



# Lack of Information About China's Military Spending Concerns Gates

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WASHINGTON, March 5, 2008 – China's announcement that it is increasing its military spending by almost 18 percent is a cause of concern because the nation's government hasn't been clear about how it will spend the money, Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates said here today.

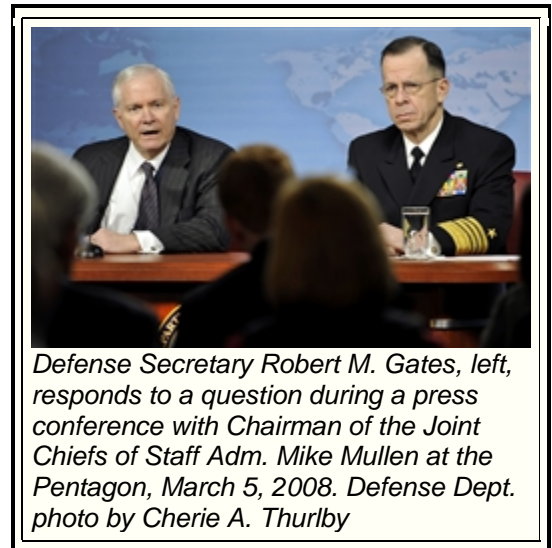
China's announcement comes on the heels of the March 3 release of the 2008 China Military Power Report, which found that China spent more than three times its announced defense budget last year and is developing new capabilities that could have global implications.

"Part of the issue is what we don't know," Gates said today at a Pentagon news conference. "I think that there's general agreement that the Chinese military budget that we see is only a portion of what the Chinese spend."

The United States has proposed engaging in strategic dialogue with Chinese officials to gain information about what the increase in the budget means and what their modernization programs mean, Gates said. In exchange, the United States would provide similar information to China.

"As you saw in the Chinese Military Power document, there's a wide range of activities under way, and we think having an ongoing dialogue with them about the meaning of all that would be very useful," he said.

Navy Adm. Mike Mullen, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, noted that beyond the 18 percent increase, the Chinese are spending money on research and development, and those investments need to be linked to strategic intent.



*Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates, left, responds to a question during a press conference with Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Adm. Mike Mullen at the Pentagon, March 5, 2008. Defense Dept. photo by Cherie A. Thurlby*

Gates also spoke about the United States' recent shoot-down of a crippled reconnaissance satellite in space, and China's concerns about that operation. The Chinese have so far made no requests for further information about the operation, he said, and the United States has been very open about the mission from the beginning.

He compared the U.S. operation to China's shoot-down of a satellite in 2007. The Chinese offered no advance notification of that operation, or any information afterward, Gates said. In contrast, the United States was very open about the satellite operation from the start and took measures to limit the amount of debris that was left floating in space, he said.

Gates emphasized that the United States has no intention of developing anti-satellite technology, and that the recent operation was conducted to deal with a potential emergency.