IRON DOME PACIFIC
Strategic Concept Overview

A Theater-Wide Strategy for Missile Denial, Force Preservation, and Decisive Stability in the Western Pacific

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December 2026

Purpose and Reader Guidance

This **Strategic Concept Overview** presents the core logic, campaign implications, and validation framework of **Iron Dome Pacific (IDP)**, a theater-wide denial and missile defense doctrine designed for the Western Pacific. It is written for senior decision-makers, planners, and policy staff who require a complete understanding of the doctrine **without reading the full doctrinal paper**.

This overview is not a chapter-by-chapter summary. It preserves the doctrine's spine:

- the **repeated failure pattern** in current war plans,
- the **governing constraint** (magazine depth and regeneration),
- the **system solution** (six reinforcing pillars),
- the **campaign trajectory shift**, and
- the **validation and decision logic** required to adopt, modify, or reject the doctrine based on evidence.

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1. The Strategic Problem

The Western Pacific is the most missile-dense, time-compressed operating environment on earth. In this theater, the decisive contest is increasingly determined not by the quality of individual platforms, but by whether the joint and combined force can remain **functional under massed missile attack** long enough to sustain combat power.

Across multiple wargames and planning efforts examining high-intensity conflict in the **2026–2028** timeframe, a repeated failure pattern emerges:

1. **Forward bases are functionally suppressed** in the opening phase (runways denied, fuel and munitions flow disrupted, command continuity degraded, sortie generation collapses intermittently or decisively).
2. **Fleet air and missile defenses are saturated** under repeated raids.
3. **Defensive missile inventories deplete rapidly**, producing "magazine bankruptcy", a condition where forces may still maneuver but can no longer sustain defense at required levels.

4. **Logistics and regeneration nodes are disrupted** (ports, fuel farms, depots, repair and handling capacity), preventing rapid recovery.
5. Even when the United States ultimately prevails, the outcome is frequently **pyrrhic**, success at catastrophic cost that undermines long-term deterrence, global readiness, alliance confidence, and strategic stability.

This is not primarily a failure of tactics, training, or technology. It is the predictable outcome of a structural mismatch: **the expected volume and tempo of missile warfare exceeds the force's ability to endure and regenerate.**

The central strategic vulnerability is therefore not simply "missiles are dangerous." It is that a peer adversary can plausibly pursue victory (or coercive leverage) through two converging mechanisms:

- **Early functional suppression** of critical nodes (bases, command, sustainment)
- **Rapid magazine exhaustion** of fleet and theater defenses

If either mechanism succeeds in the opening phase, the campaign's trajectory can become irrecoverable, not because the United States lacks capability, but because capability becomes **non-expressible** under sustained depletion and disrupted regeneration.

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2. The Governing Insight

Magazine depth and regeneration are now strategic infrastructure.

In a missile-dense theater, combat power is no longer best measured only by platforms (carrier strike groups, squadrons, combatants). Those still matter, but they increasingly serve as delivery and control mechanisms for the commodity that governs endurance: **missiles and the capacity to replace them.**

A force can be highly trained, technologically superior, and tactically innovative, and still be strategically brittle if:

- it cannot sustain missile expenditure rates under repeated raids,
- it cannot reload or restore magazines at operational tempo,
- it cannot preserve base functionality and throughput after strike days, and
- it cannot regenerate combat power inside the campaign.

In this environment:

- **Missile defense is an inventory problem**, not simply a capability problem. The decisive question is not "can we intercept?" but "how long can we keep intercepting at scale?"
- **Offense is also an inventory problem.** Scarcity forces rationing, hesitation, and "portfolio management" behavior that cedes initiative during the attacker's decisive timeline.
- **Regeneration determines outcomes.** The campaign becomes a competition of depletion and restoration cycles. The side that restores combat power faster than it depletes gains compounding advantage.

This yields the doctrine's core premise:

A force that cannot be suppressed or exhausted in the opening phase denies the adversary a rapid fait accompli and shifts the campaign from shock to endurance, where U.S. and allied advantages can compound over time.

This premise is deliberately **testable**. If it is false under realistic constraints and adversary adaptation, the doctrine should be modified or rejected.

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3. What Iron Dome Pacific Is

Iron Dome Pacific (IDP) is a theater-wide denial and missile defense doctrine designed to ensure that U.S. and allied forces in the Western Pacific:

- remain operational through the opening phase of conflict,
- can sustain defense and strike across campaign timelines, and
- can regenerate combat power under sustained attack faster than the adversary can impose depletion.

IDP is a **doctrinal overlay**, not a replacement for existing modernization or force structure. It strengthens the value of carriers, submarines, fifth and sixth-generation airpower, space-based sensing, and advanced C2 by ensuring those capabilities can survive the opening phase and remain relevant beyond it.

The doctrine's organizing logic is simple:

1. **Build theater magazines that do not collapse early.**
2. **Make fixed bases operationally continuous under repeated strike.**

3. **Expand fleet-accessible missile depth on near-term timelines.**
4. **Treat defense as endurance and time production, not perfection.**
5. **Make sustainment and reload a wartime combat system.**
6. **Distribute resilience across allies to dilute salvos and preserve decision space.**

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4. What Iron Dome Pacific Is Not

Iron Dome Pacific is deliberately bounded. It is not:

- **A promise of perfect defense.** The doctrine assumes leakage, friction, and loss. It is designed to prevent catastrophic collapse, not eliminate risk.
- **A first-strike doctrine.** IDP is a posture and endurance doctrine intended to deny early coercion and preserve decision space, not mandate preemption.
- **A substitute for shipbuilding or advanced platforms.** It complements long-term modernization by correcting a near-term decisive constraint: magazine depth and regeneration.
- **A single program or platform.** It is an integrated architecture spanning industry, bases, fleets, sustainment systems, and coalition resilience.
- **An escalation strategy.** It increases stability by reducing incentives for panic escalation driven by fear of early paralysis.

These boundaries are critical to credibility and coalition compatibility.

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5. The Iron Dome Pacific System

Iron Dome Pacific functions as a theater system in which each element reinforces the others. Its decisive output is **time under continuity**, time in which the force remains operational, retains freedom of action, and can bring industrial and coalition advantages to bear.

The doctrine is organized into six reinforcing pillars.

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6. The Six Pillars

Pillar I - Industrial Magazine Supremacy

Strategic claim: In missile-intensive war, industrial throughput and stockpile depth are combat power.

Iron Dome Pacific begins with the enabling condition for all other measures: **missile depth that is not exhausted on opening-week timelines**, and regeneration capacity that is credible at campaign tempo.

Key doctrinal requirements:

- Treat missiles, especially theater-relevant defensive interceptors and long-range strike weapons, as **strategic infrastructure**, comparable to shipbuilding and basing.
- Shift from episodic procurement to **sustained industrial throughput** and stable supplier networks.
- Design stockpiles for **repeated raids** and multi-week campaigns rather than peacetime consumption assumptions.
- Use standardization where feasible to accelerate production, simplify sustainment, and reduce "unique bottlenecks" under stress.

A core doctrinal warning is explicit:

- **Surge is not a plan.** If the opening phase is decisive and front-loaded, production that accelerates after hostilities begin cannot retroactively recover lost time, lost platforms, or lost decision space.

Industrial Magazine Supremacy is not argued as escalation. It is argued as stability:

- **Scarcity is destabilizing.** Scarcity creates "use it or lose it" pressures, accelerates rationing behavior, and incentivizes rapid escalation dynamics driven by fear of depletion.
- **Abundance enables restraint.** When leaders believe the force can endure, they retain escalation control and avoid panic decision traps.

Pillar II - Fixed Base Transformation

Guam and Okinawa as Defended, Regenerable Warfighting Nodes

Strategic claim: In the Western Pacific, bases are capital assets. Base continuity is a campaign determinant.

Iron Dome Pacific reframes Guam and Okinawa as “unsinkable strike groups” in functional terms: strategic nodes whose survivability must be treated as a warfighting requirement.

The objective is not invulnerability. The objective is **operational continuity under repeated attack**, measured by:

- sustained sortie generation,
- continuity of ISR and command contribution,
- survivable fueling/arming/maintenance throughput,
- sustained defensive engagement operations, and
- repeatable recovery after strike days.

Key doctrinal requirements:

- Build **endurance-based missile defense** for these nodes, defense that can sustain repeated engagement cycles without collapse.
- Pair active defense with passive resilience: dispersal, redundancy, deception/signature management, hardened mission-critical functions, and rapid recovery capacity.
- Avoid single points of failure. Defensive architecture must be distributed and degrade gracefully under partial loss.
- Design networks to function under degraded connectivity; a defense that requires perfect communications is brittle.

A central political and coalition point is explicit:

- Fixed base transformation is designed to be **defensive-first** and politically sustainable, particularly in sensitive locations such as Okinawa. Enhanced defense and survivability measures are stabilizing, not escalatory.

Pillar III - Distributed Arsenal Fleet

Rapid Theater Magazine Expansion on Near-Term Timelines

Strategic claim: The United States cannot build its way out of missile exhaustion on current shipbuilding timelines. Near-term magazine depth must be increased faster than new combatants can arrive.

Iron Dome Pacific establishes a Distributed Arsenal Fleet: minimally manned, missile-dense maritime platforms derived from commercial hulls and integrated into joint and naval fires architecture.

These platforms are not substitutes for destroyers, carriers, or submarines. They are **floating missile infrastructure**, a way to convert industrial missile output into deployable theater magazines **without waiting decades**.

Key doctrinal requirements:

- Prioritize capacity, endurance, and integration over elegance and multi-mission design.
- Achieve survivability through distribution and standoff employment within broader defense envelopes, not by sending arsenal ships into forward-edge contested waters.
- Use allied industrial capacity where necessary to convert hulls at scale and speed; treat this as a doctrine feature, not a workaround.

The decisive campaign effect is clear:

- Arsenal capacity prevents "magazine bankruptcy" from becoming a predictable campaign-ending event.

Pillar IV - Defensive Depth and Endurance

From Intercept Rates to Operational Continuity

Strategic claim: In a sustained salvo environment, the primary product of defense is **time**, not perfection.

Iron Dome Pacific shifts defensive evaluation away from single-exchange performance metrics and toward endurance outcomes:

- How long can defensive coverage be sustained under repeated raids?
- Do forward bases remain operationally continuous through strike days?
- Do fleet formations maintain defensive coherence without collapsing into depletion-driven conservatism?
- Does the force retain command continuity under degraded networks?

Key doctrinal requirements:

- Treat saturation as a strategy, not an anomaly. Defensive design must assume repeated raids, mixed trajectories, degraded information, and imperfect allocation.
- Manage defense as a finite warfighting reserve; inventory discipline is a strategic necessity.
- Design for "fight hurt" conditions, tolerate leakage without catastrophic discontinuity in operational output.
- Integrate sea- and land-based defenses so that fixed nodes absorb defensive demand that would otherwise burn down fleet magazines.

Under this doctrine, defensive success is defined as:

No catastrophic collapse of operational continuity in the opening phase, and sustained campaign relevance into the first month.

Pillar V - Sustainment, Reload, and Regeneration

Regeneration as a Frontline Combat System

Strategic claim: Survivability without regeneration only delays defeat.

In the Western Pacific, sustainment is not a rear-area function. It is a frontline determinant. A peer adversary does not need to destroy the force to defeat it; it can pursue operational paralysis by disrupting the ability to refuel, rearm, repair, and restore throughput.

Key doctrinal requirements:

- Treat sustainment nodes as capital assets whose survivability and redundancy are warfighting requirements.
- Design throughput to degrade gracefully rather than collapse from a single suppression event.
- Prioritize rapid missile rearm as a defining constraint of modern naval warfare; a force without reload capacity effectively fights a "single-magazine war."
- Establish forward regeneration nodes (tempo forward, endurance in depth) that allow combat power to cycle back into the fight without extended withdrawals.
- Pre-position not just stockpiles but the means to move, handle, and apply them under wartime disruption, "Day Zero readiness" is deterrence.

Regeneration must be measured by outputs:

- time to restore missile readiness,
- ship turnaround rates under attack,
- continuity of fuel and munition throughput under disruption, and
- the net “return-to-fight rate” relative to consumption.

Pillar VI - Allied Distributed Resilience

Modularity Over Uniformity

Strategic claim: Coalition resilience is a force multiplier precisely because it can be distributed, modular, and politically scalable.

The Western Pacific is a coalition theater. Doctrine that requires uniform allied participation, centralized command, or perfect political alignment is brittle. Iron Dome Pacific is designed for a federated reality: interoperable where feasible, coordinated where necessary, sovereign where politically required.

Key doctrinal requirements:

- Treat allied participation as modular building blocks: defensive capacity, dispersal options, sustainment access, distributed stockpiles, warning and continuity measures.
- Use distributed resilience to increase targeting friction and dilute salvos; the attacker must strike more nodes, with more missiles, for less suppression effect.
- Emphasize defensive-first posture as politically sustainable and stabilizing.
- Recognize that partial participation can have disproportionate effects by complicating the attacker’s strike economy and undermining rapid timelines.

Coalition resilience is both operational and political:

- It reduces coercive leverage against any single ally.
- It increases decision space during crisis.
- It strengthens legitimacy and access over time.

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7. Campaign Effects

How Iron Dome Pacific Changes the Trajectory of War

Iron Dome Pacific is designed to shift the campaign away from the repeated brittle trajectory and toward durable denial.

The Opening Week: Denying Shock Advantage

Under IDP, the opening phase becomes survivable, meaning:

- Forward bases remain operationally continuous beyond initial salvos (not undamaged, but functional).
- Fleet defensive coherence persists beyond the first raid cycle, reducing forced conservatism and catastrophic tradeoffs.
- Offensive action is sustained long enough to disrupt invasion timelines and impose unfavorable exchange ratios.
- The attacker's confidence in rapid fait accompli collapses as early suppression fails to produce paralysis.

The First Month: Endurance, Regeneration, and Tempo

The first month is where campaigns diverge. Under IDP:

- Defensive endurance remains campaign-relevant under repeated raids.
- Regeneration occurs inside the campaign rather than after it, preventing a predictable downward trend into operational irrelevance.
- Fleet and theater missile depth, distributed across sea and land, prevents defensive bankruptcy from becoming inevitable.
- Commanders retain freedom of action because scarcity-driven rationing behavior is reduced.

Over time, the attacker's strike economy worsens:

- more missiles are required to achieve less functional suppression,
- targeting becomes less efficient as resilience and distribution increase uncertainty,
- and rapid timelines become unattainable.

Political Decision Space: Stability Through Continuity

Strategic stability is strengthened because:

- catastrophic early loss is less likely to create panic escalation traps,
- coalition cohesion is less likely to fracture under shock, and
- leaders gain time to deliberate, coordinate, and manage escalation under continuity rather than collapse.

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8. Deterrence and Strategic Stability

Iron Dome Pacific strengthens deterrence primarily by **denial**, not punishment.

The deterrent message is simple and credible:

- **Early suppression will not decide the war.**
- **The defender cannot be exhausted on predictable timelines.**
- **A short, controllable war is not plausible.**

This collapses the attacker's timeline advantage in four ways:

1. Opening salvos become costly exchanges rather than decisive blows.
2. Defensive collapse becomes unpredictable, undermining planning confidence.
3. The attacker must spend more for less effect as targeting friction increases.
4. Political coercion through early shock becomes less reliable as continuity persists.

IDP also strengthens crisis stability by reducing "use it or lose it" pressures. When leaders believe endurance is credible, they can choose deliberate escalation control rather than racing perceived collapse.

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9. Risks and Tradeoffs

Iron Dome Pacific is not risk-free. Its credibility depends on confronting tradeoffs directly.

Key risks include:

- **Industrial and budget prioritization risk:** sustained missile throughput and hardened resilience measures are resource-intensive and require portfolio discipline.
- **Concentration risk:** large magazines create attractive targets unless distribution and graceful degradation are designed in from the start.

- **Adversary adaptation:** the attacker will shift targeting toward regeneration nodes, networks, and political cohesion mechanisms.
- **Institutional execution risk:** cross-domain doctrine can fragment into disconnected initiatives without a single integrating authority.

The doctrine's central judgment is disciplined:

The managed risks of building endurance are preferable to the repeatedly demonstrated risk of entering conflict magazine-insolvent and regeneration-brittle.

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10. Validation and Decision Logic

Depletion-Based Wargaming as a Requirement

Iron Dome Pacific is offered as falsifiable doctrine. Validation is not optional.

All serious tests must be:

- **Depletion-first:** finite magazines must be allowed to run dry; inventory is not a "background assumption."
- **Campaign-length:** multi-week timelines where outcomes diverge based on regeneration performance.
- **Contested logistics:** resupply and reload under attack, with realistic throughput constraints.
- **Adaptive opposition:** the adversary shifts tactics, targeting, and domain emphasis when early approaches fail.

Validation must produce decision-grade measures:

- base operational continuity (sortie generation persistence, downtime events, recovery time),
- fleet defensive endurance (time to depletion thresholds, onset/avoidance of magazine bankruptcy),
- depletion curves and stockout timelines,
- regeneration performance under attack (time-to-restore combat relevance),
- sustained campaign tempo (defensive and offensive), and
- adversary timeline disruption (whether rapid fait accompli remains viable).

Decision thresholds should be explicit:

- **Adopt** if early suppression and magazine bankruptcy are no longer reliable paths to decision under repeated runs and adaptation.
- **Modify** if outcomes improve materially but specific bottlenecks remain decisive and correctable.
- **Reject** if scaling fails to break the failure mode under realistic constraints.

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11. Governance and Authority

Integrated Doctrine Requires Integrated Ownership

Iron Dome Pacific cannot be implemented as a loose collection of initiatives. Its effectiveness depends on coherence across:

- industrial output,
- forward base endurance,
- fleet magazines,
- regeneration capacity, and
- coalition participation.

The doctrine therefore requires a single integrating authority empowered to:

- direct and enforce depletion-based validation,
- adjudicate tradeoffs across portfolios,
- prevent incremental dilution that fails to change depletion dynamics, and
- manage readiness using endurance metrics (time-to-depletion, time-to-regeneration, continuity under strike).

Without explicit ownership and authority, the predictable institutional failure is fragmentation: each stakeholder optimizes a piece, while the overall system remains brittle.

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12. Conclusion

Iron Dome Pacific is a doctrine of endurance-based denial designed for the decisive conditions of the Western Pacific: massed salvos, time compression, contested logistics, degraded networks, and front-loaded missile expenditure.

It does not promise perfect defense or low losses. It offers a narrower, more credible outcome:

- **prevent early functional suppression**,
- **prevent magazine bankruptcy**, and
- **sustain combat relevance long enough** for U.S. and allied advantages to compound.

In a missile-dominated era, wars are increasingly decided by who **runs out of missiles and regeneration capacity last**, not merely by who fields the most advanced platforms. Iron Dome Pacific responds to that reality with a theater-wide posture designed to make early coercion fail, preserve decision space, and produce decisive stability through continuity.

If the doctrine's central claim is valid, it should be adopted as formal theater posture. If it is not, it should be rejected or refined based on evidence. What cannot be justified in a missile-endurance era is reliance on brittle assumptions, because in the Western Pacific, untested assumptions are operational risk, and operational risk becomes strategic cost.