

Hearing of the House Select Committee on the Chinese Communist Party

Opening Statement of Dr. Kurt M. Campbell

Former Deputy Secretary of State

Chairman Moolenaar, Ranking Member Krishnamoorthi, Members of the Committee – it is my distinct honor to appear before you today on an issue top of mind to many of us in this room.

For nearly fifty years, the United States has worked diligently to maintain peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait. The foundation of America’s approach toward Taiwan stems from arguably the most important legislative achievement in foreign policy: the Taiwan Relations Act (TRA). Quintessentially bipartisan and drafted in a manner that placed responsibility equally on the Executive Branch and Legislative Branch, the TRA declared that it would be “the policy of the United States:

- (1) to preserve and promote extensive, close, and friendly commercial, cultural, and other relations between the people of the United States and the people on Taiwan, as well as the people on the China mainland and all other peoples of the Western Pacific area;
- (2) to declare that peace and stability in the area are in the political, security, and economic interests of the United States, and are matters of international concern;
- (3) to make clear that the United States decision to establish diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China rests upon the expectation that the future of Taiwan will be determined by peaceful means;

- (4) to consider any effort to determine the future of Taiwan by other than peaceful means, including by boycotts or embargoes, a threat to the peace and security of the Western Pacific area and of grave concern to the United States;
- (5) to provide Taiwan with arms of a defensive character; and
- (6) to maintain the capacity of the United States to resist any resort to force or other forms of coercion that would jeopardize the security, or the social or economic system, of the people on Taiwan.”

This act of Congress has provided successive administrations – from President Jimmy Carter to President Donald Trump – with a clear framework for supporting Taiwan as a vibrant democracy, a thriving technological innovator, and a key partner in the Indo-Pacific region. Since its enactment in 1979, the TRA has served as a cornerstone of U.S. engagement in Asia and an enabler of Taiwan’s transformation into both a model democracy and a beacon of freedom. This progress is not only a testament to the resilience and determination of the people of Taiwan, but also to the U.S. Congress’s bipartisan commitment to ensuring Taiwan’s security and development.

Taiwan’s global importance has never been more widely recognized – or more consequential. During my tenure as the Coordinator for Indo-Pacific Affairs at the National Security Council and later as Deputy Secretary of State under President Joe Biden, I witnessed an unprecedented level of global support for Taiwan. Across Europe, Asia, and South America, governments consistently affirmed the importance of maintaining peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait. Over the past four years, at least 12 key U.S. allies and partners have issued formal statements – through either bilateral or multilateral channels – explicitly expressing support for that goal.

The growing international recognition is not only a response to the increasingly assertive behavior from the People's Republic of China – it also reflects a deeper, global understanding of Taiwan's strategic value and its role as a defender of democratic values. Situated at the heart of the “first island chain,” Taiwan plays a critical role in regional security as both a buffer against Chinese military expansion and a key anchor for U.S. allies and partners in the Indo-Pacific. But Taiwan's significance reaches well beyond its geography. As the global leader in advanced semiconductor manufacturing, it produces over 60% of the world's semiconductors and around 90% of the most advanced chips. Taiwan has also earned global trust as a partner in public health, a provider of humanitarian aid, and a pioneer in digital innovation. In all of those roles, Taiwan stands as a frontline defender of the democratic values that underpin a free and open international order – one that has been shaped and sustained by U.S. leadership for decades.

This shared recognition of Taiwan's global importance is also shaping how Indo-Pacific countries view the war in Ukraine. Many countries – including key Indo-Pacific allies such as Japan and South Korea – have rallied behind Ukraine, recognizing that the conflict's implications extend far beyond Europe. Japan has emerged as a significant non-Western contributor, committing billions of dollars in humanitarian aid, non-lethal military support, and reconstruction assistance. Similarly, South Korea has provided hundreds of millions of dollars in humanitarian aid, non-lethal military equipment, power generation support, and long-term rebuilding efforts. For our allies and partners in the Indo-Pacific, the war in Ukraine underscores the importance of upholding the norm of territorial integrity – one that, if eroded, could embolden China to escalate coercion against Taiwan. That is why continued U.S. support for Ukraine is seen not only as vital to European security, but also as a critical demonstration of American resolve in deterring authoritarian aggression in the Indo-Pacific region.

In this context, the need for sustained U.S. leadership in support of Taiwan has never been more apparent. Much of the credit for America's strong and enduring support for Taiwan belongs to the U.S. Congress, which has consistently demonstrated bipartisan resolve through legislation and sustained engagement. But now is not the time to rest on our laurels. In just the first half of 2025, the People's Republic of China has carried out a series of provocative actions that have escalated tensions across the Taiwan Strait – testing both Taiwan's resilience and America's resolve to stand with Taipei in times of uncertainty. Therefore, the path forward is clear: the United States must work alongside allies and partners to accelerate investments in defense capabilities that project strength across the Pacific and serve as a credible deterrent against further Chinese aggression. At the same time, Washington should deepen its unofficial defense partnership with Taipei by expediting arms deliveries and supporting Taiwan's efforts to strengthen both its conventional and asymmetric capabilities. As Taiwan increases its defense spending to three percent of GDP over the next several years, the United States should pursue a comprehensive strategy that provides Taiwan with the full range of interoperable capabilities. This includes anti-ship missiles, unmanned surface and undersea vehicles, and sea mines intended to deny a cross-Strait invasion, as well as platforms that can monitor and counter China's increasing coercion and gray-zone activities, including airborne early warning and command and control aircraft and anti-submarine warfare helicopters.

As we look ahead, sustaining Taiwan's democratic success and global leadership will require a renewed, coordinated effort across all levels of the U.S. government. Taiwan's future is deeply intertwined with America's own – our economies, technologies, and societies are inextricably linked – making a strong and secure Taiwan a vital U.S. strategic interest. Meeting this moment requires a whole-of-government approach. Congress, the Executive Branch, and

civil society must all play an active role in deepening engagement with their Taiwan counterparts. This includes deepening our defense and economic partnerships with the Taiwan government, supporting Taiwan's meaningful participation in international organizations, and expanding educational, cultural, and scientific exchanges. Through these efforts, we can help ensure Taiwan remains secure, prosperous, and integrated into the international community, anchored by the enduring support of the United States and in turn, reinforcing a regional environment that advances U.S. strategic interests. I look forward to discussing how Congress can continue to strengthen and sustain Taiwan's long-term security, prosperity, and role on the global stage.