



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

January 26, 2023

Opening Statement of Commissioner Randall Schriver

Good morning. I join Chairwoman Bartholomew in welcoming our witnesses and to those viewing our hearing.

The armed wing of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), the People’s Liberation Army (PLA), will be instrumental in determining whether or not General Secretary Xi Jinping’s aspirations for Great National Rejuvenation are met. The goals behind GS Xi’s direction for the PLA to become a “world class military” by 2049 are not limited to symbolism or a simple desire to acquire the trappings of global power status. In fact, for the CCP to succeed and meet its own ambitions, the PLA must become a much more capable military.

General Secretary Xi needs a PLA capable of protecting PRC sovereignty, to include securing effective control over a number of expansive and illegal sovereignty claims. He needs a PLA that can successfully operationalize a Taiwan contingency for the purpose of forced unification. He needs a PLA that can look after broader regional and even global interests particularly where protection of sea lines of communication is concerned. And he needs a PLA that can successfully augment PRC diplomatic and economic efforts to create a regional order where countries are more deferential to its preferences and interests.

It is increasingly clear that the CCP believes the PLA must be more active abroad in order to acquire the necessary capabilities and to be better postured to play the role envisioned. Under the guidance of the CCP and Central Military Commission (CMC), the PLA is engaging in military diplomacy of various kinds, is conducting bilateral and multi-lateral exercises with greater frequency, is creating foreign bases and access opportunities, is engaging in operational military activities with foreign partners, and is active in promoting foreign military sales. The external agenda is robust.

As these activities expand and evolve, we will want to know more about how these activities impact Chinese military modernization; how they promote relationships for China that may alter the geo-political landscape; how they impact our allies and partners; and most importantly, how they affect US-China great power competition.

I look forward to learning from our expert witnesses on all these matters.