

MISSED MILESTONES: EVALUATING THE LAST FOUR YEARS IN THE EAP REGION AND UNSEIZED OPPORTUNITIES UNDER PRESIDENT TRUMP

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MISSED MILESTONES: EVALUATING THE LAST FOUR YEARS IN THE EAP REGION AND UNSEIZED OPPORTUNITIES UNDER PRESI- DENT TRUMP

Tuesday, February 25, 2025

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON EAST ASIA AND PACIFIC,
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS,
Washington, DC.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 2:16 p.m., in room 2172, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Young Kim (chair of the subcommittee) presiding.

Mrs. KIM. The Committee on Foreign Affairs will come to order.

The purpose of this hearing is to evaluate the last 4 years of the Biden administration's policy toward East Asia and the Pacific, address its successes and failures, and identify opportunities for the Trump administration to strengthen our engagement in the region. So let me now recognize myself for an opening statement.

OPENING STATEMENT OF CHAIRWOMAN YOUNG KIM

Again, welcome to East Asia and the Pacific Subcommittee's hearing entitled "Missed Milestones: Evaluating the Last Four Years in the EAP Region and Unseized Opportunities Under President Trump."

As we convene for the first hearing of the 119th Congress, our subcommittee must reflect on the past 4 years under the Biden-Harris administration.

First, we must ask the tough questions that will help us chart the course forward and ensure that we address the region's challenges head on including where do we go wrong on China policy?

Why have we failed to enact punitive measures against the Chinese Communist Party when it was clearly warranted? Do we effectively leverage our allies and partnership to raise greater awareness regarding regional issues?

Have we successfully deterred China and North Korea from advancing their dangerous agendas? Have our economic engagement goals been aligned with the demands and needs of our partners?

While the Biden-Harris administration's strategy toward China has been shortsighted in many ways one thing has remained consistent across administrations. To engage effectively in the region we must show up and work with our allies and partners.

Take, for example, the U.S. relationship with South Korea and Japan. These two nations have put aside their longstanding and

unresolved historical disputes to tackle shared regional threats including Kim Jong Un's nuclear ambitions and Xi Jinping's military and economic coercion.

This is a perfect illustration of how collaboration, despite differences, is not only possible but necessary, and while progress has been made this administration has tremendous opportunity to strengthen trilateral ties.

No matter the changes in domestic policies, our engagement with South Korea and Japan as well as with Quad and ASEAN partners must remain steadfast.

The threats posed by the CCP and North Korean regime are not going away. Neither should our commitment to these vital alliances.

Second, we cannot allow the global economy to yield to the CCP standards nor can we lose the confidence of our allies and partners in American economic strength.

In my travels across the East Asia and the Pacific region the message was clear and consistent that the United States is the partner of choice, but without substantial economic incentives our allies and friends are being forced into deeper trade dependency on China and to accept Beijing's artificially cheap investment that always comes with a price.

The previous administration's Indo-Pacific Economic Framework has the potential to provide a path forward to economically engage with these nations.

Our subcommittee now has jurisdiction over the Development Finance Corporations and we will use every tool at our disposal to ensure the U.S. remains an active and committed economic partner in the EAP region.

Third, we must continue our work on human rights. We cannot ignore the ongoing human rights abuses in Xinjiang where Xi Jinping directs the imprisonment of Uyghur Muslims and Tibetans to erase their culture and identity.

The CCP's transnational repression tactics have also spilled across borders with the regime's United Front Work Department harassing and intimidating pro-democracy activists right here on the U.S. soil.

Meanwhile, Kim Jong Un continues to steal from his own people, subjecting them to torture, forced labor, and conduct unlawful and extrajudicial killings. Across Southeast Asia independent journalists and civilians face charges simply for exercising their right of free press and assembly.

America is safer and more prosperous when we put U.S. priorities first. Our allies and partners are better off when we show up for good.

With that, I'm proud to have these witnesses before us today. Their insights will help us shape policies that will strengthen our position in the East Asia and the Pacific region and advance our national interest. Thank you.

Let me now recognize the Ranking Member, the gentleman from California Mr. Ami Bera for your opening statement.

OPENING STATEMENT OF RANKING MEMBER AMI BERA

Mr. BERA. Thank you, Chairwoman Kim.

We have been partners in this region for quite a while. We have had a chance to travel together, and I agree with your opening statements.

You know, there's progress that's been made but, obviously, there's progress that we can make going forward that really shouldn't be a partisan issue.

Certainly within Congress many of these issues are nonpartisan. We can look at the Quad coalition in the first Trump administration. They set some of those baselines.

The Biden administration elevated to the leaders level very early in this administration right after the swearing in. You had a ministerial and I think that's something that we can build on.

That partnership between the United States, Japan, Australia, India is vitally important to not just the geopolitical security for the region but also from an economic perspective, you know, bringing India into the fold.

We have had the chance to travel to Japan and Korea multiple times and, you know, the trilateral relationship is in a much better place than it was, four or 8 years ago.

We have got to continue to keep that intact regardless of politics in the region. Certainly, the bilateral Japan-Korea relationship is in a strong place and we have got to build off of that and, you know, we have a responsibility as Members of Congress to continue that but also support the administration in maintaining a strong trilateral.

We look at—in 2019 when I traveled to the Philippines that relationship was in a very bad place. Philippines was headed in the direction of China.

Now, under the Marcos administration, you know, getting the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement in place I think there's a real opportunity with the Trump administration again to build on that.

The Philippines are right back in our fold to have regular rotations and perhaps return to permanent basing and so forth there. I think that's a nonpartisan issue. That's something we can work on.

I'm just returning from Australia, New Zealand and the region and AUKUS. Pillar one is going very well. You know, looking at the words of Secretary Hegseth and others.

I think there's a strong foundation and support for AUKUS. Let's get pillar two going., again, this is a good deal for the United States. It not only establishes a presence, works with one of our Five Eye allies.

The fact that Beijing is upset about AUKUS means we're probably doing the right thing so let's keep doing it. Let's build off of that., again, this will allow us to maintain naval superiority in the region at a time when we're watching very provocative actions around northern Australia—between Australia and New Zealand from the Chinese.

We have got to send a strong message that that is not okay in the 21st century because that is how accidents happen. That is how wars get started. And, again, the behavior that we see around

there or what we see in the South China Sea, and I know you've had a chance to see firsthand some of what's happening around in the Philippines.

Again, we as the United States with our allies have to send a strong message that that's not okay.

Now, if it had been up to me we would have passed TPP a long time ago. Obviously, we find ourselves in a very different place. One area where I didn't see as much progress with the Biden administration was around trade, even digital trade, and we have agreements that we can build off of.

I think it is important for us to set the contours of what trade looks like. I don't think it's going to be joining CP-TPP but, you know, can we do digital trade?

Can we get some progress here even in a bilateral way. I think that would be important and, again, I think we as Members of Congress on this subcommittee can work in that area.

One area that we were a little bit late to the game but, you know, we did see the Biden administration reestablish embassies in the Solomon Islands, Tonga, Vanuatu.

We saw important aid and development programs going there and it's important for us to continue to support those investments that are not big dollar items but when you talk about the people we are the partners of choice, the United States.

But we have to be there. We have to show up because if we are not—you know, the PRC can show up with bags of cash and demonstrate influence in ways that we don't do business.

So working with our allies in Australia, New Zealand. The Japanese are showing an increased interest in the region. Those are all things that are nonpartisan.

Those are all things that I hope to be able to work with the Trump administration on and certainly with you, Madam Chairwoman. But I think we can work on legislation that keeps moving those relationships forward.

With that, I'll yield back.

Mrs. KIM. Thank you, Ranking Member, and I love the tone of bipartisanship, especially when it comes to EAP—Pacific Island region—and I cannot emphasize enough how important it is for us to show up and engage with our EAP regions.

Thank you for that. I look forward to continue to work with you on this committee and beyond.

Other members of the committee are reminded that opening statements may be submitted for the record, and we are pleased to have a distinguished panel of witnesses before us today on this important topic.

So let me introduce our distinguished panel: Mr. Zack Cooper, senior fellow at the American Enterprise Institute; Craig Singleton, China program senior director and senior fellow at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies; and Richard Fontaine, the chief executive officer at the Center for New American Security.

The chair recognizes the importance of the issues before us and is grateful to have you speak with us, and look forward to hearing your testimonies and, you know, answering our questions.

Your full statements will be made part of the record and I'll ask each of you to keep your remarks or spoken remarks to 5 minutes or under in order to allow time for member questions.

I now recognize Mr. Cooper for your opening statement.

STATEMENT OF ZACK COOPER

Mr. COOPER. Thank you, Chairwoman Kim, Ranking Member Bera, and distinguished members of the committee. It's an honor to be here today and I especially appreciate the bipartisan nature of your leadership on Asia issues.

Despite changes in rhetoric, recent U.S. strategy in Asia has been remarkably consistent across administrations from both parties.

In short, the United States has made progress with those countries that are most concerned about Chinese behavior. I would focus here on Japan, the Philippines, India, Australia, and South Korea, the same countries that both of you mentioned in your opening remarks.

But we have struggled elsewhere in the region, particularly with countries across most of Southeast Asia and they've been disappointed by uneven U.S. engagement and inconsistent economic visions.

These structural constraints I think are likely to continue over the next few years and in my written testimony I assessed the lasting impact of five different Biden administration initiatives on Asia. The first was continued cooperation with the Quad, the second, AUKUS security partnership, the third was the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework. The fourth was deepening of the alliance with the Philippines, and, last, U.S.-Japan-South Korea trilateral cooperation.

I think we can say that the Biden administration made real progress in many of these areas but that we do have to rethink our approach to the region because much of the rest of the region is untouched by the efforts that we have made over the last decade or so.

With these lessons in mind I want to propose what I think are potentially five big ideas that the Trump administration and the Congress could take up over the next few years.

So the first is establishment of an allied defense arsenal effort, a major new defense industry partnership with allies taking the lead on military co-development and co-production of precision munitions and autonomous systems.

The second I talk about in my written testimony is creation of an allied energy initiative to boost U.S. energy production and exports to allies in Asia who are desperate for more reliable sources of oil and natural gas.

The third is formation of what I would call a Taiwan contact group alongside U.S. allies to provide Taiwan with the capabilities needed to bolster its military defenses and societal resilience in advance of a conflict.

The fourth proposal is a trade deal with the Philippines to maintain our recent alliance momentum and avoid China being able to

use its economic influence with Manila to undermine an absolutely critical strategic relationship for the United States.

The fifth proposal I would put on the table is that the Trump administration should make a big bet on Indonesia akin to its efforts with India. The reason is that Indonesia, as many of you know well, is a rising giant.

It could act as a counterweight in Southeast Asia against China's regional influence, and I think it warrants much more attention from American policymakers.

So those are five opportunities I think the Trump administration has. I want to recently speak—quickly speak about five risks that I think are serious as well.

First, Washington will need to avoid ceding a sphere of influence to China by better coordinating with its allies and partners while finding ways to stay engaged on the principles and priorities that matter to countries in Asia.

Second, threats to withdrawal of support from Taiwan could further undermine the support of the Taiwanese public and their confidence in the United States, and that is particularly true, in my view, if it's coupled with a U.S. drawdown from parts of Europe.

Third, the danger of South Korean nuclear proliferation is real and I think it is growing. It is accelerated by concerns about the risk of U.S.-South Korea alliance decoupling and that will require new engagement from policymakers here in Washington.

Fourth, as you know, AUKUS remains a bold and important idea but I think we should be assessing the role that large undersea unmanned vehicles can play in bridging some of the capability gaps that are arising as we think about AUKUS over the next couple of decades.

Fifth, American policymakers will have to reconsider their approach to Southeast Asia, particularly on trade and development, lest China continue to make significant progress across the region.

So, in conclusion, the United States remains vital to security and prosperity across the Indo-Pacific. I thank this committee for its remarkable bipartisan leadership on these issues over many years and I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Cooper follows:]

Statement before the East Asia and Pacific Subcommittee
of the House Foreign Affairs Committee

Strategic Opportunities and Risks in the East Asia and Pacific Region

Zack Cooper
Senior Fellow
American Enterprise Institute

February 25, 2025

The American Enterprise Institute (AEI) is a nonpartisan, nonprofit, 501(c)(3) educational organization and does not take institutional positions on any issues. The views expressed in this testimony are those of the author.

Chairwoman Kim, Ranking Member Bera, and distinguished members of the committee, thank you for inviting me to testify today about opportunities and risks in the East Asia and Pacific region.

Despite changes in rhetoric, recent US strategy in Asia has been surprisingly consistent across administrations from both parties. In short, the United States has made substantial progress with those countries that feel most concerned about Chinese behavior—Australia, India, Japan, the Philippines, and South Korea. But the United States has struggled elsewhere, particularly with countries in Southeast Asia, which have been disappointed by uneven US engagement and uninspiring economic agendas.

These structural constraints are likely to continue in the second Trump administration, but policymakers can learn from America's recent successes and failures. Below I review five of the Biden administration's main initiatives in Asia, identify five opportunities that the Trump administration has to build on these efforts, and outline five risks that endanger US strategy.

Evaluating Recent US Strategy in Asia

Over the last eight years, US strategy in Asia has been remarkably consistent. Each of the past two administrations committed to prioritize the Indo-Pacific region but struggled to do so in practice. Each used similar language to explain the need for a new approach on China but had difficulty articulating a clear objective of their China strategy. Each made progress with those allies and partners most alarmed by China's behavior but experienced setbacks with countries that felt less threatened by Beijing. It is said that "foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds," but foolish consistency has also been the hobgoblin of US policy in Asia.

To understand how the United States can make lasting progress in the region, it is necessary to first review some of the major announcements that the Biden administration made on Asia policy, and assess how they look in hindsight.

- 1) *Accelerating Cooperation with the Quad*: In 2021, President Joe Biden built on President Donald Trump's revival of the Quad by hosting the first in-person summit of the Quad leaders from Australia, India, Japan, and the United States. The Quad went on to announce a range of initiatives addressing global health, infrastructure, maritime security, technology, and supply chains. This multilateral grouping has emerged as the most significant and lasting regional change of the last decade, helping to balance China's power and influence.

Secretary of State Marco Rubio's meeting with the Quad foreign ministers on his first full day in office suggests that it will continue to play a key role in President Trump's second term.

- 2) *Initiating the AUKUS Security Partnership:* In 2021, leaders from Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States announced the AUKUS security partnership. This trilateral security and technology partnership is a major step forward in defense cooperation with two of America's closest allies. The United States cannot meet the China challenge alone, so AUKUS was designed to bring together the defense industries of key US allies. But AUKUS has also faced challenges—particularly surrounding its ability to quickly deliver results. Although the agreement has persisted across changes of government in all three countries, there are vocal critics who question whether the arrangement is moving fast enough to justify its significant costs. The Trump administration will have to work with London and Canberra to manage these challenges and keep AUKUS on track despite mounting complications.
- 3) *Establishing the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework:* In 2022, the United States and 13 partners launched the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF). Although many in Asia had hoped that Washington would reenter negotiations on the Trans-Pacific Partnership, the Biden administration instead proposed a new economic initiative, without market access provisions. Pillars on supply chains, environmental issues, and fairness led by the Commerce Department made progress, but the pillar on trade organized by the US Trade Representative stalled. Most countries in the region saw the resulting IPEF deal as disappointing, with the United States effectively asking other countries to sign on to new standards without offering additional access to the US market. Few expect that IPEF will survive long into the Trump administration.
- 4) *Deepening the Alliance with the Philippines:* In 2022, Bongbong Marcos won the presidency in the Philippines, and the United States moved quickly to deepen cooperation with its long-standing ally. This culminated in the announcement of four new access locations for US forces in the Philippines and a major new development effort around the Luzon Economic Corridor. These are mutually reinforcing initiatives designed to build and sustain political support for the US presence despite past problems surrounding the basing of American troops in the Philippines. But questions remain about the viability of the increased US presence in the Philippines, given domestic political struggles in Manila and questions about the sustainability of US support for the development of the Luzon Corridor under the Trump administration.

- 5) *Advancing US-Japan-South Korea Ties*: In 2023, the Biden administration took the opportunity to deepen cooperation with Japan and South Korea while favorable leaders were in place in both capitals. South Korean President Yoon Suk-yeol was courageous in accepting domestic political risks to make progress alongside Japanese Prime Minister Kishida Fumio. This culminated in a historic trilateral summit at Camp David. Unfortunately, however, Yoon's decision to declare martial law late last year unraveled much of this progress. South Korea's next president could have a more critical view of the value of continued trilateral cooperation, forcing the United States to rethink its efforts to tie Seoul and Tokyo together. Trilateral cooperation among all three countries is very much in the US interest, but windows to pursue this cooperation seldom stay open for long.

What lessons should policymakers draw from this assessment? First, the Biden team made real progress with Australia, India, Japan, the Philippines, and South Korea, on which the Trump administration should build. Second, policymakers in Washington need to rethink their approach to much of the rest of the region, especially Southeast Asia, where US efforts have largely fallen flat while China has made inroads. Third, the Trump administration is likely to face new challenges related to the Korean Peninsula, cross-Strait issues, and trade, all of which will require careful handling to advance US interests while keeping allies and partners aligned.

Five Big Ideas for the Trump Administration

What are some big ideas that the Trump administration might pursue in Asia? Here are five possibilities that could advance US interests while also adhering to President Trump's desire for other countries to step up and alleviate some of the burden on the United States:

- 1) *Allied Defense Arsenal*: President Trump wants US allies and partners to step up and do more for their own defense. What better way to do so than by announcing a major new defense industry initiative with allies taking the lead on military codevelopment and coproduction? The United States used to be the arsenal of democracy, but America cannot offset China's scale and advancing technology on its own. Today, US allies and partners are desperately needed on everything from shipbuilding to missile production. The Trump administration should announce an allied defense arsenal program alongside a handful of key allies and partners, potentially including Asian players such as Australia, India, Japan, and South Korea, as well as trans-Atlantic allies like Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Poland, and the United Kingdom. By

“supersizing” AUKUS Pillar 2, the Trump administration could use the arsenal initiative to broaden the allied innovation base and cut through red tape on arms export rules. Those interested in government efficiency might find this a productive area in which to focus. Initial areas of emphasis should include uncrewed air and naval systems as well as stockpiles of precision munitions.

- 2) *Allied Energy Initiative*: The Trump administration aims to boost US energy production and exports, and a number of US allies in Asia are simultaneously desperate for more reliable sources of oil and natural gas. The Biden administration considered supporting increased liquified natural gas exports to Japan and several other Asian countries, but ultimately decided against it. The Trump team should take up this idea and run with it. Indeed, President Trump has already indicated some interest in bilateral energy deals with regional countries. By supplying Japan, South Korea, India, Taiwan, and others with reliable sources of energy, the United States can help them protect against supply disruptions. At the same time, these energy purchasing arrangements could help to balance trade and offset the cost of US military support. Asking allies to contribute in this way is mutually beneficial and could help all those involved establish more reliable energy sources and markets creating both economic and security benefits.
- 3) *Taiwan Contact Group*: After Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, the United States and its allies and partners established the Ukraine Defense Contact Group to assist Ukraine. But in a Taiwan scenario, it would not be possible to supply substantial quantities of arms after a conflict breaks out. Instead, the United States should establish a Taiwan Contact Group with key allies and partners today, to deter and defend against the eruption of conflict. The objective would be to provide Taiwan with the capabilities needed to bolster its military defenses and societal resilience in advance of a conflict. In combination with the arsenal program outlined above, this effort could help Taiwan to quickly field systems necessary for its defense. Countries need not break their “one China policies” to participate—those uncomfortable sending weaponry could help Taiwan with disaster relief preparations, stockpiling of food and energy, or other resilience-enhancing measures.
- 4) *Philippine Trade Deal*: The Trump administration is unlikely to embrace IPEF (indeed, many in Asia remain skeptical of its value). But that does not mean that the United States should be entirely absent from regional trade arrangements. After all, there is a real risk that China will join the Comprehensive and Progress Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership,

undermining US economic leverage in the region. The Trump administration is not returning to large multilateral trade agreements, but it should still pursue bilateral trade deals with strategic players. The Philippines might be the best choice for an initial deal. With the Trump administration withdrawing support for many foreign aid programs, the recently announced Luzon Economic Corridor could be at risk. This in turn could prevent the United States from working with the Philippines to develop options for additional presence at several nearby facilities. US policymakers may not be enamored of trade deals at the moment, but a trade agreement with the Philippines could overcome these hurdles by bolstering both American security and prosperity.

- 5) *Big Bet on Indonesia*: In his first term, President Trump made a smart strategic decision to deepen ties with India, which has helped to reshape geopolitical dynamics across the Indo-Pacific. In his second term, he should make another big bet, this time on Indonesia. President Trump and Indian Prime Minister Modi quickly built a strong personal rapport, and the same could be true with Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto. US relations with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) may be stuck in neutral the next few years, so deepening ties with Prabowo could act as a counterweight against decreased US regional engagement (while also serving as a check on Chinese regional influence). Prabowo wants to build a good relationship with the United States, so this is a unique opportunity to deepen ties with a country that will be increasingly important in the years ahead. Initiatives of value to both countries could include critical minerals cooperation, technology initiatives, and defense sales.

Five Risks for the Trump Administration

Although the Trump administration has some opportunities in Asia, it will also have to learn lessons from recent US missteps in the region. Five risks appear the most serious:

- 1) *Ceding China a Sphere of Influence*: In President Trump's first term, his administration fundamentally reset the American strategic discussion on China. Today, General Secretary Xi Jinping finds himself confronted by a range of serious challenges, most notably a slowing economy. This gives the United States and its allies and partners real leverage. But to use it, they will need to remain strategically synchronized. Any perception that the United States is unwilling to continue underwriting regional security and prosperity could encourage China to actively pursue a sphere of influence in Asia. In that case,

a lack of allied coordination or confidence could delink American strategy on China from that of its friends, allowing Beijing to pick off individual countries rather than a united front. To avoid these risks, Washington will need to coordinate carefully with its allies and partners while finding ways to stay engaged on the region's priorities, most notably trade and development.

- 2) *Decoupling of US-Taiwan Policy*: In recent months, President Trump has been quite critical of Taiwan on everything from defense spending to semiconductor manufacturing. It is natural for the United States to call on partners who are facing existential threats to bear more of the burden for their own defense. But Taiwan cannot do so alone, and threats to withdraw support for Taiwan could further undermine its public's confidence in the United States and open the door for China (Taiwan's population is watching events in Ukraine closely). Taipei should demonstrate a greater commitment to investing in its own defense and resilience while also encouraging Taiwan's leading technology companies—most notably Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Company—to continue their investments in the United States. Meanwhile, the United States and Taiwan should continue to quickly but quietly advance their defense cooperation. A conflict in the Taiwan Strait would be devastating for Taiwan, China, the United States, and the entire globe. The best way to decrease the risk of conflict is to bolster Taiwan's defense and America's preparations by reinforcing deterrence without triggering a Chinese overreaction.
- 3) *South Korean Nuclear Proliferation*: The political upheaval in Seoul has unsettled not only South Korean domestic politics but also the US–South Korea alliance. Relations between the two countries were tense between Presidents Trump and Moon Jae-in eight years ago and could get worse if the next South Korean leader leans back toward engagement with Beijing and Pyongyang. This could encourage President Trump to accelerate his efforts to withdraw some American military forces from South Korea, or once again bypass Seoul and deal directly with North Korean Supreme Leader Kim Jong Un. This in turn could reinforce Seoul's interest in an independent nuclear deterrent. The danger of regional proliferation is real, and accelerated by concerns about the risk of US–South Korea alliance decoupling. Importantly, proliferation in South Korea could also accelerate similar debates elsewhere in the region and across the globe. The Trump administration has placed a number of leading experts on Korea in key national security positions—their expertise will be needed in the next few years to guard against a weakening of the alliance and the dangerous nuclear proliferation that could result.

- 4) *Defense Industry Disruptions*: The AUKUS arrangement between Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States was a bold idea, but one that may require re-optimization. AUKUS Pillar 2 focuses on defense industry and innovation—as suggested above, the Trump administration should put it on steroids to deliver broader effects on faster timelines. Meanwhile, parts of AUKUS Pillar 1 are moving forward expeditiously, such as US nuclear-powered submarine deployments to Perth in Western Australia. But the US submarine industrial base is still struggling to meet current demands, which some Trump administration officials have suggested should trigger a reassessment of elements of the AUKUS deal. To manage these risks together, Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States should jointly assess the role that large unmanned undersea vehicles could play in bridging the capability gaps they face. Ideally, these systems would augment rather than supplant the current approach, but they could also serve as a Plan B option if the allied nuclear-powered submarine industrial base cannot support accelerated construction on satisfactory timelines at acceptable cost.
- 5) *Overlooking Southeast Asia and the Pacific*: Southeast Asia lies at the center of the Indo-Pacific region, but in recent years, the United States has struggled to engage effectively with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. This could be the case once again, particularly given that Malaysia chairs ASEAN this year—Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim has openly supported Hamas, which is likely to make for difficult relations between Kuala Lumpur and Washington. Over the last eight years, US engagement with ASEAN has ebbed, leading to deteriorating confidence in and support for the United States in the region. American policymakers will have to reconsider their approach, particularly on trade and development, lest China continue to make significant progress. Meanwhile, in the Pacific Islands, the Trump administration will need to maintain momentum formed over the last eight years to avoid Beijing building on its successes in the Cook Islands, Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu. Congressional attention to these overlooked players will remain critical.

The United States remains vital to security and prosperity across the Indo-Pacific. Many in the Trump administration have a long-standing commitment to the region and have promised to prioritize competition with China. But the structural constraints on US policy create real risks. The Trump administration and Congress will have to embrace the opportunities listed above if they are to maintain regional security and prosperity. I thank the committee for its time and leadership on these issues, and I look forward to your questions.

Mrs. KIM. Thank you, Mr. Cooper.
Let me now recognize Mr. Singleton for your testimony.

STATEMENT OF CRAIG SINGLETON

Mr. SINGLETON. Thank you, Chairwoman Kim, Ranking Member Bera, and members of the distinguished subcommittee. Thanks for inviting me today.

I'm pleased to offer policy insights from the Foundation for Defense of Democracies, a nonpartisan research institute where I serve as a senior fellow.

Over the last 4 years the Biden administration sought to stabilize relations with Beijing through sustained diplomatic dialog and relatively restrained responses to myriad Chinese provocations.

On paper, this approach aims to avoid a bilateral breakdown. In practice, however, it did amount to diplomacy without much deterrence, emboldening Chinese Communist Party Chairman Xi Jinping to test our resolve at nearly every turn.

Indeed, rather than reducing tensions, these well-intentioned diplomatic overtures paradoxically fueled Xi's worst impulses, enabling Beijing to expand its surveillance, ramp up its maritime assertiveness, and deepen its ties to other authoritarian regimes at next to no cost.

During Biden's tenure Chinese spy balloons entered U.S. airspace with little consequence, while hacking campaigns Salt, Volt, and Flax Typhoon targeted senior American officials and sensitive networks with barely a public rebuke.

Even as Beijing dramatically intensified its incursions around Taiwan and in the South China Sea, Washington's focus remained on rapid de-escalation. If left unchecked, this dynamic risks encouraging Chinese overreach, raising the specter of miscalculation or worse, war.

Today's predicament evokes lessons from the late stages of the cold war when Washington's misguided embrace of so-called peaceful coexistence inadvertently prolonged the Soviet system's survival, treating it as an immutable juggernaut rather than one vulnerable to sustained external and internal pressure.

By minimizing accountability for Chinese espionage, coercion, and violations of international norms we risk reinforcing Beijing's conviction that its revanchist ambitions need not be curbed.

A new Trump administration and the 119th Congress can move beyond mere coexistence with China, if for no other reason that the U.S. and China embody fundamentally incompatible systems and ideologies.

Simply put, today's contest cannot end in stalemate. The United States must ensure its model prevails. Moving beyond mere coexistence, a bold yet realistic aim, does not require an explicit bid for regime change.

Rather, Washington should push Beijing onto an unsustainable path where credible deterrence, targeted economic pressure, and principled diplomacy expose the structural flaws of Xi's Marxist-Leninist framework.

By holding out the prospect of genuine concessions on issues like trade we can force Beijing to confront the spiraling costs of contin-

ued hostility, potentially hastening the CCP's own unraveling if it refuses to alter course.

Ultimately, time is on our side if we choose to make it so. Chief among the measures Congress should consider are robust outbound investment screening and bans accompanied with enhanced export controls and targeted sanctions to deny Xi access to both U.S. capital markets and critical technologies for military-civil fusion.

Credible proactive threats of punitive action if China crosses red lines over Taiwan or in the South China Sea reinforce that brinkmanship will be met with real enforcement.

Meanwhile, Washington must support beleaguered democracies on the front lines of Chinese coercion. HFAC can champion streamlined foreign military sales and leveraged Presidential drawdown authorities for Taiwan, ensuring swift delivery of defensive systems and asymmetric capabilities without bureaucratic delay.

A leaner, meaner, more focused foreign assistance regime centered around strategic infrastructure, digital governance, and anti-corruption programming would also deny China a foothold in critical ports, curb risky 5G networks, and strengthen partners' resilience to Chinese coercion.

By demonstrating that America remains both principled and reliable we fill aid gaps that Beijing might otherwise exploit.

Finally, by insisting that allies, including Taiwan, invest more in their own security the U.S. can spread the financial load while preserving its leadership role.

This flexible transactional approach aligns with the President's "America first" ethos. It rewards partners who step up while denying Beijing easy wins.

Rather than striving for a fragile equilibrium in the Indo-Pacific, Washington must create an overwhelming deterrent that renders any attempt at forcible reunification or broader regional domination prohibitively costly. No such deterrent exists today.

By shifting from passive coexistence to purposeful competition on America's terms we can challenge the illusion of stability that has emboldened Beijing. This decisive posture rooted in assertive reprisal rather than reflexive de-escalation may pave the way for a new era of enduring leadership in the Indo-Pacific and beyond.

On behalf of the Foundation for Defense of Democracies I thank you again for inviting me to testify today.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Singleton follows:]

CONGRESSIONAL TESTIMONY: FOUNDATION FOR DEFENSE OF DEMOCRACIES

House Foreign Affairs Committee
Subcommittee on East Asia and Pacific

Missed Milestones

Evaluating The Last Four Years in the
EAP Region and Unseized Opportunities
Under President Trump

CRAIG SINGLETON

China Program Senior Director and Senior Fellow
Foundation for Defense of Democracies

With contributions from Jack Burnham, M. Reece Breaux, and Kirin Atluru

Washington, DC
February 25, 2025



www.fdd.org

Introduction

During its four years in office, the Biden administration sought to stabilize relations with Beijing through sustained diplomatic dialogue and restrained responses to myriad Chinese provocations. On paper, this strategy aimed to avoid breakdowns in the bilateral relationship. In practice, the Biden administration's policy of diplomacy without deterrence emboldened Chinese leader Xi Jinping, leading China to test America's resolve at every turn. Indeed, rather than reducing tensions, Biden's overtures fueled Xi's worst impulses — enabling Beijing to expand its surveillance activities at home and abroad, ramp up maritime assertiveness, and deepen its ties to other authoritarian regimes, with next-to-no cost imposition.¹

Specific incidents underscore this dangerous trend. Chinese spy balloons entered U.S. airspace with little consequence, while large-scale hacking campaigns — such as Salt, Volt and Flax Typhoon — targeted senior American officials and sensitive U.S. networks with barely a public rebuke.² Even as Beijing dramatically intensified its incursions around Taiwan and in the South China Sea, Washington's diplomatic posture remained focused on rapid de-escalation and, in some cases, retreat. Although the intent behind some of these decisions was to sidestep open conflict with China, such minimal pushback signaled to Chinese leaders that hostile actions carried limited risk. If left unchecked, this troubling trend could very well encourage Chinese overreach, raising the specter of miscalculation or, worse, war.

Today's great-power predicament evokes lessons from the late stages of the Cold War, when Washington's misguided embrace of "peaceful coexistence" (or *détente*) counter-intuitively extended the Soviet system's survival, in effect treating the Soviet Union as an immutable juggernaut rather than one highly vulnerable to sustained external and internal pressures.³ By minimizing accountability for espionage, coercion, and outright violations of international norms, Washington risks reinforcing Beijing's conviction that its revanchist ambitions need not be curbed. Today's permissive environment also overlooks China's decisive support for Russia's war effort in Ukraine, a conflict that has drained U.S. resources, divided the U.S. public, and distracted policymakers from more forcefully confronting Chinese revisionism in the Indo-Pacific.⁴

A new Trump administration and the 119th Congress have the opportunity to move beyond mere coexistence with China and dispel the notion that authoritarian expansion is inevitable. The goal need not be regime change, but rather to alter Beijing's strategic calculus through credible deterrence, targeted economic pressure, and principled diplomacy rooted in reciprocity. History has shown that consistently and forcefully pushing back against hostile acts — be they cyberattacks, territorial infringements, or unjustified arms build-ups — can, in fact, prompt

¹ U.S. House of Representatives, Committee on Homeland Security, "Threat Snapshot: CCP Espionage, Repression on US Soil is Growing," February 2025. (<https://homeland.house.gov/2025/02/12/threat-snapshot-ccp-espionage-repression-on-us-soil-is-growing/>); "Territorial Disputes in the South China Sea," *Center on Foreign Relations*, September 17, 2024. (<https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/territorial-disputes-south-china-sea/>); U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission, "An Axis of Autocracy? China's Relations with Russia, Iran, and North Korea," February 20, 2025. (<https://www.uscc.gov/hearings/axis-autocracy-chinas-relations-russia-iran-and-north-korea/>)

² Isaac Chotiner, "What's Behind the Chinese Spy Balloon," *The New Yorker*, February 18, 2023. (<https://www.newyorker.com/news/q-and-a/whats-behind-the-chinese-spy-balloon/>); Mike Wendling, "What to Know About String of US Hacks Blamed on China," *BBC* (UK), December 31, 2024. (<https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c86w2evj05do>)

³ Kevin Ruane, *Churchill and the Soviet Union, 1945-55* (Finest Hour 201, First Quarter 2023), page 28.

⁴ U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission, "China's Position on Russia's Invasion of Ukraine," December 31, 2024. (<https://www.uscc.gov/research/chinas-position-russias-invasion-ukraine>)

meaningful changes in a Marxist-Leninist regime's behavior.⁵ A recalibrated approach, featuring strategic vigilance and flexible alliance structures, would also deny Beijing the easy gains it enjoyed under more accommodating Biden-era policies.

Congress, particularly through the House Foreign Affairs Committee (HFAC), stands at the forefront of this recalibration. Measures including robust export controls, tighter sanctions regimes, stronger outbound investment screening, realigned foreign assistance, and enhanced security cooperation — paired with fair burden-sharing among allies — can profoundly complicate Xi's strategic calculus. Rather than striving for a fragile equilibrium, Washington must create an overwhelming deterrent that renders any attempt at forcible "reunification" with Taiwan or broader regional domination prohibitively costly. No such deterrent exists today.

By shifting the focus from passive coexistence to purposeful competition on America's terms, policymakers stand to challenge the illusion of stability that has emboldened Beijing. This decisive posture, rooted in assertive reprisal rather than reflexive de-escalation, could pave the way for a new era of enduring American leadership in the Indo-Pacific and elsewhere.

I. Evaluating the Biden Administration's Record

President Biden entered office pledging to restore predictability to U.S.-China relations, framing his approach as a clear departure from the previous administration's more confrontational, transactional style. Within weeks, he signaled a willingness to collaborate with Beijing on climate change, global health, and other purported "mutual interests."⁶ Yet throughout his four years in office, Biden never delivered a major, stand-alone speech outlining his overarching vision for the U.S.-China relationship, leaving allies and adversaries alike uncertain about his ultimate objectives.

This ambiguity hindered Congress and the executive branch from mounting a unified response to Beijing's multi-pronged challenge. All too often, the administration itself addressed China on a piecemeal basis — reacting to provocations rather than pursuing a coherent, proactive strategy with defined end-states.

Generally speaking, alliance-building emerged as one of the few bright spots during Biden's tenure, as demonstrated by high-level multilateral initiatives and renewed diplomatic energy in the Indo-Pacific.⁷ His administration bolstered the "Quad" framework with Japan, India, and Australia, convening multiple leader-level summits and expanding practical cooperation in areas such as maritime security and vaccine distribution. It concluded the AUKUS agreement, enabling Australia to procure nuclear-powered submarines in partnership with the United States and the United Kingdom — an unprecedented defense collaboration in the region. Biden also shepherded a historic trilateral summit at Camp David with Japan and South Korea, establishing real-time data-sharing on missile threats and deepening security coordination.

⁵ Francis P. Sempa, "Ronald Reagan and the Collapse of the Soviet Empire," *American Diplomacy*, 2004. (https://ciaotest.cc.columbia.edu/ojs/ad/ad_v9_3/sef01.html)

⁶ Lara Jakes and Steven Lee Myers, "Tense Talks With China Left U.S. 'Cleareyed' About Beijing's Intentions, Officials Say," *The New York Times*, March 19, 2021. (<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/03/19/world/asia/china-us-alaska.html>)

⁷ U.S. Department of State, U.S. Mission to ASEAN, "The United States' Enduring Commitment to the Indo-Pacific Region." (<https://asean.usmission.gov/the-united-states-enduring-commitment-to-the-indo-pacific-region>)

Taken together, these moves reassured allied governments that the United States remained invested in regional stability, even if questions persisted about whether such diplomatic momentum could fully deter Beijing's regional assertiveness.

While Biden's alliance-building efforts were necessary, they nevertheless proved insufficient to alter Beijing's behavior where it mattered most. Nowhere was the gap between alliance rhetoric and tangible deterrence more evident than in the South China Sea. Chinese vessels increased ramming incidents near Philippine waters by nearly 30 percent from 2021 to 2022, while Beijing's maritime presence at the disputed Scarborough and Second Thomas Shoals persisted for 313 and 263 days, respectively, in 2024.⁸ By maintaining near-constant occupation of these disputed sites, China effectively normalized its illegal territorial claims, recalling the passive stance of the Obama era that enabled far-reaching militarization of artificial features.

<i>Days of Maritime Presence (by year)</i>	2022	2023	2024
Scarborough Shoal	344	311	313
Thitu Island	208	206	241
Second Thomas Shoal	279	302	263
Vanguard Bank	310	221	354
Luconia Shoals	316	338	259

(Sources: Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative reports from 2022-2024)

Despite proclaiming an "ironclad" alliance with the Philippines, the Biden administration offered little beyond rhetorical support for Manila to counter these territorial incursions, raising doubts about whether the United States would truly honor its mutual defense commitments should Beijing further escalate regional provocations.⁹ With tensions on a knife's edge, any armed clash between Philippine and Chinese forces could rapidly draw the United States into a direct conflict on Beijing's terms rather than Washington's.¹⁰

Under Biden's watch, Beijing's pressure campaign against Taiwan also reached perilous new levels. In 2024 alone, China's People's Liberation Army (PLA) conducted over 3,075 incursions into Taiwan's air defense identification zone (ADIZ) — a record figure and nearly double 2023 levels.¹¹ Since 2019, the total number of PLA flights entering the ADIZ has soared by more than

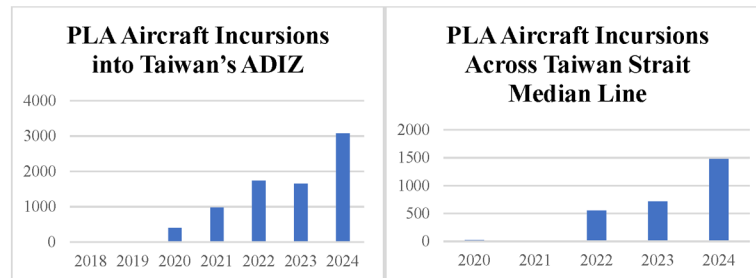
⁸ "China Coast Guard Patrols in 2024: An Exercise In Futility?" *Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative, Center for Strategic and International Studies*, February 6, 2025. (<https://amti.csis.org/china-coast-guard-patrols-in-2024-an-exercise-in-futility/>)

⁹ Helen Davidson, "Biden Pledges to Defend Philippines From Any Attack in South China Sea," *The Guardian* (UK), April 11, 2024. (<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/apr/12/joe-biden-philippines-attack-defence-meeting-japan-south-china-sea>)

¹⁰ Craig Singleton, "China and the U.S. Are Careening Toward a South China Sea Crisis," *Foreign Policy*, July 23, 2024. (<https://foreignpolicy.com/2024/07/23/us-south-china-sea-philippines-crisis-military-alliance-deterrence/>)

¹¹ U.S. Department of Defense, "Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China 2024," December 18, 2024. (<https://media.defense.gov/2024/Dec/18/2003615520/-1/-1.0/MILITARY-AND-SECURITY-DEVELOPMENTS-INVOLVING-THE-PEOPLES-REPUBLIC-OF-CHINA-2024.PDF>); U.S. Department of Defense, "Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China 2023," October 19, 2023. (<https://media.defense.gov/2023/Oct/19/2003323409/-1/-1.1/2023-MILITARY-AND-SECURITY-DEVELOPMENTS-INVOLVING-THE-PEOPLES-REPUBLIC-OF-CHINA.PDF>); U.S. Department of Defense, "Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China 2022," November 29, 2022. (<https://media.defense.gov/2022/Nov/29/2003122279/-1/-1.1/2022-MILITARY-AND-SECURITY-DEVELOPMENTS-INVOLVING-THE-PEOPLES-REPUBLIC-OF-CHINA.PDF>); Ministry of National Defense, R.O.C., "Real-Time Military Dynamics," February 2020. (<https://www.mnd.gov.tw/PublishTable.aspx?Types=%E5%8D%A6%E6%99%82%E8%BB%8D%E4%B%A%8B%E5%8B%95%E6%85%8B&file=%E5%9C%8B%E9%98%B2%E6%B6%88%E6%81%AF>); "Trackers," *PLATracker*, accessed February 19, 2025. (<https://www.platracker.com/trackers>)

200 times. Meanwhile, PLA crossings of the Taiwan Strait median line — traditionally viewed as the de facto buffer between the two sides — rose by roughly 65 times over five years.



(Sources: DoD Annual Report on Chinese Military Developments from 2022 to 2024, PLATracker)

Nor were China's coercive tactics limited to military maneuvers. Chinese cyberattacks on Taiwan's government doubled in 2024 to more than a million attempts per day, with key sectors like transportation, defense, and telecommunications suffering a six-fold surge in network intrusions.¹² Despite these escalating provocations, the Biden administration offered only muted responses, while longstanding delays to arms delivery persisted, signaling to Beijing that boundary testing would be met with caution rather than consequence.

Against the backdrop of an uneven security record, the Biden administration also sought to bolster technology partnerships across the Indo-Pacific, aiming to fortify regional supply chains and limit China's access to dual-use innovations. Proposals such as the "Chip 4" initiative with Taiwan, Japan, and South Korea aimed to harmonize semiconductor production and reduce strategic vulnerabilities.¹³ Meanwhile, the Commerce Department tightened export controls in 2023 and 2024, restricting advanced semiconductors, high-performance computing components, and AI-enabling technologies from reaching PLA-linked entities.¹⁴

This "small yard, high-fence" mindset aimed to protect key U.S. and allied industries; however, the administration's reactive, overly narrow focus allowed rerouting of U.S.-origin technology through third-party hubs in Southeast Asia.¹⁵ While late-term executive actions, such as the AI Diffusion Rule, signaled greater resolve to constrain China's military-civil fusion strategy and address deeper Sino-centric supply chain risks, these measures came years too late, allowing

¹² Yimou Lee, "Chinese Cyberattacks on Taiwan Government Averaged 2.4 Mln a Day in 2024, Report Says," *Reuters*, January 6, 2025. (<https://www.reuters.com/technology/cybersecurity/chinese-cyberattacks-taiwan-government-averaged-24-mln-day-2024-report-says-2025-01-06/>); Robert Lemos, "As Tensions Mount With China, Taiwan Sees Surge in Cyberattacks," *DARKREADING*, January 14, 2025. (<https://www.darkreading.com/cyber-risk/as-tensions-with-china-mount-taiwan-sees-surge-in-cyberattacks/>)

¹³ Eric Jung, "The 'Chip 4 Alliance' and Taiwan-South Korea Relations," *Global Taiwan Institute*, September 20, 2023. (<https://globaltaiwan.org/2023/09/the-chip-4-alliance-and-taiwan-south-korea-relations/>)

¹⁴ U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Industry and Security, "Commerce Strengthens Restrictions on Advanced Computing Semiconductors to Enhance Foundry Due Diligence and Prevent Diversion to PRC," January 15, 2025. (<https://www.bis.gov/press-release/commerce-strengthens-restrictions-advanced-computing-semiconductors-enhance-foundry#:~:text=Today's%20rules%20reinforce%20and%20build, chips%20critical%20for%20military%20advantage>)

¹⁵ Biden White House, "Remarks by National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan on Renewing American Economic Leadership at the Brookings Institution," April 27, 2023. (<https://bidenwhitehouse.archives.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2023/04/27/remarks-by-national-security-advisor-jake-sullivan-on-renewing-american-economic-leadership-at-the-brookings-institution/>)

China to continue its technological advancement and defense integration with minimal disruption.¹⁶

Although regional partners welcomed a shift back to more traditional economic statecraft under Biden, they remained wary of the administration's lack of a robust trade agenda — including its stated refusal to negotiate new agreements. The much-publicized Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF) offered no meaningful market access and ultimately yielded few deliverables.¹⁷ In rejecting new trade deals, the Biden administration inadvertently allowed Beijing to deepen its economic ties with Southeast Asian nations, thereby expanding its regional influence at America's expense. Even close U.S. partners like Singapore and Vietnam continued hedging by broadening trade relations with China, further eroding Washington's economic leadership in the Indo-Pacific.

Despite a handful of late stage attempts to ratchet up economic pressure on Beijing, the Biden administration's response often felt improvised rather than systematic. In mid-2023, the president finally floated the idea of outbound investment screening for critical sectors such as AI and quantum computing, yet ensuing executive orders proved narrow and slowly implemented.¹⁸ Congressional reports also found that American capital still flows into Chinese biotech and AI startups — industries tightly linked to the PLA.¹⁹

Meanwhile, proposed outbound screening legislation, like the COINS Act, stalled, leaving key investment loopholes unaddressed. Compounding matters, Washington imposed very few meaningful penalties on Chinese entities aiding Russia's war effort — despite multiple warnings and credible evidence that Beijing had crossed existing sanctions redlines — underscoring a broader unwillingness to enforce hard limits on Chinese economic misconduct.

The incursion of a Chinese surveillance balloon into U.S. airspace in early 2023, followed by revelations of the Salt, Volt, and Flax Typhoon cyber campaigns, seemed to offer pivotal opportunities to reset Washington's passive stance. Yet the balloon only became public knowledge after local media reports. Intelligence about the cyber breaches remained under wraps for months, with few details ultimately disclosed. In each case, the Biden administration imposed minimal punitive measures, ostensibly to preserve diplomatic channels.

By prioritizing dialogue over decisive action, Washington missed chances to recalibrate Beijing's risk calculations and counter its deep infiltration of U.S. networks — access that persists to this day and is designed to compromise U.S. critical infrastructure in the lead-up to a future conflict. Regrettably, these and other episodes reinforced regional perceptions that

¹⁶ Framework for Artificial Intelligence Diffusion, U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Industry and Security, *Federal Register*, Volume 90, Page 4544, January 15, 2025. (<https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2025-01-15/pdf/2025-00636.pdf>)

¹⁷ EAF Editorial Board, "East Asia Can't Rely on the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework," *The East Asia Forum*, March 25, 2024. (<https://eastasiaforum.org/2024/03/25/east-asia-cant-rely-on-the-indo-pacific-economic-framework/>)

¹⁸ Antonia I. Tzinova, Andrew K. McAllister, Robert A. Friedman, Jacob Marco, Marina Veljanovska O'Brien, Sophie Jin, Ronnie Rosen Zvi, and Jingwen Xing, "Outbound Investment Screening Rule Goes into Effect," *Holland & Knight*, January 10, 2025. (<https://www.hklaw.com/en/insights/publications/2025/01/outbound-investment-screening-rule-goes-into-effect>)

¹⁹ U.S. House of Representatives, The Select Committee on the Strategic Competition Between the United States and the Chinese Communist Party, "The CCP's Investors: How American Venture Capital Fuels the PRC Military and Human Rights Abuses" February 8, 2024. (<https://selectcommitteeontheccp.house.gov/sites/evo-subsites/selectcommitteeontheccp.house.gov/files/evo-media-document/2024-02-08%20-%20YCC%20Report%20-%20FINAL.pdf>); Craig Singleton, "Biotech Battlefield," *Foundation for Defense of Democracies*, January 15, 2025. (<https://www.fdd.org/analysis/2025/01/15/biotech-battlefield>)

Chinese aggression might be met with rhetoric from Washington rather than meaningful consequences.

In sum, while the Biden administration took noteworthy steps to rebuild alliances and impose targeted export controls, it never defined end-states beyond “competing to coexist” with China — focusing more on process than outcomes. Cautious public rhetoric, incomplete economic measures, and minimal punitive responses to blatant provocations allowed Beijing to deepen its influence and accelerate its technological gains. For many Indo-Pacific nations, the Biden record signaled genuine U.S. commitment but also highlighted narrow priorities and delayed responses. Looking ahead, Washington can either persist with incremental half-measures or adopt a more muscular, comprehensive framework that demands accountability, enforces reciprocity, and exacts real costs for Chinese overreach.

II. China’s Strategic Posture: Ambitions, Constraints, and Pressing Challenges

Xi’s Vision for Chinese-Style Modernization

According to a recently declassified speech delivered behind closed doors in early 2023, Xi declared the imperative of “comprehensively promoting the construction of a strong country and the great cause of national rejuvenation with Chinese-style modernization.”²⁰ For Xi, this vision is not merely aspirational — it is the historical mandate of the Chinese nation. He presents China as a civilization with a 5,000-year history that must overcome past humiliations and chart its own path through a unique model of socialist modernization. Xi’s words emphasize self-reliance, technological self-sufficiency, and the central role of the Communist Party in steering this transformation.

By framing modernization as both an economic imperative and an ideological journey, Xi seeks to project China as a global leader whose model stands as a powerful alternative to Western liberal democracy. Nowhere is this ambition more evident than in the Indo-Pacific, where Beijing’s quest for regional hegemony serves as the staging ground for its broader global aspirations.

Mounting Domestic Constraints: Purges, Economic Slowdowns, and Fragility

Despite Xi’s sweeping rhetoric about “national rejuvenation,” his regime has faced staggering setbacks that expose China’s vulnerability rather than its presumed invincibility.²¹ Military purges — ostensibly to root out corruption — have revealed systemic turmoil in the PLA, undermining readiness. Economic growth has cratered, with unemployment rising and capital outflows intensifying, fueling doubts about Xi’s stewardship. Meanwhile, key partners like Russia and Syria have stumbled, complicating Beijing’s broader geopolitical ambitions.

²⁰ Jinping Xi, “以中国式现代化全面推进强国建设、民族复兴伟业 (Comprehensively Promote the Construction of a Strong Country and the Great Cause of National Rejuvenation with Chinese Style Modernization),” *Qiushi* (China), December 31, 2024. (<http://www.qstheory.cn/2024/12/31/d21bd576012d4d29824219ef8d18ca35/c.html>)

²¹ Jinping Xi, “Achieving Rejuvenation Is the Dream of the Chinese People,” *National Ethnic Affairs Commission of China* (China), November 29, 2012. (<https://www.neac.gov.cn/seac/c103372/202201/1156514.shtml>)

China's Declining Domestic Economy

Year	Claimed GDP Growth (Annual growth rate)	Urban Youth Unemployment (Ages 15-24)	Average Annual Capital Flow (USD, Hundreds of Millions)
2019	6%	10.7%	\$66.8
2020	2.2%	12.7%	-\$225.2
2021	8.4%	12.4%	-\$546
2022	3%	14.9%	-\$885.7
2023	5.2%	15.7%*	-\$537.6
2024	~	~	-\$869.3**

(Source: OECD; Statista; Chinese State Administration of Foreign Exchange)

* National Bureau of Statistics changed its methodology for calculating youth unemployment in August 2023 in ways that likely undercount the actual unemployment rate.

** This does not include fourth quarter statistics.

Prominent Recent Targets of Recent PLA Military Purges (2023-24)

Name	Title
Miao Hua	Director, Central Military Commission (CMC) Political Work Department
Li Shangfu	Former Defense Minister
Wei Fenghe	Former Defense Minister
You Haitao	Former Deputy Commander of the Army
Li Pengcheng	Former Commander of the Southern Theater Command Navy
Li Yuchao	Commander of the Rocket Force
Zhou Yaning	Former Commander of the Rocket Force
Xu Zhongbo	Political Commissar of the Rocket Force
Liu Guangbin	Deputy Commander, Rocket Force
Wu Guohua	Deputy Commander, Rocket Force
Ju Gansheng	General, Rocket Force
Shang Hong	General, Rocket Force
Zhang Fusheng	General, Rocket Force
Zhang Zhengzhong	Deputy Chief, Joint Staff Department of the CMC
Ding Laihang	Commander of the People's Liberation Army Air Force
Ju Xinchun	Commander, South China Fleet
Cheng Dongfang	President, People's Liberation Army Military Court
Rao Wenmin	General, Equipment Development Department
Xia Qingyue	General, Equipment Development Department
Wang Dazhong	Admiral, Equipment Development Department

(Sources: Xinhua; National People's Congress; East Asia Forum; Australian Institute of International Affairs; Observer Research Foundation)

These overlapping crises leave China looking increasingly fragile, not formidable. Rather than enacting bold reforms, Xi has chosen a strategy of perseverance: muddling through economic stagnation, doubling down on ideological discipline, and stoking chaos abroad to distract adversaries and buy time.²² In doing so, he hopes to stabilize his precarious position without risking the upheaval that a genuine overhaul might bring.

Chaos Diplomacy and Internal Repression

Xi's reliance on disruption — tacitly supporting Russia's war in Ukraine and emboldening Middle Eastern disruptors, like Iran — creates its own dangers for the regime. This "chaos diplomacy" can backfire if or when these crises stabilize, allowing the West to refocus on Beijing, or — if China's proxies stumble — forcing Xi to sink resources into failing ventures. By sowing global discord, Xi also risks inadvertently uniting potential adversaries around a shared threat, ultimately undermining Beijing's broader ambitions.

Moreover, in blaming China's current woes on "Western encirclement and suppression," Xi creates the need for further repression at home and intensified efforts to enforce loyalty within the Party, the PLA, and the private sector.²³ His purges of senior officials and detention of business executives may consolidate authority, but they also erode confidence, stifle innovation, and deepen distrust of the state. This dynamic is self-reinforcing: Each clampdown sparks new grievances, compelling Xi to respond with ever-tighter controls and thereby undercutting the very stability he seeks to preserve.

As he braces for higher U.S. tariffs, outbound investment screenings, and a more confrontational posture under Trump 2.0, Xi faces a stark choice: hunker down as part of a survival strategy that redefines success around political stability, or risk overreach that could exacerbate domestic discontent and provoke a global backlash. Either path underscores the core dilemma of Xi's rule: a leader obsessed with progress, yet increasingly constrained by the need to preserve power at all costs.

The Sino-Russian Axis: A Strategic Lever

Of course, central to Xi's vision is a deepening partnership with Russia, which he views as both a strategic hedge against U.S. power and a means of reshaping the global order. While questions remain about whether China has provided overt military support to Moscow's faltering campaign in Ukraine, Xi wholeheartedly endorses Russia's narrative of resisting Western hegemony.

Bilateral trade reached record levels in energy, agriculture, and technology, underscoring how each side fills critical gaps for the other — Moscow needs markets and diplomatic cover, while Beijing seeks reliable raw materials and a partner to divide Western attention.²⁴ At the same time, Moscow and Beijing have deepened defense ties, greatly expanding arms transfers,

²² Craig Singleton, "Xi Jinping's Terrible, Horrible, No Good Year," *Foreign Policy*, January 2, 2025. (<https://foreignpolicy.com/2025/01/02/xi-jinping-china-trump-tariffs-economic-crisis>)

²³ James T. Areddy, Chun Han Wong, and Keith Zhai, "China's Xi Jinping Takes Rare Direct Aim at U.S. in Speech," *The Wall Street Journal*, March 6, 2023. (<https://www.wsj.com/articles/chinas-xi-jinping-takes-rare-direct-aim-at-u-s-in-speech-5d8fde1a>)

²⁴ "China-Russia 2024 Trade Value Hits Record High - Chinese Customs," *Reuters*, January 13, 2025. (<https://www.reuters.com/markets/china-russia-2024-trade-value-hits-record-high-chinese-customs-2025-01-13>)

weapons development initiatives, military exercises, intelligence sharing, and military exchanges.

Sino-Russian Trade Figures

Year	Chinese Exports to Russia (Billions, USD)	Russian Exports to China (Billions, USD)
2019	\$49.7	\$57.3
2020	\$50.5	\$49.1
2021	\$67.2	\$68.7
2022	\$76.1	~
2023	\$110.9	~
Total Growth	123.1%	19.9%

(Source: U.N. Comtrade Database)

This emerging axis of authoritarianism, however, is not without friction. Russia's military struggles and economic fragility undermine Xi's broader ambitions, even as they create opportunities for Beijing to extract concessions from a weakened Kremlin. For Xi, the Sino-Russian bond remains an instrumental tool: a lever to challenge U.S. primacy without risking direct confrontation — at least for now.

Ideological Ambitions and Global Outreach

Xi's pursuit of Chinese-style modernization is as much an ideological project as an economic or military one. Citing the Soviet collapse as a cautionary tale, he insists that China's future hinges on unwavering faith in the Communist Party and the supremacy of Marxist-Leninist principles adapted to Chinese conditions.²⁵ This ideological campaign extends far beyond China's borders. Through state-run media, Confucius Institutes, and state-controlled "discourse power" platforms, Beijing works to disseminate a narrative that portrays its governance model as a viable alternative to Western liberal democracy — especially for developing nations throughout the Indo-Pacific.²⁶

Xi's rhetoric of peaceful coexistence (or *détente*) is thus intertwined with a concerted effort to shape global norms, from internet governance to trade rules. This drive to champion China's system abroad comes at a moment when Xi's domestic critics accuse him of tightening political controls and quashing entrepreneurial dynamism at home, raising questions about how sustainable or appealing this model can remain if China's economic performance continues to falter.

²⁵ Xi Jinping, "Transcript: President Xi Jinping's Report to China's 2022 Party Congress," *Nikkei Asia* (Japan), October 18, 2022. (<https://asia.nikkei.com/Politics/China-s-party-congress/Transcript-President-Xi-Jinping-s-report-to-China-s-2022-party-congress>)

²⁶ Matt Pottinger, "The Chinese Communist Party's Threat to America," *Foundation for Defense of Democracies*, February 28, 2023.

(<https://www.fdd.org/analysis/2023/02/28/the-chinese-communist-partys-threat-to-america>); Bradley Bowman and Craig Singleton, "Cognitive Combat," *Foundation for Defense of Democracies*, June 28, 2024. (<https://www.fdd.org/analysis/monographs/2024/06/28/cognitive-combat>)

The Technological Race with the United States

China's technological race with the United States underscores Xi's determination to achieve self-reliance in critical industries like semiconductors, AI, and quantum computing. Even as economic headwinds slow domestic investment, Beijing's Five-Year Plans and programs such as "Made in China 2025" continue funneling vast resources into R&D. In the Indo-Pacific, Chinese firms increasingly open satellite offices in regional tech hubs — often using third countries like Singapore as transit points for acquiring cutting-edge components and skirting existing export controls.

Yet Xi's own clampdowns — ranging from corporate purges to tightened data regulations — have undermined private-sector innovation and rattled foreign investors. With U.S. restrictions poised to tighten under Trump 2.0, the question is whether Xi's push for technological sovereignty can keep pace with Beijing's grand ambitions, or whether China's mounting domestic constraints will expose fatal chokepoints in its quest for advanced industrial supremacy.

Taiwan: The Linchpin of National Rejuvenation

No doubt, Taiwan stands as the linchpin of Xi Jinping's vision for national rejuvenation — a goal he portrays as the culmination of China's historical destiny. U.S. commanders have characterized the PLA's increasingly sophisticated drills around Taiwan as "rehearsals" for forcible reunification, with a clear aim of achieving credible invasion capabilities by 2027.²⁷ In pursuit of this objective, Beijing has reoriented its military strategy to prioritize rapid modernization and operational readiness. The PLA has ramped up amphibious assault exercises and is aggressively stockpiling raw materials and advanced weapon systems, even as persistent challenges — such as procurement corruption — undermine operational efficiency.

Nevertheless, Xi's rhetoric over Taiwan leaves no room for ambiguity: He has vowed that "no one can stop the historical trend of national reunification," signaling his willingness to escalate to full-scale conflict, if necessary.²⁸ This determined military buildup serves not only as a strategic deterrent but also as a psychological tool to pressure Taiwan and test the limits of U.S. resolve in the region.

²⁷ John Grady, "China Drills Near Taiwan Are Rehearsals for 'Forced Reunification,' Paparo Says," *USNI News*, 17 Feb. 2025. (<https://news.usni.org/2025/02/17/china-drills-near-taiwan-are-rehearsals-for-forced-reunification-paparo-says>)

²⁸ Ben Blanchard, "Xi Says No One Can Stop China's Reunification with Taiwan," *Reuters*, December 31, 2024. (<https://www.reuters.com/world/china/xi-says-no-one-can-stop-chinas-reunification-with-taiwan-2024-12-31/>)

	<i>China Military Strength Around Taiwan PLA's Eastern and Southern Theater Commands</i>		
	2020	2024	Percent Change
Total Ground Personnel	412000	427000	3.6%
Total Ships (Non-Coastal)	179	204	14.0%
Aircraft Carriers	1	1	0.0%
Cruisers	0	4	N/A
Destroyers/Frigates/Corvettes	89	106	19.1%
Amphibious Assault Ships	0	3	N/A
Amphibious Landing Ships	51	51	0.0%
Total Submarines	38	39	2.6%
Nuclear Attack Submarines	2	2	0.0%
Nuclear Ballistic Missile Submarines	4	6	50.0%
Total Aircraft	970	1290	33.0%
Fighters	600	800	33.3%
Bombers/Attack	250	300	20.0%
Transport/Special Mission	120	190	58.3%
Total Missiles	1350	3500	159.3%
ICBM	100	400	300.0%
IRBM/MRBM	350	1800	414.3%
SRBM/GLCM	900	1300	44.4%

But Beijing's strategy extends well beyond conventional military preparations; it encompasses a multifaceted hybrid campaign designed to undermine Taiwan's resilience from within. State-sponsored disinformation operations, relentless cyberattacks, and covert influence campaigns are systematically deployed to sow discord in Taiwan's democratic institutions and erode public confidence.²⁹ These hybrid tactics are aimed at destabilizing Taiwan's political cohesion, creating internal divisions that could make a military intervention less costly.

Despite clear warnings and repeated provocations, U.S. deterrence measures have remained tepid, raising critical concerns about whether current policies can effectively counter Beijing's comprehensive strategy. As Xi's regime continues to blend coercive military maneuvers with aggressive hybrid warfare, the risk of miscalculation escalates — forcing Washington and its allies to reassess the adequacy of their response and the true cost of inaction. Unfortunately, because Washington hesitated in the gray zone for years, we now face a situation that demands a far more forceful and high-stakes response — an outcome that might have been avoided with earlier, more decisive action.

Global Ambitions and Influence in International Institutions

Beyond the Indo-Pacific, Xi has accelerated efforts to reshape global governance institutions and norms in ways that favor Beijing's authoritarian model. By placing Chinese nationals in

²⁹ Craig Singleton and Mark Montgomery, "Targeting Taiwan," *Foundation for Defense of Democracies*, October 4, 2024. (<https://www.fdd.org/analysis/2024/10/04/targeting-taiwan>)

leadership positions at organizations like the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), Beijing can influence rulemaking on issues ranging from 5G standards to next generation technologies. Simultaneously, the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) forges economic dependencies across Africa, Latin America, and parts of Europe, enabling Xi to rally diplomatic support — or silence criticism — on sensitive matters like Taiwan and human rights.

At the United Nations, China has increasingly pushed to redefine universal values under the banner of “win-win cooperation,” downplaying individual freedoms in favor of state-led development. Taken together, these maneuvers reflect a broader strategy: consolidate China’s leadership in global institutions, diminish Western influence, and validate an alternative governance model that conflates national sovereignty with unchallenged Party control.

In sum, Xi’s China projects confidence on the world stage while grappling with profound vulnerabilities at home. From the Sino-Russian axis to ambitious ideological outreach and technological decoupling, Beijing is advancing a revisionist agenda that challenges U.S. interests. Yet internal fragilities — from economic stagnation to growing distrust in Xi’s centralized rule — cast doubt on how far and how fast China can truly rise. As the United States and its allies brace for a more confrontational era under Trump 2.0, the scope for miscalculation remains high.

III. Moving Beyond Mere ‘Coexistence’ — A Bold Yet Realistic Aim

Amid today’s backdrop, sustaining the Biden administration’s détente strategy — one that prioritizes diplomatic pageantry over tangible shifts in Chinese conduct — demands a serious reassessment. In its place, Washington should embrace a dual approach that combines external resistance to Beijing’s illiberalism with intensified pressure on its domestic sources of strength, setting the stage for negotiations anchored in reciprocity and mutual interest. It’s not “peaceful coexistence” on any terms, nor a purely militarized standoff; rather, it’s about protecting and advancing U.S. national interests by forcing changes in China’s conduct.

Because the United States and China embody fundamentally incompatible systems and ideologies, today’s contest cannot end in stalemate — the United States must ensure its model prevails. Yet this does not necessitate an explicit campaign for regime change. Rather, Washington should push Beijing onto an unsustainable path, where persistent scrutiny, sanctions, and technology controls expose the structural flaws of Xi’s Marxist-Leninist framework. By holding out the prospect of genuine concessions on issues like trade or diplomatic recognition, Washington can force Beijing to confront the spiraling costs of continued hostility — potentially accelerating the CCP’s own unraveling if it persists on its present course.

Importantly, a stronger posture does not imply reckless confrontation. Much like President Reagan’s approach to the late-stage Soviet Union, a new administration can impose external pressures that heighten Beijing’s internal resource dilemmas — forcing the CCP to make difficult trade-offs between domestic priorities, global ambitions, and social welfare, ultimately undermining its ability to sustain both authoritarian control and economic vitality. This external resistance must be paired with intensified efforts to exploit China’s internal vulnerabilities — ranging from ballooning local debt to dependence on U.S. capital and foreign technology.

The point must be to demonstrate that Xi's maximalist ambitions clash with the realities of stable growth and global norms, including through the aggressive use of tariffs and tariff threats targeting the lifeblood of China's faltering economy: exports and overcapacity.

Meanwhile, Washington can focus on the economic battleground, targeting those sectors — semiconductors, advanced manufacturing, and AI — where Beijing's dependence on Western intellectual property and capital is most acute. Restricting China's access to these strategic assets undercuts Xi's broader modernization drive, from building a world-class military to dominating the drivers of the next industrial revolution. Over time, such technological chokepoints complicate Beijing's path to deploying advanced weapons and force projection, making Xi weigh the cost of aggression. In effect, if Xi lacks the critical enablers for a successful invasion or other high-risk gambits, he is more likely to conclude, "Not today."

Ultimately, time is on our side — if we choose to make it so. Policymakers, including HFAC members and Congress as a whole, can shift our strategy from merely maintaining the status quo to proactively securing victory in this contest. By deploying diplomatic, economic, and legislative tools, Congress can impede Beijing's access to U.S. capital markets, constrain its military-civil fusion apparatus, and safeguard America's critical industries. Chief among these measures should be robust outbound investment screening and targeted export controls, which together can throw sand in the gears of Beijing's next-generation weapons programs. By doing so, we buy critical time for U.S. and allied industries to innovate, adapt, and ensure the United States remains one step ahead of China.

Credible threats of punitive action — should China cross red lines in the South China Sea or over Taiwan — also reinforce the message that rhetorical brinkmanship must be backed by consistent enforcement and pre-emptive sanctions threats. Such deterrence through uncertainty forces Xi to weigh whether each new provocation is worth the escalated cost, potentially delaying his timeline for more aggressive moves.

Beyond a reactive posture of simply denouncing provocations, the United States and its allies should undertake demonstrations of persistent rollback — ranging from shining a spotlight on cyber intrusions and IP theft to imposing real consequences for maritime aggression. At the same time, Washington must support beleaguered democracies on the front lines of Chinese coercion. HFAC can champion streamlined foreign military sales and advocate for leveraging presidential drawdown authorities for partners like Taiwan, ensuring swift delivery of defensive systems and asymmetric capabilities without bureaucratic delay.

By also insisting that allies, including Taiwan, invest more in their own security, the United States can spread the financial load while preserving its leadership role. This flexible, transactional approach aligns with a Trump 2.0 ethos: It rewards partners who step up, while denying Beijing easy wins in critical arenas such as technology and maritime security.

While a Trump 2.0 strategy is likely to emphasize hard-nosed deal-making, moral clarity still matters. Reagan's moral confidence helped unify allies against Soviet overreach, and a similar stance today can galvanize support for confronting China's human rights abuses in Xinjiang,

Hong Kong, and elsewhere. HFAC can hold targeted hearings, bolster public diplomacy, expand Magnitsky-style sanctions, and re-introduce well-intentioned human rights-focused bills from the 118th Congress aimed at holding China's leaders to account and underscoring the stark divide between authoritarian oppression and democratic freedom. Emphasizing these values challenges Beijing's propaganda narrative and ensures the United States stands for more than transactional advantage.

Finally, reimagining foreign assistance under HFAC's oversight — through a leaner, more agile State Department-directed foreign assistance function laser-focused on strategic infrastructure, digital governance, and anti-corruption initiatives — could deny China influence in critical ports, curb the spread of risky 5G networks, and strengthen partners' resilience to economic coercion. By demonstrating that America remains both a principled leader and a reliable partner in the Indo-Pacific, Washington fills aid gaps that Beijing could otherwise exploit — preventing a vacuum in which China cements its regional dominance.

Ultimately, shifting from a defensive coexistence framework to proactive competition forces Beijing to grapple with the rising costs of revisionism. By deploying the legislative and oversight powers of Congress — especially HFAC's authority over diplomacy, sanctions, and foreign assistance — the United States can constrain China's ambitions, bolster its allies, and restore credible deterrence in the Indo-Pacific.

This policy is neither isolationist nor dangerously escalatory; it is resource-conscious, morally grounded, and precisely tailored to safeguard U.S. interests in a time of heightened rivalry. Channeling Reagan, bilateral negotiations with Beijing should hinge on fairness and transparency, not empty pageantry. In doing so, Washington can reclaim the strategic initiative, reminding Xi every day that hostility toward the United States and its partners will be met with ever-escalating consequences — until he or those around him finally decide that aggression simply costs too much or risks accelerating the Chinese Communist Party's demise.

IV. Additional Recommendations for Congress

A recalibrated China strategy must harness congressional powers — particularly those of HFAC — to impose tangible costs on Beijing's revisionism, deepen U.S. alliances, and foster flexible alignment structures capable of collectively countering Chinese coercion. While the executive branch conducts day-to-day diplomacy and defense, Congress can shape the broader policy environment through legislative initiatives, oversight hearings, and funding decisions.

Below are additional measures Congress should consider to ensure America's posture in the Indo-Pacific evolves beyond mere "coexistence" toward a more robust, reciprocal, and results-driven engagement with China:

Sectoral Export Controls and Outbound Investment Screening

- **Legislate Comprehensive Outbound Investment Screening:** Enact laws that rigorously scrutinize U.S. capital flows into Chinese firms involved in "national security technologies," while also leveraging a company-specific approach to impose sanctions on

those directly tied to military modernization or state surveillance. Such a measure, modeled on the principles underpinning the COINS Act, would ensure that American investments do not bolster Beijing's coercive capabilities while protecting vital U.S. interests.

- **Close Export and Transshipment Loopholes:** Mandate interagency coordination (Commerce, State, Treasury, Defense) to track and penalize rerouting through third countries, with regular HFAC updates on enforcement.
- **Expand Enforcement Resources:** Significantly increase funding for enforcement agencies — such as the Commerce Department's Bureau of Industry and Security (BIS) — to boost monitoring, investigation, and compliance capacities. This ensures that expanded export controls and outbound investment restrictions have real teeth, rather than becoming paper directives easily circumvented by well-resourced Chinese entities.
- **Leverage Allies and Partners:** Incentivize allies and partners to adopt U.S. export controls and regulations protecting emerging technologies by offering to expand technology sharing agreements.

Enhanced Support for Taiwan

- **Strengthen Cyber & Defensive Capabilities:** Fund capacity-building programs (e.g., informed by FDD's *Targeting Taiwan* memo) to bolster Taiwan's infrastructure, threat intelligence, and cyber readiness.
- **Put Taiwan First on the Production Line:** Instruct the Department of Defense to compel defense contractors to fulfill Taiwan's orders ahead of other foreign customers, regardless of contract order date. Require HFAC to receive quarterly updates on backlog reductions.
- **Consider Targeted Presidential Drawdowns:** Authorize drawdowns for critical "porcupine strategy" assets — e.g., sea mines, Navy Marine Expeditionary Ship Interdiction Systems, and small drones (RQ-7, RQ-20, Switchblade) — to bolster Taiwan's deterrent posture.
- **Expand Political & Economic Ties:** Encourage reciprocal visits by mid-level officials, deepen semiconductor supply-chain cooperation, and create a U.S.-Taiwan "Technology Exchange Council" under HFAC oversight.
- **Promote International Participation:** Advocate for Taiwan's meaningful role in global organizations and explore legislative avenues for a bilateral trade framework, reinforcing Taiwan's global standing.

Preemptive Sanctions and Deterrent Measures

- **Designate Trigger Points:** Pass legislation outlining automatic sanctions on major Chinese banks, state-owned enterprises, or financial institutions if Beijing blockades or invades Taiwan, or escalates maritime aggression in the South China Sea.
- **Publicly Detail Consequences:** Demonstrate deterrence by specifying assets that would be frozen and potential export/import bans — signaling that aggression will be met with steep costs.
- **Multilateral Coordination:** Use HFAC hearings to secure allied commitments for coordinated sanctions, ensuring Beijing faces a unified front.

Realign Foreign Assistance to Counter Beijing's Influence

- **Refocus State Department-Directed Counter-China Foreign Assistance:** Prioritize strategic infrastructure, digital governance, and anti-corruption initiatives that deny China a foothold in critical ports and 5G and data networks, and that reduce vulnerabilities to bribery or manipulation in major infrastructure deals. This approach bolsters local governance capacity while curbing Beijing's ability to exploit weak institutional safeguards.
- **Leverage DFC & MCC:** Direct the U.S. International Development Finance Corporation (DFC) and Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) to offer financing alternatives to Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) loans — contingent on transparency and rule-of-law reforms.
- **Strengthen Partner Resilience:** Support local civil society organizations, investigative journalism, and anti-disinformation efforts in frontline states, tying assistance to measurable progress on good governance.

Enhance Security Cooperation and Burden-Sharing

- **Foster Flexible Alignments:** Encourage minilateral groupings (e.g., the Quad, trilateral exercises with Japan and the Philippines), maritime security, intelligence sharing, technology standards, public health, and climate resilience.
- **Tie Support to Defense Spending:** Condition certain types of security cooperation on partners' willingness to boost their own defense budgets — adopting a "fair burden-sharing" principle that frees U.S. resources for strategic use elsewhere.
- **Fast-Track Critical Sales:** Mandate expedited foreign military sales for democracies at immediate risk of Chinese coercion (e.g., Taiwan), while coordinating with the House Armed Services Committee on broader defense posture.

Counter Maritime Coercion in the South China Sea

- **Target Chinese Coast Guard:** Authorize specific sanctions against the Chinese Coast Guard and affiliated maritime militia entities for ramming incidents, blockades, or other hostile actions against U.S. allies — sending a clear signal that maritime coercion will incur real costs.
- **Hold Oversight Hearings:** Convene HFAC-led briefings to explore diplomatic and economic responses, including potential sanctions or international arbitration support for allies like the Philippines.
- **Evaluate 'Accompaniment Missions':** Direct the administration to assess opportunities for U.S. or allied personnel to accompany resupply vessels, ensuring a visible deterrent presence that reduces the risk of Chinese ramming or blockades. This would bolster the safety of critical logistics operations in disputed waters and reinforce Washington's commitment to defending treaty allies' sovereign rights.
- **Establish Clear Red Lines:** Require the executive branch to define and publicly communicate the economic, diplomatic, or military consequences of further Chinese provocations against U.S. treaty allies.

Diplomatic & Public Diplomacy Tools

- **Reciprocity in Diplomatic Access:** Impose parallel restrictions on Chinese state media or diplomats if Beijing continues limiting U.S. journalists and NGOs.
- **Expose Disinformation:** Fund independent monitors to track and publicize CCP influence operations — both domestically and in allied nations — using HFAC oversight to ensure accountability.
- **Reinvigorate Broadcasting:** Expand U.S.-backed broadcasting into China and Chinese diaspora communities, promoting uncensored news, diverse viewpoints, and the merits of democratic governance.
- **Strengthen Human Rights Oversight:** Enact legislation requiring the secretary of state to designate a United States special coordinator for Uyghur issues, ensuring that systemic abuses are addressed at the highest diplomatic levels. Additionally, allocate dedicated funding to support human rights advocates and public diplomacy initiatives in the Islamic world, aimed at exposing CCP repression of Uyghurs and countering state-sponsored disinformation.
- **Scrutinize ‘Hostage Diplomacy’ and Travel Advisories:** Convene targeted HFAC hearings to examine how the State Department responds to China’s practice of detaining or restricting the movement of U.S. citizens as leverage. This includes assessing current travel advisories, legal assistance, and accountability measures, ensuring that Americans trapped in China are protected and that Beijing’s coercive tactics are publicly exposed.

Conclusion

By combining robust export controls, outbound investment bans, preemptive sanctions legislation, enhanced foreign assistance, and expanded security cooperation, Congress can impose tangible costs on Beijing’s coercive behavior and reinforce allied defense. Each of these measures is well within HFAC’s jurisdiction or influence. Through these legislative and oversight tools, the United States can shift from reactive “coexistence” to proactive deterrence, ultimately compelling China to reassess its aggressive posture or face the cumulative costs of continued revisionism.

Mrs. KIM. I recognize Mr. Fontaine for your opening statement.

STATEMENT OF RICHARD FONTAINE

Mr. FONTAINE. Chairwoman Kim, Ranking Member Bera, distinguished members of the subcommittee and staff, thank you for having me here today.

From the outset, the previous administration identified China as its top priority and the Indo-Pacific as the region most deserving of its greatest attention.

It had a number of notable successes but it also left key opportunities unseized and so the Trump administration, along with Congress, can and should build on the foundation laid over the past 4 years.

In the diplomatic sphere the Biden administration elevated the Quad to the leaders level and coordinated an ambitious effort to supply COVID-19 vaccines to Southeast Asia.

It demonstrated greater American engagement with the Pacific Islands including a summit with leaders in Washington, new diplomatic outposts, and as Representative Bera said, renewing the Compacts of Free Association.

President Biden hosted the ASEAN leaders at the White House as well, stepping ed up high-level diplomacy with what is perhaps the Indo-Pacific's most contested region. All these were positive diplomatic steps.

The administration also made significant moves on military posture including winning base access for U.S. troops in the Philippines, and securing an access arrangement with Papua New Guinea.

Of course, it formed AUKUS, the defense technology sharing agreement with Australia and the U.K., revised U.S. force posture in Japan, and agreed on Defense Industrial Base cooperation with India. Again, all positive signs.

But for all that, the net deployment of U.S. military resources in Asia has been essentially flat for over a decade even as China has made increases in virtually every area. and so rRighting the military balance in the western Pacific and ensuring deterrence remain key challenges for the new administration.

The Biden administration also refocused some of its economic efforts on the Indo-Pacific but away from trade agreements and toward defensive measures like export controls on semiconductors, outbound investment reviews, restricting Chinese electric vehicles, and so forth.

Its one attempt at an affirmative trade policy was the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework agreement, IPEF, which the chairwoman mentioned.

But this was a set of agreements that rather conspicuously lacked any market access in the United States and didn't need to be approved by Congress and so it was very limited in what it could actually put on the table in terms of what countries in the region are looking for most from the U.S. and the U.S. economy.

This recent paucity of positive economic moves in Asia represents another opportunity, should the administration choose to seize it.

So the Biden administration made some significant strides in the Indo-Pacific over the past 4 years even while, of course, it was dealing with acute crises in Europe and in the Middle East.

But given China's increasing military strength, its diplomatic ambition, and its technological advances, there remains a long way to go. The Trump administration and Congress should pursue several opportunities.

First, they should elevate regional diplomacy. The Trump administration's first meeting with the Quad foreign ministers took place on only, I believe, their second day in office. This is a good step and it's already been followed with extensive diplomacy with regional leaders.

But there are questions, of course, that are swirling about the President's regional priorities, enthusiasm for tariffs, pursuit of positive ties with Russia, and more.

So high-level and sustained Indo-Pacific diplomacy will be at a premium in all of the formats available, including the U.S., Japan, South Korea trilateral, the trilateral with Japan and the Philippines, the Quad, and, of course, Congress has an important role to play here with the CODELs and the visits both to Washington and other places.

The new administration also should pursue a positive economic vision. I think there's wide agreement that the United States should continue to reduce its economic dependence on China in areas that incur national security risk.

There's less agreement, but I think there should be, on the corresponding lesson here which is you trade less with China in sensitive areas and you trade more with your friends and allies, and there are is the possibility of sectoral agreements like digital trade or on critical minerals that would set rules, reduce dependencies on China, and signal renewed U.S. economic leadership.

The United States on the military side can't arrest the eroding balance of power in the Indo-Pacific and meet our critical commitments elsewhere without a major increase in defense spending and at the same time moving some of our military resources from the Middle East and Europe to Asia, especially in light of the prospects for peace in 2025 in each of those two regions.

Then, finally, it would be wise to avoid some unforced errors. The new administration, obviously, is moving quickly to differentiate itself from its predecessor including on Asia policy but shouldn't shoot itself in the foot by eliminating programs that have helped the U.S. bolster friends in the Indo-Pacific and contest Chinese influence, whether that's foreign aid or some of the other arrangements that are currently under question.

So by avoiding own goals, and by pursuing the many opportunities before it, the new administration and the U.S. Congress have a significant potential to bolster America's position in the world's most important region.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Fontaine follows:]



**Testimony Before the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on East Asia and the Pacific
“Missed Milestones: Evaluating The Last Four Years in the EAP Region and Unseized
Opportunities Under President Trump”
February 25, 2025**

Richard Fontaine, Chief Executive Officer, Center for a New American Security

Chairwoman Kim, Ranking Member Bera, distinguished members of the subcommittee and staff, thank you for having me here today.

It is difficult to overstate Asia’s significance. It is home to 60 percent of the world’s population, three of the five largest national economies, over 40 percent of global GDP, an estimated two-thirds of the world’s economic growth, 41 percent of international exports, and 37 percent of global imports. It claims half of the world’s active military personnel, six of the ten biggest armies, four of the ten highest defense budgets, five of the nine nuclear-weapon states, and six of the ten major carbon emitters. It is also the region in which China, America’s chief geopolitical rival, is most active.¹

To respond to China’s rise and seize the promise of Asia’s dynamism, the United States has since at least 2011 attempted to pivot, or rebalance, its foreign policy from other regions to the Indo-Pacific. The effort has been more difficult than many expected, and the United States remains a global power with interests and commitments in multiple areas. Yet the attempt to devote greater time, attention, and resources to Asia was the correct strategic impulse when first announced, and it remains the right strategic approach today.

As a result, the opportunity to evaluate the Biden administration’s approach to the Indo-Pacific, and to draw lessons from the past four years, is an important exercise. I thank the subcommittee for calling this hearing.

For all its departures, the Biden administration’s diagnosis of Asia—and of China in particular—bore striking similarities to that of the first Trump presidency. From the outset, the Biden administration identified China as its top priority and the Indo-Pacific as the region deserving of its greatest attention. Senior officials justified policy approaches in other regions—the withdrawal from Afghanistan, the early effort to stabilize relations with Russia, the attempted reentry into the Iran nuclear deal, and more—as at least partly necessary to execute a rebalance to Asia. The administration retained key elements of its predecessor’s approach, such as imposing tariffs on China, remaining outside the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) trade agreement, seeking to build up sources of domestic strength, and attempting to address the deteriorating regional military balance. The Biden administration had a number of notable successes and set the foundation upon which President Trump and his team, alongside Congress, can and should build.

Indo-Pacific Diplomacy



From the outset, the Biden administration proved itself ambitious and creative in expanding diplomatic ties with key Indo-Pacific countries and subregions. It elevated the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad) to the leaders' level and coordinated an ambitious effort to supply COVID-19 vaccines to Southeast Asia. In the Pacific Islands, after the Solomons announced a new security agreement with China, the administration took a flurry of actions to demonstrate greater American engagement in the region, including a summit with leaders in Washington, establishing new diplomatic outposts, and renewing the Compacts of Free Association. Biden hosted ASEAN leaders at the White House as well, stepping up high-level diplomacy with what is perhaps the Indo-Pacific's most contested region. The president's August 2023 meeting at Camp David with the Japanese and South Korean leaders marked the beginning of a new era in trilateral cooperation, and the administration brought Japan and the Philippines together in new trilateral formats as well. While the Biden administration originally sought to cooperate with China in areas of mutual interest, like climate, global health, and nonproliferation, the meager fruits suggest that competition will, for the time being, chill any opportunities for significant collaboration. Nevertheless, bilateral diplomacy with Beijing remains important given the potentially catastrophic consequences of crisis or conflict.

After the Russian invasion of Ukraine and Hamas's attack on Israel, U.S. diplomatic and military bandwidth was stretched by demands in Europe and the Middle East. Yet engagement with the Indo-Pacific cannot simply await peace and stability in other regions of the world; Washington will need to prioritize the Indo-Pacific even as other crises and conflicts emerge in other places. Key to a sustained focus on Asia is balancing diplomatic attention across a large portfolio of U.S. relationships and interests, taking care to ensure that activity in the Indo-Pacific does not get crowded out by demands elsewhere.

Advances in Defense Posture

From the outset, the Biden administration focused its defense policy on the Indo-Pacific, and the Department of Defense (DoD) labeled China its "pacing challenge." In May 2021, DoD indicated that in the new fiscal year it would invest \$66 billion in the Indo-Pacific region, including \$5.1 billion for the Pacific Deterrence Initiative. Two months later, on a visit to Manila, Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin secured the reactivation of the Visiting Forces Agreement, the pact under which U.S. troops rotate through the Philippines—and which former President Rodrigo Duterte in February 2020 had vowed to terminate. In August 2021, the United States conducted the largest military exercises in the western Pacific since the Cold War.

After this start, the administration won new base access for U.S. troops in the Philippines and secured a posture arrangement with Papua New Guinea. It formed AUKUS, the defense technology sharing agreement among the United States, Australia, and Britain, the keystone of which was Washington's pledge to help Australia acquire nuclear-powered submarines. The administration also revised U.S. force posture in Japan and secured an agreement on defense industrial base cooperation with India. That all these efforts were intended to balance against China barely needs mentioning.



In terms of overall military resources, however, the picture is less rosy for the Indo-Pacific. The United States today has more troops stationed in Europe than it did in 2011, when the pivot to Asia was announced. The U.S. Navy has contracted over the years, seeing only a minor increase in the number of ships over recent years. Submarine production is behind schedule. Reflecting the effort to shift regional priorities, 2021 marked the first year in three decades during which an aircraft carrier did not operate in the Middle East. By 2023, however, two carriers did so, responding to attacks on Israel.

While the net deployment of U.S. military resources in Asia has been essentially flat for over a decade, China has made increases in virtually every area over the same period. Beijing now possesses the world's largest navy, which is disproportionately focused on the Pacific as opposed to America's globally dispersed presence. Beijing has the largest air force in Asia, is completing its third aircraft carrier, and has developed hypersonic weapons. It is engaged in a major expansion of its nuclear arsenal and has acquired counter-space capabilities to threaten U.S. and allied satellites. Beijing has expanded a naval installation in Cambodia and reached a security agreement with the Solomon Islands.

Such indicators underline the challenge ahead for the Trump administration. The Biden administration made real, concrete, and positive moves to right the military balance in the Indo-Pacific. There remains, however, much more to do—both in the region and as a matter of overall budgeting and capability.

Economic Policy

As during the first Trump term, the Biden administration refocused its economic efforts in the Indo-Pacific away from ambitious trade agreements and toward defensive measures. It imposed controls on the export of semiconductors to China, restricted Chinese electric vehicles and automobile software, and pursued an industrial policy aimed at reducing supply chokepoints and maintaining a technological edge over China. Its one attempt at an affirmative trade policy resulted in the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework, a set of agreements that conspicuously avoided any market opening mechanisms.

In the absence of a positive U.S. trade policy, Beijing has sought to fill a void. Already a member of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership, it has also applied to join the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership, the successor to the TPP agreement. While the Chinese market remains far less open than that of the United States, Beijing nevertheless seeks to contrast its own market-opening efforts with American enthusiasm for tariffs, export controls, Buy America provisions, and industrial policy. The new administration should pursue opportunities to expand trade and investment with friends and allies in the Indo-Pacific, for both economic and strategic reasons.

The Biden administration used foreign aid, including through institutions like the Development Finance Corporation, to bolster friendly countries, compete with China for influence, and catalyze private sector investment. Even before the start of very large assistance packages for



Ukraine, however, the Indo-Pacific—home to more than half the world’s population—never received more than ten percent of overall foreign assistance. Reflecting on the disparities, a 2023 Senate Foreign Relations Committee staff report wisely recommended that the United States should “seek additional resources and allocate a larger portion of foreign assistance to the Indo-Pacific,” invest more in the State Department’s Indo-Pacific operations, and incentivize other U.S. agencies to “increase their grants, loans, and other financing activities in the Indo-Pacific.”²

Opportunities for a New Administration

The Biden administration made significant strides in the Indo-Pacific over the past four years, even while attending to acute crises in Europe and the Middle East. It saw particular successes in diplomacy and military posture. Yet given China’s increasing military strength, diplomatic ambition, and technological advancements, there remains a long way to go. The past four years have established a foundation that the Trump administration, and Congress, would do well to build upon.

As they do so, it is worth keeping in mind the ultimate objective of U.S. efforts in the Indo-Pacific. The overarching goal of U.S. foreign policy should be to preserve the core pillars of the international order, even as specific rules and institutions change and adapt. The United States benefits from, and has a vital interest in maintaining, a global order governed by rules rather than brute power—one in which countries enjoy sovereignty, disputes are resolved peacefully, markets are open to trade, human rights are considered universal, and democracy can flourish. Since the 1940s, Washington has opposed hostile spheres of influence emerging in Eurasia precisely because they threaten the United States’ desired rules-based order.

Today, China threatens to construct precisely such a hostile sphere of influence in Asia. It is aligned with Russia, Iran, North Korea in an “axis of upheaval” that seeks to replace a U.S.-dominated international order. Beijing’s military power has grown dramatically, making it more difficult for the United States to operate militarily across the region. Its economic weight has grown, permitting it to coerce countries in ways that violate their basic sovereignty. Its claims in the East and South China Seas run counter to long-standing maritime rules and threaten freedom of navigation, while its potential use of force against Taiwan could embroil the region in a disastrous conflict. Its illiberal activities crowd out the space in which democracy can thrive and promote the legitimacy of autocratic governance.

In this light, U.S. policy toward China should aim to ensure that Beijing is either unwilling or unable to overturn the regional and global order. That objective should broadly inform American efforts in the Indo-Pacific to serve U.S. interests and values by building a peaceful and inclusive region. The United States is not merely competing against China but working toward the preservation and extension of core international values that serve many other nations well. Washington should emphasize that fact and act accordingly.

In addition, it should pursue the following opportunities:



Elevate regional diplomacy. The Trump administration's first meeting with Quad foreign leaders took place on its second day in office. This good, assertive step has already been followed by extensive diplomacy with regional leaders. As questions swirl about the President's regional priorities, enthusiasm for tariffs, pursuit of positive ties with Russia, and more, high-level and sustained Indo-Pacific diplomacy will be at a premium. The administration should pursue regular presidential and cabinet-level visits to the region alongside issue-based coalitions in areas like technology. Congress has an important role to play here too, including via congressional delegations, parliamentary exchanges, and congressional resolutions that amount to diplomatic signaling.

Pursue a positive economic vision. The United States should and will identify areas of economic dependence with China that incur national security risk and pursue alternative arrangements. The aim of trading less with China in sensitive areas should generate opportunities for greater economic interaction with friends and allies. While a return to the TPP is politically impossible, narrower trade agreements in specific sectors are not. Sectoral agreements in areas like digital trade, clean technology, or critical minerals would set rules, reduce dependency on China, and signal renewed U.S. economic leadership. Free trade agreements with Japan, Taiwan, and New Zealand, for instance, could show that Washington remains in the business of expanding markets for American people and companies.

Increase defense spending and shift military resources. The United States cannot arrest the eroding balance of power in the Indo-Pacific, and meet its critical commitments elsewhere, without major increases in defense spending. At the same time, some military resources should shift from the Middle East and Europe to Asia.

For more than a decade, Washington fed the perception of U.S. withdrawal from the Middle East without obtaining a significant resource dividend. This amounted to the worst of all worlds: deep and costly engagement in the region while fanning the fears of abandonment. Washington should invert this equation by diminishing its military presence in the region while bolstering its commitment to act. Troop levels, air bases, maritime deployments, and more should decline in the Middle East, surging only when necessary for significant military operations, such as the initial effort to deter other actors from joining the Israel-Hamas war in the fall of 2023.

The ongoing degradation of Russian military power amid the war in Ukraine—and the prospect of an end to the conflict in 2025—is combining with European steps to increase defense budgets, acquire new capabilities, and enhance military production lines. Barring Russia emerging from negotiations with a strengthened position, its conventional military threat to NATO should be smaller than in previous years. That can allow the United States to pivot U.S. air and naval forces from defending Europe to new locations in the Indo-Pacific. This, it is worth emphasizing, should amount to a rebalancing rather than an abandonment of Ukraine. A peace agreement that leaves Russia ascendant would have deeply negative effects both in Europe and the Indo-Pacific.

Build on existing defense agreements. The Biden administration set a strong foundation for growth in key defense relationships. Washington should retain AUKUS and see it as a proof of



concept, working to ensure quick, visible wins in pillar two's area of development and delivery of emerging technologies. It should identify projects in which non-AUKUS countries like Japan, South Korea, and India can participate and, again, look for visible results in months rather than years. It should also build on the Biden administration's posture moves, including by enhancing base resiliency in Japan and expanding facilities in the Philippines.

Avoid unforced errors. The new administration is moving quickly to differentiate itself from its predecessor, including on Asia policy. As it does so, it should take care not to shoot itself in the foot by eliminating or underfunding programs that have helped the United States bolster friends in the Indo-Pacific and contest Chinese influence.

The first Trump administration, for example, struck a deal with Nepal to supply \$500 million in infrastructure financing.³ After five years of discussion, the government in Kathmandu approved the agreement, withstanding Chinese lobbying against it and committing \$200 million of its own money. That funding is now on hold, along with a vast amount of U.S. foreign aid. Should it not resume, Beijing would be more than happy to step into the breach and to point out U.S. unreliability in the bargain.

Killing foreign aid programs that sharpen America's competitive edge in Asia, underfunding defense, applying economic coercion to friends and allies, and lurching inconsistently between policies all raise doubts about U.S. long-term presence and power in the Indo-Pacific. By avoiding own goals, and pursuing the many opportunities before it, the new administration and the U.S. Congress have significant potential to bolster America's position in the world's most important region.

¹ Key elements of this testimony draw on a book-length analysis of the U.S. pivot to Asia. See Robert D. Blackwill and Richard Fontaine, *Lost Decade: The US Pivot to Asia and the Rise of Chinese Power* (Oxford University Press, 2024).

² US Senate, Committee on Foreign Relations, *Strategic Alignment: The Imperative of Resourcing the Indo-Pacific Strategy*, February 2023, https://www.foreign.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/resourcing_the_ips_-_sfric_democratic_staff_report_2023.pdf, 11.

³ Bhadra Sharma, Mujid Mashal, and Edward Wong, "Nepal Took a Risk on a \$500 Million U.S. Grant. It May Now Regret It." *The New York Times*, February 19, 2025, <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/02/19/world/asia/nepal-trump-foreign-aid.html?smid=nytcore-ios-share&referringSource=articleShare>.

Mrs. KIM. Thank you for your wonderful testimoneys. Your opening statements give us a lot of food for thought and much of which we agree on.

We all talked about how it is important for U.S. to show up to the region to build a stronger relationship with our allies and partners.

Also some of you also mentioned the—our ability to keep up with our defense capabilities so I want to start my questioning on that note.

Allies like Korea and Japan they have taken steps to assist the U.S. Defense Industrial Base and Korea's Hanwha systems is acquiring Philly Shipyards to bring shipbuilding experience to America, and Japan has already committed a trillion dollars—\$1 trillion—I wish it was more—in investment to assist the U.S. with emerging technologies.

Our partners are also looking to co-produce and co-develop with the United States so we need to ensure that these collaborations align with our security interests and industrial capacity without compromising our American innovation or competitiveness.

So the first question—I think I want to—Mr. Singleton is not listening so let me wake you up.

What steps can the Trump administration take to strengthen our Defense Industrial Base while also working with our allies and partners on national security priorities and technological and economic advancements?

Sorry to put you on the spot.

Mr. SINGLETON. Thank you. Wide awake.

It's amazing that we are talking about enhancements to our Defense Industrial Base today because we're actually thinking about investments that are going to be really coming into play tomorrow. Time is the enemy here.

I think this administration has real opportunities when we're thinking about incentivization and also deregulation, but where we are seeing gaps quite clearly are expanding mineral stockpiles that we will need for tomorrow to actually feed and drive these industries.

We actually don't have a skilled talent workforce yet for these critical industries in the defense sector. So starting to think about actual concrete programs that we can put into place through legislation to buildup our tech talent workforce will be absolutely vital.

I think—and Zack hit on this as well—trusted defense supply chains is probably the future and I think East Asia will play an anchor role in that structure.

Co-development with India, for example, on fighter jets, Japan the Glide Phase Interceptor to go after hypersonic missiles. These are all new and amazing opportunities that I don't think we would have been talking about a few years ago.

Ultimately, a lot of that will be advanced through memorandums of oral commitment, memorandums of understanding, and just simple, clear-eyed engagement throughout the region. I think there's no shortage of opportunity here as we think about these defense supply chains and it was actually Secretary Austin, I think, who really laid the groundwork for this last summer and this is an area where this administration can really proceed.

Mrs. KIM. Thank you.

On the economic engagement, Mr. Cooper, our ASEAN partners continue to request market access, and we talked about that. IPEF is good. It's a good starting point.

But, as you noted, we don't have market access there. So market access to the United States is what our ASEAN partners are asking. But trade appetite in Washington is severely limited.

So in your testimony you mentioned that Trump administration is unlikely to embrace IPEF. So what alternative strategies can the administration pursue to maintain the U.S. economic influence in the region without ceding grounds to Beijing?

Mr. COOPER. Thanks, Chairwoman Kim.

I think the only answer then for the Trump team is to think about bilateral arrangements since that's very clearly their preference that are strategic in nature and absolutely critical to the United States.

That's why, for me, focusing on the Philippines initially is probably the most critical factor. You know that, of course, we have got this Luzon economic corridor which we are trying to do with Manila, and if that doesn't go forward it will call into question our ability to use Philippine bases and other facilities in the event of a crisis or conflict.

I think we're going to have to connect our economic interests with our strategic interests to make that logical chain clear for both this administration and, of course, for the Congress as well.

Mrs. KIM. Thank you.

Mr. Fontaine, do you want to chime in on that? Since IPEF does not provide market access how can we incentivize more American companies—private sector engagements—in the region? I know we talked about that a little bit—China.

Mr. FONTAINE. Yes, I think it's worth pointing out that in the first Trump administration the administration did reach a digital trade deal with Japan and used the digital trade chapter from USMCA there, and also had kind of managed a mini deal on agriculture.

So it is just not completely beyond the realm of imagination to think that over the next 4 years there are bilateral deals, particularly in sectoral areas, you know, that could be reached on digital trade, which and would be done bilaterally or multilaterally, which they would be more about setting the rules than even market access or some market access, deals things, again, on relatively non-controversial areas like critical minerals and things like that.

More ambitiously, you know, if the U.S. gets back in the business of, you know, free trade agreements, which admittedly is a little hard to think about right now, I mean, we could have an FTA with the Philippines.

We could have an FTA with Taiwan. I mean, the centerpiece of, you know, the ill-fated TPP was essentially a U.S.-Japan free trade agreement. And so, you know, if we could politically get back to those areas the sky is kind of the limit for what would be possible on policy grounds.

Mrs. KIM. Thank you very, very much.

Let me now recognize Ranking Member Bera for 5 minutes of questioning.

Mr. BERA. Thank you, Madam Chairwoman.

I'm always going to be the optimist. I think we can always increase our economic ties. But in the short term I think there are some things that we can build off of.

Mr. Fontaine, you touched on the importance of critical minerals and, you know, some of the rare earths where we are overly reliant on a single source, in this case Beijing, and we know how they use economic coercion. We have seen a taste of it.

But it could get worse if there is a real escalation in conflict. The Biden administration had put in the mineral security partnership.

You know, we have engaged in conversations with our allies in Japan and Korea, and this is not an area where we're necessarily in competition because we all need these supplies. And I'd be curious, you know, from a congressional perspective and then, you know, working with the administration if we can work with our allies.

Obviously, the Australians want to develop this industry. Maybe a little bit more expensive than China but, again, for our security concerns it's a way of, you know, working with Australians, Malaysia, Vietnam, other areas where we strategically could go into these areas if—you know, I think that's the right approach at this point is going in and developing these new markets and even going into Africa and working in some of these places and having a presence.

Mr. FONTAINE. Yes, I think that's exactly right and, of course, on the critical minerals you have to consider both the sourcing and then the processing and so you have to solve both of those. Otherwise, if you're dependent on China for one or the other then you haven't solved your problem.

But that said, there are a number of countries in the Indo-Pacific and around the world that both have sources and some which would be the places where processing takes place. So the U.S. should be in the business of reducing barriers to that kind of trade in critical minerals and potentially looking to our other tools of economic policy, you know, through the Development Finance Corporation or, you know, some of our aid programs and things like that in order to incentivize private sector activity in these places.

So, again, I think the mantra should be, yes, trade less with China in areas of national security concern and but also trade more with our friends and allies in those very areas.

Mr. BERA. Mr. Cooper, do you want to add?

Mr. COOPER. I would just add very briefly, you know, this is an area where I think there are some countries in Southeast Asia that have tremendous capability to help us and help themselves, and Indonesia is sort of the most obvious of those.

So I think the Minerals Security Partnership is the kind of thing that should be able to last through from the Biden administration to the Trump administration because as Craig was saying it picks up on a lot of critical items that they've been worried about for a long time, going back to the first Trump term.

But I think we have got to figure out which partners we can work with in Southeast Asia or elsewhere in the region and for me Indonesia would be the logical first partner to think about.

Mr. BERA. Right. Let me shift to the Pacific Islands.

Large economic zone, big playing field, smaller populations. I know I've traveled extensively there. I know the chairwoman is traveling to the region as well.

When I look at recent elections, you know, in the Solomons and within PNG, the public seems to still want to move toward the West and so forth.

But I really am concerned when it comes time to form a government just Beijing's influence and, you know, we don't have to get into the details of it but things that we're not going to do—it's not how we do business.

But you talked about corruption, Mr. Cooper. When it comes time to form governments, the governments are not necessarily moving in our direction and I think we have got to come up with some tools on how to counter that influence.

You know, if you want to talk about that, Mr. Cooper, and then if the others want to add something.

Mr. COOPER. Yes, Ranking Member, just a brief remark, which is, you know, I think we have had a number of wake-up calls and every time we say it's a wake-up call and then we don't really wake up—you know, first with Solomon Islands, then we were worried about Vanuatu—now it's Cook Islands.

Every time we say we have woken up and then every time there's another Pacific Island that does a deal with China that we didn't see coming, I think the Trump team should get a lot of credit for in the first term putting a lot of effort into the Pacific Islands, right?

I think we have to make sure that they maintain that focus now. There are a lot of distractions around the world and the Pacific isn't the easiest place to maintain focus and we haven't done that consistently over years.

So I think we have got to use the Cook Islands situation now as another wake-up call to focus on.

Mr. BERA. Yes. Having just been in Auckland last week, obviously, that's of concern. I mean, I think how we may approach it this Congress is working with Australia and New Zealand, and Japan is showing that increased—look, how do we share the burden? How do we—even the French? I mean, pulling the French in as well.

I don't know, Mr. Fontaine, if, in the last few—

Mr. COOPER. Well, you just made the point that I was going to make, which is that we have got, you know, friends in this enterprise.

So we're not going to do what the Chinese do and engage in, you know, bribery and State capture and things like that. We're going to have a different model and different approach to engagement.

That has to be sustained and it has to be a long-term effort and ultimately it's—we don't want to see China get a foothold, certainly, in security terms in these areas, which would constrain our own freedom of action and that of our friends and allies.

So if you start from that point and then, look, what are the tools that we have available to be able to influence and, frankly, to help these countries with their own sovereignty so that they're not ultimately undermined by Chinese activity that is something that

should appeal to these governments over time, and in that we can enlist friends like New Zealand and Australia.

Mrs. KIM. Thank you.

Let me now go to the members' questioning session and I would like to first call upon Representative Moylan to ask your questions.

Mr. MOYLAN. Thank you, Chairwoman Kim.

I want to express my disapproval of President Biden's absence in the East Asia Summit during his tenure. The U.S. relationship with the Association of Southeast Asian Nation members is critical for the economic, political, and the defense of prosperity in the region.

The President's participation in these diplomatic channels is essential to ensuring that the U.S. presence in Asia remains constructive, visible, and lasting.

Partnerships such as the AUKUS alliance or the Quad organization have greatly enhanced the overall security of the Indo-Pacific. Despite their significance, the United States' over emphasis on defensive measures has alienated potential allies and support.

The East Asia Summit and other ASEAN-sponsored discussions are opportunities for the U.S. to cooperate on issues like health care and trade and disaster response and even energy.

Yet, the nonparticipation or just vocalizing the anti-Chinese sentiment is a missed opportunity that the United States cannot afford.

Unlike the previous administration, President Trump must approach the organization like ASEAN with the same passion as defense partnerships, and some have even cited President Xi Jinping and President Putin as examples of the absence to defend President Biden's nonattendance.

But the United States can and must do better. For diplomatic efforts we must stop looking at PRC or Russia as an example and demonstrate that the United States will be a lasting ally.

In the absence of our adversaries the United States can assert itself as a preferred partner in the Pacific. The United States has recently accomplished significant diplomatic achievements in the Indo-Pacific such as the U.S. alliance for international developments, disaster teams, or professional development programs in Cambodia.

Nevertheless, the United States cannot rest on its diplomatic laurels and these relationships need demonstration of our commitment.

So I implore the Trump administration to learn from President Biden's mistakes and I ask you, Mr. Singleton—you have vast experience and appreciate that, and what actions can the U.S. take to strengthen trust and cooperation with ASEAN nations, particularly those growing closer to China.

Mr. SINGLETON. Thank you, sir.

I mean, I think we mentioned it earlier but we have to show up. I think our greatest comparative advantage would be presence, persistence, and partnership and that's—the region isn't opaque. They make clear to us directly what they want from us and I think there are transactional opportunities that benefit both sides.

I think talk of market access, talk of economic engagement, is the missing link today and most countries in the region are deeply

concerned about their reliance on China for key critical supply chains.

They're concerned about Chinese companies relocating into their markets, and those dependencies and the weaponized interdependence that comes with them is concerning.

I think the biggest signal that the President can make, though, is by simply having consistent outreach to countries in the region—hosting them here, deepening people to people ties, showing up.

President—Chinese leader Xi Jinping does it quite well. The Chinese operate a vast diplomatic presence across the region. I think we have a real opportunity here to actually show up on the ground and demonstrate what we're willing to bring to the table.

Mr. MOYLAN. Thank you.

And briefly, Mr. Fontaine, you spoke about the coordination the Biden administration accomplished with Pacific Island countries. In what areas should the Trump administration build off these initial success?

Mr. FONTAINE. There's are several. Well, one One is to, of course, sustain the diplomatic engagement produced by having established the embassies in Solomons and Vanuatu and Tonga. and, you know, the China-Solomons security agreement was, as my colleague said, a big wake-up call. But then we get additional wake-up calls after additional wake-up calls.

And so to sustain sustaining the diplomatic engagement there is one aspect of all this. Then I come back just, you know, on to trade. I mean, these are very small economies in all of this but one of the great advantages the United States has is the big economic market and ability to provide access to that economic market, particularly for countries for which who, you know, it's going to be almost a rounding error in terms of their economic relationship with us. This is another big advantage.

And then, you know, again, working with these countries in combination together with Australia, New Zealand, Japan, and other bigger countries including from a little bit further outside in order to demonstrate a vision which is not the U.S. would like to dominate the region instead of China but, rather, this is about your own independence and sovereignty and ability to make your own sovereign decisions, that we want to support that as opposed to what China has on offer.

Mr. MOYLAN. Thank you very much. Thank you to the panel.

Madam Chair, thank you.

Mrs. KIM. Thank you.

Let me now recognize Representative Sherman for your 5 minutes of questioning.

Mr. SHERMAN. China has been on the rise ever since at the beginning of this century we gave them permanent most favored nation status. I was there at the time and they told us it would increase the trade deficit by a billion dollars. They were off by 4,000 percent.

I would point out that the vast majority of Democrats voted against that action and we did so under pressure from a Democratic president who turned out to be wrong on this one issue.

And I would hope our Republican colleagues will take note of this. Perhaps your proudest hour will be on occasion where you say no to a Republican president.

We now have this enormous trade deficit with China. I would point out that it is considerably larger under Trump 1.0 than it was under Biden, and that was particularly true in the pre-COVID years of the Trump administration.

So while Trump talks about how other countries are eating our lunch, they ate our lunch and our dinner under the first Trump administration.

Now, one issue we have is Americans investing in Chinese stocks. Now, China wants to encourage its people to invest in their stock and they provide tax incentives for doing so.

But they're careful to make sure that no citizen of China gets an incentive—a tax credit—for investing in American stocks.

But we have a capital gains allowance where we provide many hundreds of millions of dollars in subsidies to benefit Americans who invest in Chinese stocks.

If any of you think that that's a good idea could you raise your hand? I'm not seeing.

But what's surprising is I only got one Republican co-sponsor for my bill to take away this subsidy for investing in the Chinese economy, and I would hope that we would do a lot better in this Congress.

You'll have to stand up to billionaires to do that because billionaires think they should get a tax incentive for everything, even being Benedict Arnold when it comes to where they invest their money.

I think you pointed out how some of the small countries in the Pacific are rounding errors when it comes to trade. It's even more of a rounding error when it comes to aid.

I believe that the special—the House Select Committee on the Chinese Communist Party unanimously and in a bipartisan way called on us to fully fund USAID.

Now, American soldiers, including my father's friends, died in the Pacific over the very islands that would be of great strategic importance if, God forbid, we ever ended up in another war with a major Asian power.

Does it—raise your hand if you think it made any sense for us to stop all aid to the small islands in the Pacific as we did just a week or two ago when we froze all USAID?

Again, I'll say that no hands went up. The Solomon Islands where so many Americans—Marines—died we had a \$21 million economic support arrangement with and we have stopped that, and even if we started again we have proven ourselves to be unreliable. A \$95,000 aid program to the Cook Islands and we stopped that. It's tragic.

Now, I'll point out one other thing. We have got China making these debt trap loans where they loan money and there's no way that the project will pay it back.

Should we encourage nations that are a victim of this to simply not pay China back? Does anybody agree with that or disagree?

Should Sri Lanka be writing giant—well, so I'll point out that we, in effect, force these countries to pay back because we allow

our credit rating agencies and our lenders to treat a country as if it's a bad credit risk because they fail to pay China back.

I would say that we ought to turn to countries and say, don't give China your port. Give them your middle finger, and then you'll still be able to borrow from Europe, from the United States, and from the international community.

And with that, my time has expired.

Mrs. KIM. Thank you, Mr. Sherman.

I recognize Representative Barr for your 5 minutes of questioning.

Mr. BARR. Thank you.

Mr. Singleton, thank you for recognizing the COINS Act, the outbound screening legislation from the last Congress that I worked on, and I do agree with you that we do need legislation to address capital flows into China, especially to Chinese entities of national security concern and technologies that threaten our national security as well.

Last Friday President Trump issued an executive order titled "American First Investment Policy" and issued a national security memorandum that was in large measure aligned with the principles of the COINS Act. He said in conjunction with that release we will adopt new rules to stop U.S. companies from pouring investments into China and stop China from buying up America, allowing all of these investments that serve American interests, meaning that it's exactly the right policy.

It's the America first policies, red light to investments that compromise our national security but allow those investments that actually advance our interests.

My question to you is given the fact that the administration has now issued an executive order—it replaces the Biden executive order on outbound investment screening—is it important that Congress act as well here? Is it important that Congress pass legislation to provide statutory definition to all of this?

Mr. SINGLETON. No, absolutely, and thank you for your leadership on this issue.

I mean, cutting off Xi's access, I would say, to Western capital and technology is like depriving a fire of oxygen. I think if we don't we're sort of very much fueling the system that is seeking to overshadow our own.

I was very impressed with the policy release memo last week but it's vital that those protections be codified into law.

In many respects, the memo released last week goes a little bit farther than COINS by identifying new sectors including biotechnology, which I would argue is the next semiconductors, where we need to be hyper vigilant about capital flows.

But I think what's captured in the COINS Act is exactly the right pitch perfect moment. There's bipartisan consensus. I know it was a long road to get there but I think at this point it's the best hope for right now.

Mr. BARR. Yes. And thanks, Mr. Singleton, for recognizing that the Treasury-White House release is slightly different than COINS and we have actually been reaching out to the administration asking for interagency technical assistance. We want to incorporate that into the release of COINS 2.0.

What would you say, though, to the argument that—and obviously, because of my work on this I support the effort—but what would you say to those who make the argument, and it's not altogether a bad point, that under Xi Jinping China has abandoned the American innovation model, that the Chinese Communist central planning has replaced private allocation of capital with state-run investment and because of that between 2018 and 2023 the number of annual startups founded in China has collapsed by over 97 percent and that Chairman Xi's crackdown has really deterred U.S. investment.

Since 2018 U.S. venture capital deals in China have fallen by 87 percent. In other words, the market is taking care of this. China's economy is collapsing. China's disadvantage is that they're communists.

And so outbound investment is slowing down because it's a bad place to invest. Do we still need COINS? Do we still need an investment screening tool?

Mr. SINGLETON. No, absolutely. I mean Xi Jinping is his own worst enemy and his economic stewardship has led China to where it is today which is on the point of economic collapse, quite frankly.

I think what we have to do is protect American capital, American investors, and American technology, and institute through law common sense guardrails that ensure that American capital isn't flowing into the very technological sectors that are being used to fuel Chinese military modernization and I think that linkage between the military and the civil, particularly as it relates to investment screening and bans, is essential if for no other reason that just because China's economy is suffering today doesn't mean that they can't recover tomorrow.

Mr. BARR. Well, I agree with you and I agree with President Trump on his executive order.

Look, it's true. Chairman Xi has, in some regards, made China uninvestable. Why on earth anyone would want to invest in a communist economy where at any moment's notice at the whim of the bureaucrats in Beijing all of your investment could disappear.

Nevertheless, there are capital flows. There are Western investors, U.S. and otherwise, who are investing in some of these critical technologies and so we do need legislation.

I appreciate your testimony. I yield back.

Mrs. KIM. Thank you.

I now recognize Representative Amo for your 5 minutes of questioning.

Mr. AMO. Thank you very much, Chairwoman, and it's a pleasure to be on this subcommittee and I look forward to your leadership and that of the ranking member over this Congress.

I know that every member of our subcommittee wants to advance American interests and counter China's influence in East Asia and the Pacific and every member should want to strengthen our supply chains, boost economic cooperation, and protect our national security.

And I believe that every member understands the only way to achieve this is by building alliances and partnerships. As we look at the last 4 years I believe that President Biden understood these points.

It's why he led a historic effort to establish one of the most significant security agreements in generations. Australia, United Kingdom, United States security pact, as everyone knows, is AUKUS and it's important to just break it down and share that, you know, AUKUS improves that monitoring and increases deterrence in the Indo-Pacific.

It allows the United States to continue our leadership in emerging defense technology. Pillar one created a pathway for Australia to acquire nuclear submarines. Pillar two created deeper cooperation between all of the three allies for advanced defense capabilities.

Now, many businesses in my home State of Rhode Island are working on technology included in AUKUS like the Virginia-class submarine, or they're developing technology for pillar two like the next generation of underwater drones.

And so this agreement promotes national security and boosts local economies with good-paying jobs. It strengthens our relationships around the world.

Mr. Fontaine, could you share why it's so essential that we continue the work of AUKUS and how can we work to strengthen cooperation as we move further into pillar two?

Mr. FONTAINE. Sure. Thank you, Congressman.

Well, pillar one, I think the case for that is probably straightforward, but to increase over some years but, nevertheless, to increase the number of allied nuclear-propelled submarines in the key military theater. This is a good thing, especially given China's increase in capabilities across the board.

So we want that and, of course, the Australian participation in pillar one of AUKUS is a significant injection of several billion dollars into the submarine industrial base in the United States at a moment when we're behind on sub production, and so that's a good outcome as well.

On pillar two, you know, in a way a lot of the hard work has already been done. The Congress, you know, went through the exercise of ITAR reform, which is always, you know, throwing sand in the gears of some of these ability of countries' ability, including some of our closest intelligence and military partners, to cooperate with us in technology.

So that part has been done. We have taken our lumps from the French for having, you know, participated in the sub contract. So a lot of the hard work has been done.

On pillar two I think that the key is to have some quick, visible wins because this is a proof of concept, right? This is not only something that could work for the U.S.—the United States—the U.S., U.K. and Australia., but if this goes well, and we can show that things are possible with pillar two that otherwise wouldn't be then Japan, South Korea, India, other countries can plug in on particular projects in a similar sort of fashion.

But we haven't seen the quick wins yet and there's are a bunch of potential projects. I mean, the Australians have some unique capabilities on quantum PNT—position, navigation, and timing—you mentioned unmanned undersea capabilities—in a matter of, you know, months—12 months, 18 months, 24 months on the back end, not years.

To show some quick wins on pillar two would give some serious momentum to AUKUS and I think demonstrate its utility to everybody.

Mr. AMO. And I greatly appreciate your point of emphasis on growing partnerships and I'm hopeful that, you know, after the past 36 days of the Trump administration that the administration will demonstrate that they value these partnerships, that they understand the value therein because, you know, we have seen questioning our transatlantic alliances, we have seen foreign aid freezes, and we want to, you know, lower the temperature and ensure that our friends around the world aren't going to question our commitment to our values, and jeopardizing those would be a problem to proceeding as we should in AUKUS.

And so, you know, it is my hope that we don't have an absence of American leadership because if that is the case China will take advantage to fill that vacuum, reaching out to our allies and partners, being more of a threat in the Indo-Pacific and doing the work to really combat our values, our sense of our leadership in the world, and that's a message that I think we can all agree on.

With that, I yield.

Mrs. KIM. Thank you very much.

Let me recognize Representative Radewagen for your 5 minutes of questioning.

Mrs. RADEWAGEN.

[Foreign language spoken.]

Good afternoon. Thank you, Chairwoman Kim and Ranking Member Bera, for holding this hearing and thank you to the panel for testifying today.

As you may be able to tell how I'm dressed I am a Pacific Islander and represent the beautiful territory of American Samoa, the only United States soil south of the Equator.

So this hearing is especially important to me as we are discussing my home, the Pacific. I want to highlight some recent developments in the Pacific Islands.

Within the past 3 weeks both independent Samoa and the Cook Islands have signed major agreements with China. Unfortunately, I don't have a map here but independent Samoa is my neighbor 60 miles to the west.

Cook Islands are my neighbor to the east, along with Kiribati. My home district is now surrounded on three sides by countries that have signed major economic and security deals with China.

And since this hearing is on opportunities for the new administration what are actions that President Trump and Secretary Rubio can do to counteract China in the Pacific Islands?

And I'd like all three of you to answer, please.

Mr. FONTAINE. Well, we talked earlier about, you know, potential trade opportunities and things like that, and there's also the aid aspect of this.

As we were discussing before, the amounts of aid are relatively small that go into these countries when you look in at the grand scheme of the amount of foreign aid that the United States has provided to countries all over the world, but it makes a big difference there and we, frankly, are in a competition with China for influence.

I think what we don't want to see is exactly what you described where we have sovereign U.S. soil surrounded on three sides by countries that wish to be closer to China economically and certainly security wise.

So to use the various tools in our tool kit on aid, on trade, on diplomatic engagement, on, you know, security support and things like that, those are the things that can make a difference.

But, again, it has to be sustained. We have to demonstrate that this is not just an kind of epiphenomenon where we are suddenly interested in the Pacific Islands and we develop some initiatives and then they start to fade in a couple of years. We have to sustain these efforts over a long period of time.

Mr. COOPER. Congresswoman, I would just add briefly I think it's absolutely critical that the United States explain not just to policy-makers but also to the American people why this is in the American interest and, you know, those of us in the think tank community probably have our work cut out on that issue.

But I think it's actually pretty clear. If you're President Trump and you're looking for areas where a little bit of money goes a long way what better place than the Pacific? Relatively small populations that are desperate for greater engagement from the United States.

Sometimes they're not even looking for a lot of money, right? Sometimes it may just be a little bit of diplomatic engagement, right—opening embassies in some places that's relatively cheap. And the strategic logic is extremely clear and anyone that's read their history knows why that's the case.

So I think the challenge we're going to have is that some of these ongoing programs I think are probably paused at the moment and so we're going to have to explain both, you know, to the American people but also to some people within the government why these are so critical and why spending a little bit of money now in these areas is absolutely important in the long term.

Mr. SINGLETON. I would agree with everything that's been said and just add on that beyond the deal with the Cook Islands we also saw live fire drills around Australia this week. Quite alarming, demonstrating, I think, a capability and an intent from the Chinese to project much farther from their shores.

I think as it relates specifically to Pacific Island countries there are several opportunities. One is seabed mineral mining, which is an area that's ripe for, I think, opportunity for the United States.

I think fishery management, maritime transport, and security are other areas that closely align with this administration and the previous administration—even educational exchange, climate change assistance and support. These are all, I think, basic programs that I think to the points raised are relatively inexpensive but go a long way to deepen people to people ties.

Mrs. RADEWAGEN. Thank you, Madam Chairwoman. I yield back the balance of my time.

Mrs. KIM. Thank you.

I recognize Representative Castro for your 5 minutes of questioning.

Mr. CASTRO. Thank you, Chairwoman.

Mr. Fontaine, in your testimony you note that in 2022 Nepal accepted a \$500 million grant through the Millennium Challenge Corporation to expand its electricity grid and improve road infrastructure.

China and their supporters in Nepal fought hard to try to prevent this. They argued that Nepal was making a mistake in working with the United States and I'm glad that they were unsuccessful in their argument.

The Trump administration has abruptly frozen this assistance with no transparency. Many government officials in Nepal now worry whether they made the right decision in partnering with the United States.

How do you think Nepal's leaders feel about their decision to make the politically difficult decision to ignore China, to bypass China, and to work with the United States?

Mr. FONTAINE. Well, I suppose they're waiting for the outcome of this review and I hope that this gets turned back on because this is the reason I mentioned it in my testimony.

If you look at this \$500 million MCC compact with Nepal, it took the—it took Kathmandu about 5 years to actually come to the point where they agreed to do it for exactly the reasons that you said, because they were being lobbied by the Chinese not to do it, because this is kind of a declaration of strategic intent that they, you know, had to think pretty hard about.

And it's also worth noting that this all took place during the first Trump administration. This is a Trump administration idea to do this with Nepal, and so now that this is frozen the Chinese would love to march in and say, we will replace the Americans here, and also point out American unreliability if we were able to say once this was going and now this is not.

And it's also worth noting that Nepal agreed to kick in \$200 million of its own money toward all of this. So it wasn't just us putting in our own.

Mr. CASTRO. Thank you. And I guess—well, let me ask you, do you have confidence that that aid will be unfrozen? That that deal will be unfrozen? And bear in mind the National Endowment for Democracy their funding has been frozen. IRI is frozen. NDI is frozen.

That represents, along with what USAID represented on the development side, a way that the United States engaged the world and also promoted democracy around the world.

So I would ask the panel, having seen what you have seen of the Trump administration, the United States, for example, just voted with Russia this week to prevent a resolution that essentially would have placed the blame on Russia for the invasion of Ukraine.

From what you've seen so far do you have confidence that these funds will be unfrozen?

Mr. FONTAINE. I don't know what's going to happen with the funds. But I can point out in addition to the Nepal example I gave how I think some of this if not corrected is—amounts to shooting ourselves in the foot.

So if you look at what NDI and IRI has have been doing, they funded, for example, groups in Bangladesh, Burma, Nepal, and Sri Lanka, which have already been approached by the Chinese say-

ing—because the funds have been frozen saying, we will replace the American funds.

Now, these are democracy groups so they don't have much interest in taking money from the Chinese in the first place. But that's not going to be the case for everybody.

And so, again, there's—you know, the Chinese are sort of ready to——

Mr. CASTRO. So it's created an opportunity for China to come in as we——

Mr. FONTAINE. Correct.

Mr. CASTRO [continuing]. pulled back or receded.

Mr. FONTAINE. Or, you know, IRI, for example, provides cyber tools for circumvention technologies and other things that allow dissidents and democracy activists in places like China to be able to communicate with each other away from the watchful eye of the State.

Well, that's frozen now, and so I think those are the kinds of things that we would want to have in our arsenal as we compete with China.

Mr. CASTRO. Gentlemen, you will have—and I would just also note real quick that I think what's especially troubling is while these funds are frozen, these deals are frozen, it's not as if there's been some other plan that's been laid out to describe, you know, what else is going to go on in lieu of these things, right?

Like, you know, then you could have some debate about whether that's better. Here, everything is just frozen.

Mr. COOPER. Well, I think it was, you know, Secretary Mattis that said that if we don't end up spending a little bit of development assistance in places then we end up having to use bullets, and that certainly, I think, would be the concern.

I'll just say very briefly that I think at the end of the day the Trump administration—I understand the logic of why they want to cut down on government spending, right? But I think the point that's critical is we have got to do an assessment of each of these projects to see whether it's worthwhile.

And so doing anything across the board doesn't make sense, especially when we can't turn them back on after that, and so I worry a huge amount about the damage that that could do over the long term.

Mr. SINGLETON. I would add, I mean, China routinely criticized IRI, NDI, and NED projects, and I think they claimed that they were—we were smearing Beijing. I think that is reason enough to keep a lot of them.

But I think a wholesale review is important. That should be done expeditiously and I think to the extent possible a lot of these projects should be reinstated.

Mr. CASTRO. Thank you. I yield back, Chair.

Mrs. KIM. Thank you.

I now recognize Representative Biggs for your 5 minutes of questioning.

Mrs. BIGGS. Thank you, Madam Chairwoman, and I appreciate our witnesses today for your testimonies this afternoon.

As the engine of the global economy, East Asia and Pacific—and I'll just say EAP here on out—the Pacific's stability is fundamentally linked to our prosperity and security.

Maritime domain awareness is therefore paramount within this vast space, demanding a comprehensive approach that recognizes the interconnectedness of security and economic environment.

So serving on both the subcommittee and the Homeland Security, Transportation and Maritime Security Subcommittee grants me a unique dual perspective. From my vantage point the United States Coast Guard's leadership in enhancing the region's maritime domain awareness is undeniable.

We see the Coast Guard standing shoulder to shoulder with nations across the EAP region, from Palau in the Pacific Islands to Japan in northeast Asia.

In Palau this partnership focuses on countering illicit maritime activities like illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing which safeguard our vital resources.

Further north the Coast Guard conducts engagement with Japanese counterparts by collaborating on regular western Pacific exercises and active intelligence sharing that strengthens interoperability and ultimately contributes to a more transparent and secure maritime environment.

Across the EAP the Coast Guard embodies this proactive approach, not simply reacting to crises but actively fostering maritime safety and security by assisting nations in incident response, providing essential support, and building critical maritime domain awareness.

This vital work takes on even greater significance as maritime domain awareness becomes a central pillar of the Quad initiative, which recognizes that a stable and secure maritime domain is foundational for regional peace and prosperity.

This brings me to my first question, and I would like to ask each of you to please respond briefly. What specific role can an increased Coast Guard presence play within the Quad framework to address the complex and evolving regional security challenges that we face today?

Mr. SINGLETON. I'll go first.

I mean, I think countering Chinese illegal fishing is one area where the Coast Guard has an important role to play as a force multiplier but, frankly, is an untapped resource and it's not limited to the EAP region.

There are news reports this week of Chinese illegal fishing fleets operating off the coast of Argentina where the Argentine military actually had to intervene.

I think these are areas where the Coast Guard has tremendous experience and expertise and technology and where we can really have value add.

Mrs. BIGGS. Thank you.

Mr. FONTAINE. I would just add, ma'am, the—it's so critical in many of these countries that—you know, they don't have the ability to easily cooperate with our Navy.

Our naval ships tend to be much larger and much more capable than their navies are and much of the time their navies are doing

missions that are much more similar to our Coast Guard with vessels that are closer in size to Coast Guard vessels.

And so often they actually, I think, prefer to be able to work with our Coast Guard than sometimes the Navy, which is a little bit more challenging for them to deal with in on a symmetrical basis.

So I think there's tremendous interest across the region, really, not just in the Pacific but the whole region in having a much greater U.S. Coast Guard presence.

Mrs. BIGGS. Thank you.

Mr. FONTAINE. I guess just violently agreeing with my colleagues. I mean, the—I think the appetite for greater maritime domain awareness by the countries in the region is almost unlimited.

I mean, they don't have the capabilities often to understand the environment themselves, and by plugging into activities and information gathering activities that the United States does, especially through the Coast Guard, that's a major service that the United States can provide and ultimately is good for us because it's not just about, you know, fending off China.

It's about illegal fishing but it's also piracy and humanitarian response and natural disasters and things like that. If there's an area to do more there's been some activities through the Quad and things but, you know, the—more the southern reaches of the Indian Ocean are particularly not well defined in terms of maritime domain awareness.

And so those would be—that would be an obvious region in order to—an obvious region to look for if we wanted to do more.

Mrs. BIGGS. Thank you. My time is up.

Mrs. KIM. Thank you.

I recognize Representative Olszewski for your 5 minutes of questioning.

Mr. OLSZEWSKI. Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

I'll just echo the sentiments of my colleagues earlier about how grateful I am to be serving on the Subcommittee on East Asia and the Pacific.

It is rewarding and gratifying to see the level of bipartisanship already being displayed both on this side of the dais but also some of the unanimity from our witnesses today. So thank you all for taking the time to be with us.

I look forward to working with you, Chairwoman Kim, Ranking Member Bera. Thank you for leading the way in that work as well.

I just want to dive in a little bit. I think the stage has sort of been set earlier. I loved, Mr. Cooper, your comment about what better place than the Pacifics to sort of make these small investments for big return—small amounts of diplomacy for big return.

I really appreciate you all sharing the concern about damage over the long term. I appreciate your candor and the uncertainty as to if or when or which pieces of aid might be restored but they're all so critical.

I guess just taking a slightly different look at it is can you one or several of you speak briefly to the fact of now that aid has been stopped are we seeing and to what degree are we seeing China step in? Do you have any specific examples or data that you can share in terms of what we're seeing now that that aid has dried up?

Mr. FONTAINE. Well, I gave a couple before but on Nepal, certainly, the potential demise of the MCC compact with—the \$500 million compact with Nepal gives China an opportunity., which it has been attempting to make political and economic inroads in Nepal for a long time., and then, you know, the other specific examples whereon, you know, include the freeze in the availability of cyber tools that are provided through IRI in particular to dissidents in places, including inside China and be able enable them to communicate safely and securely. Those are frozen now.

That would, obviously, give the government of China an opportunity. and at least my understanding is that partners of both IRI and NDI in Burma, Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka have been already approached by China to say if the Americans won't fund you we will.

So those are a few specific examples.

Mr. COOPER. Can I just add a broad point to build on Richard's, which is if you look at polling data across Southeast Asia the data has not been great for the United States over the last 5 years. It showed a decreasing confidence in continued American engagement and, unfortunately, that's true from both of the last two administrations.

Now, I think if you overlap that with, you know, what you were just talking about, Congressman, that it's just going to accelerate these questions about whether the United States is really a reliable partner and, unfortunately, that's happening at a time that China is already making even more inroads and building more influence in parts of Southeast Asia and the Pacific and South Asia and elsewhere.

So I worry that this is reinforcing trends that were already occurring in the region, and so if we're going to reverse those trends not only do we have to turn the money back on in most cases, we're also going to have to think of new ideas and new proposals to add to that.

So I think it's not just a question of stopping the damage. We also have to reverse the momentum and put some ideas on the table ourselves.

Mr. SINGLETON. I would agree wholeheartedly. I mean, we have seen indications in places like Cambodia as well, Myanmar, about deactivation of these programs particularly in the civil society and reporting space—journalist space.

I think one thing we have all realized is that a lot of Chinese coercion is quite corrosive on civil society and it's very important that we fund free academic journalist exchanges on the ground so they can report the situation fairly and accurately and we're not ceding the information space to the Chinese.

Mr. OLSZEWSKI. So just fair to say the longer this goes on the harder it's going to be not only to get back to where we were but to also—fair to say? Yes.

I'll just reaffirm to my colleagues here and to others I think many of us are committed to rooting out waste and abuses that are legitimate.

So to the extent we continue this conversation I very much want to be a part of stopping aid that does not advance American interests while not having the damage done that we're seeing today.

So thank you all very much. With that, Madam Chair, I yield.
Mrs. KIM. Thank you.

We do have some time so I would like to take the opportunity to go for a second round of questioning and the first question I would like to address is the CCP and its IP theft that we're all concerned about.

According to FBI, the CCP steals up to \$600 billion worth of U.S. intellectual property every year. So we need to use every tool available to stop this obvious theft and hold the CCP accountable.

So I would like to first ask Mr. Singleton maybe start and then you can all chime in. How can the U.S. leverage existing partnerships that we have in the Indo-Pacific with our allies and partners so that we can create a unified or united front against the CCP's IP theft?

Mr. SINGLETON. No, absolutely. So much of the IP theft that we discuss is occurring in the commercial space but I also focus on the academic space as well.

Congress recently reintroduced the DETERRENT Act, which aims to crack down on Chinese attempts to secure intellectual property from our college campuses, much of which is funded by Congress.

I think these are basic common sense measures that will force universities to reckon with the fact that they're going to have to diligently report their entanglements with Chinese universities and Chinese companies, particularly those tied to Chinese civil-military fusion.

I think that's probably one key area where partners and allies are on board with rigorous academic partnership screening. It's an area where other countries, including Canada, are actually ahead of us.

I think we have a lot to learn. But this is an area where I think you're going to see broad agreement and recognition that we have to close those loopholes beyond the corporate IP theft that we see every day.

Mrs. KIM. Thank you.

Mr. COOPER. Just to add to that, I a number of years ago had the chance to do a report with the Foundation for Defense of Democracies on this very specific issue and one thing that we pointed out in that report is there are a number of products in which the U.S. Government has charged Chinese agents with stealing American technology and the businesses that were engaged in that stolen technology are still selling the products back into the United States—solar cells, for example—at massive scale, and they drove the American producers out of business in so doing.

I don't understand how we can't just turn the spigot off of the ones where—we actually indicted people in China working for the government who are stealing this technology and we're still letting them drive our companies out of business years later.

So I think there are areas like that where we just absolutely have to take action and until we do I don't think that Beijing is going to take us seriously on this issue.

Mrs. KIM. Please chime in, Mr. Fontaine.

Mr. FONTAINE. Well, the—China's theft of intellectual property from the United States and other countries as well has described

by some as, you know, one of the greatest wealth transfers in history and I think probably rightly so., and wWhen you look at it, it truly is outrageous, both in terms of scale and just the substance of what the Chinese have been doing over time with this expensive time—you know, the amount of time that it takes to develop technology and intellectual property that haven't been stolen and then exploited for economic reasons, including sometimes in our own markets.

The only thing that I would add in terms of potential remedies is to the degree to which the intellectual property is stolen or is resident in cyberspace and through cyberspace I think there's a role for offensive cyber activities in all of this.

I mean, tThis is something—somewhat controversial inside the government and policymaking circles. You have to be careful about these things.

But we do have a lot of insights into who some of these actors are, how they operate, and the cyber tools that they use in order to conduct this theft and we have a lot of our own that we should be using just to protect ourselves and to exact a price on those who have engaged in these transgressions.

Mrs. KIM. Thank you. I would like to talk about one other issue, which is North Korea policy. We need to make some adjustments, you know, and the U.S. needs to make some policy changes toward North Korea, considering the evolving nuclear ambitions and continued weapons development, and I would like to see how you can—you know, talk to us about the U.S. taking leverage, existing mini lateral frameworks to strengthen the extended deterrence and enhance our regional security.

Do you want to go, Mr. Cooper?

Mr. COOPER. Sure. I think this is an incredibly important issue and, you know, unfortunately, I think our approach in recent years is probably best termed strategic patience 2.0.

We have just sort of waited and put our attention into other things and the reality is is that the problem has gotten worse and so bad, in fact, that I think the risk is that now our allies in South Korea are actually fairly serious about developing their own independent nuclear capabilities because they worry about the pathway that North Korea is on.

So I don't know whether Donald Trump can engage with Kim Jong—un directly and address some of these issues but I think we absolutely have to think about a renewed campaign to shift the direction because otherwise we're going to end up with an even larger North Korean arsenal, even more missiles, and without a strategy to deal with it.

Mrs. KIM. Thank you.

Ranking Member?

Mr. BERA. Sure. I'll just make a few closing comments.

And I should have said this off the top. Yes, I appreciate the bipartisan nature of this but to, you know, our Foreign Service officers, folks that are working overseas, you know, I visit with them. They're often working in tough places, in refugee camps, et cetera.

These are patriotic Americans and I feel for what they're going through right now, the uncertainty, having just traveled abroad,

having had side conversations with folks. These are not folks that see the world as Democrats or Republicans.

They see themselves as patriotic Americans, and I do want to publicly say thank you for your service and thank you for what you're doing, and hang in there.

You know, again, we don't want to lose that talent, especially some of the younger folks but also the folks that have made a 30-, 35-year career out of this. These are patriotic Americans.

I'm glad to hear in a bipartisan way, you know, the importance of some of these programs and some of these programs started in the first Trump administration.

So we had Congressman Yoho, our former colleague, here 2 weeks ago and just kind of watched him work the BUILD Act with Senator Coons and others.

The Trump administration should be proud about that. They should not take that apart. As we come up on reauthorizing the DFC these are tools that I'd actually like to see us expand. They're tools that are good for America. They're good for American businesses. They're good for our influence.

You know, in February 2020 right before the pandemic shut things down I led a CODEL to Sri Lanka and Nepal, largely, because both of them had MCC compacts that were sitting on the table that we absolutely saw Chinese misinformation. Like, these are grants. These are not Belt and Road type of debt diplomacy. These were direct grants.

Now, the Rajapaksa administration ultimately turned that down and, you know, we did see the debt trap that Sri Lanka ended up in and what it did to its economy. It did take a lot of work to get Nepal and Kathmandu to agree it was a good deal. It is still a good deal for them.

To the Nepalese, hang in there. You know, we will do everything we can to get those dollars flowing. Do not take that—you know, again, look eyes wide open with how the Chinese do aid and development and use debt traps and, you know, you can look around the world and see the downside and the danger of that.

That said, I do think with this America first initiative we are going to have to rethink a little bit how we do aid development finance and I touched on in my earlier comments how we leverage our resources with our like-minded, like-valued allies that have interest in this region. And, again, you know, I think that is where we, you know, with the European Union, with Japan, Korea, Australia, even India that has an older relationship with Africa and a broad diaspora is there.

We ought to be looking for places where we can work and leverage our resources to go further to develop these economies and go into places like Kenya to develop things.

We also should look at programs. You know, when I've traveled around the Pacific Islands there's a really elegant program called the Pacific Island Tuna Program that the Nature Conservancy with Wal-Mart, using DFC funds and so forth.

Like, these are great programs that, you know, are public-private partnerships and, you know, help build the resilience of fisheries and do development projects in some of these Pacific Islands.

I would urge us as a subcommittee to look at how we can support and broaden some of these programs like Pacific Islands. That's not unique to Wal-Mart, and we have had those conversations.

But, again, it's a really elegant program that is really appreciated in the Marshall Islands and, you know, a place like PNG would be the perfect place for us to go and expand a program like that.

So I look forward to working with the witnesses in your organizations. I think it's an incredibly important time. You know, government efficiency is fine. You know, looking at programs and how we bring these programs to the 21st century is fine.

But as we come out of this initial period of disruption I think it behooves all of us as Democrats, Republicans, academics, and the think tank community to say, OK, what would the right aid and development programs for the 21st century be like?

What would the right strategy be? How do we partner with our allies and others to create that 21st century that we really want to see.

So it'll be different than the past but what does that future geopolitical strategy for the 21st century look like. So thank you again for being here and, again, thank you, Madam Chairwoman.

Mrs. KIM. Thank you, Ranking Member.

As we close, I'd like to, you know, just echo how important the East Asia and the Pacific Region is for the United States and its role in the world stage.

As we reflect on the last 4 years, and I think we have done that very constructively and productively through our engagements and our dialog today, so I want to thank you again for your insights.

Moving forward, I think it is very, very essential that we focus on strengthening our alliances and partnerships throughout the region and collectively we can combat the shared threats from North Korea, China, and these are the threats that we face today and it's not going away anytime soon.

So our engagement must remain steadfast regardless of domestic political changes and we must also ensure that our economic strategy aligns with the needs of our partners. It's not something that is one sided so we need to really, really find ways to work together with our partners and allies.

We must offer alternatives to China's state-driven economic model that too many countries have been forced to accept. So we need to show up. We need to bring alternative solutions to them and we cannot allow the global economy to be dictated by Beijing's standards.

So while we stay resilient and steadfast, again, we need to be mindful of what our allies' and partners' needs are. Washington must use every available tool to advance our economic agenda while punishing the CCP's unfair trade practices.

Finally, we talked about human rights in my opening remarks, and I don't think we went into that in depth today in our conversation but I truly believe human rights needs to remain a top priority in our foreign policy, and the Chinese Communist Party's repression both at home and abroad demands our action, our attention, and we need to be steadfast in that area as well.

So as we look ahead we already recognize there are several significant opportunities for the U.S. to strengthen its influence in the region and to secure a future that reflects our values and our interest.

So I look forward to working closely together with—not only with my colleagues here but with, you know, folks like you who are working on the ground, and you are experts in the field so we want to stay engaged in our conversation and we want to work with you as resource to many of us.

So let's work together to ensure that our policies align with our—with the challenges and opportunities that East Asia and the Pacific region faces.

With that, I want to thank you again for joining us. The committee stands adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 3:51 p.m., the committee was adjourned.]

APPENDIX

MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE HEARING RECORD



Chairman Brian Mast

**COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS
SUBCOMMITTEE HEARING NOTICE
U. S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6128**

**Subcommittee on East Asia and the Pacific
Young Kim (R-CA), Chairwoman**

February 19, 2025

Revised

TO: MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

You are respectfully requested to attend an OPEN hearing of the Committee on Foreign Affairs to be held by the Subcommittee on East Asia and the Pacific at 2:00 p.m. in Room 2172 of the Rayburn House Office Building. The hearing is available by live webcast on the Committee website at <https://foreignaffairs.house.gov/>.

DATE: Tuesday, February 25, 2025

TIME: 2:00 p.m.

LOCATION: 2172 RHOB

SUBJECT: Missed Milestones: Evaluating The Last Four Years in the EAP Region and Unseized Opportunities Under President Trump

WITNESSES: Zack Cooper
Senior Fellow
American Enterprise Institute

Craig Singleton
China Program Senior Director and Senior Fellow
Foundation for Defense of Democracies

* **Mr. Richard Fontaine**
Chief Executive Officer
Center for a New American Security

*NOTE: Witness added/changed.
**NOTE: Witnesses may be added.

By Direction of the Chair

The Committee on Foreign Affairs seeks to make its facilities accessible to persons with disabilities. If you are in need of special accommodations, please call 202 -226-8467 at least four business days in advance of the event, whenever practicable. Questions with regard to special accommodations in general (including availability of Committee materials in alternative formats and assistive listening devices) may be directed to the Committee.

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS
MINUTES OF FULL COMMITTEE HEARING

Day Tuesday Date February 25 Room 2172 Rayburn

Starting Time 1414 Ending Time 1551

Recesses ☐ (___ to ___) (___ to ___) (___ to ___) (___ to ___) (___ to ___) (___ to ___)

Presiding Member(s)
Chairwoman Kim

Check all of the following that apply:

Open Session ☒
Executive (closed) Session ☐
Televised ☒

Electronically Recorded (taped) ☒
Stenographic Record ☒

TITLE OF HEARING:

Missed Milestones: Evaluating The Last Four Years in the EAP Region and Unseized Opportunities Under President Trump

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Attached

NON-COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

None

HEARING WITNESSES: Same as meeting notice attached? Yes ☒ No ☐

(If "no", please list below and include title, agency, department, or organization.)

STATEMENTS FOR THE RECORD: *(List any statements submitted for the record.)*

None

TIME SCHEDULED TO RECONVENE _____

TIME ADJOURNED 1551

Mag Wagner
Full Committee Hearing Coordinator

Meeting on: Missed Milestones: Evaluating The Last Four Years in the EAP Region and Unseized Opportunities Under President Trump

[illegible]