

Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

May 26, 2023

Dear Chairman Gallagher and Ranking Member Krishnamoorthi,

I greatly appreciate this Committee's work to address the challenges that the Chinese Communist Party presents to U.S. innovation and competitiveness, international security, and the rules-based global order. I want to deliver this supplemental insight letter to bring additional cross-jurisdictional views and expertise as a member of the House Armed Services Committee. I am submitting these insights for the record alongside the final "Ten for Taiwan" report in the hope that our colleagues who have not had the opportunity to participate in a national security-focused Committee may appreciate the additional information. I look forward to my colleagues who have non-hard power expertise sharing their expert analysis in future reports as we hold hearings and events on issues such as agriculture, financial services, and homeland security.

This Committee's strength lies in its ability to bring together Members serving on disparate House Committees, using open- and closed-door events to have honest discussions and the space to ask meaningful questions, bringing each Member's perspective to a challenge that touches on every House Committee. I appreciate your leadership of this Committee and continued interest in robust events to bolster each Member's knowledge base, so that the work of this Committee may proliferate to every Committee in the House of Representatives. The challenges posed by the CCP merit new tools to reinforce American influence and power, new efforts by Executive agencies to counter CCP actions, and new cross-Committee Congressional collaboration. I again thank you for your openness to allowing additional insights and hope that the below supplemental views may serve our fellow Members as they think about the military implications of the US-China relationship during the FY 2024 National Defense Authorization Act process.

Sincerely,



Mikie Sherrill

MEMBER OF CONGRESS

***Members of this Committee can help Congress oversee the Department of Defense's implementation of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2023 (NDAA), and should go about this work with the understanding that the implementation and enforcement of the law and associated Congressional directives are in early stages.*** As you know, the Department takes deliberate action on details in any legislative text, but also Congressional intentions. This is an appreciated aspect of the Department's interest in implementing Congressional actions and Committee Members should take this into account when writing Defense-related proposals seeking the implementation of "Ten for Taiwan" recommendations. Therefore, I believe the Committee can weigh in on focus areas, but need to ensure a full understanding of how some of the complex, internationally sensitive aspects of the FY2023 NDAA, which only became law on December 23, 2022, are being implemented before passing judgment on whether to move in a different direction. I appreciate the Committee's interest in providing oversight on last year's Section 1087 of the NDAA, but believe that the Select Committee should, if its Members desire to pursue this recommendation, seek a briefing on the Department's plan to fulfill this requirement. For example, setting up a new Joint Task Force is a large endeavor requiring robust Department efforts and interagency coordination. I urge Members to analyze the cost-benefit of prioritizing new basing agreements as well as take careful consideration of the breadth of work each of these agreements take, but I gladly support sending additional resources to facilitate areas of Congressional interest in the Indo-Pacific region. I stand ready to assist any Member who has questions on the NDAA, or how the bill moves through Committee, or how the Department implements aspects of previous NDAA provisions.

***I appreciate Members' concerns about joint training efforts, closer partnerships with Taiwanese security forces, and agree that Congress should be informed of how the Department of Defense conducts combined training activities. I also encourage this Committee to work collaboratively with the committees of jurisdiction for the development of any mandates for Departmental action.*** The Department of Defense leads multiple multilateral air, land, and sea training initiatives each year—often with growing participation from our Indo-Pacific partners. Deterring PRC activities requires both public messaging on certain issues while ensuring we do not reveal details on prescribed defensive planning, equipment, and forces that may give our possible opponents an advantage. Collaboration with the Departments of Defense and State can ensure we find that balance. It is also important that we speak publicly about these issues in a way that best encourages deterrence while avoiding statements that are escalatory and counterproductive to deterrence.

***I wholeheartedly support the timely delivery of defensive hardware to Taiwan under existing authorities and in a manner consistent with the Taiwan Relations Act and the United States' One-China policy, both of which have upheld peace and stability across the Strait and should continue to drive US policy. I also agree that the tyranny of distance will frustrate international deliveries to Taiwan in the event of a war, blockade, or even natural disaster, and reiterate this Committee's interest in ensuring that the US delivers its end of the bargain on foreign military financing and sales. However, I disagree that the Congress urge the Department of Defense to "establish war reserve stocks for allies WRSA in Taiwan" as***

*referenced in the report.* First, I would like to highlight that Section 5503 of the FY23 NDAA already grants the President the authority to “establish a regional contingency stockpile for Taiwan that consists of munitions and other appropriate defense articles.” I am concerned that an Israel analog program would very likely be seen as escalatory by Beijing and signal a sharp provocation, as US forces would be pre-positioning and actively maintaining these munitions. Secondly, the National Defense and National Security Strategies are fundamental documents for guiding US security policy. I agree with the Committee pointing out the need to move more quickly on delivering military assistance to Taiwan, but Congress should not mandate rigid prioritizations for assistance, as this could disincentivize other countries from seeking US military assistance and perhaps push partners to other military powers—such as Russia or China. I highly urge our Committee receive additional closed door expert briefings on our foreign military sales and financing and our war reserve stockpile programs to understand the ramifications of prioritizing partner requests, current defensive deliveries and partner requests, the concept of operations for logistical supplies given certain scenarios, and existing courses of actions as developed by the Department of Defense and other partners, with the inclusion of diplomatic perspectives.