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Indo-Pacific Commander to visit Palau this week

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Admiral John Aquilino, the 26th Commander of the United States Indo-Pacific Command
Admiral John Aquilino, the 26th Commander of the United States Indo-Pacific Command, the United States’ oldest and largest combatant command, will be visiting Palau for 6 hours this Wednesday, February 23rd, reported National Security Coordinator Jennifer Anson.

Admiral Aquilino will first meet with President Surangel Whipps Jr. and Palau’s leadership and afterward, will visit areas of interest including Malakal Port, Department of Maritime Law Enforcement (DMLE), Civic Action Team (CAT), and the Airport Aircraft Rescue & Firefighting (AARF).

He will also be visiting the US plane crash site to lay a wreath.

His visit follows a series of visits from high-level US military leaders beginning in 2020, with the visit of the US Secretary of Defense Mark Esper, and in December last year of Rear Admiral Nicholson, the Joint Region Marianas Commander.

US military presence in Palau has been growing for the last two years, beginning with the construction of the US Aerial Domain Awareness (ADA) radar and radio towers, and the building up of joint-use facilities such as the Angaur airfield, Angaur dock, and Ngatpang shooting range.

The U.S. Indo-Pacific Strategy emphasizes the Pacific in order to counter what it says is China’s “coercion and aggression” in the region.