

Statement by the Honorable Madeleine Z. Bordallo of Guam
Prepared for U.S. – China Economic & Security Review Commission
11 June 2009

Vice Chairman Wortzel and Commissioner Videnieks, other members of the Commission, ladies and gentlemen, thank you for the opportunity to testify this morning about the implications of China's naval modernization for the United States. The issue of China's naval modernization is one that garners significant attention and concern in the Asia-Pacific region.

China's naval modernization raises concern among many experts in the United States because of the perceived lack of transparency in their modernization plans. Moreover, certain weapons development, like the advanced anti-ship cruise missiles or construction of an aircraft carrier, seems to directly target the sovereignty and projection of our naval forces in the Asia-Pacific region. Despite these misgivings, I believe that greater military-to-military cooperation, training and education will be important to developing stronger and broader relations with the People's Republic of China.

The United States Pacific Command, under the leadership of Admiral Timothy Keating has taken significant steps to increase bilateral relations with the People's Republic of China in recent years. For example, PRC military officials were asked to view Operation Valiant Shield exercises in the Western Pacific in 2006. Additionally, high ranking U.S. military officials have visited China and viewed some of their training which has increased a cultural understanding between our two countries. I believe that this approach of constructive engagement will help to develop a greater understanding between our two countries.

This cooperation and greater cultural understanding can further be bolstered through a greater partnership in deterring piracy in the Asia-Pacific region. The current deployment of many of the Navy's 5th Fleet to the Horn of Africa coupled with media reports may leave the impression that piracy is only an issue for the Indian Ocean and Africa. To the contrary, this remains an area of grave concern in Pacific as well. I believe that there is ability for the PRC and the United States to develop a greater partnership in patrolling against piracy in the Asia-Pacific region. Such a joint venture would only further enhance understanding between our two militaries. It would also serve as a deterrent to the issue of piracy in this region of the world.

Although increased cooperation and understanding is important, we must also ensure that we do not neglect our international and military responsibilities in the Asia-Pacific region. The realignment of some 8,000 Marines from Okinawa to Guam along with an increased Navy, Air Force and Army presence on Guam is important towards reiterating our support for our allies in this region. Realigning forces to Guam affords the United States with a freedom of movement and access that does not currently exist. The U.S. military's emphasis on bolstering military forces in Guam is strategically important and emphasizes to our allies that we are committed to their protection and serves as a significant deterrence to potential adversaries.

While I believe that greater cooperation between the PRC and the United States is important, we cannot ignore our responsibility to show China that we are committed to providing security for our nation and our interests in the region. The United States must maintain a strong forward

presence in the region as a reminder to the PRC that we have the commitment and strength to defend ourselves and our allies. I believe our presence in Guam coupled with continued strong relations with the Republic of Korea, Japan, Australia and New Zealand are key to maintaining stability and peaceful economic growth in this region of the world.

We have a complex relationship with the People's Republic of China. The unique complexities of Chinese culture coupled with the myriad of interests the United States has in this region of the world make analyzing our relationship difficult. It has been easy in the past to simply cast China as a friend or as a foe. This type of analysis is not helpful in the complexities of the 21st Century. The reality is that our relationship with China is complex and broad brush analogies serve little purpose. On the one hand we are tied together economically while on the other we compete for natural resources. I would urge the Commission to review the Chinese naval modernization with the understanding of the complex dynamics of our relationship. As a nation we must both increase our understanding of each other culturally and militarily while simultaneously ensure that our forces and diplomatic presence are postured to maintain our influence in the region. While we have little control over China's naval modernization, we have great control over our nation's response to it, based on our mutual economic interests with China and our commitment to our allies for regional peace and stability.

Again, I thank the Commission for the opportunity to testify today on this very important matter.

Filename: Statement by Congresswoman Bordallo
Directory: C:\Documents and Settings\Jertman\Local Settings\Temporary
Internet Files\OLK5E
Template: C:\Documents and Settings\Jertman\Application
Data\Microsoft\Templates\Normal.dot
Title:
Subject:
Author: Daniel Hartnett
Keywords:
Comments:
Creation Date: 6/12/2009 8:03:00 AM
Change Number: 2
Last Saved On: 6/12/2009 8:10:00 AM
Last Saved By: Daniel Hartnett
Total Editing Time: 11 Minutes
Last Printed On: 6/24/2009 1:58:00 PM
As of Last Complete Printing
Number of Pages: 2
Number of Words: 810 (approx.)
Number of Characters: 4,328 (approx.)