

**STATEMENT OF  
ADMIRAL JOHN C. AQUILINO, U.S. NAVY  
COMMANDER, U.S. INDO-PACIFIC COMMAND  
BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON DEFENSE**

**U.S. INDO-PACIFIC COMMAND POSTURE**

**17 MAY 2022**

## **Introduction / Opening Statement**

Chair McCollum, Ranking Member Calvert, and distinguished members of the Subcommittee, 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 (OAIs) 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 (OAIs) 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.