



## **Opening Statement**

### **Select Committee on the Chinese Communist Party House of Representatives, US Congress**

**July 23, 2025**

Good Morning Chairman Moolenaar, Ranking member Krishnamoorthi and members of the Committee. Thank you for your invitation to join you here today and for the important bipartisan work you do as part of this committee, not just for the United States, but for all US allies and partners.

Australia and the United States are the closest of allies and the best of friends. For over a century we have stood together in every conflict, making Australia unique amongst US allies across the world.

As long standing, resilient and modern democracies with market based economies we believe in a world order that favours freedom, based on fundamental values of universal human rights that respect human dignity, the rule of law, open and fair trade, freedom of religion, speech, association and thought, and transparent representative governance. While sincerely holding such beliefs, we are also conscious of our imperfections and capable of self correction through our democratic processes and the safeguards of transparent and accountable institutions.

While our histories differ, Australia and the US see the world through a similar lens.

It is through that lens that we have both been able to identify the rising threat from authoritarian states who, not content with absolute control over their own populations to preserve their regimes, also seek hegemonic control over their own regions and to recast the world order to accommodate their illiberal objectives. Most significantly this involves the subordination of a rule of law based on universal human rights to one arbitrarily defined by the state and to draw an equivalence between their regimes and freedom based societies.

The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) Government of the Peoples Republic of China is such a regime. This will not change. Nor can it be negotiated away.

Rather than opening up their society, during post cold war globalisation the CCP used China's newly granted access to global trade, capital markets and legitimacy in international forums to build the economic, diplomatic, technological, and military capacity to one day challenge the global order in an attempt to make it more favourable to their regime security. That day is now.

I appear here today in a private capacity, having previously served as the 30th Prime Minister of Australia from August 2018 to May 2022. During that time and my earlier Cabinet roles commencing in 2013, I witnessed and experienced first hand the dramatic escalation in the CCP regime's assertive and aggressive behaviour towards countries in the Indo Pacific region to achieve their goals. In Australia this included targeted illegal trade bans and diplomatic estrangement.

In November 2020, the PRC Embassy in Canberra helpfully released to media a list of 14 points of grievance with Australia that set out the grounds for the CCP's coercive and bullying actions. I table a copy of those points for the Committee's information.

These grievances included Australia:

- exercising our sovereignty over foreign investment on national security grounds,
- making and enforcing laws to curb foreign influence and espionage,
- allowing freedom of speech in relation to criticisms of China in our national parliament and media,
- making and supporting national statements in international fora critical of China's aggressive behaviour in the South China Sea and towards Taiwan and against their own population in Hong Kong and Xinjiang, as well as calling for an independent inquiry into the origins of COVID 19.

I have no doubt that the primary objective of the PRC's targeting of Australia during this time was to make an example of Australia as a key US ally in the region. To punish Australia as a warning to others. I am pleased our Government provided the example of resistance and resilience, by standing firm, rather than acquiescence and appeasement.

Throughout this period, we moved to work with our allies and partners in the region to deepen our ties and strengthen our cooperation. This included the initiation of AUKUS and together with India, Japan and the United States the establishment of the Quad Leaders dialogue. Both of these measures began under the First Trump Administration and were realised by the Biden Administration. They also became further points of grievance with the CCP.

After the failure of the CCP's coercive efforts to break our resolve, the PRC took advantage of the change in Government following the 2022 Federal Election to affect a reset and adopt different tactics. This included abandoning their economic and diplomatic bullying and coercion for more inductive engagement, laced with charm and flattery. That said the PRC still continues to engage in intimidatory behaviour by their military against Australia when it suits them without remorse.. While the CCP's tactics may have substantively changed, their objectives remain the same, namely:

- to neutralise public support for Australian Government actions to counter the potential security threat posed by CCP actions - such as increased defence spending or restricting investment in critical technologies or sensitive supply chains,
- to normalise and establish an equivalence between the CCP's authoritarian regime with free societies to provide license for their activities,
- to weaken the network of US alliances and partners within the Indo-Pacific that provides an effective deterrent to CCP behaviour injurious to a free and open Indo-Pacific, including non-peaceful absorption of Taiwan, and
- to isolate US influence in the region.

There are many lessons from our experience. Above all I would highlight the need to never become casual about the potential threat, but to remain vigilant and in the same way that the CCP seeks to target our alliances and partnerships, these same relationships must form the core of our shared response.

Strengthening and deepening the networks of US alliances and partners is critical to resilience and deterrence. This is as true in the economic sphere as it is in the security sphere. In this new era of post-globalisation strategic rivalry, it is critical that these tracks of national policy are aligned and integrated. It is also true that US allies and partners must understand that in this new environment more will be required of them in these relationships, both individually and collectively, including Australia, in the years ahead.

I look forward to your questions and discussing these issues with you further.

**14 Points of Grievance with the Government of Australia provided to media by the Canberra Embassy of the Peoples Republic of China. November 2020.**

1. foreign investment decisions, with acquisitions blocked on opaque national security grounds .. and putting restrictions in areas like infrastructure, agriculture and animal husbandry.
2. the decision banning Huawei Technologies and ZTE from the 5G network, over unfounded national security concerns, doing the bidding of the US by lobbying other countries
3. foreign interference legislation, viewed as targeting China and in the absence of any evidence.
4. politicization and stigmatization of the normal exchanges and cooperation between China and Australia and creating barriers and imposing restrictions, including the revoke of visas for Chinese scholars.
5. call for an international independent inquiry into the COVID-19 virus, acted as a political manipulation echoing the US attack on China
6. the incessant wanton interference in China's Xinjiang, Hong Kong and Taiwan affairs; spearheading the crusade against China in certain multilateral forums
7. the first non littoral country to make a statement on the South China Sea to the United Nations
8. siding with the US' anti-China campaign and spreading disinformation imported from the US around China's efforts of containing COVID-19.
9. the latest legislation to scrutinize agreements with a foreign government targeting towards China and aiming to torpedo the Victorian participation in B&R
10. provided funding to anti-China think tank for spreading untrue reports, peddling lies around Xinjiang and so-called China infiltration aimed at manipulating public opinion against China
11. the early dawn search and reckless seizure of Chinese journalists' homes and properties without any charges and giving any explanations
12. thinly veiled allegations against China on cyber attacks without any evidence
13. outrageous condemnation of the governing party of China by MPs and racist attacks against Chinese or Asian people.
14. an unfriendly or antagonistic report on China by media, poisoning the atmosphere of bilateral relations