

# U.S. Rep. Gallagher: Pushes to require DoD to develop strategy to build “rings of fire” in Indo-Pacific

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**WASHINGTON, D.C.** — Rep. Mike Gallagher (R-WI) and Senator Joni Ernst (R-IA) announced [they introduced](#) the Rings of Fire Act of 2023, a bill that would help strengthen deterrence and counter the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) Rocket Force by requiring the Secretary of Defense to develop a strategy for building “rings of fire” in the Indo-Pacific by developing and deploying ground-based theater-range missiles in the region. While the U.S. has had the ability to build and deploy these missiles since it rightly withdrew from the INF Treaty in 2019, the Pentagon has made little progress at meaningfully doing so, allowing the Chinese Communist Party to build a sizeable missile advantage in the region.

This bill, which is included in the House and Senate versions of this year’s National Defense Authorization Act, addresses this problem by forcing the Secretary of Defense to act with a sense of urgency to ensure the U.S. can not only develop and deploy the ground-based theater-range missiles, but also create a plan to shrink the missile gap and strengthen deterrence in the Indo-Pacific.

***“The Chinese Communist Party has spent years building a rocket force that can push American ships out of a fight and target American forces further out across the Indo-Pacific—reaching our own borders. It’s time we use this logic against them and build an anti-Navy and an advanced, theater-range missile force of our own,”*** said Rep. Gallagher. ***“Surging these missiles and dispersing them across the region is a clear way to make Xi Jinping think twice about moving on Taiwan, but top Pentagon leadership has not taken the steps necessary to develop and deploy these missiles. The Rings of Fire Act takes a critical step towards building these deterrent***

***capabilities by ensuring the Secretary of Defense has a plan to put these missiles in Xi Jinping's path and help prevent war in the Indo-Pacific."***

***"China's aggression is growing, and a strong deterrence strategy is needed to confront the Chinese Communist Party. As China's rocket force has taken the lead in the Indo-Pacific, the shocking gap in America's missile capabilities calls deterrence into question,"*** said Ernst. ***"I'm working to close this gap by building 'rings of fire' around our pacing threat and reduce China's home-field advantage. Through coordination with key allies, we can develop and deploy the missiles we need throughout the Indo-Pacific and force China's military onto its back foot, so Xi Jinping thinks twice before taking Taiwan by force. It's time to offset China's missile advantages and keep the peace through strength."***

The Rings of Fire Act specifically outlines requirements for the Secretary of Defense to develop a strategy no later than 180 days after its enactment. The strategy must include:

1. An assessment of current gaps in the United States' theater-range precision strike capabilities;
2. An identification of military requirements for these missile systems;
3. A list of prospective locations to base these missile systems;
4. A description of operational concepts for use of these missiles;
5. An identification of allies and strategies for co-development of new missiles;
6. A cost and feasible time assessment for developing and deploying these missiles;
7. The designation of a commander to be responsible for the theater missile strategy;

As Gallagher and Ernst wrote [in a recent op-ed](#), ***"An Indo-Pacific missile strategy should take advantage of geography. While China fields missiles on the mainland, the United States can deploy them across the region with the support of partners and allies. Japan and the Philippines could host shorter-range systems while longer-range systems could be deployed to northern Australia, the Pacific Islands, and Alaska. This would establish "rings of fire" that constitute a defense-in-depth across the Pacific...Building these "rings of fire" in concert with our closest allies would enhance deterrence and pose dangerous dilemmas for PLA planners. If we can close the missile gap and thereby shift regional***

***balance of power in our favor, this gives us a greater chance of making Xi Jinping think twice before attempting to take Taiwan by force.”***

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