



Hearing on “China’s Evolving Counter-Intervention Capabilities and Implications for the United States and Indo-Pacific Allies and Partners”

March 21, 2024

Opening Statement of Vice Chair Reva Price

Good morning, and welcome to the third hearing of the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission’s 2024 Annual Report Cycle. This hearing will explore the evolving counter-intervention capabilities of China’s military and its implications for the United States and our Indo-Pacific allies and partners. I would like to first thank all of our witnesses for joining us today and providing their time and expertise as we examine these issues. I would also like to thank the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works for allowing us to use their hearing room and the Senate Recording Studio for their assistance livestreaming this event. And lastly I would like to thank our USCC staff, particularly Rachael Burton and Sierra Janek for their hard work in preparation for today’s hearing.

In 1996, the United States leveraged credible military threats to deter further escalation of China’s military aggression during the “Third Taiwan Strait Crisis.” As a result, the desire to restrict future U.S. military influence in the region was among the factors which spurred Chinese leadership to invest in the buildup and modernization of their military capabilities. Today, the People’s Liberation Army, or the PLA, has developed a wide-range of capabilities that could be used to counter U.S. military operations should Beijing attempt to forcibly unify Taiwan with the Mainland or to assert control over territorial features and waters in the South and East China Seas. China’s efforts to “alter the map” in the region could directly challenge U.S. allies and partners’ sovereignty, potentially trigger U.S. alliance or defense commitments, and erode the international rules-based order.

There are reasons to be concerned about how Chinese leaders could employ their military capabilities in the future. This Commission has consistently reported on China’s aggressive use of military coercion and pressure against its neighbors in the region. In 2023, our Annual Report noted at least 1,390 incursions by PLA aircraft in Taiwan’s Air Defense Identification Zone, and we have seen China’s aggression continue to play out this year. Earlier this month, dangerous maneuvers conducted by the Chinese Coast Guard resulted in a collision with Philippine Coast Guard vessels in the South China Sea. China’s military modernization and aggressive military posture present a range of security challenges to other countries with an interest in maintaining regional stability, including U.S. allies in the Indo-Pacific.

Our hearing today will look first at China’s evolving capabilities and concepts to restrict U.S. operations in the Indo-Pacific, often referred to as “counter-intervention” or “anti-access/area-denial” capabilities. The hearing’s second panel will examine U.S. efforts to defeat China’s counter-intervention capabilities and China’s views of these efforts. Our final panel will hear perspectives from U.S. allies on the intensifying security threats posed by China and areas for continued cooperation among allies. Our witnesses today have deep knowledge and expertise in these issues. We hope this hearing will better inform policy-makers of China’s capabilities that aim to complicate U.S. efforts to defend its allies and interests in the region. In addition, we wish to better understand the challenges the United States currently faces in addressing these capabilities. Finally, we hope it will illuminate the challenge that China would face from the United States and its allies should it choose a path toward conflict. I look forward to insights and perspectives from our panelists on these important issues.

I will now hand it over to my co-chair for the hearing, Commissioner Schriver.