

HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE

**~ REVISED ~**

STATEMENT OF  
ADMIRAL ROBERT F. WILLARD, UNITED STATES NAVY  
COMMANDER  
UNITED STATES PACIFIC COMMAND  
BEFORE THE HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE  
ON RECENT SECURITY DEVELOPMENTS INVOLVING CHINA  
JANUARY 13, 2010

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WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 13, 2010**

Chairman Skelton, Representative McKeon and Members of this Committee,

I have now been in command of the U.S. Pacific Command for about three months, and although I may be new to U.S. Pacific Command, I have commanded extensively in the Asia Pacific Region. Consequently, during my 36 years of service I have developed a great respect for this part of the world and believe that now, more than ever, it is vital to our nation's security interests and economic prosperity.

In previous tours as now, the emergence of the Peoples' Republic of China (PRC) and its military has been a routine topic of discussion in my interactions with regional leaders. China's national strategy remains primarily focused on economic development. Such an approach emphasizes domestic stability and the international conditions that will support economic growth. Today, despite the pressures of a global recession, its powerful economic engine is also funding a military modernization program that has raised concerns in the region - a concern also shared by the U.S. Pacific Command. China's interest in a peaceful and stable environment that will support the country's developmental goals is difficult to reconcile with new military capabilities that appear designed to challenge U.S.

freedom of action in the region and, if necessary, enforce China's influence over its neighbors - including our regional allies and partners.

The PRC's stated goals of a defense-oriented military capability contributing to a "peaceful and harmonious" Asia appear incompatible with the extent of sophisticated weaponry China produces today. Reconciling these two can only occur through continuous, frank conversations and mutual actions within a strong and mature military-to-military relationship – a relationship that does not yet exist with the People's Liberation Army (PLA). Until it does and it is determined that China's intent is indeed benign, it is critical that we maintain the readiness of our postured forces; continually reinforce our commitment to our allies and partners in the region; and meet each challenge by the PRC in a professional manner that is consistent with international law.

### ***People's Liberation Army (PLA) Modernization***

China has continued an aggressive program of military modernization with the supporting doctrine and professionalized military to successfully achieve campaign objectives across a broad spectrum of operations. This program of modernization has been supported by a military budget that has grown annually by double digits over the last decade. While PRC leaders have consistently characterized such developments as defensive in nature, the scope of modernization, the extensive commitment to advanced training, the development of robust power projection capabilities and most importantly, Beijing's lack of transparency call such assertions into question.

The PLA has placed increasing emphasis on attracting and retaining a professional cadre of officers and non-commissioned officers. Incentives include advanced training and education, as well as housing and post-service employment preferences that should lead to a more motivated, better trained and professional military capable of conducting a broader range of combined arms missions.

China continues to develop anti-access systems capable of holding air and maritime forces at risk at extended distances from the Chinese littoral. The PLA Navy (PLAN) is continuing to develop a “Blue Water” capability that includes the ability to surge surface combatants and submarines at extended distances from the mainland. The force strength in 2009 consisted of approximately 27 destroyers, 48 frigates, more than 70 missile-armed patrol craft, 55 amphibious ships, 40 mine warfare ships, and 50 major auxiliaries and service/support craft. Modernization programs have included development of sophisticated shipboard air defense systems as well as supersonic sea-skimming anti-ship cruise missiles.

Chinese leaders are pursuing an aircraft carrier capability. In 1998 China purchased an incomplete former Soviet *KUZNETSOV* class aircraft carrier, which began renovations in 2002 at its shipyard in Dalian. I expect this carrier to become operational around 2012, and will likely be used to develop basic carrier skills.

China continues to field the largest conventional submarine force in the world totaling more than 60 boats. This force is complemented by a number of nuclear powered fast attack and ballistic missile submarines. China is also

developing a new submarine launched ballistic missile, the JL-2, capable of ranging the west coast of the United States.

China fields a growing number of sophisticated multi-role fighter aircraft, including the SU-27 and SU-30 purchased from Russia and indigenously produced 4<sup>th</sup> generation aircraft. The PLA Air Force (PLAAF) and Naval air forces have continued to focus on improving pilot and controller proficiencies in complex, multi-plane combat scenarios, including operations over water. China has also developed an anti-ship ballistic missile based on the DF-21 designed specifically to target aircraft carriers.

Until recently, “jointness” in the PLA meant that different services operated toward a common goal in a joint or combined campaign with operations separated by time and distance. However, years of observing U.S. military operations and modern warfare campaigns have convinced PLA leadership of the need for greater integration between services to include enhanced joint operations at the tactical level. Additionally, the PLA has placed increased emphasis on training in more demanding conditions, such as electromagnetic jamming environments.

### ***China’s Strategic Capabilities***

China maintains a nuclear force capable of ranging most of the world, including the continental United States. This capability has been enhanced through the development of increasingly sophisticated road mobile delivery systems as well as the development of the *JIN* class ballistic missile submarine.

Despite assertions that China opposes the weaponization of space, the PLA is developing an anti-satellite capability that was dramatically demonstrated in January 2007 when China intentionally destroyed one of its own weather satellites with a direct ascent missile.

U.S. military and government networks and computer systems continue to be the target of intrusions that appear to have originated from within the PRC. Although most intrusions focus on exfiltrating data, the skills being demonstrated would also apply to wartime computer network attacks.

### ***China's Ongoing "Sovereignty" Campaigns***

Beijing remains committed to eventual unification with Taiwan, and has not ruled out the use of force to achieve that goal. In fact, Beijing's continued military advancements exacerbate the already considerable cross-Strait combat power imbalance that exists today. The Taiwan Relations Act requires the United States "to provide Taiwan with arms of a defensive character and to maintain the capacity of the United States to resist any resort to force or other forms of coercion that would jeopardize the security, or the social or economic system, of the people on Taiwan." At the United States Pacific Command, we are fulfilling these obligations on a daily basis.

Motivated by a need for indigenous natural resources and consolidation of self-proclaimed sovereignty limits, the PRC has reinforced its claims to most of the South China Sea (SCS), including the contested Spratly and Paracel Islands. Consequently, the PLAN has increased its patrols throughout the SCS region and

has shown an increased willingness to confront regional nations on the high seas and within the contested island chains. Additionally, China lays claim to the Senkakus, contested by Japan, and contests areas on its border with India.

As an integral part of its strategy, the PRC has interpreted certain international law in ways contrary to international norms, such as the UN Convention for Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), and has passed domestic laws that further reinforce its sovereignty claims.

### ***U.S./China Military Relationship and Security Cooperation***

U.S. Pacific Command maintains a program of military activities with the PLA, highlighted by exchanges of visits by senior leaders from both sides last year. During his visit to Washington DC in November, General XU Caihou, Vice Chairman of the Central Military Commission, agreed with Secretary Gates to further develop the military aspect of the US-China relationship. As the primary implementation authority for military-to-military relations with China, U.S. Pacific Command looks forward to working with the PLA on concrete and practical measures to strengthen our military relationship. These measures include senior leader visits, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief exercise observer exchanges, a naval passing exercise, a military medical exchange, and continued POW/MIA accounting. The PLA leadership has also shown a willingness to expand military engagement to areas such as counterterrorism, counter-piracy, maritime safety, and non-proliferation.

As the Executive Agent for the U.S./PRC Military Maritime Consultative Agreement (MMCA), U.S. Pacific Command co-led senior leader bilateral MMCA discussions last summer in Beijing. The MMCA forum was initiated in 1998 and is intended to improve safety for airmen and sailors when our nations' vessels and aircraft operate in proximity to one another. During the December 2009 Defense Policy Coordination Talks held in Honolulu, both sides agreed to reinvigorate the MMCA as a viable diplomatic tool through which we can manage issues related to maritime and air safety. We are presently in consultations to set the specific dates and topics for the next Plenary MMCA, which will be held in Hawaii.

China's mandate for protecting its Sea Lines of Communications (SLOCs), which support its flows of energy and other commerce, as well as its resources within its Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), has created both challenges and opportunities. The challenges have been exemplified by the occasional confrontations between Chinese maritime forces and foreign mariners in the SCS, including the aggressive harassment of USNS IMPECCABLE in March 2009. On the other hand, security of the SLOCs should be regarded as an area of common interest for regional navies, including the U.S. and Chinese navies, and may be an opportunity for increased military-to-military cooperation.

Leaders in Beijing have consistently characterized China's nuclear weapons program as based on the tenets of deterrence and no-first use. They have also stated their opposition to a nuclear-armed Korean peninsula and proliferation of

WMD. These positions have provided a foundation for continued U.S. and PRC cooperation within the framework of the Six Party Talks and on United Nations Security Council Resolutions 1718 and 1874 addressing the North Korean nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programs and seeking to prevent North Korean weapon proliferation.

The Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command's (JPAC) efforts in China have been a positive aspect of the relationship. Investigations and recovery missions have been successful and to date PLA unilateral suspensions of military-to-military activities have not impacted ongoing JPAC missions. Current plans include missions to China in August and September 2010.

### ***Defense Telephone Link***

Historically, communications between U.S. and PRC military leadership during times of crisis have rarely occurred. Provisions for a US/PRC Defense Telephone Link (DTL) were initially discussed in 1997 and formally agreed to in February 2008 with installation complete in March 2008. The Defense Telephone Link enables the Secretary of Defense and other senior leaders to communicate directly and securely with their counterparts in the PLA. My predecessor, Admiral Keating, used the DTL to communicate with General MA Xiaotian in May 2008 regarding earthquake relief assistance. This successful communication notwithstanding, use of this important tool for crisis coordination has not been regularized, a problem in our common interest to improve.

### ***Section 1201 of the FY 2000 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA)***

The FY2000 NDAA is included in a list of four issues that the Chinese government believes obstructs the normal development of our military relations: U.S. Taiwan military relations including arms sales, U.S. air and maritime operations in China's EEZ, and the FY2000 NDAA requirement that the Department of Defense provide to Congress an "Annual Report on the Military Power of the PRC." The Chinese say that the FY 2000 NDAA hinders US/PRC goals for the stable development of military relations by legally restricting engagement to specified areas. However, as Secretary Gates has said, "no exchanges today approach the point where the provisions would prohibit the activity." I agree with the Secretary.

### ***In Closing***

As one views across the whole-of-government, one easily sees how complex our nation's relationship with China has become. It is clearly in both nations' interest and the Asia Pacific region's interests to manage these complexities and to develop a relationship with China that is constructive in every way. At U.S. Pacific Command our goal is to support this relationship by identifying opportunities that allow us to work more closely with China, while also encouraging her to reconcile strategic intent with the increasingly sophisticated combat capabilities being developed by the PLA and its periodic actions that are seen by the region as unconstructive and contrary to international norms. Congress can assist by maintaining a focus not only on China, but on the growing importance of the Asia Pacific Region as a whole to our nation and to our

global partners. Our messages during engagements with Chinese leadership must be consistent and invoke our nation's principles and values. I offer my staff's direct support to you during your travels to the region and invite you to stop in Honolulu and visit U.S. Pacific Command on your way to or from the AOR.

Finally, I would like to thank this Committee for the strong support you provide to the men and women of the United States Military. Despite being involved in two wars, our retention and recruiting rates continue to be strong, which is a reflection of the quality of life initiatives supported by you and the American people. On behalf of the more than 300,000 men and women of U.S. Pacific Command, please accept our sincere appreciation for the work you do for us and our great nation.

Thank you.