are the worst in over four decades. In October 2021, PRC's legislature passed a land borders law that asserts "sacred and inviolable" sovereignty and territorial integrity and provides a domestic legal framework for greater PLA involvement in border security. This law took effect on January 1, 2022, representing a continuation of PRC's use of domestic law as a pretext to the use of force to resolve territorial disputes.

Excessive Claims

The PRC continues to challenge the rules-based international order through expansive, illegal maritime claims, and assertive security and economic actions. One particularly egregious example is the PRC's ambiguous nine-dash line claim of islands and "adjacent waters" in the South China Sea (SCS) as subject to their indisputable sovereignty. President Xi made public assurances the PRC would not militarize the SCS. However, the PLA has deployed anti-ship cruise missiles, surface-to-air missiles, and jamming equipment to its artificial Spratly Islands features since 2018 and flown aircraft from those locations since 2020. The PLA has emplaced expansive military infrastructure in the SCS by building aircraft hangars sufficient to accommodate multiple fighter brigades, protective shelters for surface-to-air and anti-ship missiles, and significant fuel storage facilities.

The PRC uses their domestic law to threaten and intimidate other nations into actions beneficial to the PRC. China's Maritime Traffic Safety Law, implemented in September 2021, limits nations' ability to exercise certain rights and freedoms in the SCS in an attempt to convince nations to submit to Chinese law as if it were international law. Additionally, the PRC's new Coast Guard Law grants sweeping enforcement powers to the China Coast Guard (CCG) including the authority to use force to police international waters which they view as under the PRC's "jurisdiction."

These domestic laws are inconsistent with international law, norms, and standards, and they are intended to justify any action the PLA may take to achieve PRC objectives. This approach further increases the likelihood of a clash with another South China Sea claimant, as we witnessed in the November 2021 incident between the PRC and the Philippines at Second Thomas Shoal. The PRC's excessive maritime claims infringe on regional EEZs and negatively affect Southeast Asian economies while undermining navigational freedoms reflected in the U.N. Convention on the Law of the Sea.

Hong Kong

Beijing's actions undermining the 1982 Sino-British Joint Declaration concerning Hong Kong clearly and unequivocally demonstrate a significant disconnect between the CCP's commitments and actions. The PRC's relentless campaign has further dismantled democratic institutions in Hong Kong. During the December 2021 Legislative Council elections, Pro-Beijing

candidates won all but 1 of 90 seats in an election marked by the lowest number of votes cast since the 1997 handover. The PRC's heavy-handed approach to "One Country Two Systems" in Hong Kong has sent up warning flares about how Beijing would likely treat Taiwan.

Xinjiang

The PRC is actively involved in the suppression of ethnic and religious minorities, most notably in Xinjiang. According to the U.S. Department of State's 2020 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices in the PRC, "Genocide and crimes against humanity occurred during the year against the predominantly Muslim Uyghurs and other ethnic and religious minority groups in Xinjiang." Authorities reportedly detained more than one million civilians in internment camps and committed abuses such as torture and enforced sterilization.

Russia

Strategic Intent

Russia seeks to maintain its global power status and retain influence relative to China and the United States by using all instruments of national power. Like the PRC, Russia aims to establish itself as a center of gravity in a multipolar world order by undermining democratic, free, and open societies in favor of authoritarian structures. While most evident in the European theater of operations, recent examples in the Indo-Pacific include Moscow's decision to support the Burmese military junta and its ongoing assistance to the DPRK to evade and undermine U.N. Security Council resolutions.

Modernization

Russia's Eastern Military District continues to field new and improved weapons and platforms across all services. These expanding capabilities threaten the United States and our allies, including Japan, particularly in connection with its territorial dispute with Russia over the southern Kuril Islands.

The Russian Pacific Fleet increased its precision land attack and anti-ship cruise missile capacity in 2021 with two new upgraded Kilo-class submarines, one guided-missile frigate, and the modernization of one guided-missile destroyer. Eleven more new ships and submarines are expected to arrive in the next four years, including at least two Severodvinsk II class nuclear

cruise missile submarines and four more advanced Kilo submarines. The Russian Pacific Fleet employs Kalibr cruise missiles and the newly tested Tsirkon hypersonic cruise missiles.

In the air domain, Moscow recently announced it would station its most advanced fighter aircraft, the fifth generation Su-57, in the Eastern Military District. These aircraft will join an air defense structure already boasting significant numbers of fourth-generation fighters, interceptors, and advanced air defense missiles, including the state-of-the-art S-400 surface-to-air missile system.

Since 2016, Russia has stationed coastal defense cruise missiles (CDCM) in the disputed Kuril Islands, expanding its capability to threaten Japan and potentially U.S. forces. Moscow announced in late 2021 formation of a new CDCM unit to make their presence permanent.

Russia maintains a modern nuclear triad with upgraded Tu-95MSM bombers, armed with new Kh-101/102 land-attack cruise missiles. New capabilities will include at least one Dolgorukiy II class nuclear ballistic submarine, which will join two Dolgorukiy I missile submarines already in the Pacific Fleet, and a special purpose Belogorod nuclear submarine that Moscow announced would arrive in 2022. The Belogorod will carry the Poseidon unmanned nuclear weapon. The first launch of the SARMAT heavy ICBM is expected by mid-2022.

Russia is rapidly advancing its space and counter-space capabilities, conducting the third-highest number of space launches in 2021. Russia is also developing a suite of anti-satellite capabilities, such as the PL-19 Nudol direct ascent missile, high-powered lasers, and various electronic warfare systems. These capabilities allow Russia to disrupt or destroy adversary satellites during peacetime or conflict.

Moscow's extensive cyber capabilities are well known and globally active. Advanced and emerging techniques, including artificial intelligence-enabled deep fakes, coupled with existing and new relationships with deniable proxy groups, are expected to expand Russia's ability to deceive, deny, and destroy adversary networks and control systems.

Actions of Concern

Destructive ASAT Test

In November 2021, Russia launched a Nudol direct ascent anti-satellite missile that destroyed a derelict Russian satellite in low Earth orbit and created a massive debris field. This

action was irresponsible and endangers other space assets and human spaceflight, potentially for years to come.

Central Pacific Naval Exercise

In mid-2021, the Russian Pacific Fleet completed the largest naval exercise since the Soviet era, deploying approximately 20 ships, including the fleet's flagship and other large combatants, to within 20-30 nautical miles off the Hawaiian island of Oahu. While in the area, Russia twice flew Tu-95 strategic bombers into the region as a further show of force, and an intelligence collection ship operated near Hawaii before, during, and after the exercise. All these actions were an attempt to demonstrate expeditionary and long-range strike capabilities.

Hypersonic Missile Development

In December 2021, Russia announced it had fired approximately 10 Tsirkon hypersonic cruise missiles from surface ships and submarines. With a claimed range of 1000 kilometers and a speed of Mach 6 or better, this class of missiles will present significant challenges to missile defense systems and provide Russia with additional offensive strike options.

Cyber Operations

The May 2021 cyber-attack on the U.S. Colonial Pipeline system and the late 2020 SolarWinds breach are stark reminders of Moscow's ability and willingness to employ state and proxy cyber actors to support national objectives. Both of these events underscore the vulnerability of U.S. and allied networks and systems worldwide.

DPRK

Strategic Intent

The DPRK's nuclear and ballistic missile threats aim to preserve the regime, extract diplomatic concessions, and obtain prominent international attention. The DPRK's systems can reach targets throughout the Indo-Pacific, including the continental United States. Long-range missile research and development efforts, coupled with nuclear technology developments, are consistent with the regime's stated objective of achieving intercontinental ballistic missile capability to pose a credible threat to the United States.

Modernization

Kim Jong Un continues to advance DPRK's conventional and strategic military capabilities through ballistic missile and nuclear program development.

The vast majority of the Pyongyang's modernization effort is focused on ballistic and cruise missiles. Since 2020, the DPRK has demonstrated several new weapons, including a new intercontinental ballistic missile, short-range ballistic missiles, three new submarine-launched ballistic missiles, a "long-range" mobile cruise missile, and a purported hypersonic capability.

In early 2021, Kim Jong Un pledged to build smaller, lighter nuclear weapons for tactical use and more advanced delivery systems capable of striking the U.S. homeland. The DPRK desires to become a space nation but has not attempted a space launch since 2016. As Kim Jong Un proclaims the DPRK's sovereign right to do so, resumption of space activity is possible in 2022.

The DPRK Navy's primary mission is to defend the coastline and territorial waters. Limited modernization modestly enhances these capabilities by developing and fielding land- and sea-based longer-range anti-ship cruise missiles. Much of Navy's effort, however, is supporting submarine-launched ballistic missiles capabilities with specially modified subs.

The DPRK paraded new main battle tanks, anti-tank guns, and rocket and artillery systems in 2020 that began to enter the force in limited numbers in 2021. The Korean People's Army's (KPA) oversized ground force still is primarily equipped with legacy weapons, but the vast number of available systems largely compensates for performance shortfalls.

The DPRK considers its offensive cyber capabilities—including computer network attacks—a low-risk, cost-effective tool to influence and intimidate adversaries. These capabilities also support military operations and national security goals to collect information, garner illicit revenue, and spread propaganda. Cyber-enabled financial theft, extortion campaigns, and cryptojacking—compromising computing resources to mine digital currency—fund much of Pyongyang's weapons development programs.

Actions of Concern

Missile Launches

The DPRK has conducted over 60 missile launch events since 2019, including seven in January 2022 alone. The vast majority were various categories of short-range ballistic or cruise

missiles. In January 2022, the DPRK launched an intermediate-range missile, the first launch of that category since 2017. These tests supported research and development, system testing, crew training and certification, and added new launch platforms such as containerized rail-based launches. Of particular concern is apparent advancements in maneuvering capabilities and claims of achieving hypersonic velocities. These attributes would complicate defensive actions against the DPRK's small but probably growing long-range strike capabilities.

Nuclear Enrichment

By late 2021, the United Nations and International Atomic Energy Agency publicized possible nuclear enrichment and production activity that would violate UN sanctions. Such action could support an expanded nuclear testing and weaponization program.

Evasion of International Sanctions

In contravention of U.N. Security Council Resolutions (UNSCR), the DPRK imports refined petroleum through illicit ship-to-ship transfers and unreported direct deliveries by foreign-flagged vessels. USINDOPACOM supports monitoring for UNSCR evasion and works closely with our partners and allies, as well as multinational sanctions-related efforts through UNC-Rear installations in Japan, to disrupt the illicit ship-to-ship transfers. Unfortunately, Pyongyang has evaded these efforts due to Beijing and Moscow's relatively lax sanctions enforcement and PRC shipping networks; many illicit transfers occur in PRC territorial waters. In further defiance of UNSCR sanctions, Pyongyang exports coal to China, and North Korean laborers continue to work overseas, including in the PRC and Russia, despite the U.N.'s December 2019 repatriation deadline.

Violent Extremist Organizations (VEO)

Violent extremism remains an ever-present threat to the peace and stability of the Indo-Pacific region. VEO actions to date have targeted host nation governments and local armed forces but could expand at any time.

Security Impacts of Climate Change

A majority of the population within USINDOPACOM's area of responsibility live in vulnerable coastal regions. Extreme weather events and rising sea levels pose an increasing threat to food security, access to fresh water, agricultural productivity, and commerce in partner nations. Conditions associated with climate change, such as frequency and intensity of regional storms, continue and could add risk to internal stability and governance of small island states and developing countries in South and Southeast Asia.

Implementation of *Seize the Initiative*

Seize the Initiative is designed to implement the Secretary of Defense's priorities and posture the joint force in the best position possible to accomplish USINDOPACOM's assigned missions to address the key adversarial challenges through the spectrum of competition, crisis, and conflict. This approach defends the homeland, increases our warfighting advantage, and strengthens our alliances and partnerships. Additionally, *Seize the Initiative* provides the President and Secretary of Defense with options should deterrence fail.

Defend the Homeland

USINDOPACOM's priority mission is to defend the homeland through deployed presence operations designed to defend forward as far as possible from our shores. Accordingly, we are working with the Department to ensure the ability to defend Guam and protect the joint force from any potential threats.

Guam's strategic importance is difficult to overstate. The Department has committed more than \$11B for military construction projects on Guam in FY22-FY27 to meet our commitment with Japan under the Defense Policy Review Initiative (DPRI), highlighting the importance of the island for sustaining the joint force as our main operating base and home to 130,000 Americans.

To effectively deter America's increasingly modern adversaries, USINDOPACOM requires improved joint warfighting capabilities in the near, mid, and long term. An improved force posture with an integrated joint force west of the International Date Line (IDL) improves U.S. forces' response time, lethality and combat credibility. Similarly, we must exploit our advantage to operate in contested space with new technologies across all domains.

A related effort is necessary to develop and incorporate the technology required to deliver flawless battlespace awareness, integrated joint fires on a command and control network with real-time target quality data in a multi-domain environment. Achieving this capability requires experimentation and innovation across all program lines. A theater campaign facilitates synchronization of all domain forces, including space and cyber capabilities, in the AOR and is an essential part of transition from competition to crisis to conflict.

Deter our Adversaries

Force Posture

U.S. force posture is a warfighting advantage in USINDOPACOM's operational design. A force posture west of the IDL provides defense in-depth that enables the Joint Force to decisively respond to contingencies across the region. More distributed combat power increases survivability, reduces risk, and enables the transition from defense to offense quickly should deterrence fail. Forward-based and rotational Joint forces armed with the right capabilities are the most credible way to demonstrate resolve, assure allies and partners, and provide the President and Secretary with multiple options.

A widespread and diverse posture gives us the ability to more easily exercise and operate with our partners, deliver precision fires, and sustain the force with a distributed network of stores, munitions, and fuel to support our operations.

Operate in Contested Space

To effectively deter our adversaries and counter the PLA anti-access/area denial (A2/AD) strategy, USINDOPACOM requires joint warfighting capabilities in the near, mid, and long term to ensure we can continue to operate our force anywhere we desire at the time and place of our choosing. The joint force currently enjoys the ability to deliver effects throughout the AOR. We must continue to exploit this advantage with new technologies across all domains and across all program lines. This capability will allow the joint force to fight and win wherever necessary while protecting U.S. forces, equipment, and critical infrastructure.

All Domain Battlespace Awareness with a Joint Fires Network

USINDOPACOM requires an upgraded network of all-domain sensors linked with an integrated fires network to deliver persistent target custody and to engage all threats in the battlespace. This offers commanders a simultaneous, shared understanding of the battlespace, even if geographically separated. This Joint Fires Network enables any sensor from any platform (air, land, sea, space, and cyberspace) to provide targeting guidance to any weapon systems. Joint Fires Network, coupled with the lethality of current and future munitions, underpins conventional deterrence and provides the joint force with the necessary lethality to maintain combat credibility.

Campaigning

Persistent and synchronized coalition and joint operations linked over time and space in the western Pacific contributes to our ability to deter conflict. A coordinated campaign of all domain operations, activities, and investments (OAI) reassures our allies and partners, builds partner capacity, increases interoperability, and normalizes our operations throughout the AOR. Additionally, these consistent and persistent OAI's better familiarize our forces with the challenges associated with the current operating environment.

Exercise and Experimentation

Enhanced training requires conducting complex, multi-domain exercises with our allies and partners to continue to deliver interoperability and to operate at the high end. A robust theater exercise program demonstrates our commitment to defending the rules-based international order, highlights our resolve to our partners, and builds relationships between our forces. Complex exercises, combined with innovative joint experimentation, delivers confident warfighting partners and gives us the ability to rehearse warfighting concepts and develop capabilities together.

The Pacific Multi-Domain Test and Experimentation Capability (PMTEC) better prepares the joint force by developing and networking instrumented, live, virtual, and constructive training areas throughout the Indo-Pacific. PMTEC links ranges across the Indo-Pacific, including those of our allies and partners, with our test and training range infrastructure on the west coast of the U.S. This initiative delivers the largest coalition range complex in the

world with the most advanced capabilities and expands our Joint Exercise Program (JEP) to a Theater Exercise Program (TEP). PMTEC allows Joint, Combined, and Coalition warfighters to build readiness together by rehearsing against peer adversaries in scenarios that replicate highly contested all-domain environments.

Integration of Space and Cyber Domains

Seven of the nine nations and one international organization capable of launching satellites are in the USINDOPACOM AOR. International and commercial use of space is growing exponentially and drives competition for limited space-related resources.

USINDOPACOM requires resilient and flexible space and cyber capabilities to maintain warfighting advantages in all domains. Our competitors recognize the growing importance of space and cyber domains and are delivering capabilities to challenge our dominance in these critical areas. Both domains represent areas we can further integrate into activities and exercises with our allies and partners. The unity of effort between USSPACECOM, USCYBERCOM and USINDOPACOM delivers multi-domain, defensive and offensive options for civilian leadership.

Strengthen Alliances and Enhance Partnerships

A key U.S. asymmetric advantage that our security challengers do not possess is our network of strong alliances and partnerships. Because these relationships are based on shared values and people-to-people ties, they provide significant advantages such as long-term mutual trust, understanding, respect, interoperability, and a common commitment to a free and open Indo-Pacific. To strengthen alliances and enhance partnerships, USINDOPACOM continuously seeks opportunities to increase mini and multilateral events with allies and partners.

USINDOPACOM's warfighting requirement necessitates rapid, widespread information sharing to enable partner nations to employ their security forces in a coordinated manner against common threats. The delivery of a Mission Partner Environment and fusion centers provide the opportunity to share a common picture, improve interoperability, demonstrate U.S. resolve, and deliver warfighting advantages throughout the region.

Mission Partner Environment (MPE)

Today, USINDOPACOM's information sharing with allies and partners is enabled by multiple bilateral and multilateral networks. MPE provides a single joint and coalition environment to share classified operations and intelligence information with allies and partners in a resilient, cyber-secure, data-centric environment. MPE creates a theater-wide information technology infrastructure to facilitate information sharing, improve interoperability, and enable rapid coordination to provide universal battle management and share common operational and intelligence pictures.

Fusion Centers

Fusion centers build partnership capacity and serve as a crucial enabler for strengthening alliances and partnerships by using information technology, contextual analytics, and computing model assessments to illuminate patterns of life associated with transnational threats and other pernicious behavior.

First funded in FY21 and authorized in the FY22 NDAA, the Counter-Terrorism Information Facility (CTIF) provides nine countries (including six from ASEAN) the capability to counter violent extremism. Similarly, fusion centers could expand partnership capacity in Oceania to address threats presented by climate change; illegal, unregulated, unreported fishing; and illicit drugs. High level, multilateral, information sharing promotes collaboration between like-minded nations and helps sustain the rules-based international order.

Joint Interagency Task Force – West (JIATF-W)

USINDOPACOM relies on the Joint Interagency Task Force – West (JIATF-W) to fight the manufacturing and distribution of illicit drugs. JIATF-W possesses the unique capability to align a significant interagency effort to counter-narcotics and disrupt transnational criminal networks that inflict immense harm on our country. JIATF-W activities consist mainly of intelligence analysis and support to U.S. law enforcement partners serving within foreign countries where precursor chemicals are manufactured or combined to manufacture illicit drugs. JIATF-W's coordinated training also facilitates access to nations that do not have standing militaries (Oceania) and through law-enforcement channels for countries where U.S. relations are sensitive.

Multi-Lateral Relationships

Japan, Republic of Korea, United States Trilateral

Autocratic powers threaten the Indo-Pacific region's stability, making U.S.-Japan-ROK trilateral cooperation more important than ever. The U.S. commitment to the defense of Japan and the ROK is ironclad, and trilateral collaboration is crucial to ensure peace and stability in Northeast Asia amid the destabilizing nuclear and missile threats emanating from the DPRK. USINDOPACOM efforts remain dedicated to the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, and we will continue to focus on strong trilateral cooperation to facilitate crisis communication, improve combined interoperability, and present a united deterrent force against our common adversaries.

Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)

ASEAN is among the most important multilateral forums in the theater to foster relationships that build trust, prevent misperceptions, and reinforce the rules-based international order. ASEAN decision-making is consensus-based, favoring a policy of non-interference in the internal affairs of member states. The Burmese military coup in February 2021 has challenged ASEAN to reconcile these competing imperatives with its effectiveness and relevance as a regional organization. Our engagement with ASEAN demonstrates U.S. recognition of ASEAN's importance and our commitment to multilateral partnerships.

Japan, Australia, India and the United States (the Quad)

The Quad is an important partnership between Japan, Australia, India, and the United States and primarily strengthens the region's security architecture through diplomatic and economic channels. For example, the Quad has committed to produce and deliver a billion doses of the COVID-19 vaccine to the Indo-Pacific region by the end of 2022. This goal, along with initiatives to advance emerging telecommunications technology, build better infrastructure, and improve cybersecurity demonstrates how four mature and vibrant democracies can favorably shape the security environment.

Australia, United Kingdom, and the U.S. (AUKUS) Partnership

The AUKUS partnership is a new initiative that capitalizes on shared values and will deepen cooperation on the capabilities and technologies necessary to sustain deterrence and stability in the Indo-Pacific.. A key focus of this trilateral security partnership is agreement to support the Royal Australian Navy in establishing a conventionally-armed nuclear-powered submarine force – a key capability that will enhance Australia’s defense posture and bolster regional security. Additionally, under AUKUS the three nations are deepening cooperation on additional capabilities and technologies, including undersea warfare, cyber, artificial intelligence, and quantum, that will be pivotal to future high-end warfighting and enhancing our combined force posture. When combined with an increased number of exercises, these advancements will significantly aid our efforts to deter conflict throughout the region, promote greater interoperability, and improve coordination from the strategic to tactical levels.

Partners of the Pacific (POP)

Partners of the Pacific is an emerging initiative that seeks to bring together like-minded Pacific partners at the strategic level to forge a common approach towards climate and energy, infrastructure, and maritime security. Australia, France, Japan, New Zealand, the U.K., and the U.S. will develop a shared plan with the Pacific Island Countries for deepening our collective engagements.

Five Treaty Alliances

Australia

Australia is a leading contributor of international efforts to promote a free and open Indo-Pacific. In 2021, the U.S. and Australia decided to enhance air, maritime, land, space, and cyber cooperation to increase sustainment capabilities. Additional initiatives include range integration, posture improvements, and expanding multilateral operations and exercises across the theater.

Australia's efforts to maintain global security are extensive, including troop deployments to the Middle East, U.N. sanctions enforcement against DPRK, and hosting U.S. forces and capabilities in Australian territory. Australia is also increasing its collaboration with other like-minded nations. The AUKUS enhanced security partnership adds momentum to our already

robust security cooperation, and Australia's recently signed RAA with Japan exemplifies the country's priority on such collaboration.

The United States benefits from Australian collaboration to maintain a strong force posture. In 2021, Marine Rotational Force-Darwin (MRF-D) conducted its tenth rotation through Northern Australia, demonstrating combined operational capability despite COVID-19. These rotational deployments advance readiness goals, address infrastructure requirements to support required capabilities, and satisfy U.S. commitments to Australia.

The United States benefits from Australian efforts to maintain a strong force posture. In 2021, Marine Rotational Force-Darwin (MRF-D) conducted its tenth rotation through Northern Australia, demonstrating combined operational capability despite COVID-19. These rotational deployments advance readiness goals, address infrastructure requirements to support required capabilities, and satisfy U.S. commitments to Australia.

Japan

The U.S. – Japan Alliance is the cornerstone of peace and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific. The most crucial initiative to preserve our strategic alignment with Japan is to complete the realignment of U.S. forces outlined in the Defense Policy Review Initiative (DPRI). DPRI requires adjustments based on evolving challenges including the need to complete a MILCON plan on the island of Guam. Additionally, we must also continue working with Japan to develop its land-based integrated air and missile defense systems.

Japan views the PRC's expanding military activity and presence in the Indo-Pacific with increasing concern. Notably, Japan approved a record-high defense budget for the seventh consecutive year and continues to procure the most advanced U.S. defense equipment, increasing interoperability and strengthening joint force lethality. Furthermore, Japan and the U.S. concluded a new multi-year Special Measures Agreement (SMA) framework which codified Japan's commitment to increase funding for costs associated with basing U.S. forces in Japan by approximately six percent (\$8.6 billion) over five years, the largest increase in 20 years. These are critical enablers, not only for the health of the alliance but also for the U.S. to fulfill its treaty obligations and allow U.S. forces to respond to regional crises rapidly.

Australia and Japan recently signed a Reciprocal Access Agreement (RAA) to help facilitate military-to-military activities. This represents a deepening partnership between the two nations and will assist with trilateral cooperation between the U.S., Australia, and Japan.

Republic of Korea (ROK)

The U.S.-ROK alliance remains the linchpin in maintaining a stable security environment to address threats from the DPRK and any challenges that threaten our collective security interests in Northeast Asia. Our primary efforts with the ROK include integrating space operations, incorporating ROK ranges into a broader network of allied ranges, improving maritime domain awareness, and collaborating on missile defense. A multinational whole-of-government approach is required to effectively deter DPRK provocation and enforce U.N. Security Council sanctions.

The ROK's 2022 defense budget increases funding by 3.4% over the 2021 budget. The purchase of advanced platforms and munitions, such as F-35A, Global Hawk, P-8A, and upgraded PAC-3 missiles, improves interoperability and enhances their defense posture. Conditions-based OPCON Transition Plan (COTP) will remain a priority for our two nations. The alliance has matured to advance strategic alignment, multilateral cooperation, readiness, and to extend regional deterrence commitments.

Republic of the Philippines

Our strong relationship with the Philippines is based on common values, shared history, and long-standing people-to-people ties. The bilateral defense relationship is a crucial component of our network of allies and partners in the Indo-Pacific.

Following Secretary Austin's visit in July 2021, the Philippines recalled its notice to terminate the Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA), and we resumed the development of the approved Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement (EDCA) sites, which will dramatically improve our ability to exercise and operate with our Philippine partners.

The strong mil-to-mil relationship enables us to prioritize maritime security as we develop a bilateral maritime framework. The U.S.-funded technical training center for the Philippine Coast Guard recently hosted a ground-breaking ceremony in January and exemplified our increased partnership with the Philippines. Both countries agree to improve territorial

defense capabilities and establish a secure mil-to-mil communications network for crisis and contingency operations.

Kingdom of Thailand

The U.S.-Thailand treaty alliance is long-standing and built on a mutual interest in maintaining stability in mainland Southeast Asia and throughout the region. The alliance has grown even stronger since Thailand returned to a democratically elected government in 2019, adapting to address new challenges with military education and training, increased interoperability, and modernization of our defense and security institutions.

Thailand's cooperation with the U.S. is evident in our numerous exercises throughout the theater. Exercise COBRA GOLD, which has taken place every year since 1982, increases readiness for thousands of Thai and U.S. troops annually. U.S. access to Utapao Air Base and other sites enable joint logistics activities, including initial site surveys for Hat Yai and Namphong. Thailand has purchased more than \$3 billion in U.S. foreign military sales (FMS) with over 200 active FMS sales cases. Current defense spending is approximately \$6.2 billion per year or roughly 1.5% of GDP.

Other Indo-Pacific Allied Nations

Canada

Canada remains a firm ally and staunch defender of the rules-based international order. Canada deploys highly capable security forces to the Pacific to support UNSCR enforcement efforts and ensure freedom of navigation. Canada executed a combined Taiwan Strait Transit with the U.S. in 2021, while also participating in multi-carrier operations and supporting exercises throughout the region. Canada is shifting focus and resources towards the Indo-Pacific and is expected to release an updated Indo-Pacific Strategy in 2022 that reflects these changes.

France

America's oldest ally with the largest EEZ of any country in the region, France, has increased its operational activities in the region to support the rule of law and ensure freedom of navigation, including a patrol by a nuclear attack submarine and support to UNSCR sanction enforcement against North Korea. It is a significant contributor to FVEY-Plus multilateral efforts

on IUU fishing, drug and human trafficking, and community resilience related to natural disasters and climate change. France consistently leads efforts to expand multilateral cooperation such as exercise LA PEROUSE, which brought together naval assets from Australia, France, India, Japan, and the United States to operate in the Bay of Bengal. This year, exercise MARARA will enhance multilateral Humanitarian Assistance/Disaster Relief (HA/DR) interoperability in Oceania.

United Kingdom (U.K.)

In 2021 the U.K. published its Defence Integrated Review to deliver a more prominent and persistent presence in the Indo-Pacific. The current U.K. defense posture in the region includes the Brunei Garrison with approximately 700 troops, and two offshore patrol vessels that will remain in the Pacific for the next ten years.

The U.K. also demonstrated its immense capacity to project combat power into the region through the deployment of the HMS Queen Elizabeth Carrier Strike Task Group, which included embarked U.K. and U.S. Marine Corps F-35Bs and escort ships from the Netherlands and the United States. During its time in the region, the Strike Group conducted operations in the Indian Ocean, the Philippine Sea, and the South and East China Seas, participating in multi-carrier operations alongside Australia, Canada, Japan, and New Zealand assets. Over the next two years, the U.K. intends to deploy more forces to the region as part of a sustained global Britain policy, including a permanent amphibious task group and the Littoral Response Group (South), which will be configured to operate in the Indian and Pacific Oceans.

Strategic Partnerships

India

The world's largest democracy, India is a strong, capable partner with a closely aligned vision of a free and open Indo-Pacific. Recently, we entered into information sharing agreements, and we continue to expand our operations together. USINDOPACOM maximizes cooperation, information sharing, and interoperability in exercises like SEA DRAGON, TIGER TRIUMPH, and MALABAR. With respect to the Line of Actual Control, we continue to support direct dialogue and a peaceful resolution of border disputes.

Over the past decade, India substantially increased its acquisition of U.S. defense equipment by purchasing U.S.-sourced platforms such as MH-60Rs, P-8s, C-130Js, C-17s, AH-64s, CH-47s, and M777 howitzers. India may purchase other U.S. systems such as F-21s (former F-16s), F/A-18s, additional P-8s, and UAVs in the future.

Singapore

A capable partner who shares our values, Singapore continues to support U.S. military presence in Southeast Asia to deliver regional stability and underpin economic growth. USINDOPACOM persistently operates both permanent and rotational forces from Singapore, a critical sustainment, air, maritime, and command and control location for the U.S. We work collaboratively to strengthen Singapore's defense capabilities to include training pilots and finalizing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with USCYBERCOM to advance cybersecurity information sharing, exchange threat indicators, and engage in cooperation on cyber issues.

As a security leader in the region, Singapore hosts a CTIF with partners from Australia, Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, New Zealand, and the Philippines. The CTIF is a collaborative, multilateral, operational partnership that employs network analysis and multilayer analytics to identify potential terrorist threats in partnership with Singapore law enforcement and the FBI.

Developing Regional Partnerships

Southeast Asia

Southeast Asia, consisting of the ten members of ASEAN and Timor Leste, encompasses a vital engine for the world's economy and a diverse group of people who share our desire for a free and open Indo-Pacific.

USINDOPACOM operates throughout the region, participates in ASEAN exercises, conducts key leader engagements, and supports mechanisms that promote practical multilateral cooperation related to the wide spectrum of shared transnational challenges the region confronts. USINDOPACOM also co-chairs, along with Thailand, the ASEAN Defense Ministers' Meeting-Plus Experts' Working Group on Maritime Security to bolster efforts to promote safe maritime operations in accordance with international law. 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 manner that contradicts international law and accedes to Beijing's territorial and maritime claims.

Brunei

Brunei consistently advocates for policies that support the rules-based international order, and it supports U.S. presence as a stabilizing force in the region. USINDOPACOM conducts a number of bilateral and multilateral exercises with Brunei annually to further security cooperation. We are further negotiating an updated Acquisition Cross Servicing Agreement (ACSA) and are developing options to strengthen our military partnership.

Burma (Myanmar)

The Department of Defense remains deeply concerned over the February 2021 military coup d'état and the horrific violence it has inflicted on the people. USINDOPACOM does not engage the Burmese military. Nevertheless, we continue to encourage our international partners, especially those in the region, to press the regime to cease the violence, release all those unjustly detained, including State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi, government officials, political leaders, journalists, human rights activists, and other members of civil society, and restore Burma's path to democracy. We continue to support efforts to deny the regime international credibility and to provide assistance to the people of Burma who have shown they do not want to live one more day under military rule.

Cambodia

In early 2017, Cambodia suspended all military-to-military exercises with the United States. The Department maintains serious concerns about the PRC's military presence and construction of facilities at Ream Naval Base on the Gulf of Thailand. However, USINDOPACOM continues to cooperate with Cambodia on humanitarian mine clearance actions and Missing in Action (MIA) personnel accounting engagements through the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA).

Indonesia

Indonesia, the largest Muslim-majority democracy, possesses an expanding economy and plays an essential role in the regional security architecture. The leadership of the Indonesian Armed Forces are pursuing measures to improve joint capabilities and enhance their ability to defend their sovereign territory and exclusive economic zone. USINDOPACOM supports these efforts, and we are taking action to improve information and intelligence sharing, enhance our exercise program, and expand access for rotational U.S. forces. USINDOPACOM is well-positioned to support increased demand for enhanced military-to-military, bilateral cooperation, and emerging multilateral training opportunities in 2022.

Laos

Since the United States and Laos signed a Comprehensive Partnership in 2016, we have observed Laos seeking additional security cooperation from partners such as ASEAN and the United States. Progress will remain slow, but the U.S., allies, and partners continue building trust through COVID vaccine distribution, English language training, and security cooperation activities.

Malaysia

Malaysia maintains a staunch policy of support to ASEAN and regional stability. Their defense efforts focus on maritime security, counterterrorism, HA/DR, peacekeeping, transnational crime, and border protection. The U.S.-Malaysia mil-to-mil relationship is improving, and USINDOPACOM provides support to Malaysia's defense efforts through exercises and subject matter expert exchanges.

Timor Leste

Timor Leste is an emerging partner that welcomes expanded U.S. security cooperation. The 2021 Baucau MOU paved the way for more significant security cooperation through an airfield rehabilitation project. U.S.-provided aircraft support interoperability with Australia-provided Guardian Class Patrol Boats to build Timor Leste's Defense Force capabilities.

Vietnam

Vietnam shares U.S. views on the importance of freedom of navigation and adherence to the rules-based order in the South China Sea and consistently seeks to protect its autonomy and economic rights. Vietnam is a growing security partner for the United States, and USINDOPACOM is working to strengthen defense cooperation.

Vietnam and the U.S. are expected to sign a three-year Defense Cooperation Plan of Action for 2022-2024 and an updated Defense MOU Annex codifying new cooperation areas, including defense trade, pilot training, cyber, and personnel accounting (POW/MIA). Existing areas of cooperation include an Army HA/DR pre-position initiative, USTRANSCOM en-route mobility operations, and the delivery of a third Excess Defense Article (EDA) Hamilton class cutter to Vietnam's Coast Guard alongside construction of maintenance and training facilities.

Northeast Asia

Mongolia

Mongolia seeks to develop deeper relationships with the United States and other like-minded countries to advance its security and policy objectives. The Mongolian Armed Forces (MAF) have been a reliable contributor to Global Peacekeeping Operations for many years, and they are now exploring how to strengthen their defense efforts and further the professionalization of their forces.

We support the MAF's efforts to strengthen their military, which include developing a professional military education program for officers and noncommissioned officers, expanding their Special Operations Forces capability, and reconstituting their Air Force. Our engagement with Mongolia favorably shapes the regional security environment.

Taiwan

USINDOPACOM conducts military activities with Taiwan consistent with our policy as articulated in the Taiwan Relations Act (TRA) to support Taiwan's self-defense and in accordance with the U.S. on China policy, as guided by the TRA, three U.S.-China Joint Communiqués, and the Six Assurances.

South Asia**Bangladesh**

Bangladesh is an important security partner with a common vision for a free and open Indo-Pacific. Bangladesh conducts more than 100 security cooperation activities annually in areas such as maritime security, counterterrorism, HA/DR, and U.N. peacekeeping operations. We are seeking to conclude agreements that will enable Bangladesh to exchange logistic support and investigating other ways to strengthen security cooperation.

Maldives

The Maldives government is a strong promoter of the rules-based international order and desires improved relations with the United States. Our defense cooperation efforts with the Maldives include counterterrorism (CT) activities, the Maritime Security Initiative (MSI), Security Forces Assistance Brigade engagements, and information-sharing. These activities will improve CT efforts, maritime security, and maritime domain awareness capacity. Additionally, the Maldives is using \$7M in U.S. funding to purchase small boats, radars, and communications equipment, which will expand their Coast Guard's capabilities.

Nepal

Nepal seeks to expand its HA/DR capabilities while strengthening its defense institutions and sustaining its support for UN Peacekeeping Operations. The U.S. maintains a strong partnership with the Nepalese Army and supports its institution building efforts through a variety of exercise, exchange, and educational activities.

Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka shows a continued willingness for security cooperation with the United States. USINDOPACOM seeks an expeditionary logistics capability in Sri Lanka with infrastructure, prepositioned materiel, and the agreement structure to ensure its operation and sustainability. We will seek to conclude agreements to strengthen the U.S.-Sri Lanka bilateral defense relationship and enable rotational forces in support of expeditionary logistics.

Oceania

Oceania is vital to a free and open Indo-Pacific based on sea lines of communication (SLOCs) connecting the U.S. with our allies and partners. While the devastating impacts of natural disasters and rising sea levels caused by climate change pose the greatest security threat to the Pacific Island Countries (PICs), the most immediate challenge remains negative economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. The PICs' secondary security priorities are countering illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing, transnational crime, and drug trafficking while improving cybersecurity and maritime domain awareness.

USINDOPACOM continues to strengthen our bilateral military relationships Fiji, Tonga, and Papua New Guinea. In addition, USINDOPACOM routinely engages with the Freely Associated States (FAS)—the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI), and the Republic of Palau—with which the United States have signed Compacts of Free Association (COFA). We are also coordinating multilateral efforts with other like-minded nations, to include FVEY and France, to synchronize and improve the alignment of our security cooperation efforts in Oceania.

Meanwhile, the PRC engages in provocative economic and diplomatic tactics meant to intimidate other countries throughout Oceania. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the PRC established new embassies in Kiribati in May 2020 and the Solomon Islands in September 2020. The PRC is also moving to increase its Defense Attaché footprint with Papua New Guinea, Fiji, and Tonga. In the Solomon Islands, the PRC entered into a security agreement with the Islands' Police Force.

The Freely Associated States (FAS)

The Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI), and the Republic of Palau each have a Compact of Free Association with the United States. Under the COFAs, the United States has full authority and responsibility for security and defense matters in and relating to each of these three countries, including special and extensive access to operate in these territories and the ability to deny access to these three countries by any third country militaries. Our agreements with FAS allow us to sustain a forward combat credible presence. Ongoing negotiations related to the Compacts of Free Association (COFA), led by the

U.S. State Department, are vital to the maintenance of our historically good relationships with the FAS and represent USINDOPACOM's highest diplomatic priority.

USINDOPACOM engages in military construction projects throughout the FAS to improve air and maritime infrastructure, enhance domain awareness, and support FAS efforts to protect their economic interests.

Fiji

Fiji is a stalwart defense partner who consistently advocates for our shared values. We continue to expand our defense relationship with Fiji through preparations for future exercises, ship visits, defense dialogues, and the signing of the State Partnership Program with the Nevada National Guard. Fiji's leadership further strongly supports multilateral collaboration amongst regional armed forces, collaborating with Australia and New Zealand to develop the Black Rock Integrated Peacekeeping Center and to professionalize Fiji's armed forces.

New Zealand

New Zealand is a highly respected security partner that contributes to HA/DR efforts, supports UNSCR implementation, and conducts operations to ensure freedom of navigation in accordance with international law, such as its multilateral SCS patrol in the fall of 2021. New Zealand consistently supports its neighbors to strengthen their defense capabilities, improve their ability to respond to HA/DR crises, and address transnational concerns.

Papua New Guinea (PNG)

Papua New Guinea is an emerging security partner that seeks expanded U.S. security cooperation. USINDOPACOM seeks a Defense Cooperation Agreement (DCA) that enhances elements of the Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) to support future force posture and security cooperation activities that will enhance PNG defense capabilities.

Tonga

Tonga remains an active and consistent contributor to the rules-based international order and has supported U.S. security efforts around the world. Tonga's armed forces remain focused on recovery from the recent volcanic eruption and support to the government's COVID response.

USINDOPACOM is positioned to resume defense cooperation activities, including future training and exercises, once repairs are complete and COVID restrictions are lifted.

Actions to Address Security Impacts of Climate Change

In response to security impacts of climate change, USINDOPACOM is reinforcing infrastructure, increasing resilience at our own facilities, and assisting partner nations to do the same. In coordination with allies and partners, we have established the Community for Indo-Pacific Climate Security (CIPCS), comprised of military and civil sector experts to address climate impacts on security. This network will share information and approaches to regional collaboration to increase understanding and manage the security impacts of climate change. Furthermore, the command has partnered with the University of Hawaii to leverage their expertise and climate research to promote regional security, stability, and sustainability.

Actions to Promote an Inclusive Workplace

USINDOPACOM is fully committed to fostering an environment of dignity and respect where all who serve can perform to their fullest potential. This includes reviewing the recently concluded command climate survey to determine if additional actions are required. We continue to support all recently implemented changes in the Headquarters to include a fully dedicated, on-site Sexual Assault Prevention Response (SAPR) office and new Equal Opportunity (E.O.)/Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) program to show our commitment to promote an inclusive workplace. In order to demonstrate leadership in this area, the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) program was highlighted as one of the three main topics at the 2021 Chiefs of Defense (CHOD) Conference hosted in Hawaii.

Women, Peace, and Security (WPS)

Encouraging our allies and partners to recognize the potential of all their citizens and uphold international human rights is an effort outlined in the Women, Peace and Security Act, and one USINDOPACOM is executing with our Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) program. WPS promotes the values desired by all people: dignity, human rights, and equality under the law. Bipartisan Congressional support for the WPS Act has enabled the initiative to become a vital part of our security cooperation efforts. Investment in WPS conveys a strong values-based

narrative, setting the United States apart from our competitors who fail to promote equal opportunity and gender equality.

This past year at our Chiefs of Defense Conference, Japan's Vice Minister for Defense, Rui Matsukawa, delivered a powerful speech about the role of women in the military. All the participants recognized the importance and are now assessing the expansion of the role of women in their respective militaries. We remain committed to integrating WPS goals into our framework for security cooperation.

Our WPS program has expanded because of the growing appetite for WPS implementation across the region. USINDOPACOM prioritizes partnering on WPS with other nations to reinforce mutual strategic objectives, increase common understanding, and promote force interoperability. Tailored WPS initiatives with partner nations include Timor-Leste, the Pacific Islands with a focus on Fiji and Papua New Guinea, the Quad nations, Thailand, and the Philippines, among others, to advance USINDOPACOM strategic objectives.

Conclusion

USINDOPACOM has made significant strides toward improving our deterrence posture, but there is more work to do. The PRC remains our pacing challenge and strives to harness all forms of national power to mount a sustained assault against the rules-based international order. This competition has expanded in all domains, to include space and cyber. Executing an effective strategy of integrated deterrence requires adjusting our force posture and mounting a dedicated campaign funded by substantial investments to defend the homeland, deliver deterrence, and strengthen our allies and partners.

The United States must capitalize on our current technological advantage and equip forces with the world's most sophisticated weapon systems and use combined, secure networks with our allies and partners to prevent conflict. This effort requires fielding an integrated Joint force with precision-strike networks, anti-ship, and anti-air capabilities inside the First Island Chain; integrated air and missile defense in the Second Island Chain; and an enhanced force posture that provides the ability to sustain extended combat operations.

We will work tirelessly to preserve peace, stability, and the rules-based international order that has benefited all nations for more than 80 years. We do not seek conflict, nor will we shy away from robust competition. The resources we commit now, and in the future, will

preserve a free and open Indo-Pacific, strengthen our deterrence posture, and provide us the ability to fight and win should deterrence fail.

Admiral John C. Aquilino, U.S. Navy
Commander, U.S. Indo-Pacific Command

Admiral John Aquilino is the 26th Commander of the United States Indo-Pacific Command, the nation's oldest and largest combatant command. USINDOPACOM includes 380,000 Soldiers, Sailors, Marines, Airmen, Guardians, Coast Guardsmen and Department of Defense civilians and is responsible for all U.S. military activities in the Indo-Pacific, covering 36 nations, 14 time zones, and more than 50 percent of the world's population.

A native of Huntington, NY, he graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy in 1984, earning a Bachelor of Science in physics. He subsequently entered flight training and earned his wings in August 1986.

Operationally, he served in numerous fighter squadrons flying the F-14 A/B Tomcat and the F-18 C/E/F Hornet. His fleet assignments included the Ghostriders (VF-142) and Black Aces (VF-41). He commanded the famous Red Rippers (VF-11) and Carrier Air Wing 2. His extended deployments were in support of Operations Deny Flight, Deliberate Force, Southern Watch, Noble Eagle, Enduring Freedom, and Iraqi Freedom.

Ashore, Aquilino's assignments included duties as an adversary instructor pilot flying the A-4, F-5, and F-16N aircraft for the Challengers (VF-43); operations officer for the Strike Weapons and Tactics School, Atlantic; flag aide to the vice chief of naval operations; special assistant for weapons systems and advanced development in the office of legislative affairs for the U.S. secretary of defense; director of air wing readiness and training for the commander, Naval Air Forces, U.S. Atlantic Fleet; and executive assistant to the commander, U.S. Fleet Forces Command.

His flag assignments included director of strategy and policy, U.S. Joint Forces Command; deputy director, joint force coordinator, the Joint Staff; commander, Carrier Strike Group 2 aboard USS GEORGE H.W. BUSH (CVN- 77); director of maritime operations, U.S. Pacific Fleet; deputy chief of naval operations for operations, plans and strategy; and commander, U.S. Naval Forces Central Command/U.S. Fifth Fleet/Combined Maritime Forces. Prior to his assignment to U.S. Indo-Pacific Command, Aquilino served as the 36th commander of U.S. Pacific Fleet.

Aquilino graduated from Navy Fighter Weapons School (TOPGUN) and the Joint Forces Staff College. He completed Harvard Kennedy School's executive education program in national and international security.

He is entitled to wear the Distinguished Service Medal, Defense Superior Service Medal, Legion of Merit, Bronze Star Medal, Air Medal as well as several other personal unit and campaign awards. He accumulated more than 5,100 mishap free flight hours and over 1,150 carrier-arrested landings.

STATEMENT OF
GENERAL PAUL J. LaCAMERA
COMMANDER, UNITED NATIONS COMMAND;
COMMANDER, UNITED STATES-REPUBLIC OF KOREA COMBINED FORCES
COMMAND;
AND COMMANDER, UNITED STATES FORCES KOREA

BEFORE THE
HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE

FISCAL YEAR 2023



Introduction

Chairman Smith, Ranking Member Rogers, and Distinguished Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide you a written statement. I am pleased to update you on the great work done by our dedicated personnel who serve in the Republic of Korea (ROK), 7,000 miles away from Washington, D.C., professionally executing the missions of United Nations Command (UNC), Combined Forces Command (CFC), and United States Forces Korea (USFK). I appreciate your leadership and dedication in supporting our Servicemembers, Civilians, Contractors, and their Families who work with our Korean allies and United Nations Sending States (UNSS) and United Nations Command-Rear (UNC-R) elements in order to maintain a stable and secure environment on the Korean Peninsula.

The United States-Republic of Korea (U.S.-ROK) Alliance was forged in the crucible of combat. It is principled on our shared sacrifices, core values, and demonstrated commitment to deter any adversary who challenges the international rules-based order and may intend us harm. This Alliance is the linchpin of regional stability and has prevented a resumption of the hostilities that shredded the post-World War II peace on the Korean Peninsula almost 72 years ago. The U.S. commitment to the ROK remains ironclad, and our Servicemembers, along with ROK military, are trained and ready to respond to a provocation or crisis.

We must not forget, however, that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) continues to pose significant threats to regional and global security. We have not seen any indication that they have ceased research, development, and testing of capabilities that threaten the Korean Peninsula, our allies and partners in the Indo-Pacific region, and our collective security interest. The DPRK's recent missile launches validate this observation. As such, maintaining a high level of combat readiness, sustainment, and personnel remain priorities at the Commands so that we

can continue to preserve the regional peace that the U.S. and ROK, as well as our United Nations Sending States, fought hard to secure seven decades ago.

This Posture Statement provides an assessment of our security environment, a discussion of our enduring commitments to the U.S.-ROK Alliance, and an overview of our combined and joint training and teamwork. It also calls your attention to our resourcing needs and updates you on the no-fail task of strengthening our Force and Families.

The Security Environment Surrounding the Korean Peninsula

The Indo-Pacific is the priority theater for the United States. To effectively operate in this complex and dynamic environment, we must work with our allies and partners to increase awareness of the strategic ambitions of China and Russia. For this reason, we will continue to look to work with the ROK to align our Indo-Pacific Strategy with the ROK Southern Policy. However, we must simultaneously remain focused on the fundamental purpose of the Alliance which is the security of our Republic of Korea ally and to deter the DPRK in order to support diplomacy and allow for a peaceful resolution of tensions, while also remaining postured to “Fight Tonight” should deterrence fail.

Using the right mix of technology, operational concepts, and capabilities, the Department of Defense (DoD) is executing Secretary of Defense Austin’s vision for Integrated Deterrence. Our method of employing Integrated Deterrence is to weave together all the instruments of national power, the Alliance, allies, and partners to make adversaries pause in their desire to challenge or injure us and our national interests.

We observed a reduction in tensions along the Demilitarized Zone between the ROK and DPRK after inter-Korean confidence building measures were established in 2018. However, the DPRK has not ceased their activities to develop nuclear and advanced missile systems; we see this through the missile tests that have occurred over the past year. The DPRK continues to pursue

capabilities to hold our Korean and Japanese allies at risk with short and medium range missiles, hold U.S. strategic bases within the region at risk with intermediate range missiles, and hold at risk the U.S. with its intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) program.

Last October, the DPRK Defense Expo showcased a variety of missile capabilities with greater range, accuracy, and lethality while shortening the missile load and launch time from legacy DPRK ballistic missile systems. In January 2022, the DPRK followed this by launching an unprecedented amount of missiles – ranging from the tactical- short-range-, medium-range and intermediate-range systems – that revealed developmental missile systems including advanced warheads and demonstrated maneuverability. We must assume that some of these systems are likely intended to be nuclear capable. In 2020, the DPRK displayed a new ICBM larger than those tested in 2017.

The DPRK also continues to advance cyber capabilities and other conventional and emerging asymmetric military technologies. Various sources reported that the regime stole \$400 million in cryptocurrency last year. The 2021 unclassified Annual Threat Assessment by the Office of the Director of National Intelligence states that the money the DPRK secures from cybercrimes likely helps the regime fund its priorities such as nuclear and missile programs, rather than to reduce the hardships of its people.

The regime's serious commitment to aggressively pursue a weapons development program is noteworthy as it occurred during a period of extreme economic constraint resulting from years of sanctions, recent natural disasters, and of course the ongoing COVID-19 global pandemic. The DPRK's lack of transparency has hindered our ability to fully evaluate the impact of the global pandemic on the regime or its populace. Nevertheless, based on our limited observation, we assess that the pandemic has provided an opportunity to the regime's leadership to consolidate and

reorganize their economic activities, tighten the control over their general population, and enhance its power structure for the preservation of regime survivability.

Despite all the challenges, the DPRK expended great resources and effort to advance the full range of its ballistic missiles with the intent of targeting the U.S. and defeating Alliance missile defenses on the Peninsula. We are committed to the complete denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, consistent with the President's DPRK Policy. Our Integrated Deterrence approach is designed to deter conflict on the Korean Peninsula while preserving space for continued diplomatic efforts.

One Commander, Three Commands

Our three Commands - UNC, CFC, and USFK - must remain vigilant, prepared, and ready. Under one Commander, these three Commands are empowered to maintain a stabilized security environment for the ROK, our regional allies, and partners. Each Command has its own separate set of authorities and chain of command along with different challenges and opportunities. The common thread that ties these three Commands together is an ironclad commitment to the defense of the ROK, born in battle, and maintained with trust.

International Legitimacy (UNC)

When Communist Forces invaded South Korea in 1950, 22 United Nations' Member States answered the call of United Nations Security Council Resolutions (UNSCR 83, 84, 85) to exercise collective self-defense in support of the ROK and to reinforce the international rules-based orders. These U.N. Sending States (UNSS) provided forces and medical support to a unified command, the United Nations Command; UNC demonstrated an international will against the aggression. Under U.S. leadership, UNSS contributed to the fight with their national resources, and their unrelenting support and commitment to the peace and stability of the Korean Peninsula.

The mission of UNC is to enforce the 1953 Armistice Agreement, coordinate UNSS contributions, and execute assigned functions directed by the U.S. National Authorities through the Joint Chiefs of Staff to restore peace and security on the Korean Peninsula. Maintaining the integrity of the Armistice Agreement is a UNC priority, as is maintaining UNSS cohesion, situational awareness, and support to the U.S.-ROK Alliance.

UNC ensures a true multilateral effort in support of armistice conditions while maintaining the utmost respect for ROK sovereignty. It helps lessen tensions across the Korean Peninsula through leading the UNC Military Armistice Commission, Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission, and UNC-Rear headquarters element in Japan. UNC also diligently carries out its mission while supporting ROK Government initiatives such as the Comprehensive Military Agreement with DPRK. Recently, our most sacred and rewarding mission has been the repatriation of Korean War remains, which provided closure and some measure of comfort to the families of our fallen.

UNC is also capable of functioning as a coordinating headquarters for international contributions in times of crisis. It possesses the ability to serve as “a ready-made Combined Joint Task Force”, demonstrating international legitimacy and support for U.S.-ROK responses to DPRK’s provocations or aggression. True to UNC’s motto “Under One Flag,” we believe in the notion that if you want to go fast, then go alone; if you want to go far, then go together. Our collective efforts and resolve provide the foundation upon which progress towards peace on the Korean Peninsula can be built. Key to the Command’s success is maintaining trust with the Republic of Korea government.

Combined Teamwork of the U.S.-ROK Alliance (CFC)

CFC is the combined warfighting headquarters representing the U.S.-ROK bilateral military partnership. Formed in 1978, it is a unique entity that takes policy, direction, and missions from the

Combined Military Committee and is governed by and subject to bi-national decision-making and consensus.

As the ROK military has matured to become one of the world's most capable militaries, the United States remains fully committed to the bilaterally Conditions-based Operational Control (OPCON) Transition Plan. This Plan has three bilaterally-approved conditions that must be met before a transition occurs: 1) the ROK acquires the 26 critical military capabilities required to lead the combined defense; 2) the Alliance must have comprehensive response capabilities against DPRK's nuclear and missile threats; and 3) the security environment on the Korean Peninsula and in the region must be conducive to a stable transition. Since a critical characteristic of CFC is the bi-national decision-making structure, even after the transition, the structure will remain to ensure equal representation in the governing body.

The leadership of both countries continue working to realize the conditions-based OPCON transition, and this remains a priority. We are also focused on the no-fail mission to maintain the combat readiness and interoperability of our combined force. The aggregate result of over seven decades of our Alliance has significantly increased the need for secure and interoperable systems and the U.S. and Korean Servicemembers who comprise CFC focus on exercising and improving our joint and combined interoperability and combat readiness.

Our semi-annual theater-level Combined Command Post Training (CCPT) is our premier training event to maintain our combined combat readiness. Over several weeks, U.S., ROK, and multinational Servicemembers operate from our command posts, and are immersed in a realistic and challenging scenario focusing on the defense of the ROK. This training stresses UNC, CFC, USFK, and ROK systems, improves our interoperability and defines our processes as well as tactics, techniques, and procedures.

During CCPT, we also simulate coordination with ROK civilian authorities, allies, and partners in order to manage the anticipated magnitude of multinational evacuation operations. Since there are more than two million citizens from over 30 countries residing in the ROK, evacuating non-combatants from the Korean Peninsula in a crisis would require herculean and multinational efforts. Exercising such operations in a multinational format is crucial for all of us on the Peninsula to be ready to protect non-combatants while creating a maneuver space for the military to deter and defeat aggression.

As combined readiness is a no-fail mission, we must maintain our ability to train at individual, unit, and combined levels through joint, live, virtual, and constructive formats. Only when we maintain combined readiness, can CFC, as the heart of the U.S.-ROK Alliance, stand as a deterrent to any provocative DPRK behaviors. Maintaining deterrence allows the Force to maintain the Armistice and respond in crisis. More importantly, it allows for the diplomatic process to continue.

U.S. Commitment to Korea (USFK)

USFK is the premier Joint Force committed to defending the security of the ROK. It is disciplined, trained, and ready to Fight Tonight, respond in crisis, and win in conflict. The Joint Services that comprise USFK are maintaining a high level of readiness to ensure they are also prepared to support the mission. The command's leaders and Servicemembers know that combat readiness is perishable; we conduct rigorous training to maximize unit and individual combat readiness.

However, we do have to contend with challenges associated with our readiness. As the ROK has developed to be the 10th largest economy in the world, smaller towns and villages have become vibrant cities, and their populations have grown. As a result, in some areas local construction and

encroachment have become hindrances and challenges to training execution. Our personnel turnover rates also provide challenges to commanders at all levels.

The threats to the Korean Theater of Operations necessitate tough and realistic training. The physical size of available ranges and insufficient airspace present challenges for our forces such as aircrew proficiency and artillery gunnery proficiency. Although three ranges are currently available for U.S. forces to train on – Pilsung Range, Jik-Do Range, and Rodriguez Range - various restrictions that prohibit flexible and comprehensive training require our Air Component to use off-Peninsula opportunities to meet training requirements. Given that the ROK military's readiness is crucial to the overall defense of the Peninsula, we have opened the door to include ROK forces in off-Peninsula training opportunities to ensure they are not impacted by similar range issues. We need a combined U.S.-ROK solution that supports robust, day or night, live-fire and force-on-force training.

Limited access to the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense site at Camp Carroll also affects several issues linked to our readiness. Despite significant progress in increasing access to the site over the last year, unfettered access is required to fully ensure logistical support at the site, and improve the quality of life for Servicemembers stationed there. Limited access also slows the pace of construction projects on site which is critical for maintaining the system's capabilities, crew training, and upgrades. All of this hinders the Alliance's ability to operate this defensive system and defend the ROK people, as well as U.S. and ROK service members.

Another challenge is that we are at the end of the global supply chain which could impact the combat readiness of our essential munitions, ballistic missile defense systems, and pre-positioned wartime stocks. While increased resourcing in 2018 improved our posture and did help "Set the Theater", the improvements were not a permanent fix to our logistics and sustainment

challenges. Careful maintenance of these resources is an ongoing requirement necessary to sustaining increased readiness levels.

Additionally, there remain asymmetric threats that require solutions through additional interoperability and information processing capabilities. USFK continues to work with DoD to address deficiencies in deep look persistent/semi-persistent Command, Control, Computers, Communications, Cyber-defense, Intelligence, Surveillance, Reconnaissance, and Targeting (C5ISR), all of which will enhance situational awareness and inform our critical decision-making.

The U.S.-ROK Alliance anchors the preservation of peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula and the mission. It is critical we maintain a correct mix of highly proficient forces both on and off the Peninsula, paired with the proper capabilities. The Joint Force remains fully committed to maintaining high levels of combat readiness in order to counter any threat that may challenge it.

Strengthening the Force and Families

Servicemembers, Civilians, Families, and Contractors who support the Forces are our most precious resource, and taking care of our people is also a no-fail task. This involves continuous assessment and addressing of systemic issues so that we can provide a safe and inclusive environment. We continue to look for ways to build our multi-cultural community to ensure Korea remains an assignment of choice for our personnel and their Families.

We have zero tolerance for sexual assault, sexual harassment, discrimination, bigotry, or racism. We continue to strive to eliminate these corrosive detractors to trust, morale, readiness, and human dignity throughout the commands with initiatives such as listening sessions, team building exercises, workforce surveys, education, enhanced prevention programs, and enforcement. We have reinforced to our leaders that they have the authorities and responsibilities, in accordance with Services' regulations, and must foster an environment of dignity, respect, and trust that is free from

discrimination. We owe our people good leadership and the opportunity to be their individual and collective best.

Our goal is enhanced collective awareness, dialogue, reporting, feedback, and support to eliminate all forms of discrimination within our community. Toward this goal, we will continue to rely and build on our Strength in Diversity initiative to recognize, enhance, and appreciate that our strength is our diversity and inclusivity within our community. Senior U.S. leaders in the ROK will continue to stress the importance of these initiatives on their subordinates and ensure they are incorporated at all levels.

USFK has several infrastructure and garrison installation housing priorities throughout the ROK. These priorities include managing on-post housing, addressing aging infrastructure, and meeting new mission requirements. Of note, we have six new housing tower units under construction at U.S. Army Garrison (USAG)-Humphreys scheduled for completion no later than 2023. This will meet the requirement to have 40% of command sponsored Families residing on USAG-Humphreys. DoD's military construction (MILCON) is required for valid mission requirements that mitigate operational capability gaps in the ROK. MILCON is also the only source for community support requirements, such as dorms, family housing, and fitness centers, which enhance Fight Tonight capabilities. We appreciate the support from Congress for these DoD MILCON projects as well as ROK funded construction projects through the Special Measures Agreements and the Yongsan Relocation Program.

The health of our community is important, and the Brian D. Allgood Army Community Hospital (BDAACH) at USAG-Humphreys is the medical asset equipped to support 65,000 eligible beneficiaries. BDAACH is an irreplaceable part of caring for the physical, mental, and emotional health of our Servicemembers, Families, and Civilians, many of whom are young, away from home for long periods of time, and combat veterans.

Behavioral health and the well-being of our community is essential to the readiness of the Total Force. To achieve psychological readiness, we are proactively taking action to provide the highest quality of behavioral health care to mitigate the impact of risk factors on our Servicemembers and their Families. This includes addressing misconceptions and stigma surrounding mental illness, implementing comprehensive approaches to suicide prevention, and recognizing the adverse impact of unique stressors, to include the COVID-19 pandemic.

BDAACH has proven critical to supporting our operations to fully vaccinate our USFK-affiliated population in accordance with DoD guidance, including U.S. retirees and local national employees, in order to maintain peak operational readiness. At the time of this writing, 98% of Servicemembers and 90% of our total population are fully vaccinated. COVID-19 has emphasized that the health of our force directly links to our overall readiness, and we continue to manage the impact of this pandemic in accordance with U.S. and ROK government guidelines and requirements.

Way Forward

I am honored to command and serve this dedicated multinational, combined, and joint force in one of the most significant and dynamic regions of the world. Those who serve in the ROK are committed, capable, and well-supported. The Force is postured to deter aggression, defend the Republic of Korea protect U.S. interests, and if called upon, defeat any adversary.

As long as the threat persists, the ironclad U.S.-ROK Alliance remains vigilant, determined, and steadfast in our defense, not just on the Korean Peninsula but across the region. As the Commander of these incredible Servicemembers, I appreciate this Committee's continued support to fully prepare them to fight and win, on the most dangerous distance – that last 100 meters of land, sea, air, cyber, or space.

Under One Flag! Katchi Kapshida, We Go Together! Fight Tonight!

Gen. Paul J. LaCamera
Commander UNC/CFC/USFK

General Paul J. LaCamera assumed command of United Nations Command, ROK-U.S. Combined Forces Command, and United States Forces Korea (UNC/CFC/USFK) on July 2, 2021.

A native of Westwood, MA, General LaCamera commissioned as an Infantry Officer from the United States Military Academy at West Point in 1985. His education includes a Bachelor of Science from the U.S. Military Academy and a Master of Arts degree from the U.S. Naval War College.

General LaCamera most recently served as the Commanding General of the United States Army's largest Service Component Command, U.S. Army Pacific (USARPAC), headquartered at Fort Shafter, Hawaii, with portions of the command forward-deployed and based throughout the Indo-Pacific.

During his 36 years of service, General LaCamera had the honor to lead and serve with members of all military branches, inter-agency colleagues, and coalition partners from platoon through corps, and a combined joint task force.

General LaCamera's past assignments include: the 82d Airborne Division, XVIII Airborne Corps, U.S. Army Special Operations Command, and Joint Special Operations Command at Fort Bragg, North Carolina; 1st Battalion, 75th Ranger Regiment, Hunter Army Airfield, Georgia; 4th Ranger Training Battalion, 3d Ranger Battalion and the 75th Ranger Regiment at Fort Benning, Georgia; 2d Ranger Battalion, Fort Lewis, Washington; 2d Infantry Division, Eighth United States Army, Republic of Korea; 10th Mountain Division (Light), Fort Drum, New York; 4th Infantry Division, Fort Carson, Colorado; Office of Security Cooperation, Baghdad, Iraq; 25th Infantry Division, and U.S. Army Pacific, Hawaii.

General LaCamera participated in numerous contingency operations including: Operation JUST CAUSE in Panama; Operation UPHOLD DEMOCRACY in Haiti; Operation ANACONDA in Afghanistan; and multiple deployments in support of Operation ENDURING FREEDOM in Afghanistan, Operation IRAQI FREEDOM, Operation NEW DAWN, and Operation INHERENT RESOLVE in Iraq and Syria.

DOCUMENTS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

MARCH 9, 2022

(117)

1. Is there a plan to appoint a presidential representative to negotiate with the FSM and the RMI on behalf of the United States? If so, will this representative have the ability to negotiate across the executive departments?
2. What is the Administration's timeline for concluding the renewal of the Compacts of Free States Association negotiations?
3. What is the Administration's plan to protect United States interests in the Southwest Pacific if the Compacts of Free States Association lapses?"

Thank you in advance for your attention to this important issue. We look forward to your response.



John Garamendi
Chairman
Subcommittee on Readiness



Michael Waltz
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Readiness



U.S. INDO-PACIFIC COMMAND
(USINDOPACOM)
CAMP H M SMITH, HAWAII 96861-4028

March 9, 2022

The Honorable Adam Smith
Chairman
The Honorable Mike Rogers
Ranking Member
Committee on Armed Services
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 25015

Dear Chairman Smith and Ranking Member Rogers,

In testimony before the Committee earlier today, the Commander, U.S. Indo-Pacific Command mistakenly referred to Taiwan as a "nation" during an exchange regarding support to Taiwan's National Guard. At the conclusion of the hearing Admiral Aquilino immediately recognized that he misspoke and is submitting this clarification for the record. As indicated in written testimony and in other exchanges with the Committee members today, USINDOPACOM conducts military activities in accordance with the U.S. one-China policy, as guided by the Taiwan Relations Act, three U.S.-China Joint Communiques, and the Six Assurances.

JAMES B. JARRARD
Major General, U.S. Army
Chief of Staff

**WITNESS RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS ASKED DURING
THE HEARING**

MARCH 9, 2022

RESPONSE TO QUESTION SUBMITTED BY MR. WITTMAN

Dr. RATNER. Australia and the United States have forged a strong military-to-military relationship through shared experiences in peace and combat that extends over 100 years and includes operations most recently in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Syria.

Australia and the United States already train and operate at high levels through current U.S. deployments like Marine Rotational Force Darwin (MRF-D) and Enhanced Air Cooperation (EAC), and major exercises such as TALISMAN SABRE, RIM OF THE PACIFIC, and LARGE SCALE EXERCISE.

Additionally, Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States have personnel exchange programs that embed highly qualified personnel in host nation tactical units and headquarters. These exchanges provide the personnel and their militaries with improved understanding of each others' services and cultures, build partnerships and relationships that strengthen our alliances, and improve coalition operations.

AUKUS is the next step to continue enhancing our ability to operate at the highest levels through the development of the Royal Australian Navy's nuclear powered submarine program and the trilateral development of advanced capabilities. [See page 21.]

RESPONSE TO QUESTION SUBMITTED BY MR. SCOTT

Dr. RATNER. Since the People's Republic of China (PRC) controlled fentanyl-related substances as a class in 2019, the primary source country of fentanyl entering the United States is Mexico. However, the majority of the precursor chemicals used in the synthesis of fentanyl come from the PRC. We continue to press the PRC at the highest levels to enhance oversight of its chemical industry, improve information sharing, strengthen customs enforcement, and implement and enforce "know your customer" standards to restrict sales of narcotics-related precursor chemicals. We are also working closely with our international partners to echo these requests in their engagements with the PRC and to support U.S. proposals for addressing diversion of precursor chemicals in multilateral forums. In March, members of the United Nations Commission on Narcotic Drugs, including the PRC, voted to support a U.S. proposal to internationally control three fentanyl precursor chemicals, and adopted by consensus a U.S.-sponsored resolution on addressing the diversion of uncontrolled chemicals and designer precursors. The Department of State provides funding for the International Narcotics Control Board's (INCB) Databank on Precursor Chemicals, which supports real-time international law enforcement cooperation to prevent diversion and illicit manufacture of precursor chemicals and remains an important tool in helping meaningfully disrupt narcotics flows. [See page 24.]

RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MR. MOULTON

Dr. RATNER. DOD's President's Budget request for Fiscal Year (FY) 2023 includes \$1.1 billion for one America class amphibious assault ship (LHA) and \$1.7 billion for one Flight II San Antonio class amphibious transport dock (LPD). These ships will sustain the ability of amphibious forces to conduct expeditionary warfare. These investments form part of the \$27.9 billion shipbuilding request in DOD's FY 2023 President's budget request, which procures the mix of surface and subsurface ships with the capabilities required to respond to a range of contingencies from strategic deterrence to crisis response. [See page 28.]

Admiral AQUILINO. As the Geographic Combatant Commander, I establish the requirements to support Operational Plans. The services take my requirements and ensure their forces are trained and equipped to meet my operational requirements. I am confident in the Navy's and Marine Corp's abilities to meet my requirements. For the actual readiness rates, I defer to the services, mainly the Chief of Naval Operations and Commandant of the Marine Corps to discuss specific details regarding readiness and availability of the fleet. [See page 28.]

RESPONSE TO QUESTION SUBMITTED BY MR. KHANNA

Dr. RATNER. We remain encouraged by India's diversification of defense equipment over the past decade, including the more than \$20 billion of U.S.-origin defense equipment it has purchased since 2008. We also are strengthening U.S.-India defense cooperation across a range of domains. This includes working closely with India to deepen our bilateral industrial cooperation on co-production and co-development of defense articles, through projects such as the Defense Trade and Technology Initiative (DTTI). This will need to be a prolonged, deliberate effort that cannot happen overnight. As India ramps up its domestic defense industry, it will be able to phase out legacy Russian systems with equipment made in India or purchased from partners and allies. [See page 26.]

RESPONSE TO QUESTION SUBMITTED BY MRS. LURIA

Dr. RATNER. The Taiwan Relations Act provision relating to consultation with Congress reflects the constitutional processes that would be involved in the introduction of U.S. armed forces by the President into an armed conflict.

These same constitutional processes are reflected in our mutual defense treaties with allies in the region that provide for the United States acting with allies to meet a common danger "in accordance with our constitutional provisions and processes."

A U.S. response to a conflict in Taiwan would involve engagement between the President and Congress, which could take place when the facts of the situation are known and, in this respect, would be no different than the involvement of U.S. armed forces in a conflict anywhere in the world. [See page 32.]

RESPONSE TO QUESTION SUBMITTED BY MR. KAHELE

Dr. RATNER. People-to-people exchanges are a critical part of the Department and U.S. government's toolkit for engaging the Indo-Pacific region. The Daniel K. Inouye Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies is a particularly valuable soft power resource for the Department, which facilitates training, education, and the development of strong networks between defense professionals in the Indo-Pacific region. We also work closely with the Department of State in leveraging the U.S. Government's full suite of tools—including the International Military Education and Training (IMET) program—to build people-to-people ties and professional development between the U.S. Department of Defense and our allies and partners. [See page 36.]

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MEMBERS POST HEARING

MARCH 9, 2022

QUESTION SUBMITTED BY MR. LANGEVIN

Mr. LANGEVIN. The National Guard possess a unique international engagement capability they can leverage with the dual professions of its members as well as access to state resources. For example, in the State of Rhode Island our National Guard was paired with Timor-Leste in 2020 under the National Guard State Partnership Program. As you mentioned in your written statement, Timor-Leste is an emerging partner. The State Partnership Program continues to grow in strategic relevance because it provides a low cost-efficient way to build stronger, enduring relationships, and military capacity with partner nations. What is your vision for incorporating the State Partnership Program into your Operations, Activities, and Investments (OAIs) strategy?

Admiral AQUILINO. The State Partnership Program (SPP) provides a unique opportunity to expand cooperation with countries that share common interests with the U.S. and support their capacity across a range of activities, including humanitarian assistance and disaster relief. The relationships cultivated through the SPP typically last for decades. SPP engagements are developed in coordination with my country directors and the Security Cooperation Office.

QUESTION SUBMITTED BY MR. TURNER

Mr. TURNER. Admiral Aquilino, in your testimony before the committee you stated “The resources we commit now and in the future will preserve a free and open Indo-pacific and strengthen our posture and provide us with the ability to fight and win should deterrence fail.”

How does this administration’s continued inaction on renegotiating the Compacts of Free Association with the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, and the Republic of Palau impact your ability to fight today should deterrence fail?

If an agreement was signed tomorrow, as opposed to 2 or 3 years from now, would INDOPACOM be in a better position? If so, please explain how our collective defense would benefit if this open question was resolved.

Admiral AQUILINO. These important agreements strengthen our security relationships throughout the Pacific and mitigate competitors’ influence. However, as a Combatant Commander, the status of the compact negotiations does not impact my readiness or ability to plan. The historically good relationships we’ve enjoyed with these nations have allowed us to maintain a credible forward military presence that continues to this day and promotes regional stability.

I support interagency efforts to speedily conclude the negotiation of the Compact Agreements.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MR. LAMBORN

Mr. LAMBORN. Secretary Austin has stated that one of his top priorities is to strengthen our allies and partners. In order to deter Chinese aggression, Taiwan requires a variety of capabilities including anti-ship missiles, anti-ship mines, and torpedoes. How dependent is Taiwan on U.S. armaments, and how are we increasing our efforts to provide them with additional equipment? Does Taiwan have any research and development or procurement efforts to self-develop these kinds of defensive weapons?

Dr. RATNER. Taiwan maintains its own indigenous defense industry which produces a number of capabilities employed by the Taiwan Armed Forces. As part of the U.S. Government’s provision of defense articles and services to Taiwan, DOD is examining additional ways to expand cooperation. Acquisition and Sustainment (A&S), for example, is working to identify areas of mutual interest where the United States and Taiwan can expand technical cooperation on critical defense capabilities, including under the very recently signed Agreement Between the American Institute in Taiwan and the Taipei Economic and Cultural Representative Office in the United States for Research, Development, Test, and Evaluation Projects. Moreover,

relevant U.S. departments and agencies are working with industry to identify means of partnering with Taiwan's domestic defense industry in mutually beneficial ways.

Mr. LAMBORN. Secretary Austin has stated that one of his top priorities is to strengthen our allies and partners. In order to deter Chinese aggression, Taiwan requires a variety of capabilities including anti-ship missiles, anti-ship mines, and torpedoes. How dependent is Taiwan on U.S. armaments, and how are we increasing our efforts to provide them with additional equipment? Does Taiwan have any research and development or procurement efforts to self-develop these kinds of defensive weapons?

Admiral AQUILINO. Defensive armaments enhance the ability of the Taiwan Armed Forces to deter, delay, or deny military aggression, including assistance provided by the United States consistent with the Taiwan Relations Act. This requires a balanced mix of both Foreign Military Sales (FMS) and capabilities indigenously developed by Taiwan. To enable deterrence, it is imperative for the U.S. Government to deliver FMS cases to Taiwan on schedule. For its part, Taiwan must prepare through a well-resourced and thoughtfully executed budget that focuses on the right investments, including research and development, to prepare for contingency operations.

QUESTION SUBMITTED BY MR. COURTNEY

Mr. COURTNEY. In line with your concept of distributed logistics, and especially in light of the Red Hill closure, do you believe that the 10 vessels authorized under the Tanker Security Program will be enough? If you require greater sealift capacity in the INDOPACOM AOR, how many additional vessels do you need?

Admiral AQUILINO. The Tanker Security Program (TSP) provides assured access to U.S.-Flag Tankers but does not eliminate the risk associated with the U.S.-Flag tanker gap. We believe 10 TSP vessels that can be available at a moment's notice to provide support to our mobile logistics fleet is a good start. However, I concur with the FY20 NDAA tanker study which states an additional 10 TSP vessels would mitigate risk in the contested environment.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MS. SPEIER

Ms. SPEIER. Admiral Aquilino, I have long been concerned by crushing OPTEMPO and its impact on service members and their families. At a recent hearing on suicide prevention in the military, witnesses testified that stress related to excessive OPTEMPO is a key environmental factor that contributes to servicemember suicide. A February GAO report included focus groups with sailors who were working 80–100 hour weeks and losing colleagues to behavioral health issues related to the stress of overwork. Last year, Chairman Milley testified to this committee that he agreed that OPTEMPO has been too high, and that he was making changes to the Global Force Management and Request For Forces processes to reduce OPTEMPO. What have been the results of these changes in the INDOPACOM area of responsibility, and what efforts have you made to reduce OPTEMPO to sustainable levels and ensure that deployments are for truly high priority needs and not “nice-to-do” missions?

Admiral AQUILINO. I take this matter seriously and am working to balance OPTEMPO—for the well-being of our service members and their families—with the need to safeguard national security. Any deployments that will result in Service “redline” breaks or violations to the SecDef's Deployment to Dwell (D2D) Policies are highlighted in the SecDef Orders Book prior to any deployment decision. The Directed Readiness Tables have controlled OPTEMPO significantly by creating bins that “fence” force deployment availability to ensure there are forces available to respond to crisis. Within USINDOPACOM, historical data analysis shows we are diligent about abiding by Service “redlines”, the SecDef's D2D ratios, and the Directed Readiness effort.

Ms. SPEIER. General LaCamera, I am alarmed by the increase in suicides by service members, particularly at remote installations like Alaska, where twice as many soldiers died by suicide in 2021 compared to the previous year. A major problem is insufficient behavioral health providers. Soldiers in Alaska told me that they wait 2 months for an appointment. I have learned that Korea has the same problem with inadequate staffing for behavioral health across the board, and particularly for substance misuse counselors. What are you doing to increase access to behavioral health care for service members in Korea? How will you increase the number of providers? What are you doing to leverage telehealth to fill the unmet need? And what

resources or authorities do you need from Congress to address this behavioral health crisis?

General LACAMERA. Behavioral health (BH) resources currently do not meet requirements for Service Members or their families in Korea. Shortfalls are largely the result of BH provider availability, position fill rates, and laws and policies concerning alternative resources such as tele-behavioral health. The entire health care team in the Pacific are pursuing several avenues of approach to improve access to care. Due to the assessed deficit in behavioral health care, we are attempting to close the gap through multiple means. Some initiatives in Korea include

- The Military and Family Life Counseling (MFLC) Program, which is managed through DOD Military Community and Family Policy, supports both 7th Air Force and 8th Army Service Members and their families with non-medical counseling. MFLCs are integrated into behavioral health clinics as augmenting resources to improve access and non-clinical options, particularly for Service Members seeking care for life related stressors that do not meet criteria for a behavioral health diagnosis. Since June 2021, MFLC staffing has increased by 14 personnel (13/31 in JUN 21 to 27/34 in FEB 22) increasing overall staffing by more than 50%. This increase in MFLCs has increased our capacity but does not fill all our needs.
- We are also educating leaders and Soldiers of the availability of other support counseling services to include the Army Wellness Center and established remote services such as Military OneSource to provide 24/7 virtual assistance.
- Additionally, we are adding options for service members to receive treatment from local behavioral health facilities in the Tricare network. Although limited, there are civilian behavioral health clinics in the community that are Tricare affiliated and can generally provide care within 7 days for conditions requiring individual and family therapy. Services providing medication management is limited in the community.
- Finally, we are in the initial discussions with civilian mental health organizations for the establishment of an on-post Behavioral Health care clinic to provide accessible mental health care for Tricare beneficiaries and active-duty service members.

These measures are helping to meet some of the need; however, BH provider availability and position fill rates continue to be a concern. The difficulties with recruiting qualified applicants overseas have contributed to unfilled requirements and open positions.

Tele-behavioral health (TBH) is a bridging strategy to increase access to care, however, TBH services are currently limited here in Korea. Due to contractual rules with the Tricare Overseas contract, we are unable to use civilian TBH options that are located outside of the Republic of Korea. Routine scheduled TBH appointments from military Medical Treatment Facilities such as Tripler Army Medical Center and Madigan Army Medical Center are limited, and appointment wait time is approximately 2 weeks.

Discussions with MEDCOM are ongoing to increase availability of BH care and mitigate provider shortages in Korea. Areas of focus are:

- TRICARE Overseas Program policies surrounding opportunities for TBH as well as the ones related to on-installation civilian care;
- Options to enable Tricare beneficiaries to receive TBH services from TBH providers located in CONUS;
- Options to enable on-installation civilian behavioral health clinics staffed by providers from the U.S.; and
- The feasibility of using government contracted behavioral health providers to mitigate provider gaps due to challenges filling DA civilian BH provider hiring actions.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MR. SCOTT

Mr. SCOTT. Do you require American conventional hypersonic weapons to close warfighting operational gaps not covered by existing conventional weapons? If so, what operational gaps, in priority order, must hypersonic weapons be able to close?

In the operational capability gaps you identify, what technologies or capabilities must hypersonic weapons possess to close those gaps?

Admiral AQUILINO. Hypersonic weapons are required to close warfighting operational gaps, especially well-defended targets that would require large amounts of existing conventional weapons to target. Hypersonics enable a “kick down the door” strategy that makes other less-exquisite weapons more effective. I need hypersonics to engage: (1) rapidly relocatable systems, such as Integrated Air Defense Systems

(2) heavily defended deep targets; and (3) highly capable surface combatants. Hypersonic weapons require an in-flight target update capability, seekers to engage mobile targets, and warheads suitable for maritime targets.

Mr. SCOTT. Are you concerned with the pace of American hypersonic development and technology demonstrations to date?

Admiral AQUILINO. Yes, I am concerned about the pace of hypersonic weapons development, technology demonstrations, and fielding timelines. Our adversaries continue to aggressively pursue these weapons which place our forces and facilities at risk. We need to focus on capabilities that give us an asymmetric and qualitative advantage against our adversaries along with sufficient, demonstrated quantities to serve as a meaningful deterrence to aggression.

Mr. SCOTT. What would you like to see from the S&T and acquisition communities to accelerate advanced capability development and transition to the forces operating in your AOR?

Admiral AQUILINO. Rapid acquisition funding to resource limited numbers of prototypes in sufficient quantities would assist in providing an immediate operational capability in the Indo-Pacific AOR.

Mr. SCOTT. Given the current and forecasted threat environment, has the Department programmed the appropriate number of rounds to meet INDOPACOM requirements? If not, what is the appropriate number and what is limiting the total rounds currently planned (technical maturity, unit cost, number of launchers, etc.)?

Admiral AQUILINO. No, it does not meet our requirements; however, the theater requirements are classified. That information is detailed in INDOPACOM's Sec. 1242 Independent Assessment as required by the FY22 NDAA, and in the provided Anti-Surface munitions brief mandated by House Report 117-118 accompanying the FY22 NDAA.

Mr. SCOTT. Given the unique potential ranging capabilities of the Navy Conventional Prompt Strike (CPS) and Army Long Range Hypersonic Weapon (LRHW) compared to other DOD hypersonic efforts, what operational or technical capabilities do you require from those weapons?

Admiral AQUILINO. CPS and LRHW provide essential strike capability against long-range and defended targets, however we need to consider the optimal mix of capabilities (i.e. ARRW, HACM, SM-6) that takes advantage of employment diversity to enable the Joint Force Commander to mass fires for movement and maneuver. The optimal mix of capabilities must be able to engage threats to U.S. territory and have a range greater than adversary long range fires. Technical capabilities must include a resilient Beyond Line of Sight data link for in-flight updates, a seeker for moving targets, and precision navigation capability in the event of GPS jamming or GPS denial.

Mr. SCOTT. Did you recommend the use of hospital ships or an ARG to support relief in Tonga? If not, why not? If you did, were you overruled and if so, by whom? Do you believe the PRC response to the disaster has damaged U.S. interests versus our response?

Admiral AQUILINO. No, we did not recommend a hospital ship or ARG. In support of USAID's request for life saving and ISR capabilities, USINDOPACOM was a first responder, deploying USS SAMPSON and an embarked aviation detachment to provide search and rescue and natural disaster recovery assistance to Tonga. No additional DOD assistance was requested by the host nation or France, Australia, and New Zealand (FRANZ) leadership in their role as the response on-scene commander. Tonga was very appreciative of U.S. assistance.

Mr. SCOTT. Do you intend to advocate for inspections (including of active PRC bases) in Antarctica during this Antarctic summer? What is the United States doing to counter China's militarization of the continent and failure to abide by the Antarctic Treaty? How do they feel about the lack of inspections of China's station in Kunlun? What is INDOPACOM's current capacity with the special C-130s to support inspections?

Admiral AQUILINO. Inspections, led by the Department of State, are an important feature of the Antarctic Treaty System to ensure all nations use the continent for peaceful purposes and protect its fragile ecosystem. I support verifying the PRC is meeting its commitments to the international community in Antarctica, like the prohibition on military uses. The LC-130 provides a unique capability to support logistics in Antarctica, including scientific activities or State Department led inspection activities.

Mr. SCOTT. How do you assess the intent behind the Chinese lease on the airstrip on Kiribati's Kanton Island, 1200 miles from Hawaii? What's the purpose? What threat does it pose to U.S. facilities and interests, including Hawaii?

Admiral AQUILINO. China's investments around the world, and especially in the Indo-Pacific, generally have three objectives. One, to expand economic access and

opportunities; two, to expand Chinese presence and influence across all instruments of national power; and three, to correspondingly reduce U.S. influence and access across those same domains. The Chinese lease does not increase the threat to U.S. facilities. However, along with our regional partners, we are monitoring and engaged to understand the evolving situation.

Mr. SCOTT. How damaging it is that the Compacts of Free Association haven't been completed? If it's in the Indo-Pacific Strategy, why has no progress been made for a year? How concerned are you about China filling the vacuum in RMI, FSM, Palau? Without the access granted by the COFAs, how damaging is it to existing O-plans?

Admiral AQUILINO. These important agreements strengthen our security relationships throughout the Pacific and mitigate competitors' influence. However, as a Combatant Commander, the status of the compact negotiations does not impact my readiness or ability to plan. The historically good relationships we've enjoyed with these nations have allowed us to maintain a credible forward military presence that continues to this day and promotes regional stability.

I support interagency efforts to speedily conclude the negotiation of the Compact Agreements.

Mr. SCOTT. What are your unfunded priorities for bolstering U.S. ties with Vanuatu, Tonga, Papua/New Guinea and the Solomons?

Admiral AQUILINO. Three USINDOPACOM unfunded priorities—Military Construction (\$47.3M), Fusion Centers (\$3.3M), and the Asia Pacific Regional Initiative (\$10.3M)—support improved ties with the Pacific Islands including Vanuatu, Tonga, Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands.

Mr. SCOTT. As currently configured, can the the Strategic Petroleum Reserve support a war in the Pacific?

Admiral AQUILINO. The Petroleum War Reserve Stock (PWRS) in the Pacific theater is sized to meet the most demanding contingency at each military installation of Defense Fuel Support Points until a supply chain can be established. PWRS is sized, acquired, managed, and positioned to achieve the greatest practical flexibility and responsiveness to a full spectrum of regional contingencies.

Mr. SCOTT. With the necessary funding, resources, personnel and platforms, what more can the United States Coast Guard do to deter IUU fishing in the INDO-PACOM AOR?

Admiral AQUILINO. The Coast Guard has an enduring and specialized role in Oceania, Southeast Asia, and the greater Indo-Pacific to preserve the free-flow of commerce, protect natural resources, and enhance regional stability. The FY23 President's Budget expands the Coast Guard's current operations in the region in order to advance the National Defense Strategy by growing capacity for operations, engaging in maritime governance activities, and participating in meaningful engagements. Additional Coast Guard presence in the USINDOPACOM AOR will enable increased partner nation proficiency, self-sustainment, and local expertise necessary to deter Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU) fishing practices in the region.

Mr. SCOTT. Captain Kenneth Andrus, U.S. Navy, wrote an article for the October 2021 issue of Proceedings entitled, "Transform Navy Medical Operational Support."

According to Captain Andrus, "The speed and lethality of new weaponry and the minimal warning of open conflict with adversaries such as the People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) will not allow the luxury of months of preparation for combat casualty care that the Medical Corps has had in the past three decades." Do you agree with this assessment?

Admiral AQUILINO. We agree that indications and warning for a near peer conflict in the Pacific may be of short duration, requiring a ready posture in theater and a "Fight Now" mind set. U.S. Pacific Fleet is using a planning factor of days to medically augment the Fleet and enable maneuver for a high end fight. The joint force incorporates OCONUS military treatment facilities as prepositioned medical forces in theater for contingencies. The short window for preparation highlights themes of prepositioning of medical capabilities, supplies, and equipment in theater to minimize response times.

Mr. SCOTT. What shortfalls exist, if any, in the following areas of mass casualty care in your AOR? They include at-sea evacuation, medical regulation, medical unit augmentation, authorized medical allowance, medical resupply, blood products, shore casualty receiving/personnel processing, joint host-nation support, and the number of operating and treatment rooms required for a worst-case scenario?

Admiral AQUILINO. Near peer conflict in the Pacific and distributed maritime operations will result in a large number of casualties that will exceed a unit's ability to hold and treat. Anti-access and area denial combined with dynamic force employment from remote medical facilities will result in significant challenges to patient movement. As a result, we continue to analyze and refine our plans and exercises

to incorporate patient movement, mass casualties at sea, prolonged maritime care, medical resupply, and the distribution of blood products.

Mr. SCOTT. Should the United States Coast Guard bring back anti-submarine warfare as a mission? If the U.S. Coast Guard did bring back ASW as a mission, what would the impact be on the INDOPACOM AOR?

Admiral AQUILINO. The Coast Guard contributes unique and complimentary capabilities to the Joint Force across both geographic and functional combatant commands, and plays a critical role in the gray zone. While the Coast Guard performed anti-submarine operations during WWII, the Service currently does not possess anti-submarine capabilities but the demand for the Coast Guard is unprecedented and continues to work overtime across all of its 11 statutory missions.

Mr. SCOTT. Is the United States Navy prepared for mine warfare as much as it should be in the INDOPACOM AOR?

Admiral AQUILINO. USINDOPACOM needs a robust set of offensive and defensive mining capabilities. Current minelaying capabilities have not been significantly modernized since the 1980s and are largely inadequate against a peer adversary. However, research and development for new capabilities is underway and, if fully funded, can reconstitute a credible minelaying capability to deter peer adversaries. I identified \$50M for the Powered Quickstrike Mine and \$45M for the Hammerhead Mine in my FY23 Unfunded Priorities Report.

Mr. SCOTT. What are the advantages of High-Power Microwave technology in the INDOPACOM AOR?

Admiral AQUILINO. The directed-energy community has several prototypes in use and development with counter-UAS and counter-cruise missile applicability. These systems will strengthen future base defenses, complimenting other kinetic and non-kinetic systems.

Mr. SCOTT. Scott Savitz wrote a December 2021 article in Proceedings entitled, "Blockship Tactics to Trap Enemy Fleets." According to Saitz, "Blockships have tremendous cost-effective potential for thwarting adversary forces. An old rust bucket of a ship, costing tens of millions of dollars, can trap an enemy fleet costing many times that. The installation of jammers, sensors, netting, booby traps, or other devices is unlikely to dramatically change this cost differential, and all these systems involve minimal development risk. Given ever-improving autonomous navigational technology, this tactic does not even require U.S. personnel to enter harm's way. By using blockships, a navy could transform an adversary's prized fleet into a useless set of fixed targets just when it is most critically needed." Should the United States initiate a blockship program to counter potential threats?

Admiral AQUILINO. No, other methods—like stand-off maritime mining—could accomplish similar objectives with greater flexibility and responsiveness.

Mr. SCOTT. Could U.S. Navy and Coast Guard officers benefit from increased attendance at International Maritime Organization Polar Code courses? Should the U.S. Navy expand its coordination with partner nations, especially those with the most Antarctic experience?

Admiral AQUILINO. Increased opportunities to attend International Maritime Organization Polar Code courses could benefit U.S. Navy and Coast Guard officers as an avenue for additional professional development and understanding. We advance the Nation's interests by working with our network of allies and partners across domains and theaters, including to those with Antarctic experience.

USINDOPACOM also supports Operation Deep Freeze, a joint service, on-going Defense Support to Civilian Authorities activity in support of the National Science Foundation (NSF). The NSF manages the United States Antarctic Program (USAP) and Joint Task Force-Support Forces Antarctica (JTF-SFA) provides Department of Defense support to the NSF and the USAP through ODF. This mission provides U.S. forces valuable Antarctic experience including strategic inter-theater airlift, tactical deep field support, aeromedical evacuation support, search and rescue response, sealift, seaport access, bulk fuel supply logistics, and port cargo handling. Mission support consists of active duty, Guard and Reserve personnel from the U.S. Air Force, Navy, Army, and Coast Guard as well as Department of Defense civilians and attached non-DOD civilians.

Mr. SCOTT. Is there any lessons that can be learned from our allies and partners that would make our FMS program more resilient, agile, and redundant?

Admiral AQUILINO. FMS is a unique tool only available from the U.S. that can be a decisive factor for our allies and partners. However, slow contracting timelines, long delivery schedules, and lack of flexibility in terms of tailoring the equipment to customer requirements are frustrations that are only aggravated by the COVID pandemic. Our more sophisticated customers balance FMS with Direct Commercial Sales and often seek hybrid cases that offer more flexibility and resiliency. Designing technology release into our more complex systems is also highly desired by part-

ners as it shortens the release timeline and creates more opportunity for international customers. Crafting additional payment options, particularly for customers that don't qualify for dependable undertaking, is crucial as we seek to supplant Russia and China alternatives that are low cost and offer attractive financing options.

Mr. SCOTT. Will Taiwan be invited to RIMPAC 2022?

Admiral AQUILINO. No, Taiwan is not invited to RIMPAC 2022. USINDOPACOM is committed to helping Taiwan implement asymmetric defense concepts and acquire corresponding capabilities, and we presently judge that other engagement opportunities would better enable asymmetric defense capabilities.

Mr. SCOTT. Have recent deployments reinforced your belief that fifth generation fighters, like F-35, are "needed to win"?

Admiral AQUILINO. Fifth generation fighter deployments like the one that took place on the HMS Queen Elizabeth re-affirms the need for these types of aircraft in the Pacific. Fifth generation fighters provide the capability to operate within areas that 4th generation fighters can no longer freely utilize. Our adversaries continue to refine their anti-access/area denial systems, and fifth generation fighters are one way we can continue to compete in that area.

Mr. SCOTT. China's advanced air defenses and fighter capabilities are rapidly increasing in capability and capacity. These capabilities are pushing 4th generation aircraft to greater stand-off ranges, often beyond the targeting ranges of their weapons and sensors. Can you explain the importance of stand-in capabilities, such as 5th generation aircraft, and what advantages they provide if a war with Communist China were to occur?

Admiral AQUILINO. Stand-in capabilities are essential against a peer adversary. Fifth generation fighters provide persistent targeting coverage while being survivable in a high threat environment. Fifth generation fighters also provide the ability to engage mobile targets that challenge stand-off weapons due to time-of-flight. These platforms also assure allies and demonstrate our commitment to their defense by providing the ability to fight from stand-off ranges.

Mr. SCOTT. The F-35 has a unique ability to collect and fuse information, then share that information with numerous platforms across multiple domains, making it a critical node in advanced kill webs. Could you please explain the importance of this capability as it relates to Joint All Domain Operations involving joint U.S. and allied forces?

Admiral AQUILINO. The F-35 is a forward-edge sensor with lethal ability and, as such, serves as a vital node to the kill and sensing webs. Future success in war against a peer adversary will be determined through information dominance and dissemination; the F-35 is a key enabler for joint and combined forces to track, coordinate, and engage enemy targets in a time and manner the enemy cannot effectively counter.

Mr. SCOTT. Many of our key allies in the Indo-Pacific region are participants in the F-35 program. In your opinion, has the F-35 program had a positive impact on both military and diplomatic relations with these key allies?

Admiral AQUILINO. Yes, F-35 partnerships throughout the Indo-Pacific are paying tremendous dividends by creating common infrastructure across the region that enhances posture, enables more complex training, and enhances information sharing. Partnering with likeminded countries on military capabilities, like the F-35, reinforces our commitment to the region and lays the foundation for continued cooperation and a more fully integrated defense.

Mr. SCOTT. What are the operational and security risks in having only one strategic tanker in the Air Force's inventory given the vast size of the INDOPACOM AOR?

Admiral AQUILINO. One strategic tanker will limit the ability to maintain air dominance in the AOR, especially within the first and second island chain, given the vast size of the region. We can reduce risk by establishing forward refueling hubs; however, the limitation or reduction to one tanker platform will add significant risk to mission and plan execution.

Mr. SCOTT. Why is it important for NATO allies like Lithuania to be a strong supporter of Taiwan and not back down because of threats from Communist China?

Admiral AQUILINO. The PRC utilizes a variety of coercive measures against countries over which it has leverage to intimidate and deter others from taking similar actions. When these countries effectively resist PRC coercion, often with assistance from allies and partners, they demonstrate to the PRC these tactics do not work. Support for Taiwan from allies and partners, including NATO members, is important because it raises the risk for Beijing that the Taiwan issue may become a multilateral issue—something Beijing wants to avoid at all costs. This was well demonstrated when NATO partners (U.S., U.K., France, Spain, the Czech Republic, Lithuania, Estonia, and Latvia) participated in Taiwan's Open Parliament Forum in De-

cember 2021, exemplifying how NATO partners can continue to support Taiwan despite ongoing PRC pressure.

Mr. SCOTT. Communist China can easily integrate innovation like autonomy into their military complex through “civilian-military fusion. Meanwhile, we struggle to develop and adapt technologies used during the era of COIN in the Middle East to the needs of peer combat. How has China used emerging technologies, particularly autonomy to strengthen its hand in the region? How does INDOPACOM plan to adapt Artificial Intelligence models trained on decades of ISR data specific to the CENTCOM domain to the INDOPACOM domain? Does INDOPACOM have enough data to understand your area of operations? How can virtual simulation and synthetic data generation help prepare and ensure U.S. readiness in the Asian theater to deploy critical autonomous capabilities?

Admiral AQUILINO. China has mature AI and 5G-enabled surveillance systems that they export throughout the AOR. They advertise “safety” and “security” as selling points of the systems. China is the top manufacturer and exporter of commercial drones (with autonomy features).

USINDOPACOM is closely engaged with OSD, DARPA, JAIC, and other organizations responsible for developing new AI capabilities. For example, USINDOPACOM is currently working closely with the USD(I) MAVEN program to identify technical requirements to support USINDOPACOM’s objectives.

USINDOPACOM’s Stormbreaker will support this effort by generating synthetic data in support of machine learning. Additionally, the Pacific Multi-Domain Training and Experimentation Capability will support live, virtual, and constructive training and experimentation with new warfighting concepts by integrating emerging technology throughout the Indo-Pacific region.

Additionally, USINDOPACOM established a Chief Data Office (CDO) to build AI expertise within the command. As the CDO matures, we will be better postured to establish our processes and procedures for data requirements.

Mr. SCOTT. Assessments show that Chinese hypersonic missiles will push aircraft carriers thousands of miles from Chinese territory. Naval aviation assets will need to operate at unsustainable ranges for humans and in contested, communications-denied environments. Increased autonomy will be needed to project U.S. power and deter potential Chinese aggression. Yet, I am deeply concerned U.S. military departments will be unable to deploy autonomous systems effectively in the near term. Development of next generation vehicles (OMFV, Skyborg, UAVs) have significant delays and cost-overruns.

How does INDOPACOM plan to win in a potential future conflict before modernization programs have delivered new air, ground, and maritime platforms? Does INDOPACOM see a benefit in recapitalizing certain legacy ground, sea and air platforms and making them more survivable, autonomous, or lethal? Is there a need to recapitalize on existing “legacy” ISR platforms, like the MQ-9 Reaper and the Joint AI Center’s Smart Sensor project, to ensure they can operate autonomously in GPS and C2 denied environments?

Admiral AQUILINO. Yes, this is a valid approach that should be carefully considered on a case by case basis. Recapitalizing legacy platforms with survivability enhancements can extend their useful lifespan and fill gaps, especially in the near term. USINDOPACOM works closely with the Strategic Capabilities Office to look at new and innovative ways to repurpose existing legacy platforms to make them effective in an evolving threat environment.

Mr. SCOTT. The entire U.S. Coast Guard is a high-demand, low-density platform. What additional U.S. Coast Guard resources could you use in theater?

General LACAMERA. The Coast guard historically provides seaport security and convoy escort in contested areas. Here in the Republic of Korea, both of these missions are supported by our capable Republic of Korea counterparts. If additional capacity is needed, the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) could provide augmentation to host nation forces executing these missions, especially in support of U.S. NEO. Ensuring unrestricted access to sea lines of communication (SLOCs), queue routes, harbors and seaports is vital to the delivery of forces and sustainment during contingency operations.

The last time a USCG Cutter visited the ROK was in 2019, before the start of the COVID pandemic. Ideally, we would like to incorporate the USCG into the alliance planning and begin executing joint combined operations and exercises again soon.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MR. CARBAJAL

Mr. CARBAJAL. The testimony highlights China's investment in its space and counter-space programs. In its recently released white paper "China's Space Program: A 2021 Perspective," the Chinese government outlines the importance of space in its overall national strategy.

China's launch rates more than doubled in the last 5 years compared to the previous 5 years. Space launch and American competitiveness in space is something I am very focused on, especially with Vandenberg Space Force Base in my district, which is why I am concerned with how China intends to employ its space capabilities.

What is the extent of your engagement with partner nations on issues and concerns related to space? What aspects of space policy and engagement do you think need more attention in the AOR?

Dr. RATNER. Within the Department of Defense, my office works closely with the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Space Policy and the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Space and Missile Defense to engage allies and partners on space cooperation, including building a shared understanding of the threats we face in space. We have standing space engagements with our key allies in the Indo-Pacific region, such as Japan, Australia, New Zealand, and the Republic of Korea, as well as allies and partners across Europe, Africa, and in Latin America. These engagements focus on cooperation efforts in key space mission areas and aim to increase resilience in the space domain through coordinated efforts.

The Department is currently working on the ongoing development of responsible behaviors in the space domain. It is critical that we continue engaging our allies and partners, specifically in the Indo-Pacific region, on norms of behavior that contribute to the safety, stability, security, and long-term sustainability of space activities in order to increase the cost of irresponsible behavior in the space domain.

Mr. CARBAJAL. The testimony highlights China's investment in its space and counter-space programs. In its recently released white paper "China's Space Program: A 2021 Perspective," the Chinese government outlines the importance of space in its overall national strategy.

China's launch rates more than doubled in the last 5 years compared to the previous 5 years. Space launch and American competitiveness in space is something I am very focused on, especially with Vandenberg Space Force Base in my district, which is why I am concerned with how China intends to employ its space capabilities.

What is the extent of your engagement with partner nations on issues and concerns related to space? What aspects of space policy and engagement do you think need more attention in the AOR?

Admiral AQUILINO. We coordinate with USSPACECOM to strengthen our alliances and enhance emerging partnerships by increasing the frequency of space-related combined operations, exercises, and training with Australia, Japan, Republic of Korea, and New Zealand. We also support USSPACECOM's execution of Global Sentinel, participate in Space Force's Schriever Wargames, and integrate space into our exercises, like Talisman Saber, Keen Edge, and Cobra Gold. USINDOPACOM and the Defense Security Cooperation Agency are also building partner capacity with Thailand to contribute to regional multi-domain capability by 2027, supported by \$600K in FY23 Title 10 funding and USSPACECOM expertise. Similar initiatives will be evaluated in FY24 for other emerging partners like India, Indonesia, Philippines, Singapore, and Vietnam.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MR. KELLY

Mr. KELLY. The Administration's Indo-Pacific Strategy, published in February of this year, states that the United States needs to focus on targeted spending and relationship building with allies in the region. In 2016, India was designated as a "Major Defense Partner," but nearly 60% of its military equipment has been purchased from Russia. While developing a more robust partnership with the Quad (India, Japan, Australia, U.S.), what are we doing to enhance interoperability with India since they are the newest ally in the region?

a. Since we have been working strongly with Japan and Australia for some time now, what integration or interoperability challenges do we face when improving our partnership with India as a member of the Quad?

b. Is there anything else we could be doing to aid in either the expansion of programs or funding needed to improve India's defense capabilities as our strategic partner in the region, and reducing their reliance on Russian military equipment?

Dr. RATNER. Over the course of the last year, we have deepened and broadened the scope of U.S.-India defense cooperation across several domains—including in space and cyberspace. To continue strengthening our interoperability, we will prior-

itize a few promising areas of cooperation. These include deepening information-sharing and mutual logistics operations; growing our defense trade and technology relationship; and expanding high-end cooperation in the maritime domain, including in the Indian Ocean region and in Southeast Asia. Navy-to-Navy cooperation remains the most mature aspect of our defense ties and given shared challenges in the Indo-Pacific region, there is potential for even more growth. Going forward, we seek to build interoperability between our two militaries and identify new opportunities for cooperation in support of India's role as a net security provider in the region.

a. India is a critical partner and member of the Quad. Over the past couple of years, the Quad partners have continued to deepen interoperability through joint exercises such as MALABAR. Through a wide range of shared activities, such as space cooperation, technology cooperation, and vaccine production, the Quad partners are working closely together to sustain a free and open Indo-Pacific, including in support of the Association of Southeast Asian Nation's (ASEAN) centrality in the region. The Quad partners are also continuing to deepen interoperability through joint exercises such as MALABAR. These cooperative activities, however, do not reflect a formal alliance structure. Rather, they reflect the partners' abiding commitment to ensuring the durability of shared principles such as the rule of law and the peaceful resolution of disputes.

b. As noted above, we are strengthening U.S.-India defense cooperation across a range of domains. This includes working closely with India to deepen our bilateral industrial cooperation on co-production and co-development of defense articles, through initiatives such as the Defense Trade and Technology Initiative (DTTI). We have urged India—as we do with all of our allies and partners—to avoid transactions with Russia and to continue diversifying away from its procurement of Russian arms. We remain encouraged by India's diversification of defense equipment over the past decade, including the over \$20 billion of U.S.-origin defense equipment it has purchased since 2008.

Mr. KELLY. Do the unmanned aerial systems (UAS) of near-peer adversaries pose a threat to U.S. forces and installations in the INDOPACOM AOR in a competitive peacetime environment? In your opinion, is the capability and capacity of currently deployed systems sufficient to meet your requirement for detection, tracking, identification, and defeat of adversary UAS? If not, what steps is INDOPACOM taking together with the services and USSOCOM to address any capability gaps or capacity shortfalls?

Admiral AQUILINO. America's potential adversaries are investing heavily in a range of UAS for reconnaissance and surveillance, target acquisition, and with an increasing capability to conduct non-lethal and lethal attacks. I believe existing airspace control measures are struggling to keep pace with the rate of UAS technological innovation and proliferation which could threaten U.S. forces and installations. Over the past several years, USINDOPACOM has participated in counter UAS technology field demonstrations, experiments, and workshops to help technology developers build operationally suitable prototypes for land, sea and air defense against UAS attacks.

Additionally, USINDOPACOM has informed the requirements and acquisition communities of needs to address capability and capacity gaps in this dynamic threat space. Continued Departmental, Combat Support Agency, and Service Laboratory support will enable USINDOPACOM, USSOCOM, and the other Combatant Commands to collaborate on closing these gaps. Undoubtedly, this effort will be ongoing as the requirements to detect, track, identify, and defeat adversary UAS platforms evolve with technology advancements and human ingenuity.

Mr. KELLY. In the recent transition from the continuing war on Countering Violent Extremism to Strategic Competition, global requirements are continuously shifting in the face of today's geopolitical realities. With additional focus and demands being placed on USINDOPACOM in response to this increasingly dynamic transition are you positioned to meet operational requirements outlined in the NDS and national military strategy, and particularly in relation to expeditionary warfare and USMC's 2030 vision?

Admiral AQUILINO. Though USINDOPACOM has quickly evolved its exercises, operations, and activities to deliver integrated deterrence in the Indo-Pacific in line with strategic guidance, the command is limited due to a consolidated footprint of bases and misallocated forces. Much of the Joint Force assigned to USINDOPACOM is not postured to respond to critical threats and strategic competition within the Indo-Pacific region. I have outlined a prioritized set of activities and resources required to implement the NDS within the Indo-Pacific region via my Section 1242 Independent Assessment—available in a classified document and unclassified executive summary. If realized, the capabilities and requirements described in my Inde-

pendent Assessment will allow the U.S. to maintain or restore the comparative military advantage with respect to the PRC.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MR. GALLAGHER

Mr. GALLAGHER. Admiral Aquilino, 1 year ago, your predecessor famously warned about potential Chinese action against Taiwan within the decade. Since then, and particularly in light of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, in your professional judgment, has the threat to Taiwan become even more urgent?

Admiral AQUILINO. While I think it is still premature to assess how Russia's invasion of Ukraine will affect the cross-Strait situation, the PRC's relentless pressure campaign against Taiwan and preparations for possible military action does not suggest the potential for action has subsided. President Xi Jinping articulated a shift in his military modernization target date from 2035 to 2027, and the PRC has been meeting timelines ahead of initial target dates. The mission I've been given is to be prepared for that; so while I can't predict the exact date, I know we need to be ready now.

Mr. GALLAGHER. Security assistance has paid enormous dividends so far in helping the Ukrainians defend their homeland against the Russian invasion. How would similar security assistance to Taiwan, beyond Foreign Military Sales, contribute to both Taiwan and America's security?

Admiral AQUILINO. In accordance with the Taiwan Relations Act, USINDOPACOM uses Title 10 Grant Aid Assistance (Section 332, Section 333, and Section 1263 Authorities) to help Taiwan implement asymmetric defense concepts and capabilities. USINDOPACOM has active Significant Security Cooperation Initiative (SSCI) projects that complement Foreign Military Sales procurements for materiel capabilities critical to enhancing the ability of the Taiwan Armed Forces to deter, delay, or deny military aggression. These projects provide support equipment, training, and advising. Additionally, USINDOPACOM is coordinating other SSCI projects to address a holistic approach to self-defense through strengthening reserve force capacity, civil-military crisis response, and cybersecurity.

Mr. GALLAGHER. When it comes to joint warfighting, what benefits would there be to preemptively integrating allies like Japan and Australia into structures in peacetime, such as a reconstituted Joint Task Force 519 or an equivalent to help coordinate contingency response in INDOPACOM?

Admiral AQUILINO. I have spent the vast majority of my time strengthening and enhancing our relationships with allies and partners—our #1 asymmetrical advantage. Over the past year, I have participated in treaty events with our five bilateral treaty allies and conducted multiple mini & multi-lateral engagements all focused on increasing interoperability. AUKUS, the QUAD, and engagements with ASEAN are instrumental to these efforts. Additionally, I regularly engage with Chiefs of Defense to discuss areas of increased collaboration, and we have implemented a robust joint and combined exercise program with the focus of increasing our interoperability, so that in times of crisis, we are ready to respond. I am confident in USINDOPACOM and our allies' and partners' ability to work together to confront any contingency response.

Mr. GALLAGHER. How important are long-ranged, ground-based fires for your command? What would be the strategic impact if that capability were to be delayed by budget cuts or otherwise foreclosed?

Admiral AQUILINO. Long-range ground-based fires are critical to USINDOPACOM's ability to execute operations from established, expeditionary, and dispersed locations throughout the AOR. They enable us to hold critical capabilities at risk while allowing freedom of maneuver inside anti-access/area denial regions. If delayed, the capability gap will increase, reducing USINDOPACOM's effectiveness at deterring increasingly modern competitors, and ultimately placing U.S. and partner forces at greater risk in the future.

Mr. GALLAGHER. How do you envision Marine littoral regiments, especially those equipped with long-range fires, contributing to the execution of your operational plans?

Admiral AQUILINO. The ability to maneuver among small islands and establish Expeditionary Advanced Bases throughout the INDOPACOM Area of Operations provides significant combat capability. In particular, the Marine Littoral Regiment's organic long-range precision fires capability has the potential to create a counter-Anti Access/Area Denial bubble, complicating the calculus of the adversary.

Mr. GALLAGHER. Which U.S. territories and possessions in the INDOPACOM AOR are the most strategically underutilized? How can we, Congress, help DOD maxi-

mize these places' military utility for deterring PLA malign activity and in a worst case, responding to PLA armed aggression in the AOR?

Admiral AQUILINO. The Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI), in general, is the most strategically underutilized territory in the INDOPACOM AOR. While our infrastructure in CNMI supports some training and exercises, it is not sufficient to support large-scale, continuous operations. While Guam is critical to our contingency plans, CNMI could provide important additional operating locations in the region as alternatives to Guam. Congress' support to ongoing DOD posture investments in CNMI would help strengthen our military capability in the region to deter and respond to the PLA.

Mr. GALLAGHER. Andersen AFB has in recent years invested to improve its ability to load munitions and aircraft and turn higher sortie rates. What other basing facilities across the INDOPACOM AOR would benefit from Congressional appropriations for expansion and hardening of munitions storage and loading facilities? How would you rank order those locations in terms of priority?

Admiral AQUILINO. My priorities are improvements to: 1) Guam Cluster (Yap, Palau, Tinian); 2) Philippine Cluster (Basa); and 3) Australia Cluster (Tindal, Darwin, Baucau).

Mr. GALLAGHER. If the USAF, USN, and USMC were each appropriated an additional \$5 billion per year for munitions procurement, what would you like to see them spend it on? Can potentially use the response to inform supply chain conversations and find ways for Congress to better facilitate higher-rate procurement of key systems such as SM-6 Block IB, LRASM, Tomahawk ASM, JASSM-XR etc.

Admiral AQUILINO. Integrated Fires is a critical capability for the Indo-Pacific Theater to improve Joint Force lethality, which I've highlighted in my Section 1242 Independent Assessment. I recommend each of these services procure additional LRASM, TLAM, and SM-6 1B missiles.

Mr. GALLAGHER. What options does the DOD have to replace the reserves held in the strategically vital Red Hill Bulk Fuel Storage Facility? How quickly can replacement fuel storage options be brought online at an equivalent aggregate volume level across the INDOPACOM AOR and how can Congress help you facilitate rapid incorporation of these assets and capabilities?

Admiral AQUILINO. Since the announcement of permanently closing Red Hill, Defense Logistics Agency (DLA) has been working to establish a contractor-owned/contractor-operated facility on Oahu. DLA has recently announced entering into a contract with PAR Hawaii Refining LLC for one year with one-year-option period which can be further expanded as necessary. USINDOPACOM is also working closely with DLA to acquire additional contract storage capability in Guam and Subic. Another option is storage afloat which can provide USINDOPACOM mobile logistics capability to bridge potential gaps in fuel distribution. This can come in the form of medium-range tankers, coastal tankers, and off-shore support vessels. At this time, DLA and United States Transportation Command (USTRANSCOM) are in the preliminary stages of planning and coordination to contract tanker vessels. I appreciate Congress's support in transitioning to these new assets and capabilities.

Mr. GALLAGHER. What "off the shelf" construction capabilities could potentially be paired with military personnel and assets to maximize our Rapid Airfield Damage Repair capabilities and thus complicate the PRC target set and campaign planning? How can Congress help you facilitate this?

Admiral AQUILINO. There are a number of mature Government-Off-The-Shelf and Commercial-Off-The Shelf solutions that enable military personnel to repair runway surfaces with logistically-friendly tools and methods. Congress can assist by funding the President's Budget Request that includes resourcing for "off-the-shelf" solutions for Rapid Airfield Damage Repair capabilities. A prime example of a joint effort addressing a portion of the problem set is the recently completed Expedient and Expeditionary Airfield Damage Repair (E-ADR) Joint Capability Technology Demonstration (JCTD) co-funded by the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Research and Development, United States Transportation Command, and Air Force Installation and Mission Support Center. The E-ADR/JCTD investigated, designed, and developed expeditionary capabilities for runway repair and demonstrated them in operationally-relevant environments with uniformed personnel across the services. Furthermore, a number of commercial solutions from both large and small-scale equipment manufacturers were included in the assessments and exhibited great promise (some examples include modular attachments for commonly found tracked loaders and logistically-lean crater backfill methods).

Mr. GALLAGHER. How, if at all, is INDOPACOM working with partners in Taiwan to facilitate the following items? (1) backup electricity generation, (2) dispersion and hardening of fuel inventories sufficient for 45 days, (3) distributed food stockpiles sufficient for 45 days, (4) hardening of Taiwan municipal water supply infrastruc-

ture to maximize continuity during PRC blockade and or bombardment efforts, and (5) hardening of Taiwan telecommunications infrastructure, including satellite internet access to mitigate potential PRC efforts to cut the island off by interdicting subsea fiber optic cables

Admiral AQUILINO. Through the American Institute in Taiwan, the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD), and the Joint Staff, USINDOPACOM actively supports Taiwan's efforts to prioritize resilient and distributed capabilities that are crucial for both natural disasters and self-defense scenarios.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MR. CROW

Mr. CROW. According to a 2018 USGS study, several U.S. military installations in the Pacific, such as the one on Kwajalein Atoll, that host critical missile tracking and defense capabilities, could be decimated by rising sea levels by 2035.

1. Can you please provide an update on measures DOD is taking to mitigate the impacts of climate change on these important installations in the Pacific?

Dr. RATNER. The Department is currently incorporating climate considerations into policies and decision-making at all levels to ensure the Joint Force can operate under changing climate conditions, maintain important operational capabilities, and protect and enhance the natural and man-made systems essential to the Department's operations. As the National Defense Strategy makes clear, China is the Department's pacing challenge, so these imperatives are particularly important in the Indo-Pacific region. DOD has developed several tools to incorporate the impact of climate change into assessment of, and future planning for, installations, including at Pacific locations like the Kwajalein Atoll and Guam. For the past several years, the Department has been assessing climate hazards, as described in the DOD Installation Exposure to Climate Change at Home and Abroad report. That report includes information on installation exposure and on resilience measures the Department is taking to reduce vulnerabilities through a mix of management, temporary, structural, non-structural, and nature-based measures. The DOD Climate Assessment Tool, or DCAT, is also being used to inform development of an "all hazards" assessment for installations, which will be incorporated subsequently into installation master plans and military construction projects. In addition to the DCAT, the DOD Regional Sea Level (DRSL) database provides projected regionalized sea level scenarios at three future time horizons (2035, 2065, and 2100) for 1,774 coastal and tidally influenced DOD sites worldwide. DRSL information is now incorporated into DOD's installation master planning and civil engineering design criteria for coastal locations. As these assessments progress, they will produce more detailed information to support further development of climate hazard reduction measures at important installations in the Pacific and elsewhere around the world.

Mr. CROW. According to a 2018 USGS study, several U.S. military installations in the Pacific, such as the one on Kwajalein Atoll, that host critical missile tracking and defense capabilities, could be decimated by rising sea levels by 2035.

2. If these installations are greatly impacted by rising sea levels to the point of degraded operational capacity, how will that affect our missile defense posture in the Pacific and ability to protect the homeland?

Dr. RATNER. The Department has postured considerable missile defense capabilities in the Indo-Pacific region, such as missile defense and domain awareness assets in the Marshall Islands, Palau, and the U.S. territory of Guam. We also conduct developmental missile defense testing in the region. The loss of such assets would be detrimental to our national defense.

Mr. CROW. According to a 2018 USGS study, several U.S. military installations in the Pacific, such as the one on Kwajalein Atoll, that host critical missile tracking and defense capabilities, could be decimated by rising sea levels by 2035.

3. Does DOD have the funding, resources, and authorities required to ensure these strategic missile detection and tracking ground station sites are resilient to the effects of climate change?

Dr. RATNER. The Department has the necessary authorities, but because of the remote location and harsh climate, construction is more costly than what normal expectations would suggest. Currently, the construction cost index for Kwajalein is 3.72. That means construction of similar buildings on Kwajalein will cost nearly four times what the same building would cost in continental United States.

Mr. CROW. According to a 2018 USGS study, several U.S. military installations in the Pacific, such as the one on Kwajalein Atoll, that host critical missile tracking and defense capabilities, could be decimated by rising sea levels by 2035.

2. If these installations are greatly impacted by rising sea levels to the point of degraded operational capacity, how will that affect our missile defense posture in the Pacific and ability to protect the homeland?

Admiral AQUILINO. Regional and national security aspects of rising sea levels in the Indo-Pacific are a real concern. While Kwajalein is an important research and testing site, there are currently no missile defense systems on Kwajalein. USINDOPACOM is reinforcing infrastructure, increasing resilience at our own facilities, and assisting partner nations to do the same. In coordination with allies and partners, we have established the Community for Indo-Pacific Climate Security (CIPCS), comprised of military and civil sector experts to address climate impacts on security. In the specific case of missile defense, none of our missile defense facilities have been identified as being at risk to rising sea levels by 2035.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MR. WALTZ

Mr. WALTZ. What is the viability of transferring some of the U.S. Navy's inventory of sea mines, such as the Quickstrike ER, to the Taiwanese? If those sea mines are not transferable or easily used by the Taiwanese, is there a way for the United States to facilitate the Foreign Military Sale of modern sea mine systems from other partner nations, such as the Italian MN103 MANTA?

Dr. RATNER. Owing to inactive production lines, limited U.S. inventory, and Technology Security and Foreign Disclosure (TSFD) constraints, we are seeking to assist Taiwan develop its defensive naval mining capabilities through other means. These include technical assistance, subject matter expert exchanges, and operator-to-operator engagements.

Regarding the Italian MN103 MANTA, DOD would defer to Taiwan regarding whether this capability meets Taiwan's operational needs. More broadly, DOD and interagency partners encourage other third parties who are committed to cross-strait peace and stability to develop more fulsome security and defense relations with Taiwan.

Mr. WALTZ. Is it possible to include Taiwan in the development of the XLUVV Orca system or its associated Clandestine Delivered Mine (CDM)?

Dr. RATNER. I will defer to the U.S. Navy regarding cooperation on this program. More broadly, DOD is examining ways to increase technical cooperation with Taiwan on capabilities of mutual interest. Moreover, U.S. Indo-Pacific Command and U.S. Pacific Fleet regularly engage the Taiwan Navy on technical and operational issues critical to Taiwan's security.

Mr. WALTZ. What resources does the Department of Defense need to accelerate the fulfillment of the Foreign Military Sale of the Harpoon anti-ship missile to the Taiwanese? Is it possible to expand the number of Harpoon Coastal Defense Systems (HCDSs) beyond 100 launchers?

Dr. RATNER. DOD has sought consistently to accelerate production and delivery of the Harpoon coastal defense cruise missile (CDCM) system to Taiwan. The current schedule accounts for all known efficiencies, but we continue to look for additional ways to get this capability to Taiwan as fast as possible.

Regarding additional launchers, DOD defers to Taiwan regarding any operational requirements over and above its current Foreign Military Sales (FMS) case.

Mr. WALTZ. What is the viability of transferring some of the U.S. Navy's inventory of sea mines, such as the Quickstrike ER, to the Taiwanese? If those sea mines are not transferable or easily used by the Taiwanese, is there a way for the United States to facilitate the Foreign Military Sale of modern sea mine systems from other partner nations, such as the Italian MN103 MANTA?

Admiral AQUILINO. I will provide more detail in a classified response, but what I can say here is that the United States adheres to the Taiwan Relations Act, the three Joint Communiqués, and the Six Assurances as the legal framework for making defense articles and services available to Taiwan. Other partners may have a different policy.

Mr. WALTZ. What resources does the Department of Defense need to accelerate the fulfillment of the Foreign Military Sale of the Harpoon anti-ship missile to the Taiwanese? Is it possible to expand the number of Harpoon Coastal Defense Systems (HCDSs) beyond 100 launchers?

Admiral AQUILINO. Accelerating the production and delivery of Harpoon anti-ship missiles to Taiwan is absolutely crucial for enhancing the ability of the Taiwan Armed Forces to deter, delay, or deny military aggression. However, the delivery timelines are dependent on the suppliers. USINDOPACOM continues to explore options with suppliers, through the Defense Security Cooperation Agency, to shorten

the timelines. Taiwan can choose to increase the number of systems by amending the case.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MS. JACOBS

Ms. JACOBS. China has been undertaking a significant, long-term military modernization effort. In what areas have they made the most progress? And in what areas have they fallen behind publicly stated goals?

Dr. RATNER. The People's Liberation Army (PLA) has fielded, and is further developing, capabilities to provide options for the People's Republic of China (PRC) to dissuade, deter, and/or defeat, as necessary, third-party intervention during a large-scale, theater campaign such as a Taiwan contingency. In addition to strike, air and missile defense, anti-surface and anti-submarine capabilities improvements, the PRC is focusing on information, cyber, and space and counterspace operations. The PLA's focus on an integrated approach to the cyber domain using advanced technologies likely will lead to the PLA improving its ability to conduct cyber operations over the next several years.

In 2020, the PLA assessed that they achieved their 2020 goal of "generally achieving mechanization," its new 2027 goal stresses the need for the PLA to "accelerate the integrated development of mechanization, informatization, and intelligentization, while boosting the speed of modernization in military theories, organizations, personnel and weapons and equipment." Upon the announcement of the goal, a PLA spokesperson added, "China's national defense strength does not match its economic growth, and is not compatible with China's international standing and its strategic security needs."

Ms. JACOBS. I want to talk about some of the lessons DOD can learn from Ukraine, but I want to be specific. As we all have seen, in a short amount of time the Ukrainian military's performance has greatly improved since its initial clash with Russia over Crimea. I assume a lot of this is due to the training our Special Forces have provided since 2014. So my question is what specifically has the U.S. learned about how to properly stand up a partner force. What SOF training has proven the most helpful to Ukraine in its defense of their homeland and what lessons can we apply to other partner forces in Asia who might also need to one day repel an outside superior force? What do you think we could have done better in Ukraine and have those lessons similarly been applied?

Dr. RATNER. Prior to conflict, the Department of Defense programs strengthened Ukraine's ability to understand Russian activities and develop the operational skills and organizational structure to counter Russian aggression. Specifically, DOD training improved the tactics, techniques, and procedures of the Ukrainian Armed Forces, and particularly the Ukrainian Special Operations Forces (UKRSOF), such that they are better able to plan, coordinate, and implement complex operations at the tactical and operational level. Moreover, U.S. Special Operations Forces (USSOF) have helped UKRSOF restructure itself such that it can better integrate and plan with NATO Allies and other partners. Russia's invasion of Ukraine has reinforced the need to develop operational skills and organizational structures for these types of activities in vulnerable areas prior to conflict.

Additionally U.S., allied, and partner Special Operations Forces (SOF) were actively engaged in bilateral medical training with Ukrainian forces. Medical care capable of addressing combat casualties provides motivation and hope to a fighting force, especially a force resisting aggression. For example, the same Tactical Combat Casualty Care (TCCC) training, which has proven invaluable in the treatment of U.S. casualties, was provided for Ukrainian forces. There is opportunity for the DOD, other U.S. departments and agencies, and partners to build resiliency of a nation's population in future crises or conflicts through similar medical training initiatives.

Ms. JACOBS. What are we doing and what more needs to be done to accelerate full interoperability of these partner forces with their U.S. counterparts? Are we conducting enough joint training exercises? Are all the comms with our allies both secure and compatible?

Dr. RATNER. The United States continues to deepen our alliances and bilateral defense cooperation with Australia, Japan, and the Republic of Korea through training and exercises; cooperation on integrated air and missile defense; joint research, development, test, and evaluation (RDT&E) on capabilities; and other defense engagements and cooperative efforts. In South and Southeast Asia, DOD is also focused on enhancing interoperability through major training exercises like Cobra Gold with Thailand, Balikatan with the Philippines, and Garuda Shield with Indonesia, and

complementing that training with security assistance to improve partners' communications capabilities and interoperability.

Ms. JACOBS. The State Department has assessed that Burma's civilian government was deposed in a military coup. U.S. military-to-military relations with Burma were already extremely limited due to gross violations of human rights conducted by Burma's military. What does our military-to-military engagement with Burma look like? Is our engagement impacted by the coup determination? And, if so, what conditions or factors would be used to determine the scope and scale of engagement going forward?

Dr. RATNER. The Department of Defense has prohibitions on military-to-military engagements with Burma, including but not limited to prohibiting contact with members of the Burmese military, Burmese participation in U.S. military exercises or multilateral military-to-military engagements, and intelligence sharing. The coup determination did not significantly impact U.S. military-to-military engagement with Burma, and future engagement will depend on factors such as the cessation of military violence in the country, sincere efforts to restore democratic governance, and the establishment of an inclusive and representative civilian government, and the promotion of accountability for atrocities committed by the junta.

Ms. JACOBS. Are we actually selling the equipment Taiwan needs to defend itself? My concern is not about the amount of FMF and FMS we provide to Taiwan, but the type of platforms it is used for. Taiwan needs redundancy for radar and sensors. Others have pointed to the need for rapid attack boats armed with anti-ship missiles. More broadly, it is clear that the focus for Taiwan must be on defeating an attempt at an amphibious invasion. Shouldn't that be emphasized over additional F-16 sales?

Dr. RATNER. We continue to work with Taiwan to define its defense requirements in line with the cross-Strait threat. As part of this effort, we have emphasized the importance of capabilities that can be massed in larger numbers and distributed in a manner that best enables island defense. This includes short-range air defense, anti-ship missiles, defensive naval mining, and decentralized and redundant command and control. Nevertheless, we understand Taiwan's need to maintain some conventional capabilities that are best suited for steady-state activities, and will continue to support maintenance and sustainment of such previously provided capabilities.

Ms. JACOBS. As we have seen in Ukraine, wars are often not won or lost by who has the shiniest toys, but in fact who has the best long term plan for logistics. In light of that fact, what is the U.S. doing to shore up gaps that might arise in our supply chain should a conflict break out in Asia? Do you have enough fuel tankers and vertical lift assets so that all of our forward deployed forces can not just be combat ready but survive a prolonged campaign? I want you to be specific, given our current posture what percentage of U.S. forces currently in the INDOPACOM AOR could we adequately supply for a fight which lasted longer than 6 months?

Dr. RATNER. DOD's President's Budget request for Fiscal Year (FY) 2023 makes significant investments in key industrial base sectors such as microelectronics, casting and forging, batteries and energy storage, kinetic capabilities, and strategic and critical minerals. Importantly, DOD increased Defense Production Act (DPA) Title III funding to \$660 million in Fiscal Year (FY) 2023, bolstering the supply chain for defense-critical components such as critical chemicals for missiles and munitions; hypersonics components; secure, hardened microelectronics; and rare earths processing. To complement DPA investments, the FY 2023 President's Budget request includes a further \$1.1 billion to secure a robust supply chain for DOD microelectronics; \$231 million for hypersonics; \$150 million for munitions components, including critical chemicals and materials; and \$48 million for supply chains for casted and forged parts.

In addition, on October 3, 2022, the President Signed a waiver authorizing the use of DPA Title III authorities to increase the production capacity of materials critical to supporting the national defense against adversarial aggression. This will enable the Program to execute the \$600 million appropriated to it through the Ukraine Supplemental Appropriations Act to mitigate industrial base constraints for missile production and expand domestic capacity for strategic and critical minerals. The waiver will also allow the Program to expediently respond to potential future conflicts in Asia.

The FY 2023 President's Budget request also includes \$13 billion for the Air Force for rapid global mobility as a core function. This includes procurement of 15 KC-46s—the world's most capable aerial refueling platform—which significantly increases the range, flexibility, and capability of the Air Force while reducing risk to force in a near-peer conflict. The Air Force also continues to fine-tune its fleet of tactical and strategic airlift capabilities provided by specific C-130 configurations

and the C-17. The Navy's budget includes \$2.3 billion for five KC-130J Super Tankers and ten CH-53K King Stallions, and \$794.719 million for one John Lewis-class fleet oiler (T-AO). The Navy also plans to procure two used sealift vessels. The Army's budget includes \$897 million for 53 UH-60 Black Hawk utility helicopters, and \$199 million for six CH-47 Chinook heavy lift helicopters.

These investments are part of DOD's continuing, long-term investments in logistics assets that DOD relies upon to sustain its forces over the course of an extended conflict.

Ms. JACOBS. China has been undertaking a significant, long-term military modernization effort. In what areas have they made the most progress? And in what areas have they fallen behind publicly stated goals?

Admiral AQUILINO. I would highlight three areas where China has made significant progress. First, the PLA continues to field large numbers of modern weapons and systems such as fighters, warships, and missiles. Second, the PRC is showing progress in developing and fielding advanced technologies like hypersonics and smart systems. And third, the PRC is rapidly expanding its space and counter-space capabilities. I do not believe the PLA has met its goals for joint command and control or integration; still lacks realism in training and exercises; struggles to incorporate key enablers like logistics into operations and exercises; and remains behind plan in building professional education for the force, most notably for NCOs and soldiers.

Ms. JACOBS. I want to talk about some of the lessons DOD can learn from Ukraine, but I want to be specific. As we all have seen, in a short amount of time the Ukrainian military's performance has greatly improved since its initial clash with Russia over Crimea. I assume a lot of this is due to the training our Special Forces have provided since 2014. So my question is what specifically has the U.S. learned about how to properly stand up a partner force. What SOF training has proven the most helpful to Ukraine in its defense of their homeland and what lessons can we apply to other partner forces in Asia who might also need to one day repel an outside superior force? What do you think we could have done better in Ukraine and have those lessons similarly been applied?

Admiral AQUILINO. I'll let the EUCOM Commander address U.S. training activities with Ukraine, but I think what we're seeing illustrates the value of enhancing partnerships and developing credible civil-military defense capabilities. In the Indo-Pacific, we have a very strong program aimed at building partner capacity to strengthen self-defense capability and to contribute to regional and international stability. This network of strong alliances and partnerships are a key U.S. asymmetric advantage that our security challengers do not possess. Because these relationships are based on shared values and people-to-people ties, they provide significant advantages such as long-term mutual trust, understanding, respect, interoperability, and a common commitment to a free and open Indo-Pacific.

Ms. JACOBS. What are we doing and what more needs to be done to accelerate full interoperability of these partner forces with their U.S. counterparts? Are we conducting enough joint training exercises? Are all the comms with our allies both secure and compatible?

Admiral AQUILINO. "Full interoperability" will remain elusive given wide ranging technologies—even within the U.S. inventory—and the desire by partner nations to diversify sourcing to enhance resilience and strategic flexibility. We are working closely with allies and partners to increase the complexity of exercises, not necessarily adding more, as we already conduct more than 120 exercises a year in INDO-PACOM. The most important areas for developing as much interoperability between U.S. and partner forces are in the warfighting functions of secure command and control, intelligence and information sharing, and protection of critical ally/partner capabilities, infrastructure, and force protection. Interoperability in these functions is critical to progress in the areas of maneuver, fires and sustainment capabilities.

USINDOPACOM is partnering through major exercises with Japan, Philippines, Australia, and Thailand by improving Combined and Joint interoperability via the Pacific Multi-Domain Training Experimentation Capability (PMTEC) and Mission Partner Environment (MPE). Establishing secure and compatible communications to share operational information and intelligence with our allies and partners, is one of my priorities, specifically through MPE. Through these efforts, we can better train together and achieve integrated deterrence by incorporating allies and partners into our warfighting concepts.

Ms. JACOBS. There is significant strategic and operational discussion with respect to the relevance and therefore utility of land forces throughout the USINDOPACOM area of responsibility (AOR). Legitimate questions revolve around the value of land forces and their current, even projected, capabilities against potential adversaries and the inherent risk associated with how, when, and where they might be posi-

tioned, their relative lack of operational mobility, and their logistical vulnerability. What is your assessment of relevance and utility of land forces across the spectrum of competition and conflict in your AOR? In conflict, how should we consider the value and management of risk associated with how land forces might be operationally positioned, employed, and sustained over time and long distances?

Admiral AQUILINO. The presence of capable and lethal land forces with the capability to strike air and naval forces are a powerful deterrent and critical to my ability to protect our national interests. Often, presence equals deterrence and we have two critical components to our land forces—USMC Marine Littoral Regiments (MLR) and Army Multi-Domain Task Forces (MDTF). These complementary forces will be able to operate in austere locations in contested environments and include organic lift. The MLR and MDTF offer USINDOPACOM relevant capabilities across the spectrum of conflict. They will also be integral in building partner capacity by developing allies' capabilities to work across domains and operate jointly.

MLRs and MDTFs will face challenges in logistics. Both the Army and USMC are working to shore up their ability to provide logistical support from maritime sources while operating in the littorals. We will also need to work with our allies and partners to ensure the required access in the right location for elements to support the MLR and MDTF.

Ms. JACOBS. Are we actually selling the equipment Taiwan needs to defend itself? My concern is not about the amount of FMF and FMS we provide to Taiwan, but the type of platforms it is used for. Taiwan needs redundancy for radar and sensors. Others have pointed to the need for rapid attack boats armed with anti-ship missiles. More broadly, it is clear that the focus for Taiwan must be on defeating an attempt at an amphibious invasion. Shouldn't that be emphasized over additional F-16 sales?

Admiral AQUILINO. The U.S. Government has been readjusting FMS to Taiwan to emphasize self-defense capabilities that deter, delay, or deny military aggression. For example, HIMARS launchers, ATACMS missiles, Harpoon coastal defense cruise missiles, and MQ-9B unmanned aerial systems are FMS cases in the past 18 months that provide a joint, layered self-defense capability. The Field Information Communications System and Patriot sustainment FMS cases in the previous months also enhance the survivability and resiliency of Taiwan's command and control in self-defense.

Ms. JACOBS. As we have seen in Ukraine, wars are often not won or lost by who has the shiniest toys, but in fact who has the best long term plan for logistics. In light of that fact, what is the U.S. doing to shore up gaps that might arise in our supply chain should a conflict break out in Asia? Do you have enough fuel tankers and vertical lift assets so that all of our forward deployed forces can not just be combat ready but survive a prolonged campaign? I want you to be specific, given our current posture what percentage of U.S. forces currently in the INDOPACOM AOR could we adequately supply for a fight which lasted longer than 6 months?

Admiral AQUILINO. When it comes to scenarios of protracted conflict such as the one described, the logistics requirement is no longer simply theater-specific. As we are observing first hand with the current crisis, a protracted conflict requires extensive amounts of support from the whole of government, domestic industrial base, as well as our allies and partners. To answer your question on percentage of the force we can adequately supply, I would offer that we can supply all of them. However, this requires an extensive amount of globally allocated military and commercial assets that are not necessarily resident in the Pacific, which could result in delays if not mitigated. To overcome this challenge, we are working diligently with commercial industry and our allies and partners to pre-position essential resources throughout the theater thus shortening our supply lines.

Fuel tankers during peacetime are designed to sustain U.S. forces based on daily operational requirements. The DOD needs to rapidly acquire and employ tankers to be able to sustain combat forces in a prolonged conflict. One way to fill this gap is through the Tanker Security Program in which commercial tankers are incentivized to guarantee their vessels will be made available to the DOD during crises or contingencies. Another program that would enhance readiness is the renewal of the Voluntary Tanker Agreement (VTA) program. VTA establishes an emergency preparedness program for accessing tankers and formal capability between the government and the tanker industry.

Ms. JACOBS. China has been undertaking a significant, long-term military modernization effort. In what areas have they made the most progress? And in what areas have they fallen behind publicly stated goals?

General LACAMERA. [The information is classified and retained in the committee files.]

Ms. JACOBS. I want to talk about some of the lessons DOD can learn from Ukraine, but I want to be specific. As we all have seen, in a short amount of time the Ukrainian military's performance has greatly improved since its initial clash with Russia over Crimea. I assume a lot of this is due to the training our Special Forces have provided since 2014. So my question is what specifically has the U.S. learned about how to properly stand up a partner force. What SOF training has proven the most helpful to Ukraine in its defense of their homeland and what lessons can we apply to other partner forces in Asia who might also need to one day repel an outside superior force? What do you think we could have done better in Ukraine and have those lessons similarly been applied?

General LACAMERA. As the conflict in Ukraine continues, we will continue to draw on lessons learned and apply those lessons to further integrated deterrence in Northeast Asia. The Ukrainian conflict reinforces the advantage of close, if not, in-person partnership, as well as utilizing a multi-lateral Special Operation Forces (SOF) approach to assisting a partner force. While the strategic context is different in Northeast Asia, SOF adds value through a multi-domain approach to standing up or reinforcing an existing partner force. That multi-domain approach is best applied through consistent partnership with Irregular Warfare capabilities as a centerpiece.

Applied to Northeast Asia, U.S. SOF support must be tailored to the capabilities required in the region, seeking asymmetric advantage against adversaries, and reinforcing broader theater and conventional campaigns. Specific to the Korean peninsula, we focus on realistic combined training across the spectrum of potential missions in crisis and conflict, from logistics support to SOF, unconventional warfare, reconnaissance, and raids on high value targets. We also seek to ensure that our partners understand the value of Civil Affairs and military information support operations integration into operations through all phases.

I would defer to SOCEUR/EUCOM for their expert perspective on any specific lessons for improvement relative to Ukraine.

Ms. JACOBS. What are we doing and what more needs to be done to accelerate full interoperability of these partner forces with their U.S. counterparts? Are we conducting enough joint training exercises? Are all the comms with our allies both secure and compatible?

General LACAMERA. We continue to work with our allies and partners to develop and implement solutions that enable us to communicate effectively and efficiently in operations ranging from armistice to armed conflict. While some of our communications platforms with our Republic of Korea (ROK) and United Nations partners are secure and compatible, additional work is needed to achieve true technical interoperability. To address this, there are four working groups at different levels that meet regularly focused on interoperability concerns.

A large ongoing effort is that CENTRIXS-K, the primary communications network for coalition forces in Korea, is being transitioned to the Mission Partner Enterprise (MPE). MPE is the framework that the U.S. uses to establish networks and communicate with mission partners. Once in place in Korea, MPE will improve our ability to communicate with the ROK and our other coalition allies.

To address other communication security concerns, the U.S. Department of Defense Chief Information Office and the ROK Minister of National Defense (MND) are working to agree to an established cybersecurity standard that will apply to all interconnected systems to ensure integrity of sensitive and classified information exchanges. Similar to how the United States uses Risk Management Framework to address cybersecurity concerns of networked systems, the U.S. and ROK agreement on a standard will help improve the security and interoperability of systems in the future.

Joint Combined training opportunities provide us the single greatest method to enhance interoperability with our key alliance partners. At the highest level, during the bi-annual, theaterwide, joint Combined Command Post Training (CCPT), all commanders and staff work to become proficient in all aspects of planning, intelligence, and execution of defense plans including facets of interoperability over a two-week period. However, outside of CCPT and small unit level training, we are not doing enough joint training with our ROK Allies. While we do conduct as many joint training events as possible, in recent years' restrictions designed to reduce tensions on the peninsula, shrinking training areas and the continued presence of COVID have limited joint training events. The current level of joint training is not sufficient to develop true interoperability.

Ms. JACOBS. Are we actually selling the equipment Taiwan needs to defend itself? My concern is not about the amount of FMF and FMS we provide to Taiwan, but the type of platforms it is used for. Taiwan needs redundancy for radar and sensors. Others have pointed to the need for rapid attack boats armed with anti-ship mis-

siles. More broadly, it is clear that the focus for Taiwan must be on defeating an attempt at an amphibious invasion. Shouldn't that be emphasized over additional F-16 sales?

General LACAMERA. Determinations on platforms being provided to Taiwan are not within my authorities as the Commander of UNC/CFC/USFK. The Commander INDOPACOM or the Office of the Secretary of Defense may be better able to address this issue.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MR. KAHELE

Mr. KAHELE. Do you support a DOD investment in a water treatment facility and water quality testing facility at Red Hill? Does it make sense to have a permanent water quality testing facility at Red Hill so that we don't have to constantly ship samples to the mainland?

Dr. RATNER. I join the Secretary in his commitment to address the incident at Red Hill by remediating environmental impacts, restoring safe drinking water, and caring for affected military families and the people of Hawaii. While the question about the water treatment and testing facilities is outside of my area of responsibility, it is my understanding that the Navy has made or plans to make investments in both technologies, including the procurement high-precision lab equipment to establish an on-island, independent water testing capability at the University of Hawaii.

Mr. KAHELE. The Red Hill WAI Act also requires the Navy to reimburse the Honolulu Board of Water Supply and the Hawaii State Departments of Health and Education for the enormous expenses incurred as a result of Red Hill fuel spills. These expenses include drilling new drinking water wells and monitoring wells. Dr. Ratner, do you believe that DOD is responsible for reimbursing the State for costs associated with the Red Hill water crisis?

Dr. RATNER. I am unfamiliar with the Red Hill WAI Act, and I defer to our legal team on what specific responsibilities DOD has to reimburse the state for costs. While outside of my area of responsibility, it is my understanding that the Navy is in discussions with the Hawaii Department of Health (DOH) about the scope of reimbursement to DOH for expenses incurred in response to the release of fuel from the Red Hill facility.

Mr. KAHELE. The White House's 2022 Indo-Pacific strategy document highlights the importance of "building connection within and beyond the region" through people-to-people exchange. Dr. Ratner, what are some of the soft power support systems and institutions that can help support this INDOPACOM national security requirement? In Hawaii, the East West Center (EWC) is uniquely postured to do just that. Dr. Ratner, do you believe that DOD can dedicate more resources to people-to-people exchanges in the Indo-Pacific region?

Dr. RATNER. People-to-people exchanges are a critical part of the Department and U.S. government's toolkit for engaging the Indo-Pacific region. The Daniel K. Inouye Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies is a particularly valuable soft power resource for the Department, which facilitates training, education, and the development of strong networks between defense professionals in the Indo-Pacific region. We also work closely with the Department of State in leveraging the U.S. Government's full suite of tools—including the International Military Education and Training (IMET) program—to build people-to-people ties and professional development between the U.S. Department of Defense and our allies and partners.

Mr. KAHELE. I appreciate that DOD is giving Hawaii the attention it deserves related to the Red Hill water contamination crisis. Given what is happening at Red Hill, I am hearing from constituents who have relatives or friends in Okinawa that the U.S. military also contaminated the local water supply there. The U.S. military has allegedly been allowing PFOS and other harmful chemicals to go into Okinawa's main streams, springs and water supplies, thereby contaminating local farmlands and making the water undrinkable. What is DOD doing to address the water contamination issues caused by the U.S. military in Okinawa?

Admiral AQUILINO. All drinking water provided to the people of Okinawa meets Government of Japan (GOJ) drinking water standards, which are more stringent than the EPA health advisory level for Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS).

U.S. Forces Japan (USFJ) considers PFAS contamination the most important environmental issue currently under discussion between USFJ and GOJ, particularly in the groundwater wells affecting Kadena Air Base that may have been caused in part by DOD Aqueous Film Forming Foam (AFFF) systems. USFJ and the GOJ are cooperatively working to identify the cause of high PFAS levels at wells and surface water sites near U.S. military bases on Okinawa (Kadena, Camp Hansen, and Fu-

tenma) and taking steps to ensure continued safe drinking water for all while dramatically reducing the risk of future PFAS pollution as a result of mishaps.

To these ends, USFJ and the GOJ have established the PFAS Technical Working Group, under the authority of the USG/GOJ Joint Committee, to bilaterally address PFAS issues in Japan. Additionally, USFJ is moving forward unilaterally to upgrade and replace legacy AFFF firefighting systems to systems with significantly lower levels of PFAS while still meeting military firefighting specifications.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MR. CARL

Mr. CARL. The nature of the Indo-Pacific requires a steadfast and robust logistics backbone in order to get supplies and service members across thousands of miles of ocean and to facilitate movements within the theater. As you mention in your testimony, the Global Posture Review stresses the importance of enhancing our infrastructure in Guam, Australia, and the Pacific Islands. This task will also require strong logistics and supply chains. The closure of the Red Hill Bulk Fuel Storage Facility will also impact the logistics and supply chains throughout the AOR (Area of Responsibility). What do you see as critical for improving our logistic and supply chains in the Indo-Pacific and for the enhancement of our infrastructure throughout the region?

Admiral AQUILINO. Aside from increased military posture in the form of permanent infrastructure, it is vital that the Joint Force begin to integrate intra-theater distribution platforms and capabilities as well as logistics decision tools and networks. Understanding the massive amount of multimodal lift—air, maritime, and last-tactical-mile land movement associated with deploying and sustaining combat power—it is paramount that we capitalize on all available distribution platforms. This requires an extensive joint logistics command and control network to ensure operational efficiency and joint force priorities. Furthermore, the current resource pool of distribution platforms in either domain are limited and aging, which necessitates investment, overhaul, and sustainment.

In regards to fuel posture, the joint force must have access to various locations throughout the theatre to ensure a redundant and resilient supply chain. This notion is supported by the Institute for Defense Analysis study published in 2020. Increasing capacity and capability in Guam, Australia, and other Pacific islands will provide resiliency and survivability to our logistics network. Additionally, investing in fuel infrastructure postured west of the International Date Line and east of the PRC weapon engagement zone provides service components the ability to transition from competition to crisis in an effective manner. We need to invest not only in infrastructure, but also in capabilities that will ensure we can rapidly contract and acquire strategic sealift vessels to carry dry and liquid cargo to sustain the joint force during contingencies.

Mr. CARL. Can you explain how fully equipped naval medical ships, like the EPF and EMS can contribute to maximizing deterrence and distributed lethality in the Indo-Pacific as well as important partnership building exercises throughout the region?

Admiral AQUILINO. Future wars are likely to take place in contested environments, where success will depend in part on how quickly the Joint Force can build and then reconstitute warfighting readiness once attacked. Fully equipped medical ships that can rapidly treat service members and enable them to rejoin the fight or help evacuate them for future treatment will be critical in ensuring high rates of personnel readiness.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MS. STRICKLAND

Ms. STRICKLAND. As the United States Government continues to focus on the Indo-Pacific, I have heard some argue that we need to better align U.S.-based forces with particular theaters. I think that it is a compelling argument for service members to have more expertise in a particular region, as we see with the need for Arctic Warriors in Alaska, while still maintaining opportunities for people to advance in their careers. Can you tell me more about the current debate and what your views are?

If the Department moved to a regional alignment U.S.-based forces, how would this be implemented? What role would the services play in regional alignments?

Obviously, as we are seeing in Ukraine, there will be crises that happen that will increase demand on U.S. servicemembers. How would the Department align urgent needs with the need to maintain regional expertise?

Dr. RATNER. DOD has robust global force management processes that balance mission requirements, readiness, competing demands, and force availability. As a part of these processes, DOD considers what skillsets or capabilities are required to support certain missions. In some circumstances, DOD trains and equips forces for a specific skillset that has regional relevance, such as language skills or the ability to operate in certain geographic conditions. Additionally, other forces routinely operate in certain regions and develop region-specific expertise, such as Marines in Okinawa training across Southeast Asia and Soldiers in Germany training across Eastern Europe. As DOD continues to support these forces and their role in military-to-military relationships and interoperability, our top priority is maintaining the readiness and flexibility required to provide the Secretary the ability to respond to a wide range of potential global crises.

Ms. STRICKLAND. We are seeing in Ukraine the significant logistical questions by the Russian military which is even starker because Ukraine is Russia's neighbor. Given the ongoing concerns about the tyranny of distance, how are you going to ensure that we don't face the same logistics challenges in the INDOPACOM AOR?

Dr. RATNER. In accordance with the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year (FY) 2022, DOD's FY 2023 President's Budget request includes Pacific Deterrence Initiative (PDI) investments to 1) modernize and strengthen U.S. presence in the Indo-Pacific region; 2) improve logistics, maintenance capabilities, and prepositioning of equipment, munitions, fuel, and material; 3) improve infrastructure west of the International Date Line to enhance responsiveness and resilience of U.S. forces; and 4) build the defense and security capabilities, capacity, and cooperation of allies and partners. These four categories of PDI investments comprise \$3.8 billion of the total \$6.1 billion PDI request for in FY 2023, and complement the significant Air Force, Navy, and Army investments in logistics assets and capabilities that ensure the Joint Force's ability to supply and sustain its forces in conflict.

Ms. STRICKLAND. As the United States Government continues to focus on the Indo-Pacific, I have heard some argue that we need to better align U.S.-based forces with particular theaters. I think that it is a compelling argument for service members to have more expertise in a particular region, as we see with the need for Arctic Warriors in Alaska, while still maintaining opportunities for people to advance in their careers. Can you tell me more about the current debate and what your views are?

If the Department moved to a regional alignment U.S.-based forces, how would this be implemented? What role would the services play in regional alignments?

Obviously, as we are seeing in Ukraine, there will be crises that happen that will increase demand on U.S. servicemembers. How would the Department align urgent needs with the need to maintain regional expertise?

Admiral AQUILINO. As a Combatant Commander, I view it from the standpoint of needing to be prepared for full-spectrum conflict with forces that are adaptable to a wide range of environments. I am confident that I can meet my current requirements with the forces I have assigned to me.

If the Department moved to a regional alignment of U.S.-based forces, successful implementation by the services would need to ensure combatant commanders retained the ability to direct planning, training, and integration to better prepare for the transition from steady state and to crisis and contingency operations.

In practice, the Services' Talent Management and Game Plan Marketplaces develop, hire, and retain talent with regional experience. This approach capitalizes on Service Members' recent and relevant regional experience by selecting and placing them, sequentially, in positions of increasing responsibility while continuing to develop and utilize their regional expertise.

Presently, there is insufficient capacity to "fence" regional expertise in the event of a major crisis. Every unit in the DOD participated in CENTCOM operations in some capacity. Without a substantive increase in end strength, maintaining regional expertise is untenable.

Ms. STRICKLAND. We are seeing in Ukraine the significant logistical questions by the Russian military which is even starker because Ukraine is Russia's neighbor. Given the ongoing concerns about the tyranny of distance, how are you going to ensure that we don't face the same logistics challenges in the INDOPACOM AOR?

Admiral AQUILINO. We are working with USTRANSCOM, the Defense Logistics Agency, the Joint Logistics Enterprise, and greater department to ensure the tyranny of distance in this theater is overcome by resilient and redundant logistical support. The USINDOPACOM Theater Posture Plan ensures logistics are postured to provide support at the point and time of need.

Ms. STRICKLAND. As our focus moves to China, I don't want to forget our treaty allies including Korea. In December, Secretary Austin met with Minister of Defense Suh in the Security Consultative Meeting (SCM). During the SCM the Minister and

the Secretary emphasized that continuous training opportunities are important to maintain readiness. Right now, our joint forces do far too much training outside of the peninsula which is a significant cost burden and sometimes results in truncated training times. I know that there have been extensive discussions between our respective governments on the development of a combined multi-purpose live-fire training complex. Given how important this training complex is to maintaining readiness, can you give us a status update on this complex? Any idea when construction may begin?

General LACAMERA. USFK and ROK MND are still committed to continued cooperation toward the development of a combined joint multi-purpose live-fire training complex (CJMPLFC), however, there has been no progress on the development of the CJMPLFC. This delay is due to ongoing noise abatement negotiations with civilian protestors and the ROK, due to the range's proximity to civilian populations. After the ROK government was unable to make progress with the protestors, they enlisted the services of the Anti-Corruption Civil Right Commission (ACRC). The ACRC immediately called for a stop of all AH-64 gunnery training until further notice as a negotiation tactic. Recently, the ROK government commissioned a study to develop a concept for U.S. forces range operations and this year, USFK forces participated in noise abatement tests at Korean live fire ranges to provide data for the ROK study, using MI Abrams, Bradleys, and AH-64 helicopters. While there has been little progress in the development of a new range, the ROK is making some progress to increase training on the peninsula.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MR. MOORE

Mr. MOORE. Much emphasis has been placed on the importance of our QUAD and AUKUS alliances in addition to those with Japan and South Korea. However other partners in the South and Central Pacific such as France, the Marshall Islands, Palau and the Federated States of Micronesia are also critical to our supremacy in the region. I am very concerned China is actively working to flip many Pacific Island Nation's recognition from Taiwan to China, thus potentially enabling a larger Chinese Pacific military presence. How are you able to effectively secure these waters in peace as well as war, and what are you doing to oppose Chinese coercion and military encroachment in the South and Central Pacific?

Admiral AQUILINO. USINDOPACOM coordinates closely with allies and partners in the region, especially Australia, New Zealand and France, to support a consolidated approach toward regional security in the south and central Pacific. This includes participation in multilateral coordination mechanisms such as the Pacific Quadrilateral and the FVEY plus Japan and France multilateral. USINDOPACOM also works closely with the U.S. Interagency to stay engaged with Pacific Island nations without militaries. "Soft power" mechanisms are the primary DOD counter to PRC influence in the region including infrastructure development, assistance to Maritime Domain Awareness, and providing training opportunities to government personnel (i.e. medical, administrative, HA/DR, etc.).

Mr. MOORE. Since your testimony last year, the F-35 has successfully completed multiple deployments to the Pacific region, most notably the combined U.S.-U.K. deployment aboard the HMS Queen Elizabeth and the U.S. Navy deployment aboard the USS Carl Vinson. Have recent deployments reinforced your belief that 5th generation fighters, like F-35, are "needed to win"?

Admiral AQUILINO. Fifth generation fighter deployments like the one that took place on the HMS Queen Elizabeth re-affirms the need for these types of aircraft in the Pacific. Fifth generation fighters provide the capability to operate within areas that 4th generation fighters can no longer freely utilize. Our adversaries continue to refine their anti-access/area denial systems, and fifth generation fighters are one way we can continue to compete in that area.

Mr. MOORE. As we know, China's advanced air defenses and fighter capabilities are rapidly increasing in capability and capacity. These capabilities are pushing 4th generation aircraft to greater stand-off ranges, often beyond the targeting ranges of their weapons and sensors. Can you explain the importance of stand-in capabilities and what advantages they provide if an engagement with China were to occur?

Admiral AQUILINO. Stand-in capabilities are essential against a peer adversary. Fifth generation fighters provide persistent targeting coverage while being survivable in a high threat environment. Fifth generation fighters also provide the ability to engage mobile targets that challenge stand-off weapons due to time-of-flight. These platforms also assure allies and demonstrate our commitment to their defense by providing the ability to fight from stand-off ranges.

Mr. MOORE. I had the privilege of spending years of my life on the Korean Peninsula and greatly value the stalwart partner we have in South Korea. As you are aware, Kim Jong Un has recently outlined a set of ambitious nuclear modernization plans for North Korea, discussing developments in reentry vehicles, ICBMs and tactical nuclear weapons. Recent testing confirms this. Many believe that Russia would not have invaded Ukraine had it not de-nuclearized and that this crisis will only embolden North Korea's nuclear ambitions. Does our approach to North Korea shift in light of recent events?

General LACAMERA. [The information is classified and retained in the committee files.]

QUESTION SUBMITTED BY MR. PANETTA

Mr. PANETTA. During his testimony, Admiral Aquilino referred to Taiwan as a "Nation" during an exchange with Rep Panetta on U.S. support to Taiwan's National Guard. Can you please clarify our relationship with Taiwan and whether or not this was a mis-speak? Please consider the Taiwan Relations Act (TRA), three Joint Communiqués, and the Six Assurances in your response.

Admiral AQUILINO. During my testimony, I mistakenly referred to Taiwan as a "nation" during an exchange regarding support to Taiwan's National Guard. I immediately recognized I misspoke and submitted a clarification for the record at the conclusion of the hearing. As indicated in my written testimony and in other exchanges with the Committee members, USINDOPACOM conducts military activities in accordance with the U.S. One-China policy, as guided by the Taiwan Relations Act, three U.S.-China Joint Communiqués, and the Six Assurances.

[The clarification referred to can be found in the Appendix on page 119.]

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MRS. MURPHY

Mrs. MURPHY. China announced that its defense budget would grow by 7.1 percent at the annual Two Sessions, which is currently underway. Was this budgetary increase in line with your expectations, and what capabilities do you expect the PLA to invest in with this increase?

Dr. RATNER. This year's People's Republic of China (PRC) budget continues more than 20 years of annual defense spending increases and sustains the PRC's position as the second-largest military spender in the world after the United States. Moreover, the PRC's published military budget omits several major categories of expenditures and its actual military related spending is higher than what it states in its official budget. This budget will support the PLA's ambitions to implement the 14th Five-Year Plan, which will also serve the 2027 goal to accelerate the integrated development of mechanization, informatization, and intelligentization of the PRC's armed forces.

Mrs. MURPHY. Xi Jinping, as Chairman of the Central Military Commission, promoted a record number of PLA officers to the rank of general in 2019, breaking longstanding military convention in the process. Some analysts have ascribed these movements to Xi's efforts to increase the number of full-generals and place only totally loyal officers in key posts. How have such structural reforms within the PLA, including Xi's internal anti-corruption drive, affected PLA readiness?

Dr. RATNER. Despite recent turnover, disruptions to the People's Liberation Army (PLA) readiness remains minimal. The PLA will continue to pursue ambitious modernization objectives, implement major organizational reforms, and improve its combat readiness in line with the goals and timelines announced by Xi in 2017 and 2020.

Mrs. MURPHY. Our relationship with the freely associated states of Palau, the Marshall Islands, and Micronesia is an enduring American advantage in the Pacific. The Pacific Islands were mentioned 10 times in the President's recently released Indo-Pacific Strategy. How has our failure to renegotiate the compacts of free association in a timely manner affected operational planning and overall readiness in your AOR?

Admiral AQUILINO. These important agreements strengthen our security relationships throughout the Pacific and mitigate competitors' influence. However, as a Combatant Commander, the status of the compact negotiations does not impact my readiness or ability to plan. The historically good relationships we've enjoyed with these nations have allowed us to maintain a credible forward military presence that continues to this day and promotes regional stability.

I support interagency efforts to speedily conclude the negotiation of the Compact Agreements.

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MR. HORSFORD

Mr. HORSFORD. I've recently heard from Pacific Air Forces that their top acquisition requests include accelerated F-15EX fielding and the rapid procurement of the E-7 Wedgetail or a similar system. I agree with their assessment and strongly support both programs. I hope to see them prioritized in the upcoming budget request. As the combatant commander, I'm curious how these acquisition priorities influence your overall strategy for the Indo-Pacific.

Are you confident that your current forces could gain and maintain air superiority in the Indo-Pacific if required; and how would accelerated F-15EX procurement and the acquisition of a next-generation AWACS capability better posture you to meet the Chinese threat?

Admiral AQUILINO. The E-7 is needed to replace the E-3, and directly contributes to the stand-in fight due to its superior radar system. When combined with the Royal Australian Air Force's E-7 force, the joint/combined force is able to command and control the air domain throughout the vast Pacific theater. To strengthen this capability even further, it is imperative the U.S. and Australia work together to increase E-7 capability as quickly as possible. To supplement the E-7, the F-15EX directly contributes to the stand-off capability as an airborne stand-off weapons delivery platform.

I am confident our current forces could gain air superiority, but may struggle to maintain it based on PRC's massive military buildup and our own modernization efforts, which often come at the expense of current capacity. Accelerating F-15EX procurement, long range weapon development, and increasing land-based air defenses will contribute to re-gaining the necessary edge to maintain air superiority where and when it is needed.

Mr. HORSFORD. In last week's hearing with Secretary Karlin, we discussed the strategic importance of multi-lateral training events like Pacific Pathways, and the vital role they play in guaranteeing persistent access in the Indo-Pacific. We agreed that these exercises are mutually beneficial and allow the U.S. and allied nations to place combat power forward to deter aggression. I strongly believe that these exercises not only improve readiness, but are one of the most cost-effective ways to present a more complex strategic challenge to the Chinese.

Do you intend to request increased funding for the Pacific Pathways exercise in FY23, and if so, how would this increased funding allow U.S. Army Pacific to guarantee and optimize persistent access in the 1st and 2nd island chains?

Admiral AQUILINO. U.S. Army Pacific, as the lead for Operation Pathways (redesigned and renamed from the former Pacific Pathways), requested an additional \$104M for FY23 to provide persistent access in the Indo-Pacific as part of INDO-PACOM's FY23 Unfunded Priorities Report submission. Operation Pathways optimizes persistent access in the First and Second Island Chain in a phased operation enabling a sustainable, strategic path through Army and Joint multilateral exercises from October 2022 to September 2023, while our overall approach to campaigning improves our ability to deter conflict.

Mr. HORSFORD. I'm curious about the role "2805" unspecified minor construction authorities enable the Air Force to implement its Agile Combat Employment strategy.

Do you require expanded 2805 authorities to rapidly execute the military construction projects necessary for the implementation of the Agile Combat Employment doctrine?

Admiral AQUILINO. Yes, using existing authorities in support of Agile Combat Employment (ACE) doctrine across the Pacific is challenging. Average cost factors in the Indo-Pacific are often between 2-3 times the cost of comparable U.S. contract or troop labor projects in other locations due to logistical challenges present in the area of responsibility. Operating in remote locations drives up construction costs in all aspects—including material, equipment, and workforce mobilization—and operating under current authorities in 10 U.S.C. 2805 can impose limitations.