

Appendix 117 -- US CINCPAC Admiral Blair Statement to Congress (2000)

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HEARING OF THE HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE DEPARTMENT OF
DEFENSE FISCAL YEAR 2001 BUDGET

CHAIR BY: REPRESENTATIVE FLOYD D. SPENCE (R-SC)

WITNESSES: ADMIRAL DENNIS C. BLAIR, U.S. NAVY, U.S. PACIFIC COMMAND
CINC GENERAL THOMAS A. SCHWARTZ, U.S. ARMY, CINC OF U.S. FORCES-
KOREA GENERAL ANTHONY C. ZINNI,

U.S. MARINE CORPS, U.S. CENTRAL COMMAND CINC

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(Excerpts)

REP. SPENCE: (Raps gavel.) The meeting will please be in order. I want to apologize for our lax attendance. We have people in other meetings, and they'll be here shortly. We thought we might go ahead and get started.

Well, today, the committee continues its examination of the fiscal year 2001 defense budget request and the impact it will have on our policy, strategy, and military operations in the Middle East and in the Asia Pacific Region.

Joining us are three senior officers whose collective areas of responsibility literally circle the globe, stretching from the West Coast of our country, across the Pacific Ocean, to the North African shores of the Atlantic Ocean.

Most of the global population and most of the world's trouble spots are within our witnesses' area of responsibility. These areas include China, North Korea, Iran, Iraq, India, Pakistan and 62 other nations. Developments in these theaters significantly affect vital United States national security interests today and in the future.

Our witnesses today are General Anthony C. Zinni, commander in chief of the United States Central Command; Admiral Dennis C. Blair, commander in chief of the United States Pacific Command; and General Thomas A. Schwartz, commander in chief, United States Forces-Korea.

Gentlemen, we welcome you and thank you for taking the time out of your busy schedule to

testify before the committee today. Today, at the dawn of the 21st century, the United States faces significant challenges to its national security, many of which emanate from countries that fall within our witnesses' area of responsibility.

Unfortunately, there is little evidence to suggest that we are more secure now from threats originating from these areas than we were last year. In fact, in a number of significant cases, I believe the security situation we face today is even greater.

Iraq continues to defy the international community and to develop weapons of mass destruction. Nearly a decade after the end of the Gulf War, Saddam Hussein is still in power, and our United States forces are still engaged in almost-daily military confrontations in Iraqi skies.

Our daily enforcement of the no-fly zone over Iraq continues to drain the readiness of our armed forces without contributing to any change in Iraqi policy.

Further east, North Korea continues to invest resources in developing ballistic missiles and weapons of mass destruction, despite a combination of economic hardship and American diplomacy. North Korea's launch in August of 1998 of a three-stage ballistic missile is an ominous indication of that nation's ability to pose a serious threat not only to our regional allies, but also to the United States itself.

However, my most serious and far-reaching concern remains China. China has announced a significant increase in its military budget, opposed the deployment of any United States national missile defense system, engaged in dangerous proliferation activity involving weapons of mass destruction, purchased advanced military hardware from Russia and threatened war over Taiwan. In short, China continues to act anything but like a strategic partner of the United States.

In the end, China is arguably the most difficult and perhaps the most important strategic challenge the United States faces in the coming century. At the dawn of the 21st century, America is at a crossroads. Will we face our responsibilities as a world leader from a position of strength? Will we pay the price to ensure that our national -- vital national interests are protected?

I firmly believe that peace and freedom -- peace and freedom are not free, and that a strong America is the essential prerequisite for protecting our national security interests. With this in mind, I hope our witnesses today will comment frankly on whether they believe they have the resources necessary to carry out the missions they have been given and to protect America's friends, allies, and their other interests.

Gentlemen, before you begin, I'd like to first recognize the committee's ranking Democrat, Mr. Skelton, for any remarks he would like to make.

REP. IKE SKELTON (D-MO): Mr. Chairman, thank you very much. And I join you in welcoming our witnesses today, General Anthony Zinni, commander in chief, U.S. Central Command; Admiral Dennis E. Blair, commander in chief, U.S. Pacific Command; and

General Thomas A. Schwartz, the commander in chief, U.S. Forces in Korea. We thank you both, all three of you, for being with us.

Admiral Blair, China. China seems to be embarked on a path toward substantial enhancement and modernization of its conventional weapons and force projection capabilities. Recently we've seen heightened levels of rhetoric from the Chinese concerning Taiwan. There's also increased evidence of a closer working relationship between the Russians and the Chinese, and your thoughts about these developments would be appreciated. I know that you testified recently in the Senate, and we would appreciate your expanding on your thoughts regarding that and recent legislation, if you can see your way clear to do that for us, recent House legislation, if you can see your way clear, for us, to do that.

...

I took a trip to China about two weeks ago, and I had the chance to talk with the Chinese military leaders and some of the civilian leaders about the key importance of a peaceful solution to this issue between them and Taiwan and how it was in the American interest, and we had a commitment to make that solution peaceful.

I'd like to talk about two issues which go across all the CINCs, but they particularly affect the regional engagement strategy in the Pacific. The first concerns our military relations with other countries. Our military relations with key countries in the regions went up and down in the past year; China, Indonesia, India. But there are two forms of engagement which I think are important to keep going, no matter what our day-to-day relations are.

...

ADM. BLAIR: Mr. Chairman, let me just add a couple of things in the Asia Pacific Region, outside of Korea, where I fully share what General Schwartz said; number one, Japan, which is in range of Korean missiles now.

The U.S. forces that are stationed in Japan, which would be in support of anything that we do in the Korean peninsula, are important to have protection for. And the Japanese themselves feel that their citizens and facilities in Japan, which are under range, also should be defended. So they are cooperating with us on some aspects of the sea-based deterrent. And I think that's absolutely right.

As you go further, further down into Taiwan; the Chinese are building up the same sorts of missiles that -- two were fired on either side of Taiwan back in the '96 crisis -- and they are continuing to build more of those missiles.

And as I told the Chinese leadership, when I was in Beijing, we are pledged to maintain a balance there; and, as they continue to build up these large numbers of weapons that threaten Taiwan, they are throwing the balance out of whack and that we will have to think about the theater-missile defense for Taiwan in order to maintain the balance, and that there was a connection between those two, and that we are stepping up to that decision right now. So I would add that to the other concerns in the Asia Pacific region.

REP. JOEL HEFLEY (R-CO): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. A couple of questions, first for Admiral Blair.

You mentioned the military-to-military relationship with the Chinese. And I'd be interested in your amplifying on that just a little bit.

You know, the Chinese are not our ally; they are our enemy. They threaten our West Coast with missiles. They threaten to invade Taiwan, which we have interests in. They test missiles, and they steal our secrets. And so I'd be interested in what we are doing, military to military, with that.

...

ADM. BLAIR: Yes, sir, Congressman. Let me start out by saying that the military-to-military program is a part of our overall relationship with China. It's a complex relationship and what we do on the military side is a piece of that. Within that overall relationship with China, the key issue of Taiwan dominates things from the -- when we are talking with them on the government-to-government and military-to-military level. And the military part of Taiwan is, as I've discussed in my statement, ensuring that there's a balance there and ensuring that the United States can do the job to make sure that resolution is peaceful.

Having said that, the one way that Taiwan can come out well for all the countries concerned is the peaceful resolution path, not to get into conflict, then the intimidation and coercion which would precede that. And that was a point I made repeatedly while I was over in China, and that was the reason I told them that the white paper that China had published recently was not helpful because it raised the role of force and coercion and did not emphasize the diplomatic and peaceful resolution role which is the only way that we're going to solve this thing in a way that will not hurt large numbers of Chinese in the future.

Our military-to-military program enables us to have those discussions in a very real way with real live human beings, and I had many meetings in that sense. It also, though, enables us to talk about other issues, and I talked about other issues with the generals and civilian leaders over in China. If you look around the world, you can see a number of areas in which the United States and China have interests in common. Now, I'm not going to split hairs over a partner, but if you look at the access to oil coming out of the Persian Gulf, that is in the interest both of the United States and its allies and increasingly in the future in China's interest. China will be up to 70 percent dependent on Persian Gulf oil in the near future if it develops anywhere close to what it's going to.

If you look at Southeast Asia and a country like Indonesia, it's in the interest of both China and the United States to help Indonesia get back on its feet and resume a responsible role in that part of the world.

If you look at General Schwartz's area, Korea, it's important, from China's point of view, as well as from the U.S. and Korean and Japanese point of view, that the Korea issue be handled in a peaceful way, that weapons not proliferate from Korea, and that the -- and military force not be employed there.

So there are a number of areas in which the United States can cooperate, and they can cooperate militarily.

China has 15 police observers and about half a dozen military observers in East Timor. We have about -- we have a couple of dozen troops there. It's an area where we're actually working in the same group militarily.

So I think that the point of the military cooperation and support of our overall cooperation is to, yes, ensure that deterrence is there and that the balance is clearly understood, but to try to work towards the peaceful solution, which is the best way for us both.

If you look at the conversation that businessmen and financiers have when they go to China, it's entirely different from the conversations that I have. They're talking about how they can do joint ventures, how business can take place there, how financial systems can be set up, how joint ventures can be accomplished. That is the way that's going to make this thing come out right while we keep the military deterrence strong there, rather than emphasizing the military solution to this, which is a lose from China's point of view, a lose from Taiwan's point of view, and which doesn't help the United States either.

To Admiral Blair, an internal document from the Chinese Central Military Commission to all of its regional commanders, titled "China Prepares for War" -- Beijing states that, quote, "It hopes to absorb Taiwan through non-violent means, but warns of a increased possibility of a military solution." It further states that taking into account of a possible U.S. military intervention by the United States, that it is better to fight now than in the future -- the earlier, the better. The document further states that if worst -- quote, "if worst comes to worst, we will gain control of Taiwan before the deployment of U.S. forces."

This committee -- I won't speak for the entire committee, but I'd note that you were not pleased with the House's passage of the Taiwan Security Enhancement Act, by your prior testimony. We appreciate the candor of all admirals and generals that come here to testify. I will note that the bipartisan vote was 341 to 70. We speak on behalf of many now -- many of whom are the constituencies we represent in our obligations over the years to liberty, and so we will side with Taiwan.

But we welcome your insight and your candor, and value your opinion. So I'm not going to be critical, but I do want an explanation, one for which -- my constituents can understand.

ADM. BLAIR: Mr. Congressman, the part of the statement that you read from the Chinese leadership that I agree is are there hopes for a non-violent solution, and I think our job is to make their hopes come true. The fact of the matter is that right now a quick, early seizure of Taiwan is not within the military capability of the People's Republic of China. And that's the military reality, and that's the underlying foundation of our quest of a peaceful resolution in this case.

The Taiwan Security Enhancement Act I analyzed from the point of view of does it give me anything from the military point of view to do my job under the Taiwan Relations Act that I don't have now, and the answer to that is no. Then I look at it, whether it helps move us towards a peaceful resolution, which as I mentioned is, I think, the only long-term solution for Taiwan, for the United States, and for China. And I think the Taiwan Security Enhancement

Act by emphasizing the military side of it does not move us towards a peaceful resolution, it doesn't help me do what I need to do militarily, which I have all of the authority and all the direction for under current policy, and therefore I don't support it.

REP. BUYER: Mr. Chairman, I know the light is red and we have one more – The Congress has to face a very difficult vote on extending this permanent trade status and being brought into the World Trade Organization. Have you in your relationships with China made any comment to China that if, in fact, a military response or actions are taken toward Taiwan that the United States would respond militarily?

ADM. BLAIR: My conversations came at it from a different angle, Mr. Buyer, from that way. We talked about the importance of a peaceful resolution. Then we talked about the use of force. And then I explained that the use of force is against American policy, and that we are committed to enforcing American policy, and that any use of force in the short term would result in losses over there by China. So that was how I worked my way into that conversation with the Chinese leaders.

REP. BUYER: Thank you, admiral.

REP. SPENCE: Mr. Bartlett.

REP. ROSCOE BARTLETT (R-MD): Thank you. Admiral Blair, imagine with us for a moment, sir, that in a confrontation over Taiwan, that the Chinese launch one of their 20 or so ICBMs, with their 4.4 megaton weapon; that they detonate that at, say, 300 miles high over Nebraska. Now, at that altitude, it will not hurt a single person; it will not do any damage to a single building. But what it will do is to disrupt or destroy all of our microelectronics, producing at the margins of our country, that is the state of Washington and Florida Peninsula, 10- to 20,000 volts per meter. This would shut down our entire power grid nationwide. It would shut our entire communications grid nationwide. What would your advice be to the president?

ADM. BLAIR: I think you have to take it back a step further, Congressman Bartlett, and look at what the advice that the Chinese leader who would be contemplating such would seek from his military advisers. And I think that the advice of any military adviser under that situation would be: "You're running an awfully big risk with popping an ICBM at the United States."

REP. BARTLETT: Not a single person is injured. Not a single building is damaged. How would you differentiate this from cyber- warfare, where they simply came in with worms or viruses and shut down your power grid and shut down your communications grid? How would this be different than that, since now blood has been spilled and no building has been damaged? What advice would you give to the president?

ADM. BLAIR: As I -- I think that the advice that the -- the things that a Chinese leader would have to think about before he made a decision like that would be the mode of delivery and the use of a nuclear weapon over American territory. Now it's all very well to say, "Well, Mr. President of Taiwan" -- or "China, this thing will blow up at altitude and the American's will

recognize that this is just directed at their power grid and not directed at their people. And all of the systems will work perfectly even though we've never done this before and we're not sure if it's going to work or not." And what you're getting is a lot of theoretical calculations by a bunch of physicists and people who tell you that that's the right thing. It's just a foolhardy, foolhardy move to go after a country that has 6,000 nuclear warheads itself and has a deterrent posture.

So I just think it's a foolhardy act by a leader of any country with nuclear weapons, be it Russia, China, Iraq, North Korea or any other country. So I think it's something that is at the core of our deterrence policy is to keep some scenario like that or shooting a weapon that explodes on the ground or anywhere else in U.S. territory well down the area of probability.

So I think you have to go back a step further in order to deter that sort of a scenario which is what all of our nuclear strategic posture is designed to deter. And then if an actual attack takes place of the kind that you describe, or any other kind, we, the military commanders, led by the chairman assess the damage, look at the options, and give the president a recommendation on what he ought to do. But the range again there is so destructive in terms of retaliation that would still be able to be visited on China that I think it makes it very unattractive for the Chinese point of view or anybody else who might be thinking in those terms against the United States.

REP. BARTLETT: When we sent our carriers in in protest to their war games near Taiwan, they suggested that they hoped that we valued Los Angeles more than Taiwan. Two weeks ago yesterday the main headline in the Washington Times was that if we interfered with their move on Taiwan that they would nuke us. Do you remember that headline?

ADM. BLAIR: I remember the -- I know the single remark after the '96 incident, and I know who made it, and I know in what context it was made. I don't recall this, the headline two weeks ago and what that was --

REP. BARTLETT: We'll provide that for you. It was in the Washington Times, I think it was two weeks ago yesterday, and it was upper right-hand corner of the paper. And they said that if we interfered with their bringing Taiwan into their fold that they would nuke us. That was the gist of the headline.

One last question, sir. How much -- would your war fighting capability be degraded at all if this happened?

ADM. BLAIR: War fighting capability would certainly be degraded if there were a nuclear weapon fired and exploded in the atmosphere. But let me go back, Mr. Congressman, to that statement about nuclear use of nuclear weapons in a Taiwan conflict, because I don't want you to have the impression that that is a steady theme of Chinese thinking about Taiwan.

REP. BARTLETT: They said it then, and they repeated it -- and it was in the headlines two weeks ago.

ADM. BLAIR: Well, you have to be careful about who "they" is, sir. The Chinese – When I was at their National Defense University a couple of weeks ago in Beijing I talked with their leadership. The National Defense University in Beijing puts out a bunch of articles, a bunch of books, and some of them have titles like "Fighting Unlimited Wars With Superpowers," "How to Sink Nuclear Aircraft Carriers," "How to Blockade Small Islands Off Your Coast," I mean, a bunch of articles written by generally colonels that are about topics that you're clearly concerned with, a conflict in Taiwan. So I asked their leadership, "What about all these articles?"

It looks to me like you're writing some pretty authoritative stuff, talking about fighting the United States, when our official policy is to work this thing out peacefully."

And what the Chinese leadership said to me, that "those articles represent the professional views of our lower-level officers; they are writing personal-opinion articles. And of course, they are thinking about contingency plans, just as you are. But these are not the official policy." And I think that that's mostly true.

The official policy of China is to work towards peaceful resolution. The official war policy of China is called Local War Under High Conditions. It is not an automatic escalation policy of the sort that we have had in the Cold War, in the past. So I don't think that there is an official - - I know that there is not an official Chinese doctrine, which contemplates the use of nuclear weapons automatically, in a conflict with the United States.

So I think we need to look pretty carefully at who is saying what in these things, sir, before we attribute it to the entire policy of the government.

REP. BARTLETT: Thank you.

Mr. Chairman, in a totalitarian government like China, I am amazed that they have that much free-speech liberty. Thank you.

REP. SPENCE: Mr. Abercrombie?

REP. NEAL ABERCROMBIE (D-HI): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Admiral Blair, aloha. Nice to see you today.

ADM. BLAIR: Aloha.

REP. ABERCROMBIE: Just a couple of quick things.

As part of your remarks, you made a statement with respect to China and various companies. And I wasn't quite sure what the relationship to the strategic interests of -- our country were.

Were you just making an observation that there are people interested in joint ventures in China? because, as best as I am able to determine, those joint ventures mean that they want access to wage slavery in China. And as far as I can see, the only market that exists for China right now is in the United States so that we can supply them with hard dollars to finance the People's Liberation Army and other military aspects.

ADM. BLAIR: No, Congressman Abercrombie. What I was referring to is that economic interaction between countries can result in comparative advantage for both countries, lead to both having a stake in continuation of some peaceful dialogue between them. And I thought that that was, on net, a factor towards leading to a peaceful future between our countries, rather than –

REP. ABERCROMBIE: Well, I agree with that kind of approach.

So the testimony wasn't meant in any way to indicate that something like discussions that are ongoing now, about what our trade relations with China should be, should obviate in any way the necessity of us pursuing our strategic interests with respect to military activity and preparedness?

ADM. BLAIR: That's correct. And all of the safeguards that we have to look at things, like financing for individual enterprises, which may be owned by the People's Liberation Army, which are then going directly into Chinese military coffers, factories which are violating internationally recognized norms of labor conditions, are absolutely correct.

REP. ABERCROMBIE: Good.

ADM. BLAIR: I was referring to legitimate economic and financial

REP. ABERCROMBIE: I didn't think you were doing anything less than that. But inasmuch as all this is recorded somewhere and becomes grist for somebody's mill, I think it's important to make sure that we're absolutely on the same page and in the same way.

And in that context, then, with regard to Taiwan, with all due respect to the Washington Times and its headlines, I don't think we should necessarily base our policy on headline writers or what headline writers say is being done or is at point. That said, would you agree that with regard to Taiwan and its defense, to the degree that that's in the interests of the United States to pursue that with regard to the capital assets of the United States military, that it is, on the whole, not only more useful and beneficial but, from a doctrine of view, required that we control those assets as to how they're used or not used, as opposed to selling some of those assets, like Aegis destroyers or missile defense systems and so on to somebody who can then use them for what they conceive to be their strategic interests?

ADM. BLAIR: I think you're getting at really the heart of what ought to be the standard that we set for our policy in this area, Mr. Abercrombie, and that's an American policy rather than allowing it to be pigeon-holed into Chinese policy or a pro-Taiwanese policy, which I see –

REP. ABERCROMBIE: Or -- may I interject, Admiral -- corporate policy in the United States, where someone sees it in their immediate corporate profit interests or something to sell it, to sell hardware or anything else, whether it's to Taiwan or anybody else, Saudi Arabia, I don't care, you can take anybody. My point being, I'm not trying to lead you down any path on this; I'm really trying to get down on the record, Mr. Chairman, the idea that whatever we do, whether it's in Taiwan or elsewhere, it should be something that we think we're doing -- that we have concluded is in the strategic interests of the United States, and not something where

someone else gets to make decisions that have implications for us, then, militarily speaking. I don't want to see you as the CINCPAC dragged into something as a result of somebody else's actions utilizing military equipment on up to and including military platforms of a significant nature because somebody thought they could make some money selling to them and they've disguised it as some kind of -- disguised it as an aspect of American military posture.

ADM. BLAIR: I think you're absolutely correct, Congressman Abercrombie. And I draw a distinction between the relationship of a treaty ally, for example, the Republic of Korea, in which we exercise together, we have a combined command, which General Schwartz heads, and we are automatically committed, in the case of an attack on this ally, to fight in its defense, by treaty. In the case of Taiwan, we do not have that treaty relationship; what we have is a commitment for a peaceful resolution. And as you parse that down, we have a commitment to provide them capability for a sufficient defense on their part, and then we have an undertaking that, should conflict break out, that we have the capability to ensure that the right outcome comes out of that. And it's more differentiated and policy which we have to think through in a little bit different way from the way that we think through our policy with a country that we have a mutual defense treaty with, like Japan or Korea. And I think that's the heart of how we have to approach this.

REP. ABERCROMBIE: And I -- would you agree that to the degree and extent, then, we retain all of those assets ourselves, that that has a good effect in terms of assisting the Chinese or anybody else, for that matter, in understanding that they have to deal with us as opposed to us being dragged into something by somebody else's actions?

ADM. BLAIR: That is a key point. But I think there is another key point which is expressed in the Taiwan Relations Act, which is that we are obligated to provide Taiwan the independent wherewithal for a sufficient defense, and that's independent of the gear that's owned by the United States that we would bring in should we decide to enter it. So I think we have to think of both sides of it, and I think we should keep them separate but related.

REP. ABERCROMBIE: Perhaps the best defense is not necessarily providing them with hardware for --

ADM. BLAIR: Not necessarily. But it may be providing -- it is providing them with some hardware. But you have to look at each mission area and each capability. And when I make my recommendations within the government on this question, that's what I think it through, from the military point of view in terms of scenarios, capabilities on both sides, U.S. role and the Taiwanese defense. So it's a --

REP. ABERCROMBIE: Thank you very much, admiral.

Mr. Chairman, I have other questions that I would like to be able to submit, if that's okay with you. REP. SPENCE: Yes, sir.

REP. ABERCROMBIE: Thank you.

REP. SPENCE: Mr. Kuykendall.

REP. STEVEN T. KUYKENDALL (R-CA): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. you.

...

ADM. BLAIR: Congressman, let me talk about the situation last year when we sent the Kitty Hawk Battle Group, which normally operates in the Western Pacific, over to the Central Command. The two actions we take to compensate for that, basically, what that basically does is stretch out your timelines. So we were looking to ways that we could bring those timelines back so that, if General Schwartz needed something, he would have combat power, air power, in particular, available quickly. We moved down an F-15 squadron from Alaska to Korea to be on station at Kwangju flying on a daily basis.

We also looked at the next carrier that was due to deploy, which was the Constellation, in that case, and we speeded up a part of her air wing, in particular the EA-6B Prowler aircraft, electronic warfare aircraft, that are particularly important in that scenario in General Schwartz's requirement and in others, and get them ahead of the carrier into the theater so that we were able by those two combinations to keep the risks within the acceptable level.

The actions we did not take was getting the entire Connie battle group, the ships, the air wing, under way immediately, although we thought about it hard, in order to get her out there to backfill for the Kitty Hawk. So we could have done that by breaking the pers tempo standards which CNO has established and we all follow. We did have that reserve capability, but as you know, you just can't do that over time and maintain the readiness and your people. So we were at -- you identified the point where we were at maximum stretch in terms of our carrier resources. General Zinni and I talk quite a bit about every carrier that comes out of the Pacific and goes to the Central Command in terms of the balance of time that it spends in the Western Pacific versus in the Gulf region, and we are pushed and we do have to rub there. So it's an area of continuing concern.

On submarines, we have 26 of them in the Pacific, and I find that I have to make some tough allocation decisions among those in terms of choosing what they do and leaving some other things that I'd like to have them do uncovered, so that there is also a rub there. And we basically look forward to feeding this real-world experience into the QDR review that's coming up, so that when it's taken with the views of the other CINCs, we look at the long-term view, we can make the sort of balanced decisions that we need to in terms of these major forces.

REP. SPENCE: Mr. Underwood?

DEL. ROBERT UNDERWOOD (D-Guam): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And thank you for your testimonies.

Basically, I just have two questions, one for you, Admiral Blair, and one for you, General Schwartz. And I just want to make a quick comment about one element of your testimony, Admiral.

One of the things I'm trying to grapple with -- the issue of how we're relating to Taiwan -- and

I appreciate the complexity of the bilateral and multilateral relationships that you have to engage in, Admiral, that are far more complex, I think, than any other AOR. And you've outlined some of that in terms of how you have to deal with Taiwan, as opposed to dealing with a defense pact partner, like Japan or ROK.

The supporters of the Taiwan Enhancement Security Act wanted -- and I'm sure some of them would like to see something like that for Taiwan, but I think most, and certainly I -- I'm more interested in just finding out -- in the military-to-military contacts that you engage in, even though we have a kind of a policy of ambiguity about what our relationship is with Taiwan, are you making it abundantly clear that we retain the right of independent action in case the PRC decides to forcibly annex or do something to Taiwan? I mean, that's really the bottom line. I think people want to be assured that that is somehow or some way being communicated in the process of your military-to- military contacts or other contacts we have.

ADM. BLAIR: Yes, sir, we're making that clear.

DEL. UNDERWOOD: All right. Well, that's a very important feature of it, because I think a lot of times, despite all the headlines and all the kinds of things that go on, I think, at the end of the day, if we're making that abundantly clear, then I think we're you know, we're taking care of business in a way that will contribute to the security of the region.

Just a quick question on the complexities of the multilateral and bilateral relationships that we have: Is there -- can you characterize some of those relationships and perhaps maybe outline two or three of your concerns about them that the committee could be helpful in, in that regard?

...

ADM. BLAIR: Yes, sir -- Congressman Underwood.

The bilateral basis is pretty well established, of our military relations in the Asia Pacific region. We conduct, for example, over 300 exercises, and the great majority of those are all bilateral with one country or another. I think for the future, bringing these together in regional approaches is the right thing to do for the United States and our common interests there.

The sorts of things that I think will lead to that are, number one, bringing some of our exercises themselves together. And we are working with our allies and partners in Southeast Asia to bring some of the traditional bilateral exercises, like Cobago (sp), Balakatan (sp), Commando Sling together, and do a multilateral regional exercise called Team Challenge. And we put some resources behind that.

I think also, in Northeast Asia and other areas of the world, the multilateral approach is best. This would emphasize the missions that are at the lower end of the combat scale, from search and rescue to noncombatant evacuation; through peacekeeping Chapter 6, which is permissive peacekeeping; peacekeeping Chapter 7, which is peace enforcement. And these are the sorts of military operations that are in the interests of all countries, which I think build that multilateral framework.

Admiral Blair, I want to thank you for a couple of things, first for your comments about the Taiwan Security Enhancement Act. I can't help but think that if we had gone through a process of having hearings before this committee before that act was rushed to the floor, it would have

been useful.

Second, as one of the 370 who voted for the act, I certainly didn't think that I was on the side of those who favor liberty and those who are opposed were on the other side, it was just a difference in judgment. But I also want to thank you for recognizing how important it is to put military -- and the role of the military in our policy of deterrence in the context of a wider relationship with other countries. I certainly don't think that China is our enemy. And I do think sometimes we forget -- I know the Cold War ended 11 years ago, but I sometimes feel that we forget what it was like. We lived through an era where there were 6,000 nuclear weapons on the other side. To worry dramatically about attack on the United States at this point from China, a significant trading partner of ours, seems to be mistaken, to say the least.

I want to focus on a couple of things. First of all, there is an article -- I mean, the headline in the Washington Post the other day was "Chinese Are Split Over WTO Entry". I don't ask you to react to the headline, but I do commend to my colleagues the story, because the story really describes the division within China, within the leadership, with all these different groups in China over the appropriate relationship with the United States. Should it be a policy of engagement, should it be a policy of isolation? And it all comes to a head with the debate over China's entry into the WTO.

It is, not surprisingly, very much like the debate that's being held in this country over the same topic.

And so my first question is, I wondered if you could comment on your perception of the kinds of divisions, the kinds of tensions that there are within the Chinese leadership, either within the military itself or between some in the military and some in the political leadership, if you could comment on that. And then go back to your earlier comment, which I found significant, which was that a quick, earlier seizure of Taiwan is not within the capability of the Chinese at this moment in time. I will worry about California at some point after they prove to have the ability to invade Taiwan. But I think that an elaboration of those two points would be very helpful -- first, the kinds of differences you see within China, and second, their military capability to mount an operation against Taiwan.

ADM. BLAIR: Yes, sir. I will tell you that within the PLA leadership, I don't see great divisions of opinion. They are a fairly aggressive group. They don't think much of Americans and the United States, except a grudging respect. And my conversations with them are although we drink toasts and so on, they're not very friendly. So I think within the People's Liberation Army, you have a group of folks who are fairly well dedicated to doing what they see as their military job.

I try to tell them that making conflict with the United States the single planning case for their military force is not a smart idea, and I would be fooling you if I think made a heck of a lot of headway with that.

So I think within the PLA, you are dealing with a fairly hard group. Nonetheless, I think we ought to talk to them and understand each other better. That doesn't change my feeling about that. But I don't do it with a lot of illusions. Within the Chinese leadership, I think you have

people who are balancing the different things that they want to do. They both want to reunite China on those terms, and they want to join the WTO and build their country and transform their economy. If you look at what their official policy has been, they have the four modernizations. That's modernization of their economy; modernization of their agriculture; modernization of their science and technology, and modernization of their armed forces. And they put them in that order.

And as I look at their actions, their actions pretty well correspond with those four priorities. It doesn't mean that modernization of their armed forces is not something they forget about. It does mean that they give priority to these other areas.

And so I see them doing both of these things. And the -- and when there's a conflict between them, they have to make choices just the way everybody else does. So I think they're pursuing all of them.

I think that the recent White Paper, in which for the first time, and this is official Chinese policy; this is not military; this is not some spokesman, this is the leadership of the country, describing the Taiwan situation, that is significant. And I think adding a third condition for the use of force, that is, in case of indefinite postponement of reunification, their terms, is a step in the wrong direction and does show a long-term impatience, which is going to make it harder to solve this thing the right way and may get us in the soup. And so that's an unhelpful sign in terms of the way their overall leadership is going.

So I think that we need to try to make the -- when you look at how to solve this -- assure Taiwan's security over the long term, for Taiwan to be reunified with China under unfriendly terms is clearly not the right thing.

It's bad for the Taiwanese in the short term and it's bad for China in the long term, because you have an angry, revengeful group that you've joined. So that's one extreme.

The other one is if Taiwan turns into a long-term armed camp independent of China. That's not a long-term solution that's in Taiwan's security interests either. They're going to have to stay as an armed outpost for the indefinite future. The only way that we can solve this in the long term is a political arrangement based on a military balance that both sides are satisfactory. So we've got to drive towards that eventually, and time is better. The short-term solutions are all bad.

So that's, I think, what we have to pound away with to the Taiwanese leadership while we keep our military capability right. And in that sense, that statement I made that a quick seizure is not within their capability takes into account the things that China has done over the last year, building more missiles, taking delivery of Sovremenny destroyers, upgrading some of their armed forces. I look at what Taiwan has done over the past year, I look at the capability of my own forces over the past year, and my judgment is that the same balance that we had last year stands, and that we need to maintain both the assistance to Taiwan and our own capability in order for it to stand in the future and allow the peaceful resolution to occur.

REP. ALLEN: Thank you very much. REP. SPENCE: Thank you. Mr. Snyder.

REP. VIC SNYDER (D-AR): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate you gentlemen being here. A couple of my thoughts are in line with Mr. Allen's. Admiral Blair, you've kind of had a hearing today on the Taiwan Security Enhancement Act. As one of the 70 people who voted against it, it would have been very helpful, I think, to have had this hearing prior to the vote on the House side, and I really encourage our ranking member and chairman of the committee, when these kinds of bills come before the House to please -- which clearly were in the province of this committee -- to have hearings on these things, so we can hear these opinions and the committee members and the American public can hear these opinions before the bill is sent over to the Senate side.

The statement was made earlier today, Admiral Blair, that -- very emphatically -- that China is our enemy. In your opinion, as the person charged with defending us against all enemies foreign and domestic, is China our enemy?

ADM. BLAIR: I think China can become our enemy if things develop that way, mostly dependent on what China does, partly dependent on what we do. I think that China can also become a -- as long as their form of government is so antithetical to ours, I can't think of them as being an ally or something along that category, but I can think of a more balanced relationship, if things develop in a different way. So I think the answer to that question very much depends on what we do and what China does in the future.

REP. SNYDER: I agree with that analysis for looking ahead to the future. The question is, today? ADM. BLAIR: Today, I consider --

REP. SNYDER: March 15th. Do we consider China an enemy? ADM. BLAIR: I consider China a potential adversary.

ADM. BLAIR: Down the line. That's reassuring to me, since I met with a couple members from the Chinese embassy yesterday and it never occurred to me to shoot them. (Laughter.)

ADM. BLAIR: Did they think the same, Mr. Snyder? (Laughter.)

REP. SNYDER: As best as I could tell, they were unarmed. (Laughter.)

ADM. BLAIR: Right. (Laughter.)

REP. SNYDER: There has been a lot of discussion, as there should be, about the Chinese defense buildup. From your perspective as a military man, Admiral Blair, are we seeing anything -- if you were a Chinese military person or a member of their leadership, are they doing anything out of line for a nation that sees itself as -- rightfully so, as a great power in the future, in terms of their defense buildup?

ADM. BLAIR: If I put myself in the Chinese' feet and I were given the job they were doing, I think what they're doing is understandable in terms of trying to get more technology where

they can get it, and the Russians are making it pretty freely available to them and they're buying some pretty advanced systems. I think their maintenance of discipline within their country is one of their main missions, and they spend a lot of time doing that. And I think they are working against the disadvantages that they have of a not terribly innovative or well-educated force to draw from and a lot of remedial work that they have to do in order to get the basics done. So the military actions that I see them taking are understandable given where they are.

And I think that sort of the logical implication of your question, we have to look at that with a very clear-eyed view. We should be protecting our secrets. We should be ensuring that our computer networks are not open to attack. We should not be giving away things that add to Chinese capability, and we should be discouraging other countries, whether they be Russia or Israel, from selling them gear that enables them to increase their capability.

So I have a pretty clear-eyed point of view on that one, sir.

REP. SNYDER: Right. One of the arguments that came up in the discussions a few weeks ago about the Taiwan Security Enhancement Act is that there needs to be a line in the sand. And I think you read a statement earlier today what you see are charges and your mission. As the person who carries out our strategy with regard to China, in your mind is your mission clear?

ADM. BLAIR: Yes, sir. My mission is very clear.

REP. SNYDER: We sometimes hear discussions -- well, anytime we talk about China we talk about this discussion of the ambiguous nature of our policy and how that has served us well, and some people say it has served us not so well. When you hear those discussions about this the discussions of ambiguity, does that interfere at all with your the clarity that you see your military mission with regard to China and Taiwan?

ADM. BLAIR: No, sir, it doesn't. I think the ambiguity lies in the decision to commit my forces, not in the capability or the mission that I would have should that decision be made. So for myself and my commanders, we can understand that if ordered we will carry out our responsibilities to ensure that the use of force against Taiwan is not successful. That's a pretty clear mission from our point of view. The ambiguity lies in how would that decision be made, under what conditions of aggression or the political backdrop that that would be invoked. So once the word is given, our job is clear, and we can live with the fact that whether that decision is made or not depends on a lot of the decisions, or a lot of factors that our political masters have to take into account.

REP. SNYDER: Thank you, gentlemen.

...

REP. HERBERT H. BATEMAN (R-VA): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

First, General Zinni, let me join the others in commending you on your very distinguished career, both in terms of its duration and its quality. We're pleased to have you with us today in the committee along with Admiral Blair and General Schwartz.

Reference was just made to the acquisition of significant military weaponry by the Chinese from Russia. And Admiral Blair, you also mentioned Israel. Am I correct that Israel is also a supplier of significant military hardware to the Chinese?

ADM. BLAIR: Israel is now considering the sale of an airborne radar battle control platform to China. That's what I was referring to.

REP. BATEMAN: Does the government of these United States have a position with respect to that, or are they simply standing by and saying Go ahead, or are they using any leverage we might possibly have with our Israeli friends to say This is not in keeping with the best interests of international stability and our security interests?

GEN. SCHWARTZ: I'm not aware of all of what we're doing here, but I -- but the position that I have within this administration is, as I told you, that I don't think it's a very good idea.

...

Mr. Riley?

REP. BOB RILEY (R-AL): Patience does have its virtue. (Laughs.)

Gentlemen, I appreciate your being here. One of the things I always am amazed by in this testimony: When I come here I feel good, after your opening statements I feel very good; but as we get into the discussion, I become more and more paranoid. As we kind of walked through what you've said today, I have some questions for each one of you. And let me just go through them.

Admiral Blair, you said that you are in constant contact with the Chinese and you are talking to them, and that some of these comments that have been made have been taken out of context.

There was a comment that my staffer brought to me a few weeks ago, where the defense minister had said that "war with the United States is inevitable." I hope that was taken out of context; I hope he didn't mean it.

But you get the feeling that -- they are a trading partner. But I guess that when I look at it and people are making the type of statements that have been made in the last few weeks, it gives me real pause for concern. When I read that China has just purchased an Aegis-class destroyer with this Sunburn missile on it that basically flies 8 or 10 feet off of the water, that's more designed for our fleets than it would be for Taiwan.

And when I hear all this -- and then when you're asked the direct question about whether or not a Chinese attack would be successful on the mainland in a short period of time, there seemed to be some equivocation in your answer, when you said: "They could not sustain it, if we became involved. But there is no assurance that we would be involved"; that you had to maintain your capabilities, but you did not have a commitment.

I guess my question is, under this scenario, would they be successful if we did not intervene? Two, was this "war was inevitable" comment taken out of context?

...

ADM. BLAIR: Congressman Riley, I talked with Chinese Defense Minister Chi Haotian about two and a half weeks ago. And my evaluation after talking with him personally and after reading a lot about him is that he thinks that conflict with the United States is a possibility, but not that it is an inevitable.

REP. RILEY: Then I guess my question is why did he make the statement that it was inevitable?

ADM. BLAIR: I don't think that reflected what I have seen personally and what I have read in other places about his views. I think he was taken out of context in that case. I think he believes like most senior military leaders, that it may come to fighting. And as I indicated earlier, they are working on what they'd see as their military obligation to do that. But I don't believe that he was quoted correctly as saying it's inevitable. I think he believes it's a possibility. So I believe that's the case for the senior leadership.

As far as the military situation, I hope I made it clear the ambiguity is the political decision, not the military capabilities. The PRC cannot take and hold Taiwan, and we can defend Taiwan if ordered. And that's what will happen.

REP. RILEY: Can Taiwan defend themselves without our intervention?

ADM. BLAIR: For a considerable period of time. And the reason I put a time scale on that is you can imagine scenarios that would go on into months in which the sheer physical size and resources of China could ultimately wear down a small island nation, however well initially equipped. That's the only caveat on that.

But I would also -- I don't think we can just leave that sitting there with just the military piece of it, because when you cast your mind around that situation -- and there are two other aspects that are important:

Number one, neither the armed forces of Taiwan nor of the United States nor of China can assure that that kind of conflict would result in a quick victory with no casualties. There would be a lot of Taiwanese deaths as well as destruction, both to their physical infrastructure and their economy. There'd be a lot on the Chinese side, and there'd be some on the American side if we were involved in it. So that's one.

Second, the economic consequences that would be paid by China would be huge at a time when, as I said, their first three priorities all have to do with modernizing their economy, and they see cooperation with other countries as part of that. Taiwan would also lose a lot economically, as we discussed. So that part of it is also there. And that part of it is why I think that all countries realize that that scenario that you sketch out is a distant last place after a lot of other peaceful ways to get towards what their political goals are in both regions.

REP. RILEY: And I think that would still be the case today if it wasn't for this inflammatory rhetoric that we've heard for the last two to three months coming from, it seems like, every Chinese leader there. And again, I'm glad we're holding conversations with them.

But I guess ultimately we have to decide if we're going to arm Taiwan to the point that they feel militarily secure, and I can't see how they can as long as there is that ambiguity on whether or not we will intervene.

ADM. BLAIR: I think you put your finger on the heart of the policy that our country is now pursuing. Taiwan is not a treaty ally. We did end the mutual defense treaty with them. But we did say quite specifically, and the Chinese agreed, that, okay, they're not a treaty ally in which was have an automatic commitment to defend the way we do with our other five treaty -- our other four treaty allies in the region.

But --

REP. RILEY: So would you be -- would you be in favor of a continued military build-up of defensive weapons in Taiwan?

ADM. BLAIR: The answer to that question is, in a specific form, yes, I believe we have to maintain -- I believe I'm obliged to recommend improvements to Taiwan's defense to maintain their sufficient defense, which the Taiwan Relations Act places at the heart of our policy.

...

REP. SPENCE: Thank you, Mr. Riley. Mr. Hill.

REP. BARON HILL (D-IN): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to first of all thank you, Admiral Blair, for your comments about Taiwan.

I was one of those 70 with Congressman Snyder that did vote against that House resolution. I wasn't going to ask any questions, because by the time you get down here on the front row, all the questions have been asked.

...

REP. SKELTON: So the Damocles sword still hangs over your head?

ADM. BLAIR: It still hangs over our head, sir.

REP. SKELTON: Admiral Blair, there is discussion -- there will be debate later in the House on whether to have normal trade relations with the country of China. And of course, China wants in the World Trade Organization. Should that come to pass, there would be a positive vote in both the House and the Senate, and the president signed, would that help ease tensions? Besides help the farmers in America and the manufacturers in America -- which would be beside the point -- would that be a help? Because you referred to China as a potential adversary. That, of course, causes a great deal of concern. Would that be of help, besides the economy -- the economic benefit to certain segments of our society?

ADM. BLAIR: Sir, Congressman Skelton, the -- as you say, there are a lot of aspects to the WTO in terms of things that are important to workers in America and various kinds, and I can't comment on those. But I believe that entry of China into the WTO would give that country more of a stake in the peaceful relationship with the United States and other countries around the region, which is in the long-term interests of the United States.

REP. SKELTON: Thank you so much. Mr. Chairman, thank you.

REP. SPENCE: Looks like that time has arrived. (Chuckles.) Gentlemen, we appreciate your being here today. You've been of tremendous help to us in our work, and we wish you well in the future. And we hope we're going to be able to do more to help you.

Thank you very much.

GEN. ZINNI: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. ADM. BLAIR: Thank you.

REP. SPENCE: (Strikes gavel.)