

**Remarks at the International Assessment and Strategy Center
Luncheon
The Honorable Michael R. Turner
Chairman, Strategic Forces Subcommittee, House Armed Services
Committee**

June 28, 2012

I. Intro

I want to thank the International Assessment and Strategy Center (IASC) for inviting me to speak here today and for holding this event.

I'm going to make some brief remarks and keep the focus where it should be, these experts.

Mr. Fisher, Dr. Karber, you are two of the leading experts on matters that are critical to the subcommittee that I have the privilege to lead: the Strategic Forces Subcommittee of the House Armed Services Committee.

As many of you know, my subcommittee is the panel responsible for U.S. national security space, missile defense, and nuclear weapons programs.

And, on all of these topics, China is a key question. What exactly does China want? What are they aiming for? We can't say.

What we can say is that China's unprecedented military build-up requires that we, as prudent national security thinkers, must plan for the worst, hope for the best, and determine how to make clear to China where our interests lie.

China need not be a threat, but, if our history proves one thing, it is that American timidity encourages aggression.

II. China Tunnels

As a Member of Congress on the House Armed Services Committee, I have access to some of the most highly classified intelligence and military planning in our government. But, our society depends on an informed citizenry as well.

That's why I was grateful for the work Dr. Karber undertook through Georgetown University to assemble a comprehensive unclassified, entirely open-source product with the help of his students, on the so-called Chinese "Underground Great Wall".

While it's of course true that the existence of this "Underground Great Wall" was known before Dr. Karber's report, it was only after the publication of an Executive Summary, and a story in the Washington Post, that we truly saw a long-overdue public debate begin about just what China is up to with over 5,000 kilometers of tunnels and underground facilities.

I think this is serious business.

It was telling for me however, that this report, was so quickly attacked by the arms control movement.

Many of these people spend much of their time clamoring for more classified information about U.S. nuclear forces to be made public.

But, when unclassified information about another country's nuclear forces, especially a country like China with uncertain motives regarding the United States and its allies, was compiled and disseminated publicly, the attacks were quick and blistering.

It was almost as if the arms control groups were concerned that Dr. Karber, by shining light on Chinese nuclear force developments, was somehow challenging their agenda of disarming the United States.

But, facts are stubborn things.

And, we cannot ignore, because it's inconvenient to an arms control and disarmament agenda, when a country like China builds 5,000 kilometers of tunnels for its conventional and nuclear forces.

As General Kehler, our commander of STRATCOM recently said at the Council on Foreign Relations, "[u]nderground tunnels are a problem for us."

Dr. Karber, I look forward to your final report being issued soon.

Deterrence is predicated on the creation of a belief in the mind of those whom you would deter that you can destroy that which they hold dear.

The problem with these tunnels is they could create in the minds of China's leaders that their military assets are secure and off limits to U.S. power.

III. China proliferation – Rick Fisher

I'd like to thank Mr. Fisher. Rick first testified before my subcommittee last October on the question of China's strategic forces modernization.

Rick talked about China's increasing focus on mobile missiles and ballistic missile submarines, specifically the Jin class and the JL-2 missile.

Recently, Rick was one of the first China analysts to note that Chinese entities seem to be playing an integral role in North Korean ICBM development.

It's one thing for China to be providing state support to North Korea to keep its economy afloat. Don't get me wrong, I'm against that.

But, it's an entirely different matter for China and its state sponsored firms to be providing transporter erector launcher equipment to North Korea for its new road-mobile intercontinental ballistic missile.

Let's not forget, Secretary Gates said this missile would make North Korea "a direct threat to the United States."

This missile, as Rick was among the first to observe, was showcased by the Pyongyang regime during its recent centenary celebration for the birth of the founder of that regime.

And it's clear, based on Rick's research, that the missiles showcased in Pyongyang's military parade were riding on Chinese transporter erector launchers of similar makes and models to those used by China for its own road mobile missiles and mobile air defense systems.

Secretary Panetta agreed with the assessment of Chinese support when he said at an April 19, 2012 House Armed Services Committee hearing that, "I'm sure there's been some help coming from China...clearly there has been some assistance along those lines."

And, according to press reporting, the United Nations, perhaps as early as tomorrow, will issue a report charting this and other examples of Chinese support for North Korean ballistic missile programs.

This is a staggering indictment of our entire China and North Korea policies. We have – throughout this administration, at least – had a lowest common denominator approach to North Korea: we've only been as tough as China would let us be.

If, as it appears, China has been holding us back on sanctions that would actually deal with North Korea's ballistic missile and nuclear weapons programs, and, at the same time, supporting those programs through its state sponsored companies, clearly our entire policy is flawed and those flaws are endangering our national security.

Rick, I thank you and IASC for your diligence in making sure the American people, and, frankly, many members of Congress, are aware of these threats to our security and the failures of our current policies.

The Administration must answer these questions that Rick has raised, and I have sent two letters to the Administration to compel them to do so. One of the questions I ask in my letters to Secretary Clinton and General Clapper, the DNI, is, simply put, where are the sanctions of these Chinese companies?

What's more, if the Administration wants the House Armed Services Committee to fund its nonproliferation Center of Excellence in China, they will at least have to answer these questions about China's proliferation activities. This is just common sense.

IV. NDAA response

I'd like to briefly discuss how Dr. Karber and Mr. Fisher have helped the HASC and I in current policy debates.

As many of you know, this Administration has been fiercely driving the U.S. towards a zero nuclear weapons policy.

My concern, however, whether from the unilateral reductions of the New START treaty or other reductions to our hedge force, is that the Administration has really only succeeded in reducing the nuclear forces of one nation: the United States.

There can be no argument that Russia, China, Pakistan, or North Korea have done anything but modernize and grow their own nuclear forces since the President entered office.

The Administration has a Nuclear Posture Review Implementation study underway. We believe this study is nearly complete or complete. We don't really know, because, despite numerous requests, and even a hearing last November, the Administration has totally ignored Congress.

What little we know, we've learned from the press, which seems to be a theme for this Administration, to leak to its favorite reporters.

For example, the Associated Press reported earlier this year that, “The Obama administration is weighing options for sharp new cuts to the U.S. nuclear force, including a reduction of up to 80 percent in the number of deployed weapons.”[1]

And, the Japanese Paper Kyodo recently reported that, “the United States would also explore the possibility for unilaterally abandoning a portion of the roughly 3,000 reserve warheads not yet deployed...one official floated the possibility of reducing the number to about 1,000.”[2]

I am deeply concerned about such cuts. For one thing, why make them?

The New START treaty hasn't yet been implemented; and for that matter, the modernization plan promised when that treaty was ratified – and the president appears to be reversing course on modernization.

For that matter, former STRATCOM commander Kevin Chilton stated that further cuts weren't in the national interest because, as he put it, “The arsenal that we have is exactly what is needed today to provide the deterrent.”[3]

So why cut U.S. nuclear forces further?

In terms of China, we know they've got significantly fewer nuclear forces than the United States does at present. We also know China is building up its forces, and modernizing them, and that it may double its force by the end of this decade.

China is deploying scores of mobile missiles, and, for the first time, a sea-based deterrent with their JIN class submarines and JL-2 missiles, which it has been testing.

Why would the administration reduce our superiority versus China, and at what point would those reductions entice China to build up?

Surely, the Administration is taking this into account right? Wrong.

As General Kehler stated recently, “It is not possible to accurately determine the precise level or conditions at which the PRC leadership might elect to attempt to match the U.S. nuclear inventory.”

In other words, we don’t know.

This is why the House-passed national defense authorization bill freezes our current nuclear guidance and strategy.

Simply put, the Administration has not made the case for further reductions, and I simply don’t believe the Congress can afford to let the Administration take risks like these with America’s security.

We also require the Administration to undertake a comprehensive assessment of China’s nuclear strategy, modeled off of the Team B concept of earlier years. I have long been concerned about what we know and don’t know when it comes to China’s nuclear forces. It’s time to get those answers.

Additionally, the House NDAA this year requires STRATCOM to undertake a study of the Underground Great Wall to understand what it means for our ability to target key capabilities in China using our conventional and nuclear forces. We must not let China undermine our deterrent.

V. Conclusion

We don’t want an adversarial relationship with China, but what do they want?

As I noted earlier, we don’t really know. I’ll quote from this year’s congressionally mandated report on China’s military power, “secrecy and ambiguity remain China’s predominant approach in the nuclear realm.”

Unfortunately, the administration appears to be singularly focused on

further reductions of U.S. nuclear forces.

And, frankly, the so-called “pivot to Asia” rings hollow to me.

With the exception of a deployment of Marines to Australia, which I think is commendable, I see no other real change to our posture in Asia.

I am deeply concerned that this Administration has no real plan to counter the uncertainty of China’s military development.

That is why groups such as IASC, and the work of Rick Fisher and Dr. Karber, and so many of you, are so important to the nation’s security.

Please keep up the good work. Thank you for listening. I’m happy to take a couple of questions.