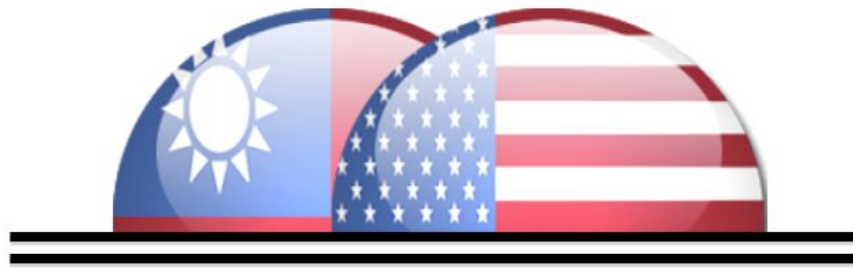


“Phase Zero: A New Taiwan Policy?”

Keynote Remarks by Senator Gardner



March 14, 2019

(As prepared for delivery)

Thank you for the kind introduction.

I would like to thank the Global Taiwan Institute and Project 2049 for the privilege of appearing before you today to address United States policy toward Taiwan on the eve of the 40th anniversary of the Taiwan Relations Act.

In fact, today’s event is a homecoming of sorts. On April 17, 2017, I addressed the Project 2049 Institute with a speech concerning U.S.-China relations and U.S. policies in the Indo-Pacific region.

In that speech, I announced for the first time that I will be introducing legislation called the Asia Reassurance Initiative Act, or ARIA, and outlined the intent and the provisions of that effort.

In particular, I promised in that speech that ARIA would “unequivocally back Taiwan as our important security partner, including authorizing new arms sales and providing for enhanced diplomatic contacts with Taipei.”

Only 22 months after – *things move fast in the U.S. Congress, don't they?* – President Trump signed ARIA into law on New Year's Eve, December 31, 2018.

The language regarding Taiwan in ARIA was – as advertised – unequivocal in its support of maintaining and growing the U.S. economic, defense, and diplomatic relationship with Taipei.

ARIA established that it is now the policy of the United States to “support the close economic, political, and security relationship between Taiwan and the United States”

ARIA established that “The President should conduct regular transfers of defense articles to Taiwan that are tailored to meet the existing and likely future threats from the People's Republic of China.”

Finally, ARIA established that “the President should encourage the travel of high-level United States officials to Taiwan, in accordance with the Taiwan Travel Act.”

ARIA is a historic legislative achievement for U.S. policy toward Taiwan, to stand alongside the Taiwan Relations Act that we are here to commemorate today.

Now comes the hard part -- implementing both the letter and the spirit of the law.

There is, as the audience here knows well, a significant and historic difference between the views of the executive branch and the legislative branch regarding U.S. relations with Taiwan.

The Congressional view, which ARIA supports and I am here to expound on, is that the United States must consistently grow our relationship with Taipei.

The reasons for this approach are self-evident. If our goal is to secure a free and open Indo-Pacific, we should look no further than the nation of Taiwan.

Taiwan is a free, prosperous, and peaceful nation of 23 million people.

Taiwan does not threaten its neighbors -- in fact, it seeks to build friends around the world through generous contributions to good causes, such as global health.

Taiwan respects the rights of its people – Freedom House just ranked Taiwan among the freest nations in the world, giving it a score of 93 out of 100.

Taiwan was just ranked the 10th freest economy in the world by the Heritage Foundation's 2019 Index of Economic Freedom -- Adam Smith himself would have been proud of Taiwan's entrepreneurial spirit.

Of course, we see a markedly different picture across the Taiwan Strait.

Under Xi Jinping, China is imprisoning Uighurs and other religious minorities, cracking down on civil society more broadly, and discriminating against foreign businesses, including U.S. companies.

It is increasingly evident through projects such as the Belt and Road Initiative that China cares little for building genuine alliances, but is instead interested in securing unflinching fealty by corrupting elites around the Indo-Pacific.

And increasingly, Beijing's rhetoric and actions toward Taipei are becoming more menacing.

Since the May 2016 inauguration of President Tsai, six nations have withdrawn diplomatic recognition from Taiwan, due to pressure from Beijing.

In his New Year's message this year, Xi Jinping again alluded to the possible use of force to "re-unify" mainland China and Taiwan.

As Project 2049's own Ian Easton wrote in *The National Interest* in September 2018:

"China's rapid military buildup is focused on acquiring the capabilities needed to annex, or conquer, Taiwan. Chinese publications euphemistically call this "achieving national unification."

"The war plan for fighting a Taiwan invasion campaign is tattooed onto the PLA's corporate memory. It is something that has been indoctrinated and encoded into the minds of all top-level officers. For them, the interests of the regime, not the people of China, are paramount, and their "main strategic direction" (supreme objective) is to end Taiwan's life as a de facto independent country."

In doing these things, Beijing has the temerity to present these developments as consistent with the so-called "One-China policy", one which the United States acknowledges, but has never accepted to mean anything other than eventual peaceful resolution acceptable to both sides of the Taiwan Strait.

The question before us today is where we go with U.S. policy toward Taiwan from here.

My answer is straightforward: we must pursue every available avenue of cooperation with Taipei allowable under U.S. law.

This must start with robust and regular defense sales to Taipei, as authorized by the TRA and ARIA. We must do so regularly and with a purpose to address Taiwan's defense needs in every warfighting domain – land, sea, air, or cyberspace.

In fact, ARIA authorizes \$100 million annually to enhance cybersecurity cooperation with the nation of the Indo-Pacific.

I also introduced legislation to create the so-called Cyber League of Indo-Pacific States, or CLIPS, to ensure regional cooperation against cyberattacks.

I call on the Administration to ensure that Taiwan is front and center in these efforts.

Next, we must do more to expand and protect Taiwan's diplomatic space, including from Beijing's shameful attempts to poach Taipei's allies.

In the 114th Congress, President Obama signed into law my legislation to direct the State Department to support Taiwan's inclusion into INTERPOL.

In the 115th Congress, I proposed the Taiwan International Allies Protection and Enhancement Initiative (TAIPEI) Act, which would direct the U.S. government to develop a strategy to support Taiwan's diplomatic alliances around the world and authorize suspension of U.S. assistance to nations that are taking actions to undermine Taiwan.

I intend to re-introduce an enhanced version of the TAIPEI Act in the 116th Congress.

I also call on the Administration to comply with U.S. law and allow high-level visits of U.S. officials to Taiwan, starting with sending a Cabinet official for the 40th anniversary ceremony in Taipei in April.

Finally, we must expand avenues of economic cooperation with Taiwan.

My ARIA legislation authorizes the Administration to engage in “multilateral, bilateral, or regional trade agreements with partners that comply with trade obligations and respect, promote, and strictly adhere to the rule of law.”

The Administration should certainly consider Taiwan as one such eligible partner – and engage in free trade negotiations with Taipei, either in a multilateral or a bilateral format.

Since taking over as the Chairman of the Subcommittee on East Asia and the Pacific four years ago, I have had the privilege to visit Taiwan three times.

I have now met President Tsai four times, including traveling last August to meet her in Los Angeles during her transit to Latin America.

Each time we met, I found in President Tsai a like-minded interlocutor and a genuine democratic leader committed to peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific.

This is why last month, I led a letter with a number of my Senate colleagues to Speaker of the House of Representatives, Nancy Pelosi, asking her to invite President Tsai to address a joint session of Congress in the near future.

As we wrote in that letter:

“President Tsai is a genuine democratic leader engaged in a struggle against an authoritarian and oppressive system that seeks to deny the Taiwanese people democratic rights and fundamental freedoms.

Extending an invitation for President Tsai to address a joint session of Congress in this historic year for U.S.-Taiwan relations would send a powerful message that the United States and the American people will always stand with the oppressed, and never the oppressor.”

Standing with the oppressed, and never the oppressor – that should always be our policy toward our friends in Taiwan.

Thank you for hosting me here today.