



U.S.-CHINA ECONOMIC AND SECURITY  
REVIEW COMMISSION

## **Hearing on China's Views of Sovereignty and Methods of Access Control**

### **Opening Statement of Mark Esper, Commissioner February 27, 2008 Washington, DC**

I would like to welcome everyone to today's hearing. I am pleased to be serving as a co-chair for this hearing, along with my colleague, Commissioner Jeff Fiedler.

As mentioned earlier, today we will be examining China's views of sovereignty and the methods China is capable of employing to ensure that what it views as its sovereignty is protected. For the last ten years, China's defense spending has increased at a rate of over ten percent per year. The Chinese defense budget increased more than 17 percent in 2007, increasing the pace of its military modernization. Fielding more capable naval weapon systems has increased China's ability to protect sovereignty and control access on its periphery. Its recent demonstration of an anti-satellite weapon has shown that China now possesses the ability to engage and destroy targets in space.

Yet, even with China's numerous recent military achievements, we should not restrict our analysis of its ability to protect what it views as its sovereignty to military capabilities, for China appears to be taking a much broader approach to these issues. We also look forward to our panelists helping us explore non-military means of enforcing sovereignty claims. At the same time China has been growing militarily and economically, it has also been taking a more active role in the development of regional and international norms and laws regarding sovereignty. This approach will be discussed today as well.

Some excellent witnesses have agreed to appear before us today. I look forward to the insights they will provide this commission on these issues, and I would like to thank them for being here.

I'll now turn it over to my co-chair, Commissioner Jeff Fiedler, for his opening remarks.