

**UNCLASSIFIED**

HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE

STATEMENT OF  
MAJOR GENERAL JP MCGEE  
VICE DIRECTOR FOR STRATEGY, PLANS, AND POLICY  
JOINT STAFF, J5  
BEFORE THE  
HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE  
19 SEPTEMBER 2023

## UNCLASSIFIED

Chairman Rogers, Ranking Member Smith, and Members of the Committee, I appreciate this opportunity to update you on how the Joint Force supports Department of Defense efforts to strengthen deterrence across the Taiwan Strait. The Joint Force remains fully committed to supporting a whole-of-government approach to addressing critical national security challenges in the region consistent with the Taiwan Relations Act (TRA), the Three Joint Communiques, and the Six Assurances. Accordingly, I am pleased to testify alongside Assistant Secretary of Defense Ratner and Deputy Assistant Secretary Resnick from the Department of State.

### *Outlining the Challenge*

The National Defense Strategy identifies the People's Republic of China (PRC) as our most consequential strategic competitor – our “pacing challenge” – and the only one capable of integrating the elements of its national power to mount a sustained challenge to U.S. interests. Over the past ten years, we've observed the PRC working to improve its military capability and capacity in one of the largest, fastest, and most comprehensive military build-ups since World War II.

In the last two years, we've seen a marked increase in the People's Liberation Army (PLA)'s maritime and air activity as the PRC continues its pressure campaign against Taiwan and strives to increase its regional influence. Although the PLA still operates under critical limitations including the lack of combat experience, insufficiently realistic training, and challenges in training its personnel on advanced equipment, the risk of a PRC attempt at forceful unification with Taiwan is a significant threat against which we must be prepared.

The PRC's actions are destabilizing and increase the likelihood of miscalculation. However, as you have heard Secretary Austin and General Milley say, conflict across the Taiwan Strait is

## UNCLASSIFIED

neither imminent nor inevitable. Deterrence, backed by the most capable and credible fighting force in the world, is real and strong today, and we are taking steps to strengthen cross-strait deterrence in accordance with long-standing policy. We are working to strengthen peace and stability across the Indo-Pacific region by delivering a forward leaning, cutting edge Joint Force, integrating with regional allies and partners, and supporting our commitments under the Taiwan Relations Act.

### *Delivering a Forward Leaning, Cutting-Edge Joint Force*

Forward-based joint forces with lethal capabilities demonstrate resolve, support allies and partners, and provide senior leaders with options during a contingency. Fielding combat ready forces throughout the Indo-Pacific requires access, basing, and overflight arrangements. The Department is supporting U.S. Indo-Pacific Command's (USINDOAPCOM) pursuit of permanent and rotational operating locations to provide maximum resiliency and flexibility for any contingency. The funding provided by Congress in 2023 and the President's FY 2024 budget request will enable the Department and Joint Force to continue the necessary planning and implementation of these efforts.

With Congress' support, the Department is delivering cutting-edge capabilities to the Joint Force today and investing in capabilities we'll need to maintain deterrence or prevail in conflict into the future. Today, the Joint Force can deliver effects throughout the region; however, we must continue to maintain and expand our technological advantage across all domains. Maintaining our joint warfighting advantages will deter conflict and, should deterrence fail, enable the Joint Force to prevail should deterrence fail. The President's FY 2024 budget request will ensure the Department's ability to provide effective future deterrence. The requested Pacific

## UNCLASSIFIED

Deterrence Initiative funding, along with research, development, and procurement funding, will enable us to outpace our challengers by developing and deploying breakthrough technologies in addition to strengthening the resilient force posture we need.

### *Integrating with Regional Allies and Partners*

The Joint Force fully supports the Department's efforts to grow the coalition of partners dedicated to preserving peace and stability throughout the Indo-Pacific region. This network of allies and partners is the Joint Force's greatest asymmetric advantage. Our alliances, multilateral arrangements, partnerships, and friendships are essential elements of this network and critical for providing regional security. Accordingly, the Joint Force supports our Indo-Pacific allies and partners as they work to improve their capabilities, build relationships with each other, and strengthen their relationships with the U.S. The Joint Force will continue to strengthen security cooperation, training, and campaigning with allies and partners by focusing on increasing interoperability, building capacity, and enhancing shared security.

Effective campaigning requires persistent and synchronized joint operations in cooperation with our allies and partners. Recurring joint and combined operations and exercises are critical to building the warfighting advantage we need to deter aggression. The Joint Force recognizes this as it develops capabilities and creatively combines them in new operational approaches such as the Joint Warfighting Concept. This approach enables the Joint Force to operate across all domains, and it will facilitate our campaigning with regional allies and partners. This campaigning will normalize our operations throughout the region, deliver interoperable warfighting partners, and provide opportunities to rehearse our operational approach.

## UNCLASSIFIED

### *Supporting our Commitments Under the Taiwan Relations Act*

The Joint Force supports the Department as it continues to uphold commitments consistent with the Taiwan Relations Act, including providing Taiwan with sufficient self-defense capabilities. The TRA has enabled peace, stability, and deterrence across the Strait for over four decades. It also provides the foundation of bipartisan support for providing Taiwan with self-defense capabilities and maintaining the Joint Force's capacity to resist anything that jeopardizes Taiwan's security. This is increasingly important as the PRC continues its coercion campaign against Taiwan and resists efforts to engage in military-to-military dialogue to deescalate tensions. We believe in the importance of maintaining open lines of communication to ensure competition doesn't turn into conflict.

Taiwan will create a formidable challenge for any invading forces if it can leverage its terrain and asymmetrically employ its weapon systems. "Asymmetric defense" is an approach designed to attack or capitalize on an adversary's vulnerabilities, rather than attacking an adversary's strengths. Asymmetric capabilities must be credible, resilient, mobile, distributed, and cost-effective to achieve multi-domain deterrence and signal to an adversary that an invasion or an attack would not come without significant cost. The equipment Taiwan is procuring and the support they are receiving is ensuring that Taiwan can better defend itself.

Continuously refined capability requirements for Taiwan's defense inform U.S. security cooperation with Taiwan. The capabilities we provide are tailored to counter the military threat Taiwan faces, and we believe they provide the best return on investment and deterrent value.

Cross-Strait peace and stability remain a fundamental U.S. national security interest in the Indo-Pacific. The Joint Force recognizes the growing threat from the PRC and its military, and we are committed, in line with long-standing policy, to support Taiwan's ability to deter and

**UNCLASSIFIED**

defend its successful and prosperous democracy. Thank you for what this Committee and this Congress have done, and continue to do, to provide oversight and resources to counter the PRC's increasingly coercive and aggressive behavior. I look forward to your questions and today's discussion.