
CHINA WILL BUILD STRING OF MILITARY BASES AROUND WORLD, SAYS PENTAGON

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The US Defense Department expects China to add military bases around the world to protect its investments in its ambitious One Belt One Road global infrastructure program, according to an official report released on Thursday.

Beijing currently has just one overseas military base, in Djibouti, but is believed planning others, including possibly Pakistan, as it seeks to project itself as a global superpower.

China's advancement of projects such as the One Belt, One Road Initiative (OBOR) will probably drive military overseas basing through a perceived need to provide security for OBOR projects, the Pentagon said in its annual report to Congress on Chinese military and security developments.

China will seek to establish additional military bases in countries with which it has a longstanding friendly relationship and similar strategic interests, such as Pakistan, and in which there is a precedent for hosting foreign militaries, the report said.

That effort could be constrained by other countries' wariness of hosting a full-time presence of the Peoples Liberation Army, the report noted.

But target locations for military basing could include the Middle East, Southeast Asia, and the western Pacific.

The report came as the Pentagon also warned that deepening Chinese activities in the Arctic region could also pave the way for a strengthened military presence, including the deployment of submarines to act as deterrents against nuclear attack.

The assessment is included in the US military's annual report to Congress on China's armed forces.

The Pentagon report noted that Denmark has expressed concern about China's interest in Greenland, which has included proposals to establish a research station, establish a satellite ground station, renovate airports and expand mining.

Civilian research could support a strengthened Chinese military presence in the Arctic Ocean, which could include deploying submarines to the region as a deterrent against nuclear attacks, the report said.

China has already established well-armed outposts on contested atolls it has built up in the South China Sea.

Last year, there were reportedly discussions on a base in the Wakhan corridor of northwest Afghanistan.

In addition, The Washington Post recently identified an outpost hosting many Chinese troops in eastern Tajikistan, near the strategic junction of the Wakhan Corridor, China, and Pakistan.

Chinese President Xi Jinping has sought to project the countrys power beyond its immediate back yard in east and southeast Asia.

This includes strengthening the countrys presence in international institutions, acquiring top-flight technology and establishing a strong economic presence worldwide.

It also includes projecting the countrys military force on land, sea and in space, the report notes.

Chinas leaders are leveraging Chinas growing economic, diplomatic, and military clout to establish regional preeminence and expand the countrys international influence, the report said.

Beijing in particular increasingly see the United States as becoming more confrontational in an effort to contain Chinas expanding power, it said.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/may/03/china-will-build-string-of-military-bases-around-world-says-pentagon>

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