

US-China Commission QFR – Asia-Pacific Posture Changes

QUESTION: Provide the Commission with some unclassified details about the shifts that are occurring in the Pacific due to global defense posture changes and our “hedging” approach (e.g. movement of carrier battle groups to the Pacific, troop deployments to Asia, etc.).

ANSWER:

- The administration is implementing the most comprehensive realignment of U.S. global defense posture since the end of World War II and the Korean War. As part of that realignment effort, we are strengthening our capabilities in the Asia-Pacific region and adding greater flexibility to address the security challenges of the 21st century. Our plans include:
 - Increased strike capabilities - maritime, air, and deployable ground - in the Pacific, to include presence of rotational bombers in Guam and an increased level of carrier presence;
 - Force posture realignments and transformed roles and missions in Japan to strengthen the U.S.-Japan alliance, including adjustments to the U.S. footprint on Okinawa (negotiations in progress through the Defense Policy Review Initiative);
 - Consolidation of U.S. forces on the Korean peninsula into two hubs (relocation of a brigade to Fort Lewis already completed);
 - Establishment of an Air Force Warfighting headquarters in Hawaii;
 - New training opportunities in Australia; and,
 - Access, logistical, and training arrangements in Southeast Asia.
- Our rapid response to the December 2004 tsunami is an example of the flexibility and strengthened capability provided by our ongoing posture changes in the Asia-Pacific region.
 - While simultaneously engaged in Iraq and Afghanistan, the U.S. was able to quickly surge forces in response to an unforeseen humanitarian need.
 - We deployed a carrier strike group, expeditionary strike group, search and rescue assets, and command and control capabilities in less than a week, and a 15,000-strong joint task force in less than two weeks.
 - Speed was enabled by the close relationships and interoperability of our forces with other countries in the region and in neighboring regions.