

Pentagon asks to double Pacific budget as top admiral says US must prepare to “fight” China

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The US military has asked Congress to double its budget in the Pacific as part of an unprecedented military buildup aimed at China.

The Pentagon submitted the request as part of its so-called “Pacific Deterrence Initiative” centered around fielding a “network of precision-strike missiles” in Taiwan and Japan targeting China, with the capability to “sustain combat operations for extended periods.”

In testimony before the Senate Armed Services Committee on Tuesday, Navy Adm. Philip Davidson, head of the Indo-Pacific Command, made it clear that the military buildup is aimed not only at threatening China but in fighting a war.

“We absolutely must be prepared to fight and win should competition turn to conflict,” Davidson said.

In a striking statement of the imminence of a conflict between two of the world’s leading nuclear powers, Davidson made clear that the timetable for a major conflict is not in decades, but in years.

“I worry that they’re accelerating their ambitions to supplant the United States and our leadership role in the rules-based international order, which they’ve long said that they want to do that by 2050. I’m worried about them moving that target closer,” he continued. “Taiwan is clearly one of their ambitions before then. And I think the threat is manifest during this decade, in fact, in the next six years.”

Last week, Davidson echoed his remarks at the American Enterprise Institute, where the admiral stressed that “the period between now and 2026, this decade, is the time horizon in which China is positioned to achieve overmatch in its capability, and when Beijing could, ‘could,’ widely choose to forcibly change the status quo in the region.”

Secretary Blinken State Antony singled out China as the singular US adversary. “Several countries present us with serious challenges,” he said, “including Russia, Iran, North Korea... but the challenge posed by China is different. China is the only country with the economic, diplomatic, military and technological power to challenge the United States.”

The Pentagon’s plans for a military buildup in the Pacific make clear the content of Blinken’s words. The response of the United States to China’s growing economic weight is the threat of military aggression.

The US missile buildup in the Pacific follows Washington’s withdrawal from the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) treaty, the most significant nuclear arms reduction treaty of the 20th century.

“The INF treaty unnecessarily constrained the United States,” Senator Jim Risch, the ranking Republican member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, told *Nikkei*.

While the INF treaty was signed with the Soviet Union and applied to Russia, the primary target of the US in withdrawing from the treaty was China.

With the Pentagon’s “Pacific Defense Initiative,” it is clear what the withdrawal will look like in practice: the planned deployment of missiles within just minutes of flight time to China’s major coastal cities, placing the US and China on a hair trigger for war.

Risch told *Nikkei* that the deployment of intermediate-range missiles in the Indo-Pacific “is a great and increasingly necessary area of discussion for the United States and Japan to explore.”

This move is both insane and criminal. Japan, the only country in which nuclear weapons were ever used in wartime, would be used as an unsinkable aircraft

carrier in a missile standoff between the world's two most powerful military powers. If the missiles were ever used for their intended purposes, the collateral damage would be Japanese lives.

On Tuesday, a novel titled, *2034: A Novel of the Next World War*, portraying the buildup to a war between the United States and China, went on sale. It was co-authored by Adm. James Stavridis (ret.), former supreme allied commander of NATO, and former Marine Special Operations Officer Elliot Ackerman.

Commenting on the book, Stavridis observed, "The novel lays out a pretty plausible ladder of escalation that goes from a conventional attack to a second conventional attack to a third conventional attack to America deciding to pull a tactical nuclear weapon and use it... That's more real [a prospect] than I wish it were."



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