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“Properly Resourcing the Indo-Pacific
in an Era of Great Power Competition”
House Foreign Affairs Committee, Subcommittee on Indo-Pacific
Written Testimony
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Chairwoman Kim, Ranking Member Bera, and Members of the Subcommittee – thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to testify regarding the President’s Fiscal Year 2025 budget request for East Asia and the Pacific (EAP).

The Indo-Pacific is the focal point for many of our most pressing geopolitical and economic priorities. With over half the world’s population and two-thirds of the world’s economy, the region is the center of global economic growth in the 21st century. As our National Security Strategy states, it is in our vital national interest that we ensure that developments in the region are consistent with our interests and values. With billions of dollars in investment and millions of American jobs supported by the region, the security and prosperity of everyday Americans relies on an Indo-Pacific that is free and open, connected, prosperous, secure, and resilient.

Since the release of the Administration’s Indo-Pacific Strategy over two years ago, the United States has taken historic strides to advance our shared, affirmative vision for this vitally important region. Our accomplishments under the Indo-Pacific Strategy reflect not only U.S. leadership, but also an unprecedented level of cooperation with allies, partners, and friends across the region to tackle global challenges and protect our shared vision for the world. Our work together to build collective capacity remains the bedrock of our approach to the region.

To advance this vision, we are working with allies and partners whose shared commitment to democracy, human rights, and governance acts as a beacon of strength in the Indo-Pacific. For example, the United States has

long supported the people of Burma, and we will continue to support all those working peacefully to restore Burma's path to democracy. We stand in solidarity with their resolve to bring stability, unity, prosperity, and democracy to their country. We also continue to work with the international community to raise awareness of DPRK human rights issues, document violations and abuses, and increase the flow of independent information into the DPRK.

Key efforts led by the Department of State, in collaboration with our partners and allies, have advanced each of the five objectives of the Indo-Pacific Strategy. We successfully renegotiated the Compacts of Free Association which Congress thankfully passed into law back in March. We upgraded our partnership with ASEAN to a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership and held two summits at the White House with Pacific Island leaders. We have supported our Philippine allies in upholding international law in the South China Sea. We have expanded our physical presence in the Indo-Pacific by opening Embassies in the Solomon Islands, Tonga, and Maldives, and we will open an embassy in Vanuatu imminently. Together with our G7 partners, we launched the Partnership for Global Infrastructure Investment (PGI) in 2022 and established the PGI-Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (PGI-IPEF) Investment Accelerator to support high-standard infrastructure investment in the region, including in the Luzon Corridor in the Philippines. We have signed defense cooperation agreements with Indonesia and Papua New Guinea and established a mechanism for real-time information sharing on DPRK missile threats with Japan and the Republic of Korea (ROK). With our Quad partners, we financed, manufactured, and distributed almost 400 million COVID-19 vaccine doses in the region, and launched a Quad Health Security Partnership in 2023.

While this focus on the Indo-Pacific is driven by how vital the region is to our own security and prosperity, we also acknowledge the growing challenge posed by the People's Republic of China (PRC). The PRC is the only state with the intent to reshape the international order and increasingly the economic, diplomatic, military, informational and technological means to do so.

Building on our efforts to advance the Indo-Pacific Strategy, the President's FY 2025 budget request includes \$4 billion in discretionary funding, of which \$1.9 billion will support the EAP region – which includes \$511 million for diplomatic engagement and a foreign assistance budget of \$1.4 billion. The President's budget request also \$2 billion in mandatory funding to support game-changing investments in the Indo-Pacific to counter the PRC and \$2 billion in mandatory funding to create a new International Infrastructure Fund, which will include projects in the East Asia and Pacific region.

This is a substantial increase in funding designed to deliver on our shared priorities in the region. Diplomatic engagement resources will expand the United States' footprint in the region, increasing personnel that directly support the implementation of the Indo-Pacific Strategy, particularly at our newly opened or expanded embassies in the Pacific. Foreign Assistance resources will support each of the strategy's objectives and strengthen key regional frameworks such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), the Quad, the Mekong-US Partnership (MUSP), and the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) to position the United States as the region's indispensable partner.

Our request also supports our commitment to maintaining peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait. The United States' One China policy, which has remained consistent over the past 45 years, has been key to the maintenance of peace and stability. A new base FMF request of \$100 million specifically for Taiwan will support our effort to assist Taiwan in maintaining a sufficient self-defense capability, in addition to funding passed in the recent Indo-Pacific Security Supplemental Appropriations Act.

Outcompeting the PRC over the next decade is a strategic imperative, and accomplishing this task will require unprecedented resourcing and innovative new ways to support our allies and partners. As a result, the President's request includes the \$4 billion in mandatory funding that I described above to ensure the United States can offer credible, reliable alternatives to PRC options.

These mandatory resources would particularly focus on hard infrastructure projects that have long been underfunded internationally. With over \$40 trillion in estimated need in low- and middle-income countries, quality infrastructure is a particularly acute problem in the Indo-Pacific. These investments could include critical mineral mining and processing; fiber, mobile, and wireless networks; subsea cables, landing stations, and data centers; and ports, roads, railroads, and water and sanitation infrastructure.

This request would also enable us to better leverage the unique capabilities of the private sector, helping to expand markets and opportunities for U.S. businesses, and coordinate strategic investments with likeminded partners to advance longer-term, deeper cooperation in countries most at risk of coercion and predatory influence.

I also urge Congress to support Educational and Cultural Exchanges in line with the President's FY 2025 request. Competitors are increasingly active in educational and cultural spaces across the Indo-Pacific, and we must continue to seize the opportunity to showcase first-hand what makes the United States value proposition different. It is essential that the United States maintain flagship exchange programs at this critical moment and to avoid losing ground with key audiences in areas we have traditionally held a strategic advantage.

The United States must continue to expand its presence and investment in the Indo-Pacific to achieve our strategic goals. We are continuously receiving requests from our Indo-Pacific partners to do more, and our allies and partners are looking to us to provide credible alternatives to the PRC. The President's FY 2025 budget request will allow us to build on our existing efforts and will further strengthen our commitment to the region.

Thank you for inviting me to testify today. I look forward to answering your questions.