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**U.S. House Foreign Affairs Committee Subcommittee on Asia, the**  
**Pacific, Central Asia, and Nonproliferation**  
**“America’s Way Forward in the Indo-Pacific”**

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Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Chabot, and distinguished members of the Subcommittee. Thank you for inviting me as a witness to provide thoughts on these important, strategic matters related to U.S. policy in the Indo-Pacific region. It’s an honor to provide my views for this committee’s consideration.

I particularly appreciate the forward-looking nature of this hearing, even captured in the title itself: “America’s way forward.” Because it is indeed in the Indo-Pacific where our country’s future fortune’s will largely be determined. This region is where one finds over half the world’s population, one third of the global economy, six out of the seven of the world’s strongest militaries, and all five of the globe’s top 5 users of energy and top 5 emitters of carbon dioxide respectively. Given its weight across these areas and more, the Indo-Pacific region will be the driver of our well-being as a nation in ways no other region can. And of course, our most significant strategic competitor, China, also resides in the region.

Our interests in the Indo-Pacific are enduring: to the protect the American people, to promote American prosperity, to preserve peace through strength and the maintenance of a favorable military balance, and to maintain and expand the free and open order. It is the set of challenges that potentially complicate our ability to promote those enduring interests that is evolving. And thus, our policies must evolve (while still guided by some anchoring principles).

President Biden assumed office at a time of enormous challenges ranging from the pandemic, to serious societal and political divisions at home, to global climate change, to an accelerating innovation curve that may bring several inter-related disruptive technologies online simultaneously. The Administration also faces a number of challenges in the traditional security space when one looks at growing threats from China toward Taiwan, Japan, India and the regional commons, as well as threats from a DPRK as it has continued to advance its nuclear weapons capabilities.

The inheritance from the previous Administration is a strong one despite some analysts who are overly dismissive because they didn’t like the tone of the previous President, or some of the pet issues he pursued (e.g., burden sharing with allies). The previous Administration named the Indo-Pacific region the priority theater, recognized the necessity of adopting a more effective competitive posture vis-à-vis China, provided stronger and more direct support to Taiwan, nurtured and grew emerging partnerships with countries like India and Vietnam, gave unprecedented attention to the Pacific Islands and began implementing policies to sustain and promote a free and open Indo-Pacific despite the efforts of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) to actively undermine that order. The previous Administration worked with Congress on

important reforms on CFIUS, and on improving mechanisms to support U.S. outbound investment through the Build Act. The Administration and the Congress also worked with one another to resource investments in the military that enhanced the lethality of our joint force with China and the People's Liberation Army (PLA) as the main pacing element.

The previous Administration itself benefitted greatly from the good work of its predecessor Administration in the Indo-Pacific. In many ways, the last Administration's policy of "a free and open Indo-Pacific" was the natural successor to the Obama Administration's "pivot to Asia" (later called the "rebalance"). It would be accurate to note that the last Administration's policies were more evolutionary than revolutionary. The last two Administrations recognized the growing importance of the region to our interests, the evolving challenge from China, the importance of modernizing alliances, and the strategic significance of the emerging partnerships non-alliance countries such as India, Vietnam, and Indonesia.

Given a strong inheritance, sustained policies across two previous Administrations, and the growing consensus in Congress around the China challenge, I think it's reasonable to expect continuity going forward. This may strike some as counter-intuitive given the very different tone and styles of leadership between the previous Administration and the current – but it seems clear the fundamental objectives and trajectory are sound. The fact of the matter is that U.S. policies are being developed in response to the CCP's revisionist aspirations, increasingly assertive behavior in the region, and gross violations of human rights at home – and this would be the case no matter who occupies the White House.

From my perspective, there are many encouraging statements and actions coming from the Biden Administration through its early days. I applaud last week's meeting of the Quad at the Presidential level. This week's two plus two meetings with Japan and Korea, and Secretary Austin's follow-on travel to India are also positive steps. The continued recognition of China as a strategic competitor and the need to partner with like-minded countries to preserve a free and open Indo-Pacific set the appropriate vision.

Given this "good start" rather than criticize the new Administration, I'd like to forward some questions that remain regarding the direction policy will ultimately take as various reviews are concluded and interagency work is done. As there are still policy positions yet to be revealed. I'd suggest this committee exercise its oversight function to query Administration officials on a number of these outstanding questions such as:

The previous Administration was quite clear that competition with China was the priority challenge, and would serve as the organizing principle for most of the executive agencies including the Department of Defense. In the Biden Administration's interim national security strategic guidance, it seems less clear – China is mentioned well after other issues such as climate change and combatting the pandemic. How will priorities be set and where will competing with China be ranked?

Most Administrations claim that their approach to China is informed by some version of "cooperate where we can, compete where we must." This was true of the last Administration that pursued trade deals with China, cooperation on the DPRK, and military confidence building

measures. If climate change is defined as an existential threat and higher priority issue for our national security strategy, how will the Biden Administration pursue bilateral climate and energy cooperation with China while at the same time sustaining a competitive edge in key areas?

The Biden Administration has signaled future defense budget cuts. But the criticism of the Obama Administration's pivot to Asia was "right vision, insufficiently resourced." How do we continue to enhance lethality and maintain a military edge if resources dip?

The Biden Administration has talked about elevating the issue of human rights in our relationships with friends and foes alike. What does this mean for the relationship with China particularly in light of the ongoing genocide? Will the Administration call for a boycott of the Beijing Olympics in 2022? Equally important, what does this mean for our allies and partners where we have seen some backsliding? Will there be moves to curtail engagement with allies and partners such as the Philippines, Thailand, and India?

What are the measures of success in the tech competition with China? Which elements are the most important for success – protection of US technology, thwarting Chinese innovation in areas with military applications, or enabling higher paced innovation at home?

Many strategists criticized the last Administration for halting efforts to join a Trans Pacific Partnership agreement and for lacking a coherent trade and economic strategy for the region. Will the Biden Administration pursue multi-lateral trade liberalization? Bilateral trade deals? What will the economic pillar of the Indo-Pacific strategy look like?

Will the Administration continue to ensure Taiwan's continued existence and survival as a democracy and deny the CCP's ambition to subjugate the people of Taiwan to authoritarian rule? Will the previous Administration's support for higher level engagement with Taiwan be sustained?

By taking part in leader-to-leader engagement with the DPRK, the previous Administration seems to have exhausted all forms of engagement in pursuit of denuclearization. What will the Biden Administrations approach be to the DPRK and nuclear issues?

Again, these are questions regarding some of the policies that have yet to be revealed, not a suggestion the Biden Administration is off-track. In closing, I offer some recommendations that address some of the above questions as well as other issues. I recommend:

1. The Biden Administration should continue to make effective competition with China its true priority in both word and deed, and it should be sufficiently resourced across domains; alliances with friends such as Japan, South Korea and Australia should be understood to be our greatest asymmetrical advantage in this competition if managed appropriately.
2. It should be the goal of the U.S. to maintain a military edge and to achieve a high degree of confidence that the U.S. and our allies would prevail in the range of known contingencies with China; this will necessitate wise implementation of the Pacific

Deterrence Initiative to enhance the survivability of U.S. forces even in a protracted fight. The Administration should also make known its intention to deploy ground-based precision fire capabilities now allowable after the withdraw from the INF Treaty.

3. Human rights and democracy promotion should be major pillars of U.S. foreign policy including in the Indo-pacific. Consideration must be given to the geo-political environment and we must be deft enough to avoid pushing allied and partnered countries in the direction of China's camp – which would only risk more back-sliding and less influence for the U.S. We should raise the cost to the CCP for China's historic abuses of human rights and not shy from articulating a vision for a future for the Chinese people beyond authoritarian control and abuse.
4. The technology competition with China is very real and critical to the overall strategic competition. We should continue to develop tools to protect our technology, ensure the integrity of our critical supply chains to reduce vulnerabilities, and to work with partners and allies to achieve the same. But prevailing in the tech competition is most dependent on out-innovating the other side. More government support should go toward enabling an environment conducive to entrepreneurship and innovation, and we should think more creatively about where we are willing to bear risk.
5. The Quad should be made meaningful on the defense and security side. This can be done through more complex training and exercises, through enhanced real world operational cooperation (e.g., tracking PLA submarines), and by pursuing flagship initiatives. On the last point, the Quad should think about activities and associated capabilities required to strengthen maritime domain awareness and maritime security across the region.
6. The Biden Administration should pursue a flagship trade agreement in the Indo-Pacific; We need to be seen as being “in the game” and providing an attractive alternative to trade agreements with China. The good work of the previous Administration on implementing the Build Act with the creation and resourcing of the Development Finance Corporation should be continued and even accelerated.
7. Engagement with Taiwan should be enhanced and U.S. support made more visible to further strengthen deterrence against a PLA invasion. Declaratory policy should shift away from so-called “strategic ambiguity” and in the direction of “strategic clarity, tactical ambiguity. It should be said it is in our strategic interest for Taiwan to survive and exist in its current status or better, and it is not in our interest for Taiwan to be absorbed by the CCP.
8. The Biden Administration should recreate “maximum pressure” directed toward the DPRK, but resist providing diplomatic off-ramps too quickly. The Administration must also deal with the DPRK as a de facto nuclear weapons state and all that entails with respect to our deterrence posture, non and counter-proliferation tools, and sustained pressure. This should be done while denying the DPRK legal and official recognition of a nuclear weapons state and while still pursuing complete, verifiable, irreversible denuclearization (CVID).

Thank you again for the opportunity to participate in this hearing. I look forward to your questions.