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for the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs
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the Pacific (EAP)
“Implementing an America First Approach in the East Asia and
Pacific Region”
Written Testimony
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Chairwoman Kim, Ranking Member Bera, and Members of the Subcommittee – thank you for the opportunity to testify today on Implementing an America First Approach in the East Asia and Pacific region. The region is of vital strategic importance to the United States, and our commitment to a free and open Indo-Pacific is unwavering.

As Secretary Rubio has emphasized, the United States must carefully balance our global defense priorities, ensuring that we maintain robust alliances and a credible deterrent in both Europe and the Indo-Pacific. While we cannot deploy identical resources to every region, we are steadfast in our support for our Indo-Pacific allies and partners as part of our enduring commitment to the region that is the world’s largest and most dynamic, economically and in many other respects.

Our approach is rooted in strengthening alliances and deepening relations with the Quad and trilateral cooperation, with Japan, the Republic of Korea, and the Philippines, and through other key partnerships, such as AUKUS. We continue to advance economic collaboration, promote regional prosperity, and reinforce security partnerships with countries across the region, including growing cooperation with Fiji, Vietnam, and Papua New Guinea.

The Department of State, in coordination with our interagency partners, is investing in maritime law enforcement and regional security initiatives. These efforts are designed to uphold international law, safeguard freedom of navigation, and support the sovereignty of Indo-Pacific nations.

We are also leveraging our new approach to foreign assistance to help partners build resilient economies, address urgent humanitarian needs, and enhance our shared interests in a range of areas. Our targeted assistance supports infrastructure, commercial cooperation, health, and education, while also fostering good governance and transparency and ensuring that every dollar spent advances American interests.

A key priority is securing critical minerals supply chains. We are working with allies and partners to diversify sources of critical minerals essential to advanced manufacturing, reducing dependence on China, and ensuring the security of our industrial base.

Maintaining U.S. market leadership on AI and the Digital Economy in the fast-growing markets outside of China is another focus. Our Pax Silica initiative is building the coalition necessary to fortify our supply chains, while our Embassies are working with Commerce colleagues to promote AI and related exports. Through APEC and ASEAN, we are mainstreaming American regulatory approaches to minimize redtape and promote innovation.

Additionally, we are encouraging countries and partners to increase investment into the United States, supporting American innovation and job creation. And our new Reciprocal Trade Agreements are promoting fair and open markets in the region, which enable U.S. businesses to compete and thrive, while advancing high standards for labor, the environment, and digital trade.

Our military colleagues, led by Secretary Hegseth, have highlighted the unique operational challenges of the Indo-Pacific—vast distances, logistical complexity, and the need for technological innovation. We are working to ensure that U.S. forces remain agile, resilient, and ready to respond to any contingency, while leveraging local economies and building the capacity of our partners. We are working closely with our developed country treaty allies Australia, Japan, and Korea to meet the security challenges of the future and increase their resourcing and defense cooperation to share the burden of maintaining a free and open Indo-Pacific. We are also working closely with our Southeast Asia treaty allies, the

Philippines and Thailand, to ensure interoperability and preparedness. We share a clear-eyed assessment with our allies that a region dominated by a hegemon would undermine the foundations of stability and prosperity for all.

Together with U.S. interagency partners, EAP supports U.S. engagement to combat transnational crime across the Indo-Pacific, targeting the fentanyl supply chain, pressing China and other countries to take concrete law enforcement actions, and working to dismantle transnational criminal organizations running online scam operations that defrauded Americans of more than \$12.5 billion in 2025. We are closely working in parallel with DOJ, which has restrained more than \$15 billion in cryptocurrency from scam centers since October 2025, and advancing targeted sanctions and diplomatic pressure to hold governments accountable for enforcement.

I would like to highlight two recent developments that underscore our ongoing engagement in the region. First, the President's recent trip to China provided an important opportunity for leader-to-leader engagement, reaffirming our commitment to open lines of communication and establishing a relationship based upon fairness and reciprocity. The President's meetings with Xi Jinping addressed critical economic and regional security issues, ranging from ongoing concerns with bilateral trade to Iran and the Strait of Hormuz.

Second, the United States is advancing significant new cooperation within the Quad partnership—comprising the United States, Japan, Australia, and India. We are implementing the vision Secretary Rubio and his Quad counterparts laid out last month in New Delhi through a concrete plan that is expanding our work together on critical minerals, maritime security, infrastructure development, energy security, and emerging technologies. The Quad's renewed commitments will help ensure a free and open Indo-Pacific, and demonstrate the power of like-minded democracies working together to address shared challenges.

Through these efforts, the State Department is making America safer, stronger, and more prosperous. By advancing our interests abroad, we are protecting our citizens at home, strengthening our economy, and upholding the values that define us as a nation.

Above all, our Indo-Pacific strategy is guided by the aspirations of the region's peoples and our shared commitment to peace, stability, and prosperity. We remain engaged, present, and responsive to the needs of our allies and partners, and we look forward to working with Congress to advance these objectives.