

**Testimony of
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U.S. Department of Defense**

**House Armed Services Committee
“The Risk of Losing Military Technology Superiority
and its Implications for U.S. Policy, Strategy, and Posture
in the Asia-Pacific”
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Introduction

Thank you very much, Chairman Thornberry. Thank you also to Ranking Member Smith and members of the committee for having me here today.

It’s a pleasure to be here with you to discuss one of my top priorities as the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy – implementing the President’s rebalance to the Asia-Pacific region. I’m also pleased to be here alongside ADM Locklear and GEN Scaparrotti. Our men and women in uniform at US Pacific Command and U.S. Forces Korea serve as the day-to-day face of DoD’s rebalance for many partners in the region, and we greatly appreciate their tireless work.

Although this is the first time I’ve had the opportunity to address this topic with you, Secretary Carter, Deputy Secretary Work, and I all spend a great deal of our time focused on this important region of the world.

In fact, both Secretary Carter and I recently returned from Asia, where we were able to see first-hand some of the exciting efforts the Department has underway to enhance our defense posture in Japan, the Republic of Korea, Australia, and Singapore. We also had the opportunity to sit down with our close allies and partners to discuss a shared vision for the future of the region and our partnerships. The resounding message we heard on these trips is that our allies and partners support the U.S. rebalance and continue to seek greater U.S. leadership and engagement in the region.

Overview of Security Environment

This year is an important one in the Pacific region, as it marks the 70th anniversary of the end of the War in the Pacific. The past seventy years have been a time of tremendous change and opportunity for the Asia-Pacific region. As Asia-Pacific nations rise and become more prosperous, it creates enormous opportunities for the United States. At the same time, Asia’s dynamism has also created a much more complex security environment, with challenges ranging from rapidly advancing military technologies to widespread humanitarian disasters.

In particular, China’s rapid military modernization, its opaque defense budget, its actions in space and cyber space, and its behavior in places like the East China Sea and South China Sea raise a number of serious questions. Though China’s expanding interests are a natural part of its growing power, China continues to pursue activities and investments that lead many in the region, including the United States, to question its long-term intentions. Of note, China is

engaging in a comprehensive military modernization program that includes investments in capabilities such as ballistic missiles, anti-ship cruise missiles, and counter-space weapons that seem designed to counter U.S. power projection capabilities.

China's behavior in the maritime domain has also created significant friction with its neighbors. The Chinese government's efforts to incrementally advance its East and South China Sea claims and to block access to disputed fishing zones suggest a willingness to assert control over contested areas through coercion or the use of force. Moreover, its extensive land reclamation activities, especially the prospect to militarize these outposts, are deeply concerning to us. We would therefore urge China to show restraint and refrain from further activities that undermine regional trust. We also continue to urge China to clarify the meaning of its ambiguous Nine Dash line claim as a starting point to reducing tensions and creating greater transparency.

The U.S. and China are not allies, but we don't have to be adversaries. A strong, constructive U.S.-China relationship is essential for global security and prosperity. Our efforts to reduce the risk of miscalculation and unintentional conflict in the South China Sea and the region more broadly are a critical element of our regional engagement. We are therefore not only raising our concerns with China, we are also taking steps to build transparency and improve understanding through our military-to-military ties. Over the past year, through initiatives like the two Confidence-Building Measures we signed last fall, we have made significant strides in our bilateral defense relationship, while still adhering to the strict limitations guiding our defense contacts with China.

We face a number of other challenges in the region, however, beyond China's current activities. Of greatest concern to the Department is North Korea's dangerous pursuit of its ballistic missile and weapons of mass destruction (WMD) programs. North Korea's actions present a serious threat to the United States and the international community. North Korea has repeatedly demonstrated the willingness to use provocative means to achieve its ends. Just over the past year, this included a cyber-attack against Sony Pictures Entertainment in November 2014 and multiple short-range missile tests—most recently occurring in the past month, some of which immediately preceded Secretary Carter's arrival in Seoul.

These challenges are magnified by the growing range of non-traditional threats the U.S. and our allies grapple with in the Asia-Pacific region, including increased flows of foreign fighters to and from the Middle East, trafficking of illegal goods and people, and devastating natural disasters such as the cyclone that hit Vanuatu just last month.

Even in the face of these challenges, the overall trajectory of the Asia-Pacific region is very positive. Indeed, the complexity of Asia's security environment has helped propel closer cooperation between the United States and our allies, and a greater demand for U.S. leadership and presence. It has also led numerous partners across the region to step up into leading roles in providing security in the region and across the globe.

DoD Rebalance Strategy

In response to these shifting dynamics, the Department of Defense has consistently worked to implement President Obama's strategy of rebalancing toward the Asia-Pacific region.

Over the past six years, we have made our engagement and investments in the Pacific a top priority, even in the face of budget constraints. But the rebalance is first and foremost a whole-of-government approach, and we view our efforts as working hand-in-hand with the many political, economic, and development initiatives underway across the region.

One of the most important of these efforts is the administration's work to finalize the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), an agreement that would knit together twelve of the region's largest economies and would increase U.S. exports by over \$123.5 billion in the next decade. As Secretary Carter noted last week in Arizona, the Department believes this agreement not only has economic importance, but also has strategic significance.

TPP holds enormous promise for jobs and growth across our nation's economy – and our military strength ultimately rests on the foundation of our vibrant and growing economy. By increasing trade among our allies and partners, TPP will provide nations with greater economic choices. It will establish landmark protections for labor and the environment, making it the greenest trade agreement ever. And it will help ensure all nations play by the same open and transparent rules. So we believe very strongly that TPP is not just a critical piece of the President's economic agenda, it also is an important piece of his security agenda. U.S. leadership in global trade will enable broad-based prosperity, protect our strategic interests, and promote our core values. I urge the Congress to pass Trade Promotion Authority and allow the negotiators to conclude this critical agreement.

Modernizing Alliances and Partnerships

In the Department of Defense, our efforts to implement the rebalance are focused on a few key areas. First, strengthening our security relationships with our friends and allies. For over seventy years, our security alliances have been the bedrock of our presence in the Asia-Pacific region. And they will continue to be the foundation of our engagement in the future. Over the past few years, the Department has engaged in a concerted effort to modernize our alliances and develop the right capabilities and missions for today's security environment. We are seeing these efforts come to fruition on a number of fronts.

In Japan, we are very close to completing a historic update of our Defense Guidelines, which would simply not have been possible a decade ago. This update leverages Japan's expanded capacity to contribute in the region, and will allow us to build cooperation in new areas such as space and cyberspace. Equally important, it will allow the U.S.-Japan alliance to play an even larger role on the global stage, where Japan is already contributing to important efforts like countering ISIL and responding to Ebola.

Likewise, we are working with the Republic of Korea (ROK) to develop a comprehensive set of Alliance capabilities to counter the range of growing North Korean threats, while expanding our ability to tackle global challenges together. And in Australia and the Philippines, we signed ground-breaking posture agreements in 2014 that will provide enhanced access for U.S. forces while greatly expanding the combined training opportunities for our alliances. These agreements will also improve our interoperability, allowing us to build on global cooperation with Australia in places like Iraq and to pursue high-end engagements such as Exercise Balikatan with the Philippines, which will kick off next week as the largest and most complex military exercise we've ever held together.

Our strong friendships in the region stretch beyond our traditional alliances to new and growing partners. In line with President Obama's recognition that South and Southeast Asia is a region of growing strategic, economic, and political importance, the Department has made a deliberate decision to strengthen our defense partnerships in this critical region. This is one reason why every Secretary of Defense under the Obama Administration has made it a priority to attend the annual Shangri-La Dialogue in Singapore and why Secretary Carter will continue this tradition when he travels to Singapore in May.

In addition to our strong strategic partnership with Singapore, we are strengthening key partnerships with nations such as Indonesia, Malaysia, and Vietnam, where we are working together to help them lead in areas ranging from maritime security to supporting peace-keeping operations around the globe. We are also investing in our partnership with ASEAN, which is leading the way in building a more robust security architecture in the region. Regional institutions such as the ASEAN Defense Ministers' Meeting Plus (ADMM-Plus) are fostering concrete multilateral defense cooperation through exercises and training that will promote trust and transparency and build our collective capacity to respond to emerging crises.

The U.S.-India relationship is another one of our most exciting and dynamic partnerships. Just this past January, President Obama and Prime Minister Modi signed a new Joint Vision Statement. We also signed the first update in a decade to our bilateral Defense Framework, which will allow us to expand our relationship into exciting new areas, such as maritime security cooperation. Through the Defense Technology and Trade Initiative (DTTI), we are also pursuing cutting-edge collaborations in research and development and in defense technology. During President Obama's visit in January, we agreed to our first four "pathfinder" co-development and co-production projects. This is the type of work we undertake with few other countries, and it demonstrates the seriousness we attach to the U.S.-India defense relationship.

Posture and Presence

In tandem with our efforts to modernize our relationships in the Pacific, the Department is also updating our forward presence by developing a more distributed, resilient, and sustainable posture—one that allows us to operate more flexibly and respond to a wider range of challenges. This is not simply about increasing the number of assets we have in the region. It's about using our existing assets in new ways, across the entire region, with an emphasis on operational flexibility and showcasing our ability to project power across and within the Pacific - activities that maximize the value of our assets despite the tyranny of distance we face.

For example, we've developed a more distributed model for our Marine Corps that reduces our concentrated steady-state presence on Okinawa through locations to Australia, Hawaii, Guam, and mainland Japan. As a result, DoD concluded our first battalion-sized rotation of more than 1,100 Marines to Australia in 2014, including the rotational deployment of four helicopters. These efforts, along with rotations already beginning for 2015, help enable us to conduct complex and comprehensive training scenarios. Our posture agreement with Australia also enables the U.S. Air Force to increase the frequency and duration of training opportunities they are able to conduct together with the Royal Australian Air Force. They will

eventually scale up to an enduring two-month rotational presence and sophisticated training exercises that will capitalize on gains in interoperability made over the past decade of working side-by-side in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The U.S. Navy also continues to implement a rotational presence concept. We are currently completing the second proof-of-concept deployment of a Littoral Combat Ship, (LCS), to Singapore, and are on track to achieve our stated goal of simultaneous rotation of four LCS through Singapore from 2017. This year, Singapore will also host the introduction of a rotational Joint High-Speed Vessel, (JHSV), to the region, which will expand to rotational stops in other locations in the future.

Our Services' effort to update their presence likewise extends to the Army, which will be initiating the first rotational deployment of an Army Brigade Combat Team to the Korean Peninsula later this spring. Similarly, it has established a new exercise engagement model, Pacific Pathways, which allows our soldiers to spend more time on the ground training side-by-side with counterparts like Indonesia and Malaysia. Both of these efforts are enabling the Army to rotate increasingly ready and capable forces through the Pacific region, ensuring our forces, and those of our regional partners, will be able to respond to the region's most complex challenges.

Capabilities and Investments

Finally, one of the most important efforts the Department of Defense has underway is our effort to bring our finest capabilities forward to the Asia-Pacific region, underwriting our contribution to regional stability, crisis response efforts, and alliance obligations. As part of the rebalance, the Department is basing a fourth Virginia-class attack submarine in Guam to strengthen our advantage in survivable undersea capabilities, stationing two additional Aegis missile defense-equipped destroyers in Japan to counter the region's growing missile threat, and deploying our most modern Zumwalt class destroyers to the Pacific region. The Department maintains a continuous bomber presence of B-2s and B-52s in the region for deterrence purposes, and a range of cutting-edge manned and unmanned surveillance aircraft, such as the Navy's P-8 and the Air Force's RQ-4 Global Hawk, to enhance our operational awareness of regional developments.

But more than simply deploying existing technologies, the Department is making significant investments in the types of innovative technologies that will sustain America's technological edge into the future and ensure that we can operate in any and all regions, regardless of the technological developments of other nations. We face a security environment in Asia in which potential adversaries are designing systems to directly challenge U.S. technological superiority. Maintaining our technological edge therefore requires that we continue to make key investments in future systems that can succeed in a highly contested environment.

We're investing in technologies that will protect the strength of the U.S. military not only on the sea but also underneath it – including the Virginia Payload Module, a compartment added to our attack submarines that will increase their weapons-carrying capacity by more than 75%, a new nuclear ballistic missile submarine, and unmanned undersea vehicles. We're also investing

in the technologies we need to maintain U.S. dominance in the air - including the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter, long-range surveillance aircraft, the KC-46A advanced refueling platform, and a new stealth bomber. Our investments in the future also encompass precision munitions that increase our ability to strike adversaries from greater stand-off distances, like the extended range Joint Air to Surface Standoff Missile (JASSM-ER) and a new long-range anti-ship cruise missile (LRASM), which was just successfully tested last month.

But as we were all reminded recently during the cyber-attack on Sony Pictures, the challenges we face extend far beyond threats to the air and sea. Therefore, we're also working on new capabilities that can protect our ability to operate freely in space and cyberspace. Finally, we are not just developing new technologies to employ in a crisis, but focusing on the ability of U.S. forces to survive in a crisis. While seemingly small-scale in comparison to our modernization efforts, investments in rapid runway repair and the hardening and dispersal of facilities are essential to ensure the joint force can operate successfully in a high-threat environment, particularly in light of the growing risk posed by ballistic and cruise missile programs. The Department is also examining concepts for dispersing our forces in the region to decrease our vulnerability to attack while preserving our ability to conduct joint operations.

All of these efforts demonstrate the seriousness of the Department's efforts to protect U.S. military primacy in the Asia-Pacific theater. This is the impetus for the Department's ongoing Defense Innovation Initiative (DII), which represents a long-term, comprehensive effort to enhance our military's competitive edge, even in light of budget constraints. Through the DII, the Department will "offset" global advances in military technologies by identifying new breakthroughs in cutting-edge systems from the world of robotics, autonomous weapons, and big data. Additionally, the DII will look beyond the systems we deploy to explore how we can use these systems in innovative ways. So we are also exploring new operational concepts, new approaches to professional military education, and new wargaming activities.

Conclusion

The Department's rebalance initiatives, as well as those of our inter-agency colleagues, will not be achieved overnight. They are long-term, comprehensive endeavors that reflect the enduring interests and commitment we have to the Asia-Pacific region. I am confident that the Department is making significant progress to modernize our relationships, enhance our posture and presence, and ensure we have the necessary capabilities to deter conflict and maintain stability, as we have for the past seventy years. I look forward to continuing to work together with Congress to achieve these goals in the years ahead.

Thank you.