

HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE

STATEMENT OF

VICE ADMIRAL FRANK C. PANDOLFE, USN

DIRECTOR OF STRATEGY PLANS AND POLICY

JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF

BEFORE THE HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE

ASIA PACIFIC REBALANCE

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Chairman McKeon, Ranking Member Smith, and distinguished Committee Members, thank you for the opportunity to offer my thoughts on the Asia Pacific Rebalance.

Every day, the Joint Force conducts real-world operations, exercises, and senior leader engagements in the Asia Pacific region in support of the Administration's Rebalance policy. These activities facilitate greater interoperability with regional forces, mitigate risk of miscalculation, and reduce the likelihood of conflict. Supported by our robust regional force posture, U.S. engagement in the Asia Pacific is essential to regional security.

### OPERATIONS

United States forces in the Asia Pacific region operate continuously on land, in the air, and on the sea. These forces routinely conduct freedom of navigation operations, deployments, and port visits, they also work with regional partners to respond to natural disasters. Our presence deters North Korean aggression and ensures unrestricted access to the global commons. As a recent example, U.S. forces responded quickly and efficiently by supporting the U.S. Agency for International Development's humanitarian response to the Philippines in the wake of super typhoon Haiyan in November 2013. The scope and speed of our response—more than 13,400 personnel, 66 aircraft, and 12 naval vessels—clearly demonstrated the depth of U.S. commitment to the region. By evacuating 21,000 people and delivering nearly 2,500 tons of relief supplies, U.S. forces again showcased the ability to respond rapidly and effectively. Activities like this increase interoperability with allies and partners which in turn improves their ability to respond to a range of contingencies. U.S. forces' long-term operational presence in the region also serves to deter threats to peace and stability.

### EXERCISES

As Acting Undersecretary of Defense Lumpkin stated, regional relationships form the foundation of our alliances and partnerships in the Asia-Pacific. Solid

relationships are built on familiarity, trust, and communication; these effectively increase our capability to work together in any number of scenarios. Military exercises have proven to increase interoperability across key mission areas such as humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, counter-terrorism, maritime security, and peacekeeping. As the Rebalance continues, regional exercises continue to grow in scope, participation, and sophistication, ranging from basic unit-level training to complex multinational exercises such as RIMPAC and COBRA GOLD. In 2014 RIMPAC will include Brunei and China for the first time; Thailand-based COBRA GOLD will see participation by Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Singapore, and Republic of Korea, among others. Through our exercise program and other engagements, we are helping our partners take the lead in addressing regional challenges. Additionally, we work closely with the Department of State to assist nations in strengthening their maritime security capabilities.

#### SENIOR LEADER ENGAGEMENT

Senior uniformed leaders are taking advantage of opportunities to reach out to our counterparts in the region. For example, Chairman Dempsey traveled to China in April 2013 for high level meetings with the Chinese Chief of the General Staff and other key Chinese leaders, and will host a reciprocal visit this May. He hosted allied defense chiefs from the Philippines and Australia in 2013, as well as the Malaysian Chief of Defense just this month. The Chairman also accompanied Secretary Hagel to Korea for the annual alliance conference in September 2013. PACOM commander Admiral Locklear and his service component commanders continuously engage with their regional counterparts, hearing their concerns, reassuring them of continued support, and demonstrating U.S. commitment to the Rebalance.

#### FORCE POSTURE

This commitment is most visibly demonstrated by physical presence. Our close relationship with regional allies and partners is enabled by U.S. force posture in the Asia Pacific, which assures access and reduces response time. In addition

to our long-term presence in Korea and Japan, Rebalance initiatives in Darwin Australia and Singapore continue to bear fruit. Rotational Marine Corps deployments to Darwin began in 2012; we sent a Company-level rotation of Marines there for six months last year and will eventually grow this rotational presence to 2500. Additionally, the Littoral Combat Ship USS FREEDOM completed her first deployment to Singapore in November 2013; we will see up to four LCS rotationally deployed there by 2017. These are just two of a number of ongoing force posture initiatives in the region.

As the Rebalance to Asia continues, our commitment to the region reassures allies and partners and deters those who would undermine stability. U.S. commitment to the region is demonstrated by our operational activities, ongoing exercises, and Senior Leader Engagement, all underpinned by our physical presence. I look forward to your questions on these and other topics this morning.

Finally, please accept my thanks to this committee for all you have done for our men and women in uniform. Thank you.