



Commander, U.S. Pacific Fleet
Admiral John C. Aquilino

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Chief of Navy Roundtable
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As delivered

Good Morning Mr. Minister, Admiral Reza. First of all as a Navy fighter pilot, I could think of no better way to start my day than with this morning's welcoming ceremony, and hearing the sound of freedom all across the airstrip in Malaysia.

On behalf of my CNO, Admiral Richardson, it's an honor to be here today in Langkawi. It's wonderful to be among so many friends, distinguished maritime leaders, and I thank you for the opportunity to participate today, thank you very much for inviting me.

Ladies and gentlemen, as outlined in the National Defense Strategy of the United States, great-power competition has reemerged as the central theme and challenge to security and prosperity.

Nowhere are the stakes higher of that great-power competition than here in the Pacific. Combined with a robust constellation of allies and partners who desire to build and strengthen the international economic order, we are all operating towards that same end - continued security and stability that results in a free and open Indo-Pacific.

There is no better signal of our desire to maintain a free and open Indo-Pacific than U.S. naval operations in the region.

That is why we will continue to fly, sail and operate wherever international law allows. Bilateral and lateral operations and cooperative deployments underpin our collective maritime efforts in the region.

For example, USS McCampbell conducted a cooperative deployment with the United Kingdom in the South China Sea this past January. Other allies and partners like Japan, Australia, New Zealand, and France have all operated in the South China Sea in support of the international rules-based system.

In support of the UN sanctions enforcement efforts, the United States, United Kingdom, Republic of Korea, Japan, Australia, France, New Zealand, and Canada, have operated ships, aircraft, and other equipment, and/or provided personnel for the Enforcement Coordination Cell directly in support of these efforts on the USS Blue Ridge.

When you consider that 90% of world trade is moved by sea, it is easy to understand why shared values amongst nations are so important.

This mutual respect for and adherence to international law as well as a safe and secure maritime environment has enabled all nations in the region – large and small – to prosper. Additionally, it has enabled the longest era of peace and prosperity in modern times. Today, the very nature of our operating environment requires shared common values and a collective approach to maritime security.

That is why we conduct naval exercises and information sharing with our partners and allies throughout the region.

This September we will conduct the ASEAN-U.S. Maritime Exercise to deepen our relationships and fulfill a commitment we made.

We conduct the Southeast Asia Cooperation and Training (SEACAT) exercise, Naval Engagement Activity Vietnam, and the Cooperation Afloat Readiness [and] Training (CARAT) exercises, which allow us to conduct key maritime security tasks such as interdiction, boarding and information sharing, all to enhance our interoperability.

Multi-national organizations like the Indian Navy's Information and Analysis Center and Singapore's Regional Humanitarian Coordination Cell also have the potential to provide a collaborative environment to address maritime security issues and respond to potential humanitarian crises.

We welcome exploring additional areas to partner with maritime nations in order to build awareness and enhance the ability of nations to share potential time sensitive and vital information.

Ladies and Gentlemen... our vision for the Indo-Pacific excludes no nation. The United States has been here, we are here today, and we are in the Indo-Pacific region to stay. No better example of that exists than the Rim of the Pacific exercise.

This past summer we had twenty-six nations, 47 surface ships, five submarines, 18 national land forces, and more than 200 aircraft and 25,000 personnel -- and that includes Malaysia's first visit to RIMPAC with a ship. We are looking forward to hosting many of you in the summer of 2020.

While any navy can surge forces, none can surge trust or cooperation. We have built that trust over the past seven decades and will continue to build and strengthen relationships with any nation – large or small – with common values for decades to come.

Going forward, we remain committed to ensuring maritime security, which provides stability and enables prosperity throughout the entire Indo-Pacific Region, together.

My promise to you is that we will continue to partner and stand shoulder-to-shoulder with all nations who share a mutual respect for and adherence to international law, as well as a vision for a free and open Indo-Pacific.

I look forward to taking your questions, and hearing your perspectives on how we can better work together to collectively address our shared regional challenges, and it is my honor and privilege, again, Mr. Minister and Admiral Reza, being here today, thank you very much for inviting me. Thank you.