



On May 21, 2020, Dr. John Wood, director of United States Indo-Pacific Command (INDOPACOM) J9 Pacific Outreach, discussed the Department of Defense's perspectives on responding to the pandemic. His talk focused on INDOPACOM's readiness to support the State of Hawaii and regional partners and allies, and how the military will continue to contribute to the state's economy.

Support for the State of Hawaii

INDOPACOM's primary focus is to protect the health and safety of service members while maintaining the force's readiness to respond to challenges in the region and carry out its mission. It is also standing by to help Hawaii as well as Guam, American Samoa, the Compact of Free Association (COFA) states, and the Northern Mariana Islands.

- INDOPACOM is prepared to coordinate with the Governor of Hawaii and the Deputy Chief of Staff for the National Guard under the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).
- Currently there are 250 members of the National Guard activated in Guam and 1,200 in Hawaii.
- The hospital ships *USNS Comfort* and *USNS Mercy* were deployed to US east and west coasts to provide additional medical support.
- The US Navy is forward deployed and prepared to provide Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Response (HA/DR) during the oncoming hurricane/typhoon season.

Insight: As the State prepares to welcome travelers, it could coordinate with the National Guard and INDOPACOM to ensure that sufficient resources are available for measures like contact tracing and monitoring mandatory quarantine.

Maintaining friends, allies, partners, and readiness during the pandemic

- The US Navy will host the Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC) exercises this year, but it will be conducted entirely at sea, avoiding all onshore social events in Hawaii. National forces will not intermingle.
- INDOPACOM stands ready to assist and provide security to countries within its area of responsibility (AOR), including Compacts of Free Association nations. US Army Pacific is responsible for handling any international security and assistance requirements in Guam, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and COFA states. The III Marine Expeditionary Force stationed in Okinawa is standing by to assist in the Indo-Pacific.
- USAID, the Department of the Interior and the Department of Defense are also providing financial aid and equipment to INDOPACOM AOR states. The military and other USG agencies are being particularly careful to avoid exporting Covid-19 through international aid activities.

Building up local non-tourism economy

- Hawaii's strength is that it is home to the region's leading authorities on Asia-Pacific affairs. Hawaii should be at the top of everyone's list when it comes to environmental stewardship, sustainable and renewable energy, and Pacific Islands relations.

Insight: State offices, local research institutions, and NGOs could direct more resources toward promoting Hawaii as an authority on Asia-Pacific matters in the United States.

This document was prepared by Eugenio Benincasa and Ariel Stenek. For more information, please contact Dr. Crystal Pryor (crystal@pacforum.org), Director of Nonproliferation, Technology, and Fellowships at Pacific Forum. These preliminary findings provide a general summary of the discussion. This is not a consensus document. The views expressed are those of the HIF chair and do not necessarily reflect the views of all participants. The speaker has approved this summation of their presentation.