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SUBJECT: China's Emergent Military Aerospace and Commercial Aviation Capabilities

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International Affairs

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Commissioner Blumenthal, Commissioner Videnieks, and members of the Commission, thank you for your invitation to testify and present the views of the Department of the Air Force on the progress of China and its attempt to field a modern air force. I appreciate the opportunity to discuss the US Air Force relationships with China and Taiwan and our strategy and efforts to strengthen relationships that to enhance regional security.

In my capacity as Deputy Under Secretary of the Air Force, International Affairs, I am charged with leading US Air Force efforts to build Air Force-to-Air Force relationships, partnerships, and partnership capacity, including mutually beneficial, interoperable air and space capabilities. I am responsible for developing and implementing pol-mil policy that is consistent with US government objectives and policy goals, articulated in the USAF Global Partnership Strategy that we write, as well as Interagency coordination, development and oversight of US Air Force International Affairs Specialists and the USAF attaché program. Additionally, my organization manages foreign disclosure and export control for the Air Force. Of particular interest to this Commission, I am responsible for the US Air Force programs that assist Taiwan in maintaining a sufficient self-defense capability, consistent with the Taiwan Relations Act.

I do have direct, significant experience in engaging with China that predates my current assignment. Thirteen years ago, as Chief of the Asia-Pacific Division on The Joint Staff, I had a key role in authoring and negotiating the US-PRC Military Maritime Consultative Agreement. As head of the US delegation to Tension Reduction Subcommittee of the Four Party Talks (US-ROK-PRC-DPRK) in Geneva in the late '90s, I found the Chinese delegation to be generally positive and work to produce progress in achieving our goal of lessening tensions on the Korean Peninsula.

Among our goals in engaging with China is to develop greater mutual understanding which, in turn, helps to build mutual trust, through a continuous process of dialogue aimed at

improving communications to reduce the risk of miscalculation and to promote regional security. A recent experience is relevant. In March of this year, I was the US representative to celebrations marking the 80th anniversary of the Chilean Air Force. The PRC representative was a PLA Air Force Lieutenant General. In our discussions on the side-bars of the related events, we agreed that both nations need more dialogue and senior leader engagement, and that such talks would be mutually beneficial. I emphasized the need for greater transparency, in terms of military capabilities, budget, and intentions on the part of China. We are hopeful that China will join us in seeking future senior-level engagement opportunities.

Undoubtedly, China is determined to increase its military capabilities across the board, including aerospace and ballistic missile forces. While the PRC military continues to lag US forces from a technology standpoint, they are rapidly improving their long-range air defense systems, electronic warfare, computer network attack efforts, and offensive strike capabilities. Additionally, China is improving its training regimen, to better utilize the technology of their forces now in the field. The US must stay ahead of the game, and maintain our ability to deter or, if necessary, defeat an attack.

Just as we build relationships with our international partners, China, too, has built relationships. Many of these affiliations are commercial in nature, such as in Africa, and some have both a commercial and security component to them, such as with Iran. In some cases, while beneficial from a financial standpoint, these relationships are counter-productive to our joint security interests. I think it is interesting to note and ponder the fact that South America is the largest recipient of Chinese overseas investment.

In the Asia-Pacific region, while some might argue that we have few common goals, I believe that it is in the best interests of both the United States and China to ensure an environment of security and stability that fosters economic and social development.

US Priorities, Goals, and Challenges

The stated policy of the United States is to create a positive, cooperative, and comprehensive relationship with China, capable of addressing common global challenges and advocating shared interests.

In the military realm, we wish to work with the PRC to develop a stable and reliable military-to military relationship—a relationship which upholds the values of freedom of commercial/military movement, addresses common security challenges such as terrorism, piracy, and proliferation, and fosters stability in the region.

There are multiple challenges that we must face before arriving at this vision. Today, China's growing presence and influence in regional/global economic and security affairs has not been matched with an increasing transparency about the pace, scope, and ultimate aims of its military modernization programs. This creates the potential for misunderstanding of China's strategic intentions, not just with the US but with the region as a whole. Cooperation is further hampered by the "on again/off again" cycle that has characterized the relationship in recent years.

The recent issuance of the Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) also highlighted some US priorities as they relate to the region. The continued process of globalization and the rise of non-state actors have ushered in a complex and uncertain security landscape. Other states, including China and India, are rising to greater prominence on the world stage and beginning to shape a changing international system. The U.S. must continue to work with allies and partners to ensure and promote stability, prosperity, universal values, and an international order that promotes integrated cooperative action to address regional security concerns. Close collaboration with allies and partners in the region is required to avert crises and respond when action is required. A constructive relationship with China would do much in ensuring a stable, prosperous East Asia.

In regard to our other allies and partners, the U.S. has a lengthy history of involvement in the Asia-Pacific region, and we seek to continue to strengthen our existing partnerships and alliances in the Pacific. Our current presence in Asia rests firmly on our historical treaty alliances and other agreements with countries in the region. We reaffirm the U.S. commitment

to our allies through our forward-stationed and deployed forces that serve an important contribution to regional security. We are working to increase partner participation in security cooperation frameworks within the region in order to increase trust and transparency and reduce the risk of conflict. The U.S. remains committed to assisting Japan and the Republic of Korea in deterring threats and aggression, as we adapt our defense presence to better ensure regional stability. This includes the advancement of the Republic of Korea's lead role in the combined defense of its territory, the continued implementation of the Realignment Roadmap with Japan, and the institution of Guam as a regional hub for security activities in the Western Pacific. We also seek to uphold our commitments as outlined in the Taiwan Relations Act (TRA). In addition, we endeavor to build the capacity of partners to respond to humanitarian crises and natural disasters in the region.

China, in particular, is a growing regional and global economic and security power, and has influenced much of the evolving strategic landscape of East Asia. China's military has grown in terms of both capabilities and mission scope as the country has increasingly pursued regional and global interests. The United States welcomes a strong, prosperous, and successful China that plays a greater, more productive global role, and welcomes the benefits that can be obtained through greater cooperation between our two countries. The U.S. and China should work to maintain open channels of communication in order to expand these areas where we can cooperate and manage differences that are present in any complex and multilevel bilateral relationship.

We have a strong interest in ensuring a stable cross-Strait relationship. Here, US policy with respect to Taiwan has been consistent and clear, based on our one-China policy, the three Joint US-China Communiqués and the Taiwan Relations Act. We welcome the relaxed tensions and the expanded program of cross-Strait exchanges, to include trade, tourism, and other economic links. By fulfilling our commitments as outlined in the TRA, we ensure that Taiwan can remain strong and confident, free from threats or intimidation, to pursue further engagement and peaceful dialogue with the PRC.

China's Military Modernization and Force Projection

A comprehensive modernization effort that began in the early nineties has transformed China's military into a capable force with a mix of advanced weapon systems and numerical superiority over their neighbors, but the People's Liberation Army Air Force (PLAAF) remains a regional air force with a limited capability to project airpower more than a few hundred nautical miles off China's coast. However, China does not rely solely on airpower to project influence in the near-abroad. They have developed a broad range of technologies as part of what appears to be a larger anti-access/area-denial strategy centered on asymmetric capabilities.

Ballistic missiles are China's primary prompt, long-range offensive weapon. They have one of the most active development programs in the world and the largest deployed conventional ballistic missile force of any nation. More than 1,000 short- and intermediate-range missiles with a variety of ranges, payloads and capabilities are currently based in southeastern China. Specialized warheads include runway penetrators, anti-radar seekers, and anti-ship payloads designed to threaten large naval vessels such as aircraft carriers. Taken together, ballistic missiles and cruise missiles provide China with a dual-pronged capability to strike almost any regional target, to include airfields, ports, ships, military bases, logistics nodes, command and control facilities and industrial/economic centers.

Chinese military writings also reflect a comprehensive understanding of information operations and their importance in modern conflict. Toward these ends, China is building its space, counterspace and electronic warfare capabilities. China is developing a large and diverse array of jammers and anti-satellite weapons provide the capability to deny situational awareness to foreign military personnel, commanders and civilian leaders. Another growing concern is cyber warfare, threatening the integrity of military and civilian information systems around the world in ways still not entirely understood.

China has not ignored self-defense while developing its regional force projection capabilities and has built one of the world's most robust integrated air defense systems. China's large numbers of fourth generation fighters and tightly integrated web of advanced sensors and air defense weapons pose a difficult challenge for even the most modern air forces in the region.

Most current PLAAF missions are satisfied by these regional capabilities, but emerging requirements to support what PRC President Hu termed “New Historic Missions”, such as protecting China’s interests worldwide, is causing the PLAAF to develop its role as an expeditionary air force. To achieve a force projection capability on a wider scale, the PLAAF will need to develop its strategic airlift, long-range air-to-air refueling and C4ISR capabilities to support expeditionary operations. The ongoing People’s Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) effort to develop an aircraft carrier will also aid China in realizing these goals.

China’s Global Presence

As an emerging power, China’s global presence and engagement have increased significantly over the past two decades, a fact with significant political, economic and military ramifications for the international environment.

Politically, China has moved from a state operating somewhat outside the international system to a full and active participant in global institutions and a generally constructive player. Rarely, though, and only with reluctance, will China accept the mantle of leadership on the global stage. China’s foreign policy goals, like those of all countries, remain designed to further its national interests, but Beijing has become more willing to make some sacrifices in order to cast itself as a responsible international actor.

With the world’s third-largest economy, China’s influence on the global economy is enormous. China has some level of economic engagement with virtually every country in the world. Additionally, China was able to avoid the worst of the recent global financial crisis and emerged from it with even greater economic power than before. Beijing is also claiming a bigger voice in global economic forums, such as the Group of 20, and its influence will only grow as China’s economy continues to expand. China’s increasing need to import raw materials, especially oil, is driving much of its economic engagement with foreign countries and is affecting prices and product availability worldwide. Beijing’s efforts to expand its influence in Africa, South America and the Middle East are due in large part to the need to maintain access to markets and resources. As the key sea lane of commerce, the significance of the Strait of Malacca, for example, has commensurately increased.

On the military front, the frequency and scope of People's Liberation Army (PLA) interactions with foreign militaries have expanded since 2002 as well. Through global military engagement, China seeks to enhance its power by cultivating foreign relationships, bolstering its international image and assuaging the concerns of countries wary of China's rise. The PLA sends more than 100 delegations a year abroad and maintains a regular presence with approximately 100 countries. Their participation in bilateral and multilateral exercises and operations is increasing as well. The PLA currently contributes troops to 18 United Nations peacekeeping operations, and its involvement with international humanitarian and disaster relief efforts, such as Haiti, is growing. The PLAN is maintaining a three-ship contingent off the Horn of Africa to help combat piracy as well. China's burgeoning indigenous defense industry allows Beijing to generate revenue and enhance foreign relationships via arms sales. While the overall trend for the past 30 years has seen a decline in the use of arms sales as a tool for PRC influence, as the quality of PRC products and technologies improves, we may see these trends reverse.

Conclusion

The US Air Force continues to seek opportunities to develop and strengthen partnerships around the world, and to enhance our long-term capabilities through security cooperation. We continue working to further relationships with more established allies through programs such as the Joint Strike Fighter, where our partners have committed \$4.5B in research and development funding. We are helping to address a chronic shortage of strategic and inter-theater airlift among partner nations and we are developing our Contingency Response Groups, which are a key component of AF support to humanitarian assistance missions such as U.S Pacific Command's PACIFIC ANGEL program. Additionally, we continue to foster partner engagement capability; Australia's commitment to fund a communications satellite in the WGS constellation is another example of the value and synergy of lasting partnerships.

The USAF's aims for our Pacific forward presence in Guam are to strengthen and further develop our Asia-Pacific alliances and partnerships to advance mutual security interests, ensure sustainable peace and security in the region, and promote allied and partner contributions to global stability. We accomplish this by maintaining a robust persistent presence of rotational

bomber, fighter and tanker aircraft enabling us to maximize opportunities to train with our partners. By modernizing our infrastructure we seek to guarantee Guam's viability well into the future. This continuous forward presence also serves as reassurance to our allies and partners in the region of America's commitment to their security, while also encouraging their enhanced security roles and facilitating regular multilateral security cooperation within the region.

In the Global Partnership Strategy, the Air Force has outlined a path to cultivate these key partnerships, nurture our global relations, and fortify our geographic access, safety and security around the world. Our strategy seeks to develop partners that are able to defend their respective territories while ensuring the development of interoperability and integration necessary for coalition operations. With more than 45,000 US Airmen assigned to PACAF/PACOM and an average of more than 2,000 deployed worldwide (to and from PACOM) every day, the Air Force remains fully engaged in this region.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to testify today on these important issues. I look forward to your questions.