

# U.S. Rep. Gallagher: Outlines vision to deter CCP invasion of Taiwan

Posted on Tuesday, Oct 18, 2022

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**WASHINGTON, D.C.** — Rep. Mike Gallagher (R-WI), a member of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence and the House Armed Services Committee, today delivered remarks at the Heritage Foundation following the release of its [2023 Index of U.S. Military Strength](#), a report that annually gauges the U.S. Military's ability to perform its mission in the modern threat landscape. The 2023 Index finds that the United States military is ***“rated as weak relative to the force needed to defend national interests on a global stage,”*** the first such rating in the Index's nine-year history.

In response to these findings, Rep. Gallagher delivered a speech that warned the U.S. military is entering into a ***“window of maximum danger”*** with respect to Taiwan and that to protect U.S. interests, Pentagon leadership needs to focus on creatively using the resources it has today to build a force deter a CCP invasion of Taiwan.

In his remarks, Rep. Gallagher acknowledged that while *“long-term investments to rebuild American military superiority in general—and maritime superiority in particular—are critical, the reality is that we will not be able to build the Navy the nation needs within the next five years. What we can do, however, is build an **anti-navy.**”*

In his speech, Rep. Gallagher laid out his plan to do so, which included:

- Surging long-range conventional precision fires in three concentric rings across the Pacific: (1) the First Island Chain; (2) the Second Island Chain plus the Central Pacific islands, and (3) the outer edges of the theater including Alaska, Hawaii, and Australia,
- Maxing out the capacity of active weapons production lines through multi-year

procurement contracts, as well as modernizing the Defense Production Act so it can provide direct project financing, automatic fast-tracking of permits, and investments in defense workforce training, and

- Moving Taiwan to the front of the Foreign Military Sales line and clear the backlog of \$14 billion dollars worth of foreign military sales (FMS) items that have been approved but not delivered, providing direct financial assistance to Taiwan, and giving the Pentagon drawdown authority to directly provide defense articles to Taiwan.

Rep. Gallagher concluded that, *“we don’t lack options, we lack leadership. We lack leadership in the Pentagon capable of bending the bureaucracy to their will, in service of a defense strategy that prioritizes hard power. And we lack leadership in the White House that understands the paradox of deterrence: that to avoid war, you must convince your adversary that you are both capable and willing to wage war. If we ignore hard lessons about hard power, if we continue down the utopian path of disarmament, and if we allow the fear of escalation to dominate our decisions, we will feed Xi’s appetite for conquest and invite war itself. **By choosing instead to put an anti-navy in Xi’s path, we can deter war in the short term and buy time to build a Navy that defeats communism over the long term.**”*

Click [HERE](#) to watch the speech in full, or read the text below as it was prepared for delivery.

*Thank you Kevin, and congratulations to you and the Heritage Foundation on the publication of the 2023 Index of Military Strength. I wish I could be here today on happier terms, but I don’t know what was more depressing: watching my Packers get demolished by the New York J-E-T-S Jets at Lambeau Field on Sunday, or reading this year’s Index, which for the first time in the history of the Heritage index downgrades the overall rating of the US military.*

*Reading the Index, I thought to myself: you know it sure would be nice if we didn’t have to spend all this time and money on military strength in pursuit of peace. But here’s the problem: we’ve tried everything else and none of it seems to work. For example, at the height of the utopianism that characterized the interwar period, the Senate attempted to outlaw war by ratifying the Kellogg-Briand Pact on January 16, 1929. The only “No” vote was Wisconsin Senator John Blaine, who as the author of the 21<sup>st</sup> Amendment must have understood that outlawing war would work about as well as outlawing alcohol. Senator Blaine subsequently lost his senate seat and was*

*censured by the state legislature, while Secretary Kellogg won the Nobel Peace Prize. But just a few years later signatories including Japan, Germany, Austria, and Italy would violate the Treaty, eventually leading to World War II.*

*War remains outlawed, yet war persists, in part because these utopian delusions persist. Consider President Biden at the UN last fall, wish-casting that we were closing an era of “relentless war” and opening one of “relentless diplomacy” in which “many of our greatest concerns cannot be solved or even addressed by the force of arms.” Days before Vladimir Putin’s latest invasion of Ukraine, Biden’s Special Presidential Envoy for Climate John Kerry expressed his confusion about the looming invasion, saying “I thought we lived in a world that had said no to that kind of activity.” Meanwhile, senior State Department officials projected their enlightened sensibilities onto Putin, scolding him that instead of invading Ukraine he should focus on “build[ing] back better.”*

*Or consider the Biden Administration’s National Defense Strategy, the cornerstone of which is a concept called “integrated deterrence.” Beneath the jargon, the basic idea is that we can deemphasize hard power yet still bolster deterrence by better integrating soft power, allies, and technology into military operations. But while the Pentagon is talking about doing less, the rest of the interagency is not talking about doing more. If you examine the strategic plans released this year by the Departments of State, Treasury, and Commerce, the term “integrated deterrence” is nowhere to be found. The administration has even deluded itself into thinking that integrated deterrence succeeded in Ukraine. Barely one month into the war, anonymous Pentagon officials bragged to the Washington Post that integrated deterrence “comes out smelling pretty good from this.” Yet tens of thousands of dead Ukrainians and millions more displaced should not smell, look, or feel good. A Post profile lauding Austin’s application of integrated deterrence in Ukraine included Under Secretary of Defense for Policy Colin Kahl boasting that: “We are literally defying the laws of bureaucratic physics by how fast we are going [in Ukraine].”*

*Now I’m a Marine, not a physicist. But Newton’s First Law of Motion states that an object in motion will stay in motion unless acted upon by an external force. And on February 24, 2022, deterrence failed in Ukraine because, as Putin put his invasion into motion, President Biden repeatedly signaled he would not put American hard power in Putin’s way. The President preemptively pulled American troops out of Ukraine, abandoned our embassy, sent our ships sailing out of the Black Sea, and even seemed to green light a “minor incursion.” The administration went so far as to limit the pre-war transfer of defense equipment out of a fear it might provoke*

*Putin. Instead, the Biden Administration largely relied on the threat of sanctions and sternly-worded statements to deter Putin, and deterrence disintegrated, at the cost of tens of thousands of lives, hundreds of billions of dollars, and increasing threats of nuclear escalation.*

*Eventually, after we went back and forth in a hearing, Secretary Austin and Chairman Milley admitted that integrated deterrence failed in Ukraine, and that “short of the commitment of U.S. military forces into Ukraine proper,” “Putin was not deterrable.” This was an important, if inadvertent, admission about the supremacy of hard power, one that has profound implications for how we deter a war with China over Taiwan.*

*For when it comes to Taiwan, time is not on our side. We have entered the window of maximum danger, or the “Davidson Window,” which is a reference to former Indo-Pacific Commander Phil Davidson’s assessment that China may make a move on Taiwan within the next five years. Divesting of hard power within the Davidson Window is dangerous, yet the Biden Administration insists on doing just that. The Biden defense budget would force the Navy to bottom out at 280 ships and the Air Force to cut over 1000 airplanes by 2027, just in time for the PLA’s 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary and target date for having the capability to take Taiwan. Most of the transformative technology DoD is investing in with its much-hyped 9.5% increase in research and development dollars, from hypersonic weapons to “Joint All Domain Command and Control,” may not be fielded until the 2030s—if at all. Making matters worse, we’re running low on the munitions that are essential to both Ukraine and Taiwan. Two months into the war we had already sent Ukraine a quarter of our entire Stinger stockpile and more than seven years’ worth of Javelins.*

*Now some think I’m too pessimistic, and that the 69-year-old Xi Jinping, who is securing a third term as General Secretary of the Chinese Communist Party this week, will abandon his lifelong ambition of taking Taiwan. But look at what he has just recently gotten away with: (1) Hong Kong; (2) genocide; (3) covering up a coronavirus pandemic that has killed over 6 million globally. Furthermore, Xi’s problems—a structural economic slowdown, skyrocketing household debt, and the demographic buzzsaw of dealing with more retirees than any society in history—all get worse in the 2030s. Why would he wait?*

*We must not gamble the fate of the Free World on Xi’s restraint nor on our own utopian delusions that somehow we’ve evolved beyond wars of territorial expansion. We must put American hard power in Xi’s path before it’s too late. While*

*long-term investments to rebuild American military superiority in general—and maritime superiority in particular—are critical, the reality is that we will not be able to build the Navy the nation needs within the next five years. What we can do within the Davidson Window, however, is build an **anti-navy**. By anti-navy I mean asymmetric forces and weapons designed to target the Chinese Navy, deny control of the seas surrounding Taiwan, and prevent PLA amphibious forces from gaining a lodgment on the island.*

*The first step in building this anti-navy does not require us to defy any laws of physics, though technically it is rocket science. Now that we are no longer bound by the INF Treaty, we can surge long range conventional precision fires in three concentric rings across the Pacific: (1) the First Island Chain; (2) the Second Island Chain plus the Central Pacific islands, and (3) the outer edges of the theater including Alaska, Hawaii, and Australia. In the first ring we need shorter range anti-ship and air defense missiles such as the Naval Strike Missile, Long-Range Anti-Ship Missile, and SM-6. These weapons will be operated by Army and Marine Corps stand in forces, especially in the Southern Japanese and Northern Philippine Islands, and wherever possible, they should be containerized to confuse Chinese targeting. In the second ring, we need extended range Maritime Strike Tomahawks and other intermediate range missiles. In the third ring we need longer-range intermediate missiles with advanced energetic materials in places like Alaska and Australia's Northern Territory. The point is that the PLA Rocket Force (China's anti-Navy) has fielded low-cost weapons to keep American ships out of the fight and target America forces concentrated in a few, fixed locations. We must use this logic against them, building an anti-navy that can sink PLA ships and amphibious landing craft at port, in the Strait, and on Taiwan's beaches.*

*The second step in building an anti-navy is to stockpile munitions before the shooting starts. [At current production rates, for example, it will take at least two years to boost Javelin production from 2,100 to 4,000 missiles annually. In many cases Chinese companies are the sole source or a primary supplier for the energetic materials used in our missiles. To fix this the Pentagon should stop buying minimum sustaining rates of critical munitions and start maxing out the capacity of active production lines through multi-year procurement contracts. Drawing on the lessons of Operation Warp Speed, we can also modernize the Defense Production Act and use it to provide direct project financing, automatic fast-tracking of permits, and investments in defense workforce training. Consider that when I first deployed to Iraq in 2007, most Marines were riding around in highly-vulnerable Humvees. When](#)*

*I returned in 2008, as if by magic, we all had highly-survivable MRAPs, because Secretary Gates made fielding them his highest acquisition priority. The next Secretary of Defense must similarly make rebuilding our munitions industrial base a personal crusade.*

*The third step is to turn the talk about arming Taiwan to the teeth into reality. This starts with moving Taiwan to the front of the Foreign Military Sales line and clearing the backlog of \$14 billion dollars worth of FMS items that have been approved but not delivered. Congress can go further by providing direct financial assistance to Taiwan and by giving the Pentagon the same drawdown authority to directly provide defense articles to Taiwan that it already has with Ukraine. For example, rather than demilitarizing hundreds of Harpoon missiles or putting them into deep storage, the Pentagon could utilize a Taiwan drawdown authority, make any necessary modernizations and certifications, and send these missiles, along with launchers to Taiwan. We should also learn from the first two Taiwan Strait crises, where President Eisenhower dramatically increased American combat power on and around the island. This means increasing the size and frequency of American active duty and National Guard rotations on Taiwan and giving them the tools they need to put Chinese amphibious assault ships at the bottom of the Taiwan Strait.*

*We can complete these steps within the Davidson Window. In concert with a topline increase, we can pay for it by reducing the size of DoD's civilian workforce, the joint staff, the office of the secretary of defense, the overall number of flag and general officers, and the fast-growing DEI bureaucracy. We can recycle valuable assets that contribute nothing to warfighting such as golf courses. We can resurrect the 2015 Defense Business Board study of DoD's core business practices, which identified a path to saving \$125 billion over five years, more than enough to fund the anti-Navy and the Navy the nation needs.*

*In other words, we don't lack options, we lack leadership. We lack leadership in the Pentagon capable of bending the bureaucracy to their will, in service of a defense strategy that prioritizes hard power. And we lack leadership in the White House that understands the paradox of deterrence: that to avoid war, you must convince your adversary that you are both capable and willing to wage war. If we ignore hard lessons about hard power, if we continue down the utopian path of disarmament, and if we allow the fear of escalation to dominate our decisions, we will feed Xi's appetite for conquest and invite war itself. By choosing instead to put an anti-navy in Xi's path, we can deter war in the short term and buy time to build a Navy that defeats communism over the long term. Thank you.*