

**U.S. POLICY IN THE INDO-PACIFIC REGION:
HONG KONG, ALLIANCES AND PARTNERSHIPS,
AND OTHER ISSUES**

HEARING

BEFORE THE

**COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS
UNITED STATES SENATE**

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U.S. POLICY IN THE INDO-PACIFIC REGION: HONG KONG, ALLIANCES AND PARTNER- SHIPS, AND OTHER ISSUES

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 18, 2019

U.S. SENATE,
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS,
Washington, DC.

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:05 a.m., in room SD-419, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. James E. Risch, chairman of the committee, presiding.

Present: Senators Risch [presiding], Gardner, Romney, Portman, Young, Cruz, Menendez, Cardin, Shaheen, Coons, Kaine, Markey, and Merkley.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. JAMES E. RISCH, U.S. SENATOR FROM IDAHO

The CHAIRMAN. The Senate Foreign Relations Committee will come to order.

Good morning, everyone. Thank you for joining us this morning.

And, Assistant Secretary Stilwell, I am delighted to welcome you to testify before the committee for the first time in your new role. Since your confirmation on June 1, I believe you have been in at least 10 Indo-Pacific countries. You have had an opportunity to engage with our allies and partners, and to begin to tackle the challenges and seize the opportunities in this vital region, and also assess what needs to be done to advance American interests and the administration's Indo-Pacific Strategy. And so, we have asked you here today to share your observations on these topics and to discuss the priorities and initiatives you plan to focus on in your role.

I wanted to start with something that both houses of Congress are intensely focused on—in a very bipartisan manner, I might add—and that is the situation in Hong Kong. What we see in Hong Kong is particularly significant—is a particularly significant example of the Chinese Communist Party's long record of broken commitments. The Communist Party's promise that Hong Kong would maintain a high degree of autonomy was not just a verbal understanding, it was a commitment China made when it signed the Sino-British Joint Declaration in 1984. This summer's protests reflect years of frustration by the Hong Kong people, who are seeing an evaporation of their fundamental rights and freedoms. Though China calls this an internal affair, the United States has a distinct relationship with Hong Kong comprised of multiple formal agreements and other forms of cooperation. We have a legitimate inter-

est in what happens there. U.S. policy should be focused on holding China accountable to its commitments regarding Hong Kong, and we must also support the Hong Kong people in pursuit of the rights and freedoms they were promised.

With those factors in mind, this committee is working on bipartisan legislation spearheaded by Senators Rubio and Senator Cardin. The Foreign Relations and Banking Committees are—also recently sent a letter to the administration regarding the adequacy of U.S. export controls with respect to Hong Kong.

I look forward to hearing you regarding messages the U.S. Government is sending to the Chinese Communist Party on Hong Kong and, importantly, our best options for supporting the Hong Kong people. China's actions in Hong Kong and elsewhere will, of course, figure prominently in today's conversation. However, I think it is important that we hold a hearing examining the whole region. The Indo-Pacific, home to three of the world's largest economies and five of the United States seven treaty allies, would be important to the United States even if China was not a factor. We have a significant interest in building on the alliances, partnerships, and connections that have grown between the United States and the region for over 200 years.

My home state is a case in point. It is—it has long and deep U.S. ties with the Indo-Pacific. The value of Idaho's exports to Asia was 2.1 billion in 2018. More than 80 percent of Idaho's exports are sold directly to countries in the Pacific Basin. Multiple Indo-Pacific countries have deep and longstanding economic investments in Idaho. In fact, Taiwan is our second-largest source of foreign investment, exceeded only by Canada. And, since 2009, we have been the proud home of a Singaporean F-15 Training Squadron at the Mountain Home Idaho Air Force Base.

Idahoans are familiar with some of the challenges posed in this region, as well. An example I raise often is Micron Technology, based in Boise. Their intellectual property was stolen by a Chinese company who then patented that technology in China and sued Micron. This example speaks to the importance of the United States remaining economically engaged with the region. It is imperative that we work to ensure open markets, fair trading practices, and, most importantly, the rule of law and adherence thereto. Anything less is unacceptable.

With all that in mind, we need to support strengthening our allies and growing our partnerships on every front. In the last couple of years, the administration has announced multiple initiatives focused on the Indo-Pacific, and we look forward to hearing about progress and what more is required. There are a lot of areas where we need—where the need for that cooperation is evident. We need to reinvigorate our alliance with Thailand, following the election earlier this year, while continuing to message to them the importance of freedom of expression and democratic consolidation. The Pacific Islands are an area that is ripe for greater U.S. engagement, and I was glad to see Secretary Pompeo recently announce negotiations regarding compact extensions. We have to maintain our focus on safeguarding the global commons, especially in light of China's assertive behavior in Vietnam's Exclusive Economic Zone. And the coming months are important with respect to U.S.

policy towards Myanmar as that nation heads toward elections in 2020.

I look forward to discussing these and many other issues. With that, Senator Menendez.

**STATEMENT OF HON. ROBERT MENENDEZ,
U.S. SENATOR FROM NEW JERSEY**

Senator MENENDEZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, Assistant Secretary Stilwell, for joining us today. Almost 3 years into the Trump administration, it is nice to have a confirmed Assistant Secretary finally in place.

I think you will find a great deal of agreement on this committee about the importance of the Indo-Pacific for the future of our security and prosperity and addressing the China challenge. We all know the statistics about the region's economic dynamism, number of the world's major militaries, the nuclear proliferation challenges, the governors' challenges, and the opportunity to grow regional architecture. Likewise, and I know it may be a surprise for some to hear this, but I agree with the Trump administration's idea behind its Indo-Pacific Strategy. But, the administration has yet to demonstrate how this strategy will be fully resourced and properly implemented, or that it is a policy that actually makes us more competitive with China, not just more confrontational towards China.

China's rise presents something different from our experience of the past 240 years, a nation with an economy equal or greater than our own, and a competitor across every dimension of power. With Xi Jinping declaring himself President for life, cracking down on civil society and human rights, introducing an Orwellian system of mass surveillance, advancing militarily in the South China Sea and economically in Africa and the western hemisphere, over the past three decades, China has sought to emerge as a regional military hegemon, including through increasingly provocative behavior in the maritime domain, which directly affects U.S. interests, including the free flow of commerce, freedom of navigation, and in the peaceful resolution of disputes, consistent with international law. When it comes to trade over the past decade, we have witnessed China increasingly bend the rules to its own benefit in order to secure its position as the world's second-largest economy.

So, we agree on the challenge, and I think we would all welcome the emergence of a China that follows established international economic rules, supports international institutions, laws, and norms. But, thus far, the Trump administration's China policy does not seem to be having an effect in shaping or deterring China. For example, China's aggressive maritime activities in the South China Sea and ongoing building of infrastructure that could easily be turned to military use continues unchecked. China has yet to make any significant concessions in any of the deep structural issues at the heart of our trade and economic imbalance. Instead, China is going toe to toe in a good and easy-to-win trade war, and our economy is suffering.

China's Belt and Road continues to expand and make inroads around the world. China continues to provide support for North Korea, even as North Korea continues to move forward with its missile and nuclear programs unconstrained, while the United

States no longer conducts necessary military readiness exercises on the Peninsula. China's digital authoritarianism continues apace with ever-greater repression at home and exporting fully installed systems for despots around the globe. China's great leap backwards on human rights and governance is gathering momentum, with the administration conspicuously silent as the people of Xinjiang and Tibet suffer and Chinese civil society space is crushed. Beijing continues to squeeze Taipei, including, this week, the loss of yet another of Taiwan's diplomatic allies, on Trump's watch. The list goes on.

If this is what winning with China looks like, I am truly tired, to the point of exhaustion. We must remember that merely being more confrontational with China does not make us more competitive with China. We have to leverage all of the tools in our toolkit. We must resource the Indo-Pacific Strategy. The administration is still far below the Indo-Pacific resourcing for our diplomacy and development of the final years of the Obama administration.

Last week, I met with a senior elected official from an allied government in the region who told me that, quote, "We have to rebuild our crumbling alliance." I am not naive enough to take what people tell me at their face—at face value, but one only has to look around the region to know that those words ring true. We have to address our own economic challenges and ensure America can compete with China as it assumes a global role through the Belt and Road Initiative. We must work with recipient Belt and Road countries to strengthen their ability to negotiate good terms for Chinese investment, or else risk having the rule of law in these developing nations washed away in a flood of Chinese cash. We can help set standards, offer technical and diplomatic support, stand up for human rights, including for labor and the environment, and support institutions that empower the weak to pursue justice with the strong.

As I prepare new legislation to bolster our economic diplomacy and statecraft, I hope we can all agree that such efforts must be paired with bold efforts to prepare the American people to succeed in this new world.

So, let me end, this morning, by making one last comment that I share with the Chairman about, and that is Hong Kong, which I know we will address in the course of the hearing, and where I am working with colleagues on bipartisan legislation on the Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act. The special character of Hong Kong is one of the world's great success stories. The vibrancy of the people of Hong Kong and their economic success, and their yearning for democracy and self-governance, is inspirational. It is critical that the United States stand with the people of Hong Kong.

I have been disturbed by some of the rhetoric from the senior-most levels of this administration regarding Hong Kong over the past several months, as well as the suggestions that Hong Kong might be on the chopping block for a trade deal. So, I look forward, this morning, Mr. Secretary, to a clear and uncompromising statement about our support for the people of Hong Kong in their quest to maintain their self-governance and autonomy, to safeguard their human rights and their exercise of democratic freedoms of speech,

of assembly, to select their own leaders, and to determine their own future. I hope that we will hear that from you.

And I thank the Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Menendez.

For everybody's information, we have the usual challenges today, or at least frequent challenge, and that is, we have three votes scheduled at 11 o'clock. So, I think probably what we will do is rotate out the presiding while I go down and vote, and—but, I think we can get through this as we usually do.

So, with that, Mr. Stilwell, thank you so much for coming.

David Stilwell is the Assistant Secretary of State for the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs. Prior to his appointment as Assistant Secretary, he served in the Air Force for 35 years, beginning as an enlisted Korean linguist in 1980, and retiring in 2015, with the rank of brigadier general, as the Asia Advisor to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs. He served multiple tours of duty in Japan and Korea as a linguist, a fighter pilot, and a commander. He also served as the Defense Attaché at the U.S. Embassy in Beijing, People's Republic of China, from 2011 to 2013.

Assistant Secretary Stilwell, welcome. We are anxious to hear your remarks.

STATEMENT OF HON. DAVID STILWELL, ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EAST ASIAN AND PACIFIC AFFAIRS, U. S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Mr. STILWELL. Thank you, Chairman.

Chairman Risch, Ranking Member Menendez, members of this committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you and to discuss U.S. policy in the Indo-Pacific region, including Hong Kong, alliances and partnerships, and other issues.

During my first months in office, I have worked with Secretary Pompeo to advance the administration's Indo-Pacific Strategy. Our approach recognizes the region's central global importance and central role in American foreign policy, as underscored by the President's National Security Strategy. Our vision for a free and open Indo-Pacific is built on common principles that have benefited all countries in the region, including respect for the sovereignty and independence of all nations, regardless of size.

U.S. engagement upholds enduring principles: freedom of the seas, market-based economics, and open investment environments, free, fair, reciprocal trade, and good governance, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples. These are not just U.S. values, they are shared globally and across the Indo-Pacific region. ASEAN's recent outlook on the Indo-Pacific recognizes and upholds many of the same values as essential for peace and prosperity, as do the regional visions of Japan, South Korea, India, Taiwan, and other partners.

With respect to the economic pillar of the Indo-Pacific Strategy, the State Department is focusing on three main areas: infrastructure, energy, and a digital economy. We are working with our interagency partners to promote open markets, high standards of transparency, and free, fair, and reciprocal trade. Our economic ini-

tatives help the countries in the region use private-sector investment as the path to sustainable development. In August, Secretary Pompeo announced nearly \$30 million for the energy development through the Japan-U.S. Mekong Power Partnership, or JUMPP, building on our Asia EDGE Regional Energy Initiative, announced by the Secretary last year. This month, we enhanced our Infrastructure Transaction and Assistance Network by launching a Transaction Advisory Fund to help countries negotiate complex infrastructure deals.

With respect to governance, we seek to build capacity for good governance and adherence to international law, rules, and standards. This will strengthen civil society and democratic institutions, counter corruption, and help countries attract high-quality financing necessary to fuel their economic development while securing their sovereignty. We are implementing well over 200 governance programs under our whole-of-government Indo-Pacific Transparency Initiative, and we are identifying new areas of cooperation with like-minded partners.

On the security front, our aim is to build a flexible, resilient network of like-minded security partners to promote regional stability, ensure freedom of navigation and other lawful uses of the sea, and address shared challenges in the region. Last year, Secretary Pompeo committed nearly \$300 million in security assistance to improve maritime domain awareness in order to protect critical sea lanes. In addition to implementing this assistance, we launched a new program in August to counter transnational crime along the Mekong. And, just last week, we conducted the first-ever U.S.-ASEAN maritime security exercise. We have also seen continued significant progress in our relationship with India, including through the quadrilateral dialogue with Japan and Australia.

The Secretary's travel to Thailand, Australia, and the Federated States of Micronesia in August reinforced these elements of our strategy. I will be happy to discuss details, as you may wish; also happy to discuss upcoming engagements, such as the second Indo-Pacific Business Forum, scheduled for 4 November in Bangkok, on the sidelines of the East Asia Summit.

But, now I would like to close with a note on China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan.

The United States seeks a constructive and results-oriented relationship with China, grounded in fairness and respect for sovereignty. The Trump administration has emphasized the imperative to compete with China. This does not mean we seek conflict, nor does it preclude cooperation when our interests align. Yet, we will not shy away from exposing and contesting actions that undermine the free and open international order that has fostered peace and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific for decades. We have repeatedly expressed our concern over China's actions to bully Taiwan through economic coercion, squeezing Taiwan's international space, and poaching diplomatic partners. These actions undermine the cross-Strait status quo, which has created peace and benefited both sides of the Strait for decades.

Meanwhile, Beijing's military modernization continues at a breakneck pace. The United States has an abiding interest in peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait. The U.S. has, for decades,

maintained our support for Taiwan's ability to maintain a sufficient self-defense capability, and we will continue to support an effective deterrence capability for Taiwan.

U.S. arms sales to Taiwan are informed by the Taiwan's Relation Act and based on continuing assessments of Taiwan's defense needs. To meet those needs, in 2019 alone, this administration approved and notified Congress of potential sales of more than \$10 billion, critical defensive equipment, including Stinger missiles and F-16 aircraft. Nor will we be silent about the Chinese government's repression at home, including Xinjiang and Tibet.

In Hong Kong, we support freedom and expression of peaceful assembly. Protesters in Hong Kong are only asking Beijing to keep its promises made in the Joint Declaration of Basic Law. Beijing has responded by repeatedly blaming U.S. Government for black-hand tactics and publicly identified U.S. diplomatic personnel, putting them at risk. China has provided no evidence of a black hand behind the protests in Hong Kong, because it does not exist. Hong Kongers look to the streets—took to the streets because Beijing is undermining its own one-country/two-systems framework. As Secretary Pompeo has observed, the protesters are asking that Beijing uphold its commitments. And, as President Trump has said, "we seek a humane resolution to the protests."

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today, and I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Stilwell follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. DAVID STILWELL

Chairman Risch, Ranking Member Menendez, and Members of the Committee: Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you, and to discuss U.S. policy in the Indo-Pacific region, including Hong Kong, alliances and partnerships, and other issues. I would also like to thank the Committee for its leadership in advancing U.S. interests by supporting engagement across the Indo-Pacific region.

THE U.S. INDO-PACIFIC VISION

During my first months in office, I have worked with Secretary Pompeo to advance the administration's Indo-Pacific strategy. Our approach recognizes the region's central global importance and central role in American foreign policy, as underscored by the President's National Security Strategy. Our vision for a free and open Indo-Pacific is built on common principles that have benefitted all countries in the region, including respect for the sovereignty and independence of all nations, regardless of their size.

The history of U.S. engagement in the Indo-Pacific is a story of trade and commerce, starting over two centuries ago when the trading ship the Empress of China left New York and traveled across the Indian Ocean to Canton, where it traded American ginseng for Chinese tea and porcelain. It is also one of shared sacrifice, as we joined with partners to push back the tides of imperialism, communism, and despotism.

Since World War II, the Indo-Pacific region has undergone a remarkable transformation. Hundreds of millions of people have climbed out of poverty; dictatorships have given way to democracies; and the region has become home to world-class companies and the engine of global economic growth. This transformation was in no small part due to U.S. engagement. Today, the United States is the largest source of foreign direct investment in the Indo-Pacific. We conducted over \$1.8 trillion in two-way trade with the region in 2017. All five of our non-NATO bilateral defense alliances are in the Indo-Pacific. And over 730,000 Asian students are right now studying in the United States, accounting for more than two-thirds of international students in America.

Over the decades, this engagement has upheld enduring principles: freedom of the seas; market-based economics and open investment environments; free, fair, and reciprocal trade; good governance; respect for human rights and fundamental free-

doms; and friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples. These are not just U.S. values; they are shared globally and across the Indo-Pacific region. ASEAN's Outlook for the Indo-Pacific adopted in June recognizes and upholds many of the same values as essential for peace and prosperity, as do the regional visions of Japan, South Korea, India, Taiwan and other partners.

The Trump administration's approach involves a range of elements.

With respect to the economic pillar of the Indo-Pacific Strategy, the State Department is focusing on three main areas: infrastructure, energy, and the digital economy. We are also working with our interagency partners to promote open markets; high standards and transparency; and free, fair, and reciprocal trade. Our economic initiatives help the countries in the region use private sector investment as the path to sustainable development. In August, Secretary Pompeo announced nearly \$30 million for energy development through the Japan-U.S. Mekong Power Partnership (JUMPP), building on our Asia EDGE regional energy initiative announced by the Secretary last year. This month we enhanced our Infrastructure Transaction and Assistance Network (ITAN) by launching a Transaction Advisory Fund to help countries negotiate complex infrastructure deals. Next month we will host the first U.S.-ASEAN Cyber Policy Dialogue in Singapore as we continue to implement programs under the Digital Connectivity and Cybersecurity Partnership (DCCP).

With respect to governance, we seek to build capacity for good governance and adherence to international law, rules, and standards. This will strengthen civil society and democratic institutions in the region, counter corruption, and help countries attract the high-quality financing necessary to fuel their economic development while securing their sovereignty. We are already implementing well over 200 governance programs under our whole-of-government Indo-Pacific Transparency Initiative, and we are identifying new areas of cooperation with like-minded partners. These efforts strengthen democratic systems and civil society; empower citizens; fortify institutions; and eliminate laws that tie-up private investment while also combating corruption and hidden costs in foreign transactions.

On the security front, our aim is to build a flexible, resilient network of like-minded security partners to promote regional stability; ensure freedom of navigation, and other lawful uses of the sea; and address shared challenges in the region. Last year, Secretary Pompeo committed nearly \$300 million in security assistance to improve maritime domain awareness in order to protect critical sea lanes. In addition to implementing this assistance, we launched a new program in August to counter transnational crime along the Mekong, and just last week we conducted the first-ever U.S.-ASEAN maritime security exercise. We have also seen continued significant progress in our relationship with India, including through the Quadrilateral Dialogue with Japan and Australia.

RECENT TRAVEL

The Secretary's travel to Thailand, Australia, and the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) in early August reinforced these elements of our strategy and reaffirmed our commitment to partnerships across the Indo-Pacific. I would like to share a few highlights from that trip.

In Thailand, the Secretary participated in several ASEAN-related meetings that demonstrated our support for ASEAN's central role in the region's architecture. At the U.S.-ASEAN Ministerial, ASEAN Foreign Ministers welcomed a U.S.-proposed leaders' statement on energy security. We highlighted increased U.S. economic investment, launched energy and transnational crime programs, and celebrated the 10th anniversary of the Lower Mekong Initiative. We also deepened our long-standing partnership with Thailand, one of our oldest allies.

At the East Asia Summit Ministerial, the Secretary made a clear statement on China's bullying in the South China Sea and urged ASEAN and China to move forward with a meaningful Code of Conduct that comports with UNCLOS. The Secretary shared his concerns about backsliding on human rights and democracy in the region, including the plight of Rohingya from Burma's Rakhine State. He urged Burma and partners to create conditions conducive to the safe, voluntary, dignified, and sustainable return of displaced Rohingya. He reiterated our commitment to final, fully verified denuclearization of the DPRK and held a trilateral meeting with Japan and the ROK to discuss this and other concerns, including the need to resolve the differences between these two important U.S. allies. At the ASEAN Regional Forum Ministerial, he supported the adoption of three policy statements and joined Brunei in co-sponsoring a statement on Aviation Partnership and Security.

The Secretary then traveled to Sydney for AUSMIN, where we deepened our coordination with Australia across the Indo-Pacific and beyond. Secretary Pompeo

asked for Australian participation in patrols in the Straits of Hormuz. Two weeks after the meeting, Prime Minister Morrison announced Australia's intention to join.

Finally we travelled to the Federated States of Micronesia, where the Secretary announced that we intend to negotiate amendments to certain provisions of the Compacts of Free Association with the Freely Associated States. Resourcing these commitments will require close consultation with Congress to advance partnerships, economic growth, and democracy and human rights as we see China expanding its strategic influence.

I recently returned to the region to follow up on the Secretary's visit and continue to advance our strategy. My first stop was Timor-Leste, one of the world's newest democracies, to represent the United States at the 20th anniversary of its independence referendum. During my visit, I attended a ceremony to witness the entry into effect of Timor-Leste's maritime boundary treaty with Australia, a first-ever use of the UNCLOS conciliation mechanism. In Indonesia, I reaffirmed our strong political, security and economic relations, and spoke with alumni of U.S.-sponsored exchange programs from across Southeast Asia. I also met with the ASEAN Secretary General to reiterate the importance of ASEAN to our Indo-Pacific vision.

In Brunei, my counterparts hosted the 4th Senior Officials Dialogue, where we discussed ways to enhance our security cooperation, strengthen economic ties, and ensure respect for common values, including human rights. In meetings with Singapore's senior leadership, we reviewed our strategic partnership and the growing economic bonds evidenced by our surplus in goods and services trade with Singapore. In all my stops, the message from my interlocutors was clear: they want America present; they want America engaged in the Indo-Pacific, and, they want increased American economic ties, investment, and companies—along with the transparency and good business practices they bring.

UPCOMING ENGAGEMENTS

The past few months have been quite productive, and I believe the trend will continue as we prepare for the November East Asia Summit, Indo-Pacific Business Forum, and APEC CEO Summit and Leaders' Meeting.

We are responding to our partners' desire for U.S. economic engagement by holding the Second Indo-Pacific Business Forum in Bangkok on the sidelines of the East Asia Summit. The forum will reinforce the benefits of partnering with the dynamic U.S. private sector and the importance of high standard development, transparency, and the rule of law. We have already sent out invitations to nearly 400 U.S. companies in many of your districts, and I welcome you to join us.

At the Forum, we will also highlight the significant human capital element of our Indo-Pacific Strategy. Our flagship youth leadership program, the Young Southeast Asian Leaders Initiative (YSEALI), has a network of over 142,000 young people committed to working with the U.S. on leadership and regional cooperation. We support dozens of other programs, such as the International Visitors Leadership Program, Fulbright scholarships, and the International Law Enforcement Academy in Bangkok. We will do more to highlight these outstanding programs and partner with other countries who share our commitment to investing in people.

BEIJING'S MALIGN CONDUCT

Finally, while the U.S. Indo-Pacific Strategy has made significant progress to reinforce and advance the free and open order in the Indo-Pacific region, we are increasingly concerned that some are actively seeking to challenge this order. We are committed to working with any country that plays by the rules, but we will also stand up to any country that uses predatory practices to undermine them.

As the President's National Security Strategy makes clear, we are especially concerned by Beijing's use of market-distorting economic inducements and penalties, influence operations, and intimidation to persuade other states to heed its political and security agenda. Beijing's pursuit of a repressive alternative vision for the Indo-Pacific seeks to reorder the region in its favor and has put China in a position of strategic competition with all who seek to preserve a free and open order of sovereign, diverse nations.

Since early July, Chinese vessels have conducted maritime surveys near Vanguard Bank with armed Coast Guard escorts and maritime militia in order to intimidate Vietnam and other ASEAN states away from developing oil and gas resources in the South China Sea. Through repeated illegal actions and militarization of disputed features, Beijing has and continues to take actions to prevent ASEAN members from accessing over \$2.5 trillion in recoverable energy reserves.

Economically, the Chinese government uses an arsenal of policies inconsistent with free and fair trade, including market access restrictions; opaque, discrimina-

tory regulatory processes; currency manipulation; forced technology transfer; intellectual property theft; and creation of non-market excess industrial capacity to build Beijing's manufacturing base at the expense of its competitors. Through initiatives such as One Belt One Road, Beijing has flooded much of the developing world with hundreds of billions of dollars in opaque infrastructure loans, leading to problems such as unsustainable debt burdens and environmental destruction and often giving Beijing undue leverage over countries' sovereign political decisions. We welcome fair and open economic competition with China, and economic engagement between China and other countries that adheres to international best practices such as transparency, responsible lending, and sustainable environmental practices. But where China acts in a manner that undermines these principles, we are compelled to respond.

We have repeatedly expressed our concern over China's actions to bully Taiwan through economic coercion, squeezing Taiwan's international space, and poaching diplomatic partners. These actions undermine the cross-Strait status quo which has created peace and benefitted both sides of the Strait for decades. Last week in Taipei we co-hosted the inaugural U.S.-Taiwan Consultations on Democratic Governance in the Indo-Pacific, to explore ways to prevent election interference and promote adherence to the rule of law in the region. This builds upon the success of the Global Cooperation and Training Framework, jointly sponsored by the United States and Taiwan, which has convened experts from over 30 nations from the Indo-Pacific and beyond to forge solutions to make our societies healthier, safer, and more democratic.

Meanwhile Beijing's military modernization continues at a break neck pace. Its exercises in the region are increasingly complex and clearly intended not only to deter U.S. efforts to sustain our forward presence in the region, but to signal to other countries, and to the authorities on Taiwan, that they are under direct threat. Beijing's conduct is at odds with its public narrative of a "peaceful rise."

The United States has an abiding interest in peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait. The United States has for decades maintained our support for Taiwan's ability to maintain a sufficient self-defense capability and we will continue to support an effective deterrence capability for Taiwan. U.S. arms sales to Taiwan are informed by the Taiwan Relations Act and based on continuing assessments of Taiwan's defense needs. To meet those needs, in 2019 alone, this administration approved and notified Congress of potential sales of more than \$10 billion dollars of critical defensive equipment including stinger missiles, F-16C/D Block 70 aircraft, M1A2T Abrams Tanks, and other needed equipment to preserve peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait.

The United States seeks a constructive and results-oriented relationship with China grounded in fairness and respect for sovereignty. The Trump administration has emphasized the imperative to compete with China. This does not mean we seek conflict, nor does it preclude cooperation when our interests align. Yet we will not shy away from exposing and contesting actions that undermine the free and open international order that has fostered peace and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific for decades.

Nor will we be silent about the Chinese government's repression at home. As Secretary Pompeo has said, the ongoing human rights crisis in China is "truly the stain of the century." In Xinjiang, authorities are deliberately attempting to strangle Uyghur culture and stamp out the Muslim faith, including by detaining more than 1 million ethnic and religious minorities in camps. And in Tibet, where the Communist Party's oppression goes back decades, thousands of Buddhist monks and nuns have been evicted from their residences in just the past year alone. Disturbingly—and ironically—the party continues to assert its role in the Dalai Lama's reincarnation process, even as President Xi has urged party members to remain "unyielding Marxist atheists." We believe that Tibetans, like all faith communities, must be able to practice their faith freely and select their leaders without interference. We will continue to assert this belief, and we remain committed to supporting meaningful autonomy for Tibetans.

Then there is Hong Kong, which has of course raised some particularly acute concerns in recent months. Hong Kong's astounding rise to a global center of finance and commerce was predicated on its open society, rule of law, and respect for fundamental rights and freedoms. That this rise continued even after Hong Kong returned to Chinese control in 1997 is a result of the assurances China gave to the United Kingdom in the Sino-British Joint Declaration (the "Joint Declaration"); namely, that Hong Kong would maintain a high degree of autonomy and maintain its liberal traditions as reflected in the Hong Kong Basic Law (the "Basic Law"). Preserving this autonomy was also the purpose of the United States-Hong Kong Policy Act of 1992, which has shaped U.S. policy toward Hong Kong since.

We believe that the freedoms of expression and peaceful assembly—core values that we share with Hong Kong—must be vigorously protected. Hong Kong is governed under Beijing’s “One Country, Two Systems” framework. Protestors in Hong Kong are only asking Beijing to keep its promises made in the Joint Declaration and the Basic Law. Beijing has responded by repeatedly blaming the U.S. Government for “black hand” tactics and publically identified U.S. diplomatic personnel, putting them at risk.

China has provided no evidence of a “black hand” behind the protests in Hong Kong, because it doesn’t exist. Hong Kongers took to the streets because Beijing is undermining its own “One Country, Two Systems” framework. As Secretary Pompeo has observed, the protestors are asking that Beijing uphold its commitments under the Joint Declaration and the Basic Law. And as President Trump has said, we seek a “humane” resolution to the protests. The United States supports peaceful assembly and freedom of expression.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today. I look forward to your questions.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

I am—we are going to do a 5-minute round of questions right now, and I am going to take part of my time here, right out of the chute, to ask a couple of questions.

What—number one, what do you view as the most effective thing we can do, as far as supporting the people of Hong Kong?

Mr. STILWELL. Senator, we can continue our support, both rhetorical and legal, as emphasis by the Hong Kong Policy Act. We can, again, be vocal, not just the administration, but the Congress, as well, in addressing the issues. And I would say that we have already been successful, in that Carrie Lam has backed out and withdrawn the Extradition Act, which was the origins of this—the current friction. So, I would take a little credit, the U.S. Government, on having applied sufficient pressure and encouraged Beijing to do the right thing in Hong Kong.

The CHAIRMAN. I appreciate that.

Overnight—I do not know if you saw, or not—but, the Hong Kong Government opened a Dialogue Office, supposedly for dialogue with protests. Do you think that is going to have any significant effect, or is that more cosmetic than anything else?

Mr. STILWELL. Senator, I think any dialogue or any addressing of the protestors’ concerns is—will be effective, and it does give them both a voice that they asked for and the option to execute their choice of government; again, as we preserve—as the Hong Kong—or, as the Joint Declaration provides for 50 years of autonomy as they adjust to this one-China/two-systems process. So, yes, I do think the dialogue, especially an open dialogue, will have the desired effect.

The CHAIRMAN. Appreciate that.

I think most Americans are not aware of the new initiative in China, relatively new initiative in China, regarding the social credit system. And I wonder if you could talk about that for a minute. I kind of view this like the opposite of our Social Security system. Our Social Security system is put in place to give benefits to people that need it, and keep track of it. And the social credits in China is just the opposite. It is set up to receive benefits—the government to receive benefits from the people, and also to keep track of it, which is stunning, the way they are keeping track of what people do in order to gain these so-called social credits with the government. Could you talk about that for a minute?

Mr. STILWELL. Yes, Senator. Thank you for that question.

What the Chinese government is proposing, and what Xi Jinping has published two volumes on, titled “The Governance of China,” is a new type, a new way of governing, both domestically and increasingly, we are seeing, globally. This type of governance is not what we are used to, not what Francis Fukuyama declared as the end of history; systems that recognize the interests of the people who are governed, and the right for those people to identify the types of government they want. What the new-type system looks at is, you know, a government that sees itself as able to identify what is best for its people, and then institute activities, such as you mentioned, with the social credit system, to identify that.

The definition of human rights is interesting, in that we consider individual human rights. The United Nations charter identifies the rights of individuals. And this system identifies a broader sense of, “The needs to the many override the needs of the few.” And so, it is a different approach to how you run a country and how you govern, both, again, in China and outside.

As social credit goes, it—that particular approach to governance is basically a substitute for trust. And, as I said in my hearing, I want to make sure that we do not demonize everything. As—there is room for engagement, there is certainly room for competition, as Senator Menendez said. But—so, rather than—I do like—I will do my best to seize both the positives and negatives. In this social credit thing, it is hard to see a lot of positives, in that anything you do online, who you associate with, those things are, you know, tallied and used against you, or for you, you know, in determining your reliability and your buy-in to this system of government.

And so, I think more will come out on this subject. The implications are enormous, especially in a very digital and technical leadership system that includes surveillance. And we are seeing that surveillance, especially in places like Xinjiang and other places. So, I am happy to go further, if you would like.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. I appreciate that. And I also view it, it seems to me, as a way for the government to surveil its people to keep track of its people overall. So, thank you.

Senator Menendez.

Senator MENENDEZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Secretary, do you believe that our China policy is a function of our Indo-Pacific Strategy, or that our Indo-Pacific Strategy and policy is a function of our China Strategy?

Mr. STILWELL. Senator, that is a great question. On my desk, I have a piece of paper—

Senator MENENDEZ. The only ones I ask here are great questions. [Laughter.]

Mr. STILWELL. No, no, no, so I mean I—

The CHAIRMAN. Can we vote on that?

Mr. STILWELL. —I mean that sincerely. On my desk, I have— [Laughter.]

Senator MENENDEZ. I am willing to take a vote on that.

[Laughter.]

The CHAIRMAN. Secret ballot.

[Laughter.]

Senator MENENDEZ. I am sorry. All right. I am losing my time, here.

Mr. STILWELL. Okay. On my desk,——

Senator MENENDEZ. I mean, it is not a chicken-or-egg question. It is——

Mr. STILWELL. No, no.

Senator MENENDEZ. It is——rather, it is——important elements of strategy and priority flow from how one defines their strategic goals and then the lines of the—you know, the ends, the ways and means to achieve it. So, that is why I am asking.

Mr. STILWELL. Thank you. On my desk, I have a piece of paper that—you know, printed from a management school, that identifies the differences between policy and strategy. And they quite often get confused. And certainly I am one of those who confuses it. But, I do think, in general, our strategy certainly informs the policy. I am taking it in that regard. And the—you know, the policy—the Indo-Pacific Strategy addresses U.S. interests in the region—economic, diplomat—or security, and governance interests. And then from those come decisions that we make on individual actions and decisions that we make that end up generating our policy. And so, in the broadest terms, the Indo-Pacific Strategy, again, seeks to identify those things that are particular strengths. And, in this case, I think governance—having just addressed the Chairman's question—the governance is the clearest leader and the one we have not talked about in the recent past. Again, like we said, we have assumed that open democratic systems and free-market economies are obvious, but in—that is no longer the case. We can no longer assume that. And so, again, I think the strategy, as we look at the economic leg, in particular, addresses that.

Senator MENENDEZ. Yeah. But, what I am trying to understand is, Does our China policy—is that a function of what we look at the Indo-Pacific region, or is the Indo-Pacific policy a function of how we look at China and its strategy? Is one driving the other?

Mr. STILWELL. Sir, thank you for that clarification. And this is not all about China. And so, that is why an Indo-Pacific that looks at the region, writ large, and in the region, of course, is the China—China. And it is the largest part, certainly, in terms of challenges, but there are many opportunities there, as well. And then recent travel has really shown a—an understanding of that as we broadcast this and then inform and get out personally with the leadership. In those most recent trip to Timor-Leste, Indonesia, Brunei, and Singapore, we had many opportunities to clarify these questions you are asking, as well, is where they fit into the strategy and then, again, is this all about China? And I would just restate that it is not.

Senator MENENDEZ. Let me move to Hong Kong. On September 8, thousands of Hong Kongers went to the streets, marching towards the U.S. Consulate, calling on the U.S. to pass and support the Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act. Does the administration support the Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act?

Mr. STILWELL. Thank you, Senator. The administration supports Hong Kong's autonomy, its democratic systems, and all the others. We will continue to voice that. The protests in front of the Embassy——

Senator MENENDEZ. But the—I appreciate that. Does it support the legislation that I just directed to you? That is my specific question.

Mr. STILWELL. Yes, Senator. I need to take a longer look at the legislation and understand that better—

Senator MENENDEZ. I would urge you to do so, because there is a pretty bipartisan effort here, and we believe that it is an appropriate one. So, I would like to get a clearer answer from the administration. Do you, or do you not, support it? Or do you have reservations about it? You know, we would welcome participation, but I think this is a moving vehicle. So, I would like to know where the administration is at on that.

[The information referred to follows:]

The Committee Received No Responses From Mr. Stilwell for the Following Questions

Do you, or do you not, support it? Or do you have reservations about it?

Senator MENENDEZ. Also, does the administration believe that Hong Kong is fully autonomous, as envisioned under the Basic Law?

Mr. STILWELL. Senator, to date, and then given the retraction of the Extradition Act, the determination is still that Hong Kong is—in accordance with the Hong Kong Policy Act, has sufficient autonomy to continue.

Senator MENENDEZ. What steps is the United States taking, if any, to make sure that crowd-control equipment we export to Hong Kong is not being used to commit human rights violation on the streets? I see that the British suspended their crowd-control exports to Hong Kong. We find the use of, as Amnesty International has verified, rubber bullets, officers beating protesters who did not resist, aggressive tactics to obstruct journalists, the misuse of tear gas and pepper spray. What are we doing in this regard?

Mr. STILWELL. Thank you, Senator.

Of course, our interests in making sure that, as the President said, you know, retaining—maintaining a—peaceful protests and avoiding violence to the maximum extent possible. So, we, Commerce, and others, we carefully review these applications for these sorts of controlled goods on a case-by-case basis. And in each instance, we weigh the national security and foreign policy and human rights implications of each of those sales.

Senator MENENDEZ. So, we have not been suspending any sales—

Mr. STILWELL. Sir, not to my knowledge.

Senator MENENDEZ. Well, it is something we should be considering, it seems to me, if they continue to happen.

Finally, let me ask you. You traveled recently to Japan and Korea. These are two incredible allies of the United States. And, in our joint mutual security and other interests, both on the Korean Peninsula and certainly as it relates to China, maintaining that trilateral unity is incredibly important. We have seen a devolution of the relationship between Japan and South Korea over a series of issues. Should we not be playing a role to bring these two allies together and stop the spiral downward, and try to get to a better place so that we are not ultimately on—you know, creating

a risk in a vacuum, here, where China can particularly take advantage of?

Mr. STILWELL. Thank you, Senator.

I absolutely share your concern in that regard, and therefore, you will understand I have spent, of my 2 1/2 months on the job, a considerable amount of that time working at my level with counterparts to, again, address both—the concerns on both sides of the Tsugaro Straits there. And, you know, as far as actions, the Secretary has met with both sides, trilaterally, 3–8 times; this—the President, twice, most recently at the East Asia Summit. We held another trilateral meeting in early August, endeavoring to get both sides to approach this just—you know, this problem from a very positive and productive standpoint. So, we are actively engaged. Because that activity may not be visible publicly, it does not mean it is not happening. So.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Menendez, I think your question regarding suspension of sales of those really deserves a more looking at, and particularly if the British have done it. I mean, they would know what is going on in there more than—better than we would. So, I—we probably ought to take a look at that. I—are you aware of any that are pending right now, or is it an ongoing sale—

Senator MENENDEZ. It is an ongoing sort of sale, so—

The CHAIRMAN. I think we ought to be take a look at that. I think that is an excellent suggestion. Thanks so much.

Senator Gardner.

Senator GARDNER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, Secretary Stilwell, for your testimony today and joining us. Look forward to having you before the East Asia Subcommittee in the near future.

Just wanted to talk about the work that you have identified in your statement. Many of the actions you have cited as taken toward Asia came out of the Asia Reassurance Initiative Act that this committee passed last Congress that was signed into law on New Year's Eve. In fact, the appropriations bill that just came out of the State and Foreign Operations Appropriations Subcommittee includes \$2.5 billion for ARIA implementation and an additional \$2.5 billion for ARIA implementation. And I urge my colleagues to support that because of the work that we did in a bipartisan fashion on this committee. There is a lot of work we can do on national security, a lot of work we could do on economic opportunity, and, of course, human rights, democracy, rule of law, with the dollars now being appropriated to fully implement ARIA.

Going to Hong Kong and the point that Senator Menendez, Senator Risch were making, it—the Defense Authorization Act, the Senate passed a Sense of Congress Resolution on July 28th that required and states, “The United States shall impose financial sanctions, visa bans, and other punitive economic measures against all individuals and entities violating the fundamental human rights and freedoms of the people of Hong Kong.” So, my question is, Does the administration plan—or have plans to impose financial sanctions, visa bans, and other punitive measures against individuals and entities violating the fundamental human rights and freedoms of the people of Hong Kong?

Mr. STILWELL. Thank you, Senator.

I will address your first question, on ARIA. I will not talk about BUILD this time. Great to have a law and a strategy that actually overlap and align. So, thank you and your colleagues for your support in that, in making, you know, the Indo-Pacific Strategy a reality. Because, certainly, it requires resources.

On your second question, Senator I am aware of—there are a number of policy options, there is a number of legal options for dealing with these things. This has been going on for 100 days, as has—passed an anniversary. If—take—my response is that we take this extremely seriously. In all interactions that I have been in with the Secretary on this subject, with his counterparts, this has come up prominently and strong advice to resolve this through dialogue, peacefully, simply listen to what the protesters are asking. And I do believe that you have seen positive motion in that regard, from Carrie Lam and the others. So, as far as identifying individuals and then taking action—certainly take that under advisement and we will continue to watch that. But—

Senator GARDNER. But, no action is planned right now.

Mr. STILWELL. Senator, I have no information on that regard.

Senator GARDNER. Thank you.

On Taiwan—well, Taiwan lost another diplomatically, the Solomon Islands, this past week. On September 6th, as news was breaking about this possibility, I sent a letter—a private letter to the Prime Minister of Solomon Islands, asking him to reconsider the decision, to engage in a dialogue with the United States regarding Taiwan as a global partner in the Communist Party of China, the threat that it poses. We did not receive a response, and obviously we know the action Solomon Islands has taken. What—as a result, we have introduced a bill called the Taipei Act, which would require the administration to develop diplomatic plans to help protect and preserve Taiwan’s global leadership, diplomatic allies, and opportunities. What has the administration done to prevent this kind of action from taking place, again losing additional support? And what other nations are considering these actions?

Mr. STILWELL. Thank you, Senator.

I guess I can point to actual actions taken. And that would be the Secretary’s trip to Micronesia. I got to join him on that. And the simple act of being visible in the region, I do think—not in this particular case, with Solomon Islands, but, in general—gives us something to point to, and it certainly reinforces and reassures the region that the U.S. is interested.

As far as the, again, Taipei Act, I completely support the notion of—you know, this falls in line with Taiwan Relations Act and the six assurances, and those things that were designed to prevent this exact thing from happening, prevent Taiwan from its international space being squeezed. And so—

RESPONSE RECEIVED FROM HON. DAVID STILWELL TO THE TAKE-BACK QUESTION
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR CORY GARNER

Question. Does the administration support the Taipei Act?

Answer. The Taiwan Allies International Protection and Enhancement Initiative (TAIPEI) Act of 2018 is evidence of Congressional interest in strengthening Taiwan’s standing in the world and comes in response to increased Chinese pressure to marginalize Taiwan’s international space. I am concerned with Beijing paying off leaders to end their country’s relationship with Taiwan and shirking this inter-

national space. We recognize that Congress wants to demonstrate its continued support for Taiwan's participation in the international community—a reflection of the strong belief that it is a democratic success story, a reliable partner, and a force for good in the world. The administration shares this desire and the commitment to Taiwan's participation in the international community. Along with other relevant U.S. government departments and agencies, we are studying this proposed piece of legislation with interest.

Senator GARDNER. Thank you. And I am running out of time, here. On ARIA, Asia Reassurance Initiative Act, just mentioned, you have talked about how it has informed some of the actions you have taken. I would like to learn more about how it was received in the region, what people are saying about it. We can get to that later. But, I am concerned about several reports that are overdue under ARIA right now, pursuant to sections 205, 214, 305, and 306. Those reports are now overdue, and would love to see those reports completed.

When it comes to North Korea, could you give us an indication right now of what you believe North Korea's nuclear production is?

Mr. STILWELL. Senator, I cannot—

Senator GARDNER. Are they still—they are still producing nuclear weapons?

Mr. STILWELL. I assume they are, yes.

RESPONSE RECEIVED FROM HON. DAVID STILWELL TO THE TAKE-BACK QUESTION
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR CORY GARNER

Question. Do we know how many nuclear productions—nuclear weapons?

Answer. The State Department will arrange a classified briefing on this topic to provide additional information.

Senator GARDNER. And maximum pressure—the doctrine of maximum pressure is still our policy toward North Korea?

Mr. STILWELL. Senator, as far as I know, that is true, yes.

Senator GARDNER. And do you believe that any sanctions against North Korea should be lifted until they—or that no sanctions should be lifted until they demonstrate a commitment toward complete, verifiable, irreversible denuclearization?

Mr. STILWELL. Senator, the policy is still for full, verified denuclearization, absolutely.

Senator GARDNER. And full, verified denuclearization is the same as complete, verifiable, irreversible denuclearization?

Mr. STILWELL. Sure. Yes.

Senator GARDNER. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Gardner.

Thank you, Secretary Stilwell. I think this point that Senator Gardner just raised regarding the Solomon Islands really needs to be looked at. I think that is the canary in the mine. We all know—I think—I do not think the American people are fully appreciative of how widespread China's influence is around the world. They are in every country. Solomon Islands, you would not think would be much, but there they are. And they spend a lot of money. And money influences people, and that has an effect on whether they are going to stay recognizing Taiwan, or not. So, I think we are going to need to develop a strategy on that. We certainly cannot match their spending, inasmuch as—you know, we, being a capitalist country, the capital is controlled by the private sectors. In China, if they want to spend money on another country—and they

are, all over the world—they do it, and they do it easily, and they do not have to go to anybody to get permission. So, I think this is a—I think that is a really important point that you raised, Senator Gardner.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Cardin.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And, Secretary Stilwell, thank you very much for your service, and thank you for being here. This is a critically important hearing.

And I am going to start with Hong Kong. You have already been questioned in regards to the use of control—crowd-control devices and military-type sales to China and Hong Kong. I want to make this a little bit broader. It is clear we have seen, in the last year to 2 years, a crackdown on human rights by the Chinese government's influence in Hong Kong affecting its autonomy. I think that is a factually indisputable point. When we passed the 1992 U.S.-Hong Kong Policy Act, which gave special status to Hong Kong, different than mainland China, we did that and said, "as long as they adopt international standards"—Hong Kong. And we gave the President the power to adjust the benefits if there is less autonomy within Hong Kong itself.

It seems to me that it is pretty clear there is less autonomy today than there was anticipated to be by this time. We were supposed to have independent elections. We have not had that. We have had the protesters harassed and put in jeopardy. Does the administration have a process where they will use the direction given by Congress in 1992 to leverage that for a change in direction by Chinese influence over Hong Kong, or, if that is not achieved, to take specific action that could affect the status of Hong Kong?

Mr. STILWELL. Senator, thanks for that question. And it is difficult to nail down exactly one aspect of that, or one area we can push on.

I would say that, you know, I am fully aware of the Act, and we have been in long discussion on its implementation, the impacts on both the U.S. and on China, you know, if, you know, the implementation takes place. And there has been a very fulsome discussion. So, as far as your question on whether there is activity or a process, we are deeply—you know, we are engaged on this one.

The—I am going to keep pointing back to the ability for the protesters to make changes. I would say withdrawing the Extradition Act is a very positive step, and—

Senator CARDIN. Of course, it never should have been introduced in the first place, but I hear you.

Mr. STILWELL. And they were able to, through a democratic process, through their own voice and through, you know, large exertion, push back on what seemed to be a done deal. And so, as far as autonomy, I would say that it is, essentially, still autonomous. You know, these are gradations, gray areas, and we will continue to discuss this. And we would be happy to get back with you on that.

[The information referred to follows:]

The Committee Received No Responses From Mr. Stilwell for the Following Questions

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over Hong Kong, or, if that is not achieved, to take specific action that could affect the status of Hong Kong?

Senator CARDIN. So, we are going to be stronger if the administration and Congress works together.

Mr. STILWELL. Absolutely.

Senator CARDIN. And that is why I would urge you to have open discussions with us—it can be in a closed setting that is fine—so that we are all on the same page as to how you are using the strategies.

I remember when I first introduced the Magnitsky statute and ran into resistance from an administration—not this administration—that said, “Why are you bothering with what we do?” In the end, I think everyone would acknowledge, including the administration, that Congress acting gave the administration more strength to advance our interest.

Senator Rubio and I have introduced legislation, in regards to Hong Kong, that would require certain reports annually to Congress on the status of autonomy in Hong Kong. I would urge you that that would help you, because then you could explain to the stakeholders that you have to report to Congress, so that you do not have total discretion here, which gives you a stronger hand in an effort to bring about the proper conditions in Hong Kong.

So, I would just urge you to work with us so we can achieve what was anticipated in 1992, because, quite frankly, I think we have seen, in the recent years, trends that have us extremely concerned. And I admit there have been victories, but we should be making progress, not just preventing negative things from happening.

Mr. STILWELL. Senator, I appreciate that. And, you know, I was up here 2 days last week, having these conversations with both the House and the Senate side, and I will continue to do that.

Senator CARDIN. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Cardin.

Senator Romney.

Senator ROMNEY. Secretary Stilwell, thank you for joining us today.

It is my view that the greatest threat to freedom for America and for the world is a China that decides to try and impose its authoritarian system on the world, that it is our highest priority to dissuade China from that course, or to confront them, if necessary, to prevent them from taking that course. Do you agree with that?

Mr. STILWELL. Senator, absolutely.

Senator ROMNEY. I would note that, as the leader of the free world, that really falls on us to bring the free world together to make sure that we are able to dissuade China from taking that path and threatening our freedom and the freedom of the world.

They have developed, quite clearly, a strategy. You mentioned the difference between strategy and policy. I worked many years in a strategy consulting firm, helping companies think about strategy. And I look at what they have done, and I say, “Wow, this is one of the most brilliant strategies I have ever seen.” The Belt and Road means that they are going to have access to key raw materials, they are able to also send their products out. Predatory pricing and industrial policies allow their industries to take over indus-

tries around the world on an unfair basis, basically managing and brainwashing their own citizens. And, then, of course, an influence campaign around the world, with things like the Confucius Institutes, here in our country, where we are trying to tell schoolchildren a whole different message about authoritarianism and China. And it is my hope that we, as a Nation, will finally develop a true strategy as it relates to this highest priority in preserving our freedom.

But, one question in my mind is, what would the key elements be of such a strategy? What are key our advantages? What are—from your perspective, what do we have to have as the central part of a strategy to dissuade China from imposing its will on the world, or to confront them when they do? Do you have a sense of that, of things that you think make sense to be part of that?

Mr. STILWELL. Senator, absolutely. I really appreciate that question.

The Indo-Pacific Strategy addresses those terms, those things. The obvious one is security. I mean, if you do not have stable, you know, air and maritime lanes, you—your ability to trade is affected. China looks to a—you know, change that equation, especially in the South China Sea. So, security leg of the strategy is important, but it is also the one we know best.

The second one is economics, looking at things like infrastructure, energy, digital economy, these things that address exactly what you mentioned, in One Belt, One Road.

And then, as I mentioned before, governance. And it is about, you know, transparency. The difference between open democratic systems and the system that your—you have mentioned is the fact that one is very opaque, and they really do not want you to see what is going on in the background. And so, one of my goals in this job is to work more closely with groups like the Global Engagement Center and others to—and expose these things, make them obvious to everybody. And once people see that, and once you open this up, this is what Australian John Garnaut talks about, casting sunlight on these problems. They tend to go away on their own. An example would be, maybe, Malaysia's election in—bringing Mahathir into power, where it became clear that One Belt, One Road and these things were not quite what they seemed, that maybe there was some elite capture and some deals going on that they did not want the electorate to see. When exposed, it resulted in a different—a change of leadership.

Senator ROMNEY. I would note, from my perspective as well, that one of the key elements, perhaps the key element, as it relates to a strategy is that we have friends, and they tend not to have friends. And that linking with our friends and allies to confront their scale, the sheer scale of their population means that their economy will be enormous at some point, and that it—that tying closer to our friends is essential to the preservation of freedom. As Ranking Member Menendez mentioned, just the fact that we have two friends in the area that are confronting one another is not in our interest. We very much want to have close relations, economic relations with other nations in the world, military coordination, and so forth. My impression is that the administration seems to be pushing away the world. And when we talk about “America First,”

that we are giving a message that somehow we do not care about the rest of the world. I know that is not going to be your point of view. But, is it not very much in our interest to draw in the world, to get closer, economically, to perhaps, yeah, put pressure on China with tariffs on China or other economic sanctions, as needed, but that we should be doing just the opposite with the rest of the world, which is drawing in our friends, getting as close as we possibly can so that we can have the economic and political might to dissuade a very authoritarian regime?

Mr. STILWELL. Senator, thanks for that. That is a great point.

So, I will point to the—you were talking about economics and allies—we will point to the recent conclusion, of course, our bilateral trade—free-trade agreement with the Koreans and, hopefully soon, a similar free-trade agreement with Japan and other allies in the region, doing what we can, at least bilaterally, to ensure, you know, prosperity for both. Those things, as you mentioned earlier—you know, the lack of allies and partners on the Chinese side is a—you know, it is a—it is to their detriment. And it has to do with like-mindedness.

And so, you know, I was just recently in Australia with the Secretary. That relationship is going very well. We are—Prime Minister will be here this week. It—we also have been to Bangkok. I have been to Thailand twice in—since I have been here, working that relationship positively. And, you know, I share your concern about making sure that our allies and partners are onboard.

Senator ROMNEY. Thank you.

Mr. Chairman, let me just note that I will be submitting for the markup later today a proposal to commit us to working with allies and partners both in the Asia-Pacific region and Europe to come up with a common policy to address the challenges we face from the rise of Asia. And I will be hoping to get some support from members of the committee.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Romney.

Senator SHAHEEN.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Assistant Secretary Stilwell, thank you for being here.

I want to change the subject. My home State of New Hampshire has one of the highest overdose death rates in the country based on the opioid epidemic. The highest percentage of those deaths are the result of fentanyl. And the vast majority of fentanyl that comes into the United States comes in from China. And, despite previous agreements with the United States and China, between the two countries, China said, earlier this month, that it has had only limited cooperation with the United States on reducing the illegal import of fentanyl into America. So, do you agree with the Chinese government assessment? And can you talk more specifically to what we are doing to try and encourage China to work with us to keep fentanyl out of this country?

Mr. STILWELL. Senator, thank you for that.

And yes, I do agree that more can be done in the PRC to manage this problem. One of the statements they make is that, “We do not have a drug problem in China.” And yet, we do know that that drug is making it into our own country. So, if they would apply

those same standards domestically as they do when it leaves the country, that would certainly help.

I know the administration, before I came in, brought down a policy that allowed China the ability to use our Postal Service at rates, you know, preferential. I do think that also helped, as well. But, I think—and I know the—both working together—this is another issue that both the administration and the Congress share its concern and activity. I note Senator Rubio praised the passage of the Fentanyl Sanctions Act, holding China accountable for its part in allowing this tragedy to continue.

Senator SHAHEEN. You did not mention what more we are doing to try and get China to comply with the agreements that we have—

Mr. STILWELL. Senator, you have my full commitment to raise this in every setting with them. I also know that they are—in the negotiations through another agency, that they have convinced the Chinese to tighten up their scheduling activity. And so, variations of fentanyl do not continue to make their way in under some guise of, “That is not the one we were looking for.” And so, I—there is positive action, but I will continue to raise that.

Senator SHAHEEN. I would urge you and the State Department to do everything possible to try and keep fentanyl out.

And you mentioned the Postal Service. We know much of that fentanyl comes in through the Postal Service. And yet, this administration has threatened to withdraw from the Universal Postal Union, which would be detrimental to our efforts to try and keep fentanyl out of this country. Can you tell me why the administration is planning to do that, and what we can do to try and urge that you reconsider that decision?

Mr. STILWELL. Senator, thank you for that question.

I am not going to do this all the time, but I will plead ignorance on this one. And I have spent half of my time in the job downrange in the region, and my opportunities to actually study up on all issues has been limited. But, I will take that one for—

[The information referred to follows:]

The Committee Received No Responses From Mr. Stilwell for the Following Questions

Can you tell me why the administration is planning to do that, and what we can do to try and urge that you reconsider that decision?

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you. We will make sure we send a follow-up question and ask you to respond to it.

In 2017, the Federal Retirement Thrift Investment Board announced it would broaden the I Fund to include China and other emerging markets. Senator Rubio and I have sent a letter to the Board expressing our concern about this change. It will come into force in 2020, and we believe it puts at significant risk nearly 50 billion in Federal Government employee retirement assets, and that it undermines U.S. economic and national security interests, because those dollars could go to China for many of its activities that are not consistent with our democracy and our values. So, given the Chinese companies’ lack of transparency and clear ties to the government, do you think this is something that the Thrift Savings Investment Board should reconsider? And has the State De-

partment weighed in on this, or has the administration weighed on—weighed in on this in any way?

Mr. STILWELL. Yeah, thanks, Senator.

Always conscious of staying in my lane, I share your concerns about transparency, as I mentioned earlier, in governance, the ability to understand how decisions are taken, and certainly in economics. Anytime you invest, you want to know what you are investing in, and you want to know how those investments are being managed. And so, I will look into that. But, again, I do not want to speak out of turn.

Senator SHAHEEN. Well, thank you. And I appreciate the concern about staying in your own lane. I would argue that one of the challenges we have in the Federal Government is that we do not have enough interagency communication and cooperation as we address these issues, and that a broader strategy that includes everybody as we are thinking about these—everybody relevant within the government as we are thinking about some of these decisions would be a better approach, because it would mean we could be more effective.

So, thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Shaheen.

Senator Coons.

Senator COONS. Thank you, Chairman Risch and Ranking Member Menendez, for organizing this hearing.

And thank you, Assistant Secretary Stilwell, for sharing your expertise and your views with us today. I appreciate your efforts to communicate with us, and I think we have already built up a significant list of questions where we are looking forward to your response about the administration's views on key pieces of legislation, the administration's actions with regards to fentanyl, with trade, with human rights, with quite a few issues. And so, I will add one more to that pile, if I might.

First, broadly, I do think it is critical we work to reinforce our alliances in the region and reassure our partners, the U.S. remains committed to the Indo-Pacific. And, while our military presence in South Korea, Japan, elsewhere throughout the region, is critical, we also need diplomatic and economic tools to show the U.S. is, indeed, a Pacific power. In your testimony, you referenced infrastructure, energy, and digital as three key lynchpins to our efforts in the region, and initiatives to try and increase private-sector investment and to utilize initiatives like JUMPP, investments in transparency, the new Transaction Advisory Board. And it was in your written testimony, you referenced the One Belt, One Road effort by China as a way that they are undermining, in some ways, the sovereignty, the autonomy of nations throughout the whole region, and concerns that we share about transparency, responsible lending, and sustainable environmental practices. As you know, I am sure, many of us worked together on this committee and with the administration to get the BUILD Act passed and signed into law last year. It creates a 21st-century Development Finance Corporation, which is about to launch, that will bring greater scope and scale to American efforts to mobilize private capital, to boost economic development. And it is my hope that it will be a genuine Develop-

ment Finance Corporation that will also tackle these questions and present a competing model of transparency and sustainability.

I would be interested in hearing, in the many trips that you have been making to the region and that the Secretary has made, what are you doing to help engage and educate governments in the region about these new U.S. tools? In trips I took to Japan and South Korea earlier this year, I made a point of talking with both the leaders of their domestic development finance agencies and with their leaders about this. How do you see us using this tool, going forward?

Mr. STILWELL. Senator, thank you very much for that.

Let me start off by noting—certainly share your concerns about getting at the infrastructure question in the region. And I will speak to the Indo-Pacific, certainly my part of the world. We have seen other infrastructure programs from other countries have had—have been popular. I do think there has been, and will be increasingly, buyer's remorse for One Belt, One Road projects. At the same time, and not necessarily tied to that, you have seen an increased interest in taking advantage of the economic and investment benefits that come from developing infrastructure where it is needed. And we know, off the top of my head, it is something like \$27 trillion of infrastructure need, and yet there is 70 trillion of capital looking for places to invest, looking for solid investments, looking for investments that will pay off, vice these projects we have seen, bridges to nowhere and other things. And so, the fact that an old fighter pilot can actually say that with some fluency tells you that I am, you know, getting up on the step on this one.

But, I would like to point to the—a part of that, the upcoming Indo-Pacific Business Forum that is going to happen in Bangkok on the 4th of November, on the sidelines of the East Asia Summit, where we are encouraging CEOs, Congress, and other U.S. leaders to come share their ideas, opportunities, information with these countries to make sure they understand there is not just one choice—it is not just this one project, this one system—but there is a great opportunity to use, not just the U.S.—and we have been talking allies and partners—you know, Japan has been very active in this region—Korea, Australia, others. And so, the strength in this process as it continues to mature is—it is going to be very broad and give these countries choices that they, right now, do not have.

Senator COONS. Well, I have spent a significant amount of time, in my early years here, focusing on Africa. The difference, in terms of infrastructure investment and engagement in Africa, in particular, is just stunning. And in the Indo-Pacific, I really hope the administration will work closely with our regional allies—Australia, the South Koreans, the Japanese, as you mentioned—as well as our European allies—the Scandinavians, U.K., and French—and move quickly. Because this new capacity should be up and running in a matter of a month or two. I have met with the nominee we are considering soon to run it, who I think can be quite capable, agile. And, with these new resources, we should be able to put on the world stage a competing model for how to do development in a responsible and transparent way. I very much look forward to working with you on it, and look forward to hearing from you how

you think we might be able to be constructive in accelerating the deployment of this new tool.

Thank you.

Mr. STILWELL. Senator, thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much.

Senator Merkley.

Senator MERKLEY. So pleased to have you with us.

So, the administration has been relatively silent on the genocide in Burma regarding the Rohingya, and reportedly because of concern about driving Burma closer to China. But, does that silence, or near silence, on genocide in Burma undermine USA credibility as a champion of human rights, in general?

Mr. STILWELL. Senator, I appreciate your question.

We have had lots of discussions on this topic. There has been action taken. I think you—aware that we have sanctioned, you know, all military officials and their families subject to visa restrictions through the JADE Act. There has been GLOMAG activity, as well. This is clearly a—you know, of high interest to this administration, and it will continue to be as we work with Burma to help them understand the importance of, you know, democratic principles that we all share. And so, I will continue to work that.

I have yet to get to Burma in my travels, but it is on the list. And so, again, I look forward to getting to interact personally and share this message.

Senator MERKLEY. Thank you. I really encourage you to speak out forcefully, because we were very late to doing any sort of sanctions on Burma after much of the international community acted. President of the United States has never spoken publicly condemning the genocide. And it has given a lot of interest to others around the world that they can get away with severe, horrific action against minorities without the U.S. raising its voice in a powerful way. So, I would love to see us, even at this point, speak out. And we are 2 years past.

The Senate passed, last week, the Uyghur Human Rights Act. And the administration has been independently, reportedly, considering visa bans against Xinjiang officials because of the treatment of Uyghurs under the Global Magnitsky Act. Do you see the administration acting quickly to highlight and use Global Magnitsky Act in regard to the Xinjiang officials who are, basically, treating a population almost like slaves?

Mr. STILWELL. Senator, I appreciate that perspective. And yes, the conditions, the activities in Xinjiang are of great concern. And it, certainly to me, the administration, and to the world, you are seeing—the Australians have definitely taken this one up, a documentary—and this is coming out of nongovernment—on the—you know, what they could find on this. If—you know, my concern is, if there is nothing bad happening in Xinjiang, why is it so difficult to get out there and see it? You know, why cannot—if there is nothing wrong, we should be able to travel there on our own and go see for ourselves. I got to travel there when I was the Defense Attaché, and the security environment was eye-watering. And there are issues there. And it has to do, again, with the interpretation of what constitute human rights. And so, we will continue to work with our counterparts. And we have opportunity, coming up here

next week, at the General Assembly and others, and we will raise this.

Senator MERKLEY. I think it would be great to hear the U.S. raise it. The—we keep hearing that the administration is delaying action because they do not want it as a factor during the trade negotiations with China. But, I think, for the administration to really delay acting sends another message that we are abdicating leadership on human rights. The Senate has acted and passed the Uyghur Human Rights Act last week. And it includes my amendment that says there will be Magnitsky sanctions unless China provides independent human rights monitors, with unfettered access. And I would love to see the administration get behind that vision.

I want to turn to the Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act. We did not get a very clear answer when it was raised by my colleague, but I thought I would mention a couple of the key provisions and see if the administration supports them.

One is to assess whether China has an eroded Hong Kong civil liberties, as protected by the Hong Kong's Basic Law. Would you and the administration support such an assessment?

Mr. STILWELL. Senator, it would definitely support a conversation on—you know, and we are, ongoing, assessing and evaluating the current status, in accordance with the Human Rights Democracy and as well as the Hong Kong Policy Act.

RESPONSE RECEIVED FROM HON. DAVID STILWELL TO THE TAKE-BACK QUESTION
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR JEFF MERKLEY

Question. A second provision allows Hong Kong residents to work and study in the U.S. if individuals have been arrested for participating in a nonviolent protest. Is that a provision the administration would support?

Answer. Educational and cultural exchanges between the United States and Hong Kong remain a core element of the relationship. We have also been explicit in expressing our continued support for human rights and fundamental freedoms in Hong Kong, including the freedoms of expression and peaceful assembly, as enshrined in the Basic Law and Sino-British Joint Declaration. Being arrested for participation in a nonviolent protest, in itself, would not preclude visa issuance under the Immigration and Nationality Act.

Senator MERKLEY. A third provision is that the President report to Congress a list of individuals responsible for abducting, torturing people exercising internationally recognized human rights in Hong Kong, and banning such individuals from entering the U.S., and imposing sanctions on them. Would the administration support that provision?

Mr. STILWELL. Senator, I am—offer you the same answer on that. I do not want to get out ahead of the administration. As I said, this subject has come up—you know, in my interaction with the Secretary, has come up at every opportunity, in strong words, to discourage further negative actions in Hong Kong. The President has been very clear, as well, on insisting on a humane resolution and the rest. So, I—yeah, the—we share your concern.

Senator MERKLEY. A fourth provision—this is the last one, Mr. Chairman—is a report—requiring a report on the evasion of sanctions that China would—is required, through U.N. resolutions, to put on sanctions or export controls using Hong Kong to evade actually applying those, including as it applies to North Korea. I will just note that this is a significant issue of Hong Kong being used to allow China to not enforce sanctions and export controls.

I would love to see the administration take a very strong stand on all three of these areas, with Burma, with the Uyghurs, and with Hong Kong.

Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator.

Senator Cruz.

Senator CRUZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Welcome. Thank you for your testimony today.

This week, there were very concerning reports that the Solomon Islands plan to sever their ties with Taiwan, in favor of China. What message do you think this sends to the region? And what can the U.S. do to help prevent our allies from succumbing to economic or military pressure exerted by the PRC?

Mr. STILWELL. Senator, thanks for that question.

The late-breaking news on that is—was unfortunate, and, you know, it is part of a larger strategy to slowly squeeze Taiwan's international space. And, you know, this is why there is a Taiwan's Relations Act. This is why I am very familiar with it and will insist that we continue to abide by that, in addition to, you know, agreements such as the Third Communique, which indicates that, in order to resolve this issue through dialogue and peacefully, as we all agreed to do, that there—you know, there are certain things we are going to have to do. Arms sales. As you note, about \$10 billion of arms sales in 2019 alone, in a—of a defensive nature, to ensure that Hong Kong—or that Taiwan has the opportunity to negotiate and dialogue with the PRC.

So, as far as protecting its international space, again, we are very actively involved that—as I mentioned earlier, the Secretary stopped through the—Micronesia. You know, that is a hard stop to make, and we still went out there to demonstrate U.S. concern, interest, and commitment in the area.

Senator CRUZ. The 2017 U.S. National Security Strategy describes China as a, quote, “competitor.” The 2018 National Defense Strategy refers to China as a “strategic competitor.” And then the 2019 intelligence strategy puts China in the category of “adversaries.” What are the intended implications, if any, of these various labels? And how do you view China, going forward?

Mr. STILWELL. Senator, as you know, words matter. As I said previously, that we need to choose them very carefully. In my mind, especially with regard to ensuring that we are talking about the Communist Party and not the people. But, in this case, I think “strategic competitor” has the right flavor. You know, from my time in Beijing, 8 years ago, we were hoping that we would come to that realization sooner than later. The—I am not going to parse words on the Intel report. I am not sure of its authoritativeness. But, the point is that the U.S. administration, the Congress, have all come to the conclusion that this thing—we need to, kind of, get busy and take active steps to deal with this thing. And, as mentioned earlier, allies, partners—presence, visibility, and, again, all the things the administration has done to date, I think, address this.

Senator CRUZ. Now, China is, of course, investing billions in the Belt and Road Initiative, is also actively promoting espionage, and is also pushing Huawei to build the infrastructure of 5G, along with the capacity of China, to monitor and intercept communica-

tions among our allies. What is your assessment of how effective what China is doing on each of those fronts? And what more should we be doing to press back?

Mr. STILWELL. Senator, I think one of the great aspects of, you know, our country and our system and the system and the—that our like-minded allies and partners share is, we are comparatively slow to anger. We tend to give the benefit of the doubt. And so, I think we have been hopeful that the Chinese, you know, cyber strategy would be resolved. And we have been talking about this for years. This is not just in the last 3 years, but trying to get at China's intent with using cyber to its own benefit.

In the case of Huawei, now, we have finally come to realize—and we are trying to encourage others to admit and understand—that the systems here are under the direct control of the Chinese government. They have laws that say that Chinese companies will release information, you know, at the Chinese government's direction. And so, the fact that it is in this—we are talking about it in this hearing says, I think, it has achieved that level of awareness. Others are aware of the problem. And—you know, and we will continue to work on offering alternatives, pushing other—you know, people want better technology, and I think we need to help get to that.

Senator CRUZ. So, one final question. Washington has believed, for decades that we could change China into a friend by trading with them. And yet, we are seeing evidence that at least some of the reverse is playing out, that China is changing the behavior of American companies. So, multiple U.S. airlines designated Taiwan as a Chinese province in order to maintain access to China. Google began development of Project Dragonfly, a search engine compliant with the great firewall censorship requirements. Apple has located iCloud servers in China, in cooperation with the Chinese state-owned enterprise. And Thermo Fischer has exported AI technology for, quote, “law enforcement purposes” in China.

How should the United States think through a framework for economic cooperation when we are seeing American companies being coopted into helping the communist government maintain power and maintain oppression?

Mr. STILWELL. Sir, that is a great question.

There is plenty that the government can do. But, in the end, you know, there is a business model, here, that looked too good to be true and is quickly being understood to be not all that it appears to be. And so, you are seeing businesses recognize this as they now look for other places, both as markets and as, you know, places to do business, and they are leaving for other destinations where maybe labor costs are lower or maybe the business environment is better. And so, obviously, the government, certainly this administration, has taken pretty significant steps to help business understand the downside of, you know, the things that you mentioned. And you are seeing positive change in that regard.

It is—it diversifies as people look at different markets and the rest, which I think is, economically, a healthy idea, rather than have it all in one place.

Senator CRUZ. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Cruz.

Senator Kaine.

Senator Kaine. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you, Secretary Stilwell.

Two suggestions and a question.

So, the suggestions. Your testimony—written testimony contains a lot of references to the U.S. strategy of maintaining adherence to international law, rules, and standards, promoting freedom of the seas, ensuring freedom of navigation. On page 3, you point out, “At the East Asia Summit Ministerial, the Secretary made a clear statement on China’s bullying in the South China Sea, and urged ASEAN and China to move forward with a meaningful code of conduct that comports with UNCLOS.” How about we just, as the United States, join UNCLOS? I mean, the notion that we are going to try to tell everybody that they should follow UNCLOS, when we are one of the few countries in the world that has not joined it, strikes me as foolish. Many administrations have tried this. Every current living Secretary of State, Secretary of Defense, says it would be a good thing for the country. We visited INDOPACOM in Hawaii, in April, and were told by INDOPACOM it would be a good thing for the country. This would be something that the Trump administration could do to achieve enforcement of freedom of the seas and others that other administrations have not been able to do. If the President would be forceful for it, we could get it done. And so, I would urge the administration to do something that other administrations have not been able to do. That could be a win, and it could achieve what you testify you hope to achieve.

Second, Senator Romney asked you, “What were the elements of the framework?” And you mentioned some elements, but he added to it: alliances have to be key to this. Many of us hoped to have a Trans-Pacific Partnership that would unify us with other nations in the region, and serve America’s interests there. A third of the Democrats voted for fast-track authority to give the President the ability to negotiate a deal. Many of us were disappointed with the ultimate product, on the enforcement side. We liked many of the substantive provisions, but we did not think the enforcement provisions were strong enough. President Trump announced he was terminating those discussions, and the deal has gone forward anyway, without the United States. But, again, if we are serious about alliances, I would encourage the administration to take a look at what they ended up with and decide what additional protections, enforcement or otherwise, the United States might want to get in. But, I think that would both cement alliances and put us together in a strong way to compete economically against China.

And the third—and the question I want to ask you is this. And I know it was referred to before I came. The tensions between Korea and Japan. We were in Korea, a group of nine of us—Senator Portman and I were in that group—in April. And these are wonderful allies of the United States. We have very strong relationships—economic, military cooperation. But, they have significant tensions between them right now. The President is—at least publicly, reported they were trying to schedule a meeting with the South Korean President next week connected to the U.N. General Assembly. What could the U.S. do to try to help, you know, bring

Korea and Japan closer together in this current political environment in those countries?

Mr. STILWELL. Senator, thank you for that.

I think the answer is, What has the administration done, to date, as we saw this process beginning to—you know, this, kind of, tit-for-tat begin? And, as I mentioned earlier, the Secretary has met trilaterally 8 times. The President has met trilaterally twice. As you would imagine, we—you know, we continue to work with both sides. I was just in Seoul, and was talking to Ambassador Harris about other things we can do. I have met with my counterparts multiple times—early August, especially in Bangkok, while we were all together, to encourage both sides just to take a pause and look at resolution versus continuing to express their concern. As you mentioned, these alliances are very important, and the trilateral nature of that sends a very strong message to the region.

So, I will tell you that we will continue working and encouraging them both to look for positive solutions to this current issue.

Senator KAINE. Thank you for your testimony.

Senator PORTMAN [presiding]: Thank you, Senator Kaine.

And, Secretary Stilwell, thanks for your patience today.

I understand that the Chair and Ranking Member are likely to come back after votes, so we are going to go into recess in a second, here, and I am going to literally run to the vote, but I wanted to have a chance to ask you a couple of questions first.

I was at the Department of Transportation this morning. I missed some of your responses, but it sounds like China was central to many of the discussions today. And there is good reason for that. Whether it is the issue of North Korea or Taiwan or the Belt and Road expansions or what is going on in Hong Kong today, as we sit here, Tibet, the Uyghurs, other human rights issues, whether it is the cyberattacks that were talked about earlier, or whether it is the trade issues and the obvious instances of unfair trade, China is kind of in the middle of a lot of issues.

One that I do not know if it got discussed yet today is the fentanyl problem. In Ohio, we have had an epidemic, and more people have died from overdoses in Ohio than any other cause of death in the last few years. Finally, last year we made a little progress. But, even within that progress, you see that the killer is fentanyl. It is, by far, the number-one cause of death. Probably two-thirds of our deaths in 2017 that we have been able to analyze came from fentanyl, often mixed with other drugs; more recently, with crystal meth, not just other opioids. It is coming from China. We know that. I chair the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations. We did an investigation of this issue, and it was very clear that it comes through the U.S. mail system, primarily, and primarily from China.

I have been there. I have spoken to Chinese officials about this. We passed the STOP Act, which requires them to provide advanced data to let our law enforcement know which packages are likely to be vulnerable by knowing where it is from, what is in it, where it is going. But, they could do much more, in terms of shutting down these chemical companies that illicitly are producing this deadly poison that is coming into our communities. They could do more to stop these evil scientists who are taking these precursors.

So, what should we be doing on this? And are you as discouraged as I am about the fact that, after years of raising this with the Chinese, we continue to see a flow of fentanyl coming from China that could be stopped?

Mr. STILWELL. Senator, I do share your concern on that. And there have been a number of things done. I think there is more that can be done to, again, stop the flow of this drug.

There has been success in getting China to actually create a scheduling regime that, you know, puts drugs like fentanyl in a certain controlled bin, which would, in theory, prevent that from making it to the U.S. Unfortunately, you know, chemicals can morph and change, and the scheduling process has to acknowledge that and incorporate all of those.

The administration has taken steps on the U.S. Postal Service to deny and take down China's ability to use our Postal Service at very inexpensive rates, and also affect the ability to use our own mail service to move this drug to the U.S.

You know, this comes up in bilateral interaction. They are a sovereign country. I mean, in the end, there is only so much we can do. But, I do think that the pressure has been steady and continuous, and will continue over time. And you have seen some impact.

On the other hand, there is—you know, by his own admission, the President of China says that there is no drug problem in China. And yet, it is coming here, which tells you they are—have the ability to control it, and maybe they should, you know, exercise more of that.

Senator PORTMAN. Yeah. Well, listen, I would just urge you to continue to raise it at every level and at every meeting. It seems unrelated, maybe, to some of the other issues I listed, but it is not, because it directly affects American citizens and families, and it is devastating our communities, tearing families apart. And we need to do more here, on the demand side. We are doing that, having some success. But, it is so cheap and so powerful, and China can, and must, do more.

On the trade front, what we are looking for is really very simple. We are looking for a relationship that is grounded in fairness, in reciprocity, and in respect for sovereignty. And my thinking is, on so many of these issues where, you know, China is taking on, sort of, the global trading system and the system that has created so much prosperity around the world, it is China that actually has benefited from that more than any other country. If you think about it objectively, you know, they are a huge export power, they are now a major trading partner, and you would think they would want to work with us on fairness, reciprocity, and respect for sovereignty. My hope is that, in October, we have some good meetings, and that we are able to move forward. The Secretary of Transportation—or Secretary of Treasury and the U.S. Trade Representative, I know, are eager to roll up their sleeves in October and make something happen to get back to at least where we were in May, and move forward.

Do you have any thoughts on this? Let me just give you one data point that I assume the Government of China knows. A recent study by UBS of CFOs of export-oriented manufacturers found that one-third of the companies in China that are foreign companies

have moved at least some production out of China in 2018. Another one-third of the companies in China, foreign investment in China, intend to do so in 2019. So, there is a movement out of China, in part because of the trade issues, and particularly the issue of intellectual property and technology transfer. Do you have thoughts on that, whether the Chinese government realizes we are seeking fairness, we are seeking reciprocity, and we are respecting their sovereignty, but we do need to see these changes, but they do, too, in order to continue their economic expansion?

Mr. STILWELL. Senator, strong feelings on this one. And getting to see the steadfast and unblinking approach to—we knew this was not going to be a quick thing, right? This is not going to go over—you know, this is the lifeblood of the Communist Party, is to continue a growth rate that supports its goals for, you know, prosperity. You know, by 2049, they want to be a—you know, a strong, wealthy nation. They have metrics for—that need to be achieved by 2021 and 2049. But, those have to be achieved, as you say, in a way that treats both sides with respect, mutual benefit, and fairness. And that has been where we—it has been falling down. And so, I think you would agree that the President has taken some very strong and effective steps in letting the Chinese know that this sort of behavior is going to end, that we look for a trade partner, and we look for, as they say, true win-win outcomes that—where both sides benefit equally. So, completely share your concern.

Senator PORTMAN. Yeah. Secretary Stilwell, I think you can communicate, perhaps in a way that is different than our negotiators can, to China about the importance of coming to a resolution, and why it is in their interest, and, more broadly, in their interest to have the global trading system continue to be effective. Because they are benefiting from it more than anyone else. And that is fine. If it is fair, if it is reciprocal, we should all be able, you know, to have trade back and forth between our countries. But, that—to me, that UBS analysis that I mentioned to you, and also just the reality that the United States and other countries are finally at the point where we have had enough and we are going to have to see, you know, some increased fairness. In us—for us, the 301 case, you know, is leading these negotiations, but it is even broader than that for many countries around the world that are watching to see what happens. And my hope is, many of those countries will join us.

I see my colleague, Senator Young, has joined us. Assuming he has voted, I will turn to you. Have you already voted?

Senator YOUNG. I have.

Senator PORTMAN. Excellent. Okay. We were going to go into recess during the vote, but you are here to take us through, so—

Senator YOUNG. Yeah. Thanks so much.

Senator PORTMAN. Yeah.

Senator YOUNG. I thank my colleague.

So—and I also thank you, Assistant Secretary.

I understand you recently visited several of our Asian partners and allies, and were engaged in important conversations related to our Nation's security, their security, ways that we can work together in furtherance of our mutual economic goals, moving forward.

These partners and allies, one might argue, in addition to our own American values, which I would regard as Western values, are our most important asset as a country, geopolitically speaking. And so, it is essential, as we, sort of, look at the globe, that we maintain these security and economic relationships, as I know the administration has been emphasizing. Countries that border or are within, you know, sort of, the Southeast Asia and South Asian area are left with at—you know, essentially, a binary choice. They can either be accommodationist towards a power that increasingly is adventurist in its behavior, sort of revisionist with respect to grabbing pieces of ocean and real estate, and they have acted unlawfully, economically, with respect to running afoul of WTO rules. So, they could be accommodationist towards a power like that, or they can take a chance. They can take a chance on the United States, on what was, until recently, called the liberal international economic order of rules and norms and expectations. And much of that depends on the United States and the reassurance that we give our partners.

So, I guess the question I would ask of you, Assistant Secretary, is, as you made your travels, were there particular things that our partners in the Asia-Pacific region, especially Southeast Asia, indicated they are seeking from the United States, in terms of reassurance, moving forward?

Mr. STILWELL. Senator, that is a great question.

You know, reassurance is the one thing—it does not cost a lot, and it is always in short supply. You know, every time we travel to either an ally, partner, or just a—you know, a fellow capital—one, they are very happy to see the Americans there. It gives them that weight, so it is not a binary choice. They can—you know, the word “choice” is interesting. We are allowing a—allowing them to choose their own sovereignty, vice to be issued a—you know, an order to say, “You can do it this way or you are not—you know, you are not going to get anything for it.” And so, I think, in short, the answer to your question is just physical presence. And it is not just me or the administration. I mean, certainly when Congress travels, you carry that same message to these capitals, and it is a message of reassurance, it is a calming message, and it is a message of like-mindedness that, you know, “We believe your sovereignty is the number-one concern. We share that. We—you know, we share that—the interest in sovereignty and then giving you real choices that you can make that benefit you and your country.” And this is where the idea of transparency really comes into play in that. Those, maybe, leaders who are going to make deals that they may not want their countries to—you know, their people to see; that only works for a short time. And so, those who do not necessarily share those democratic principles will eventually, as in the case of, you know, recent countries—those things will come to light, and then they are going to have to answer for that. And so, all we ask is that these deals be transparent.

And one of the programs that the administration has got is a transaction. It is called TAR. And it helps these countries look at and assess, through a legal lens, the deal they have been given, the contract they have been given, and look for the holes in it that may not comport with maintaining their sovereignty. So, we are certainly taking active steps in that regard.

Senator YOUNG. That is helpful. So, one of the things I heard is the importance of a presence. During my time in the Navy, we heard about the importance of naval presence. That extends, I think, to the economic and diplomatic realm. And we, in Congress—I agree, we play an important role in making sure that we carry the flag of the United States of America to these capitals, visiting world leaders, and reassure our allies and partners that we are with them. And then that presence needs to be backed with resources, where necessary—military, diplomatic, developmental, and so forth. And to the extent you can make this body aware of the particular tools, as you just have, that you are hearing a real need for, an appetite for in your travels that is very helpful, because we want to partner with the administration on this effort.

So, thanks again for your presence here today.

And I do not see the Chairman present, so we will—yeah, so I will unilaterally suspend the hearing, at this point.

[Laughter.]

Senator YOUNG. Yeah. Irrespective of any parliamentary words I must utter, I hereby—I hereby suspend this hearing, sir. You can go take care of yourself in some private setting.

[Laughter.]

Senator YOUNG. All right? Yeah. I am out of here.

[Recess.]

The Chairman [presiding]: Committee will come back to order. Thank you so much.

As usual, we struggled through the interruption, but here we are.

So, with that, Senator Menendez, the floor is yours.

Senator MENENDEZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

You know, Senator Young said he “suspended” the hearing. And I thought it was martial law that—

[Laughter.]

Senator MENENDEZ. Anyhow. But, I am glad that the Secretary stayed.

A couple of quick final questions. I remain concerned that the administration created the appearance that our security commitment to Taiwan is up for negotiation with Beijing over U.S.-China trade issues. Can you tell, Mr. Secretary, this committee now that our relationship with Taiwan is guaranteed by the law under the Taiwan Relations Act, it is not being used as a bargaining chip by the administration?

Mr. STILWELL. Senator, I can confirm that. And nothing speaks louder than \$10 billion in, you know, defensive weapons sales this year. That shows a commitment to ensuring that Taiwan has the ability to, you know, stand up to and negotiate from a position of equality and not from weakness.

Senator MENENDEZ. I agree with that. That is why I, from—to the extent that my role, along with the Chairman, of approving arms sales, I approved that rather quickly, but then it was held up by the administration. And it is that holding-up that creates concerns for me that leads to the question. So, I am glad to hear you reaffirm, unequivocally, that we are not using Taiwan as a bargaining chip with China over other issues that we have.

Let me ask you about the role—we have spent a lot of time with China and Japan, South Korea, and on—myriadly so, on Hong Kong, but several administrations have sought to deepen the U.S. relationship with India in order to address the rise of China in Asia. And, while that defense relationship has grown from being essentially nonexistent following the end of the Cold War, there are still questions about the possibilities for security cooperation between Washington and Delhi, which has roots in a historical Indian approach of nonalignment in foreign affairs. India's border dispute with China last year in Doklam helped to bolster the security partnership with the United States, but a lot of work, I think, remains. What do you see as obstacles to deeper defense cooperation between the United States and India? And, given these obstacles, what do you see as realistically possible?

Mr. STILWELL. Senator, thank you for that question.

And if Alice Wells, SCA, was sitting right here, I would certainly pass that question to her, as India is not in the EAP responsibility. But, I will say that—well, I met with Alice yesterday, and we had this conversation on doing a better job of stitching together East Asia Pacific and South and Central Asia to make sure that that black line between Bangladesh and Burma, between Central Asian Republics and China, and the like, is much less solid, that it is more gray, and that any actions we take are in consultation and coordinated. And so, we can get exactly at the point you make about, you know, bringing India in into the EAP region as a like-minded security provider. The Quad is ongoing. We are hearing lots of great things at Delhi on—again, participating with Japan and Australia and the U.S. on shared security interests.

As far as details on the Indian military capabilities, I am going to have to get back to you on that.

RESPONSES RECEIVED FROM HON. DAVID STILWELL TO THE TAKE-BACK QUESTIONS
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

Question. India's border dispute with China last year in Doklam helped to bolster the security partnership with the United States, but a lot of work, I think, remains. What do you see as obstacles to deeper defense cooperation between the United States and India? And, given these obstacles, what do you see as realistically possible?

Answer. While as Assistant Secretary for the East Asian and Pacific Bureau I cannot comment on U.S.-India defense cooperation, I can tell you that India is a vital player in the overall Indo-Pacific Strategy.

The United States and India share a comprehensive defense partnership and we are committed to help build India's capacity as a net security provider in the Indo-Pacific. India is a Major Defense Partner of the United States, and the 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue serves as the primary mechanism to advance security cooperation. The United States has offered India a wide-array of defense technologies, and we look forward to our first tri-service military exercise with India in November. We appreciate Congressional support for deepening defense ties with India, including the Major Defense Partner designation.

Senator MENENDEZ. I would appreciate that. I think it is hard to have an Indo-Pacific Strategy without understanding the Indo side of that. So, I would look forward to you giving us an assessment. And if it is—and I am happy for you to work with your colleague to give us that assessment.

So, lastly, I want to follow up on something that our colleague, Senator Gardner, raised with you. As I said in my opening statement, we have been concerned that the Indo-Pacific Strategy of the

administration has not been resourced. In fact, in the past, it has had funds cut. And I know, as an Air Force general—I am sure you are familiar with the adage—“You show me your budget, and I will tell you your strategy.” So, we have been concerned that there has been rhetoric, but no resources that make a strategy. I do not know if you are aware that, in this year’s foreign operations bill, the Senate Foreign Operations Committee has provided 2.55 billion to support the Indo-Pacific Strategy, an increase of about a billion dollars over the President’s budget request, I think. I applaud the appropriators, in a bipartisan way, for doing that. I support it.

Can I get your commitment today that you will endeavor to ensure that all those funds are fully expended as Congress directs, and that none of those funds will be subject to rescission or other unconstitutional or illegal withholding by OMB or the administration?

Mr. STILWELL. Senator, absolutely appreciate the support from the Congress in making my job a lot easier, as you see the administration and the Congress working closely together, and you are seeing both—there is a bipartisan support for this—these bills and this activity.

I will just note that the EAP, my budget, is—been increased by 47 percent, as you mentioned, resourcing the strategy as—and helping me, and us, do a better job to support your direction, as well, as we coordinate with you. So, again, we thank you for all the legislation that supports the administration’s Indo-Pacific Strategy and our shared desire to get at this problem.

Senator MENENDEZ. Well, I—I will tell you, Mr. Secretary, you have adapted well from the military regime to the State Department regime, which is not always very responsive. So, let me return to my question. And that is—

The CHAIRMAN. I thought that was a compliment.

[Laughter.]

Senator MENENDEZ. Well, I—it depends on—

The CHAIRMAN. I started out like—

Senator MENENDEZ. —it depends on where you sit.

[Laughter.]

Senator MENENDEZ. In any event, my key question here is that if we resource something, if Congress has the intent to say, “This is where we want money spent,” we need you to execute on it. Otherwise, then, we are resourcing a strategy that we, in a bipartisan way, agree, but then, to see those resources either not executed upon and, therefore, fall to some other purpose, or be redirected. If you are executing on the strategy, and committing the resources, then we will not fall into that set of circumstances. So, let me rephrase the question and maybe get a more direct response.

Can I expect you to assiduously execute, once you receive these funds, within your lane on the issues that we are resourcing so that we can see them spent in a timely fashion to accomplish the goal?

Mr. STILWELL. Senator, I will be a very careful steward of the funds provided, in accordance with the law, as directed.

Senator MENENDEZ. Now, “a careful steward” can either take an inordinate amount of time to execute or can execute in an appropriate amount of time. So, I appreciate every member of the execu-

tive branch being a careful steward of Congress's appropriations. My goal—and I am not trying to trap you into something, I am trying to get to—if we are actually finally resourcing what you need to do to execute the strategy that we believe, in a bipartisan way, will get us to a better position in the Indo-Pacific region, but it will take you to execute on it in a prompt—yes, efficient, and yes, steward like fashion as a fiduciary—but, am I going to expect that you are going to execute on this in a way that we will not see, at the end—if we see, at the end of this period of time, an excessive amount of money that has not been spent in pursuit of the strategy, then one of two things exist. Either that strategy does not need that much money, in which case we will have to reconsider it, or it's purposeful, at the end of the day, is to leave resources for other purposes. Can I expect you to execute on it in a timely fashion to assure that we achieve the goal that we have resourced?

Mr. STILWELL. Senator, to the best of my ability, I will do that.

Senator MENENDEZ. All right. Thank you very much.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Menendez.

Secretary Stilwell, thank you so much for coming here today and giving us the benefit of your view and your testimony.

For the information of the members, the record will remain open until the close of business on Friday. And we would ask that the witness respond as promptly as possible. And your responses, of course, will be made part of the record.

So, nothing else for the good of the order, committee is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 11:50 a.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

RESPONSE OF HON. DAVID STILWELL TO QUESTION SUBMITTED BY SENATOR JAMES E. RISCH

Question. It is important that U.S. strategic priorities are reflected not only in our budgets, but also in our personnel footprint. Given the higher priority this administration has placed on China and the Indo-Pacific, what steps is the Department taking to ensure we have sufficient Foreign Service Officers and Civil Servants in the region? If the Department has not taken any such steps, why not? What priorities or initiatives could you better advance with more people in the region?

Answer. I support the Department of State's FY 2020 request of onboard levels of nearly 24,700 Department USDH personnel. This level of staffing is needed to carry out the Department's foreign policy mission and meet the goals and objectives of the National Security Strategy and Joint Strategic Plan. This staffing level is consistent with the Department's current hiring plan and previous Congressional guidance.

We have added new positions in the bureau of East Asia and Pacific Affairs to implement our Indo-Pacific Strategy and are continuing the process of ensuring we have adequate human resources to support the strategy. Moreover, the Department's public calls for diplomatic resources for these programs is a signal of our commitment to our vital interests in the region.

RESPONSES OF HON. DAVID STILWELL TO QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY SENATOR ROBERT MENENDEZ

CHINA'S GOALS/INTENTIONS

It seems as though there are as many opinions regarding China's intentions as there are analysts, with some saying it is strictly economic, others that China seeks to change the global system of governance, and still others asserting that China wants to achieve regional or even global hegemony.

Question. What is your view on what China wants in the near term, in the long term, and why? What are—in your views—the three most important things the U.S. can do to protect its interests vis-à-vis China?

Answer. Beijing's strategic objectives are to: 1) Resume its rightful place at the center of the global stage. 2) Strengthen the Communist Party's rule, and 3) complete its development goals by maintaining economic growth and technological advancement. In response to China's counterproductive actions, we must defend U.S. interests while adjusting the nature of the bilateral relationship to deal with negative behaviors such as intellectual property theft, forced technology transfers, and other market-distorting practices. To put the relationship in more even footing, the administration is raising the profile of Beijing's egregious human rights abuses in diplomatic engagements, maintaining tariffs on Chinese exports in order to encourage Beijing to end its unfair trade policies and practices, and supporting U.S. finance and export credit tools to mobilize private sector investment and promote sustainable development projects.

CEDING U.S. INFLUENCE TO CHINA

Over the past 3 years the U.S. has retreated from its leadership role in the international community, providing China with an opportunity to expand its role on the global stage. Examples abound, such as the administration's decision to pull out of the Paris Climate agreement, the Trans-Pacific Partnership, the Iran nuclear deal, the Human Rights Council, and so forth. The impact of these moves has been twofold: it has led some of our country's closest allies to begin hedging their bets and decreasing the weight they give to U.S. preferences in their own decision-making because they view the United States as untrustworthy and unreliable and it has shifted attention to other vehicles—such as the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) and a TPP-11 in the economic and trade realms—in which the U.S. is not included. The result is that the U.S. is at a disadvantage.

Question. How do we compete with China and how do we mitigate the negative effects of its rise and influence if we don't even have a seat at the table in these institutions and agreements, many of which we ourselves forged and once led?

Answer. The United States remains the leading contributor to international organizations. I am confident in our ability to maintain the independence and values of these organizations. We recognize that China is seeking to reshape the international system, especially in multilateral development and technical/standards-setting bodies, to accommodate its narrow interests and authoritarian system. The United States is working collectively with like-minded partners and others to bolster international rules and norms and to share best practices in the face of challenges posed by China. Many of our UNGA High Level week engagements focused on advancing a positive U.S. agenda with our partners in multilateral fora and highlighting the need to expose and counter China's problematic behaviors consistently and publicly.

Question. China's path may be easier for governments in developing countries who calculate they either don't want or can't afford to protect democratic institutions. What can the United States do to combat the erosion of democratic norms amid China's growing influence?

Answer. In short, we need to shine a light on China's nefarious behavior while more consciously advocating for democratic and free market ideals. The United States remains a model for democracy and freedom for the world, especially developing countries. While China's authoritarian political model and state-centric development approach might appeal to some local political leaders, I am confident local populations desire the same democratic freedoms and protections as people everywhere. For example, while China might build an economically unviable stadium in Africa, the United States has long collaborated with nations in Africa and their people to eradicate disease, develop businesses, and improve educational opportunities. Efforts by any foreign government, including China's, to undermine the democratic institutions, fiscal sustainability, or national security of countries around the world are unacceptable. We will highlight our concerns with Beijing's problematic practices globally, and continue to offer positive alternatives through both our diplomacy, public engagement, and assistance efforts.

Question. So, yes or no, do we have an agreement in writing with North Korea: That the current nuclear test suspension must continue, and that denuclearization means the dismantlement or removal of all nuclear weapons, facilities, technology, and material from North Korea?

Answer. Our goal is to achieve the final, fully verified denuclearization of the DPRK, as committed to by Chairman Kim in Singapore. U.N. Security Council Reso-

lutions require North Korea to abandon its nuclear and ballistic missile programs. The Trump administration is engaged in a diplomatic effort to eliminate the DPRK's U.N.-prohibited WMD and ballistic missile program and has built unprecedented international support. Meanwhile, as the President has said, sanctions on the DPRK remain in effect.

There is still a great deal of work to do to achieve our goal of the final, fully verified denuclearization of North Korea. The Department is committed to keeping you and other members of Congress updated on the administration's efforts.

Question. So, yes or no, do we have an agreement in writing with North Korea: That North Korea will end the production and enrichment of uranium and plutonium for military programs?

Answer. Our goal is to achieve the final, fully verified denuclearization of the DPRK, as committed to by Chairman Kim in Singapore. U.N. Security Council Resolutions require North Korea to abandon its nuclear and ballistic missile programs. The Trump administration is engaged in a diplomatic effort to eliminate the DPRK's U.N.-prohibited WMD and ballistic missile program and has built unprecedented international support. Meanwhile, as the President has said, sanctions on the DPRK remain in effect.

There is still a great deal of work to do to achieve our goal of the final, fully verified denuclearization of North Korea. The Department is committed to keeping you and other members of Congress updated on the administration's efforts.

Question. So, yes or no, do we have an agreement in writing with North Korea: That North Korea will permanently dismantle and disable its nuclear weapons infrastructure, including test sites, all nuclear weapons research and development facilities, particularly with respect to advanced centrifuges, and nuclear weapons enrichment and reprocessing facilities?

Answer. Our goal is to achieve the final, fully verified denuclearization of the DPRK, as committed to by Chairman Kim in Singapore. U.N. Security Council Resolutions require North Korea to abandon its nuclear and ballistic missile programs. The Trump administration is engaged in a diplomatic effort to eliminate the DPRK's U.N.-prohibited WMD and ballistic missile program and has built unprecedented international support. Meanwhile, as the President has said, sanctions on the DPRK remain in effect.

There is still a great deal of work to do to achieve our goal of the final, fully verified denuclearization of North Korea. The Department is committed to keeping you and other members of Congress updated on the administration's efforts.

Question. So, yes or no, do we have an agreement in writing with North Korea: That North Korea will put forward a full, complete and verifiable declaration of all its nuclear activities?

Answer. Our goal is to achieve the final, fully verified denuclearization of the DPRK, as committed to by Chairman Kim in Singapore. U.N. Security Council Resolutions require North Korea to abandon its nuclear and ballistic missile programs. The Trump administration is engaged in a diplomatic effort to eliminate the DPRK's U.N.-prohibited WMD and ballistic missile program and has built unprecedented international support. Meanwhile, as the President has said, sanctions on the DPRK remain in effect.

There is still a great deal of work to do to achieve our goal of the final, fully verified denuclearization of North Korea. The Department is committed to keeping you and other members of Congress updated on the administration's efforts.

Question. So, yes or no, do we have an agreement in writing with North Korea: That North Korea has agreed to robust restrictions to assure that nuclear material, technology and expertise are not exported?

Answer. Our goal is to achieve the final, fully verified denuclearization of the DPRK, as committed to by Chairman Kim in Singapore. U.N. Security Council Resolutions require North Korea to abandon its nuclear and ballistic missile programs. The Trump administration is engaged in a diplomatic effort to eliminate the DPRK's U.N.-prohibited WMD and ballistic missile program and has built unprecedented international support. Meanwhile, as the President has said, sanctions on the DPRK remain in effect.

There is still a great deal of work to do to achieve our goal of the final, fully verified denuclearization of North Korea. The Department is committed to keeping you and other members of Congress updated on the administration's efforts.

Question. So, yes or no, do we have an agreement in writing with North Korea: That North Korea will continue its current missile tests suspension, including all

ballistic missiles and any space launch, and has agreed to the dismantlement of all ballistic missiles and a prohibition on all ballistic missile development?

Answer. Our goal is to achieve the final, fully verified denuclearization of the DPRK, as committed to by Chairman Kim in Singapore. U.N. Security Council Resolutions require North Korea to abandon its nuclear and ballistic missile programs. The Trump administration is engaged in a diplomatic effort to eliminate the DPRK's U.N.-prohibited WMD and ballistic missile program and has built unprecedented international support. Meanwhile, as the President has said, sanctions on the DPRK remain in effect.

There is still a great deal of work to do to achieve our goal of the final, fully verified denuclearization of North Korea. The Department is committed to keeping you and other members of Congress updated on the administration's efforts.

Question. So, yes or no, do we have an agreement in writing with North Korea: That, like nuclear technology, North Korea has agreed to sufficient safeguards to assure us that no ballistic missiles and associated technology are proliferated or exported?

Answer. Our goal is to achieve the final, fully verified denuclearization of the DPRK, as committed to by Chairman Kim in Singapore. U.N. Security Council Resolutions require North Korea to abandon its nuclear and ballistic missile programs. The Trump administration is engaged in a diplomatic effort to eliminate the DPRK's U.N.-prohibited WMD and ballistic missile program and has built unprecedented international support. Meanwhile, as the President has said, sanctions on the DPRK remain in effect.

There is still a great deal of work to do to achieve our goal of the final, fully verified denuclearization of North Korea. The Department is committed to keeping you and other members of Congress updated on the administration's efforts.

Question. So, yes or no, do we have an agreement in writing with North Korea: That North Korea will submit to a robust compliance inspections including a verification regime for its nuclear and ballistic missile programs, including complete access to all nuclear related sites and facilities with real time verification including "anywhere, anytime" inspections and snap-back sanctions if North Korea is not in full compliance?

Answer. Our goal is to achieve the final, fully verified denuclearization of the DPRK, as committed to by Chairman Kim in Singapore. U.N. Security Council Resolutions require North Korea to abandon its nuclear and ballistic missile programs. The Trump administration is engaged in a diplomatic effort to eliminate the DPRK's U.N.-prohibited WMD and ballistic missile program and has built unprecedented international support. Meanwhile, as the President has said, sanctions on the DPRK remain in effect.

There is still a great deal of work to do to achieve our goal of the final, fully verified denuclearization of North Korea. The Department is committed to keeping you and other members of Congress updated on the administration's efforts.

Question. So, yes or no, do we have an agreement in writing with North Korea: That any agreement is permanent in nature, with no sunsets on its provisions?

Answer. Our goal is to achieve the final, fully verified denuclearization of the DPRK, as committed to by Chairman Kim in Singapore. U.N. Security Council Resolutions require North Korea to abandon its nuclear and ballistic missile programs. The Trump administration is engaged in a diplomatic effort to eliminate the DPRK's U.N.-prohibited WMD and ballistic missile program and has built unprecedented international support. Meanwhile, as the President has said, sanctions on the DPRK remain in effect.

There is still a great deal of work to do to achieve our goal of the final, fully verified denuclearization of North Korea. The Department is committed to keeping you and other members of Congress updated on the administration's efforts.

Question. So, yes or no, do we have an agreement in writing with North Korea: That progress on sanctions relief should be dependent on dismantlement and removal of North Korea's nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programs?

Answer. Our goal is to achieve the final, fully verified denuclearization of the DPRK, as committed to by Chairman Kim in Singapore. U.N. Security Council Resolutions require North Korea to abandon its nuclear and ballistic missile programs. The Trump administration is engaged in a diplomatic effort to eliminate the DPRK's U.N.-prohibited WMD and ballistic missile program and has built unprecedented international support. Meanwhile, as the President has said, sanctions on the DPRK remain in effect.

There is still a great deal of work to do to achieve our goal of the final, fully verified denuclearization of North Korea. The Department is committed to keeping you and other members of Congress updated on the administration's efforts.

Question. So, yes or no, do we have an agreement in writing with North Korea: That any deal that gives North Korea sanctions relief for anything other than the verifiable performance of its obligations to dismantle its nuclear and missile arsenal is a bad deal?

Answer. Our goal is to achieve the final, fully verified denuclearization of the DPRK, as committed to by Chairman Kim in Singapore. U.N. Security Council Resolutions require North Korea to abandon its nuclear and ballistic missile programs. The Trump administration is engaged in a diplomatic effort to eliminate the DPRK's U.N.-prohibited WMD and ballistic missile program and has built unprecedented international support. Meanwhile, as the President has said, sanctions on the DPRK remain in effect.

There is still a great deal of work to do to achieve our goal of the final, fully verified denuclearization of North Korea. The Department is committed to keeping you and other members of Congress updated on the administration's efforts.

SUPPORTING AND FOSTERING AUTOCRATIC REGIMES

China may not be trying deliberately to challenge the United States ideologically, but its practices and policies have made the world safer for autocrats: it provides economic assistance with no demands on good governance, protects rogue regimes from punishment in international institutions; and teaches other countries best practices for internal repression. In addition to not asking questions or protecting democracy and human rights, China also makes it easier for autocratic regimes to survive through its economic support (such as Venezuela and North Korea), it also is exporting its pervasive surveillance technologies and many of the weapons used to oppress citizens seeking greater democratic rights.

BELT AND ROAD

China's economic might is its primary lever for altering existing global governance structures. Through its Belt and Road Initiative, China has expanded its economic reach throughout the globe, and with it, its global influence.

Question. What can we do to check China's rise? Are infrastructure investments underwritten by China as part of its "Belt and Road" Initiative (BRI) about improving Chinese access to foreign markets, or is it a de facto way to establish a global presence that could be utilized for security and defense purposes—or both?

Answer. We raise our concerns with partners and China that the latter's infrastructure diplomacy activities embody a set of standards and principles outside accepted international standards and best practices. The United States views One Belt One Road, or OBOR, as a "made by China, for China" initiative that aims to expand China's state-driven, anti-competitive approach to global trade and investment. China would contribute more to global economic development by addressing the unfair barriers and imbalances in its own domestic market. China should follow through, for example, on its public commitments to reject protectionism and promote trade and investment liberalization by lifting numerous discriminatory policies and practices, including large government subsidies that favor Chinese firms, discrimination against foreign firms operating in China, forced technology transfers, foreign ownership restrictions, opaquely administered licensing requirements, and intellectual property theft. As Secretary Pompeo has said, "It is one thing to compete in an open, fair, transparent way. The United States is prepared to compete with our NATO allies, with China, with any country that shows up with a commercial transaction—a better mousetrap, a better idea—and compete with fair, reasonable, transparent transactions. It is a very different thing to engage in transactions that have a national security component to them. When a nation shows up and offers you goods that are well below market, one ought to ask what else is at play, why it was that that entity showed up with a deal that is literally too good to be true."

This approach is working. At the second Belt and Road Forum, the Chinese Communist Party representatives spent most of their time on the defensive, explaining why OBOR is not a debt trap.

Question. What can we do to make the United States more competitive—both economically and diplomatically, vis-à-vis China? What is the United States' competitive edge?

Answer. The United States' competitive edge is the free and open global market system that we created and that has fueled unprecedented prosperity in the United

States and around the world over the past 70 years. In order to maintain the integrity of this system, we must ensure that all countries, including China, play by established rules that ensure market forces, not political fiat, drive national interaction. That means collaborating with our allies and partners to deal with China's state-directed economic model and unfair trade practices, including intellectual property theft, forced technology transfer, and state subsidies that distort global markets and harm workers and businesses in countries that play by the rules. This administration is taking a range of strong actions, including tariffs on Chinese goods, that have brought China to the negotiating table. But we are also strengthening our export controls, bolstering our investment screening, and encouraging our allies and partners to do the same. History has shown that the United States can out-compete any state-directed economy as long as we hold fast to our values and confront the behavior of challengers that seek to exploit our open economy.

CHINA-LATIN AMERICA

We have seen the China accelerate its engagement with Latin America and the Caribbean in recent years, particularly as the U.S. has neglected the region. In fact, Latin America has become the second-largest destination for Chinese foreign direct investment, with more than half of it going to natural resources, but also includes expansion into tech telecoms, and auto manufacturing. From 2005–2017, China provided the region with an estimated \$150 billion in development loans and other assistance, and in recent years, Chinese banks' financing to the region surpassed that of the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank combined. It has helped prop up the Maduro regime in Venezuela and has been responsible for building ports, nuclear research reactors, and other infrastructure projects across the region. All of this is our own back yard, and despite the fact that most governments in the region would prefer to work with the U.S. but find we are either not interested, not able to respond quickly enough, or offer deals that are too expensive or have too many strings attached ...

Question. What can we do to reassert a U.S. presence in the region as a helpful and honest partner, while preserving protections for the environment, human rights, and fair practices?

Answer. As neighbors and partners, we have a strong interest in the region's well-being and prosperity. What China does here economically and otherwise affects us all. We work to strengthen governance, promote transparency, and ensure respect for human rights—the values that define our hemisphere. We oppose those who seek to silence dissent, deprive citizens of their privacy, impose restrictions on religious beliefs and practices, or use corrupt, non-transparent practices. We are deepening our longstanding engagement with the region and continue to work with our partners to uphold global standards and norms. We are supporting regional growth by broadening our development finance tools and implementing our “Growth in the Americas”—or “Americas Crece” initiative—to catalyze private investment in energy and infrastructure. We support countries in the region to negotiate with China from a position of strength. The region is home to 12 of the 20 countries with which we enjoy free trade agreements, and we remain committed to market-driven, private sector-led economic development. The total stock of U.S. direct investment in Latin America was \$1 trillion in 2017, compared to \$390 billion from China. We believe that the sustainable, value-added engagement we provide is a far better approach for the region than predatory lending that produces little benefit while often leaving lasting negative impacts.

U.S. STRATEGIC REGIONAL ALLIANCES

As I noted in my opening statement, in our Indo-Pacific strategy and our competition with China we cannot ignore the critical importance of our existing alliances and partnerships. Countries in Europe and Asia that are willing and able to work with us in meeting the challenge posed by China's growing power—many of which have some of the world's strongest economies and most powerful militaries—are a critical asset and indeed a competitive advantage in and of themselves.

Question. What do you see as the best way to leverage these allies in constructing an Indo-Pacific strategy and in mitigating China's rise? Are there particular areas of your focus and attention that you would highlight for the Committee, with regard to existing allies and partners, who are concerned about recent United States' actions, reliability and predictability in the region?

Answer. My first trip to the region made stops at four of our five allies in the region. On that trip, I was focused on hearing their concerns and demonstrating the U.S. commitment to the region. Clear communication has shown to be the most ef-

fective way to reassure I'm focusing on engagement and messaging to ensure allies and partners have the clearest understanding of our intent and expectations.

Our existing alliances and partnerships are central to the three pillars of the Indo-Pacific Strategy (IPS): prosperity, governance, and security. The values and principles driving our policy—like sovereignty and decisions made free from coercion—are shared by our partners in the region. With these partners we have identified digital economy, infrastructure, and energy as target sectors for development in the region. No one invests more in the Indo-Pacific than we do. U.S. FDI more than doubled from 2007 to 2017, reaching \$940 billion. In 2016, U.S. direct investment supported 5.1 million jobs in the Indo-Pacific region. On the security front, the U.S. provided more than \$500 million dollars in security assistance in FY2018. This includes \$400 million in foreign military financing, more than the prior 3 years combined. This includes a focus on maritime domain awareness, humanitarian assistance/disaster response, peacekeeping, and countering transnational threats, all of which are concerns shared by our friends and allies in the region. The second Indo-Pacific Business Forum on the sidelines of the East Asia Summit on November 4 of this year will demonstrate the efficacy of these programs.

HUMAN RIGHTS/UYGHURS

Over a million Uyghurs, Kazakhs and other ethnic Muslims remain arbitrarily detained in so-called re-education camps for no other reason than their faith, appearance and culture. We've had prominent Uyghurs testify in this room—calling on the United States to impose targeted sanctions on senior military officials who are responsible for this internment.

Question. What steps is the U.S. administration taking to ensure that the Chinese government is held accountable for these actions?

Answer. The United States is alarmed by China's highly repressive campaign against Uyghurs, ethnic Kazakhs, Kyrgyz, and other Muslims in Xinjiang, including the detention of over 1 million individuals in camps since April 2017. We have publicly expressed concern about China's repression and arbitrary detentions at the highest levels, including statements by Vice President Pence and Secretary of State Pompeo. We are constantly raising this issue, both with the Chinese, other governments, American businesses, civil society, and in multilateral fora. For example, on September 24, the United States co-sponsored a panel discussion on the human rights crisis in Xinjiang on the margins of the United Nations General Assembly attended by more than 30 countries, including GCC members.

Question. What support are we giving for refugee resettlements for Uyghurs in the United States or in any other part of the world?

Answer. The U.S. government provides funding to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), which has the mandate for protection and assistance to refugees and asylum seekers worldwide, to include Uyghurs and others fleeing persecution in China. The U.S. government considers for resettlement Uyghurs who have been referred by UNHCR to the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program. In addition, during the U.N. General Assembly, Secretary Pompeo called on all countries to resist China's demands to repatriate Uyghurs.

Question. What kind of support are we giving to civil society organizations who are documenting the stories of Uyghurs and other ethnic Muslims? What are we doing to protect them and others from harassment?

Answer. We commend the reporting of civil society organizations, academics, and news organizations that are documenting the human rights crisis in Xinjiang. We also recognize the bravery of so many Uyghurs who have shared their stories publicly, despite the risks. DRL programs around the world promote the development of a civil society that is capable of pressing governments to be responsive to human rights violations and citizen demands, including in places like China. This includes support to groups to document abuses, including of religious freedom.

HUMAN RIGHTS/TIBET

It is my firm belief that the promotion of religious freedom must remain a central pillar for successful U.S. foreign policy. The Chinese Government has sought to assert its claim that it is the sole authority to decide on the issue of Tibetan reincarnation, particularly that of the Dalai Lama, but it is my understanding that while reincarnation is a common belief among Buddhists, the practice of the search for the identification of reincarnated individuals is a purely Tibetan Buddhist practice. Therefore, the selection of the next Dalai Lama is a matter of religious freedom for Tibetan Buddhists and should be without governmental interference and up to the

Tibetan Buddhist community. If any government, including that of China, should seek to intervene or select the next Dalai Lama, it would effectively undermine the legitimacy of a revered Tibetan Buddhist institution and deprive millions of Buddhist practitioners around the globe, including those in the United States, their legitimate spiritual leader and teacher.

Question. Where do you see an opportunity for the United States to protect the right of Buddhists to enjoy religious freedom and to ensure that Buddhist religious institutions are free from Chinese interference?

Answer. We are deeply concerned by the Chinese government's tightening restrictions on religious practice, including in particular interference in the selection, education, and veneration of Tibetan Buddhist religious leaders, which has a global impact on all practitioners. This administration will continue to advocate for the right of religious communities to select, educate, and venerate their leaders without interference. We will continue to urge China to promote religious freedom for all individuals, including Buddhists and those who worship outside of official state-sanctioned institutions. We remind Chinese counterparts that decisions regarding the selection of Tibetan Buddhist leaders rests with Tibetan Buddhist leaders and the Tibetan people. We will continue to raise Tibetan issues with Chinese government counterparts at multiple levels, and to have frank discussions with Chinese authorities about human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the freedoms of expression, religion, and belief.

DEMOCRATIC TRANSITIONS

Question. Broadly speaking, what is your assessment of democratic transitions in Southeast Asia? Are countries continuing to make progress in becoming free democratic societies—or have they lost momentum and do their setbacks signal a broader retreat from democratic values and principles? What is the overall trend for the region?

Answer. Countries in Southeast Asia continue to make progress, albeit slow and uneven, towards democratic reforms. In Malaysia, last year's historic elections marked the first-ever transition of power from the ruling coalition to the opposition since the country's independence in 1957, and the new government is working towards implementing constructive democratic reforms. Indonesia marked two decades since its remarkable transition from authoritarian rule to democracy, and in April 2019 held its fifth successful nationwide election. In Burma, we strongly support ongoing efforts to promote democratic reforms, including establishing civilian control of the military, and to strengthen the capacity of civil society organizations, political parties, and ethnic groups to more effectively engage in the democratic process. In Cambodia, we had seen some progress with elections that allowed for effective competition between several parties. However, the arrest of the opposition leader, dissolution of his party, and subsequent ban on 118 opposition leaders by the Supreme Court are serious setbacks to democracy in Cambodia. Government efforts to curtail civil society and independent media are also significant challenges. Finally in Thailand, as we work with the newly formed Royal Thai Government to deepen the alliance and partnership between our two nations, we consistently message to Thailand's government, opposition parties, and civil society that democratic institutions must be strengthened and human rights and fundamental freedoms must be respected.

I remain committed to supporting democratic transitions through engagement and foreign assistance to further advance democratic values.

Question. What is your assessment of the current situation in Thailand? What is the appropriate level and type of engagement between the United States and Thailand as we return to "normal" in our relationship? What options are available to the United States to encourage or induce Thailand to continue to make progress on democratic and constitutional government?

Answer. Thailand is a key partner and a long-time ally in Asia. The U.S.-Thai relationship covers the full range of political, security, and economic cooperation, and we remain committed to maintaining our friendship with Thailand and the Thai people. The decision to lift the military coup restriction on foreign assistance in July 2019 was based on the return to a democratically elected government, but we recognize that there is still work to do. For many years, we have supported the strengthening of democratic institutions, civil society, and independent media in Thailand. We consistently message to Thailand's government, opposition parties, and civil society that democratic institutions must be strengthened, and we support efforts to do so. Continued progress to uphold democratic institutions, human rights, and fundamental freedoms is essential to our ongoing partnership with Thailand.

Question. How should the U.S. government reconcile two often-competing imperatives: support for electoral democracy and close diplomatic and strategic relations with a U.S. treaty ally like Thailand?

Answer. The United States has long supported accountable and democratically elected governance in Thailand, and we welcomed Thailand's long-awaited return to civilian rule. Secretary Pompeo recognized during his visit to Bangkok last month that the elected voices in the newly formed Royal Thai Government, both in the Parliament and in the Cabinet, will help assure that the government reflects the will of the Thai people. The lifting of the military coup restriction provides important new opportunities to work with the new government to deepen the U.S.-Thai alliance and partnership, and to support ongoing progress in transparency and good governance. A strong U.S.-Thai partnership also supports Thailand's ability to address a broad range of 21st century threats to a free and open Indo-Pacific region.

HUMAN RIGHTS AND FREE AND OPEN INDO-PACIFIC

Question. How does human rights factor into decision-making in the administration's Free and Open Indo-Pacific strategy? How are programs and policies intended to support human rights and good governance being prioritized and resourced in the administration's budget request?

Answer. Promoting respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, including freedom of religion or belief, is a key component and focus our vision for a free and open Indo-Pacific. We will continue to promote transparency, openness, rule of law, and the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, and the United States has continuous and ongoing programs supporting these goals. Thanks in large part to the strong support we have received from Congress, our investments in these areas totaled over \$400 million over a 2-year period. On November 17, 2018 at the APEC CEO Summit, the Vice President announced an Indo-Pacific Transparency Initiative to direct our investments in this space to advance shared goals in the region.

My continued close interactions with DRL A/S Rob Destro will be instrumental in promoting policies intended to support human rights and good governance. The first collaborated event we did together was the Deputy Secretary's on Xinjiang at the margins of UNGA, which demonstrated our resolve in promoting international human rights standards. As such, I will continue to support human rights by strengthening our diplomatic and public diplomacy efforts throughout the world; imposing economic costs; placing export restrictions on items that can be misused or on entities that act in a manner inconsistent with U.S. foreign policy; and imposing visa restrictions on individuals involved in or responsible for human rights abuse. I am committed to working with foreign governments improve respect for human rights and promote good governance.

Question. Can you ensure you will meet with civil society groups that work on human rights issues in the region? When you travel will you make sure you meet with activists on the ground?

Answer. I assure you that I will meet with civil society groups that work on human rights issues while on travel in the region. I will also meet with activists to gain a greater understanding of the human rights situation on the ground. During my recent travel to Timor-Leste and Indonesia, I met with participants in the regional Young Southeast Asian Leaders Initiative (YSEALI)—who are going to be part of the next generation of leaders—to underscore our shared commitment to respect for human rights and good governance. In Singapore, I met with think tankers and other civil society members to discuss our shared values for rules-based government. In Timor-Leste, I was able to launch the Marie Colvin Memorial English Journalism Scholarship. Marie Colvin was an American journalist whose courageous reporting from a besieged U.N. compound in Syria after the 1999 referendum helped save the lives of 1,500 refugees. This scholarship encourages journalism that can help people make informed decisions about their country and futures.

Question. Do you believe that the crimes committed against the Rohingya constitute genocide or crimes against humanity?

Answer. We remain deeply concerned about the Burmese military's appalling human rights abuses against Rohingya and members of other ethnic and religious minority groups. We remain focused on accountability for those responsible, seeking justice for victims, advocating for unhindered humanitarian access, and promoting reforms that will prevent the recurrence of atrocities and other human rights violations and abuses.

The U.S. government has characterized the atrocities that took place in northern Rakhine State since August 2017 as “ethnic cleansing,” due to the horrific nature of crimes committed against Rohingya. Additional determinations that certain acts may amount to genocide or crimes against humanity would be made in the Executive branch by the Secretary of State, who has stated he seeks policies that promote accountability and change behavior. I will continue to assess all available information and make recommendations on how best to support and promote justice and accountability for atrocities and other human rights violations and abuses in Burma.

Question. What steps is the administration taking in imposing real costs to the Burmese military and in imposing financial sanctions on the highest-levels of the senior military officials?

Answer. The United States continues to prioritize accountability for those responsible for these abuses and justice for victims as part of larger efforts to promote and defend human rights. We will continue U.S. leadership of the international response to the Rakhine State crisis and efforts to deter further atrocities. In this regard, the United States will consider the utility of all policy tools at our disposal, including sanctions.

To date, the United States has conducted its own documentation of abuses, sanctioned five officials and two units within the Burmese military, and designated four individuals as gross human rights violators, including the Commander-in-Chief and Deputy Commander-in-Chief of the Burmese military. Anyone designated under this authority, Section 7031(c), is ineligible for entry into the United States. In addition, under the Leahy Law, we have found that there is credible information that all units and officers involved in operations in northern Rakhine State, as well as their chain of command up to and including the highest levels of the Burmese military, were implicated in gross violations of human rights, and therefore, consider those units and individuals to be ineligible to receive any U.S. assistance under the Leahy Law.

Question. What signal do you think we send to the Burmese military or to the victims when 1 day we say they should be held accountable—but then go on to train and conduct naval operations with their forces?

Answer. The ASEAN-U.S. Maritime Exercise (AUMX) in Thailand included participants from the United States and the 10 ASEAN member nation states (AMS). Under long-standing ASEAN practices, AMS cannot be excluded from an official ASEAN event, including Burma. The substance of the exercise supports critical U.S. national interests in bolstering regional stability and cooperation.

At the same time, we have shown, through both financial sanctions, Leahy Law restrictions, and visa restrictions, we are taking targeted actions against those who are involved in violations or abuses of human rights in an effort to promote accountability. In parallel, we undertake actions that promote civilian oversight of the military and the strengthening of Burma’s democratic institutions. To assist Burma in overcoming decades of isolation and repression under military rule, we will search out opportunities to promote reform, advance good governance, and help Burma avoid mistakes of its past.

Question. What do you believe are the main stumbling blocks for the continued democratic transition and for ethnic reconciliation? Are there constitutional or other reforms that you see as necessary if we are to be able to consider Burma democratic?

Answer. We support Burma’s transition away from military rule, efforts to make Burma’s constitution more democratic, and efforts to defend Burma’s independence from malign influences in the region. It is critical that the United States maintain our policy of engagement with Burma to move the country in the direction of civilian, democratic rule. We should support through engagement and foreign assistance those elements of civil society, business, and government that seek reform and to enshrine the institutions of democracy, good governance, rule of law, free markets, and respect for human rights.

Empowering Burma’s democratic institutions, and reducing the role of the military in politics, is key to addressing longstanding underlying challenges following 50 years of authoritarian rule. Reform of the military, to include placing it under civilian control and holding its members accountable for abuses, is critical to Burma’s transition.

Question. How should we approach our mil-mil relationship with Burma given that the Tatmadaw has yet to be held accountable for its role in the Rohingya geno-

cide or other ethnic conflicts? Where and how do issues related to ethnic and national reconciliation fit in with the political transition process?

Answer. Reforming the Burmese military, ending its decades of impunity, and placing it under the control of the civilian government is essential for Burma's future. Further, promoting ethnic and national reconciliation, as well as building an inclusive civic identity, is crucial for Burma to move past its more than seven decades of civil war. Ultimately, progress depends on the people, government, military, and armed groups of Burma, but the Department will continue to prioritize ways to support efforts towards peace and reconciliation.

At present, the United States prohibits the sale of military equipment to Burma, as well as military assistance, including International Military Education and Training (IMET) and Foreign Military Financing (FMF) assistance. Further, under the JADE Act, the United States is required to restrict visas for military leaders and their immediate family members.

As previously mentioned, Leahy Law ineligibilities will apply until the government of Burma is determined to have taken effective steps to bring the security force unit members responsible for gross violations of human rights to justice.

Question. Over the long-term, is there anything more the U.S. can do to support a smooth democratic transition—and genuine national reconciliation—in Burma?

Answer. The United States must maintain our policy of engagement with Burma to move the country in the direction of civilian, democratic government. We should support those elements of civil society, business, and government that seek reform and bolster institutions that promote democracy, good governance, rule of law, free markets, and respect for human rights, including religious freedom. That includes strengthening the capacity of civil society organizations, political parties, and ethnic groups to more effectively engage in the democratic process; empowering public servants to be responsive to their constituents; encouraging responsible investment and businesses practices to shrink the space for corruption; and expanding opportunities for the next generation of leaders to continue needed reforms.

Question. In the past week, Taipei has lost two more diplomatic partners to Beijing. Given the steady bleeding away of Taiwan's diplomatic recognition under the Trump administration, what more needs to be done to support Taiwan's international space?

Answer. The State Department is already taking actions to demonstrate its continued support for Taiwan's participation in the international community—a reflection of the strong belief that it is a democratic success story, a reliable partner, and a force for good in the world. As we draw attention to Taiwan strengthening its ties with its remaining diplomatic partners, we also point out Beijing destabilizing and coercive actions, which run counter to the Three Communiqués.

During the United Nations General Assembly High-Level Week, the United States invited Taiwan authorities to attend several U.S.-hosted side events. These included a religious freedom event at U.N. Headquarters, where President Trump delivered remarks, a roundtable on directing U.S. capital to emerging markets in the Indo-Pacific, and a roundtable on promoting gender equality in the Indo-Pacific. In addition, Taiwan President Tsai Ing-wen met with the U.N. ambassadors of all Taiwan's diplomatic partners during her transit through New York City in July 2019.

Nine of Taiwan's remaining 15 diplomatic partners are in Latin America and the Caribbean. We believe that Taiwan has been a committed development partner in the region, whether through direct bilateral assistance or through its long-standing support of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB). The Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs has been actively engaging Taiwan and regional partners to enhance cooperation, as well as investment and infrastructure financing initiatives. In June, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary Julie Chung met with Taiwan's ambassadors in Haiti and St. Lucia. She also participated in the U.S.-Taiwan Working Group Meeting on International Organizations on August 6. The State Department sent a Deputy Assistant Secretary from the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs to speak at an event in commemoration of the IDB's 60th anniversary that the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) hosted on Taiwan's role as a development partner in the region. The event highlighted Taiwan's 25 years of contributions to the IDB, including funding for women entrepreneurs, programs to prevent chronic kidney disease, and training for engineers. The event drew senior officials from the State Department, the Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC), the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), and representatives from Taiwan's diplomatic partners in the region.

To highlight Taiwan's strengths as a partner for countries in the Pacific, the American Institute in Taiwan (AIT) and Taiwan Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA)

are co-hosting the first-ever Pacific Islands Dialogue in October 2019. The senior-level dialogue will explore potential areas of cooperation between the United States, Taiwan, and our like-minded partners in the Pacific Islands.

More broadly, the State Department supports Taiwan's meaningful participation in international organizations that do not require statehood, and focus on public health, safety, and security. We continue to work with our like-minded partners to advocate for Taiwan in multilateral fora, including the World Health Organization (WHO), the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), and the International Police Organization (INTERPOL), where Taiwan seeks to expand its already significant contributions to addressing global challenges.

RESPONSES TO HON. DAVID STILWELL QUESTIONS
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Question. Does the State Department support passage of the Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act?

Answer. We are concerned about efforts by Beijing to erode the autonomy that underpins our special treatment of Hong Kong. We will continue to engage with Congress on these issues.

Question. What message have we delivered to the Chinese and Hong Kong authorities about what U.S. redlines are?

Answer. The United States remains staunch in our support for Hong Kong's high degree of autonomy as guaranteed in the Sino-British Joint Declaration and reflected in the aspirations of Hong Kongers. In response to the ongoing crisis, we have urged all sides to exercise restraint and expressed strong support for freedom of expression and peaceful assembly in Hong Kong. The Department has clearly stated that any forcible intervention in Hong Kong would be unacceptable to the international community and have dire consequences for China's global reputation, relationships, and interests.

Question. What would be the consequences and implications if the Chinese government were to roll in with their security forces and crackdown on the protestors?

Answer. The United States has called on the PRC government to adhere to its commitments and obligations under the Basic Law and the Sino-British Joint Declaration to respect Hong Kong's high degree of autonomy. We have clearly stated that forcible intervention by Beijing in Hong Kong would face the harsh condemnation of the international community and would have lasting negative consequences for China's global reputation, relationships, and interests. We will continue to urge China to exercise restraint and act in accordance with its commitments and obligations regarding Hong Kong.

Question. Please expand on Secretary of Defense Mark Esper's statement that the Indo-Pacific is "our priority theater."

Answer. Although the Department of Defense is best placed to comment on the Secretary of Defense's specific remarks, we share his focus on the Indo-Pacific as a priority. From early in this administration, President Trump made engagement in the Indo-Pacific region a priority. In November 2017 in Vietnam, he outlined a vision for a free and open Indo-Pacific region where all countries can prosper side by side as sovereign, independent states.

The U.S. National Security Strategy recognizes that we are entering a new era of great power competition, and that the Indo-Pacific will be a central focus in that competition. Through a whole-of-government Indo-Pacific strategy, we are dedicated to building new partnerships with countries and institutions that share our commitment to an international system based on clear and transparent rules.

The U.S. government has taken several steps to invest and orient ourselves in line with the President's prioritization of the Indo-Pacific region. The United States also provided almost three-quarters of a billion dollars in security assistance for Indo-Pacific nations in fiscal years 2018 and 2019, including \$500 million in bilateral and regional foreign military financing.

Question. Do you expect an expansion of naval deployments or other activities in the region?

Answer. Questions about specific military deployments and activities remain within the purview of the Department of Defense, however, maritime security is a shared focus of our activity in the Indo-Pacific. The U.S. has an enduring national interest in ensuring freedom of navigation and other lawful uses of the sea.

We support cooperation with Indo-Pacific partners to maintain free and open access to the maritime domain for all nations. Moving forward, we will continue to support continued multilateral activities with like-minded partners, to include exercises, port visits, and Freedom of Navigation Operations.

Question. Secretary Esper has spoken of expanding U.S. base locations in the region. What possibilities exist in this regard?

Answer. DoD is best placed to answer this question. We will continue to seek opportunities for appropriate diplomatic engagement to support DoD's efforts to build partnerships and grow U.S. presence in cooperation with our like-minded partners and allies.

Question. What are the administration's goals for the upcoming East Asia Summit and the U.S.-ASEAN summit in November?

Answer. The administration plans to engage the East Asia Summit and U.S.-ASEAN summits to further advance our strategy for a free and open Indo-Pacific. We will demonstrate our vigorous commitment to peace and security in the region, and highlight our deep-rooted and dynamic economic ties in the region, including the extensive role of the U.S. private sector. The administration will advance U.S. interests on regional security priorities, in particular, North Korea's denuclearization, addressing China's militarization of disputed features and provocative actions in the South China Sea, as well as the ongoing situation in Burma's Rakhine State. The administration will reaffirm its commitment to a robust, unified ASEAN at the heart of the free and open Indo-Pacific. The summits will also be an opportunity to demonstrate close alignment with our allies and partners on efforts in Southeast Asia and the benefits that accrue to the entire Indo-Pacific as a result of those partnerships. In addition to the East Asia Summit and U.S.-ASEAN Summit, the United States and Thailand will co-host the Indo-Pacific Business Forum on November 4, to highlight our economic and commercial engagement under the Indo-Pacific Strategy and expand the economic ties that drive job growth and prosperity on both sides of the Pacific. The Business Forum will promote the role of our dynamic private sector in the region, and the importance of a high quality, transparent, socially-responsible approach to business.

Question. Will President Trump attend the EAS and U.S.-ASEAN summits in Bangkok?

Answer. The administration recognizes the importance of participating at the highest possible level in ASEAN-centered meetings, including the U.S.-ASEAN and the East Asia Summit. While a decision has not yet been made on who will lead the U.S. delegation to the summits, the administration is fully committed to advancing our vision for a free, open, and secure Indo-Pacific region.

As an Indo-Pacific power, consistent and sustained U.S. leadership in the region is vital to our long-term national security. The President's National Security Strategy and National Defense Strategy make clear the priority the United States places on injecting new vitality into our regional partnerships, and the administration is resolved to maintaining our longstanding leadership role and defending the security and prosperity of this vital region.

U.S.-CHINA RELATIONS

In August 2018, a U.N. panel said it was "alarmed" by reports of mass detentions and mass surveillance in Xinjiang. It recommended an end to extralegal detentions and the immediate release of detainees. In his October 2018 speech, Vice President Pence asserted that Uyghurs were being subjected to "around-the-clock brainwashing" and that survivors see the camps as an effort to "stamp out the Muslim faith."

Question. Are U.S. officials pressing PRC officials about human rights issues in Xinjiang, and, if so, through what means and in what venues?

Answer. The administration remains deeply concerned by China's crackdown on the human rights and fundamental freedoms, including religious freedom, of Uyghurs, ethnic Kazakhs, Kyrgyz, and other members of Muslim minority groups in Xinjiang. We continually press China, both publicly and privately, to end its repression of members of ethnic and religious minority groups and release all those who have been arbitrarily detained. In addition, the Department of State is actively working with other agencies on effective actions to address these human rights issues. The Department has conducted outreach to U.S. and Chinese companies with business in Xinjiang to urge them to implement human rights safeguards in an effort to ensure that their commercial activities do not contribute to these abuses.

Question. Is the United States government involved in any coordinated international activity on behalf of Uyghurs in Xinjiang?

Answer. The Department of State is leading extensive diplomatic and public diplomacy efforts to galvanize international condemnation of the Chinese government's human rights abuses in Xinjiang. On March 13, we co-hosted an event on the human rights crisis in Xinjiang at the U.N. in Geneva on the margins of China's Universal Periodic Review. On March 26, Secretary Pompeo met with Uyghurs affected by PRC repression. During the Ministerial to Advance Religious Freedom in July, President Trump met with survivors from the many communities impacted by China's restrictions, including Uyghurs. During President Trump's Global Call to Protect Religious Freedom on the margins of the U.N. General Assembly (UNGA) on September 23, Jewher Iham testified to China's abuses of Uyghurs. On September 24, also on the margins of the U.N. General Assembly, Deputy Secretary Sullivan co-hosted (with Canada, Germany, the Netherlands, and UK) an event on the human rights crisis in Xinjiang. This event was attended by over 30 U.N. member state delegations, as well as live streamed and amplified in multiple languages through various Department social media platforms, reaching an online audience of over 191,000. The Department will continue to lead international coordination efforts on this issue through regular diplomatic engagement.

Question. What is the status of U.S. considerations regarding imposing Global Magnitsky Act sanctions on Xinjiang officials?

Answer. The Chinese Government's detention of more than 1 million individuals in Xinjiang since April 2017 is illustrative of the worsening human rights situation in China. We are committed to using all tools available as appropriate to hold accountable those Chinese officials responsible for these human rights abuses and will not cease our actions until Beijing's behavior changes.

Question. Is the administration's tariff policy toward China part of an effort to "decouple" the U.S. and Chinese economies in the name of national security, as some administration officials have suggested? Is that a realistic goal?

Answer. It is not U.S. policy to "decouple" from China or constrain its growth in any way. The President wants a robust trading and investment relationship with China, as long as it plays by the rules and does not exploit our open system. The goal of applying tariffs is to encourage The People's Republic of China to cease acts, policies, and practices covered by USTR's Section 301 investigation, including China's market-distorting technology transfer requirements and intellectual property practices that threaten American innovation in critical sectors. China should adopt policies that will lead to fairer trade, more efficient markets, and prosperity for all of our citizens.

Question. Do you believe that the crimes committed against the Rohingya constitute genocide or crimes against humanity?

Answer. The Department remains deeply concerned about the Burmese military's appalling human rights abuses against Rohingya and members of other ethnic and religious minority groups. We remain focused on accountability for those responsible, seeking justice for victims, advocating for unhindered humanitarian access, and promoting reforms that will prevent the recurrence of atrocities and other human rights violations and abuses.

The U.S. government has characterized the atrocities that took place in northern Rakhine State since August 2017 as "ethnic cleansing," due to the horrific nature of crimes committed against Rohingya. Additional determinations that certain acts may amount to genocide or crimes against humanity would be made in the Executive branch by the Secretary of State, who has stated he seeks policies that promote accountability and change behavior. I will continue to assess all available information and make recommendations on how best to support and promote justice and accountability for atrocities and other human rights violations and abuses in Burma.

Question. What steps is the administration taking in imposing real costs to the Burmese military and in imposing financial sanctions on the highest-levels of the senior military officials?

Answer. The United States continues to prioritize accountability for those responsible for these abuses and justice for victims as part of larger efforts to promote and defend human rights. We will continue U.S. leadership of the international response to the Rakhine State crisis and efforts to deter further atrocities. In this regard, the United States will consider the utility of all policy tools at our disposal, including sanctions.

The United States has conducted its own documentation of abuses, sanctioned five officials and two units within the Burmese military, and designated four individuals as gross human rights violators, including the Commander-in-Chief and Deputy Commander-in-Chief of the Burmese military. Anyone designated under this authority, Section 7031(c), is ineligible for entry into the United States. In addition, under the Leahy Law, we have found that there is credible information that all units and officers involved in operations in northern Rakhine State, as well as their chain of command up to and including the highest levels of the Burmese military, were implicated in gross violations of human rights, and therefore, consider those units and individuals to be ineligible to receive any U.S. assistance under the Leahy Law.

Question. The United States has since then certified that Thailand has restored democracy and resumed normal military to military relations—does it believe then that Thailand had a free and fair elections?

Answer. The United States has long supported accountable and democratically elected governance in Thailand, and we welcomed Thailand's long-awaited return to civilian rule. Following the election, we noted our concerns about ongoing criminal cases and disqualification reviews, and we advocated that the Election Commission should resolve these cases through a transparent process that maintains the confidence of the Thai people and in accordance with democratic norms. In accordance with U.S. law, the certification that a democratically elected government had taken office in Thailand resulted in the lifting of the military coup restrictions on assistance to the Government of Thailand. We also understand that there is still work to do to strengthen democracy and rule of law in Thailand. The United States has long supported the strengthening of democratic institutions, civil society, and independent media in Thailand, and we will continue to do so.

Question. What levers does the United States have to push for human rights and democracy issues in Thailand?

Answer. The lifting of the military coup restrictions provides important opportunities to work with the new government to deepen the U.S.-Thai alliance and partnership, and to support ongoing progress in transparency and good governance. Our foreign assistance to Thailand focuses on law enforcement capacity building, trafficking in persons, security assistance, assisting refugees and displaced persons, and strengthening democratic institutions. We consistently message to Thailand's government, opposition parties, and civil society that democratic institutions must be strengthened, and we support efforts to continue Thailand's democratic progress.

Question. Does the State Department consider Taiwan to be a "country," and if so, does it no longer consider Taiwan's political status to be unresolved?

Answer. The United States remains committed to the U.S. one China policy based on the Three Joint Communiques and the Taiwan Relations Act. Consistent with the one China policy, the United States recognizes Beijing as the sole legal government of China and has acknowledged the Chinese position that there is one China. There has been no change to our one China policy. This policy has enabled us to maintain robust unofficial relations with Taiwan while pursuing a constructive, results-oriented relationship with China. Our consistent policy has contributed to the security of Taiwan, and supported the maintenance of peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait.

Question. How, if at all, is the administration planning to help Taiwan resist potential PRC influence operations targeting the January 2020 presidential and legislative election?

Answer. Strengthening Taiwan's ability to resist potential PRC influence operations is a priority for the administration, and the Department of State is currently working a variety of initiatives in support of this objective. Defending democratic institutions and countering disinformation is a focus for the American Institute in Taiwan (United States) and TECRO's (Taiwan) Global Cooperation and Training Framework (GCTF), which aims to leverage Taiwan's resources and capabilities to amplify U.S. programming and outreach across the Indo-Pacific. Launched in 2015, the GCTF has convened more than a dozen programs on a variety of issues, including media disinformation. Hundreds of policymakers and experts from throughout the Indo-Pacific have participated.

Most recently, on September 10–11 in Taipei, AIT and the Taiwan Foundation for Democracy (TFD) organized a GCTF workshop on Defending Democracy through Promoting Media Literacy, which involved the participation of Deputy Assistant Secretary Scott Busby from the State Department's Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor. Under AIT auspices, the Bureau also led the first annual U.S.-Taiwan Consultations on Democratic Governance in the Indo-Pacific Region on Sep-

tember 12 in Taipei. The consultations are a platform for U.S. and Taiwan stakeholders to explore potential areas of cooperation to promote democratic values and transparency in the region. Both events examined Taiwan's existing efforts to promote media literacy among students and the general populace, and to counter disinformation from authoritarian regimes, especially in the lead up to Taiwan's presidential and legislative elections on January 11, 2020.

Working through AIT, the Department of is also partnering with Taiwan's National Information and Communication Security Task Force (NCIST) to host a two-part cyber security training and simulation on November 4–8, 2019. Part of this training, Taiwan's annual Cyber Offense and Defense Exercise (CODE), will focus on strengthening cybersecurity of Taiwan's critical IT infrastructure, including election systems, as well as strengthening Taiwan authorities' resilience to malicious cyber activities, including social engineering.

Additionally, through AIT, the Department's Global Engagement Center (GEC) implements several counter-disinformation programs with Taiwan organizations. GEC will implement multiple projects in the coming fiscal year to provide rapid election-related support, as well as build longer-term resilience. These projects include supporting fact checking and media literacy organizations, strategic communications workshops to more effectively counter disinformation, and research to analyze the impact and longer-term trends of disinformation in Taiwan. GEC also partners with Taiwan organizations to build capacity in other countries.

Through GEC's support, TFD and the East-West Center partnered this past summer on a good governance and rule of law workshop that convened civil society members from Pacific Island countries. During the GCTF workshop and democratic governance consultations in September 2019, U.S. and Taiwan authorities committed in principle to build upon these workshops to train additional regional partners.

Question. In your view, how does Australia fit into the United States' free and open Indo-Pacific strategy? What is Thailand's role in the strategy?

Answer. We share a commitment with our allies Australia and Thailand—and with other partners—to preserve an Indo-Pacific that is free and open. Our close cooperation with Australia—one of our most capable and reliable partners in the Indo-Pacific—is underpinned by a deep alignment of our mutual interests and shared values, and evident from our consistent, high-level bilateral engagements including AUSMIN, the annual Australia-U.S. Ministerial Consultations. Through these engagements, the United States and Australia work together to tackle our most pressing regional and global challenges, including preventing Chinese interference in the Pacific. The United States and Australia also share a deep commitment to ASEAN centrality, and we are both committed to working with ASEAN to strengthen its role as a centerpiece of the Indo-Pacific's regional architecture and increase its contributions to a free and open Indo-Pacific region.

Thailand is one of our longest standing allies in the Indo-Pacific region, and our broad cooperation continues on issues that benefit both of our countries, the region, and beyond. A strong U.S.-Thai alliance, forward-looking and rooted in history, facilitates a free and open, prosperous, and peaceful Indo-Pacific region. Together we have made progress on shared goals such as advancing regional security, expanding trade and investment, addressing public health challenges, countering transnational crime, combating trafficking in persons, and assisting refugees and displaced persons. We value Thailand's role as a regional leader, including its chairmanship of ASEAN this year, as well as its co-hosting of the Indo-Pacific Business Forum on November 4, 2019.

Question. To what degree is the United States coordinating a security strategy in the Southwest Pacific with allies Australia, New Zealand, and Japan?

Answer. As part of the U.S. Indo-Pacific Strategy, the United States is addressing regional security challenges by redoubling our commitment to established alliances and partnerships, in this case by working with Australia, New Zealand, and Japan in the Pacific. We have a shared interest with all three nations—and with other like-minded partners—to confront common threats, protect shared resources, and uphold sovereignty—including in the Pacific Islands.

The United States coordinates regularly on security cooperation in the Pacific through several mechanisms. Specifically with Australia and New Zealand, we conduct an annual Australia-New Zealand-United States Trilateral Pacific Security Dialogue. Together with France, the United States works with Australia and New Zealand in the Quadrilateral Defense Coordination Group to coordinate maritime security efforts in the Pacific Islands region.

INDOPACOM regularly coordinates capacity-building activities including the building, training, and equipping of the Pacific Island Countries' security forces with Australia, Canada, France, Japan, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom. The Department of Defense partners closely with Australia and New Zealand in delivering humanitarian assistance and defense capacity building in the region. In 2018, the Australian government agreed to lead an effort with the United States to redevelop a naval base in Papua New Guinea. Both Australia and New Zealand have welcomed increased U.S. defense attache presence in the Pacific, including new offices in Papua New Guinea and Micronesia.

The United States, Australia, and Japan are pursuing complementary initiatives to build capacity that advances the region's rules-based maritime order and boosts resiliency to natural disasters. Three Cabinet Secretaries have visited the region in the past year. In Palau for instance, the United States is supporting efforts to improve its maritime domain awareness through the installation of a maritime coastal surveillance system; Japan has established a maritime law enforcement center; and Australia is providing a patrol boat. The United States, Australia and Japan hold the Security and Defense Cooperation Forum, an annual trilateral dialogue to promote cooperation in areas such as humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, peacekeeping support, and maritime capacity building. At the margins of the 18th Shangri-La Dialogue in Singapore, the Acting Secretary of Defense and the Japanese and Australian ministers of Defense agreed on a Strategic Action Agenda that enables their respective defense organizations to plan and implement enhanced trilateral defense cooperative activities.

RESPONSES OF HON. DAVID STILWELL TO QUESTIONS
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR JEANNE SHAHEEN

Question. The administration has threatened to withdraw from the Universal Postal Union (UPU), which would be detrimental to efforts to reduce the flow of fentanyl and other opioids into the United States. Withdrawal from the UPU would seriously hamstring the ability of the Postal Service to collect electronic data on packages arriving from abroad. Do you believe it is important that the United States remain within the Universal Postal Union and increase efforts to ensure countries are providing advance electronic data on international mail?

Are you aware of efforts within or outside the State Department to ensure the Postal Service is receiving advance electronic data on packages from abroad?

Answer. The Universal Postal Union is a valuable institution that helps serve many American interests. The administration would strongly prefer to remain in the Union.¹

At the same time, the UPU's procedures have not kept pace with changes in the global economy. Ensuring the exchange of advance electronic data for international mail has been one of our two chief negotiating objectives in the last year of intensive outreach and negotiation with other UPU members by the State Department and U.S. Postal Service. These efforts compliment robust assistance programs by both agencies to ensure receipt of advance electronic data. We are confident that those negotiations will come to a successful conclusion.

RESPONSES OF HON. DAVID STILWELL TO QUESTIONS
SUBMITTED BY SENATOR EDWARD J. MARKEY

HONG KONG

On August 30th, I wrote to Facebook CEO, Mark Zuckerberg, asking why Facebook runs targeted ads for state-controlled media organizations—including those in mainland China—that dehumanize and spread disinformation about the Hong Kong protestors. Unlike Twitter, which changed its policy during the protests, Facebook still accepts money from Chinese state-run outlets that use its platform to cast protestors as rioters and extremists. Without a change in policy, state-run

¹On September 25, the UPU Extraordinary Congress agreed by consensus to a landmark set of reforms. These reforms secured the main objectives of the Trump administration, representing a major diplomatic victory and a demonstration of American leadership. As part of the agreement, the U.S. Postal Service will provide the UPU 40 million Swiss francs (\$40 million) over the next 5 years to address several U.S. priorities including increasing the capacity of UPU members to provide advanced electronic data (AED), addressing the challenge of counterfeit goods, and stemming the shipment of drugs through the postal system.

outlets will keep finding ways to spread their skewed narratives without technically violating Facebook's content restrictions.

Question. Do you believe these advertisements can have a negative effect on U.S. interests and values?

Answer. The United States recognizes the important role of an independent and free media in a democratic society. The freedoms of expression, including for members of the media, and peaceful assembly are core values that we share with Hong Kong; these must be vigorously protected. We are deeply concerned by Chinese government attempts to manipulate public opinion by spreading disinformation about the situation in Hong Kong—including through the use of state-sponsored disinformation campaigns on social media and other platforms.

Question. Have you been in touch with American social media companies regarding their responsibilities with respect to disinformation spread by state-controlled entities? If so, to which companies did you speak and what did you say?

Answer. We engage in regular dialogue with American social media companies. Following Facebook's August 19 announcement that it removed multiple Chinese accounts linked to state-sponsored disinformation campaigns, Department of State officials raised the matter with Facebook's Hong Kong office. The conversation focused on the balance between protecting freedom of expression and combating coordinated disinformation campaigns in the context of the ongoing protests in Hong Kong. Facebook subsequently announced that its collaboration with the Agence-France Presse (AFP) fact check service, which provides Facebook with fact-based justifications for removing certain instances of disinformation, would be extended to Hong Kong.

Question. What signal does it send to would-be authoritarians around the world that the United States is overlooking widespread, structural impediments to democracy?

Answer. The United States supports democracy, human rights, and fundamental freedoms as essential components of good governance, peace, and prosperity around the world. For instance, following Thailand's elections on March 24, the seating of Parliament, and the subsequent formation of government on July 16, the Secretary of State certified that a democratically elected government had taken office in Thailand. This certification resulted in the lifting of the restrictions on assistance to the Government of Thailand imposed as a result of the 2014 military coup, in accordance with U.S. law. We have long supported accountable and elected governance in Thailand, and we are pleased to see a great diversity of opinion and voices in Parliament. The decision to lift military coup restrictions was based on the seating of a democratically elected government, but we understand that work remains to be done by Thailand on democracy and human rights. We continue to call on Thailand to strengthen democratic institutions and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Question. If we are to credibly push back on the pernicious rise of authoritarian policies, especially those being implemented and exported tacitly, if not explicitly, by the Chinese government, why should the United States quickly and fully restore relations with countries where democracy is being thwarted?

Answer. We always seek to see democratic values advance around the world. For example, the U.S.-Thai relationship covers a wide range of political, security, and economic cooperation. We congratulated the tens of millions of Thai citizens who participated in the long-awaited March 24 election for demonstrating their strong support for a return to elected government. The voting process, robust media coverage of that process, and open debate around its merits are steps toward a more democratic government that reflects the will of the people. We welcome the diverse elected voices in the newly formed Royal Thai Government, and we have communicated to the Royal Thai Government that continued progress to uphold democratic institutions, human rights, and fundamental freedoms is essential to the success of our ongoing partnership with Thailand. We remain committed to maintaining our enduring friendship with Thailand and the Thai people.

Question. Why is the first military equipment the United States is selling to the Thai military capabilities that could be used against the Thai people in another coup? What other military equipment could the United States have decided to sell to Thailand that would not have a potential role in suppressing protestors?

Answer. Thailand is a key U.S. defense partner and ally. The sale and use of U.S. military equipment advances the Royal Thai Army's efforts to modernize and improve its interoperability with the U.S. military. The United States reviews each

sale of defense equipment on a case-by-case basis in accordance with the Conventional Arms Transfer policy. This review includes human rights concerns. If the United States has reason to believe that the transferred equipment will be used to commit human rights violations, the transfer would not be authorized. The United States has robust military to military cooperation with Thailand and conducts more than 400 joint engagements and exercises each year, ranging from public health to cyber cooperation to humanitarian assistance and disaster relief. These efforts demonstrate our steadfast commitment towards enhancing critical capabilities and readiness required to address together the full spectrum of security challenges in the Indo-Pacific.

Question. Are there benchmarks in place that the Thai government must meet to warrant future military sales? Are there other ways in which the State Department is using American leverage to ensure that democracy and human rights are not suffering in the attempt to blunt Chinese influence?

Answer. The United States is committed to a long-time partnership with Thailand, a key ally, assisting it in defense modernization efforts to be ready and capable to address a broad range of 21st century threats to a free and open Indo-Pacific. At the same time, protecting human rights and advancing democratic values remain among our highest priorities in Thailand, and we will continue to ensure that those priorities are advanced in our engagement. U.S. military assistance to Thailand is consistently evaluated according to U.S. law and policy objectives, and we are carefully tracking Thailand's democratic progress and protections of human rights. For example, in addition to building relationships that support our diplomatic and military interests in Thailand, U.S. International Military Education and Training (IMET) courses help promote the United States' tradition of upholding and respecting the international law of armed conflict and human rights, including civil and political liberties, as well as the military's responsibility to protect civilian life and support a civilian government.

Question. What metrics are you using to determine whether Thailand is making sufficient progress in its transition to greater democracy?

Answer. We consistently message to Thailand's government, opposition parties, and civil society that democratic institutions must be strengthened and human rights and fundamental freedoms must be respected. The promotion of democracy, human rights, and fundamental freedoms has been a major part of all high-level engagements with Thailand for many years, including Secretary Pompeo's recent visit to Thailand for ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meetings. We are consistently tracking and providing support for Thailand's democratic progress. Our messaging and engagements intentionally underscore our commitment to advancing democratic principles in Thailand. Local elections, expected in 2020, present an opportunity for us to help enlarge the democratic space and will provide insight into Thailand's progress toward stronger democratic institutions.

Question. Is the State Department working with Thai authorities to ensure that the country is open to political asylum seekers? What U.S. programs or supports are in place to assist those fleeing retribution?

Answer. Thailand has a legacy of hosting large numbers of refugees over the past 40 years. We consistently advocate with Thailand's government, both at the central and local level, to build on that legacy and provide stronger protection for refugees and asylum seekers and increase diplomatic engagement on the Rohingya crisis. We coordinate closely with international organizations (such as UNHCR), NGOs, and like-minded diplomatic partners to maximize the effectiveness of our humanitarian diplomatic outreach. We regularly urge governments in Southeast Asia, including Thailand's government, to strengthen legal and other protections and to honor their international human rights commitments in order to prevent the repatriation of refugees and asylum seekers to their countries of origin against their will. We also advocate to Thailand's government to allow refugees and asylum seekers to remain outside of immigrant detention, to grant temporary residence and work authorization for refugees, and to provide protection to Rohingya and other asylum seekers transiting Thailand by land or sea.

Question. Does the State Department have the authority to impose visa bans against foreign officials that violate human rights?

Answer. Under INA Section 212(a)(3)(C), if the Secretary of State determines that an alien's entry or proposed activities in the United States "would have potentially serious adverse foreign policy consequences for the United States," that alien is inadmissible. We will continue to promote accountability for those who commit human rights violations and abuses, including by considering targeted measures against

Xinjiang officials. China should end its repression of members of ethnic and religious minorities and release all those who have been arbitrarily detained. Until such time, we will continue to consider all available diplomatic options.

Question. Are you aware of any communication from the White House instructing the State Department not to use this authority against Chinese officials?

Answer. The American people have strong concerns about China's activities in Xinjiang, which are reflected across the U.S. government. Secretary Pompeo has repeatedly denounced China's actions, including during his March meeting with Uyghur Muslims at the Department of State, and at the State Department-hosted Ministerial to Advance Religious Freedom. The Vice President has been similarly outspoken. At the same ministerial on July 18, he characterized China's campaign as a "deliberate attempt by Beijing to strangle Uyghur culture and stamp out the Muslim faith." On July 17, the President himself also personally heard from Jewher Ilham, who is the daughter of prominent Uyghur scholar Ilham Tohti, who was given a life sentence in 2014.

Question. What signal does it send to would-be authoritarians around the world that the United States refuses to impose targeted sanctions on Chinese officials responsible for widespread repression and incarceration of ethnic minorities and other groups?

Answer. I am deeply troubled by the Chinese government's worsening crackdown on the human rights and fundamental freedoms, including religious freedom, of Uyghurs, ethnic Kazakhs, Kyrgyz, and other members of Muslim minority groups in Xinjiang. China must end its repression of members of ethnic and religious minorities and release all those who have been arbitrarily detained. Until such time, the United States will continue to urge the international community to raise their concerns, and consider all available diplomatic options.

Question. In May of this year, I sent a letter along with 25 of my colleagues in the House and Senate, raising the cases of three jailed journalists in Vietnam who work for Radio Free Asia and the Voice of America—two U.S.-funded organizations that are under the U.S. Agency for Global Media.

What is the State Department doing to advocate for the release of these individuals?

Answer. Press freedom is fundamental to transparency and accountable governance. Journalists often do their work at great risk, and it is the duty of governments and citizens worldwide to protect their right to do their jobs without retribution. These cases were among the cases of concern that the United States raised the issue at the annual U.S.-Vietnam Human Rights Dialogue, held most recently in May 2019. State Department officials have continued to advocate on behalf of these journalists as well as for other political prisoners at all levels of government. We regularly call on Vietnam to respect and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms for all in Vietnam, consistent with its international obligations and commitments.

Question. Has the U.S. Embassy in Bangkok asked Thai authorities about their ongoing investigation into Radio Free Asia blogger Truong Duy Nhat's abduction from Thailand? If so, what was the government's response?

Answer. The Department is aware of reports that Radio Free Asia blogger Truong Duy Nhat is in Vietnam and is being prosecuted for corruption. We are continuing to monitor the situation closely. We understand that Mr. Nhat was attempting to register as an asylum seeker in Thailand when he disappeared in late January 2019, but the exact sequence of the events leading to his return to Vietnam remains unclear. We regularly urge the Governments of Vietnam and Thailand to strengthen legal and other protections to prevent the repatriation of refugees and asylum seekers to origin countries against their will. Press freedom is fundamental to transparency and accountable governance. Journalists often do their work at great risk, and governments and citizens worldwide need to protect them.

Question. In May of this year, I sent a letter along with 25 of my colleagues in the House and Senate, raising the cases of three jailed journalists in Vietnam who work for Radio Free Asia and the Voice of America—two U.S.-funded organizations that are under the U.S. Agency for Global Media.

Will the Department consider measures against Vietnamese authorities if these individuals are not released? If so, which measures?

Answer. Press freedom is fundamental to transparency and accountable governance. We are aware of the case and have engaged on it at the highest levels, including in bilateral fora such as the annual U.S.-Vietnam Human Rights Dialogue. The United States regularly raises cases of individual concern at all levels of government, to include during visits by President Trump to Vietnam and PM Phuc to Washington. We continuously call on Vietnam to respect and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms for all in Vietnam, consistent with its international obligations and commitments.

We continue to assess the situation and adjust our response accordingly.

