The Department of Defense's Role in Long-Term Major State Competition

Testimony before the House Committee on Armed Services

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Chairman Smith and Ranking Member Thornberry, distinguished members of the Committee, it is an honor to testify before you today on the Department of Defense's role in long-term interstate competition. I will be focusing my remarks on U.S.-China competitive dynamics, and would like to commend the Committee's leadership on this issue for the past several years.

I have worked on these issues for much of my professional career, including stints in the Office of the Secretary of Defense on the China desk during the George W. Bush administration and as Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for East Asia during the Obama administration. That said, I want to be clear that these are my opinions alone and are not those of the Wilson Center, the U.S. Government, or any other organization.

I would like to make four main points:

1) The United States and China are engaged in a long-term geopolitical competition over the relative distribution of geopolitical power in the Indo-Pacific, and over the future of the liberal order that for decades has been critical to the region's stability and prosperity.

2) China seeks to establish itself as the dominant power in the Indo-Pacific, and has developed a tailored military capability designed to undermine the ability of the U.S. military to operate and project power into regions associated with key contingencies along China's periphery.

3) The Department of Defense can play a critical role in supporting U.S. geopolitical competition with China by pursuing a range of initiatives that sustain conventional deterrence, build resilience against Chinese coercion, and ensure the ability of the United States military to respond decisively in a crisis or conflict.

4) To achieve these ends, the United States should pursue a broad array of initiatives that empower U.S. allies and partners, change how we fight, build on U.S. technological advantages, update regional U.S. force posture, and make difficult choices that prioritize competition with China over other challenges around the world.

I will expand on each of these points.

The Nature of U.S.-China Competition

Competition between China and the United States involves all aspects of national power, including military, technology, politics, economics, and ideology. But the competition is taking place within the context of deep economic integration between China and the United States and, more broadly, between China and the broader global economy. Indeed, China's role as an economic engine *within* the global economy is a key source of its geopolitical power and a potential avenue for Chinese influence and coercion. At the same time, the United States is in the midst of a robust debate about the utility of engagement with Beijing and the long-term purpose of the U.S.-China relationship.

While the United States has faced other peer competitors in its history, the burgeoning competition with the People's Republic of China (PRC) will be unlike anything the United States has previously confronted.

Drivers of China's Strategy[1]

As a great power, China represents something completely new. Though wealthy, technocratic, and confident like other rising powers have been, China's unique history and the ideology of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) mean that China's approach to foreign affairs will differ significantly from those of other great powers. China's ambitions blur the lines between domestic and foreign affairs, and seek to ensure that the CCP is able to pursue its interests without restriction. Although Beijing likely views its approach as benevolent and virtuous, a Chinese-led world order would nevertheless cast aside assumptions of liberal internationalism, and embrace a system founded on calculations of raw power, coercive influence, hierarchy, and great-power spheres of influence.

China's ambitions are rooted in its strategic motivations, its ideology, and its interpretations of history. Beijing's ultimate vision for the future envisages a revitalized China that is stable and prosperous at home, dominant in the Indo-Pacific, and able to shape events around the world through an informal hierarchical system with China at the center. Chinese leaders do not describe this vision as a coercive arrangement. Rather, they paint it as a natural recognition of China as the region's rightfully dominant power founded upon close political ties and tight economic integration that benefits all.

China's approach to foreign affairs is also shaped by its understanding of history. Most important in this regard is the CCP's use of the so-called century of humiliation—the period

[1] This subsection is largely derived from Abraham M. Denmark, *Strategy in the Asian Century: Empowering U.S. Allies and Partners,* (New York: Columbia University Press, forthcoming).

from the mid–nineteenth century until 1949 during which China was repeatedly defeated militarily and forced to sign treaties that ceded territory and sovereignty—as a justification for its foreign policy behavior. According to the CCP's narrative, hostile foreign powers caused China to fall from its rightful place as Asia's dominant power, and only the CCP has the ability to stand against hostile external forces and enable China to reassume its rightful place atop Asia's geopolitical hierarchy. Thus, Chinese assertiveness over Taiwan and in the South and East China Seas can be painted by Beijing as correcting historical injustices.

Beijing is no longer the revolutionary power it was under Chairman Mao, and it does not seek to rewrite the rules of the existing order wholesale. Rather, Beijing has ambitions to carve out exceptions for itself when established rules, norms, and institutions limit its freedom of action or complicate the pursuit of its objectives. Ultimately, China is neither entirely supportive of the status quo nor entirely dismissive of it. Instead, its approach changes issue by issue, according to how Beijing defines its interests.

Beijing's orientation toward the established order is profoundly consequential as its geopolitical power expands. The scale of China's remarkable economic rise is well-known, and China today is the top source of trade for the Indo-Pacific, including critical U.S. allies and partners. These economic ties provide Beijing with significant political leverage over smaller countries, and have paved the way for increased levels of technological integration that have catalyzed concerns about the presence of Chinese-origin technologies in foreign critical infrastructure networks.

China has also translated its newfound prosperity into a highly capable and modern military force. China's announced 2019 defense budget of $175.4 billion sustains more than two decades of annual military spending increases, continuing the People's Liberation Army's (PLA) status as the world's second-best funded military in the world. Xi Jinping's report from the CCP's 19th National Congress in October 2017 established goals to complete military modernization by 2035 and fully transform the PLA into a "world-class" force by the middle of the 21st century. These objectives are especially notable because they are not tied to specific military contingencies, but rather appear to be linked with China's emerging status as a great power.

The PLA's objective is to be capable of fighting and winning "informatized local wars," or limited regional conflicts that involve precision strike capabilities enabled by real-time, data-driven Command, Control, Communications, Computer, Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (C4ISR).[2] The PLA is focused on developing the ability to force Taiwan's

[2] U.S. Department of Defense, *Annual Report to Congress: Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China 2019*, p. ii-iii.

unification with the mainland by invasion or coercion. At the same time, other missions – including the East and South China Seas, China's borders with India and North Korea, and operations further afield from China's periphery such as power projection, sea lane security, counterpiracy, peacekeeping, humanitarian assistance/disaster relief, and noncombatant evacuation operations – have grown in importance in recent years.

To achieve these objectives, it is critical for China to erode the ability of the United States to intervene in a conflict and successfully uphold U.S. security commitments in the Indo-Pacific. To these ends, the PLA seeks to develop the ability to deter, delay, and defeat efforts by the U.S. military to operate and project power into the region by degrading critical U.S. operational and technological advantages. For decades, Chinese strategists have studied how the United States goes to war and have developed a tailored set of capabilities specifically designed to neutralize the large military bases operated by the United States across the Indo-Pacific, deny the U.S. ability to operate in the air and at sea in areas near a contingency, and disrupt U.S. logistics and C4ISR.

Yet China does not seek war. If anything, China's leaders have to date demonstrated an aversion to actions that could elicit an armed conflict with the United States or its allies. Instead, China has employed so-called "gray zone" tactics that are calculated to avoid an armed conflict while still advancing China's broader political ambitions, albeit gradually. China uses civilian and paramilitary forces to supplement the PLA Navy in this approach, at times sailing through contested waters and harassing vessels from other claimants operating in international waters. China's approach to the South China Sea is an exemplar of this strategy, as Beijing has managed to build and expand new "islands" and military facilities that would enable the PLA to project power further beyond China's immediate periphery – all without firing a shot.

When considering possible military conflicts between China and the United States, the PLA brings with it inherent advantages and disadvantages. China's primary advantages are derived from its geography and the relatively limited scope of its ambitions: the contingencies that the PLA must plan against are relatively close to the Chinese homeland, giving China a "home field advantage" of having the ability to mass its forces close to the mainland while not needing to project and sustain military forces at great distances. As a result, the PLA would be able to rapidly bring a significant quantity of military assets to a conflict along its periphery.

The PLA's relatively narrow scope also provides an important advantage for Chinese military investments and force development: with a small set of contingencies and a limited set of potential adversaries, China's defense industries are able to tailor capabilities to a greater degree than their American counterparts.

Yet China's disadvantages are also manifest. While China's defense industries have certainly closed the gap with the United States in the production of high-end military capabilities, the United States continues to hold an advantage in several capabilities areas. Additionally, the PLA has not fought a foreign adversary in a sustained conflict since Vietnam in 1979, and therefore lacks practical warfighting experience. Moreover, the PLA's ongoing domestic mandate to sustain the continued rule of the CCP is likely to remain a fundamental distraction for any of China's external military ambitions.

Implications for American Strategy

The stakes of this competition are profound. A risen, ambitious, and assertive China poses a significant challenge to two interrelated, foundational elements of American strategy toward the Indo-Pacific.

First, a central theme of American strategy toward the Indo-Pacific the first decades of the Republic has been to prevent the establishment of exclusive geopolitical dominance of the region by any other power and to ensure that the Pacific Ocean remains a conduit for American power and ideas.[3] In the twentieth century, the United States fought several wars to prevent regional domination by Imperial Japan and, later, to prevent what was then perceived as the spread of international communism. This strategy has been concisely explained by Dr. Henry Kissinger: "The domination by a single power of either of Eurasia's two principal spheres—Europe or Asia—remains a good definition of strategic danger for America, cold war or no cold war."[4]

A risen China represents a significant challenge to this fundamental principle of American strategy. China's rapidly expanding economy, with the second-largest national GDP in the world, is being translated by Beijing into significant political and military power. This could have direct implications for the United States: in the military dimension, even short of conflict, the successful use of Chinese military power to undermine perceptions of American power or credibility – especially as it relates to U.S. commitments to its allies – would send a powerful signal to the region that American geopolitical leadership in the Indo-Pacific has come to an end, heralding a new era in the regional balance of power.

Yet concerns about China's expanding geopolitical power are not only based on raw calculations of GDP and military power. China is a challenge to American strategy not only

[3] Michael Green, *By More than Providence: Grand Strategy and American Power in the Asia Pacific Since 1783*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2017).

[4] Henry Kissinger, *Diplomacy* (New York: Simon and Schuster 1994) p. 813

because of its growing strategic weight, but also as a result of how Beijing seeks to utilize its growing influence.

This speaks to the second fundamental aspects of American strategy in the Indo-Pacific that is challenged by a risen China: sustaining the key attributes of the liberal regional order. Namely, after the disasters of two world wars, the United States led the world by establishing a liberal international order based on the establishment of common rules, norms, and institutions; the promotion of liberal political and economic systems; forswearing campaigns of territorial conquest; respecting national sovereignty; and encouraging the spread of democratic political systems.[5]

Although China has benefited significantly from this liberal order, many in Beijing today see that order as dominated by the West, and therefore inherently hostile to China's rise and its interests. Although China does not seek to explicitly overthrow the established order, Beijing has sought to exert greater influence within established institutions, and carve out exceptions in established rules and norms it finds to be limiting or contrary to the interests of the CCP.

Clearly, the stakes of U.S.-China geopolitical competition are high. China's rise poses significant challenges to two longstanding aspects of American strategy toward the region. Addressing these challenges will require an adroit American strategy that both prevents China from successfully establishing itself as the dominant geopolitical power in the Indo-Pacific while also sustaining the key principles that have been essential to the success of the post-war liberal regional order.

Assessing the Department of Defense

Evaluating the performance of any Department in furthering a U.S.-China competition will necessarily be incomplete, as strategic failures in other areas will fundamentally impact the ability of the Department of Defense to succeed. Indeed, several decisions in the economic, political, and diplomatic spheres have weakened American power across the Indo-Pacific and diminished the ability of the United States to successfully compete with China.

Yet looking at the performance of the Department of Defense specifically, I would rate it as decidedly mixed. The Department of Defense deserves credit for calling out the competitive dynamics of the U.S.-China relationship in the *National Defense Strategy*, and the people that have been appointed to drive Indo-Pacific defense policy – including former Assistant Secretary of Defense Randy Schriver and Acting Assistant Secretary of Defense David

[5] Henry Kissinger, *World Order* (New York: Penguin Books, 2014), 1.

Helvey as well as the terrific civil servants and military leaders that continue to work in the Pentagon – are consummate professionals and highly talented leaders. Additionally, the Department of Defense has done a laudable job of tackling challenges related to its reliance on Chinese suppliers in critical supply chains and the implications of Chinese investments in critical sectors of the economy. It has also sustained important initiatives from the previous administration, including conducting Freedom of Navigation Operations in the South China Sea and deploying THAAD to South Korea.

A key area of concern for me is how the U.S. has handled its relationships with its allies and partners. While the Department has been very active in engaging allies and partners at the tactical and operational levels, strategic engagements have been deeply unproductive. The decision to unilaterally suspend joint military exercises with South Korea, along with the President's description of the exercises as both destabilizing and overly expensive, damaged Seoul's confidence in the reliability of American commitments to the defense of the ROK. Similarly, engaging in hardball negotiating tactics in an attempt to extract exponential increases in host nation support funds from Japan and South Korea sends a strong message that the United States sees alliances as little more than a rent-seeking enterprise rather than a relationship based on shared values and mutual interests.

Additionally, there has been a noted lack of progress in adjusting U.S. military posture in the region. Despite the evolving military challenge posed by the PLA, progress on evolving U.S. force posture has largely stalled. The Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement (EDCA) has been largely stagnant, realignment of forces on Okinawa and beyond continues to proceed at a sluggish pace, and few new posture initiatives have been announced. Certainly, some of these challenges are due to forces beyond the control of the Department of Defense or the U.S. Government. But it is also apparent that adjusting posture in the Indo-Pacific has not been a priority for the Department.

Finally, there are also clear indications that the Department of Defense continues to struggle with prioritization in its decision-making. We have seen continued deployments of additional U.S. military forces to the Middle East and Afghanistan, despite the Department's rhetorical prioritization of the Indo-Pacific. Moreover, the Trump administration's decision to shift military construction funds to support the construction of a wall along the border with Mexico adversely affected long-standing efforts to realign U.S. forces in the Indo-Pacific – especially in Guam. Considering that Japan is paying billions to support our realignment effort, such delays have both operational and political consequences.

Toward a Successful Military Competitive Strategy

In a multifaceted competition with China, the United States cannot afford to ignore any dimension of national power. They are often inextricably intertwined, and overinvesting in one aspect of national power cannot make up for a lack of investment in another. For example, building on American military technological advantages will require investments in our domestic education system, sustaining an immigration policy that drives and supports American innovation, expanding research and development in critical technology areas, and supporting the innovative engines of the American private sector.

Similarly, a critical foundation for American soft power in the Indo-Pacific is our support for democratic values in our foreign policy and our adherence to established international laws and norms. Democratic values are not only an American or a Western construct – they have been embraced across the region. Adherence to these principles in American foreign policy is a critical source of our attractive power, and what sets us apart from China and Russia. Allies and partners will be a critical aspect of any American competitive strategy, and their willingness to work with the United States will be in part be informed by perceptions of the United States as a force for good.

Moreover, adherence to established international laws and norms – such as the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) – sends a strong message to the Indo-pacific that American power conveys public goods that are in the interest of all nations, and that efforts to undermine those laws and norms not simply a strategy to counter the United States, but an affront to the broader international community.

That said, considering the focus of this hearing, I will concentrate my remarks on crafting a successful strategy in the military domain of this competition. This strategy should focus on maintaining a favorable balance of power in the Indo-Pacific, and sustaining a robust regional liberal order. The Department of Defense has a critical role to play in both. These goals can best be achieved by implementing a strategy that enhances conventional deterrence, builds resilience against Chinese coercion, and ensures the ability of the United States military to respond decisively in a crisis or conflict. This will involve several interrelated initiatives:

Enhancing U.S. Alliances and Partnerships

A unique and critical advantage for the United States in the Indo-Pacific is its network of alliances and partnerships. These relationships are both a conduit for American military power in the region – hosting several U.S. military bases and tens of thousands of our military personnel – as well as an important supplement to American military power with their own highly capable defense forces.

As competition with China intensifies, the United States should engage its allies and partners to strengthen alliance coordination mechanisms, enhance military interoperability, build the capacity for combined operations, and empower allies and partners to contribute more to their own defense as well as public goods associated with a robust liberal regional order. Such an effort would require an adjustment to policies and restrictions that hamper important arms exports and military technology transfers.

Changing How We Fight

To sustain the ability of the U.S. military to maintain credible deterrence in the Indo-Pacific, the United States must change how it goes to war. This will require a renewed emphasis on dispersion, unpredictability, resilience, and mobility; as well as the development of specific strategies to operate within and degrade China's counter-intervention capabilities.

Important work is currently underway within the U.S. military services to develop new concepts of operations to adjust to these new realities. For example, Marine Corps Commandant General David H. Berger has clearly signaled his intent to adjust his service's approach to these challenges. He writes in his 2019 Planning Guidance that "it would be illogical to continue to concentrate our forces on a few large ships. The adversary will quickly recognize that striking while concentrated (aboard ship) is the preferred option. We need to change this calculus with a new fleet design of smaller, more lethal, and more risk-worthy platforms."[6] The U.S. Army's development of Multi-Domain Task Forces, and the Expeditionary Advanced Base Operations concept from the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps, are similarly promising initiatives. These internal innovation efforts should be encouraged and supported, eventually merged by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff into a joint concept of multi-domain operations in denied spaces, and drive capability investments and adjustments to regional force posture.

Building on American Technological Advantages

The era of unchallenged American technological dominance is coming to an end. While China may not be able to match all high-end American technologies, it has developed several unique capabilities that the U.S. military would find highly challenging during a conflict. While the United States can mitigate some of these challenges with changes to operations and posture, in some cases the only way the U.S. can sustain its ability to succeed in a conflict with China will be to sustain its technological advantages in certain critical areas.

[6] David H. Berger, *Commandant's Planning Guidance,* 4.

Technological innovation will be especially important in sustaining the ability of the United States to operate within denied spaces. Such systems could include long-range anti-ship and anti-air cruise missiles based on sea, air, and mobile land-based platforms; penetrating air and subsurface platforms, both manned and unmanned; and resilient C4ISR and logistics systems.

In this context, I would like to emphasize the importance of developing and deploying conventionally-armed ground-based missiles previously prohibited by the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty. Because the INF Treaty was only signed by the United States and Russia, the Indo-Pacific's military environment has evolved so that only the United States was constrained. As noted previously by U.S. military leaders, over 90 percent of China's ground-based missiles would violate the INF Treaty.[7] This capability will help the United States develop a more dispersed, unpredictable, resilient, and mobile force with greater efficiency and fiscal sustainability. While negotiations with allies and partners over basing and deployments will be difficult, I do not believe they are insurmountable. While there are some legitimate concerns surrounding how the deployment of intermediate-range ballistic missiles could impact crisis stability with China, there are fewer concerns about the deployment of a similarly-ranged anti-ship cruise missile. As a result, the United States should put the development of ground-based intermediate-range cruise missiles on a fast track, while giving more time to assess the implications of intermediate-range ballistic missiles and to gauge interest by Beijing in military-to-military dialogue on issues related to strategic stability.

Updating U.S. Regional Force Posture

The United States has not conducted a comprehensive review of its global force posture in a decade. That review resulted in several adjustments to American military force posture in the Indo-Pacific, including the establishment of a rotational presence in Darwin, Australia and the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement (EDCA) with the Philippines.

Since that review was concluded, the military challenge posed by the PLA has intensified dramatically. The U.S. must be ready to fight with what it has in, or can rapidly shift to, the Indo-Pacific. Sufficient changes to U.S. military capabilities in the Indo-Pacific will not happen with good ideas and technology alone – it will require a modernized force posture.

The United States should conduct another review of regional force posture, with an eye to supporting new concepts of operations under development. A substantive adjustment to

[7] Paul McLeary, "PACOM Harris: U.S. Needs to Develop Hypersonic Weapons, Criticizes 'Self-Limiting' Missile Treaties," *USNI News*, February 14, 2018.

regional force posture would require significant investments in new facilities across the region, prepositioning of critical munitions and fuel, improved infrastructure, and intensified exercises and training.

In response to the intensifying threat of Chinese military capabilities to U.S. within the so-called "first island chain",[8] there may be an impulse among some American military strategists to diminish America's military presence close to the Chinese mainland and adopt an offshore balancing strategy. Such an approach would be misguided for several reasons:

1. It would send a stark signal to U.S. allies and partners, as well as to Beijing, that the United States is ceding the region to China;

2. It would dramatically limit the ability of the U.S. military to shape peacetime "Phase 0" dynamics, allowing Beijing to dictate operational terms within the first island chain;

3. It would be difficult to translate into a military success, as victory would rely on inflicting long-term economic costs on China. This is a questionable proposition, considering Beijing's willingness to absorb economic pain in the course of a conflict of such high geopolitical stakes; and

4. It would be disadvantageous to American interests. Shifting forces eastward to Guam or other islands further east would only be a temporary fix – China can build more, longer-range weapons; and over time develop the capability to strike those bases as well.

All this points to one conclusion: to sustain deterrence and enhance regional resistance to Chinese coercion, the United States must be both present in the region; and be prepared to operate within, and effectively degrade, China's counter-intervention capabilities – especially across the first island chain. Fortifying this island chain with anti-ship and anti-air capabilities – both American and allied – while also deploying naval assets in adjoining waters would pose a significant challenge to PLA planning and conflict operations. Yet this will require an updated American posture.

[8] The "first island chain" is a Chinese conception of a ring of islands that arc southward from the Kurils to the Japanese homeland, through the Ryukyu islands, Taiwan, the northern Philippines, and extending across the South China Sea to Borneo and central Vietnam.

A good model for enabling an Indo-Pacific posture initiative would be the U.S.'s European Deterrence Initiative. This Initiative has devoted billions of dollars into a concerted effort to help EUCOM and the Service Components' operations in the European theater in the face of an increasingly challenging regional military environment. By contrast, the Indo-Pacific Maritime Security Initiative has been much narrower in scope, with significantly lower funding. For FY2019, the Maritime Security Initiative received only $84 million, compared to the $4.7 billion that was spent on the EDI.

The United States should establish a dedicated fund to support a renewed and more resilient military posture in INDOPACOM, and help allies and partners enhance their ability to defend themselves, cooperate with the United States, and resist Chinese military coercion. An Indo-Pacific deterrence and resistance initiative would help jump-start adjustments to U.S. military posture in the region, and help INDOPACOM meet near-term operational challenges. While the specifics of such a proposal would need careful scrutiny and review, it would help our military have the ability to succeed in an increasingly challenging environment.

Prioritizing Investments

Truly prioritizing the Indo-Pacific and competition with China in U.S. foreign policy and national security strategy will inevitably have significant budget implications. In an environment of finite resources, this of course means making difficult choices and accepting risk in other areas.

A high priority should be granted to capabilities and researching emerging technologies that will enable the U.S. military to operate within and degrade Chinese counter-intervention capabilities. Conversely, the U.S. should reduce numbers of legacy systems that would be of limited utility in a denied environment.

Some may argue that the United States should reduce the scope and tempo of its operations to offset the expenses of greater investments in capabilities and posture. However, this ignores the negative strategic effects that would ensue from a significantly decreased regional operational tempo. Some presence operations can likely be conducted by allies and partners, but this cannot be completely outsourced.

If the Indo-Pacific is prioritized, other regions will likely need to see a reduction of U.S. military forces and investment. Too often, even as the United States has identified the Indo-Pacific as a top priority, the region has not received significant attention in comparison to other regions of the world. For example, in 2018 East Asia and the Pacific received less U.S.

security assistance than any other region in the world, amounting to only 3% of total U.S. funding.[9]

Strategy is often ultimately about deciding what *not* to do, and decreasing U.S. commitments and operations in other parts of the world where U.S. interests are less critical, or where the United States can assume a greater degree of risk, will be increasingly necessary. This will necessarily involve reducing U.S. presence and operations in other parts of the world, eschewing capabilities that are less relevant for operations in the Indo-Pacific. Specifically, as the United States reduces its presence in Afghanistan and Syria, and U.S. dependence on Middle Eastern energy resources continues to decrease, the Department of Defense should examine options to reduce its presence across the Middle East and North Africa.

Finally, focusing American military power on the Indo-Pacific will require strategic discipline in the deployment and use of military force. We must be wary of distraction and overextension, and ensure that decisions and investments reflect stated priorities - a good rule of thumb for all national security decision-making.

Conclusion

There is no doubt that the Indo-Pacific will be a critical region in the 21st Century. In fact, this is the year when the region's economies will be larger than the rest of the world combined.[10] It is absolutely critical that the United States sustains its leadership in the region, and that the Pacific Ocean remains a westward conduit for American ideas and products rather than an eastward conduit for threats and instability.

As China rises, the Department of Defense has a critical role to play in ensuring that the United States sustains a favorable regional balance of power and maintains a liberal regional order. Doing so will require significant investments and attention, and it is not a task that will be completed anytime soon. Rather, success will depend on patience, strategic forethought, and a geopolitical strategy that involves all elements of national power.

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[9] This compares to 4% for Sub-Saharan Africa, 4.4% for Latin America and the Caribbean, 4.8% for Europe and Eurasia, 32% for South and Central Asia (which includes Afghanistan), and 51.2% for the Middle East and North Africa. This includes data encompassing 358 programs, including Foreign Military Financing, the Afghanistan Security Forces Fund, and the Counter-Islamic State in Iraq and Syria Train and Equipment Fund, among others. See the Security Assistance Monitor, http://www.securityassistance.org.

[10] "The Asian Century is set to begin," *Financial Times*, March 25, 2019.

The issues we confront today are of historic consequence. Ultimately, despite the significant challenges we face, I remain fully confident in the ability of the United States to succeed in this competition and maintain regional peace and stability.

Again, thank you for inviting me to testify today. I look forward to your questions.