

January 28, 2022

MEMO TO: Traci N. T. Fujita, Director of Council Services

F R O M: Jerry Paredes, Legislative Analyst *JAP*

SUBJECT: **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING: MILITARY AFFAIRS COUNCIL AND HAWAII DEFENSE ALLIANCE—2022 VIRTUAL PARTNERSHIP CONFERENCE** (PAF 21-012(25))

On January 6 and 7, 2022 the Military Affairs Council (MAC) and Hawaii Defense Alliance (HDA) hosted the 2022 Virtual Partnership Conference.

MAC is composed of business leaders and retired U.S. flag and general officers who advocate and liaison with military commands. MAC is an advocate of Hawaii's military as a major economic driver for the State and is committed to the promotion, preservation, and protection of military missions and installations in the State.

The HDA was established by MAC to bring together industry, government, educational institutions, and community-resource partners to work together and help increase local business opportunities while strengthening the local defense industrial base, identifying challenges, and offering solutions. HDA seeks to increase Department of Defense opportunities in the State.

Admiral John Aquilino, Commander of the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command (INDOPACOM), served as the keynote speaker on January 6. Admiral Aquilino provided a military update on behalf of INDOPACOM that included the defense capabilities of the 375,000-person command. The update emphasized the strategic importance of Hawaii to United States defense capabilities in the region. Admiral Aquilino further stated that rising tensions due to China's assertive actions in the region require a counter. The U.S. and its allies have been promoting a free and open Indo-Pacific to ensure peace, free navigation, and rule-based international order in key international sea lanes. Due to its strategic location in the Central Pacific Ocean, its staging capabilities, and uncertainty caused by China's actions, Hawaii will continue to remain of vital importance for national defense.

General Charlie Flynn, Commander of the U.S. Army Pacific, served as the keynote speaker on January 7. General Flynn gave a presentation on the criticality of innovation and modernization to maintain competitive advantage in the Pacific. General Flynn's presentation focused on emerging markets, job

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creation, diversification, and investment. General Flynn emphasized the importance of innovative thinking to bring funding and resources to locally created jobs and industries.

Department of Defense personnel provided an update and presentation on the recent fuel leaks at the Red Hill Bulk Fuel Storage Facility (Red Hill) in Honolulu. Two major fuel leaks, in May and November, respectively, contaminated Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickham's water supply. As a result, thousands of families were forced out of their homes. The presentation provided visual diagrams of the fuel-storage tanks, the leaks, and engineering-related specifics. The Red Hill fuel leak has galvanized public opinion and public trust against the U.S. military as it relates to land leasing and water-resource protection. An investigation is underway, and matters related to cleanup expenses remain unanswered.

Major General Ken Hara, the Adjutant General for the State of Hawaii, Department of Defense, provided a State military update. Major General Hara provided the statistics for National Guard members and their ability to respond to deployments. Major General Hara also serves as the Director of the Hawaii Emergency Management Agency, where he oversees the training and readiness of 5,500 soldiers and airmen of the Hawaii National Guard. As the Homeland Security Adviser to the Governor, Major General Hara highlighted the fast response time capabilities of the National Guard. Major General Hara further stated that recent swift activations to assist with natural disasters and the State's ongoing response to the COVID-19 pandemic are a credit to the personnel.

Other topics discussed included a cultural and conservation discussion about the University of Hawaii's work on Oahu Army installations and the status of construction of Drydock 5 at the Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to attend this informative webinar. Please let me know if you have any questions.

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cc: David Raatz, Deputy Director of Council Services