

Stenographic Transcript
Before the

COMMITTEE ON
ARMED SERVICES

UNITED STATES SENATE

HEARING TO RECEIVE TESTIMONY ON THE POSTURE OF UNITED STATES
INDO-PACIFIC COMMAND AND UNITED STATES FORCES KOREA IN REVIEW OF
THE DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION REQUEST FOR FISCAL YEAR 2024 AND THE
FUTURE YEARS DEFENSE PROGRAM

Thursday, April 20, 2023

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1 HEARING TO RECEIVE TESTIMONY ON THE POSTURE OF UNITED STATES
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5
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7
8 U.S. Senate

9 Committee on Armed Services

10 Washington, D.C.

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12 The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 9:30 a.m. in
13 Room SD-G50, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Hon. Jack
14 Reed, chairman of the committee, presiding.

15 Committee Members Present: Senators Reed, Shaheen,
16 Gillibrand, Blumenthal, Hirono, Kaine, King, Peters,
17 Duckworth, Rosen, Kelly, Wicker, Fischer, Cotton, Rounds,
18 Ernst, Sullivan, Cramer, Scott, Tuberville, Budd, and
19 Schmitt.

1 OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. JACK REED, U.S. SENATOR FROM
2 RHODE ISLAND

3 Chairman Reed: Good morning. The Committee meets to
4 receive testimony from Admiral John Aquilino, Commander of
5 the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command and General Paul LaCamera, the
6 Commander of U.S. Forces Korea. Gentlemen, thank you for
7 your service to the nation and please convey our thanks to
8 the men and women serving under your commands.

9 This is a critical time for our forces in the Indo-
10 Pacific. China's ambition in the region continues to grow,
11 as does its aggressive behavior. Chinese leadership seeks
12 greater power influence around the world, and it is
13 leveraging a wide range of military, economic, and political
14 pressures against its neighbors to advance these goals.

15 As our defense leaders have made clear, the United
16 States does not seek conflict with China, and strategic
17 competition is not an inevitable march to conflict. America
18 has long been a pacific nation, and we have deep economic
19 and security interests in the region.

20 During today's hearing I look forward to discussing how
21 our forces can continue to improve our military posture and
22 capabilities while also supporting whole-of-government
23 efforts to compete effectively in the region.

24 To that end, the Defense Department recently raised its
25 Joint Concept for Competing, which makes clear the objective

1 of China and our adversaries is to, in their words, "win
2 without fighting." The concept warns that if we do not
3 adapt to the realities of long-term competition, the United
4 States risks ceding strategic influence, advantage, and
5 leverage while preparing for a war that never occurs. I am
6 interested to hear from our witnesses how they plan to
7 utilize the joint capabilities in the Indo-Pacific and Korea
8 to address these challenges.

9 Recognizing the challenges in the Indo-Pacific,
10 President Biden has requested a considerable funding
11 increase for INDOPACOM in the fiscal year 2024 budget. This
12 includes \$9.1 billion for the Pacific Deterrence Initiative,
13 or PDI, to strengthen the posture, infrastructure, and
14 capabilities of our forces. In addition, this PDI
15 investment will help build the capabilities of our allies
16 and partners through military-to-military training
17 exercises, freedom of navigation operations, and
18 infrastructure improvements. The PDI request is a subset of
19 broader department-wide investments to modernize and equip
20 the force, much of which is focused on China as the
21 Department's pacing challenge.

22 Our comparative advantage over China remains our
23 network of allies and partners in the region and globally.
24 I am encouraged by the progress made through AUKUS, our
25 military partnership with Australia and the United Kingdom,

1 which is serving as an important test case for potential
2 future partnership. The maturation of the Quadrilateral
3 Security Dialogue, or Quad, involving the United States,
4 Japan, India, and Australia, also presents a valuable
5 framework.

6 Further, we have recently seen momentum in a number of
7 other relationships throughout the region, including our new
8 basing agreement with the Philippines, historic cooperation
9 announcements between South Korea and Japan, and a
10 remarkable transformation in Japan's new defense strategy.
11 It is my hope that these developments will provide more
12 opportunities to engage other regional powers.

13 However, the most dangerous flashpoint that could turn
14 our competition with China into a conflict remains Taiwan.
15 In the past several years we have seen a surge of aggressive
16 Chinese military exercises around Taiwan's airspace and
17 territorial waters, as well as an escalation in combative
18 language from Beijing. The world has a right to be
19 concerned.

20 To help Taiwan develop its own defense capabilities,
21 consistent with the Taiwan Relations Act, the 2023 National
22 Defense Authorization Act included a package of security
23 assistance tools ranging from foreign military financing to
24 presidential drawdown authority. I understand INDOPACOM is
25 continuing to help Taiwan develop its training and

1 warfighting concepts, and I expect Congress will continue to
2 support this effort. Admiral Aquilino, faced with these
3 wide-ranging challenges, I would like to know your
4 assessment of INDOPACOM's preparedness to carry out the
5 United States' strategy in the region.

6 As we seek to more effectively compete with China, we
7 must also manage the threat posed by North Korea. North
8 Korea has conducted nearly two dozen missile tests this
9 year, including ICBMs and cruise missiles, and has
10 reportedly stopped its routine military-to-military
11 communication with South Korea. We also know that Kim Jong
12 Un continues to view nuclear weapons as the ultimate
13 deterrence against foreign intervention, and intends to gain
14 international acceptance as a nuclear arms state.

15 The goal of U.S. policy remains the denuclearization of
16 the Korean Peninsula, but we are not taking an all-or-
17 nothing approach. Instead, the Biden administration has
18 pursued what it describes as a calibrated, practical
19 approach to diplomacy with the North, with the goal of
20 eliminating the threat to the United States. This approach
21 will require smart and firm engagement with the North
22 Koreans, but more importantly, it requires coordination with
23 our allies and partners in the region, particular South
24 Korea and Japan. General LaCamera, I would ask for your
25 views on the partnership between the U.S., Japan, South

1 Korea, and other regional partners in addressing North
2 Korea's destabilizing activity. I would also like to know
3 how your forces are maintaining readiness through training
4 exercises with their South Korean counterparts.

5 I want to again thank the witnesses and look forward to
6 your testimony. Let me now recognize the Ranking Member,
7 Senator Wicker.

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1 OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. ROGER WICKER, U.S. SENATOR
2 FROM MISSISSIPPI

3 Senator Wicker: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And I want
4 to thank both of our witnesses for being here today.

5 The Department of Defense's most pressing task remains
6 ensuring deterrence of conflict in the Indo-Pacific.
7 Failure to prevent aggression there would have enormous
8 consequences. But we have already seen deterrence fail in
9 Europe. We did not deter Putin from invading Ukraine, and
10 not doing so has cost the global economy over \$1 trillion
11 thus far, brought untold suffering to the Ukrainian people,
12 and heightened the threats under which our European allies
13 live. Our intelligence community predicts that a deterrence
14 failure in the Indo-Pacific would be much, much worse.

15 We are entering a particularly dangerous period. Xi
16 Jinping is the most powerful and ruthless leader in China
17 since Chairman Mao. We know Xi has aggressive intent, and
18 he is rapidly increasing China's military capability.

19 His ally, Kim Jong Un, has also improved North Korea's
20 capabilities to threaten the continental United States and
21 our allies. The North Korean dictator has already provided
22 significant weaponry to Russia's failing fight in Ukraine.
23 We also know that Xi and Putin have signed up to a so-called
24 "No Limits" partnership.

25 We have a lot of work to do. The fiscal year 2024

1 budget request before us is the last one in which
2 significant programs and activities could be funded and
3 fielded in time for 2027, the year by which Xi has told the
4 Chinese military to be prepared to take Taiwan. That is
5 less than 4 short years away.

6 Although a portion of the Pentagon is operating on a
7 wartime tempo when it comes to supporting Ukraine, I cannot
8 say the same for their focus on China.

9 Because this Committee felt that our defense strategy
10 was not being implemented fast enough, the Pacific
11 Deterrence Initiative was created and requires the Indo-
12 Pacific Combatant Commander to provide an independent
13 assessment of resources required to meet the challenge in
14 that region.

15 This initiative has allowed us to start moving our
16 policies and investments in the right direction, but this
17 forward motion has come in fits and starts. For example,
18 last year, Congress authorized and appropriated an
19 additional \$100 million for planning and design activities
20 in the Western Pacific. These funds were meant to expand
21 our basing and logistics footprint in places such as Yap in
22 Micronesia, Tinian in the Marianas Islands, and the
23 Philippines, and elsewhere.

24 Once again, these initiatives are not fully funded in
25 this budget. At this pace, it would take 25 years to

1 modernize our basing posture in the Western Pacific,
2 compared to what we did in 5 years in Europe through the
3 European Deterrence Initiative.

4 Similarly, low-cost and high-value investments for
5 allies and partners remain unfunded. We still cannot
6 effectively share communications and intelligence with
7 allies and partners.

8 These are just a few of the important enabling
9 capabilities we need in the Indo-Pacific. We need much
10 more. For instance, the Pentagon still seems unserious
11 about building the Guam Defense System in a timely fashion.
12 There are key space, cyber, electronic warfare, and command
13 and control technologies we must accelerate as well.

14 This Committee recognizes the seriousness of the
15 competition. That is why this Congress led the bipartisan
16 charge to increase the defense budget in last year's cycle,
17 with a set of investments tailored to our most significant
18 operational challenges in the Indo-Pacific. I am hopeful we
19 can do so again this year. We really have to do so again
20 this year.

21 Allow me to repeat: the window during which this
22 Committee can authorize significant capability to deter
23 China in the near term is closing. 2027 is a few short
24 years away, if that is the accurate projection. And I am
25 not convinced we have treated that date with the adequate

1 seriousness thus far. We will need to prioritize our
2 defense investments more effectively here in Congress.

3 So, I thank our witnesses. You have quite a job ahead
4 of you. And we appreciate what you do and want to work with
5 you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

6 Chairman Reed: Thank you very much, Senator Wicker.
7 Admiral Aquilino, please.

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1 STATEMENT OF ADMIRAL JOHN C. AQUILINO, USN, COMMANDER,
2 UNITED STATES INDO-PACIFIC COMMAND

3 Admiral Aquilino: Chairman Reed, Ranking Member
4 Wicker, and distinguished members of the Committee, thank
5 you for the opportunity to discuss the Indo-Pacific region
6 with you here today.

7 I deeply appreciate your continuous support to all of
8 our servicemembers, government civilians, and their families
9 within the Indo-Pacific Command. It is my distinct honor
10 and privilege to serve alongside these brave men and women
11 who selflessly execute our deterrence mission and defense
12 missions every day. Your support is instrumental in our
13 ability to accomplish these missions, but there is more to
14 do, and we must act with a greater sense of urgency.

15 Every day, USINDOPACOM works tirelessly to prevent
16 conflict, not provoke it. War in INDOPACOM is not
17 inevitable, and it is not imminent. However, this decade
18 presents a period of increased risk, as illustrated by a
19 variety of things. First, the illegal, illegitimate war by
20 Russia in Ukraine. Second, the largest and fastest military
21 buildup and malign behavior of the PRC, including their "No
22 Limits" relationship and partnership with Russia. Third,
23 the continuous missile provocations and nuclear rhetoric by
24 the DPRK, and in this theater the threat of violent
25 extremism is also present.

1 Our National Defense Strategy identifies the PRC as the
2 most consequential strategic competitor to the United
3 States, and the only competitor capable of combining its
4 economic, diplomatic, military, and technological
5 capabilities to mount a sustained challenge to the rules-
6 based international order.

7 "Seize the Initiative" is INDOPACOM's approach to
8 execute the National Defense Strategy and accomplish our
9 defense priorities -- defend the homeland, deter strategic
10 attacks, deter aggression, and build a resilient joint
11 force. By design, this approach prevents conflict through
12 integrated deterrence. It ensure we can fight and win
13 should deterrence fail. And it provides the Secretary of
14 Defense and the President with options for any contingency.

15 There are four pillars to our approach. First is a
16 robust theater posture; second, a joint operations campaign
17 comprised of lethal, persistent forces forward; third,
18 technologically superior capabilities to maintain our
19 warfighting advantages in the near, mid, and long term; and
20 fourth, an enhanced network of allies and partners that
21 which any of our challengers do not have. We respectfully
22 request your continued support for these four focus areas,
23 and recognize that any delay in one area directly affects
24 all the others and puts the overall success of our
25 deterrence efforts at risk.

1 Again, conflict in the Indo-Pacific region is not
2 inevitable, but we cannot rest on our past accomplishments
3 to secure a future peace. Security challenges threaten our
4 very way of life as well as the peace, prosperity, and
5 stability of the rules-based international order that has
6 enabled that peace for over 80 years.

7 The investments we make today will allow future
8 generations to enjoy the same legacy of liberty our
9 ancestors entrusted to us, but we do not have the luxury of
10 time. We must act now to preserve this free and open Indo-
11 Pacific.

12 Chairman, Ranking Member Wicker, thanks again for the
13 opportunity to appear today, and I look forward to your
14 questions.

15 [The prepared statement of Admiral Aquilino follows:]

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1 Chairman Reed: Thank you very much, Admiral Aquilino.
2 General LaCamera, please.

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1 STATEMENT OF GENERAL PAUL J. LACAMERA, USA, COMMANDER,
2 UNITED NATIONS COMMAND / COMBINED FORCES COMMAND / UNITED
3 STATES FORCES KOREA

4 General LaCamera: Chairman Reed, Ranking Member
5 Wicker, and the distinguished members of the Committee,
6 thank you for the opportunity to appear before you as the
7 Commander of the United Nations Command, Combined Forces
8 Command, and U.S. Forces Korea to discuss the current
9 situation on the Korean Peninsula.

10 Korea is as important today as it was in 1950, when the
11 international rules-based order was first challenged and
12 successfully defended on the Korean Peninsula. Located on
13 the Asian continent, the Republic of Korea is crucial to
14 regional and global stability. When North Korean communist
15 forces invaded South Korea, with the blessing and assistance
16 of the Soviet Union and China, the United States, along with
17 the 22 members of the United Nations, stood together with
18 the South Korean people to expel the aggressors. The Korean
19 War taught us that we must always be ready and forward-
20 postured with our allies.

21 To ensure continued peace and stability on the
22 Peninsula, I have five priorities that are nested within the
23 Indo-Pacific Commander's "Seize the Initiative" approach to
24 ensure free and open Indo-Pacific.

25 My first priority is to defend the homelands, the

1 United States and our allies. The Korean War has not ended
2 -- we are in an armistice -- and the Kim regime has
3 developed capabilities that can reach beyond Seoul, Tokyo,
4 Washington, D.C., and the capitals of the United Nations
5 Command Sending States. By defending forward in this
6 strategic location we better protect our people and the
7 Korean people. Defending forward reinforces our iron-clad
8 commitment to the Republic of Korea.

9 My second priority is to strengthen the United States
10 and the Republic of Korea alliance. We must never take the
11 alliance for granted. This is our center of gravity for
12 deterring the Kim regime. The alliance has effectively
13 deterred the Kim regime's resumption of large-scale
14 aggression for almost 70 years, allowing security and
15 stability to flourish and the Republic of Korea to develop
16 into an economically prosperous, vibrant democracy.

17 In contrast, the Kim regime ignores the needs and
18 rights of the great majority of its population and continues
19 to invest its resources into developing weapons that it uses
20 at a leverage. External leverage coerces concessions from
21 the international community. Internal leverage maintains
22 control of the people and ensures Kim regime survival.

23 My third priority is to prepare for combat. This is
24 decisive. Our alliance alone cannot deter aggression. Our
25 power of resistance deters. Maintaining the highest state

1 of combat readiness is our main effort. Because readiness
2 is perishable we must continue realistic training in order
3 to respond to aggression and defend our homelands.

4 My fourth priority is to build coalitions to dissuade
5 aggression in the region. Our network of allies and
6 partners with common interests on the Korean Peninsula
7 represents our greatest asymmetric advantage.

8 My fifth priority is to ensure our personnel are taken
9 care of and prepared to execute our mission on the Korean
10 Peninsula. Mission first, people always. Our people
11 serving on the Asian continent have the extraordinary
12 responsibility of providing security and stability
13 throughout the Republic of Korea and Northeast Asia. Our
14 focus remains taking care of the mental, physical, and
15 spiritual needs of our servicemembers, civilians, and
16 families.

17 Since 1953, the United States and the Republic of Korea
18 remain ready to deter and respond to North Korean
19 aggression. Our mutual defense treaty expresses our common
20 desire to live in peace with all people and governments. It
21 also expresses our common determination to defend ourselves
22 against external armed attacks so that no potential
23 aggressor could be under the impression that the United
24 States or the Republic of Korea stands alone in the Pacific
25 area.

1 While the United States and the Republic of Korea
2 alliance began out of military necessity, it has evolved to
3 become the linchpin of stability and prosperity in Northeast
4 Asia. The soldiers, sailors, airmen, marines, guardians,
5 civilians, and contractors are proof of our iron-clad
6 commitment to the alliance and ensure that the authoritarian
7 regimes of North Korea, China, and Russia cannot unmake the
8 international rules-based order.

9 Should the Kim regime resume hostilities, with your
10 continued support we are ready. I am proud to serve with
11 them and honored to represent them before you. Thank you,
12 and I look forward to your questions.

13 [The prepared statement of General LaCamera follows:]

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1 Chairman Reed: Thank you very much, gentleman.

2 General LaCamera, your prepared testimony states that
3 Kim Jong Un is determined to operationalize his nuclear
4 arsenal and is developing a credible second-strike
5 capability. Your testimony also states that without outside
6 influence it is not matter of if North Korea will detonate
7 another nuclear device but when.

8 In this situation, do you see China in any way
9 affecting their decision-making about the inevitability of
10 another nuclear detonation? And then what is the effect of
11 the North Korean's having a credible second strike?

12 General LaCamera: Thanks, Chairman. I think China can
13 play a spoiler in this. They can be supportive or they can
14 be non-supportive in what he is doing. What we are seeing
15 right now, in any kind of U.N. sanctions votes in the United
16 Nations, both China and Russia continue to veto that, and
17 they continue to work against the things that we are trying
18 to do to maintain peace and stability.

19 Chairman Reed: And with a second-strike capability, I
20 presume that would immensely complicate your --

21 General LaCamera: Yes, sir. I mean, it is clear that
22 he has, in the last, you know, year plus, he has
23 demonstrated a whole bunch of different capabilities, all of
24 which could lead to a second-strike capability. I mean, he
25 is clearly focusing on the theater ballistic missile

1 capability, not just on the Peninsula regionally but
2 globally.

3 Chairman Reed: Thank you.

4 Admiral Aquilino, you have difficult steps to
5 prioritize in terms of investments, and one area which seems
6 critical is the electronic spectrum. I mean, to
7 successfully conduct operations in the Pacific ideally you
8 could disrupt the communication of our enemies and also
9 their ISR, and at the same time, in a complementary fashion,
10 disguise our assets and also have constant secure
11 communication. Is that, in your view, like the number one
12 priority?

13 Admiral Aquilino: Thanks, Chairman. So if you are
14 talking about a prioritized list, the Guam Missile Defense
15 System remains the Indo-Pacific's number one priority. That
16 is based on the homeland defense mission that is most
17 critical. But immediately behind it, Senator, you talked
18 about the capability to influence the electromagnetic
19 spectrum, absolutely. We view it through this lens of
20 decision superiority, which means we need to be able to
21 operate in contested space, we need persistent battle space
22 awareness of all things going on, and we need to be able to
23 close our kill chains with the weapons and the network that
24 allows that to happen, and the electromagnetic spectrum is
25 critical to that.

1 Chairman Reed: Are we putting enough resources in this
2 budget to accelerate that process and accomplish that task?

3 Admiral Aquilino: I am very thankful for the
4 Department's budget. It certainly is strategy based. It is
5 certainly focused on the Indo-Pacific. That said, as you
6 know, Chairman, I have provided an unfunded list as it
7 applies. The Secretary has got global responsibilities.
8 And as you have tasked in the authorization language, I am
9 responsible to provide you with a list of what INDOPACOM
10 assesses as the critical capabilities needed to both deter
11 and defend, and we have provided both of those reports, as
12 directed by law, to help inform.

13 But it has certainly been identified, and my
14 requirements have been fed into the Department.

15 Chairman Reed: Thank you very much. Final point,
16 Admiral Aquilino, you point out in your testimony, this is
17 the first time in history the United States is facing two
18 major nuclear powers, so a lot of the theory, a lot of the
19 institutional arrangements that we have made reflect the
20 Cold War, which was a Soviet Union and U.S. confrontation.

21 Just very quickly, how has this changed, to your
22 thinking and the thinking of your colleagues in the
23 Department of Defense?

24 Admiral Aquilino: Thanks again, Chairman. So
25 certainly the No Limits relationship by President Putin and

1 President Xi is something we ought to be watching very, very
2 closely, and what does that mean. My partner, General
3 Cotton, at STRATCOM, is the lead for all the strategic
4 nuclear portions. As it applies to INDOPACOM, he is a great
5 supporting partner, and that means we have to understand
6 what does that look like as we manage escalation and
7 delivery deterrence, both conventionally and in the
8 strategic nuclear lens.

9 I think what makes sense to me, and I know he would
10 advocate for, and that is the modernization of our strategic
11 nuclear triad as a priority threat, to be able to compete in
12 that new world.

13 Chairman Reed: Thank you very much.

14 Senator Wicker, please.

15 Senator Wicker: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

16 Admiral, let me just make sure I understand. With
17 regard to the electromagnetic spectrum, that is highly
18 important, right up there bumping up against the Guam
19 Initiative. Is that right?

20 Admiral Aquilino: Yes, Senator. I would say it is in
21 my number two kind of pile of decision superiority, behind
22 the Guam Defense Initiative.

23 Senator Wicker: Okay. So in order for us to take care
24 of that we are going to have to fund some unfunded
25 requirements. Is that correct?

1 Admiral Aquilino: Senator, for consideration again I
2 have provided the assets and the capabilities I think I
3 need. There are certainly some capabilities I have asked
4 for that provide benefit in the electromagnetic spectrum in
5 order to execute our mission.

6 Senator Wicker: Is it highly important that we fund
7 this, vitally important?

8 Admiral Aquilino: Yes, sir. I believe it is.

9 Senator Wicker: Okay. Let me just ask both of you,
10 there are some people who feel our support for Ukraine is
11 taking away from our capability and credibility in the Indo-
12 Pacific, particularly with regard to Taiwan. Admiral, you
13 first and then General. What do you say to that?

14 Admiral Aquilino: Senator, I do not. The United
15 States is the only global force capable of managing multiple
16 threats. My partner in EUCOM is executing his mission sets.
17 I have not been impacted at this point as it applies to my
18 deterrence mission. So I do believe we can do both. I
19 believe we have to do both to maintain the peace.

20 Senator Wicker: We have to do both. Okay. General,
21 what would Ukrainian success in this war say to the world
22 about the situation in the Indo-Pacific?

23 General LaCamera: For us, we are taking what is going
24 on in Ukraine as, you know, lessons learned, boiling it
25 down. It does not necessarily translate to what a fight on

1 the Peninsula would look like. I think the support that is
2 being provided, the lessons learned coming off of that, I
3 think it reinforces how we feel about sovereignty and a
4 country's right to choose their future.

5 Senator Wicker: Okay. Well, let me then ask you to
6 enlarge on that. What is it to us, what happens in Taiwan
7 and South Korea? You spoke about an international rules-
8 based order, and sometimes I am troubled that that
9 terminology does not get through to the American people.
10 What is it to us, living in Virginia and Maryland and
11 Mississippi and Nebraska and Arkansas that the forces of Xi
12 Jinping and Kim Jong Un not succeed in that area?

13 General LaCamera: I think it is a history lesson for
14 the American people. I mean, the blood and treasure that we
15 put forth in World War II and international rules-based
16 order that we established right after that was challenged in
17 1950. It has been bookended by what is being challenged in
18 Ukraine right now. And I think what it is demonstrating is
19 that we believe in the sovereignty of a nation, choosing
20 their future. We believe in democracy, et cetera.

21 Senator Wicker: Okay. Admiral, do you see what I am
22 saying? International rules-based order -- what is it to us
23 in Tupelo?

24 Admiral Aquilino: Thanks, Senator. So what it means
25 is freedom of navigation. So think of goods and services

1 flowing unencumbered through wherever they need to go to get
2 to the people of the world.

3 Senator Wicker: Our ability to purchase the products
4 we need for everyday life.

5 Admiral Aquilino: I do not know if it is on the
6 purchase side, but when we talk international rules-based
7 order it is certainly on the delivery side. So two-thirds
8 of the entire global economy flow through the South China
9 Sea and the Straits of Malacca, and if you were to not have
10 a rules set of orders and there was a country that believed
11 they could meter, monitor, task, tax, or impact that set of
12 prosperity, that is what it would mean to the people of
13 America, when you talk about the international rules-based
14 order.

15 The ability to fly anywhere that rules allow. The U.S.
16 standing in the region as it applies to being an assured
17 partner in the vicinity. Those are kind of the stakes and
18 what it means when we talk about the international rules-
19 based order.

20 Senator Wicker: The value of the word of U.S. leaders,
21 you are saying.

22 Admiral Aquilino: Absolutely.

23 Senator Wicker: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

24 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Wicker.

25 Senator Shaheen, please.

1 Senator Shaheen: Thank you, and thank you both for
2 your service and for being here this morning.

3 India is a key partner. It is a member of the Quad.
4 It is the only member of the Quad that maintains such a
5 close and ongoing relationship with Russia, including
6 continuing to acquire additional weapons from Russia.

7 Are there more steps we should be taking to discourage
8 India from maintaining that relationship with Russia and
9 encourage them to adopt more of the positions of other
10 members of the Quad, Australia, Japan, with us?

11 Admiral Aquilino: Thanks, Senator. So India has been
12 a tremendous partner. The partnership is only growing. It
13 is strengthening. We have similar security concerns. We
14 have people-to-people ties. We have certainly deep
15 relationships with the Indians. They buy our equipment. We
16 are interoperable in the military-to-military space. Their
17 Chief of Defence, General Chauhan, and I have a terrific
18 relationship.

19 So I think what we need to do is keep fostering this.
20 The world's largest democracy with similar security
21 concerns, we have to continue to work together in order to
22 ensure that the United States and India's relationship
23 grows. We certainly support the increased multilateral
24 aspect of it. So the Quad is not a military agreement. It
25 is an economic and diplomatic relationship. But the Quad

1 nations come together often to practice and rehearse, and
2 will continue to do that.

3 Senator Shaheen: Well thank you. I agree. I think it
4 is very important. And as we look at the growing
5 relationship between China and Russia, it has an ever-
6 increasing role to play. So thank you.

7 Can you speak to how the expanded security agreement
8 between the U.S. and the Philippines enhances our posture
9 and how it can serve as a model for other nations?

10 Admiral Aquilino: Thanks, Senator. It is critically
11 important. So one of five mutual defense treaty allies in
12 the region, the Philippines, our history goes back a very
13 long way, as everyone knows. The increased EDCA, that have
14 been concurred to -- and I thank the Secretary for his work
15 there as we have proposed those sites, that expands the
16 areas that we can rehearse and exercise with the
17 Philippines. But the critical nature of the Philippines,
18 its strategic location, and the partnership that we have,
19 those sites are critical. More than likely in next year's
20 budget you will see and ask to do planning and design work
21 in those sites. They have just been announced. So there is
22 no money in the 2024 budget to start work in those
23 additional four sites, but you do see other requests to
24 build up the current sites in the Philippines. And our
25 operations there, our partnership with the Philippines is

1 critical.

2 Senator Shaheen: And is that helpful as we are looking
3 at other partner nations in the region, to be able to show
4 what is happening in the Philippines? Are they looking at
5 that as something that they are willing to consider because
6 they see that agreement?

7 Admiral Aquilino: Thanks, Senator. I think all the
8 nations in the region are looking at the threat and
9 realizing they need to take additional actions, the
10 Philippines, as a model for how we operate together, but it
11 is certainly not alone. We are doing the same thing with
12 the Japanese. General LaCamera is working with the South
13 Koreans. We are working with our Australian counterparts.
14 We are doing the same with our Thailand alliance.

15 So it is a model, and it is expanding, and we are
16 looking at all nations to deliver those same capabilities,
17 together with the United States.

18 Senator Shaheen: Thank you. I really appreciate the
19 leadership that INDOPACOM has taken on the Women, Peace, and
20 Security Act, and I think it serves us well all around the
21 world. But can you speak to the advantage that that gives
22 us over China, when we are looking at how we can engage
23 women more fully and the contrast that presents to what
24 China is doing?

25 Admiral Aquilino: Certainly, Senator. So the contrast

1 is clear when you think about Xinjiang and the treatment of
2 the Uyghurs, and understand that that goes on, you know,
3 that is a problem set that China has to face, and one of our
4 asymmetric advantages. So our ability to care for all
5 people, no matter what, and the Women, Peace, and Security
6 Initiative that was begun in INDOPACOM before me and that we
7 continue has been helpful.

8 As a matter of fact, I was just in Papua, New Guinea, a
9 couple of months ago with my counterpart, General Goina, and
10 that is where our next seminar is coming up, followed by one
11 in Japan.

12 So it is about people, it is about respect, it is about
13 treating people fairly. It is what we stand for in the
14 United States and we will continue to do those things.

15 Senator Shaheen: Thank you very much. Thank you both.

16 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Shaheen.

17 Senator Fischer, please.

18 Senator Fischer: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you
19 both for being here today and thank you for your service to
20 this country.

21 Admiral, on your unfunded requirements list you
22 included a requirement for funding to accelerate the
23 development of several munitions, including the FM-6, the
24 Army's PrSM weapon system, and the Maritime Strike
25 Tomahawks. What would those capabilities provide and why do

1 you assess that it is necessary to make those investments in
2 2024?

3 Admiral Aquilino: Thank you, Senator. So as we always
4 look at lessons learned, certainly one that came out of the
5 Ukraine conflict was the ability to ensure that our
6 stockpiles were correct, with the right number and the right
7 types of weapons and capabilities. So in the Indo-Pacific
8 Command, we have those requirements identified. We can talk
9 specific classified if we need to, but bottom line is the
10 entire Joint Force is required to help deliver effects to
11 both deter and fight and win.

12 So from the land component, Maritime Strike Tomahawk,
13 PrSM Increment 2, those capabilities, to enable the MDTF
14 from the Army, their new formation, the Multi-Domain Task
15 Force, and from the Marine Corps and the Littoral Marine
16 Regiment, those are the capabilities that those forces need
17 to bring with them in the region to do the missions
18 assigned. So that is why I have advocated for those, right
19 types and right numbers.

20 Senator Fischer: Right. Thank you, because it was a
21 lesson learned from Ukraine. The much, much faster rate
22 than planned for, especially in expending all those
23 munitions there. So thank you for including those on the
24 requirement list.

25 You also have on the unfunded priority list a

1 requirement for an additional \$511 million for INDOPACOM
2 campaigning. Why is campaigning in the Indo-Pacific
3 particularly valuable, and what types of exercises or
4 activities would this additional funding be used for if
5 Congress would authorize it?

6 Admiral Aquilino: Thanks, Senator. So the delivery of
7 deterrence through the lens of INDOPACOM "Seize the
8 Initiative" approach, campaigning is one aspect of it, and
9 that means persistent forward forces operating with our
10 allies and partners in the region forward every day.

11 So when we talk about our operations and exercises, we
12 do 120 exercises a year with our allies and partners, but
13 that is not 365 days. So for the days we are not exercising
14 I am also looking to ensure that our forces are forward,
15 prepared, and operating with our allies and partners every
16 day. That is what those campaigning dollars are requested
17 for. That is to pick up the force and move it forward into
18 the theater, in places where they can operate with our
19 allies and partners. And that money is not to do
20 maintenance. It is not to do depot-level sustainment. It
21 is for transportation costs to be able to move the force and
22 sustain the force forward.

23 Senator Fischer: Which is extremely important not just
24 for the exercises but also for future planning. Correct?

25 Admiral Aquilino: Yes, ma'am.

1 Senator Fischer: Thank you. With AUKUS, the security
2 partnership that allows us to share significant capabilities
3 with our closest allies. We hear a great deal about Pillar
4 1 and the sharing of nuclear propulsion technology with
5 Australia, and that is an important part of the agreement.

6 However, through Pillar 2, the AUKUS partnership allows
7 for greater cooperation across multiple lines of effort.
8 What do you assess to be the prime areas of opportunity to
9 increase that coordination and extend partner capabilities
10 and capacities?

11 Admiral Aquilino: Senator, first, our partnership with
12 the Australians is so critically important, again, a mutual
13 defense treaty ally. The Australians have shared blood and
14 treasure with us in every fight we have been in for over 100
15 years. So I commend my partner, Angus Campbell, and all of
16 the Australian leadership.

17 They also are concerned about the security environment,
18 which is why AUKUS is so critical for both peace and
19 prosperity, as we share submarine technology and deliver
20 U.S. Virginia-class submarines, and follow-on types of
21 submarines.

22 But in Pillar 2 there is also a ton of capabilities
23 that you highlighted. The most critical, and I think we can
24 get at fast, there are some cyber capabilities, there are
25 space-based capabilities, there are some undersea

1 capabilities, and then there is some work in the form of
2 artificial intelligence and machine learning. There are
3 others. Those, I think, have the most promise for near-term
4 delivery of capability.

5 Senator Fischer: And the United States is stronger
6 when our allies are strong as well. Correct?

7 Admiral Aquilino: Always.

8 Senator Fischer: Thank you.

9 Chairman Reed: Thank you very much, Senator Fischer.

10 Senator Gillibrand, please.

11 Senator Gillibrand: Thank you. Admiral Aquilino,
12 INDOPACOM is the first combat command to have a Space Force
13 Regional Command Center. How is U.S. Space Force's Indo-
14 Pacific integrating into INDOPACOM, and can you discuss how
15 you build the Guardian skill set into your regional
16 exercises like Cobra Gold and Balikatan?

17 Admiral Aquilino: Yes, Senator. Thank you. I really
18 appreciate General Saltzman's team, along with General
19 Dickinson to set up the first component at INDOPACOM. So
20 General Mastalir is my component commander, and the
21 criticality of his efforts to synchronize our effects,
22 undersea, on the sea, above the sea, in space and
23 cyberspace, is something that the U.S. can do better than
24 anybody on Earth. The space component is critical. Their
25 enabling capabilities are extremely valuable. And working

1 with our allies and partners in this domain is also
2 important.

3 In Cobra Gold, which is our most recent exercise, in
4 Thailand, we actually put in place a space component as a
5 part of that exercise. We are doing it in Balikpapan. It
6 will be included in all of our upcoming exercises, wherever
7 and whenever we can. Talisman Sabre, as well, with the
8 Australians. Northern Edge as a part of our event. So it
9 is now just normal ops.

10 Senator Gillibrand: Great. The House Armed Services
11 Committee earlier this week, you noted that the strategy and
12 approach with regards to the PRC is competition and not
13 containment. Can you expand upon why that difference is
14 important?

15 Admiral Aquilino: I think for me, Senator, the ability
16 to compete is really a non-adversarial type of relationship,
17 which is, I think, what the United States seeks. The PRC
18 believes we are trying to contain them. There is no doubt,
19 despite the President's comments, the Secretary of Defense's
20 comments, General Milley's comments, and my comments. We
21 seek peace, not to provoke conflict.

22 So competition is important. There are things we are
23 going to agree on. There are things we are not going to
24 agree on. That is what competition looks like.

25 Senator Gillibrand: Well, relatedly, last month

1 Secretary Austin testified before this Committee that he
2 thought it was important that great powers have the ability
3 to talk to each other and manage crisis. But reports
4 indicate that his outreach was not answered by the PRC
5 during the tensions in February over the high-altitude
6 balloon.

7 Are you engaged with your counterparts in China's
8 eastern and southern military districts, and from your
9 perspective, why would such engagement be important?

10 Admiral Aquilino: Senator, I certainly think it is
11 valuable to have relationships and be able to have
12 conversations, whether it is for positive reasons or in
13 times of concern. So it has been important for me. I have
14 not had contact with my counterparts, either in the Eastern
15 Theater Command or the Southern Theater Command, although I
16 have had a standing request to have a conversation now since
17 I have been in this position.

18 We have invited our counterparts to the Chiefs of
19 Defense Conferences that we do two to three times a year
20 virtually, and once a year in person, and we will continue
21 to seek their attendance to those important events where we
22 can come together with all of the regional military leaders
23 to have conversations.

24 Senator Gillibrand: I would be grateful if you do
25 establish that contact that you update the Committee,

1 because this is a priority that we can deconflict.

2 Admiral Aquilino: Yes, Senator.

3 Senator Gillibrand: Similarly, the Department has
4 focused on One Health surveillance, meaning an integrated
5 public health approach considering human and veterinary
6 diseases, food, and environmental monitoring, for years,
7 since well before the pandemic. COVID-19 focused us all on
8 the intersection well-framed in the One Health concept.

9 Can you address any programs or initiatives within
10 INDOPACOM based on the One Health concept and how those are
11 serving to protect the health and security of the American
12 people?

13 Admiral Aquilino: Thanks, Senator. We certainly
14 support CDC in this important initiative. We do not have
15 any programs, but what we do have is exercises. So in 2021,
16 we did an exercise directly focused on this issue. We will
17 do it again in 2023, and we will remain linked with the
18 interagency. Especially in the wake of COVID, the
19 importance, I think, came to light.

20 Senator Gillibrand: Right, and the fact that we do not
21 have any working relationship with China made the work with
22 regard to COVID's beginnings, middles, and end really
23 difficult. So that is why your role is so important in
24 these long-term national security goals.

25 General LaCamera, Kim Jong Un has launched 12 rounds of

1 missile tests since January. Some of these tests happened
2 close in time to our Freedom Shield exercise with South
3 Korea, but several of the tests predated that exercise. Can
4 you fill us in on what your assessment is driving the recent
5 surge in dangerous activity?

6 General LaCamera: His Eighth Party Congress in 2021,
7 Senator, he laid out a trajectory. He is doing that. Right
8 now I think he is reacting to our training. Since President
9 Un has come in we have increased our ability to not just do
10 command post exercises but field training exercises.

11 The challenge is when we telegraph the timing of it, it
12 gives him an opportunity to plan to use that as a reaction
13 to us. But he is on a course that he set in 2021, and he is
14 moving out on it.

15 Senator Gillibrand: Thank you. Thank you, Mr.
16 Chairman.

17 Chairman Reed: Thank you very much, Senator
18 Gillibrand.

19 Senator Cotton, please.

20 Senator Cotton: Admiral, I want to continue along the
21 line of questioning about Taiwan's capabilities. I know
22 that there is a backlog of weapons transfers to Taiwan that
23 has to be addressed. But not every kind of weapon in the
24 world is backlogged. So while we work on that backlog I
25 want your professional assessment of whether an

1 appropriation of FMF funds to provide Taiwan with weapons
2 that are not backlogged, weapons such as mines, might be
3 helpful for them and also helpful to increase deterrence in
4 the Western Pacific.

5 Admiral Aquilino: Yes, Senator. So the delivery
6 capability to enable our responsibilities under the Taiwan
7 Relations Act is important, and to get it to the people on
8 Taiwan is critical. And the capabilities we have laid out,
9 that we have coordinated and identified inside the
10 Department, there are many that could be done very quickly.

11 Senator Cotton: Could you just give us kind of a
12 handful of the top priorities of what additional FMF funds
13 could get to Taiwan of weapons that are not backlogged?

14 Admiral Aquilino: I think what I would give you is the
15 capability set. I cannot tell you which specific ones are
16 backlogged.

17 Senator Cotton: That is fine.

18 Admiral Aquilino: But if you think about anti-aircraft
19 capability, if you think about anti-ship capability in a
20 variety of forms, whether they be missiles, mines, but those
21 capabilities would be critical.

22 Senator Cotton: There is also the possibility of a
23 Taiwan-focused presidential drawdown. Would your answer be
24 the same for that, that that also could help surge some of
25 the capabilities to Taiwan that they need to improve

1 deterrence in the Western Pacific, just like FMF funds
2 would?

3 Admiral Aquilino: Yes, sir, absolutely, and I thank
4 Congress for taking a look at that, and ultimately for the
5 presidential drawdown authority, not only for the authority
6 to do it but ultimately to backfill it, if possible, is
7 critical.

8 Senator Cotton: Okay. You have also expressed concern
9 about the loss of any combat power in the theater. As the
10 Ranking Member on the Air, Land, Power Subcommittee I have
11 been particularly concerned about the fact that our Air
12 Force is characterized by shrinking inventories and an aging
13 fleet, going back 30 years now.

14 I want to be clear I am not talking about changing our
15 global force posture. I know there has been a lot of angst,
16 if you will, about moving aircraft around from the Western
17 Pacific and from Germany and Alaska. So I am not talking
18 about that. I am talking about adding more capability to
19 the Air Force as a whole.

20 Given the importance of air power in any kind of
21 conflict scenario in the Western Pacific, would additional
22 F-15EXs and F-35s in the Air Force inventory enhance your
23 efforts to deter conflict?

24 Admiral Aquilino: It certainly would, Senator,
25 especially when you talk about the increased capability and

1 capacity that might come with that. Fifth-generation
2 advanced and the fourth-generation capability that exists in
3 the EX, those capabilities would absolutely help deliver
4 deterrent effects.

5 Senator Cotton: Thank you.

6 General, North Korea continues to develop new
7 capabilities and make new threats to the Republic of Korea
8 and to the United States and other friends. They recently
9 tested a solid-fueled intercontinental ballistic missile.
10 How does that change your assessment of their capability,
11 and why would that be an important advance for North Korea
12 over their traditional liquid-fueled missiles?

13 General LaCamera: Thanks, Senator. It poses some
14 challenges on the indications and warnings. Again, he laid
15 out his plan. He is moving towards it. It is continuing to
16 demonstrate a couple of things. One, he meant what he said,
17 and two, he is continuing to be able to develop this
18 capability. Even with sanctions and even with COVID and
19 lockdowns and things like that, he has been able to continue
20 this development.

21 Senator Cotton: And why, exactly, does the
22 introduction of a solid-fueled missile reduce your
23 indications and warnings?

24 General LaCamera: I would rather move that to a
25 classified setting, Senator.

1 Senator Cotton: Okay. I think sometimes we get kind
2 of accustomed to these provocations from North Korea and we
3 overlook the fact that they are, in fact, improving their
4 nuclear forces capability, and it is not just the same-old,
5 same-old.

6 General LaCamera: I can assure you I am not
7 distracted.

8 Senator Cotton: No, I know you are not, but I think
9 some people here, and when they see the news in the United
10 States are, and I think it is important that we be mindful
11 that they are making technological progress that is alarming
12 in both the nature of their nuclear forces and also the
13 ranges of their missiles.

14 Thank you both, gentlemen.

15 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Cotton.

16 Senator Kelly, please.

17 Senator Kelly: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

18 Admiral Aquilino, as we spoke about this morning, I
19 just want to get a little bit more detail on the Compass
20 Call electronic warfare mission. You know, there is no
21 doubt that the next conflict that we are involved in will be
22 heavily fought, and potentially won in the electromagnetic
23 spectrum. And as our adversaries evolve in their EW
24 capabilities it is critical that we maintain our competitive
25 edge here by being ready to protect our own assets and also

1 attack our adversaries' capabilities in the electronic
2 warfare spectrum.

3 So the EC-37B, the new Compass Call capability that I
4 worked on on this Committee to increase the procurement will
5 enhance blue force lethality and survivability. And I am
6 really proud that this capability is going to be hosted in
7 Arizona, at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base.

8 So Admiral, what impact would the Compass Call have in
9 INDOPACOM if a crisis or conflict emerged?

10 Admiral Aquilino: Thanks, Senator. It is absolutely a
11 part of our set of capabilities that we believe we would
12 need to employ. The new capability out of Compass Call is
13 critical, along with all of the other electromagnetic
14 support capabilities that come from all the services.
15 Again, this is going to be a joint service fight. The
16 Compass Call supports not only the Air Force but the rest of
17 the Joint Force, so it is critical.

18 Senator Kelly: And I know you are not an EW guy, you
19 know, being a former F-14 pilot, who served, by the way,
20 with my brother, I think aboard the Ike. But can you speak
21 specifically about the EC-37B and what critical capabilities
22 that it can deliver that might not be available on any other
23 platform?

24 Admiral Aquilino: So to keep it in the unclassified
25 space, the ability for our force to operate in contested

1 space is important. Our ability to have persistent battle
2 space awareness is important. And then any capabilities to
3 do any disruption actions that we would like to take are
4 important.

5 Senator Kelly: And has it recently been used in any
6 exercises?

7 Admiral Aquilino: I will have to get back to you on
8 that, sir.

9 Senator Kelly: Okay. And then, finally, in your
10 professional military opinion how many Compass Calls do you
11 think that your theater, INDOPACOM, needs to ensure blue
12 force survivability if we were to be in a conflict,
13 specifically with China?

14 Admiral Aquilino: Sir, if it is okay I would get back
15 to you in a classified setting on that.

16 Senator Kelly: And then, General, can you also comment
17 on the necessity for a strong electronic warfare attack
18 capability on the Korean Peninsula?

19 General LaCamera: Yes, Senator. Thank you. I need
20 that but I also need the ability to train at that level on
21 the Korean Peninsula, which we currently do not have, either
22 on the ROK Air Force or U.S. Air Force side. So we have got
23 to go off-peninsula to get some of that training for our
24 pilots to be able to operate in the EW threat area.

25 Senator Kelly: And then, Admiral, back to you. On the

1 Navy's EW capability, how do you currently assess where the
2 United States Navy is specifically with aircraft carrier
3 battle groups?

4 Admiral Aquilino: Senator, as we talked about there is
5 a critical importance for that electronic attack and
6 electronic support capability. It is inherent and
7 interwoven into the carrier strike group formation. It is
8 also used to support the rest of the Joint Force, so those
9 F-18G Growlers are critically important.

10 Senator Kelly: It is one area where Ukraine is
11 currently struggling when the Russian electronic warfare
12 capability is outmatching them at this point. And I think
13 it is indicative of how important electronic warfare is in
14 any modern combat. So thank you, Admiral, and thank you,
15 General.

16 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Kelly.

17 Senator Rounds, please.

18 Senator Rounds: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Gentlemen,
19 first of all let me begin by thanking both of you for your
20 service to our country, and your families' as well. It is
21 appreciated and sometimes we do not say it enough.

22 Gentlemen, to both of you, I would like to begin along
23 the same lines with regard to spectrum issues. There has
24 been a discussion about the separation or the sharing of
25 certain parts of the electromagnetic spectrum, in order for

1 our country to continue moving forward in 5G development.
2 But the area in particular that I want to focus on is the
3 area which is the 3.1 to 3.45 gigahertz band. It is
4 especially sensitive because we have already had testimony
5 by naval officials, including Secretary Del Toro,
6 specifically regarding the use of that part of the
7 electromagnetic spectrum with regard to radar.

8 I would like to continue that line of questioning and
9 provide each of you an opportunity to discuss the importance
10 of the 3.1 to 3.45 portion of the spectrum with regard to
11 protecting our forces, and perhaps a little bit of
12 additional color with regard to how critical that part is
13 with regard to the physics of that area of the spectrum.

14 Admiral Aquilino?

15 Admiral Aquilino: Senator, we certainly operate in
16 that spectrum, so as we look at the potential sharing and
17 how we are going to do that, we certainly do not want to
18 have any place where either our capabilities are impacted by
19 other use, and as always, as good stewards, we do not want
20 to be impactful to any other use. So I think we would have
21 to look at it very closely and figure out how we could make
22 it work.

23 Senator Rounds: Fair to say that the current radar
24 systems that our most advanced destroyers use is using radar
25 systems that operate in that area. Correct?

1 Admiral Aquilino: Yes, Senator. There are a variety
2 of Joint Force capabilities that operate in that spectrum,
3 to include missile defense, firm at sea, so there are
4 certainly some critical capabilities there.

5 Senator Rounds: Does that include the island of
6 Hawaii?

7 Admiral Aquilino: So the Aegis system on Kauai, in
8 Kauai, certainly operates in that spectrum, along with other
9 missile defense capabilities.

10 Senator Rounds: Thank you. General?

11 General LaCamera: Senator, I am going to have to take
12 that for the record. That is above my expertise.

13 Senator Rounds: That is fine. Thank you, gentlemen.
14 I simply think that it is very important that we understand
15 -- we have an committee which is working right now on
16 sharing that information. There are some people that would
17 like to move forward with including a sale of that part of
18 the spectrum, and I think it is just simply not responsible
19 for us to allow that to happen until after the complete
20 report is completed in September. That is the reason for
21 asking the question.

22 Admiral Aquilino, cyber and space remain critically
23 important domains to U.S. national security. Could you
24 briefly explain how you integrate your operations with
25 CYBERCOM and SPACECOM? And do you believe the fiscal year

1 2024 budget adequately supports our ability to effectively
2 address the growing cyber and space threats in the Indo-
3 Pacific?

4 Admiral Aquilino: Thanks, Senator. So I have a space
5 component, as we just talked about, and I also have a cyber
6 component. As a part of our operations development and
7 planning and campaigning those teams are plugged directly
8 into the physical domains, the ships, the submarines, the
9 airplanes, the ground forces, and we synchronize all those
10 operations.

11 General Nakasone, General Dickinson, and General
12 Saltzman are great partners. They understand the missions
13 that I have asked, they understand my priorities, and they
14 are taking all actions to support our efforts.

15 Senator Rounds: Thank you. We have talked some about
16 the use of land mines and other capabilities in which to
17 shape a battlefield. General LaCamera, can you talk a
18 little bit about the need to be able to appropriately shape
19 a battle positioning on land in the Korean Peninsula and the
20 need to have those battle-shaping capabilities.

21 General LaCamera: Thanks, Senator. I mean, the
22 Demilitarized Zone is probably one of the most heavily mined
23 areas in the world, and to be able to integrate, to prevent,
24 shape, move, disrupt the enemy's ability to move over land
25 is extremely important to the ground force commander.

1 Senator Rounds: Do you continue to have discussions
2 about the deployment or the ability to deploy appropriate,
3 treaty-appropriate capabilities? And we are talking about
4 land mines, basically, but those of a modern era that we can
5 control in terms of when they are available and when they
6 are neutralized?

7 General LaCamera: Yes. As we go through on our
8 exercises, mine clearing and mobility exercises is all part
9 of the field training exercises that we do, not just in the
10 digital world but on the ground.

11 Senator Rounds: Can you do your mission appropriately
12 without access to those types of tools?

13 General LaCamera: I do not believe so.

14 Senator Rounds: Thank you, sir. Thank you, Mr.
15 Chairman.

16 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Rounds.

17 Senator Ernst, please.

18 Senator Ernst: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Gentlemen, thank
19 you very much.

20 Admiral Aquilino, let's talk a little bit about the
21 Indo-Pacific. It absolutely is the priority theater and
22 site of our pacing threat. Thank you for your defense. If,
23 God forbid, the United States would ever cross swords with
24 China, the defense of our nation really does depend on you,
25 so thank you.

1 I want to talk specifically, Admiral, about the land-
2 based systems. DOD reports that China fields more than
3 1,250 ground-launched ballistic missiles and ground-launched
4 cruise missiles, with ranges between 500 and 5,500
5 kilometers. How many ground-launched missiles of that range
6 does the United States field?

7 Admiral Aquilino: None that I am aware of at this
8 time.

9 Senator Ernst: You are right. Zero. And of the
10 programs under development, how many exceed 3,000
11 kilometers, which would be the outer ranges of your area of
12 responsibility?

13 Admiral Aquilino: Same.

14 Senator Ernst: Zero. You are right, Admiral. Thank
15 you. And Admiral, what military advantages would this gap
16 provide China with in any future conflict?

17 Admiral Aquilino: Well, Senator, it certainly is in
18 their strategy and their design is to keep us out of the
19 theater. So our ability to operate in that space is
20 critical, as I discussed.

21 Senator Ernst: And Admiral, would you agree that
22 ground-launched theater-range strike systems could buy down
23 some of that risk in your AOR?

24 Admiral Aquilino: Senator, as we said, the entire
25 Joint Force would be required both to deter and to fight and

1 win if need be. The ability for the land component to
2 deliver those weapons -- and again, those are articulated in
3 my 1254 Report, as requirements that I have identified that
4 we need -- it certainly expands our ability to provide
5 multiple dilemmas, and they are directly involved in our
6 approach.

7 Senator Ernst: Multiple dilemmas is a good thing. And
8 Admiral, would you further agree that DoD should study
9 options for deploying those ground-launched, theater-range
10 strike missiles in your AOR?

11 Admiral Aquilino: So I do not know about the study. I
12 can tell you we are doing it right now, Senator. So our
13 exercises, our operations as a part of the Multi-Domain Task
14 Force and the Marine Littoral Regiment, the forces are
15 preparing when that capability is delivered.

16 Senator Ernst: Very good. Thanks. And I am glad to
17 be leading an effort to build the Rings of Fire in INDOPACOM
18 along with Senator Manchin and Congressman Gallagher in the
19 House. We feel that that is important for your
20 capabilities.

21 Admiral, you spoke a little bit with Senator Wicker
22 about some of the Ukraine tradeoffs, and I want to drill
23 down a little bit on that and be a little more specific. So
24 let's talk about Ukraine as it applies to Taiwan. Has our
25 support to Ukraine depleted any munitions that are needed

1 for Taiwan?

2 Admiral Aquilino: Not at this time, Senator.

3 Senator Ernst: So a little different fight, a little
4 different capabilities that are needed. So just to be very,
5 very clear, the fight that is ongoing between the Ukrainians
6 and the Russians, the munitions that we are providing to
7 Ukraine at this time are not degrading capabilities that are
8 necessary for the fight that might occur in Taiwan.

9 Admiral Aquilino: That is correct, Senator.

10 Senator Ernst: Okay. Thank you. So we do have a lot
11 of discussion about this, ongoing, in the Senate and in the
12 House. There are those that say we cannot complete both
13 missions, we should not be helping in Ukraine. I agree with
14 you, Admiral Aquilino, I agree with you, General LaCamera,
15 that we must maintain our assistance to Ukraine. It will
16 not, at this point, degrade what we are doing as we look
17 towards the East.

18 So I want to thank you both for making that very clear
19 today, and I do hope that other Members of Congress
20 understand this need, and plainly put, it is for the defense
21 of our nation and our global standing that we ensure success
22 with the Ukrainians, but we also cannot take our eye off the
23 ball when it comes to any fight that might occur, whether it
24 is North Korea or whether it is China.

25 So thank you, gentlemen, very much for being here.

1 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

2 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Ernst.

3 Senator Rosen, please.

4 Senator Rosen: Well, thank you, Chairman Reed. I
5 really appreciate you holding this hearing. Thank you both
6 for your service to our nation, for being here today, and I
7 want to associate myself with my colleague, Senator Ernst,
8 on how we have to do all of it. All of our standing, our
9 safety around the world matters, and I appreciate your
10 service there.

11 And so we are going to go right into it, Admiral
12 Aquilino, and talk about maintaining our technological edge,
13 because we are all talking about China. They are leveraging
14 state funding to accelerate their own military modernization
15 efforts across key domains. They are rapidly advancing in
16 areas like AI, robotics, cyber, and, of course, hypersonics.

17 Domestically, global competition for a skilled
18 workforce, declining investment in R&D, DOD's contracting
19 challenges, and the STEM workforce gap, they are
20 unfortunately all eroding and they are hurting our
21 technological edge over China.

22 And so it is why I am working to establish a public-
23 private partnership program to accelerate the scaling,
24 production, and acquisition of innovative defense
25 technologies by creating incentives for investment right

1 here in American small businesses working in this space. We
2 have to be nimble.

3 So, Admiral Aquilino, how might a public-private
4 partnership that spurs private sector investment and
5 advanced defense capabilities, how do you think that could
6 help us maintain our technological edge with China?

7 Admiral Aquilino: Thanks, Senator. So as I
8 articulated in my testimony, the ability for the United
9 States to go faster to deliver deterrent effects is
10 critical. The innovation that exists in the United States
11 is second to none anywhere on the globe, so any actions that
12 would deliver outcomes in support of our deterrence effect
13 would always be welcome.

14 Senator Rosen: Thank you. I think using the
15 imagination and innovation partner is always a good thing.
16 And another place that we really have to do that is our
17 cybersecurity, and our cybersecurity cooperation, in
18 particular, with Taiwan, because we are acutely aware of the
19 threat that China poses in the cyber domain. China has used
20 Taiwan as a testing ground for its cyber capabilities, and
21 its recent cyberattacks have forced Taiwan to harden their
22 defenses.

23 So it is why today I am introducing, with Senator
24 Rounds -- he is not here right now -- Senator Rounds and
25 Congressman Gallagher, bipartisan legislation to expand

1 military cybersecurity cooperation with Taiwan. So again,
2 Admiral Aquilino, how do you assess Chinese cyber threats to
3 Taiwan and how is INDOPACOM working to expand military-to-
4 military cybersecurity cooperation with Taiwan to strengthen
5 the deterrence and raise the cost of escalation for Beijing?

6 Admiral Aquilino: Thank, Senator. Again, in
7 combination with my partner, General Nakasone from CYBERCOM,
8 we always look to strengthen allies', partners', and
9 friends' networks so that they are secure and that they can
10 have a confidence that the things that they are putting out
11 in their own networks are not being read or impacted by
12 other nations, and we do that across the theater. So we
13 certainly have actions undergoing to ensure that.

14 As a part of our approach in INDOPACOM, and it is a
15 part of my unfunded list, is something called the Mission
16 Partner Environment. So to talk to those allies and
17 partners right now, I have 13 separate networks. That is
18 costly. They are at risk. And what we are attempting to
19 deliver is a single pane of glass that allows us to
20 communicate securely, in a cyber safe way, with all of our
21 partners across the region, no matter who, at the level at
22 which we can share.

23 So we have demonstrated already with one of our
24 partners, and we will expand that our ability to scope and
25 scale it. But it is the only way we will be able to operate

1 with those allies and partners in a way that gives us
2 confidence.

3 Senator Rosen: I agree with you on the single point of
4 entry because 13 separate networks leaves a lot of points of
5 vulnerability, too much to manage.

6 In the few seconds I have left, I want to talk about
7 your state partnership program. In Nevada, we have the
8 Nevada National Guard, we have our partnerships with Fiji,
9 Tonga, and most recently Samoa, to support INDOPACOM's
10 mission. I am going to go pretty fast here. In the South
11 Pacific we help you with maritime security and humanitarian
12 assistance goals.

13 And so given their strategic locations, the small
14 island nations, particular again vulnerable to threats from
15 China. So how can our state partnership program, how can it
16 be leveraged to bolster the cybersecurity programs in the
17 Indo-Pacific, and the National Guard is?

18 Admiral Aquilino: So we view those relationships
19 through the National Guard, and General Hokanson is also a
20 great partner in support of that. As a matter of fact, we
21 just signed a recent one -- I was at the signing -- in one
22 of the Pacific islands not long ago.

23 So expanding that, building those relationships help
24 build trust, and all of that leads towards increased
25 interoperability and capability, in cyber and all the other

1 domains.

2 Senator Rosen: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

3 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Rosen.

4 Senator Budd, please.

5 Senator Budd: Thank you, Chairman, and General,
6 Admiral, thank you both for being here.

7 Admiral, in very real terms what is the strategic
8 significance of the Taiwan Strait? And more broadly, why is
9 maintaining a free and open Indo-Pacific matter to
10 Americans?

11 Admiral Aquilino: Thanks, Senator. So certainly
12 Taiwan itself is in a strategic location as it applies to
13 the transfer of two-thirds of the global commerce around the
14 world. It matters as it applies to the international rules-
15 based order. In other words, if a single nation is allowed
16 to describe what will be allowed to sail, fly anywhere that
17 they choose, that is not what the like-minded nations of the
18 world have signed onto. There is a coercive potential.
19 There is increased cost potential. There is insurance hike
20 potential. I mean, the second-, third-, and fourth-order
21 effects are enormous. So all of those things are what
22 matter to the global nations.

23 Senator Budd: Thank you for that. You know, when I
24 think about this, I think about how important it is to work
25 with and empower our allies and our partners to ensure that

1 no one nation can dominate such an important region,
2 militarily.

3 And sticking with you, Admiral, I have got a few
4 questions I would like to ask about our foreign military
5 sales process. And I have asked questions of other
6 geographic combatant commanders as well. So I would
7 appreciate, on the first part, just a simple yes or no, and
8 then at the end I will give you a chance to expand, if you
9 will.

10 Is the current FMS process, is it fast and flexible
11 enough to meet our foreign partner security needs, in your
12 AOR? And that is a yes or no. Is it fast and flexible
13 enough to meet --

14 Admiral Aquilino: I would like it to go faster.

15 Senator Budd: So that is a no, I take it?

16 Does the transfer of U.S. defense articles build our
17 partners' capacity to provide for their own defense?

18 Admiral Aquilino: It does.

19 Senator Budd: And is the United States still the
20 security partner of choice in your AOR?

21 Admiral Aquilino: For almost all of the nations, yes,
22 sir.

23 Senator Budd: Thank you. Is the United States at risk
24 of losing that security partner of choice status to China?

25 Admiral Aquilino: I think it is an area of competition

1 that we have to ensure that we execute our roles and make
2 sure that we, in alignment with all those like-minded
3 nations, are moving towards a region that supports the
4 benefit of all those nations.

5 Senator Budd: Is China increasing arms exports to any
6 countries in your area of responsibility?

7 Admiral Aquilino: They are.

8 Senator Budd: So could you explain how foreign
9 military sales challenges are impacting strategic
10 competition with China in the Pacific?

11 Admiral Aquilino: So the FMS program for the United
12 States, Senator, helps us ensure that we are interoperable
13 with like-minded nations. We are certainly not going to
14 plug in any of the PRC capabilities into our systems. It
15 builds confidence. We have the best capabilities on the
16 globe, also a lesson learned from Ukraine. So continuing to
17 share, operate, coordinate, and exercise with those partners
18 increases their ability to defend themselves and it
19 increases our partnerships.

20 Senator Budd: Thank you. Admiral, how comfortable are
21 you with the defense industrial base ability to produce the
22 munitions necessary to meet your requirements?

23 Admiral Aquilino: So I am extremely impressed with all
24 the defense industrial base. I would like them to go
25 faster.

1 Senator Budd: Thank you very much. Chairman, I yield
2 back.

3 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Budd.

4 Senator Hirono, please.

5 Senator Hirono: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Admiral
6 Aquilino and General LaCamera, thank you very much for your
7 service and for being here. And Admiral, always good to see
8 you.

9 So when we met recently, Admiral Aquilino, you made it
10 very clear that you are the responsible person for missile
11 defense of Hawaii. In this year's budget request there is
12 money for a dual-use radar, and this is a good step forward,
13 but certainly will not be the last.

14 As the supported commander for the mission, do you
15 believe the services and your fellow combatant commanders
16 are providing you the capabilities you need for the defense
17 of Hawaii now and into the future?

18 Admiral Aquilino: Aloha, Senator. Thank you. I am
19 absolutely responsible for the defense of Hawaii. I am
20 supported by a variety of great partners. They understand
21 their roles. They understand the stakes. I certainly have
22 an added concern since I live there. But bottom line is
23 Hawaii is defended, and we will continue to defend it. The
24 additional capabilities we have asked for will enhance that
25 defense.

1 Senator Hirono: Thank you. The Compacts of Free
2 Association between the U.S. and the Republic of the
3 Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia and
4 Palau are currently up for renewal. You and I discussed the
5 importance of the Compacts when we met, and they are vital
6 to our ability to maintain a free and open Indo-Pacific.

7 The COFA agreements include support for COFA citizens
8 who can come to our country without visas, a very special
9 category of lawfully present people in our country. So
10 until the policy changes in the late 1990s, these COFA
11 citizens had access to Federal benefits. While the access
12 to COFA benefits is not directly within your jurisdiction,
13 effective Compacts are critical to our ability to operate in
14 your AOR.

15 Admiral, do you agree that strong Compact agreements,
16 including honoring our commitments to the people of the
17 Compact states and nations, and particularly those who
18 choose to live in the U.S., is critical to our ongoing
19 operations in the Indo-Pacific?

20 Admiral Aquilino: Thanks, Senator. So the Compact
21 Agreements are absolutely critical to the defense of the
22 United States. Those are partner nations that we have deep
23 history ties with. As a matter of fact, the Compact states,
24 per capita, send more servicemembers to the United States
25 military than anywhere else. So they have proven to be

1 patriots, and they are tremendous friends. So we defend
2 them like they are our hometown, and we will continue to do
3 that. So that is critically important.

4 Now, as you articulated, not in my lane, but the United
5 States takes care of people. Our ability to ensure the
6 broad spectrum of human rights and taking care of people is
7 a part of our DNA, so I certainly support that.

8 Senator Hirono: Thank you very much, because as a
9 totality of the commitments that we have to our Compact
10 nations, the DOD, which very much, of course, in our
11 country, very much benefits from these Compacts, that again,
12 while it may not be in your lane as to their ability to
13 access Federal benefits, that is a very important component
14 of our partnership and our close relations with our Compact
15 nations.

16 Admiral Aquilino, across your theater facilities in
17 Hawaii, Guam, Japan, and Korea are in a state of disrepair,
18 impacting our readiness and ability to mobilize forces
19 quickly. Failing pipes, moldy barracks, intermittent
20 blackouts, and frankly, lackluster repair facilities run
21 counter to our military and community needs.

22 How does the deferred maintenance of our
23 infrastructure, really resulting in massive facility
24 failures such as at Red Hill, how does that impact your
25 ability to conduct deterrence in your AOR?

1 Admiral Aquilino: Thanks, Senator. So I as you know,
2 the infrastructure and support and funding for the service
3 infrastructure comes through service budgets, but when we
4 took a look at the most recent, specifically the water main
5 break on Hawaii, I took a look through the lens of
6 readiness, on we ought to be able to identify where we are
7 concerned, and not just in Hawaii. We did in Korea. We did
8 it in Japan and the other places throughout the theater, for
9 me to be able to understand our readiness.

10 So we undertook a study. My team is reviewing what
11 that looks like, and Senator, when we complete that study I
12 would be glad to come back and brief you. I have advocated
13 for those investments into the infrastructure to deliver the
14 readiness we need for the force. But again, I owe you an
15 answer on that.

16 Senator Hirono: I think it is really important because
17 as we establish priorities for the DoD and for all of the
18 services that the deferred maintenance is becoming ever,
19 ever larger, and it results in the kind of catastrophes that
20 cost billions of dollars. So I appreciate your leadership
21 on this, and as far as I am concerned we need to have a much
22 better plan on how we are going to keep up with maintenance
23 of all of our facilities across our country, as well as,
24 indeed, the world.

25 Thank you very much.

1 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Hirono.

2 Senator Scott, please.

3 Senator Scott: Thanks, Chairman.

4 General LaCamera, thanks for hosting me last
5 Independence Day. I got to meet a lot of your troops, and a
6 lot of them were from Florida, so thanks for doing that.

7 If North Korea invades and was able to take over South
8 Korea, would it have any impact on the American family?

9 General LaCamera: Yes, I believe it would.

10 Senator Scott: So if you were going to say, hey, this
11 is why we should have troops in South Korea, why we should
12 make sure that South Korea remains as an independent
13 country, what would you tell the American public?

14 General LaCamera: I would tell it is an important
15 piece of ground. It puts us on the Asian continent. It is
16 a demonstration of our iron-clad commitment to the region
17 and peace and stability in the region. I think South
18 Korea's economy is important to our economy, and that
19 regional stability. And I believe that a challenge to that
20 would have impacts on the United States.

21 Senator Scott: Are there any products or services that
22 would be important that the American citizen would be
23 without? Would it matter to the average person that wants
24 to go buy something?

25 General LaCamera: No. I believe in capitalism and

1 competition, and I am sure they can find another product
2 elsewhere. I think it is more of an intangible than it is a
3 tangible.

4 Senator Scott: Admiral, what would you say about --
5 would you say the same thing about Taiwan? You know, if
6 China invaded and they were able to win and took over
7 Taiwan, would it have any impact on American families?

8 Admiral Aquilino: Senator, first of all, the
9 integration of the global economic network is critical, and
10 there would be multiple touches on the Taiwan piece,
11 specifically the high-end semiconductors is critical to many
12 things we use. So there would be a drastic impact if we
13 were not able to replace it in some other way. There is no
14 doubt about that.

15 Senator Scott: And do you have any idea of what
16 percentage of high-end chip are made in Taiwan and how much
17 of an impact that would have on cars, any electronics we do?

18 Admiral Aquilino: Almost all of them, and I do not
19 know what that percentage of impact would be, but it would
20 be broad.

21 Senator Scott: For both of you, for Korea and for
22 Taiwan, are the governments of South Korea and Taiwan, are
23 they doing everything they can to defend themselves?
24 Because it is not the easiest thing in the world to, one,
25 get to Taiwan, or two, to have the resources to be able to

1 defend South Korea. So for each of you, could you just tell
2 me how important it is, and do we have the right resources,
3 are they doing the right things? I mean, as far as I can
4 tell, Taiwan -- I mean, what, do they have 8-month
5 conscription? I mean, they have not armed their citizens.
6 I mean, it seems to me that would be some of the simplest
7 things to do, have a stronger military, arm their citizens.
8 The same with South Korea.

9 Admiral Aquilino: Yeah, Senator. So in the wake of
10 the Ukraine invasion by Russia I think if you look at that
11 and if you look at a variety of other actions that have gone
12 on in the region, there is a real concern, to include on the
13 island of Taiwan. If you look at Hong Kong, all right, who
14 is next? And if you look at Ukraine and the linkage between
15 Russia and China, there is a real concern.

16 So I have certainly been encouraged by recent actions
17 for conscription and other things that have been taken. I
18 think there is a real seriousness now.

19 Senator Scott: Is that true for South Korea?

20 General LaCamera: I mean, it is a little bit
21 complicated because right now we have a bilaterally agreed
22 upon OPCON transition program to get them to where they
23 would take over one of my commands, Combined Forces Command.
24 They are on the right trajectory to do that. The agreement
25 is that it will be standards based and not time based, so we

1 are moving in that direction, to make sure that happens.

2 Senator Scott: So Senator Budd brought up, and I think
3 some others have brought up our military industrial complex
4 ability to provide weapons. We are way behind, we know, in
5 Taiwan. What do you think the Federal Government ought to
6 be doing to make sure that our defense contractors move
7 faster? Because it will make your lives easier, especially
8 in Taiwan, if they had, what is it, \$19 billion worth of
9 arms that they have ordered that we have not provided to
10 them.

11 Admiral Aquilino: Yeah, Senator. Certainly the
12 President's budget, as it was submitted, has got a component
13 of a multi-year on the munitions piece, would be very
14 helpful. I think sending that consistent demand signal is
15 what industry needs. That said, as the most innovative
16 nation in the world, I would hope that the industrial base
17 could take that, combined with other actions, and move
18 faster.

19 Senator Scott: All right. Thank you. Thank you,
20 Chairman.

21 Chairman Reed: Thank you, Senator Scott.

22 Senator Duckworth, please.

23 Senator Duckworth: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good
24 morning, gentlemen.

25 I have been emphasizing the importance of our partners

1 in Southeast Asia, in particular, with every chief and
2 combatant commander that has come before this Committee
3 today. I think we can do much more to bolster these key
4 relationships to support the entire Indo-Pacific region, and
5 there are some nations that we have not managed those
6 relationships in the last few decades in a way that we have
7 in the past.

8 In August, I plan on taking several of my colleagues to
9 the Philippines, Indonesia, and Thailand, in particular,
10 where we will focus especially on this issue, the many
11 important opportunities that our nations have to partner
12 together.

13 Admiral Aquilino, in your testimony you highlighted
14 INDOPACOM's enhanced exercises with 14 partner nations like
15 Indonesia's Super Garuda Shield. But beyond these, you
16 know, Coral Gold, Garuda Shield, once-a-year, once-every-
17 other-year exercises, in what other ways does your command
18 plan to deepen cooperation with our allies and partners, in
19 Southeast Asia in particular, including those nations that
20 maybe we have not dealt with on a regular basis, like
21 Vietnam or Cambodia, and some of the other nations?

22 Admiral Aquilino: Yes, thanks, Senator. So the
23 exercises certainly are a critical component, as you know.
24 My partner, General Centino, in the Philippines -- as a
25 matter of fact, I am flying to the Philippines on Wednesday

1 to go to an event with him and our Japanese counterpart. We
2 have agreed to, across the region, the Chiefs of Defense and
3 myself, to work towards more mini- and multi-lateral sets of
4 engagements, whether they be meetings, tabletop exercise, or
5 operations, for more consistent and more direct ability to
6 operate the interoperable and to execute our mission sets,
7 all for the defense of the region and to keep it safe.

8 So we are doing a ton. There are almost no events we
9 do unilateral anymore. Everything is done with allies and
10 partners.

11 In Thailand, General Chalermopol is also a good friend
12 and partner. I went to Cobra Gold kickoff, we spent some
13 time together, we laid out what else we could do, and again,
14 we continue to look for those opportunities.

15 We are always prepared and planning for any HADR
16 support that might be needed. That is us taking care of
17 humanity should it happen to any of those partners.

18 So we are plugged in across the board, and I only see
19 it getting more robust and more effective.

20 Senator Duckworth: Yeah, I think also there is
21 intelligence sharing that is important. I know that
22 Singaporeans kind of had a cell there that that helps with,
23 limited intelligence sharing. There are so much that you
24 can do.

25 My colleague, Senator Rosen, talked a little bit about

1 cyber. I informed her that in 2021, we actually passed
2 legislation that authorized a pilot program that enhances
3 cybersecurity partnership with our forces, with those of
4 Vietnam, Thailand, and Indonesia. I am now planning on
5 introducing legislation to expand this important program to
6 include Malaysia and the Philippines in this year's NDAA.

7 Admiral Aquilino, can you comment on the value of
8 direct engagement with our overseas partners to help build
9 their cyber skills? You sort of touched on this a little
10 bit, but I think it is really critically important, beyond
11 just speaking directly with us, but also sharing with each
12 other within the region.

13 Admiral Aquilino: Yeah, thanks, Senator. Certainly
14 our ability to share information and coordinate and
15 cooperate is absolutely dependent on the cybersecurity of
16 those systems. Otherwise, it is just getting to places
17 where it should not go.

18 You mentioned the CTIF or the Counterterrorism
19 Information Force in Singapore. It is also critical that
20 that sharing gets directly into those facilities to prevent
21 any violent extremism, multilateral, multi-nations, to
22 deliver those effects.

23 So like I said, General Nakasone has taken great
24 strengths to ensure those neighborhoods have the
25 cybersecurity they need. Our investment in the mission

1 partner environment contributes directly through this zero-
2 trust mindset to ensure we can do it.

3 Senator Duckworth: Thank you. General LaCamera, I am
4 really interested also in U.S.-Korea cybersecurity
5 partnerships, and you mentioned this in your testimony. Can
6 you expand on that a little bit here?

7 General LaCamera: We are also working with General
8 Nakasone and his folks, and we are also working with the
9 South Koreans. We have our own mission partner environment
10 networks for us to be able to communicate. It is not only
11 important when dealing with the South Korean military but
12 also in the United Nations Command and the Sending States,
13 and making sure that we can coordinate with those countries.

14 Senator Duckworth: Thank you. I yield back, Mr.
15 Chairman.

16 Chairman Reed: Thank you very much, Senator Duckworth.

17 Senator Sullivan, please.

18 Senator Sullivan: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Gentlemen,
19 thank you. I think the country needs to know what an
20 excellent job both of you two are doing in your respective
21 theaters, so I want you to hear that from this Committee. I
22 both of you are doing exceptional work for our country.

23 Last year, in the NDAA, this Committee, by the way,
24 unanimously, put in a provision for a floor of 31 amphib
25 ships, 10 big-deck amphibs. The Commandant, a few days ago,

1 testified just how important that was for force projection,
2 crisis response, all over the world, for the Marine Corps
3 and the Navy. How important is a robust complement of
4 amphibs for your theater, both of you?

5 Admiral Aquilino: So Senator, thanks. The amphibious
6 ready group as it applies with 3-ship ARGs is certainly
7 important to our ability to deter as well as our ability to
8 fight and win. And I have articulated the requirements as
9 it exists from INDOPACOM in to the CNO as part of his
10 development approach. Now he owns the whole globe. So
11 right now our requirements are met, and we have advocated to
12 ensure that those requirements are not divested or they are
13 somehow reduced.

14 Senator Sullivan: General? Amphibs, force projection,
15 crisis response, MEU-ARGs?

16 General LaCamera: Yes. Thanks, Senator. We live on a
17 peninsula. Having that capability available allows me to
18 give multiple options or multiple dilemmas to any adversary
19 who would try and disrupt peace and stability in the region.

20 Senator Sullivan: Admiral, we have talked about
21 different kind of deterrence factors with regard to the
22 CCP's decision whether or not to invade Taiwan. Of course,
23 there is the ability, which has already been talked about
24 here, for Taiwan to defend itself, which is in the Taiwan
25 Relations Act, the ability for us, if need be, called upon

1 by the President to help in that regard with our allies.

2 But there is also this, what I call a third level of
3 deterrence, which is economic, financial, energy, to put
4 forward a very comprehensive suite of sanctions with us and
5 our allies to say to Xi Jinping and others, hey, if you
6 actually undertake a violent military invasion of Taiwan,
7 here are the massive sanctions that are going to crush your
8 economy.

9 When you think about all instruments of American power,
10 the way the Chinese do, how important do you think that
11 third level of deterrence could be? Because we all want
12 deterrence. No one wants a war in the Taiwan Strait. But
13 we also know if it is going to be started, it will be
14 started by the Chinese. How important is that to look at
15 from the level of deterrence as well, on military factors?

16 Admiral Aquilino: Yeah, Senator. Again, so the
17 military lens is certainly my lane as it applies to this,
18 but as I look at the Chinese approach for an all forms of
19 national power assault on the international rules-based
20 order, I think it is critical that the United States, and it
21 is also a part of this integrated deterrence strategy the
22 Secretary has tasked us. So that all forms of national
23 power have to come together, and the economic lever is a
24 pretty big one. So I concur.

25 Senator Sullivan: Admiral, you and I went to Northern

1 Edge 2 years ago. Impressive. There was a carrier strike
2 group there, a couple hundred aircraft doing night fighting
3 in JPARC, really great training for the whole Joint Force.
4 Can you talk a little bit about how important you think
5 Northern Edge is in Alaska for an exercise that brings
6 together all of our services but also our allies, and what
7 we can demonstrate up there in the great state of Alaska?

8 General LaCamera: Yes, Senator. So Northern Edge, as
9 a matter of fact it is going to happen here again this year,
10 in the not-too-distant future. It is certainly important
11 for us to be able to operate in places that we are
12 comfortable operating. We can train to high-end tactics and
13 capabilities. That said, all of our exercises are important
14 across the globe. Northern Edge is usually one of our
15 largest.

16 Senator Sullivan: General, I was actually out, left
17 the hearing here for a few hours. I greeted an honor flight
18 from Alaska. They just arrived -- World War II vet, Korean
19 War vet, Vietnam vets. I love doing this. I never miss
20 when the honor flights come in. We were at the Korean War
21 Memorial. I want to publicly, and I have done it a few
22 times, you and I have talked about, do a shout-out to the
23 Korean government and the Korean people who just spent over
24 \$20 million adding a very important element to the Korean
25 War Memorial, which is the wall of honor, all the U.S. and

1 Korean killed in action. I encourage all Americans to go
2 look at that. I want to thank again the Korean government,
3 Korean people, because they paid for that. They paid for
4 that. Pretty special.

5 How is it going with the new government -- I had the
6 opportunity to meet with the new president recently -- in
7 terms of their commitment to not only defense, but one thing
8 that I have seen that looks very promising is a new focus on
9 U.S.-Korea-Japan relations, training. The trilateral aspect
10 of our defense in Northeast Asia is really important. How
11 do you see that going? And I want to compliment the new
12 government. They seem to be really putting their shoulder
13 into that, and I think it helps for our deterrence and
14 defense in the region. What is your view on that?

15 General LaCamera: Thanks, Senator. In the last year
16 we have been able to increase our combat readiness and
17 focus, not just in command post exercises but at the
18 addition of field training exercise. And we have been able
19 to bring in two carrier strike groups. We have been able to
20 do multiple ballistic missile defense exercises. We talked
21 about the other exercises that the admiral does inside of
22 the theater that we have been able to participate in.

23 So President Yoon has really been focusing on combat
24 readiness, and as you discussed with the trilateral piece,
25 the threat is real to the region. KJU, when he fires his

1 missiles, you know, he sends messages to not only South
2 Korea but to Japan and the United States on the
3 capabilities. And I think the President is showing
4 tremendous leadership in the region to move forward to
5 secure not just the Korean people but the American people.

6 Senator Sullivan: So the trilateral relationship is
7 deepening and getting better, from your perspective?

8 General LaCamera: It is. Yes, sir.

9 Senator Sullivan: Great. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

10 Chairman Reed: Senator Schmitt.

11 Senator Schmitt: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you
12 both for your service.

13 Admiral, I wanted to ask, I know there has been some
14 discussion, there is \$19 billion worth of weapons systems
15 that the Taiwanese have ordered that they have not gotten.
16 I think you and I share the same belief that we need to have
17 a greater sense of urgency with this, as they face a
18 potential invasion from Communist China. What other weapons
19 capabilities do you think, that are not going to take that
20 long, are really important for the Taiwanese to have to
21 defend themselves, that could get there in shorter order?

22 Admiral Aquilino: Thanks, Senator. So again, without
23 going into some specific systems, but again, anti-air
24 capability, anti-ship capability, delivered in a variety of
25 means, whether it is missiles, mines, or other things. I

1 think there are some of those that, with some innovative
2 work, could be delivered faster.

3 Senator Schmitt: Okay. Admiral, a few days ago the
4 Chinese Ambassador to the Philippines made some significant
5 threats against Taiwan and the safety of 150,000 Filipinos
6 living in Taiwan. This kind of egregious comment is exactly
7 why many countries in the Indo-Pacific are deepening defense
8 cooperation with the United States, as you are aware.

9 In addition, China continues to conduct provocative
10 operations in the South China Sea, harassing Filipino
11 vessels with lasers and sailing Chinese warships near
12 Filipino holdings in the South China Sea. There has been a
13 commitment, my understand, to accelerating capability
14 development of the Filipino armed forces during the recent
15 2+2 meeting to include helping Manila acquire priority
16 defense systems and platforms.

17 Admiral, in your view what are the next steps we should
18 take with the Philippines?

19 Admiral Aquilino: So in support of our mutual defense
20 treaty we are providing a variety of capabilities and
21 training and actions with the Philippines. I think the
22 posture initiatives are critical. So for the United States
23 to be successful in executing our responsibilities for the
24 defense of the Philippines, those posture initiatives, the
25 new EDCA sites, and delivering that capability and

1 infrastructure is critical. And then we can always continue
2 our operation together.

3 Exercise Balikatan is going on. It is the largest
4 event in the region for the land component. We have also
5 synchronized at sea. And this particular exercise, it is
6 led by the Marine Corps, but it is integral with the Army,
7 the Navy, and the Air Force as a part of Balikatan.

8 So those continued demonstrations and interoperability
9 is the next piece we can do.

10 Senator Schmitt: And I think it is just such a key and
11 strategic alliance for us, the Philippines. Would you
12 support -- you mentioned infrastructure -- would you support
13 a permanent base on the Philippines?

14 Admiral Aquilino: I think that decision, Senator,
15 would be certainly critical for the Philippines. I do not
16 think the Philippines are looking for permanent U.S. bases.
17 That is their sovereign territory. I think what we would
18 like to be able to do is operate with them in places that
19 they would allow us to go at this point in time.

20 Senator Schmitt: Okay. Admiral and General, Missouri,
21 as you both know probably, hosts the entire operational
22 fleet of the B-2 Spirit bombers. Could you both discuss, in
23 general terms, the significance of the air leg of the
24 nuclear triad to your deterrence missions?

25 Admiral Aquilino: Yes, sir. Certainly the

1 foundational aspect of our strategic nuclear deterrence lies
2 in the triad. So the B-2s, the SSBNs and the ICBM-4s. That
3 modernized force is critical to ensure that our conventional
4 deterrent is foundationally based. So for the China portion
5 and the rest of the Indo-Pacific region, it is absolutely
6 critical, and we demonstrate it, aligned with our STRATCOM
7 partner, fairly frequently, and General LaCamera can talk to
8 that.

9 General LaCamera: Thanks, Senator. It poses multiple
10 dilemmas. We get questioned about our ability on extended
11 deterrence, and I think it is just another demonstration of
12 the tremendous capability that we bring to any fight
13 worldwide.

14 Senator Schmitt: And what has been the reaction from
15 our friends and adversaries? What have you witnessed is
16 their reaction to that capability?

17 General LaCamera: For us, on the allies side, again,
18 we are looking at this fight from a joint, combined
19 interagency, multidomain, and this is just another arrow in
20 our quiver that we continue to demonstrate. With the
21 testing that KJU has been doing and the support that I get
22 from Admiral Aquilino, and pushing assets, again, it is just
23 allowing us to build combat readiness, which we have not
24 been able to do.

25 Admiral Aquilino: And I think for the rest of the

1 region, Senator, it is also important for them. The
2 Australians have allowed us to do two B-2 bomber detachments
3 out of Amberley. So that shows, to me, that the capability
4 is important for them, as well as the rest of the region.
5 And we operate, whenever possible, to demonstrating that
6 bomber capability in the theater.

7 Senator Schmitt: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

8 Chairman Reed: Thank you very much, Senator Schmitt,
9 and gentlemen, thank you. I have one additional question.

10 We are currently at impasse in confirming general
11 officers, including, I believe, the 7th Fleet Commander.
12 Admiral Aquilino, what impact does this have on your
13 readiness and the impact also on the offices involved in
14 terms of their whole family situation and also their
15 opportunities outside the service?

16 Admiral Aquilino: Senator, thanks for that.

17 Operationally, I am going to have no impact because the 7th
18 Fleet Commander is not going anywhere until a proper
19 replacement is in place. So I think the real impact you
20 articulated, right, it is the personal advancement, it is
21 the personal development, it is the family understanding and
22 predictability. Those are the places. So will it hinder
23 our ability to continue to maintain the right people in the
24 right jobs to be able to then potentially advance and take
25 the next right job? Absolutely.

1 Chairman Reed: Again, it seems a situation where, for
2 the next several months, you could get by. But at that
3 point people who are next in line to step up will consider
4 other options outside the service. And, in fact, we have
5 seen this situation in the Navy because of other situations.
6 Tailhook froze an entire cohort of officers, other incidents
7 in the Navy, and as a result, valuable individuals just
8 could not be promoted and had to retire. And if this
9 persists, this will have a serious detriment on readiness
10 eventually. Is that correct?

11 Admiral Aquilino: That is absolutely right, Senator,
12 or Chairman, and Glenn Defense Marine is the other example I
13 would think you are inferring to. We did have impact to
14 really quality people in a lot of cases.

15 Chairman Reed: General LaCamera, any other comments in
16 this regard?

17 General LaCamera: No. I agree with Admiral Aquilino.
18 I mean, the general officers that I have, I am not giving
19 them up. But again, it does stagnate the next set of
20 general officers or flag officers that are on current
21 promotions lists that are not confirmed. So the second and
22 third or long-term effects, there will be impacts, and then
23 when do people decide to leave and you might lose quality.

24 So I think there is a potential long term.

25 Chairman Reed: I do too, and I hope that we can move

1 quickly and return to regular order and the custom, which is
2 that individuals who served the nation for 30 years or more
3 have been selected based on their merit as military
4 officers, not any other reason, by panels of other military
5 officers can be confirmed routinely by the Senate, unless
6 there is some particular, specific issue with an individual
7 candidate. And that is my hope.

8 So thank you all, gentlemen, for your testimony today.

9 [Whereupon, at 11:17 a.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

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