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

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Today's hearing comes at a pivotal moment. For 75 years, the People's Republic of China has vowed to bring Taiwan under its control. We have our own Taiwan Relations Act. We have our “One China” policy. However, in recent years, that pressure—not just, by the way, with regard to Taiwanese, but other people, including American citizens—has intensified and globalized with Beijing not only targeting Taiwan across the strait, it’s projecting intimidation across borders, institutions, using political transnational repression as tools of coercion among people across the globe.

The title of this hearing rhymes with major legislation of mine, the STAND with Taiwan Act. That bill, which I've introduced in the last two Congresses and will soon be introducing again, has great bipartisan support. Senators Graham, Duckworth and Coons are the top co-sponsors. I would encourage, strong bipartisan support with my colleagues here. What that would do is, if there is a military invasion of Taiwan by the Communist Party and the PLA of China, this would trigger punishing comprehensive sanctions on the Chinese economy and particularly leaders of the Chinese Communist Party—punishing economic, trade, financial, energy. We all want deterrence in the Taiwan Strait. I think the threat of these massive sanctions might be critical in terms of deterring a cross-Strait invasion of Taiwan by the PLA.

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We also need to deal with the here and now of Chinese coercion abroad. Again, this hearing is going to focus on the coercion of Taiwanese citizens. But I want to make sure, and I certainly will be asking questions in my Q and A with the witnesses of repression of others—people from Hong Kong, American citizens, which is really unacceptable when that happens by the Chinese Communist Party. They're good at coercing their own citizens, but they're not going to, with this Congress, be allowed to coerce Americans or those who are our allies.

These threats are multifaceted—AI-generated disinformation; the extraterritorial application of PRC laws; of course, diplomatic pressure on Taiwan's allies; the public intimidation of democratically elected leaders. By the way, that's something the Chinese Communist Party would never do. They never stand for election themselves. They fear their own people because they know they probably wouldn't get elected if they had to stand for elections. So that makes them nervous when there are people who actually stand for elections like we do and go before the people.

The PRC is also attempting to rewrite international norms, distorting UN General Assembly Resolution 2758, and pressuring countries to embrace Beijing's view that all necessary measures it might use to achieve unification with regard to Taiwan. Most disturbingly, the PRC has labeled Taiwan's vice president, who I know well and is a good friend of mine, and other officials as “obstinate Taiwan independence diehards,” threatening them with life imprisonment or worse. It has declared any Taiwanese citizen, including those living abroad, can be punished under PRC law. In a closed-door meeting earlier this year, senior CCP official Wang Huning reportedly called for a global expansion of these intimidation tactics. According to credible reporting, Wang instructed embassies and security services—hopefully they're not doing it here in America, but they probably are—to implement “proactive intimidation against so-called radical Taiwanese independence advocates worldwide, including in the United States of America.

These are not abstract threats last year, Czech intelligence uncovered a planned “kinetic operation” by the PRC to intimidate then Vice President-elect Bi-khim on her visit there. Again, she's a friend of mine—a great person. The PRC is also harassing international media outlets for interviewing Taiwanese leaders. Individuals around the world who criticize Beijing's Taiwan policy have been doxed and placed under surveillance. This is transnational repression. It is a coordinated strategy to isolate Taiwan, dominate the global narrative through fear and coercion, and again, not only against Taiwanese citizens, but other citizens, including our own citizens.

Every day, the CCP grows bolder and more aggressive in its threats against Taiwan, the United States and our allies in the Indo-Pacific. We need to call that out, have open hearings like this, and push back against this transnational repression.

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