



## **Hearing on “China’s Military Diplomacy and Overseas Security Activities”**

**January 26, 2023**

### **Opening Statement of Chairman Carolyn Bartholomew**

Good morning, and welcome to the first hearing of the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission’s 2023 Annual Report cycle. Before we begin, I would like to extend a warm welcome to the Commission’s newest member, Commissioner Reva Price. Commissioner Price has many years of experience working in Congress on China-related issues and we look forward to her contributions to our work.

Thank you all for joining us today. Thank you to our witnesses for sharing your expertise and for the work you have put into your testimonies. I would like to thank the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works for allowing us the use of their hearing room and the Senate Recording Studio for their assistance livestreaming this event. I also want to express my appreciation for the work of each of the Commission staff members. They are essential to this Commission’s success. Today, in particular, I thank Sierra Janik, Andrew Hartnett and Jessie Foster for their capable work in putting together this hearing.

Today’s hearing will examine the range of foreign engagements undertaken by China’s military and internal security forces, as well as elements of China’s military-industrial complex, and the implications of these activities for the United States.

The Chinese Communist Party under General Secretary Xi Jinping is pursuing a goal of developing the People’s Liberation Army into a “world-class” military by the middle of the twenty-first century. Achieving this goal is a critical component of the CCP’s efforts to establish a Sino-centric world order. In this new world order, other countries would acquiesce to China’s priorities and preferences, an arrangement General Secretary Xi refers to euphemistically as a “community of common human destiny.”

The foreign activities of the PLA and other Chinese security forces contribute to these goals in several ways. By conducting regular bilateral and multilateral dialogues with other countries’ security forces, the PLA is building relationships and expanding its presence on the global stage. By participating in exercises and training with other militaries, the PLA practices power projection skills and cultivates an image of China as a responsible contributor to global security. Maintaining robust defense ties with Russia, China has sought to learn from its past combat experience and also continues to pursue joint development of advanced military technology such as heavy lift helicopters. The advanced economies of Europe have played a role in supporting the PLA’s development by licensing Chinese production of defense articles that China’s state-owned defense corporations have subsequently indigenized for the PLA’s own use and for export.

China is also a major player in the international arms market, ranking among the top five global arms suppliers since at least 2010. Although its total sales remain significantly below those of the United States or Russia, China has established itself as a leading global provider of certain weapons such as unmanned aerial vehicles. It is also a major supplier to certain countries on its periphery such as Pakistan and

Bangladesh. As in so many other areas of foreign engagement, when it comes to foreign military sales Chinese companies have no qualms about selling weapons to countries or parties that the US and other countries will not, including the military dictatorship in Burma or in active conflict zones in Sudan and South Sudan.

As the United States and its allies navigate the strategic competition with China, it is imperative that we understand both the drivers of China's foreign military activities and their implications for the international security order. China's military relationship with Russia deserves particular scrutiny in the continued fallout from Russian president Vladimir Putin's war against Ukraine.

Finally, as Beijing continues to promote the still vague idea of a "Global Security Initiative" led by China, a thorough examination of China's military diplomacy will provide valuable insight into what the world should expect in years to come. We look forward to exploring these topics in detail in the hearing today and to discussing actionable policy recommendations for Congress.

I will now turn the floor over to my colleague and co-chair for this hearing, Commissioner Randall Schriver.