



*HONOLULU, January 17, 2024* – Pacific Forum's recent Operationalizing Integration in the Indo-Pacific (OIIP) conference brought together more than 200 leaders, military officials, and experts to navigate the complex security landscape of the Indo-Pacific.

The event featured a series of compelling discussions and keynote addresses, offering crucial insights into the evolving regional dynamics and highlighting the imminent challenges facing nations.

Keynote speaker **Admiral John C. Aquilino's**, Commander, U.S. Indo-Pacific Command, warning of an expected Chinese show of force against Taiwan reverberated throughout the conference, setting the tone for deliberations on hastening integration of forces across command and control, across all domains, including that of the defense industrial base. Emphasizing Beijing's consistent military actions in response to perceived provocations, Admiral Aquilino highlighted the need for vigilance and collective action among allies.

He stated "we are in most dangerous time of last four decades" citing threats from China, Russia, North Korea, Iran and extremists as growing concerns.

Aquilino stressed, "I do need your voice, dear allies and partners, we must all say what is the threat. We must be a team or we will be run over." He laid out the requirements for a Joint All Domain Command-and-Control system that would allow US forces and their allies to synch in times of high-intensity warfare. He noted that the first iteration of the "Joint Fires Network" would be trialed in the summer.

US Pacific Fleet **Admiral Samuel Paparo**, warned of a "chilling" potential conflict in the region, emphasizing how China is systematically preparing for offensive war and could target Alaska.

Discussions focused on critical missions, technologies, battle networks, and policy planning required for integrated deterrence. Enabling defense industrial collaboration was deemed crucial.

**Dr. Laura Taylor-Kale**, Assistant Secretary of Defense for Industrial Base Policy at the US Department of Defense, delivered the second day's keynote address on the recently released National Defense Industrial Strategy (NDIS). As the lead on delivering the strategy, Dr. Taylor-Kale shared invaluable insights into the four priority areas laid out in the strategy.

**Mira Resnick**, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Regional Security, affirmed the U.S.' commitment to support Taiwan, detailing efforts to expedite foreign military sales and provide grant assistance for critical needs. The emphasis on having strategic assets positioned on the island further highlighted the commitment to Taiwan's security in potential contingencies. She also noted the tension between opening up the defense eco-system in order to further collaboration and risking penetration by our adversaries.

#### **Quotes:**

**Admiral John C. Aquilino** warned, "When something occurs that they don't like, they tend to take actions."

**Mira Resnick** stated, "The U.S. wants to ensure peace in the Taiwan Strait, security for Taiwan, and security in the United States."

#### **Key Takeaways:**

1. Amidst a deteriorating international order, the US and its allies unite in recognizing the need for new policies to enhance deterrence. Despite hesitations and perceived risks, there's a shared understanding that embracing calculated risks is essential. Accelerating the integration of industries and systems becomes paramount, demanding agile responses to geopolitical shifts.
2. At INDOPACOM, cutting-edge data architectures take center stage to establish a joint all-domain command and control system. This strategic move aims to empower US and allied forces, enabling seamless operations across the evolving battlefield. The imminent trial of the Joint Fires Network at RIMPAC this summer marks a significant advancement, enhancing real-time decision-making and operational efficacy.
3. Critical to fortifying national strength is the call for robust defense industrial collaboration among the US and its allies. This collaboration, involving maintenance, services, and joint manufacturing, stretches across the vast Indo-Pacific region. Accepting associated risks, this cooperative effort establishes a resilient defense ecosystem, crucial for navigating the intricate challenges prevalent in the region.

For the full agenda and further details on the 2024 Operationalizing Integration in the Indo-Pacific, visit <https://pacforum.swoogo.com/2024-OIIP>

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