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Panel II: Countering China’s Military Strategy in the Indo-Pacific Region

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Introduction

Hearing co-chairs, Vice Chair Reva Price and Commissioner Randall Schriver, members of the Commission: Thank you for this opportunity to share my thoughts on China's Evolving Counter-Intervention Capabilities and Implications for the U.S. and Indo-Pacific Allies and Partners.

We have already heard from several specialists today about China's capabilities and concepts for "counter-intervention."

My comments below focus on countering China's military strategy in the Indo-Pacific region. More specifically, I use data drawn from PRC-produced news media and academic journals to discuss PRC views of U.S. military operations, activities, and investments designed to counter the PRC military in the Indo-Pacific.¹ I address three of the Commission's questions:

1. What are China's views of the U.S. security architecture in the Indo-Pacific region?
2. What U.S. military capabilities is China most concerned about in a scenario where the People's Liberation Army (PLA) may seek to constrain or restrict U.S. military operations in the region?
3. How do Chinese authoritative writings assess new U.S. operational concepts such as Multi-Domain Operations (MDO) for the Army and Air Force, Agile Combat Employment (ACE) for the Air Force, Distributed Maritime Operations (DMO) for the Navy and Marine Corps, and Expeditionary Advanced Base Operations (EABO) for the Marine Corps?

The remainder of my comments examine each of these three questions and then provide some recommendations for legislative action.

What are China's views of the U.S. security architecture in the Indo-Pacific region?

China views the U.S. Indo-Pacific security strategy and all elements of the U.S. security architecture in the Indo-Pacific region, including its alliances, security partnerships, and military presence, as attempts to contain and counter China.

Subject matter experts commenting in PRC media argue frequently that U.S. military leaders are designing and executing operations and activities in the region to achieve one of three objectives:

1. To foment tensions and create instability along the PRC's periphery²
2. To enlist the support of regional allies and partners to advance U.S. security objectives both in the region and globally, including the (perceived) containment of China³

¹ This testimony draws, in part, on previous analysis done by CNA analysts James Bellacqua, Josiah Case, Annette Lee, and Brian Waidelich. The author would like to acknowledge these contributions and express appreciation for their efforts. Any faults or errors are the sole responsibility of the author.

² Zhang Yunbi, "US Blasted for Inciting Instability in South China Sea," *China Daily*, July 13, 2023, <https://www.chinadaily.com.cn/a/202307/13/WS64aed0eaa31035260b81609b.html>; Xu Ke, "US's Indo-Pacific Strategy Brings Instability Only," *China Military Online*, Oct. 8, 2023, http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/OPINIONS_209196/Opinions_209197/16257081.html.

³ "US Steps Up Efforts to Rope in Regional Countries, Engage in Camp Confrontation to Bring Harm to Asia-Pacific," *Xinhua*, May 5, 2023, http://www.news.cn/world/2023-05/05/c_1129592332.htm; Rachel Zhang and Teddy Ng, "Can the US Enlist the Philippines to Help Contain China in the Indo-Pacific?," *South China Morning Post*, Feb. 14, 2021, <https://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy/article/3121582/can-us-enlist-philippines-help-contain-china-indo-pacific>.

3. To enhance training and force posture and improve interoperability to better position the U.S. military, as well as the militaries of our partners and allies, for a potential contingency involving the PLA⁴

These arguments are ubiquitous in PRC government and media commentary on U.S. military activities in the region and are used to frame all discussions of the Indo-Pacific security architecture. They are the lens through which any U.S. military capability in the Indo-Pacific is viewed.

Which U.S. military capabilities is China most concerned about in a scenario where the PLA may seek to constrain or restrict U.S. military operations in the region?

PRC media and academic journals' discussion on this topic falls into two main baskets: (1) concerns about the U.S. strengthening its alliances and security partnerships, and (2) concerns about the U.S. increasing the quality and quantity of its military capabilities and platforms in the region.

Among PRC defense and security thinkers, the degree of strategic alignment between the U.S. and its Indo-Pacific allies is a topic of perennial interest. In a potential scenario where the PLA may seek to constrain or restrict U.S. military operations in the region, the PLA would likely differentiate these countries based on assumptions about their willingness to side with and militarily support the U.S. in a conflict. Such an effort by the PLA could consider, for example, which countries would send troops to conduct combined operations alongside U.S. forces and which countries (without committing their own troops) might make infrastructure such as ports and airfields available for use by the U.S. military.

Over the past 2–3 years, Japan and Australia have been portrayed generally in PRC writings as the countries that are the most willing and supportive of U.S. security objectives in the region. Since 2022, the newly elected governments in the Republic of Korea and the Philippines have often been portrayed as moving closer to the U.S. and increasingly willing to support the U.S. in countering the PRC—but not with a commitment as solid as that of Japan and Australia. Other nations in the region are usually portrayed in PRC writings as unwilling to align openly and consistently with the U.S. against the PRC.

In addition to formal alliances, Beijing would likely be concerned with the implications of existing multilateral security partnerships, such as the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (the Quad), a strategic security dialogue between Australia, India, Japan, and the U.S., and the trilateral security partnership for the Indo-Pacific region between Australia, the United Kingdom, and the U.S. (AUKUS), as well as emerging trilateral partnerships such as US-Japan-Korea and U.S.-Japan-Australia. These multilateral groupings are often portrayed in PRC media as precursors to U.S.

⁴ Wang Bing, "US Continues to Incite Allies to Disrupt Asia-Pacific, Liang Yongchun: Seeking to Forge New Model of 'Extraregional-Country Grouping to Interfere in South China Sea,'" China National Radio, Aug. 21, 2023, https://military.cnr.cn/jsrp/20230821/t20230821_526386999.shtml; "Japan's Massive Drills Intended to Challenge China's Sovereignty Militarily," *Global Times*, Sep. 15, 2021, <https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202109/1234413.shtml>.

designs for a regional alliance to encircle and contain China that are designed to stoke divisions in the region and bring about a “new Cold War” or “mini-NATO in Asia.”⁵

I would like to draw particular attention to two of the aforementioned security partnerships: AUKUS and developments in US-Philippine security cooperation.

AUKUS

I would argue that, for several reasons, the event that caused the most significant change in PRC views of U.S. alliances and security partnerships in the region over the past decade was the announcement of the AUKUS trilateral security partnership in 2021.

First, it was a surprise. The AUKUS agreement was announced suddenly and with very little buildup in the press or socialization of the concept in the region. Unlike the U.S.-Australia agreement to host rotational deployments of U.S. Marines in Darwin of the 2010s,⁶ which was telegraphed some months in advance, the PRC had little opportunity to prepare a response, exert influence, or attempt to shape regional views in advance of the AUKUS announcement. Seemingly overnight, they were faced with a different reality of the regional security environment.

Second, the announcement was a historic and potentially game-changing development. The agreement marked the first time that the U.S. has shared its sensitive nuclear-propulsion technology with an ally since the 1958 Mutual Defense Agreement with the United Kingdom. Moreover, the scope of cooperation between the three countries was more expansive than anything PRC military writers had talked about previously. In addition to sharing nuclear-propulsion technology in pillar one of this agreement, the second pillar allows for cooperation and joint development of capabilities ranging from cyber, artificial intelligence, and quantum technologies to hypersonic and counter-hypersonic capabilities. Taken together, AUKUS created a new ceiling in the potential for interoperability between the U.S. and other advanced militaries as they operate in Asia.⁷

Third, AUKUS solidified the perception in Beijing that Canberra was now openly aligned with Washington to China’s detriment and fully onboard with U.S. efforts to contain the PRC.

To be clear, PRC authors do not take all of the promises of AUKUS at face value—they are quick to point out the implementation challenges and to express skepticism that the governments of the U.S., UK, and Australia—and their respective defense industrial bases—are capable of meeting all of their AUKUS commitments. However, I would argue that the agreement itself has reshaped the PRC understanding of the universe of the possible with regard to alliances and security partnerships in Asia.

⁵ Zhong Sheng, “Building a ‘Mini-NATO’ Trilateral Alliance Harms Peace and Stability in the Asia-Pacific,” *People’s Daily*, Aug. 29, 2023, p. 17, http://paper.people.com.cn/rmrb/html/2023-08/29/nw.D110000renmrb_20230829_2-17.htm.

⁶ Donna Miles, “Rotational Force in Australia Paves Way for Big Growth in 2014,” American Forces Press Service, Sept. 24, 2013, <http://www.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=120844>.

⁷ For more, see Li Wei, “AUKUS, A Hot Topic at Beijing Xiangshan Forum Webinar 2021,” China Military Online, Oct. 28, 2021, http://english.chinamil.com.cn/view/2021-10/28/content_10103144.; John Christianson, Sean Monaghan, and Di Cooke, “AUKUS Pillar Two: Advancing the Capabilities of the United States, United Kingdom, and Australia,” <https://www.csis.org/analysis/aukus-pillar-two-advancing-capabilities-united-states-united-kingdom-and-australia>.

The US-Philippines Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement

A second security partnership development that the PRC would see as relevant to a scenario where the PLA may seek to constrain or restrict U.S. military operations in the region is the *US-Philippines Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement* (EDCA). EDCA is a 2014 agreement that grants the U.S. military temporary access to designated Philippine military facilities and allows the U.S. to pre-position military equipment at these sites. On February 2, 2023, the U.S. Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin and his Philippine counterpart announced plans to expand the scope of the EDCA by granting the U.S. military access to four new locations in “strategic areas of the country” and by completing projects in the five existing EDCA locations agreed to in 2016. Two months later, the U.S. Department of Defense spokesperson stated that the locations of the four new sites were Naval Base Camilo Osias in Santa Ana, Cagayan; Camp Melchor Dela Cruz in Gamu, Isabela; Balabac Island in Palawan; and Lal-lo Airport in Cagayan.⁸

Various commentators in PRC media drew attention to the proximity of three of these sites (in northeast Luzon) to Taiwan and one of them (in Palawan) to the disputed Spratly Islands in the South China Sea. The commentators argued that the U.S. intended to use the new EDCA sites to deter or fight China in possible contingencies involving Taiwan or the Spratly Islands.⁹

For example, one PLA officer noted, “US is using the favorable strategic position of the Philippines to strengthen its military presence in the South China Sea and Taiwan Strait, drive a wedge between China and the Philippines, and promote the implementation of U.S.-Philippines military cooperation.”¹⁰ Another PRC commentator voiced concern that the three sites in northeast Luzon would strengthen U.S. control over the Bashi Channel between the Philippines and Taiwan, which he described as “a critical pathway” for the PLA Navy to “enter and exit the First Island Chain.”¹¹

Improving U.S. military capabilities and platforms in the region

Although it is difficult to rank which developments the PLA finds most or least concerning based on information found in PRC media reports and academic journals, it is clear that PRC military and strategic thinkers have tracked with interest numerous force posture adjustments in the Indo-Pacific. These developments are most concerning for Beijing when improvements in U.S. military relations with an ally are coupled with agreements that change the U.S. military footprint in a country or region. One key example concerns recent developments in Japan’s Southwest Islands, which form part of the First Island Chain.

⁸ David Vergun, “New EDCA Sites Named in the Philippines.” <https://www.defense.gov/News/News-Stories/Article/Article/3350297/new-edca-sites-named-in-the-philippines/>.

⁹ “Balance Between Powers Big Test for Manila: China Daily Editorial,” China Daily, Feb. 1, 2023, <https://www.chinadaily.com.cn/a/202302/01/WS63da5e80a31057c47ebac5f3.html>; Liu Lin, “Observation | US to Build New Military Infrastructure at Four Philippine Bases, Where is the Sword of Strengthening Defense. Cooperation Directed?” The Paper, Feb. 3, 2023, https://m.thepaper.cn/newsDetail_forward_21786203.

¹⁰ Liu Lin, “Can US, Philippines Really Stand Shoulder to Shoulder?” The Paper, Apr. 7, 2023, https://m.thepaper.cn/newsDetail_forward_22597262.

¹¹ Fan Anqi, “US Intensifies Military Attempts in the Philippines, to ‘Tie Manila Closer to Its Geopolitical Chariot,’” Global Times in English, Apr. 5, 2023, <https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202304/1288576.shtml>.

Adjustments and investments around Japan's SW islands

Since 2022, PRC news media and academic journals have highlighted various completed, planned, and prospective U.S. and Japanese military deployments and exercise activities in Japan's Southwest Islands. Examples include the following:

- The potential deployment of intermediate-range ballistic or cruise missiles¹²
- The deployment of U.S. MQ-9 Reaper unmanned aerial vehicles to Kanoya Air Base¹³
- Planned upgrades to the Southwest Islands' logistics infrastructure related to airfields, ports, and medical facilities for Japanese Self-Defense Force use that were described in Japan's National Security Strategy, National Defense Strategy, and Defense Buildup Program¹⁴
- The planned deployment of an electronic warfare unit and surface-to-air guided missile unit to Yonaguni¹⁵
- The establishment of the U.S. Marine Corps' 12th Marine Littoral Regiment on Okinawa¹⁶

PRC SMEs argue that the increased range, concentration, and resilience of offensive capabilities being deployed to the islands could better position the Japan and the U.S. to (1) track PLA submarines, surface combatants, and aircraft; (2) deny the PLA access to key straits needed to enter the Pacific, and (3) destroy infrastructure on the PRC mainland and offshore islands as well as PLA platforms operating in the vicinity of Japan.

Other missile developments

U.S. missile deployments in Asia are a source of concern for the PRC, both for their military capability and their geopolitical significance. Missiles deployed by the U.S., as well as those acquired by its allies and partners, could be used offensively in the land, sea, and air domains against PLA targets or defensively to intercept the PLA's own missiles. Furthermore, it is not lost upon PRC military thinkers that the act of accepting a missile deployment is a significant commitment. By agreeing to host such a U.S. asset, a host country is agreeing to bear the costs of any domestic political opposition and to assume the risk that the U.S. asset hosted on its soil could

¹² "Regular Press Conference of the Ministry of National Defense on July 28," PRC Ministry of National Defense, Aug. 5, 2022, http://eng.mod.gov.cn/news/2022-08/05/content_4917402.htm.

¹³ CCTV-4: *China's Public Opinion Field*, Aug. 28, 2022, <https://tv.cctv.com/2022/08/29/VIDEHy7ayomppYfmqv3Q4vkw220829.shtml?spm=C52507945305.PXjYs4J0rffg.0.0>; CCTV-4: *Focus Today*: Sept. 22, 2022, <https://tv.cctv.com/2022/09/22/VIDE3NPrhml99ow0Wfqdva0J220922.shtml?spm=C45305.PmBKBQYn4ReN.E2dBMI2VdbgJ.33>.

¹⁴ In one such example, a PRC state television report stated that airfield upgrades in the Southwest Islands would include modified runways on Miyako, Ishigaki, and Yonaguni to accommodate the takeoff and landing of F-35s. See CCTV-4: *Asia Today*, Dec. 19, 2022, <https://tv.cctv.com/2022/12/19/VIDEFjxNr8IRU58IyQ32xZUA221219.shtml?spm=C45305.PilkmPvmwrBJ.E3GBGR5JxwmC.17>.

¹⁵ CCTV-4: *Focus Today*, Jan. 12, 2022, <https://tv.cctv.com/2022/01/12/VIDEXr8oSHhqHWT0jVzBjvGW220112.shtml?spm=C45305.PmBKBQYn4ReN.E2dBMI2VdbgJ.32>; Shenzhen TV: *Greater China Live*, Dec. 29, 2022, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SpI2_y4O7T8&ab_channel=%E7%9B%B4%E6%92%AD%E6%B8%AF%E6%BE%B3%E5%8F%B0GreaterChinaLive.

¹⁶ "12th Marine Regiment Redesignates to 12th Marine Littoral Regiment," Nov. 14, 2023, <https://www.marines.mil/News/Press-Releases/Press-Release-Display/Article/3588984/12th-marine-regiment-redesignates-to-12th-marine-littoral-regiment/>.

one day make their country a target of aggression. Indeed, reminders of the implicit costs of such a bargain are a message frequently transmitted by the PRC propaganda apparatus.¹⁷ Two recent missile deployment developments merit attention.

Tomahawk missiles to Japan. One high-profile missile development was the October 2023 announcement of an accelerated Tomahawk cruise missile sale to Japan. The announcement came just months after Japan's prime minister first confirmed that the country would purchase 400 Tomahawk missiles from the U.S. as part of efforts to develop "counterstrike capability," or the ability to use stand-off weapons to attack missile bases in enemy territory.¹⁸ Although Tokyo views this capability as defensive in nature and a complement to the country's air and missile defense systems, PRC commentators have taken a darker view. They have portrayed the accelerated sale,¹⁹ coupled with what they see as the development of "offensive" capabilities to strike enemy bases, as an indicator of increased Japanese militarism and willingness to side with the U.S. in challenging China's regional security interests.²⁰

US Army plans to deploy ground-based intermediate-range missiles in the Indo-Pacific in 2024. In late 2023, the U.S. Army announced plans to deploy ground-based intermediate-range missiles in the Indo-Pacific during the coming year. According to *Nikkei*, which cited remarks from a U.S. Army spokesperson, two options are being considered—land-based versions of the Standard Missile-6 (SM-6) and the Tomahawk cruise missile.²¹ The commanding general of U.S. Army Pacific said in a February 2024 *Proceedings* article that the Army was on track to deploy these midrange capabilities in the near term to "sink ships from land, at range, and with precision."²² The PRC has been vocal in expressing its concern. A spokesperson of China's Ministry of Defense referred to the planned deployment as a "dangerous move" that would "pose a serious threat to other nations."²³ An arms control specialist at a PRC government-affiliated think tank went so far

¹⁷ For example, see "Statement of the Spokesperson of the Chinese Embassy in the Philippines on U.S. Ambassador to the Philippines [Name Omitted] Remarks on EDCA Cooperation and South China Sea," Embassy of the People's Republic of China in the Philippines, Mar. 16, 2023, http://ph.china-embassy.gov.cn/eng/sgdt/202303/t20230312_11039384.htm; Ning Tuanhui, "AUKUS Deceitful Pact Should Not Deter Level-Headed New Zealand," *Global Times*, Nov. 3, 2021, <https://www.globaltimes.cn/page/202111/1238065.shtml>.

¹⁸ *Defense of Japan 2023*, Japanese Ministry of Defense, p. 234.

¹⁹ Lee Feraen, *Breaking Defense*, "US Clears \$2.4B Deal with Japan for Hundreds of Tomahawk Missiles, Systems," Nov. 17, 2023, <https://breakingdefense.com/2023/11/us-clears-2-4b-deal-with-japan-for-hundreds-of-tomahawk-missiles-systems/>.

²⁰ "The Japanese Maritime Self-Defense Force Hides Its 'Military Expansion' Ambitions," *People's Daily*, Dec. 8, 2022, <http://military.people.com.cn/n1/2022/1208/c1011-32583061.html>.; also see Defense Review, television program, CCTV-7, Oct. 9, 2023, <https://tv.cctv.com/2023/10/09/VIDE6kSIvvV13qKWDiAYtRws231009.shtml?spm=C52346.PFNWz3WcJJ8I.Ee7M47yacO9u.33>.

²¹ Ryo Nakamura and Ken Moriyasu, "US to Deploy New Ground-Based Missiles to Indo-Pacific," *Nikkei*, Dec. 3, 2023, <https://asia.nikkei.com/Politics/International-relations/Indo-Pacific/U.S.-to-deploy-new-ground-based-missiles-to-Indo-Pacific-in-2024>.

²² General Charles Flynn and Lieutenant Colonel Tim Devine, "To Ugun Seapower in the Indo-Pacific, You Need an Army," *Proceedings*, Vol. 150/2/1,452, Feb. 2024, <https://www.usni.org/magazines/proceedings/2024/february/upgun-seapower-indo-pacific-you-need-army>.

²³ "Regular Press Conference of China's Ministry of National Defense on November 30," Ministry of National Defense of the People's Republic of China, Dec. 6, 2023, http://eng.mod.gov.cn/xb/News_213114/NewsRelease/16271259.html.

as to assert that the deployment could trigger nuclear escalation because the missiles could be used to strike land-based nuclear targets of a potential adversary.²⁴

How do Chinese writings assess new U.S. operational concepts such as MDO for the Army and Air Force, ACE for the Air Force, DMO for the Navy and Marine Corps, and EABO for the Marine Corps?

PRC military thinkers and strategists carefully study all of the world's major militaries with an eye toward identifying operational lessons learned and gaining a better understanding of potential adversaries. Not surprisingly, evolving U.S. operational concepts are of high interest. Over the past few years, the U.S. has conducted a number of exercises and operations that have employed such operational concepts as MDO, ACE, DMO, and EABO. Common themes in the PRC media response to these activities include (1) an assumption that these concepts were developed to counter the PRC military—especially within the First Island Chain; (2) an assessment that, if successfully employed, these concepts have the potential to improve U.S. military stealth, strike, and survivability; and (3) a contention that PRC long-range missile capabilities have the potential to counter forces employing these concepts and raise the costs of conflict.

Some examples are listed below.

Large Scale Exercise (LSE) 2021 and 2023 (LSE 21, LSE 23). LSE 21 and LSE 23 both employed operational concepts such as DMO and EABO. PRC military experts assessed that the operational concepts were designed with a goal in mind of countering China, portrayed the exercises as opportunities to practice these concepts on a global scale, and suggested that if the U.S. military were successful in integrating these concepts, it could gain an advantage in a notional future conflict. For example, a former researcher at the PLA Academy of Military Sciences, opined on PRC state television that if the U.S. military is successful in “merging together” its various new concepts, it “could very clearly seize the maritime advantage over China.”²⁵

Noble Fusion. Noble Fusion was a combined, multi-service exercise staged in the Philippine Sea east of the Luzon and Miyako Straits on February 3-7 2022.²⁶ The exercise featured the participation of units from the US Navy, US Marine Corps, US Air Force, and the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force. PRC writings noted the application of EABO and MDO during this exercise and portrayed these concepts as likely to be employed in the event of a conflict.²⁷ For example,

²⁴ Guo Xiaobing, “US Land-Based Intermediate-Range Missile Deployment in Indo-Pacific May Trigger Nuclear Escalation,” *Global Times*, Dec. 4, 2023, <https://opinion.huanqiu.com/article/4Fcsy2Meo5E>.

²⁵ Focus Today, television program, CCTV-4, Aug. 10, 2023, <https://tv.cctv.com/2023/08/10/VIDEDg1cHLSSHIPQMh2Ll4HS230810.shtml?spm=C45305.PmBKBQYn4ReN.E2dBMI2VdbgJ.33>.

²⁶ Gunnery Sgt. Dengrier Baez, “Exercise Noble Fusion Kicks Off with Joint Combined Expeditionary Training In Philippine Sea,” *Marines*, Feb. 4, 2022, <https://www.marines.mil/News/News-Display/Article/2924024/exercise-noble-fusion-kicks-off-with-joint-combined-expeditionary-training-in-p/>; Lt. Col. Caleb Eames, “CTF-76/79 Highlights Joint and Allied Naval Expeditionary Force Capabilities during Noble Fusion,” *DVIDS*, Feb. 7, 2022, <https://www.dvidshub.net/news/414221/ctf-76-79-highlights-joint-and-allied-naval-expeditionary-force-capabilities-during-noble-fusion>.

²⁷ CCTV-4: Focus Today, Feb. 9, 2022, <https://tv.cctv.com/2022/02/09/VIDEtyKDxnX55oj2P2tugqva220209.shtml?spm=C45305.PmBKBQYn4ReN.E2dBMI2VdbgJ>.

one PLA officer assessed that Noble Fusion was “clearly focused on Taiwan” and that the U.S. and Japan are training in the concept of EABO “with Taiwan at the center.”²⁸

Some PRC writings about this exercise also argued that the PRC had the ability to counter these operational concepts—especially through the employment of the PRC’s long-range missile capabilities. For example, a retired PLA officer claimed that any U.S. “attempt to create a lonely outpost on the first island chain is basically impossible” due to China’s “long range missiles and air control capabilities.”²⁹

ACE. PRC writings generally describe ACE as a U.S. Air Force response to China’s anti-access/area denial (A2/AD) capabilities in the Indo-Pacific. In their writings, ACE is portrayed as providing the dual advantages of improving the stealth, mobility, and survivability of air assets at the same time reducing the planning time and logistical support required for air operations.³⁰ ACE featured prominently in PRC media reporting on recent iterations of Valiant Shield and Cope North as well as the U.S. Air Force effort to construct a divert airfield on Tinian Island of the Mariana Islands.

Recommendations

A common element of many of the areas of concern expressed in PRC media and academic journals is the central role of allies and partners in working in concert with U.S. military forces in any scenario where the PLA may seek to constrain or restrict U.S. military operations in the region. To have confidence that we will retain the access and support of our allies and partners in the region and globally, it is imperative that the U.S. do all within its power to increase confidence in the durability of its commitment to the region, its reliability as a partner, and its intention to promote and preserve the values that guide our foreign policy. In some cases, doing so will require countering disinformation campaigns designed to generate opposition or discontent with U.S. presence in the region, and in other cases it may require taking difficult actions to demonstrate the reliability of the U.S. as a security partner. With this in mind, I make the following recommendations.

- Reauthorize the Global Engagement Center to ensure that the U.S. has the tools required to counter PRC mis-/dis-/ and mal-information activities that seek to degrade and undermine support for the U.S. presence in the Indo-Pacific.
- Support legislation to provide funding and military assistance to Ukraine to demonstrate the staying power of the U.S. commitment to resisting aggression.

²⁸ CCTV-4: Focus Today, Feb. 9, 2022, <https://tv.cctv.com/2022/02/09/VIDEtyKDxnX55oj2P2tugqva220209.shtml?spm=C45305.PmBKBQYn4ReN.E2dBMI2VdbgJ.32>; CCTV-7: Defense Review, Feb. ,9 2022, <https://tv.cctv.com/2022/02/09/VIDEi81SjZcvdQxpevRoBFq2220209.shtml?spm=C52346.P3qPxW9Ux1lo.EX5KFDTi4RyG.1> .

²⁹ CCTV-4: Asia Today, Feb. 9, 2022, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X3iapiO6AZk>.

³⁰ “US Media: The US Air Force Trains ‘Dividing the Whole into Smaller Parts’ in the Pacific,” Reference News (Cankao Xiaoxi), Apr. 27, 2019, <http://www.cankaoxiaoxi.com/mil/20190427/2378600.shtml>; Wen Jie, “‘Rapid Raptor’ the US Military’s New Deployment Tactic for F-22,” Ordnance Knowledge (Bingqi Zhishi), Aug. 1, 2016.