

Washington, DC – Congressman Rob Wittman (VA-1) testified today before the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission as they conducted the hearing, “China’s Active Defense Strategy and its Regional Impacts.” The hearing examined the future of Chinese military strategy and how it will affect the United States, its allies and its interests.

“As Co-Chair of the Shipbuilding Caucus here in Congress, as Member of the House Armed Services Committee, and most importantly, as a representative of my constituents, it is necessary to watch China’s economic growth and military modernization and analyze how it might affect the United States,” Wittman said, following the hearing. “There is no question that China is seeking regional and global power. It’s critical that the United States monitor their strategy and continue to develop our relationship with this emerging nation.”

In his testimony, Wittman cited the importance of strategic leadership, especially within the Department of Defense. The House Armed Services Committee continues to press for answers from DoD with regard to the recently announced “Efficiency Initiative,” which proposed \$100 in savings and an additional \$78 billion military budget cut within the next five years, without giving strategic analysis to Congress to explain the large cuts. Wittman encouraged the Commission to explore whether the Efficiency Initiatives take into account China’s growing military might and ability to flex and project its power.

“Our defense budget must first meet this country’s strategic needs, and following yesterday’s hearing in the Armed Services Committee, I remain concerned that we lack the strategic analysis needed to ensure that’s our first priority,” Wittman said.

About the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission

The U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission was created by the United States Congress in October 2000 with the legislative mandate to monitor, investigate, and submit to Congress an annual report on the national security implications of the bilateral trade and economic relationship between the United States and the People’s Republic of China, and to provide recommendations, where appropriate, to Congress for legislative and administrative action.

Wittman's full testimony follows:

- My concern is whether we are making necessary investments in our weapons platforms to deter or meet this emerging threat. How are strategic and budgetary decisions being made at the Pentagon? Is strategic need driving the budget? Or is the budget driving our force structure?
- The House Armed Services Committee met yesterday to hear testimony from the Pentagon on the Secretary's recently announced Efficiencies Initiatives.
- After this hearing, I believe that we are no closer today than we were in August when the Efficiencies Initiatives were first announced to understanding how decisions are being made at the Pentagon. I have yet to see any substantive data or analysis, let alone any kind of implementation plan that shows the cost savings, strategic analysis, or consistent decision making process, to support these Efficiencies Initiatives.
- One issue for the Commission to explore may be whether the Efficiency Initiatives take into account China's growing military might and ability to flex and project its power?
- In order to counter this emerging anti-access threat in Asia our focus should be on force posture, maintaining alliances, and maintaining the current footprint of strategically located bases in the western pacific.
- The 2010 QDR criticizes China for a lack of transparency about its military development plans and decision-making processes. Continued military-to-military exchanges will be critical to reducing mistrust and misunderstanding.
- The Chinese government is aggressively investing in their own future and will certainly not be sitting idle.

- The United States must look at our own force structure, make needed investments in areas like shipbuilding, and take into account how shifting priorities within the Defense budget will affect our ability to counter a threat in the Pacific.

- I want to end my statement by again thanking the Commission Co-Chairs for your invitation to speak. This concludes my remarks and I welcome questions from the Commission.