

UNCLASSIFIED

**CHAIRMAN ADAM B. SCHIFF
HOUSE PERMANENT SELECT COMMITTEE ON
INTELLIGENCE
U.S.-CHINA RELATIONS AND ITS IMPACT ON NATIONAL
SECURITY AND INTELLIGENCE IN A POST-COVID WORLD
JULY 1, 2020**

Like many of you, I would have much preferred to hold this hearing in person. However, because the threat posed by the COVID-19 remains serious and widespread, we are proceeding in the best manner we can, remotely in today's case, in order to ensure the safety of our witnesses, Members, staff, and the public.

Today's conversation is essential to our oversight of how the IC and the nation should adapt to meet the challenge posed by an increasingly assertive China, especially as this shift occurs against the backdrop of a global pandemic with far-reaching and still unseen implications.

I had hoped that it would be a bipartisan discussion. Unfortunately, and without reason or justification, our Republican colleagues once again have decided to absent themselves from the work of the Committee. I repeat my hope that they will reconsider this path and join us for future unclassified public hearings and unclassified closed roundtables. We will continue to have them, as they are being used to frame oversight issues requests, and inform the members on the myriad of threats facing our country.

The American people expect that the Congress will continue to do our job. That means showing up, at a minimum, whether we want to or not. Whether conducted remotely, or in person, these hearings and supplemental roundtables are official business and integral to our responsibilities in the classified realm. Pandemic or no pandemic, the American people have a right to expect us to conduct our business in a way that prioritizes the safety of witnesses, Members, staff and the public.

...

Today's hearing is convened at the height of a global pandemic. As evidenced by the virtual format of this hearing, COVID-19 has daily and fundamentally shaped our lives. Unfortunately and undoubtedly, COVID-19 will have similar impacts on the United States' national security interests, and must prompt the intelligence community to reexamine its standing priorities.

UNCLASSIFIED

Several of our witnesses' prepared statements for the record have referred to this unique moment in history as "clarifying." For the United States, it is evident that the national security and intelligence challenges that we will face in the coming decades have considerably evolved from the post-9/11 world.

For U.S. allies and partners, the reliability, capability, and staying power of the United States appears, at the moment, to be far from certain.

For China, which is in the midst of its self-proclaimed "strategic window of opportunity," the pandemic continues to offer new paths for Beijing to assert its long-standing sovereignty claims, gain parity in emerging technology, and shape the broader international order in a manner conducive to its own interests.

Just yesterday, China moved to implement sweeping new national security legislation in Hong Kong, permanently fracturing Hong Kong's treasured judicial independence. This past month, China engaged in deadly clashes along the Line of Actual Control, resulting in the tragic deaths of a dozen Indian soldiers, and an unknown Chinese death toll, as well. Moreover, scientists have recently identified a new flu strain with pandemic potential, demonstrating that global health events of international concern will continue to emanate from China.

Notwithstanding the implications of these events, the landscape of the international economy—and the United States and China's respective roles within it—will be even more directly impacted by COVID-19. Growing calls for the U.S. to pursue a strategy of technological decoupling and increase the resiliency of U.S. supply chains present real choices for policy-makers. Moreover, in the face of China's "One Belt, One Road" strategic initiative, Washington's ability to clearly communicate the economic benefits of continued engagement with the U.S. has proven limited.

The Committee takes these shifting dynamics very seriously. In spring 2019, we initiated the China Deep Dive, which set out to conduct a comprehensive assessment of the intelligence community's ability to address the multifaceted challenge that China poses. While our findings remain with the intelligence community for comment and a declassification review, we have identified several areas requiring additional focus and oversight. Our annual Intelligence Authorization Act will continue to champion the importance of quality collection and analysis on China-focused issues.

UNCLASSIFIED

Competing with China cannot and should not be a slogan. It requires deliberate policy action and careful introspection about how we can draw upon our inherent strengths. As one of our witnesses notes in prepared testimony, we cannot underestimate the benefits associated with the safeguarding and championing the promise of American opportunity.

As the United States navigates an increasingly fraught bilateral relationship with China, particularly in conjunction with a global recovery from COVID-19, it is prudent to take stock and prepare. Today, we will hope to do just that.