

### CCAI



The challenges we face are formidable, but the United States possesses unique strengths to confront them. Our democratic values, our open society, our diversity, our base of innovation, our deep-rooted ingenuity, our combat experience, our globe-spanning network of Allies and partners, and above all, our extraordinary all-volunteer force, provide strong foundations for a defense strategy that will ensure American security, prosperity, democracy, and liberty.

- 2022 National Defense Strategy



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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Recognizing our rich history and future trajectory, PACAF will continue evolving airpower as a warfighting force and regional partner. We understand the challenges inherent to generating airpower in contested environments, recognizing it is fundamentally different than projecting power from safe-haven bases. Therefore, we embrace the acceleration of change, leveraging innovation to benefit the United States and our Allies and partners.

PACAF Strategy 2030 provides our Airmen with Strategic Priorities to Defend the Homeland, Deter Aggression, and Reinforce Allies and partners in the complex and ever-changing Indo-Pacific strategic environment. We must continue to set the pace as the premier Air Force in the Indo-Pacific by maintaining and exploiting our comparative advantages. To support regional Integrated Deterrence, we must synchronize our actions with Joint and multinational partners. PACAF strives to accomplish this by increasing interoperability to maximize effects, while mitigating risks through the strategic allocation of finite resources.

This strategy provides Operational Priorities to Enhance Our Warfighting Advantage, Advance Theater Posture, Strengthen Our Alliances and Partnerships, and Shape the Information Environment. To this end, PACAF will continue to evolve competence in areas such as Agile Combat Employment, maritime strike, Multi-Capable Airmen, resilient basing, information and intelligence sharing, and contested logistics. PACAF's integrated and proactive approach will preserve our position of strength, deny strategic competitors' military objectives, and defend interests shared with our Allies and partners.

## PACAF is Evolving Airpower and setting the pace to preserve peace, and if necessary, fight and win!



The Indo-Pacific is entering a pivotal era where the actions of the United States, our Allies and partners, and our strategic competitors will influence the social, economic, and security conditions for the foreseeable future. As an Indo-Pacific leader, the United States has a vital interest in an open, prosperous, and secure region. Several threats put this vision at risk by challenging core values, shared interests, and the institutions underpinning a free and open Indo-Pacific. America's strategic competitors—

the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), the Russian Federation (RF), and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK)—undermine the rules-based international order through coercive actions, enabled by their growing conventional and nuclear capabilities. Additional security concerns stem from Violent Extremist Organizations seeking to advance ideological agendas through fear, and environmental disasters threatening the economic and governance systems vital to regional peace and welfare.

The United States, aligned with our Allies and partners, must deter and mitigate these threats for our collective security, prosperity, and freedoms. PACAF will utilize the distinct advantages of airpower to lead this unified effort, taking swift and decisive action to defend a free and open Indo-Pacific. We will anticipate security trends in the global security environment, and evolve our operations, activities, and investments accordingly.

#### **AUTHORITARIAN REGIMES' REVISIONIST BEHAVIORS**

Autocratic leaders from the CCP, RF, and DPRK deliberately undermine the rules-based international order to advance self-serving political ends. Per the 2022 National Security Strategy, these regimes jeopardize regional security by, "... threatening or waging wars of aggression, undermining democratic political processes of other countries, leveraging technology and supply chains for coercion and repression, and exporting an illiberal model of international order." For example, the CCP responds to diplomatic activities with military aggression, including unprecedented and hostile military operations around Taiwan, the South China Sea (SCS), and other locations throughout the region. Additionally, the RF uses military force in its unjustified invasion of Ukraine, and the DPRK encroaches on other peaceful nations' sovereignty with missile launches.

#### CHINESE COMMUNIST PARTY'S UNWAVERING **HEGEMONIC AMBITIONS**

In October 2022, Chairman Xi Jinping secured an unprecedented third term focused on instituting a Beijing-first international order. Using its "Three Warfares" approach—public opinion, psychological, and legal—the CCP intimidates nations and individuals across all elements of national power including the use of military coercion, undermining regional security and stability. The CCP lacks transparency where its publicly stated peaceful ambitions and behaviors are often at odds with its actual coercive actions within in the region.

» Expansionist Claims. The CCP uses a combination of manufactured historical narratives and domestic decrees to subvert common international law.

Additionally, the CCP conducts economic debt coercion, trade manipulation, and military force to intimidate regional stakeholders. Contrary to international law, the rulings of international organizations, and neighboring countries' objections, the CCP continues to undermine territorial integrity in the SCS, the East China Sea (ECS), the Taiwan Strait, and the Line of Actual Control. Given this trend, we anticipate future disputes will emerge in the polar regions and other domains historically viewed by international law as global commons.

» Military Modernization. The People's Liberation Army (PLA), the armed wing of the CCP, is rapidly modernizing its weapon systems and fielding new all-domain capabilities to achieve its 2027 "Centennial Military Building Goal" of transforming into a force on par with the American military. To realize this goal, the PLA is developing capabilities that are "mechanized, informatized, and intelligentized." Specifically, the PLA Rocket Force is pursuing precision strike capabilities in addition to fielding thousands of long-range missiles capable of inflicting grievous harm far from China. Further, the PLA Navy (PLAN) and PLA Air Force are growing in numbers and combined already constitute the regions largest air and maritime force.

#### **ENVIRONMENTAL AND HEALTH SECURITY IMPACTS**

Environmental and biological threats put regional stability and security at risk. Left unchallenged, these threats cause transboundary conflict, social unrest, and economic volatility, and threaten some regional nations' very existence. Natural disasters and global health crises exacerbate regional security issues such as water scarcity, food insecurity, population displacement, and critical infrastructure. Malign actors can exploit these periods of vulnerability for political or ideological motives.

# STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

PACAF will focus resources and effort to sustain a favorable global security environment using airpower. Therefore, PACAF will maintain a free and open Indo-Pacific by conceptualizing and acting upon the security environment according to three strategic priorities:

#### **★** DEFEND THE HOMELAND

PACAF's top priority is to protect Americans at home and abroad while defending the United States Homeland, including territories west of the International Date Line. PACAF is a first responder to natural disasters and man-made crises where American people and equities are at risk, supporting the layered defense of vital interests in the Indo-Pacific.

#### **TOTAL AGGRESSION**

PACAF will maintain a resilient, combat-credible force postured for rapid response in the face of adversary counter-intervention efforts. PACAF will deny strategic competitors' threats or actual use of military force to achieve political objectives or territorial goals. If deterrence fails, PACAF will secure national military objectives as part of the Joint Force.

#### \* REINFORCE ALLIES AND PARTNERS

PACAF's asymmetric advantage is the American-led global network of like-minded countries. Our collective determination maintains a free and open Indo-Pacific, and stands in sharp contrast to the self-serving interests of our strategic competitors. By collaborating with Allies and partners to increase security capacity through enhanced integration and interoperability, PACAF sustains this advantage toward our common security objectives.



# OPERATIONAL PRIORIES -:

If deterrence fails, PACAF will be ready to fight. These operational priorities reflect the urgency to accelerate change to meet the challenges of this decisive decade. Informed by our finite resources, PACAF will focus on four priorities:

#### ENHANCE WARFIGHTING ADVANTAGE

We must be ready to generate and sustain airpower to deliver effects at the location and time of our choosing. We will accomplish this by improving Agile Combat Employment (ACE) and maritime interdiction capabilities. In parallel, PACAF will integrate the latest capabilities and technologies to enable all-domain awareness and operational-level command and control (C2) in contested and degraded environments.

#### **ADVANCE THEATER POSTURE**



PACAF must posture to rapidly respond to a wide range of crises. We are setting the theater by expanding access, basing, and

overflight across the Indo-Pacific, focusing on our ability to execute ACE operations in strategic locations. Additionally, we will continue investing in rapid runway repair, fuel resiliency, aircraft shelters, prepositioned material, and communications infrastructure.

#### STRENGTHEN ALLIANCES & PARTNERSHIPS



PACAF values the strength of multilateral efforts. We promote Allied and partner participation in initiatives that bolster high-end

combined training. Reducing barriers to information and intelligence sharing will increase interoperability, enable more robust bilateral and multilateral opportunities, and support shared awareness in all domains.

#### SHAPE THE INFORMATION ENVIRONMENT



PACAF must effectively communicate our resolve to Allies, partners, and strategic competitors through our words and deeds.

Our strategic competitors regularly manipulate the information battlespace through disinformation and censorship. In contrast, PACAF will be transparent with our operations and intentions to uphold United States' interests.

## ENHANCE WARFIGHTING ADVANTAGE

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The American military advantage fortifies our ability to deter aggression and shape the global security environment. Our strategic competitors—specifically the CCP—aim to close the gap through deliberate military modernization programs. In response, PACAF must leverage the quintessential American ability to adapt to changing conditions. We must operationalize emerging technologies and create novel employment methods to maintain air superiority across the spectrum from competition to conflict. This lethal edge will deter attacks, and if necessary, secure victory.

**Expand Agile Combat Employment for Mission** Resiliency. ACE is a proactive and reactive operational scheme of maneuver executed to maximize survivability and sortie generation within range of an adversary's long range precision fires. PACAF will prioritize the development and procurement of capabilities to operate in a more dispersed and decentralized manner. The ACE hub-and-spoke model trades efficiency for resiliency, complicating the adversary's targeting by adding dilemmas. To succeed in contested or degraded environments, we will employ Mission Command and delegate decision-making to the lowest level, empowering Airmen to effectively use their judgement, ingenuity, experience, and skill. To develop Multi-Capable Airmen, PACAF will continuously invest in leadership education, technical training, and high-end exercises.

Strengthen Joint Integration to Maximize Maritime Lethality. PACAF is evolving operational airpower concepts for maritime interdiction. Our ability to rapidly penetrate contested airspace provides unique response options to the Joint Force. We continuously refine the tactics and capabilities required to deliver precise, lethal, and integrated fires in the maritime domain to support the United States Indo-Pacific Command.

Increase All-Domain Awareness for Optimized Command and Control. PACAF is improving decision speed and accuracy by using advanced communication

technologies, edge computing, and artificial intelligence to enhance sensor fusion. By integrating disparate multidomain capabilities, PACAF preserves the ability to conduct effective operations in highly contested environments, enabling other elements of the Joint and Combined Force.

- » Combined Joint All-Domain Command and Control.
- A resilient, self-healing Combined Joint All-Domain Command and Control network underpins PACAF's ability to hold air, maritime, and land targets at risk, at a time and place of our choosing. We will achieve this by leveraging innovative technologies from government and private industry to support C2 processes and systems, including space-based communication and navigation systems, enhanced cyber capabilities, all-domain sensors, and artificial intelligence. These technologies will improve real-time situational awareness at all echelons by improving decision accuracy, reducing timelines, and enabling Mission Command.
- » Space. PACAF is coordinating with the newly established United States Space Force Indo-Pacific to integrate organic space assets, maintain all-domain awareness, and effectively employ airpower. Space support minimizes gaps in the vast operational battlespace while providing secure communications, navigation, and precision targeting support to the Joint Force. The resiliency and interoperability of space-based systems are vital to PACAF's decision advantage.



» Cyber. Authoritarian regimes including the CCP, RF, and DPRK are increasingly focusing efforts on information dominance using cyber and electronic warfare capabilities to gain a strategic advantage over U.S. forces, and our Allies and partners. Offensive cyber tools employed against friendly forces and systems seek to exploit, deny, disrupt, or degrade networks—to include space-based capabilities. These offensive cyber fires can range from strategic disinformation campaigns to denial-of-service attacks that can affect our critical infrastructure. PACAF, in concert with Air Combat Command, and along with Joint and Interagency partners will remain vigilant in the digital battlespace to detect, negate, and if necessary, respond to cyber threats that seek to bring us harm. As the militarization of the cyber domain continues by those whose values run counter to ours, PACAF will ensure continuous and effective cyberspace operations by actively defending against cyber threats of all types.

**Integrate Cutting-Edge Capabilities for Operational Advantage.** The United States Air Force is building the world's largest 5th-generation fighter fleet, fielding the next-generation stealth bomber, introducing the world's first 6th-generation fighter, and arming aircraft with innovative weapons. As the air component in the United States Department of Defense's priority theater, PACAF must operationalize these technological advancements by employing new tactics and increasing high-end training with the Joint Force, enabling these exquisite airpower tools to realize their full warfighting potential.



- » Air Dominance. The Next Generation Air Dominance fighter, B-21 Raider, and the E-7 Wedgetail will each deliver game-changing advantages. PACAF will pair these platforms with new weapons including the Joint Advanced Tactical Missile and other programmed maritime strike, hypersonic, and stand-off weapons. Introducing and integrating these advanced assets will fundamentally reshape the battlespace to the advantage of the United States and its Allies and partners.
- » Collaborative Combat Aircraft. By integrating unmanned combat aircraft across diverse missions, we continue to develop the ongoing evolution in air combat. It is already clear these systems will increase combat reach and flexibility, while simultaneously reducing risk in highly contested environments.
- » Aerial Refueling. Advancements in aerial refueling allow PACAF and Allied and partner air forces to deliver fuel at greater ranges while providing access to previously unavailable airfields. Integrating the KC-46—the world's most advanced multi-role aerial tanker—along with other emerging technologies will advance PACAF's ability to generate combat airpower from austere locations.

Initially, innovators harnessed airpower as a means to overcome the challenges of terrestrial and seafaring battles, and today's innovators continue that legacy as battlefield lines morph in new and unexpected ways. ""

General David W. Allvin

## ADVANCE THEATER POSTURE



The legacy of large main operating bases place forward deployed aircraft at extreme risk during conflict due to adversary anti-access capabilities. Additionally, our current basing posture, optimized seventy years ago, adversely affects our ability to rapidly respond to natural disasters and man-made crises today. PACAF is expanding access, basing, and overflight to include distributed operations in new strategic locations. We will continue to assure Allies and partners while simultaneously deterring opportunistic acts of aggression through forward presence and the ability to rapidly respond to crises.

Optimize Access, Basing, and Overflight. Access is essential for PACAF to effectively respond to crises and defend common interests in the region. We are upgrading existing basing agreements to forward deploy assets and minimize response time to crises.

Additionally, we will engage with select regional Allies and partners to establish new basing agreements and secure overflight. These agreements will be mutually beneficial, designed to enhance cooperation and interoperability, strengthen humanitarian assistance/ disaster relief (HA/DR) responses, increase joint training, and improve shared air domain awareness.

#### **Distribute Logistics Supply and Sustainment.**

PACAF and our Joint and multinational partners are routinely exercising and training from various locations, demonstrating our collective ability to deploy airpower throughout the Pacific. We regularly train in locations such as Guam, Tinian, and Saipan, and with our Pacific partners in Japan, the Republic of Korea, Australia, and Palau. We are also working with partners interested in expanding the ACE footprint to other Indo-Pacific areas. In support, PACAF is increasing prepositioned materiel to reduce sustainment requirements, while simultaneously strengthening logistics networks that support contested operations across the vast Indo-Pacific. As a result, we are improving capability and capacity for both ACE operations and HA/DR response.

Diversify Resilient Forward Basing. To counter the increasing missile threat to United States and Allied operating locations, PACAF is adopting capabilities to generate and sustain airpower from distributed locations in contested and degraded environments. We are diversifying our defenses to include additional camouflage, concealment, and deception, infrastructure hardening, and active defense capabilities. PACAF is also advancing non-kinetic defensive solutions such as electronic warfare, high-powered microwaves, and laser technologies. Finally, we are accelerating constructing aircraft shelters and other airfield infrastructure to increase resilience.



### STRENGTHEN ALLIANCES AND PARTNERSHIPS



Our strategic competitors increasingly threaten regional interests across the Indo-Pacific, negatively impacting security, sovereignty, and prosperity. PACAF and our Allies and partners will resolve these shared challenges by relying on each other's strengths to collectively evolve airpower—together, we will deter aggression.

Reinforce Ally and Partner-Led Initiatives. We are resolute in the collective defense of a free, open, and prosperous Indo-Pacific. PACAF projects strength by exercising both unique American capabilities and capabilities shared with our Allies and partners, generating new strategic dilemmas for authoritarian regimes. PACAF will honor existing military agreements with our Allies and partners and seek new ones, to enhance interoperability and integration between our systems, platforms, and Airmen, while supporting select areas of interdependence led by Allies or partners. Additionally, our Allies and partners possess cultural, positional, and capability advantages vital to our collective Indo-Pacific objectives, filling critical PACAF gaps.

- » Defense Cooperation & Agreements. Allies and partners continue to secure national interests through their own engagements and agreements. Significantly, Japan has signed reciprocal access agreements with Australia and the United Kingdom to strengthen interoperability. Continued growth in a network of layered bilateral and multilateral defense cooperation agreements is essential to maintain a free, open, and prosperous Indo-Pacific.
- » Security Cooperation. New Zealand and Australia provide essential capabilities to Pacific nations through initiatives like the Pacific Reset Program and the Pacific Step-Up Program. These efforts increase regional engagement with the Pacific Islands and Papua New Guinea to address critical areas like climate change, communications infrastructure, defense and police training, COVID-19 provisions, HA/DR, and maritime security. PACAF is ready to assist our Allies and partners where possible to support these initiatives that strengthen regional security.



» Technology. Our Allied and partner nations are global leaders in several advanced technologies with defense applications. For example, Australia's high-frequency, over-the-horizon radar technology supports air and maritime domain awareness while providing early warning. PACAF will work to maximize interoperability, helping Allies and partners realize the full potential of mutually beneficial technologies.

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» Global Presence and Reach. As interests and values increasingly cross international boundaries, the seams between historically defined geographic boundaries are dissolving. This dynamic is driving a resurgence of Indo-Pacific engagement from countries outside the region. PACAF welcomes increased presence and exercise participation from the Five Eyes Alliance (FVEY), the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), and other security partners.

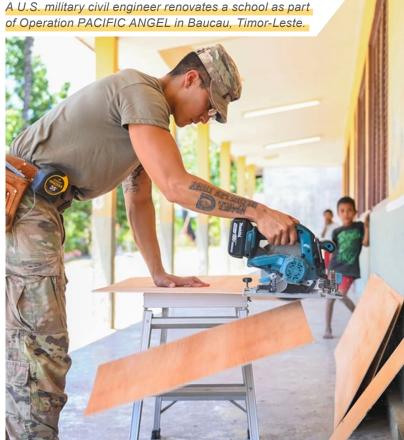
Capability, and Geography. Our asymmetric advantage is the expansive global network of like-minded partners who routinely train and exercise with PACAF. Our interoperability and integration exponentially increases our collective capacity and capability to respond to regional crises. PACAF prioritizes multilateral engagements with a focus on high-end training with key Allies while continuing to attract new partners and enhance interoperability with existing ones. Across that spectrum, PACAF will continuously incorporate unilateral and shared interests, maximizing our collective preparedness for a range of scenarios.

**Bolster High-End Combined Training in Strength,** 

» All-Domain Awareness Integration. PACAF is signing new information and intelligence-sharing agreements with Allies and partners to foster all-domain awareness. We support security cooperation programs that strengthen detection, identification, and defense capabilities against air and maritime threats. By empowering nations with data and expanding our shared understanding, we improve our collective ability to maintain air sovereignty.

USAF, Japan Air Self-Defense Force, and French Air and Space Force exercise in Guam.





- » Reciprocal Aerial Refueling & Maintenance Integration. Reciprocal agreements are the cornerstone of trust between PACAF and our Allies and partners. This trust is reflected in aerial refueling certifications with Australia, Japan, and the Republic of Korea, and Singapore and our reciprocal maintenance agreement with Australia. We will continue to support these agreements and advocate to implement similar agreements with other nations.
- » Fighter Integration. PACAF will increase 5th-generation fighter training with our Indo-Pacific F-35 partners including Australia, Japan, the Republic of Korea, and Singapore. We encourage additional participation from our global F-35 partners and those with indigenous 5th-generation aircraft, and we will continue 4th- and

- 5th-generation training with all Allies and partners to increase platform, system, and weapon interoperability.
- States Air Force bomber visits and integration with Indo-Pacific Allies and partners. Our bombers primarily provide a credible military deterrent and critical support for domain awareness and air defense training. We will prioritize flying and landing in new locations, exercising multi-axis approaches, and integrating with existing and new partners.

Together, we will strengthen our collective deterrence by complicating the environment for our strategic competitors through our unified strength in experience, capability, credibility, and will. 

— General Kenneth S. Wilsbach



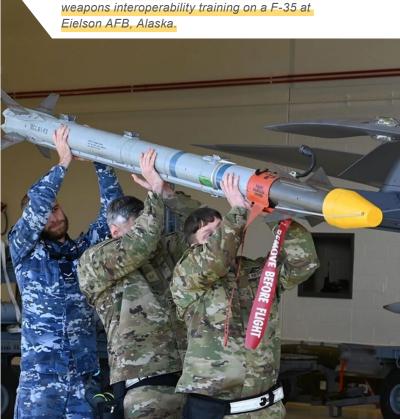
## SHAPE THE INFORMATION ENVIRONMENT



On 21 December 2022, a PLAN J-11 fighter conducted an unsafe intercept of a USAF RC-135 operating in international airspace. According to a public statement released by USINDOPACOM, the PLAN pilot "flew an unsafe maneuver by flying in front of and within 20 feet of the nose of the RC-135," forcing the USAF aircraft to "take evasive maneuvers to avoid a collision." USINDOPACOM also released a 29-second video of the encounter, which clearly shows the PLAN J-11 pulling in front of the RC-135. While the United States' account of the incident was factual and supported by visual evidence, it was immediately and directly refuted by the PRC in multiple media outlets. In an effort to obfuscate the incident and turn the narrative in their favor, the PRC released a counter-narrative and their own video attempting to demonstrate the United States was at fault for the unsafe incident.

Battle for the Strategic Narrative. The RC-135 incident highlights a continued struggle for the information space where facts can be overpowered by false counternarratives and mass media attention. This is true for both the United States and our Allies and partners. In similar incidents in May 2022, the PLA conducted unsafe intercepts of Canadian and Australian aircraft operating in international airspace; the PRC made public statements countering official accounts of the events and accused the foreign militaries of causing the incidents due to their proximity to PLA forces. As like-minded nations continue to uphold principles of a free and open Indo-Pacific in accordance with international law, the CCP will continue to contest the physical and information environments. Therefore, any operation must begin with the assumption that our strategic competitors will leverage our actions to create counter-narratives with the intent to manipulate international opinion and erode trust in the United States and our Allies and partners.



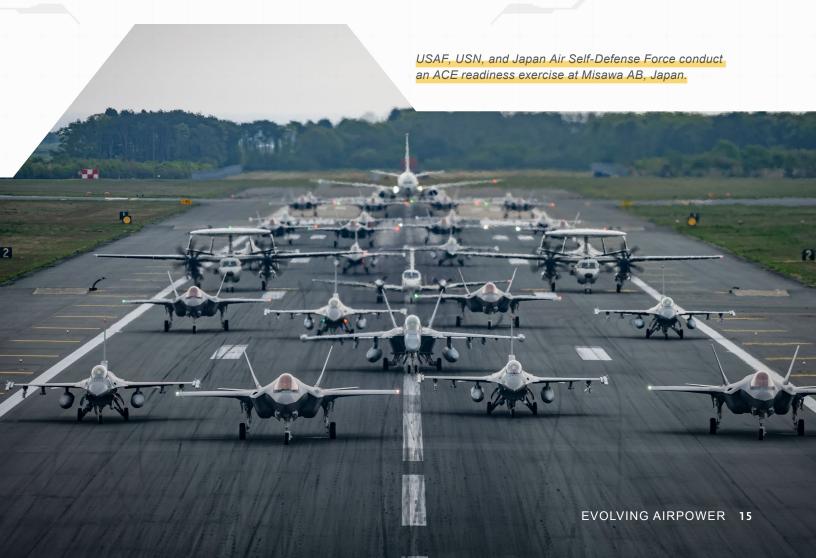


USAF and Royal Australian Air Force conduct

Messaging Airpower with Transparency. Airpower sends an assertive and observable message to shape the security environment. Demonstrating cutting-edge capabilities, forward presence, and commitment to our Allies and partners communicates the United States' resolve in the Indo-Pacific. Our Airmen uphold the rules-based international order through their daily activities— we will continue to act responsibly and with transparency to maintain credibility as a regional leader. PACAF will deliberately design missions and will clearly communicate our intentions. This approach is foundational at all PACAF echelons and throughout each phase of planning.

Messaging airpower with transparency will fight ambiguity. Aligning our actions and words assures our Allies and partners by reinforcing our collective objectives. Likewise, we deter strategic competitors by demonstrating our credible capabilities and resolve to uphold United States' interests. As the security environment shifts, we will send a clear message that will continue Evolving Airpower to address emerging opportunities and challenges.

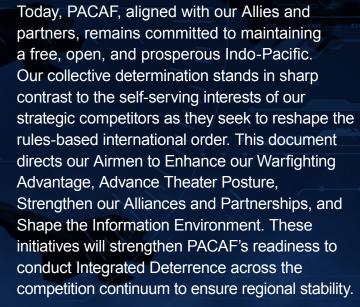
Our Airmen uphold the rules-based international order through their daily activities.





## CONCLUSION

The United States will continue to provide premier airpower for the defense of the United States and our Allies across the Indo-Pacific. PACAF has survived and excelled through a world war, regional conflicts, natural disasters, and a global pandemic. These historic periods and events reflect PACAF's strength, resilience, and resolve to uphold and defend regional stability, security, and prosperity.



As the United States continues to navigate this decisive decade of uncertainty, PACAF must anticipate and rapidly adapt to new social, economic, and security conditions that impact the role of airpower within the Indo-Pacific. With the combined strength and experience of our Allies and partners, PACAF's steadfast resiliency will continue to propel us forward to meet the challenges of the future.

**PACAF** is Evolving Airpower to set the pace for the future.

