



U.S.-CHINA ECONOMIC AND SECURITY  
REVIEW COMMISSION

## Hearing on “China’s Foreign Policy: Challenges and Actors”

### Opening Statement of Commissioner Carolyn Bartholomew

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As China’s overseas interests and presence expand, so too will the range of foreign policy challenges Beijing faces. Addressing these challenges adeptly and successfully will require new ways of thinking about foreign policy priorities and new ways to implement them. At the same time, an increasing presence on the world stage inevitably creates tension for the Chinese government between safeguarding its overseas interests and its long-standing stated position of opposing interference in other countries’ internal affairs. How elastic is the concept of non-interference in internal affairs?

For example, as the West has struggled to respond to events in Libya, a country with 36,000 Chinese workers and a large source of Chinese oil imports, Beijing supported UN sanctions against the Qaddafi regime. It then abstained from supporting the use of military force to prevent a humanitarian crisis, and subsequently criticized the actions of Western coalition forces. Can we expect China to move further along a continuum of foreign policy actions? Will the Chinese government’s decisions be systematic or on an ad hoc basis? Is there a new emerging “China doctrine,” influenced and shaped by new parties? If so, what does this mean for U.S. diplomacy?

As Beijing flexes its muscles, it has strong new tools to employ, including increased economic leverage, especially in light of the global financial crisis. Both developing and developed countries welcome Chinese trade, investment, and economic aid. Europe is actively pursuing Chinese assistance for addressing its sovereign debt crisis. And countries from Suriname to Kenya to Tonga are recipients of the fruits of China’s growing economic power. So, too, are a number of “countries of concern.”

Yet Beijing’s open arms and deep pockets raise concerns in many countries. For example, some in the developing world see Beijing’s investment as a new form of colonialism while many struggle with displacement of domestic production by Chinese goods. The acquisition of resources is clearly guiding much Chinese investment, but what else will the Chinese government expect in return for its generous terms and large investments? Will Chinese investment around the world shape the willingness of countries to challenge China on its policies or behavior?

And while the challenges China faces in foreign policy grow in scope and complexity, there may also be changes occurring in China’s foreign policy apparatus. Some of our witnesses today will discuss the emergence of new, or newly empowered, voices in China’s foreign policy making process. The roles of traditional foreign policy actors, such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the People’s Liberation Army may be evolving. New actors such as resource companies, financial institutions, local governments, and netizens are coming on the scene. What role are they playing in the development of China’s foreign policy?

All of these issues may result in a Chinese foreign policy that radically differs from the past. We will be joined today by a number of experts from the Administration, academia, and private organizations who we hope will help us answer some of these questions. In particular, we are pleased to welcome Congressman Dana Rohrabacher from California who has taken time out of his busy schedule to join us, as well as Mr. Daniel Kritenbrink from the State Department and Mr. David Helvey from the Department of Defense to present the Obama Administration’s perspectives.

Before I turn it over to my colleague for his remarks, I’d also like to thank Senator Ben Nelson and his staff for helping us to secure today’s hearing room.