

## FACT SHEET

Starting on May 29, 2024, Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III will travel to the Indo-Pacific region for the tenth time since taking office. His trip will occur as the Department of Defense continues to strengthen U.S. relationships with allies and partners to advance regional peace, stability, and deterrence.

The Secretary will attend the Shangri-La Dialogue in Singapore, meet with regional counterparts, and deliver plenary remarks highlighting a new convergence of likeminded Indo-Pacific partners who share a vision for a free and open region. He will also travel to Cambodia for meetings with senior officials following his first trip to the country as Secretary of Defense in November 2022.

Under the leadership of the Biden-Harris Administration, the United States has delivered historic results in the Indo-Pacific by investing in regional capability, transforming U.S. force posture, and connecting allies and partners.

## CONNECTING ALLIES AND PARTNERS

*The United States is joining together with allies and partners across the Indo-Pacific to strengthen regional peace and security, including through bilateral, trilateral, and multilateral efforts with:*

- ▶ **The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)**, following the launch of an Emerging Leaders' Defense Fellowship Program for young civilian and defense leaders in Southeast Asia.
- ▶ **Japan and the Republic of Korea (ROK)**, following the 2023 completion of a multi-year trilateral exercise plan and the full activation of a real-time DPRK missile warning data-sharing mechanism – two key deliverables announced at the August 2023 Camp David Summit.
- ▶ **Australia, Japan, and the Philippines**, following the second-ever meeting of defense ministers from all four countries in May 2024, where they advanced their multilateral collaboration in support of a free, open, secure, and prosperous region.
- ▶ **AUKUS partners, Australia and United Kingdom**, following progress on advanced capabilities cooperation and implementation of the Optimal Pathway for Australia to obtain conventionally-armed, nuclear-powered submarines.
- ▶ **The Freely Associated States**, following the March 2024 passage of the *Compact of Free Association Amendments Act* by Congress, which funded the economic assistance at the heart of the Compacts of Free Association into the 2040s and supported U.S. defense ties with three vital Pacific Islands partners.
- ▶ **Allies and partners across the Indo-Pacific region**, with combined operations that enhance interoperability, boost deterrence, and demonstrate shared resolve against coercive behavior, including:
  - **Exercise BALIKATAN with the Philippines**, which featured more than 16,000 members of the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the U.S. military, as well as Australian and French forces.
  - **Exercise SUPER GARUDA SHIELD with Indonesia and 17 other nations represented**, which featured more than 4,000 service members who participated in amphibious and airborne operations training, as well as command and control simulation.
  - **Exercise COBRA GOLD with Thailand**, which included 4,500 U.S. service members and participation from over 30 nations, including Japan, Singapore, Malaysia, and the ROK.
  - **Exercise FREEDOM SHIELD with the ROK**, a large-scale combined field exercise which featured more than 18,000 combined U.S. and ROK military forces and built combat readiness, as well as interoperability among participating units.

## TRANSFORMING U.S. FORCE POSTURE

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*Under President Biden's leadership, the United States has delivered historic achievements with allies and partners to make U.S. force posture in the Indo-Pacific region more mobile, distributed, resilient, and lethal, including by:*

- ▶ **Forward deploying the Marine Corps' most advanced formation** – a U.S. Marine Littoral Regiment — to Japan by 2025, significantly enhancing combat-credible deterrence.
- ▶ **Bolstering deterrence and increasing strategic asset rotations to the Korean Peninsula**, including visits by U.S. carrier strike groups, port calls by U.S. ballistic missile and U.S. guided missile submarines, and the first landing of a U.S. nuclear-capable B-52 on the Peninsula in decades.
- ▶ **Requesting more than \$120 million in funding for infrastructure improvements at Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement (EDCA) sites across the Philippines** through the President's Budget Request for Fiscal Year 2025, following the February 2023 announcement by the United States and the Philippines that the two countries would designate four new EDCA sites in strategic areas of the Philippines.
- ▶ **Launching a series of force posture initiatives with Australia**, including more expeditionary visits of U.S. submarines, increased rotations of U.S. bombers and fighters, expanded Marine and ground forces cooperation, and continuing upgrades of key bases in Australia.
- ▶ **Concluding a Defense Cooperation Agreement with Papua New Guinea (PNG)** that builds on decades of bilateral defense and security cooperation, strengthens the U.S.-PNG relationship, and increases regional stability and security.

## INVESTING IN REGIONAL CAPABILITY

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*The United States is deploying cutting-edge military capabilities in the near term, developing long-term capabilities to maintain deterrence in the Indo-Pacific, and supporting allies and partners as they invest in their own strength by:*

- ▶ **Proposing major investments in U.S. military capabilities through the President's Budget Request for Fiscal Year 2025**, including \$61.2 billion for air power; \$48.1 billion for sea power; \$33.7 billion for vital space capabilities; \$14.5 billion for cyberspace activities; \$4 billion to increase submarine production rates and availability; and \$9.9 billion for the Pacific Deterrence Initiative, which will invest in military construction, logistical support operations, and ballistic missile defense activities.
- ▶ **Working closely with the Philippines to conclude a bilateral Security Sector Assistance Roadmap**, which will guide shared defense modernization investments that bolster combined deterrence, improve the Philippines' capacity to resist coercion, and enhance interoperability.
- ▶ **Supporting Japan as it seeks to substantially increase its defense budget and acquires new capabilities** – including counterstrike – to strengthen regional deterrence.
- ▶ **Modernizing the U.S.-ROK alliance** through bilateral consultations, exercises, and asset deployments to strengthen peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula and beyond.
- ▶ **Collaborating with India on defense industry and innovation** through the India-U.S. Defense Acceleration Ecosystem (INDUS-X), co-production of armed combat vehicles and jet engines, and mid-voyage repairs of U.S. vessels.
- ▶ **Delivering greater maritime transparency through the Indo-Pacific Partnership for Maritime Domain Awareness (IPMDA)**, which enhances partners' abilities to monitor and police their waters.