

UNCLASSIFIED

STATEMENT FOR THE RECORD

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FOR:

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Hearing on “Strengthening Deterrence in the Indo-Pacific”

Introduction

Good morning Chairman Moolenaar, Ranking Member Krishnamoorthi, and other distinguished members of this Committee.

I am honored to be here today to share my assessment of the military threats posed by China and several ways that we can counter the increasingly dangerous security situation in the Indo-Pacific. The urgency to restore deterrence against China goes hand-in-hand with preparing to fight and win a large-scale conflict.

I will share how the United States can achieve—and in some cases regain—military advantages to disrupt and defeat the CCP’s militant ambitions. As a retired Army 4-star general, my views represent an alternative to the mainstream—not by contradicting the prevailing logic, but by offering a more comprehensive outlook on the most consequential military problem we face.

Drawing on my 39 years in the U.S. Army and command experience across the Indo-Pacific, including the 25th Infantry Division and U.S. Army Pacific, I will focus on the role of landpower—often overlooked in cross-Strait scenarios. Sea control, air superiority, space, and cyber dominance are all vital—but there are two key points I want to reinforce about landpower in this theater.

The Role of Landpower in the Taiwan Scenario

First, U.S. Army capabilities **underwrite the joint force**. The Army owns more executive agent responsibilities supporting other services than any other DoD entity. Army forces

provide essential functions: long-range precision fires, theater logistics, prepositioned stocks, missile defense, intelligence, command and control, construction, and medicine.

These capabilities create depth, enable reach, and bind the interdependencies of the joint force. In short, without Army forces occupying key terrain, we cannot achieve maritime or air superiority.

Importantly, the Marine Corps, while expeditionary and critical to fleet operations, does not provide the enduring presence or logistical staying power required to hold terrain. That is the Army's role.

PLA Ground Forces: The True Center of Gravity

Second, many analysts mistakenly identify the PLA Navy, Air Force, or Rocket Force as the center of gravity in a cross-Strait scenario. But while these forces can enable an invasion, they **cannot achieve the objective**.

The **PLA Army**, specifically the 72nd and 73rd Group Armies under the Eastern Theater Command, is the **only force capable of seizing, occupying, and subjugating Taiwan**. That is the military objective. Without tens of thousands of PLA ground troops—backed by mechanized and support elements—the CCP cannot win.

Air and sea bombardment cannot substitute for troops who seize ground, suppress resistance, and impose political control.

As naval strategist JC Wylie once wrote:

“The ultimate determinant in war is the man on the scene with a gun... He is control. He determines who wins.”

Taiwan cannot be conquered without PLA soldiers on the ground. Ukraine has reminded us: wars are ultimately decided by ground combat. Even in the Middle East, with full-domain superiority, we required ground forces to close the fight.

So it would be a strategic error to marginalize landpower. Not only does it enable deterrence, but for the PLA, it is the only means of victory.

The PLA's challenge is enormous. To win, it must:

- Cross 100 miles of contested ocean
- Establish and sustain beachheads
- Conduct urban warfare against a dug-in defense
- Do all this before U.S. and allies can fully intervene

If the PLA Army fails to land and hold terrain, the invasion fails. Even if we sink their ships and down their planes, if they seize the island, they win.

The Regional Security Environment

Zooming out, the regional security situation is more dangerous than at any point in my career. China's aggression is growing—incremental, insidious, and global.

In South Asia, the Belt and Road fuels rivalries and instability. Clashes with India on the Line of Actual Control, the Burma civil war, and China's drive to bypass maritime chokepoints like the Malacca Strait all reveal strategic positioning connected to Taiwan.

In Southeast Asia, China weaponizes infrastructure, restricts water access along the Mekong, and undermines the sovereignty of partners like the Philippines.

In the Southwest Pacific, China exports internal security forces like the People's Armed Police to establish footholds on key terrain—ports and airfields critical to military operations. This also threatens over a million American citizens across our Pacific territories and homeland.

Defending our Pacific soil is not abstract—it is a core national responsibility.

The Case for Landpower

China's rehearsals around Taiwan—joint fires, amphibious assaults, missile tests—are not just exercises. As Admiral Paparo noted, they are war plan rehearsals.

Air and sea power are essential. But they **do not operate in isolation**. U.S. Army forces provide the logistics, missile defense, C2, and fires that **enable** air and sea superiority. They also partner with Indo-Pacific armies across our treaty allies and strategic partners.

In the absence of a formal collective security alliance, the Army builds a **strategic landpower network**.

No other service can provide this.

U.S. Army Capabilities and Contributions

Fires – Systems like Typhon and HIMARS deter PLA planning. Typhon's deployment to the Philippines is already shifting Chinese calculus. We must accelerate deployment and diversify suppliers.

Resilient Maneuver – Army forces complicate PLA targeting. Continued investment in mobility (FLRAA), autonomy, and layered air defense is essential.

Cross-Domain Integration – Multi-Domain Task Forces combine fires, intel collection and sensing, AI, cyber, and space into an integrated deterrence platforms. These formations have become a version of the Joint Targeting Clearinghouse for Fires in forward positions. They are incredibly important to both the US Forces and our Allies and Partners to see, sense, understand, and if need be strike. They are lethal and non-lethal formations that change the calculus of the Chinese.

The Network – Army theater intel, signal and cyber capabilities underpin joint operations. We must retire vulnerable legacy systems and modernize SBUE networks for partner interoperability.

Sustainment – Army logistics, medicine, and transport are essential enablers for all services. These must be prepositioned and distributed across the Indo-Pacific now—not during crisis.

Security Force Assistance – SFABs build lasting partnerships with the many ground-centric militaries in Asia. These relationships are our strategic connective tissue.

Strategic Influence, Information, and Psychological Operations

Beyond conventional military deterrence, we must also win the information and psychological contest in the IndoPacific. China's "Three Warfares" strategy—legal, psychological, and public opinion warfare—is actively deployed to fracture regional cohesion, isolate Taiwan, and erode allied confidence. Our response must go beyond missiles and maneuvers. We must synchronize messaging, posture, and influence across the entire region with concentration on the First and Second Island Chains to reinforce allied resolve and sow uncertainty and doubt in Beijing's calculus.

U.S. psychological operations, integrated with joint training, alliance commitments, information messaging, and strategic communications, should visibly demonstrate unity and readiness—especially among frontline states like Japan, the Philippines, Korea, and Taiwan. By amplifying democratic cooperation, exposing Chinese aggression, and reinforcing the credibility of allied military responses, we deny China the informational space it needs to divide and fragment people and our partnerships. Strategic influence is not a supplement to deterrence—it is a central pillar of it.

Conclusion

The significance of key terrain—land areas—has not diminished, even in a region blanketed by water. In fact, it has only increased given the reach, speed, and precision of modern battlefield technologies coupled with the fact that more people live in the Indo-Pacific than anywhere else on the planet. It is critical that Army forces "be there" –

so they can reinforce – and in some cases reestablish – military advantages called for by Admiral Paparo. We can successfully deny a PLA invasion of Taiwan if we better incorporate the role and contributions of ground forces – on both sides – into our strategy.

Furthermore, investing in our own Army and ground-based warfighting systems represent asymmetric investments in terms of cost and capability. We should be extremely cautious about going all-in on high-end platforms and technologies that we cannot regenerate or quickly replace in wartime. Not to say we should not maintain a technological edge, but we should consider doing so by leveraging lower cost and more readily produced alternatives, namely those operating from the land domain. Couple that with how ground systems offer greater survivability, because they offer a counter capability to the PLA's A2/AD network – a network that was designed to defeat our air and maritime power, not mobile, reloadable, concealable, networked, meshed ground forces.

Again, my intent is not to make an argument for either-or. Land forces cannot deter or win this conflict in isolation. However, the same is true regarding other forms of military power. Rather, I am hoping to emphasize for this committee that not only do **US Army forces underwrite our jointness, but also the distinct advantages that U.S. Army ground forces offer in ways that complement our high-cost investments in naval and air power.** Furthermore, we must consider the centrality of landpower from the PLA's perspective – they cannot win without an invasion force capable of seizing the terrestrial objective.

I know that this committee regularly hears from defense experts who claim we have entered a key moment when our national choices will dictate future outcomes for both our Partners in the region as well as our Nation here at home. I will add emphasis to this urgency by saying that **the United States' window for strategic decision-making is closing. China is moving quickly to ready their armed forces to seize military initiative in crisis, and consequently we must accelerate our own preparations. We must prioritize the training readiness, modernization, and organization of our armed forces towards our Nation's most critical global threat – China, and specifically to counter their cross-Strait invasion plans.**

It is imperative that the United States approaches China's challenge with urgency, clarity, and resolve. U.S. landpower, integrated with our air and sea capabilities – including our strategic nuclear forces – as well as space and cyber, provides not only the deterrence necessary to prevent conflict but also the assurance to our allies that America stands unwavering in its commitment to a free and open Indo-Pacific.

Thank you, and I look forward to your questions.