

Written Statement of J. Randy Forbes

Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee on East Asia, the Pacific, and International Cyber Security Policy Hearing

March 29, 2017

Chairman Gardner, Ranking Member Markey, members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the work your subcommittee does and for the honor of appearing before you this afternoon. I am also very happy to be here with Robert Gallucci.

The topic you have chosen for this hearing is both timely and critical. While the world's eyes seem rightly focused on the instability of North Korea's leadership and the actions of that leadership, it would be wrong to conclude that this was merely "a crisis de jour." The security issues presented with North Korea and the entire Indo-Asia-Pacific region will continue to require more attention and resources from the United States. We ignore this not just at our peril, but at the peril of the world.

To say that I admire the expertise of each member of this subcommittee is not flattery, it is simply accurate. I read much of what you write, and I listen to much of what you say. My comments this afternoon are not offered with the arrogance of believing they are not without challenge. However, they are offered with my conviction that they are right, and with my hope that they will at least open avenues of thought which could assist in some small manner in preparing us as a nation for the challenges we will face in the Asia-Pacific area for decades to come.

The current security outlook in the Asia-Pacific region is precarious at best. For decades, the peace and prosperity of the Asia-Pacific region has been based upon the perception that the United States was both willing and able to intervene decisively to stop aggression by one country in that critical region against another.

Today, more than at any point I can recall, that peace and prosperity is in jeopardy. The causes of present concern are well known to this committee.

First, China is now almost two decades into an ambitious and unprovoked military buildup, with a clear goal of supplanting the United States as the dominant military power in the region. At the same time, it is using paramilitary forces to commit "gray-zone" aggressions against its neighbors and establish de facto control of disputed waters. The tangible result is that they have now reclaimed over 3,000 acres of land (features) in the South China Sea and they have militarized many of these features contrary to international law.

Second, North Korea and the regime of Kim Jong Un continue to pose an imminent and unpredictable threat to their neighbors, while steadily pursuing a larger nuclear arsenal and the capability to threaten and potentially strike the continental United States.

Yet, even these two causes for concern do not adequately reflect the sea change that has taken place regarding the security threat currently existing in the Asia-Pacific area.

For example, it is not just that China has been engaged in a significant military buildup. It is the nature of that build up that is concerning. They have developed advanced fighter aircraft and long range cruise and ballistic missiles that can threaten U. S. assets at much greater ranges. They have credible capabilities to destroy, disable or reduce the effectiveness of U. S. aircraft carriers and to threaten regional air bases so as to deny air superiority. If you combine this with their advances in electronic warfare, space operations, and cyber capabilities a very concerning tapestry begins to unfold.

Equally concerning is a new boldness and aggressiveness appearing in Chinese leadership, especially in their rising ranks. This is especially manifested in a growing willingness to disregard international laws and norms and to project their claims in ways creating more opportunity for possible confrontation.

North Korea has always posed a problem because normal principles of diplomacy and asymmetrical coercion do not work well with irrational actors and that is what we face in North Korea. The difference between the threat we face today versus the threat we faced even a decade ago is quite substantial. A decade ago, we worried about a conflict in a single domain with a single actor. Today, a conflict most likely would involve multiple actors and would almost certainly involve multiple domains. A conflict could very well present the normal threat of conventional warfare but be combined with potential nuclear, cyber, or even space challenges.

So why is this region so important?

Many analysts including former U.S. Secretary of Defense Carter and the current PaCom commander, Admiral Harry Harris have called this "the most consequential region for America's future." It is easy to see why. In the coming decades, this is the region where the largest armies in the world will camp. This is the region where the most powerful navies in the world will gather. This is the region where over one half of the world's commerce will take place and two thirds will travel. This is the region where a maritime superhighway (transporting good or bad things) linking the Indian Subcontinent, Southeast Asia, Australia, Northeast Asia, and the United States begins. This is the region where five of America's seven defense treaties is located. This is the region where two superpowers will compete to determine which world order will prevail. This is the region where the seeds of conflict that could most engulf the world will probably be planted.

Recognizing the importance of this region is vital and I was one of the first to applaud the Obama administration for doing so when it first announced its "pivot" to the Asia Pacific area which was soon renamed the "rebalance." Unfortunately, confusion about this policy was not limited to its name. When there is confusion in the articulation of a policy, our competitors and allies can look to how we resource that policy in an attempt to extrapolate what it means. Otherwise, they are left to define it for themselves which often means our competitors see in it their worst fears and our allies have expectations that are never realized. That is exactly what happened with the "rebalance."

Since this hearing is focused on security issues, I have limited my analysis and comments to those issues. The scope prevents me from looking at other important issues such as human rights, trade, economic development goals, and the principles of democracy itself. Yet I know you realize the importance of all of these issues.

From a security view, the rebalance was not only grossly under resourced but the signaling was very poor. One of the primary reasons for this was the failure to develop an adequate National Defense Strategy. According to testimony before the House Armed Services Seapower and Projection Forces Subcommittee, the primary document used to resource the military during much of the last administration was its 2012 National Strategic Guidelines. Those Guidelines were fatally flawed with wrong assumptions. Four of those assumptions according to testimony later presented by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to the full House Armed Services Committee were:

1. That Isis would not rebound and grow as it did
2. That the U.S. would be out of Iraq and Afghanistan
3. That the Chinese would not militarize as they did
4. That the Russians would not rebuild at the rate they did

The result among other shortfalls was that in 2007 the Navy could meet approximately 90 percent of our combatant commanders validated requests. Last year the Navy was able to meet less than 42 percent. A defense budget was presented that would have delayed the deployment of an aircraft carrier and remove cruisers from our fleet. There were major reductions in the army and the air force. Carrier gaps emerged and our surge capacity challenged. FONOPS were essentially prohibited between 2012 and 2015 and allowed only begrudgingly at other times.

The chinese felt they were virtually unchecked and our allies seriously questioned not just our capability but our resolve in the Asia-Pacific area. China and North Korea share responsibility for the growing instability we

see in Asia. But at the same time, the stability of the international system is also being undermined by the fact that the willingness and ability of the United States to uphold it has fallen into doubt. The Obama Administration's "rebalance" to the Asia-Pacific signaled that Washington understood the importance of this region to U.S. interests. However, failure to adequately resource this effort-both at the Department of Defense and the State Department-resulted in it falling short of hopes and expectations.

So what recommendations can we offer for moving forward? While we certainly can not do everything, there is much we can do.

I believe the most important thing this subcommittee and this congress can do is to build a new culture of strategic thinking. I am convinced that we will need to increase our defense spending. However, you can not just write a check to fix our security issues in the asia-pacific area. We need first and foremost a comprehensive National Defense Strategy with a major part of it focused on the Indo-Asia-Pacific arena.

We can argue over nomenclature, but for the purposes of my comments, "strategy" is that endeavor by which we balance our ways, means, and desired ends. It is where we make trade offs and though it is not popular to say, take risks. I also agree with Lawrence Freedman's conclusion that its purpose is "about getting more out of a situation than the starting balance of power would suggest."

"Policies" are the guidelines that help structure how decisions are made within the broader strategic architecture.

"Tactics" are how we implement our decisions through action.

Strategy should drive policy which should drive tactics. However, I fear that all too often in our country today we are reversing the order and becoming reactionary instead of strategic. There was a time when we could afford that error because we could essentially outrun our mistakes. That time has passed. There may have been a time when we could rely solely on our military strength. That time has passed. So too has the time when our strategy can be dictated by our budget.

To be effective, a National Defense Strategy must be birthed in a marriage between Congress and the Administration. It must also be a holistic approach uniting every element of government power. You should no longer accept the ruse that you are not entitled to a strategy because it is like some secret football play that can not be disclosed until you have to use it. For a National Defense Strategy to work you must be able to articulate it so that policy makers feel comfortable resourcing it, so our allies know how to embrace it, and so our competitors know the lines not to cross. To do that, I would suggest the following:

- A. Require the Department of Defense to develop and present to Congress a National Defense Strategy along with the basic assumptions used to develop it. If the assumptions are wrong, the Strategy will be flawed.
- B. Require the Department of Defense to show how its budget resources that Strategy and the risks assumed if it is not so resourced.
- C. Ask for a plan from both the Department of Defense and the Department of State as to how it plans to improve strategic thinking. If it is not a priority to agency leadership, it will not happen. If you are not seeing it in personnel decisions, it will probably not happen.
- D. Require a cross agency review of Asia-Pacific policies with a task force designed to develop policy guidelines and to ensure those guidelines are compatible with the National Defense Strategy.

Our U.S. security alliances are very durable but they need reinforcement. They need to know that the United States still knows how "to make the trains run on time," especially when it comes to national defense. Articulating a well-reasoned National Defense Strategy they can embrace and resourcing it to show an increased presence in the area will do much to strengthen these alliances. In addition, I would suggest the following:

1. Continue to strengthen bilateral alliances with Japan and South Korea, while also encouraging and enabling those two key allies to cooperate more closely with one another on many issues of mutual concern.
2. Make clear our commitment to the security of Taiwan. Our allies read our resolutions, so language can be important.
3. Work with Prime Minister Duterte to sustain recent progress in US-Philippines defense cooperation and, importantly, ensure that American forces can continue to deploy to the Philippines in support of both Philippine security and our broader security objectives in the region. Despite recent bumps in the road, it is still mutually beneficial to both countries to improve this relationship.
4. Continue to work with our ANZUS allies, Australia and New Zealand, and in particular explore additional options for forward deploying or forward staging American forces and conducting combined training in the region. This includes integrated maintenance and ground support operations as well as greater integration of 5th generation fighter deployments.
5. Seek to develop closer ties with countries like India, Vietnam, and others that share many of our security concerns and could be enabled to play a bigger role in maintaining regional stability.
6. For too long, the Asia-Pacific has not been prioritized within the State Department security assistance budget in a way that is commensurate with its level of importance to U.S. interests. Indeed, in recent years, the entire region has received only 1 percent of U.S. Foreign Military Financing. If we conclude that this may be the "most consequential region for America's future" we should strongly consider proposals for an Asia-Pacific Stability Initiative as a budget mechanism similar to the European Reassurance Initiative with the goal of devoting additional resources to our interests in the Pacific.
7. We certainly must send additional funding to DOD to invest in munitions, resiliency, sustainment, and capabilities that Pacific Command needs. However, I would also advocate for increasing targeted Foreign Military Financing and International Education and Training funding to help

enhance the militaries of partners like the Philippines, Thailand, Vietnam, Indonesia, and Malaysia.

8. Routinize Freedom of Navigation Operations (FONOPS).

9. Reconsider the efficacy of the Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty. Since 1987, the United States has complied with the bilateral Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty with Russia, which prohibits either party from fielding certain types of surface-to-surface missiles. At the same time, China has deployed over 1000 of these missiles, according to DoD reports to Congress, and uses them to menace our allies and partners and our own forward deployed forces in the region. In light of this fact, and the recent testimony by Gen. Paul Selva, Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, that Russia is actively violating the INF Treaty, I believe this committee should begin reassessing whether continued adherence to the INF Treaty is in the interest of our country. As a member of the House Armed Services Committee's Strategic Forces Subcommittee, I tasked the DoD with reassessing the military implications, but I believe it is incumbent upon this committee to further explore the diplomatic and broader foreign policy considerations.

10. Support efforts to restore US military readiness and better prepare it for threats. While I realize the importance of focusing on matters of foreign policy that fall clearly within the purview of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, I would be remiss if I did not remind members of the committee that deterrence, which I believe is the primary contributor to peace and prosperity, is predicated upon the belief that our country is both willing and able to stand up to aggression. To deter aggression in the Asia-Pacific, we must make it clear to would-be aggressors that we not only remain committed to the region, but also will be able to effectively project power into the region, deny aggressors their objectives, and impose costs and punishments upon them. Current shortfalls in U.S. military readiness-such as insufficient stockpiles of precision-guided munitions, and forgone training and maintenance- are seriously undermining our ability to respond to and defeat aggression. This, in turn, undermines our ability to deter it.

11. Finally, no discussion of Asia-Pacific security issues would be complete without at least discussing the rise of Islamic extremism. If one thing is

increasingly clear there is no single magical response now available to eradicate this dangerous evil. We must continue to foster partnerships not just with our allies but also with other actors within the region who suffer from its effects. In the cross agency review I addressed earlier, I would specifically laser in on joint efforts to cut off the funding streams for these organizations. Removing the financing is like removing the oxygen from a room, it makes it almost impossible for the organization to survive or grow.

Once again, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you and thank you for what you do for our country.