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Opening Remarks

Stand with Taiwan: Countering the PRC's Political Warfare and Transnational Repression

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Excerpt of Remarks

Good morning, and congratulations, Senator Sullivan, on assuming the chair and gavel of the Congressional-Executive Commission on China. I look forward to working closely with you on so many critical topics, including on the topic of today's hearing, countering the Chinese Communist Party's Political Warfare and Transnational Repression directed at democratic Taiwan.

In 1999, two People's Liberation Army colonels, Colonel Qiao and Wang, published a book entitled *Unrestricted Warfare*. It is a fascinating book, and one which sees everything short of kinetic as a battlefield.

How is it that we have so many fentanyl overdoses in the United States? Read *Unrestricted Warfare* and understand.

What is lawfare, and how is open access to our court system weaponized against us? Read *Unrestricted Warfare* and understand.

Simply put, it is a primer on what we may term political warfare, aimed squarely at the United States.

But standing in the way, is the *de facto* island nation of Taiwan, the *de jure* Republic of China.

I think we sometimes fail to appreciate how much vitriolic attention that Taiwan, as a frontline state, absorbs from mainland China that otherwise would be directed at the United States. As the vital center of the first island chain, Taiwan is a buffer and our first line of defense against the People's Republic of China, which is bent upon seeking hegemony and dominating the entire world, supplanting the United States as the world's preeminent power.

In many ways, Taiwan is similar to Israel, another frontline state, which absorbs much of the concentrated attention—from terror bombs to propaganda—that otherwise would be directed at the United States by jihadist groups and state sponsors of terrorism such as Iran.

In this regard, both Taiwan and Israel are too often overlooked or taken for granted by too many in the United States. We should keep in mind throughout today's hearing that Taiwan's security is America's security, and the political warfare and transnational repression campaigns that are waged against Taiwan in an amplified manner are also being waged here in a less evident way, though it is often very evident among Chinese diaspora communities in the United States who are targeted by the Chinese Communist Party.

It is because of this need to protect American citizens and those that are here lawfully who are targeted by CCP transnational repression—in particular those of ethnic Chinese, Tibetan or Uyghur descent—that Senate Ranking member Merkley and I, joined by Ranking Member McGovern on the House side, introduced the Transnational Repression

Policy Act last Congress, and why we will be reintroducing it again soon, joined by Chair Sullivan.

But, again, it is the example of Taiwan that is instructive. We saw Taiwan's Vice President Bi-khim Hsiao—a friend to many of us here in Washington from her time as ambassador—being targeted during a trip she made to the Czech Republic in March 2024 for a quote “demonstrative kinetic action,” according to a Czech military intelligence spokesman, said to be a staged vehicle accident planned while she was in her car.

We have seen similar methods deployed, here, in the United States, against famed Democracy Wall dissident Wei Jingsheng. Wei was in his car driving home when two cars attempted to force him off the road.

There is also much we can learn from how Taiwan counters CCP political warfare. The CCP bombards Taiwan with propaganda and false narratives, seeking to manipulate the information space, including through the use of “deep fake” video clips created using artificial intelligence.

Rather than silencing “influencers” and others who parrot pro-Beijing messages under the guise of combatting “disinformation,” groups such as Taiwan FactCheck Center provide context to rebut to such messages. Chat group users of the messaging app Line, which is prevalent in Taiwan, are able to flag statements that appear problematic, and Taiwan FactCheck Center will provide context so as to allow the user to become a more informed consumer of information.

The Taiwanese experience, whereby democracy rose out from an authoritarian and martial law past, has a lot to teach us regarding the importance of freedom and free speech. The key to combating wrong speech is not censorship, but more speech. These are lessons we can learn and take to heart from Asia's most vibrant democracy.

Finally, I would like to note that Taiwan has a story to tell, not only to its own people or to the West, but also to the people of China, bypassing the Chinese Communist Party, and overcoming the Great Firewall the CCP has built.

Taiwan's President William Lai Ching-te has recently been giving speeches on Ten Topics, ranging from discussion of sovereignty to democracy to constitutionalism and the rule of law. Of course his principle audience is the people of

Taiwan. But judging from the way the CCP mouthpiece the Global Times has been responding, his message is also penetrating the ears of people in China, who live under Communist oppression.

The Chinese Communist Party, in the wake of the Tiananmen Massacre, made a bargain with the Chinese people: you acknowledge our total political control, and we will make you economically prosperous.

For much of the so-called Reform Era, China did grow economically, despite political repression. Under Xi Jinping, however, due to his ridiculous economic policies, not only did he double down on repression, but he also destroyed the Chinese economy. Thus the Chinese people have neither prosperity nor freedom.

The message of Taiwan to China is, you can have both prosperity and freedom. So long as Xi Jinping and the Chinese Communist Party remains in power, however, the Chinese people will enjoy neither, and the people of Taiwan will always be under threat.

I hope for a free Taiwan, forever independent of communist control. I also hope for a free China, independent of communist control.

Thank you.