



U.S.-CHINA ECONOMIC AND SECURITY
REVIEW COMMISSION

Hearing on “China’s Active Defense Strategy and its Regional Impact”

Opening Statement of Commissioner Carolyn Bartholomew

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Washington, DC

Thank you, Chairman Reinsch. Today’s hearing will examine “*China’s Active Defense Strategy and the Implications for East Asia.*” The topic is particularly timely.

Just prior to the Secretary of Defense Gates’ recent trip Beijing, the Commander of U.S. Pacific Forces, Admiral Willard, noted that China will soon field an antiship ballistic missile capable of targeting U.S. aircraft carriers up to a thousand miles off of China’s coast. A few days later, while Secretary Gates was in Beijing, the Chinese military flight tested its first stealth fighter, allowing news of the test to “leak” out to the internet.

These developments, along with others the Commission has described in recent years, appear to be manifestations of a concerted effort to develop capabilities that directly counter the U.S. military. Frequently referred to in the United States as an “anti-access strategy” intended to keep U.S. forces at bay, this strategy is being operationalized across all domains of war—land, sea, air, space, and cyberspace. More importantly, the PLA is attempting *to integrate and synergize* its capacities in these various domains in order to maximize its capabilities, similar in effect to how the U.S. military conducts joint operations.

The PLA is not simply developing and integrating traditional military capabilities, but is also experimenting with less traditional, but very effective, means. Methods such as offensive cyber operations and counterspace operations act as force multipliers for the PLA’s growing anti-access capabilities. U.S. military operations in the Western Pacific are heavily dependent upon the flow of information, be it through space-based, aerial, or terrestrial systems. We should all take note of Secretary Gates’ comments regarding China’s advances in cyber- and anti-satellite warfare, when he noted that those advances pose a “potential challenge to the ability of [U.S.] forces to operate and communicate in this part of the Pacific.”

China’s growing anti-access capabilities do not just pose potential problems for the United States. Regional states, many of them long-time U.S. friends and allies, are also affected. Military means are often fungible, and the line between offense and defense is blurry at best. In many ways, China’s anti-access strategy more accurately should be referred to as an “area control strategy.” This difference is not lost on regional states. In recent months, Japan has announced a realignment of its forces in order to better observe and react to China’s military

developments, especially around Japan's southernmost islands. In Southeast Asia, a nascent maritime arms race is occurring, primarily driven by China's growing capabilities.

Today we will focus on these and other questions.

Before I turn to my co-Chair for the hearing, Commissioner Wortzel, to deliver his remarks, I want to thank Congressman Wittman from Virginia, who has taken time out of his busy schedule to join us here today. I'd also note that Senator Inouye from Hawaii has submitted written testimony for this hearing, which will be posted on our website shortly. Also, I'd like to thank recently retired Lieutenant General Deptula, who we'll introduce later today, for his years of military service and to the rest of our witnesses for all of their time and dedication.