

**\*\* EMBARGOED UNTIL DELIVERY \*\***

**U.S. Force Posture in the U.S. Pacific Command  
Area of Responsibility**

**Joint Statement of**

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**before the  
House Armed Services Subcommittee on Readiness**

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Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Bordallo, and distinguished members of the subcommittee. We appreciate the opportunity to appear before you today to discuss U.S. Force Posture in the United States Pacific Command's area of responsibility (USPACOM AOR), and the Department of Defense's views on the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) independent assessment.

Our testimony will cover two broad themes: the rebalance toward the Asia-Pacific region and the Department's approach to enhancing U.S. defense posture there; and our efforts to strengthen key alliances and partnerships to achieve a common security vision for the region. Advancing these is critical to the future stability and growth of the region.

### ***Defense Strategy and Approach to Posture in the Asia-Pacific Region***

U.S. strategy calls for rebalancing defense, diplomatic, and economic resources toward the Asia-Pacific region. While this hearing focuses on expanding our broad-based military presence in the Asia-Pacific region, the Administration-wide initiative spans the spectrum of our diplomatic efforts, to include strengthening of our bilateral alliances, deepening working relationships with emerging powers, engaging in multilateral institutions, expanding trade and investment, and advancing principles of democracy and human rights. Enhancing the U.S. defense posture is just one aspect of the broader U.S. Government (USG) efforts to demonstrate its commitment to this critical region. Also essential to this strategy, from a defense perspective, are our efforts to strengthen alliances and partnerships in the Asia-Pacific so that we can more efficiently and effectively advance a common security vision for the future. Rebalancing to achieve these ends requires enhanced U.S., allied, and partner military capabilities throughout the region; the forward presence of U.S. forces in the region; and a more resilient military infrastructure to support effective U.S. power projection operations in the face of potential traditional and non-traditional security threats.

The CSIS assessment supports these tenets of the U.S. Defense Strategic Guidance. It acknowledges that the economic and security interests of the United States are inextricably linked to developments in the Asia-Pacific region, drawing conclusions consistent with the Department's own analysis about the challenges and opportunities likely to present themselves in Asia over the coming decade. Of note, the CSIS assessment also supports the Department's approach to enhancing U.S. defense posture as a key element of the overall policy, and highlights appropriately some of the challenges to implementing and sustaining the U.S. defense presence and posture in this critical region.

The Department continues to pursue a defense posture in the Asia-Pacific region that is geographically distributed, operationally resilient, and politically sustainable throughout the region. More broadly, it is investing in the defense activities, presence, posture, and capabilities

necessary to reassure allies and partners in the region and shape the security environment, while also providing forward capabilities appropriate to deter and defeat aggression.

In the coming years, the Department will continue to build up Guam as a strategic hub in the western Pacific; expand access to locations in Southeast Asia, Oceania, and the Indian Ocean Region; invest in the capabilities appropriate for deterring and defeating aggression and reassuring allies and partners; and expand our exercises, assistance efforts, and other engagements with allied and partner states in order to build trust, capacity, and interoperability.

This includes necessary near-term investments to establish fully capable Marine Air-Ground Task Forces (MAGTFs) in Japan, Guam, Australia, and Hawaii; plans to deploy up to four Littoral Combat Ships (LCS) to Singapore; and plans to increase the rotational deployment of U.S. Air Force units in northern Australia.

In parallel with these posture enhancements, the Department is also making key capability investments that undergird our efforts to rebalance toward the Asia-Pacific region. Steps include the development of a new, penetrating bomber and long-range, prompt conventional strike systems; the sustainment of the Navy's carrier fleet and their associated air wings; and investment in a variety of resiliency initiatives. Pursuing these and other capabilities appropriate to projecting power and ensuring freedom of maneuver in this critical region offers the best prospects for protecting U.S. interests, not only in the Asia-Pacific region, but also elsewhere in the world.

The United States faces security challenges across the globe. As the Department looks to rebalance toward the Asia-Pacific region, it is mindful of pressing priorities elsewhere in the world and across the defense program, which compete for scarce defense resources. The Fiscal Year 2013 President's Budget Request provides an initial set of investments toward fulfilling the Defense Strategic Guidance's vision of a Joint Force of 2020, including enhanced defense capabilities and activities in the Asia-Pacific region. However, fully realizing these plans for future defense activities, presence, and posture in the Asia-Pacific region will not happen in one budget cycle; accordingly, the Secretary of Defense has directed the Military Departments and other Components to build on Fiscal Year 2013 investments in the Fiscal Year 2014 budget proposal now under development. Although the Department differs with CSIS's claim that there is a disconnect between DoD's strategy and resources, the Department agrees with the assessment's finding that continued appropriate budgeting will be essential to properly execute this strategy. The Department of Defense firmly believes it is making appropriate, deliberate choices to resource the strategy over time.

As Secretary Panetta noted in his comments on the CSIS assessment, sequestration would place at risk the bipartisan goal of sustaining this rebalance. The Department looks forward to

partnering with Congress to ensure that the Nation maintains the world's best military, capable of meeting priority challenges and taking advantage of security opportunities in the Asia-Pacific region, the Middle East, Europe, and elsewhere.

### ***Strengthening Alliances and Partnerships***

The Center for Strategic and International Studies report comes against the backdrop of an increasingly dynamic Asia Pacific security environment. President Obama has stated that, as a Pacific nation, the United States will play a larger and long-term role in the Asia-Pacific over the decades to come. This effort will draw on the strengths of the entire U.S. government. In his speech before the International Institute for Strategic Studies Asia Defense Summit, known as the Shangri-la Dialogue, Secretary Panetta outlined how the Department of Defense is approaching the rebalance to Asia by presenting four key principles: 1) promoting international rules and order to advance peace and security in the region; 2) deepening of bilateral and multilateral partnerships; 3) enhancing and adapting the U.S. military's enduring presence in the region; 4) investing in the capabilities need to project power and to operate in the Asia-Pacific.

Looking across this vast region today, we see that it is home to some of the world's fastest growing economies; the world's largest populations and the world's largest militaries. The Asia-Pacific region provides unprecedented opportunity for trade and investment, as well as access to cutting edge technology; it also contains several and varied challenges whether through maintaining freedom of navigation in the South China Sea; countering the proliferation efforts of North Korea and maintaining robust deterrence against North Korean aggression or provocation; ensuring transparency in the military activities of key regional players, such as China; or addressing traditional and non-traditional security challenges such as counter terrorism, counter piracy, and disaster relief.

A central, indeed essential, part of this strategy are our efforts to strengthen alliances and partnerships in the Asia-Pacific region to advance a common vision for the future. In this context, the CSIS report includes an important discussion of the Department of Defense plans for the realignment of U.S. Marine Corps (USMC) forces. The realignment plan sustains USMC force presence in the Asia-Pacific region, establishes multiple, fully capable Marine Air-Ground Task Forces there, and, importantly, increases our ability over time to train and exercise with allies and partners throughout the region.

The realignment of USMC forces enhances the political sustainability of our presence in Japan by enabling early movement of some USMC forces to Guam independent of progress on the Futenma Replacement Facility (FRF), while relocating others to the less populated northern part of Okinawa. This approach maintains our forward capabilities, reduces our footprint in Okinawa, and, in combination with other measures, should reduce the political pressures

associated with our presence there—all while sustaining robust Government of Japan financial support for the Marine Corps move to Guam. By providing for the possibility of shared training ranges in Guam and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, this agreement supports deeper operational cooperation with the Self Defense Forces and our larger bilateral review of Roles, Missions, and Capabilities.

In this context, the Department of Defense continues to work closely with the Government of Japan to implement the provisions of the April 27, 2012 2+2 Meeting Joint Statement. In order to demonstrate to the region that we have a credible plan, congressional support is essential, and the Department is incredibly appreciative of the Committee's – and this Subcommittee's – continued cooperation and counsel to move forward with realignment.

The Department agrees with the CSIS assessment that there are opportunities to move forward with Guam and send an important signal to the region.

For much the same reason, the Department believes that to rotate fewer Marines to Guam, as suggested by the CSIS assessment, would bring into question the stability of our basing arrangements with Japan, and would run counter to our plan to establish multiple, fully capable MAGTFs in multiple locations within the Asia-Pacific region.

Turning to the Republic of Korea (ROK), the U.S.-ROK alliance continues to be a cornerstone of U.S. defense partnerships and posture in Northeast Asia. In accordance with the 2009 Joint Vision Statement, we have been realigning our forces on the Korean Peninsula over the past several years to prepare for the transition of wartime operational control (OPCON) to the ROK in December 2015. This transition allows for the ROK to take the lead role in the combined defense of Korea, supported by an enduring and capable U.S. military force presence on the Korean Peninsula, in the region, and beyond. Central to this effort is the need to evolve U.S. and ROK capabilities to provide for a stabilizing presence on the Peninsula and in the region, including rotational deployments of U.S. Army units to the ROK in support of a range of peacetime and contingency response activities. The Department is working in partnership with the Republic of Korea to implement the bilateral Strategic Alliance 2015 plan, including the caveats proposed by CSIS, which are already part of a series of planning milestones toward which the Department is working to ensure that OPCON transition occurs as planned with no loss of readiness to our combined forces

Other significant posture changes are underway in Southeast Asia, in addition to the discussed rotational deployments of Marines Corps and U.S. Air Force aircraft units to Australia. These initiatives will strengthen one of our most important alliances, both by providing expansive opportunities for high-end, combined training in Australia and through working together to build

partnerships in Oceania and Southeast Asia to build regional capacity to address common security challenges.

The LCS deployment to Singapore will strengthen U.S. engagement in the region through port calls at regional ports and engagement of regional navies through activities such as exercises and exchanges. They will also support the Department's efforts to counter transnational challenges and build partner capacity for maritime security, among other missions.

The Department will continue to explore opportunities with treaty ally the Philippines to deploy forces rotationally to priority areas in order to enhance their maritime security.

Supporting these planned and potential posture changes are enhancements to U.S. training ranges in the region. Investments in training ranges in Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and other locations, will enhance U.S. joint training opportunities, as well as combined training opportunities with our allies and partners.

The Department of Defense is devoting substantial effort to the USPACOM AOR, consistent with the U.S. strategic priority to rebalance to the Asia-Pacific region and attain a defense posture that is geographically distributed, operationally resilient, and politically sustainable. The Department appreciates the efforts of CSIS in conducting this independent assessment and looks forward to continuing dialogue with Congress on this key national security issue.

We look forward to addressing your questions.