



WASHINGTON PARLIAMENTARY INTELLIGENCE-SECURITY FORUM

WASHINGTON, DC - DECEMBER 4-5, 2024

SUMMARY REPORT

**PARLIAMENTARY INTELLIGENCE-SECURITY FORUM
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DECEMBER 4

VENUE: DIRKSEN SENATE OFFICE BUILDING - COMMITTEE HEARING ROOM 106

OPENING REMARKS

- **Hon. Robert Pittenger**, Chairman, Parliamentary Intelligence-Security Forum

Hon. Robert Pittenger opened the session by welcoming all attendees and emphasizing the significance of the forum in addressing critical issues related to global security.

- **Hon. Matt Pottinger**, Former Deputy National Security Advisor for President Trump. (*video*)

Matt Pottinger outlined the global threats posed by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), emphasizing its role in undermining health, security, and liberty worldwide. Key points included:

The CCP's coverup of the COVID-19 outbreak and its continued violations of international treaties.

Economic disruption through state-sponsored intellectual property theft and predatory trade practices.

Military threats, including support for authoritarian regimes and potential conflict over Taiwan.

Efforts to export autocratic governance and influence global narratives through propaganda and technology.

Pottinger called for unified global action to deter Beijing's aggression, defend democratic values, and protect international sovereignty.

- **Dr. Jonathan Ward**, PhD, Senior fellow at Hudson Institute, Author, THE DECISIVE DECADE

This session featured a dynamic Q&A between Congressman Robert Pittenger and Dr. Jonathan Ward, alongside questions from audience members, addressing critical global issues, particularly the U.S.-China relationship and its broader implications.

U.S.-China Relations and Strategy:

The U.S. has lacked long-term engagement and strategy in regions like Latin America, allowing China's influence to grow through infrastructure investments and commodities trade.

Economic containment of China is essential to counter its geopolitical strategies. A U.S.-led initiative, alongside allies, is needed to establish aligned sanctions, export controls, and investment screenings targeting critical sectors like semiconductors, telecommunications, and energy.

China's "No Limits" partnership with Russia and its support for Iran, North Korea, and fentanyl production underscore its role in undermining global stability and U.S. sovereignty.

The Role of the Private Sector and Allies:

U.S. corporations must prioritize national security over short-term profits. Stronger collaboration with Europe, leveraging shared economic strengths, is critical for aligned sanctions and trade practices. Allies like India and the Philippines are already taking decisive actions against China. A unified front can challenge China's coercive economic practices and ensure global stability.

Taiwan and Regional Security:

Promoting trade and investments with Taiwan is pivotal. The U.S. and its allies must strengthen support for Taiwan as a counterweight to China's aggression in the Indo-Pacific.

Europe's Role:

Europe's alignment with the U.S. on screening Chinese investments and countering economic coercion is essential. Establishing best practices across export controls and sanctions is a priority for effective collaboration.

The Path Ahead:

A restructured global economy must ensure prosperity while minimizing reliance on China. This includes building stronger trade partnerships within the Americas, integrating North America's industrial capabilities, and securing supply chains against China's dominance.

Conclusion:

The U.S. must lead a coordinated effort to counter China's economic and geopolitical ambitions, ensuring that the free world remains united and resilient.

REMARKS

- **Rep. Stacey E. Plaskett (D-VI)**, Member, United States House of Representatives.

Rep. Stacey Plaskett delivered an insightful address at the 10th Annual Parliamentary Intelligence and Security Forum, emphasizing the global challenges in national security, intelligence sharing, and emerging technologies like 5G and AI. Drawing from her unique perspective as the first member of Congress from a U.S. territory to serve on the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, she highlighted the evolving threats posed by rogue governments such as China, Russia, Iran, and North Korea. Rep. Plaskett spoke on the erosion of democracy, the challenges in U.S. alliances, and the rising influence of adversarial states, particularly in Africa and the Caribbean. She underscored the importance of a diverse intelligence community to address these complex issues, advocating for a workforce that reflects a wide range of backgrounds and experiences. Rep. Plaskett also discussed the security risks in the Caribbean, particularly the influence of China and Russia, and the strategic role of U.S. partnerships in the region. In closing, she reaffirmed the necessity for collaboration in the face of

an increasingly unstable global order and the urgent need for innovative solutions to safeguard national and international security.

WEAPONIZED MIGRATION: A GLOBAL CHALLENGE.

- **Prof. Milos Ivkovic**, MA, LLM, LLM - International Arbitrator/Advisor to Governments; Washington University School of Law

Prof. Milos Ivkovic's speech focused on the manipulation of migration and asylum laws, particularly how media narratives distort the issue to create a false connection between immigration and human rights. He argued that asylum laws are specific, only protecting those fleeing persecution, and that immigration is a matter of national sovereignty, not international law. He emphasized that countries have the legal right to close their borders, and zero immigration is permissible under international law. Ivkovic criticized the manipulation of migration, particularly by state actors like Russia, China, and Iran, who finance and influence migration flows for geopolitical purposes. He warned that this manipulation threatens national security by undermining public support for sovereign immigration control, urging lawmakers to confront false narratives and uphold the rule of law.

- **Mr. Joseph Humire**, Executive Director, Center for a Secure Free Society

Mr. Joseph Humire's presentation focused on the concept of weaponized migration as a strategic tool used in modern geopolitics. He traced the issue's prominence back to the U.S. Southern border crisis, highlighting how President Trump reframed migration as a national security concern. Mr. Humire recounted his experience observing the 2018 Central American Caravan, revealing how NGOs, particularly Pueblos Sin Fronteras, facilitated the migration, with political motives linked to Venezuela's government. He introduced the concept of "strategic engineered migration," where mass migration is used as a method of coercion by state and non-state actors for geopolitical ends.

Mr. Humire also discussed the crisis at the Belarus-Poland border in 2021, which he argued served as a precursor to Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Shifting to Latin America, he examined the Venezuela-Colombia border, where migration has led to instability, allowing criminal organizations and great power competition to take root. He concluded by urging the audience to view mass migration not just as a legal or humanitarian issue, but as a strategic method in asymmetric warfare used to pressure sovereign nations.

LINKING INDO-PACIFIC TO EURO/ATLANTIC

- **Hon. Cristian Bacanu**, Member of Parliament, Chamber of Deputies of Romania.

Mr. Cristian Bacanu's speech at the Washington PI-SF forum analyzed the current geopolitical tensions, drawing comparisons to World War II. He referenced Winston Churchill's speech to highlight the importance of democratic nations in shaping global events.

Mr. Bacanu argued that the new Cold War, driven by China and Russia, extends beyond military power to economic dominance, technological influence, and control over resources. He called for stronger alliances, particularly with NATO and democratic countries in Asia, and emphasized the need for increased defense spending.

In conclusion, Mr. Bacanu stressed that only through united action can democracies secure a prosperous future and prove this is their finest hour.

- **Mr. John Sitilides**, Geopolitical Strategist, Trilogy Advisors LLC, and Senior Fellow (National Security Program), Foreign Policy Research Institute

Mr. John Sitilides discussed the extent to which the Russian invasion of Ukraine is influencing China's approach to Taiwan. While Ukraine is a factor, it is not the dominant influence on Beijing's strategy. Mr. Sitilides argued that China's primary goal is the reunification of Taiwan, driven by national rejuvenation under President Xi Jinping. He also emphasized China's desire to absorb Taiwan's advanced semiconductor capabilities, its ambition to project power in the Indo-Pacific, and its resentment of Taiwan's free-market capitalist democracy that offers an alternative and successful governance model to the citizens of the People's Republic of China under Communist rule.

Mr. Sitilides pointed out that the U.S. is no longer the sole global superpower, and military resources are stretched thin due to ongoing hardware resupply obligations in Ukraine and Israel, as well as the thinning out of the once-dominant U.S. defense industrial base. He warned that Taiwan's defense spending and military training is insufficient to the magnitude of the threat from China. Mr. Sitilides concluded that the U.S. must strengthen its military and economic capacity in conjunction with allies throughout the Indo-Pacific region to deter China from taking aggressive actions towards Taiwan, emphasizing the need for a strong deterrent strategy.

A brief audience question raised the possibility that a U.S. failure in Ukraine might embolden China. Mr. Sitilides suggested that even if the U.S. policy in Ukraine fails, Taiwan's defense remains a critical American and global economic priority, and the geopolitical status quo in the Taiwan Straits and broader Indo-Pacific region should be maintained.

REMARKS BY CONGRESSMAN JIM BAIRD

Rep. Jim Baird, representing Indiana's 4th Congressional District, delivered a speech focused on global security challenges, emphasizing the importance of international cooperation and cybersecurity. Drawing from his agricultural background, he highlighted the role of technology in strengthening global security, particularly in light of recent geopolitical tensions, including the war in Ukraine and instability in the Middle East.

Rep. Baird stressed the growing threat of authoritarian leaders collaborating, particularly the alliances between Russia, China, North Korea, and Iran. He emphasized the need for stronger cyber defenses, citing attacks such as the Colonial Pipeline ransomware attack and threats to critical infrastructure.

He also highlighted the importance of securing the U.S. border, addressing the opioid crisis and human trafficking fueled by Chinese chemicals. Rep. Baird concluded by advocating for energy independence,

urging the U.S. to strengthen its position as a reliable energy supplier to allies, reducing reliance on hostile nations like Russia and Iran. He reaffirmed the critical need for unified action among democratic nations to address global security threats.

ISRAEL'S 8 FRONTS OF WAR SINCE OCT. 7TH

- **Hon. Eliav Benjamin**, Deputy Chief of Mission, Embassy of Israel to the United States

DCM Benjamin's speech emphasized the critical role of partnerships and support in overcoming challenges. He expressed deep gratitude to the United States, Israel's closest ally, for its steadfast support over the past 76 years, particularly since the devastating terrorist attacks of October 7, 2023. Highlighting the ongoing crisis, he mentioned the 101 hostages still held in Gaza and the toll the war has taken on Israel, which faces multiple fronts of conflict, including Hamas, Hezbollah, and Iranian-backed militias.

DCM Benjamin stressed that Israel is not fighting for itself alone but for global security, particularly to prevent terrorism from spreading. He condemned Iran's involvement in supporting terrorism across the world and called for increased international pressure to curb Iran's nuclear ambitions. He also outlined Israel's efforts to degrade Hamas' capabilities and ensure long-term security, mentioning the resilience of Israeli citizens, including his own family members.

The speech also addressed Israel's struggles on the multilateral stage, particularly within the United Nations, which he criticized for its hypocrisy and bias against Israel. He urged stronger global action against anti-Semitism, emphasizing the importance of adopting the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition of anti-Semitism to combat hate and discrimination.

In closing, DCM Benjamin called for continued global solidarity to support Israel's fight for peace and security, stressing the importance of fighting terrorism, anti-Semitism, and injustice to create a safer world for everyone.

CHINA'S IRREGULAR WARFARE PLANS.

- **Hon. Erik Bethel**, Distinguished Fellow, Chamber of Digital Commerce; former U.S. Representative to the World Bank

Mr. Bethel's speech delved into China's strategy of unconventional or unrestricted warfare, stressing that China views all domains—military, diplomacy, technology, and more—as interconnected, unlike the siloed approach often seen in other countries. He warned that any potential conflict with China would likely be maritime, given China's rapid naval expansion.

He highlighted the growing power imbalance, noting that China builds the equivalent of a Royal Navy every four years, while the U.S. struggles with shipbuilding and a shortage of resources. Mr. Bethel also pointed out China's increasing militarization of the South China Sea, despite promises to avoid it, and the potential risks to Taiwan, which is facing growing pressure from Chinese military exercises and encirclement.

Mr. Bethel also emphasized China's use of economic and digital warfare, with initiatives like the Belt and Road project that place countries in debt and give China significant political leverage. He raised

concerns about China's growing influence in international institutions like the UN, warning about the risks of ignoring China's strategic ambitions and interference in global governance. He concluded by urging the international community to confront these challenges with a more integrated and proactive response.

ILLICIT FINANCE

- **Hon. John Cassara**, Author, Anti-Money Laundering, former CIA field agent for 30 years

Mr. Cassara began by addressing a key question raised at last year's forum: How are we doing in the fight against international money laundering? He noted that the magnitude of global money laundering is significant, with estimates of \$5 trillion annually, equivalent to 2-5% of global GDP. However, he emphasized that actual seizures and forfeitures are much lower, with less than \$40 billion recovered each year, far below the scale of illicit activities.

He pointed out that, despite the vast amounts spent on anti-money laundering (AML) compliance and enforcement, the results are not proportionate. For example, the U.S. spends \$61 billion on AML efforts annually, but the seizures and fines remain modest. Mr. Cassara highlighted the need for more effective enforcement and better coordination across countries to address this global issue. He also mentioned that financial institutions have made progress in AML measures, but a critical gap remains in terms of transparency and beneficial ownership information.

He listed ten reasons for the difficulties in combating money laundering, including the sheer scale of the problem, outdated AML systems, a lack of skilled enforcement personnel, and corruption. He concluded by stressing that technology can help, but the core solution lies in stronger enforcement with better resources and political will to address the challenges more effectively.

- **Hon. John Walsh**, President and Chief Executive Officer, SightSpan Inc. Washington D.C.

Mr. Walsh's speech focused on the intersection of terrorism, organized crime, and cybercrime, emphasizing the need to view all illicit activities through a unified lens. He argued that distinguishing between these categories based on motivations—whether ideological or financial—was less important than identifying the illegal activity itself. He highlighted the challenges of tracking these crimes across different countries, given varying legal definitions. Mr. Walsh stressed the importance of enhanced "Know Your Customer" (KYC) practices and the need for a holistic approach, merging data from disparate sectors to more effectively identify and combat bad actors. He called for stronger public-private partnerships to share information on illicit activities without compromising privacy. He also noted the evolving role of artificial intelligence in detecting suspicious activities, urging the need for better data management to improve crime detection.

- **Hon. Jerome Beaumont**, Executive Secretary, Egmont Group of Financial Intelligence, Ottawa

Mr. Beaumont thanked Robert for organizing the event and praised the forum's unique nature. He introduced his work with the Egmont Group, which connects 177 financial intelligence units globally to combat financial crime. He emphasized the vast scale of financial crime, which accounts for 2-5% of global GDP—roughly \$5 trillion. Mr. Beaumont highlighted the importance of international cooperation, noting that financial intelligence units exchange over 24,000 pieces of information annually. He also discussed the critical need for resources, both financial and technological, within these units. He pointed out the growing role of AI in improving financial crime detection, with countries like Canada, USA and others leading the way. Mr. Beaumont underscored the importance of public-private partnerships in tackling financial crimes like money laundering and human trafficking. He shared real-life examples, including a case of human trafficking and the success of Project Protect, a public-private initiative in Canada. He concluded by stressing the importance of investing in financial intelligence units to ensure global safety.

REMARKS BY HON. ZDENKA POPOVIC, VICE PRESIDENT OF MONTENEGRO PARLIAMENT

Hon. Popovic emphasized her country's progress in fighting organized crime and corruption. She highlighted Montenegro's NATO membership and EU aspirations, as well as the government's efforts to strengthen judicial independence. Key achievements include resolving 95% of criminal cases, prosecuting over 600 members of organized crime, uncovering human trafficking and illegal border crossing crimes, and prosecuting significant economic crimes, including tobacco smuggling. The government also focused on high-level corruption, prosecuting over 120 cases. Hon. Popovic thanked international partners for their support in these efforts.

FIGHTING EMERGING TECHNOLOGY THREATS - CRYPTO, AI AND QUANTUM

- **Ms. Lilita Infante**, Chief Executive Officer, CAT Labs, Former U.S. Department of Justice Special Agent

Ms. Lilita Infante raised an urgent concern about the emerging threat posed by digital crime organizations empowered by new technologies like cryptocurrency, AI, and quantum computing. Drawing from her experience as a former DEA agent and taking down the largest dark web market, Hydra, Ms. Infante highlighted how criminal networks are leveraging these technologies to operate anonymously on a global scale, bypassing traditional sanctions and regulations.

She emphasized the correlation between the takedown of dark web markets and a decrease in overdose deaths, showing the significant impact of these illegal markets. However, even with the collapse of Hydra, these criminal activities have adapted and are now utilizing new methods, such as ransomware attacks and crypto scams, to target individuals and critical infrastructure.

Ms. Infante also stressed the global implications of these technologies, including how adversarial states like North Korea and Russia use cryptocurrency to finance illicit activities, and the growing weaponization of AI by cybercriminals. She warned that quantum computing could soon render current encryption systems obsolete, leading to catastrophic breaches.

In conclusion, Ms. Infante called for a unified global effort to counter these digital threats, urging leaders to equip law enforcement with the necessary tools and invest in technology to stay ahead of

criminals. She emphasized that the fight against digital Kingpins must involve collaboration, innovation, and proactive action.

- **Dr. Cosmin Vasile**, International Arbitrator, Managing Partner Zamfirescu Racoti Vasile&Partners, Bucharest

Dr. Cosmin Vasile discussed the challenges of regulating cryptocurrencies, arguing that a meaningful and effective regulation can only be achieved through international public law instruments, such as treaties and conventions. He highlighted the dual nature of cryptocurrencies, presenting both opportunities and threats to the global financial system.

Dr. Vasile used several examples of major incidents in the crypto market, such as the FTX insolvency, the Terra Luna crash, and the Mt. Gox cyber attack, to demonstrate the vulnerabilities of the unregulated crypto ecosystem. These events, which resulted in significant financial losses, have shaken investor confidence and exposed the need for regulation.

He pointed to several countries that have taken steps toward regulating cryptocurrencies, such as Switzerland, El Salvador, Dubai, and Singapore, emphasizing the importance of consumer protection alongside innovation. However, he also warned that unilateral approaches to regulation are insufficient, as they create inconsistencies and barriers to cross-border cooperation.

Dr. Vasile concluded by comparing the regulation of cryptocurrencies to climate change, arguing that just as global climate issues require international agreements, the regulation of cryptocurrencies must be approached from a global perspective to address the multifaceted risks effectively.

IMPLICATIONS OF BLOCKCHAIN FOR NATIONAL SECURITY: CBDCS, DECENTRALIZED NETWORKS AND MACROECONOMIC COMPETITION

- **Mr. Morgan Murphy**, U.S Navy, Former National Security Advisor, United States Senate, Former Pentagon Press Secretary

Mr. Murphy's speech addressed the future of the U.S. economy, blending his military and business perspectives. He began by acknowledging his limited expertise in blockchain technology but expressed his focus on economics, emphasizing the importance of educated guesses in decision-making. Drawing from his experiences in the U.S. Navy, he reflected on how his views evolved over time, from a belief in neoconservative ideas to becoming more empiricist in his approach to national security and economics.

He criticized U.S. spending in Afghanistan, particularly on infrastructure projects like the "Lara Bush Highway," highlighting the unsustainable costs and misplaced priorities. He argued that the U.S. must shift away from these costly endeavors and focus on rebuilding its manufacturing base, which was outsourced in favor of a knowledge-based economy. Mr. Murphy stressed the importance of regaining economic self-sufficiency, particularly in critical industries like semiconductors, which the U.S. struggles to produce domestically.

Mr. Murphy also defended the use of tariffs, explaining that while they may raise prices in the short term, they are necessary for protecting national security and revitalizing domestic manufacturing. He argued

that U.S. reliance on adversaries for essential goods, such as rare earth materials and manufacturing components, is a dangerous policy. He concluded by asserting that tariffs could help restore the U.S. manufacturing base and ensure that the country is not dependent on adversaries for its security needs.

- **Ms. Carole N House**, Special Advisor for Cybersecurity and Critical Infrastructure Policy | White House National Security Council

Ms. House's speech highlighted her extensive experience in the National Security community and shared personal anecdotes that shaped her worldview. She discussed her background as a former Army officer and her work in cybersecurity, intelligence, and the National Security Council. She emphasized the intersection of technology, economics, and national security, particularly in relation to cryptocurrency and blockchain.

She explained how North Korean cyber actors use cryptocurrency to fund their regime's activities, emphasizing the need for responsible innovation in emerging technologies. Ms. House stressed the importance of ensuring that technological advancements like blockchain are regulated to protect both national security and consumer interests. She highlighted the risks posed by cryptocurrency in illicit activities such as cybercrime, fraud, and sanctions evasion.

She concluded by advocating for a balanced approach to regulation that promotes innovation while mitigating risks, ensuring financial stability, and safeguarding democratic principles.

- **Mr. Kristopher Klaich**, Director of National Security Policy, Digital Chamber

Mr. Klaich, representing the Digital Chamber, discussed the vital intersection of technology, the economy, and national security, emphasizing the interconnectedness of these three pillars. He explained that blockchain technology plays a crucial role in all aspects, including military capabilities, economic growth, and technological innovation. He described blockchain as the next generation of the internet, with applications across finance, trade, communications, and supply chains.

Mr. Klaich highlighted the growing global competition, particularly from China, which has made significant strides in developing a blockchain-based infrastructure. He discussed China's efforts to control blockchain technology through its Blockchain Services Network (BSN) and its plans to implement a central bank digital currency (CBDC) linked to a social credit system, which raises concerns about surveillance and control.

He also mentioned the security risks associated with blockchain, such as North Korea's involvement in crypto-related cybercrimes and Russia's use of cryptocurrencies to circumvent sanctions. Despite these challenges, he noted that blockchain offers significant economic opportunities and that countries must choose between aligning with China's centralized, controlled system or a freer, more open system led by the US and its allies.

In conclusion, Mr. Klaich stressed the importance of a decentralized blockchain model to counterbalance risks and maintain privacy, urging collective action to secure a strategic advantage and safeguard democratic values.

CYBERSECURITY: THE HUMAN ELEMENT

- **Mr. J.P. Parker**, Former Special Advisor to the Vice President of the U.S. for Cyber, Intelligence, and Space

Mr. Parker's speech emphasized the increasing importance of cybersecurity in the context of global threats, particularly from China. He explained how China uses cyber tools to create confusion, disrupt economies, and deter military actions, aiming to reshape the global order. He introduced the concept of a "zero trust" cybersecurity architecture, stressing that organizations should assume breaches are inevitable and design their systems accordingly.

Mr. Parker also highlighted the significant risk of insider threats, where even well-trained employees can unintentionally compromise security. Drawing from his experience, he noted that both external actors and internal mistakes pose serious risks. He recommended:

Engaging commercial cyber defense services, which are now highly capable and effective against nation-state actors like China.

Continuously training and testing employees to avoid careless errors that could expose vulnerabilities. Acknowledging the scale of Chinese cyber operations and the need to focus on mitigating insider threats.

Overall, Mr. Parker's speech called for a proactive, multi-layered approach to cybersecurity, combining technological defenses with vigilant human oversight.

- **Dr. Paul J. Maurer**, President of Montreat College, a recipient of the NSA National Center of Academic Excellence for their cybersecurity programs

Dr. Paul Maurer, President of Montreat College, discussed the critical role of ethics in cybersecurity, highlighting his recently co-authored book *The Code of Honor: Embracing Ethics in Cybersecurity*. Dr. Maurer and co-author Ed Skoudis, a leading cybersecurity expert, argue that cybersecurity challenges are more human than technical, emphasizing that the solution lies in cultivating ethical leadership in the field.

Drawing attention to the National Security Agency's (NSA) interest in this approach, Dr. Maurer explained how Montreat College's ethical curriculum, and the book, was requested by the NSA as an educational tool for the nearly 500 institutions designated as National Centers of Academic Excellence (NCAE). These tools address the ethical dilemmas faced by cybersecurity professionals, such as ransomware attacks and IT audits, through a set of principles designed to guide decision-making.

The Code of Honor includes an oath for cybersecurity students and professionals, and includes ethical commitments such as: treating others with dignity; taking ownership of mistakes; working collaboratively, and; maintaining honesty and integrity in all actions. Dr. Maurer noted that ethical considerations are central to cybersecurity, particularly in high-pressure, high-stakes environments.

The NSA has made the teaching of ethics a requirement of the nearly 500 NCAE colleges and universities, underscoring the importance of ethical decision-making for the rapidly growing cybersecurity workforce. Dr. Maurer concluded by urging the adoption of this ethical framework globally to address the cybersecurity challenges facing the modern world.

IMPACT ON GLOBAL SECURITY FOLLOWING THE RUSSIAN INVASION OF UKRAINE.

- **Hon. Jaak Madison**, Member of the European Parliament, Estonia - Member of the Estonian Center Party

Hon. Madison's speech emphasized the ongoing war in Ukraine and its global implications, stressing that Russia's aggression is not just a regional issue but a global one. He discussed the importance of support for Ukraine, pointing out that while Russia may not be a global military threat, its alliances with China, North Korea, and Iran make it a significant threat to global stability. Hon. Madison expressed concern over the potential consequences if Ukraine were to make territorial concessions, warning that such actions would embolden Russia and its allies, extending their influence further.

He also addressed the necessity for the U.S. to maintain its global leadership role, asserting that Russia's success in Ukraine could lead to a diminished U.S. influence, particularly in the face of China's growing power. He highlighted that the U.S. should support Ukraine not only for humanitarian reasons but also to preserve its strategic interests. Hon. Madison argued that NATO must increase its defense spending and enhance its readiness to counter the growing threats from Russia and China.

In response to questions, he discussed the need for a balanced approach to achieving peace, which should ensure Ukraine's security and maintain the global power balance, preventing further expansion of authoritarian regimes. He concluded that peace should not come at the cost of undermining Ukraine's sovereignty or compromising the security of NATO members

COUNTERING HYBRID THREATS FROM CHINA AND RUSSIA IN THE AMERICAS.

- **Prof. Celina Realuyo**, Professor of Practice, William J. Perry Center for Hemispheric Defense Studies, National Defense University, United States

Prof. Realuyo's speech focused on the growing threat of hybrid warfare, where state and non-state actors exploit multiple domains like land, air, sea, cyberspace, and outer space to destabilize nations. She emphasized how countries like Russia, China, Iran, and North Korea operate in the "gray zone" to undermine democratic institutions, often using criminal networks. She highlighted China's influence in Latin America through the Belt and Road Initiative, 5G, and digital surveillance platforms like TikTok.

She also discussed the fentanyl crisis, driven by Chinese chemical exports, and Russia's use of disinformation and cybercrime, especially in Latin America. Prof. Realuyo called for stronger U.S.-Latin American economic ties, public-private partnerships, and a focus on countering disinformation and cyber threats. She concluded by urging greater international cooperation to address these hybrid threats and protect digital sovereignty.

- **Ambassador Carla Sands**, Vice Chair, Center for Energy and Environment, America First Policy Institute; former US Ambassador to the Kingdom of Denmark

Ambassador Sands delivered a strong speech addressing the rising influence of adversaries such as China, Russia, Iran, and North Korea in the Western Hemisphere, highlighting the challenges posed to U.S. leadership. She emphasized that weak U.S. leadership in past administrations has allowed these

countries to engage in predatory actions, destabilizing the region and challenging the prosperity of Latin America.

The Ambassador pointed to China's significant presence, particularly its Belt and Road Initiative, which has resulted in substantial investments in infrastructure like the \$1.3 billion mega port in Peru. She also highlighted the growing ties between China, Russia, and Iran with countries like Venezuela, which has become a major hub for illicit activities, including drug trafficking and human trafficking. She underscored China's role in the fentanyl crisis, noting that Chinese banks are helping wash cartel money.

Amb. Sands stressed the need for stronger ties with Latin American countries like Colombia and Ecuador to combat illegal immigration, organized crime, and drug trafficking. She also touched upon the shift in U.S. policy under President Trump, emphasizing a more secure border, reciprocal trade deals, and the expectation that nations will invest in their own security and defense.

The Ambassador outlined a vision for a future in which the U.S. is the preferred trade partner, and countries are held accountable for their actions, including repatriating illegal immigrants. She concluded by reaffirming President Trump's "America First" approach, stressing that bold, decisive actions now would ensure a better future for both the U.S. and Latin America.

THREATS TO US NATIONAL SECURITY IN THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE

- **Hon. Mariano Federici**, Senior Managing Director, K2 Integrity, former President of FIU-Argentina and Chairman of Egmont Group

Mr. Federici's speech highlighted the growing threats in Latin America, particularly from authoritarian regimes, organized crime, and external influences from countries like China, Russia, and Iran. He discussed how authoritarian governments in Cuba, Venezuela, and Nicaragua, as well as weak democracies in Brazil, Mexico, and Colombia, are undermining democratic institutions and the rule of law. He emphasized the impact of organized crime, such as powerful cartels, which destabilize the region and infiltrate political systems.

Federici also addressed the role of corruption, which enables criminal groups and erodes trust in governments. He pointed to the increasing influence of China, Russia, and Iran in Latin America, with China expanding through its Belt and Road Initiative and Russia supporting authoritarian regimes. He criticized the U.S. for underestimating these threats and for engaging in diplomacy that inadvertently empowered these regimes. Federici called for a more decisive U.S. approach to counter these challenges, promoting democracy, good governance, and stronger international cooperation.

- **Hon. Juan Guaidó**, Former Interim President of Venezuela

Hon. Guaidó's speech focused on the threats posed by authoritarian regimes in Latin America, particularly Venezuela, to regional stability and U.S. security. He highlighted the role of cyber threats, drug cartels, and organized crime, which are used by regimes like Maduro's to manipulate migration and maintain ties with adversarial powers such as Russia, China, and Iran. Hon. Guaidó emphasized

the need to stop these regimes to protect democracy and U.S. interests. He also shared his personal experience of exile and discussed the opportunity to restore democracy in Venezuela, urging international support to counter authoritarianism and strengthen regional stability.

COMMENTS FROM

- **Rt Hon Uko Ndukwe Nkole Ranking Member Security Intelligence Committee 8th And 9Th House of Representatives Nigerian National Assembly:**

Hon. Nkole emphasized the critical security challenges facing Africa, particularly terrorism financing, banditry, and the fallout from the collapse of Libya. He noted that these issues, compounded by conflicts like farmer-herder clashes, are destabilizing the continent. Hon. Nkole highlighted Nigeria's importance, warning that instability in the country would have global ramifications. He urged the gathering to focus on these pressing African security concerns and expressed hope that his colleague would provide further details on the situation. He concluded by stressing the need for Africa to be a central focus in discussions on global security.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING AND ITS ROLE IN SPONSORING TERRORISM

- **Ms. Anne Basham**, Chief Executive Officer at Ascend Consulting and Chair of the Interparliamentary Taskforce on Human Trafficking

Ms. Basham's speech addressed the alarming issue of human trafficking and its connection to global security. She shared the story of a Yazidi girl enslaved by ISIS, emphasizing how trafficking funds terrorism. She explained that human trafficking generates \$236 billion annually and enslaves an estimated 50 million people worldwide, making it the second-largest criminal enterprise. Ms. Basham also highlighted the role of state-sponsored terrorism, especially by China, North Korea, and the Taliban, in exploiting children for forced labor to fund their operations.

She stressed that human trafficking is not just a human rights issue but a global security threat. Laws like the Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act in the U.S. and similar European legislation are a step in the right direction. Ms. Basham urged for increased sanctions, grassroots advocacy, and stricter laws to eliminate forced labor from global supply chains which often exploit children. She concluded by calling for a united international effort to combat human trafficking, emphasizing that it is a shared responsibility to protect the most vulnerable from exploitation.

- **Ms. Tanya Gould**, OSCE International Survivor of Trafficking Advisory Council member and Anti-Human Trafficking Director for the Commonwealth of Virginia

Ms. Gould, a survivor of human trafficking, discussed the systemic nature of trafficking and its connection to terrorism. She began by explaining how terrorism and human trafficking share key elements such as violence, threats, intimidation, and coercion. She emphasized that terrorist

organizations often recruit victims, especially women and children, for sex slavery, forced labor, and even as fighters. Human trafficking serves as a critical revenue source for terrorist operations, with trafficked individuals sometimes used to assist in smuggling or border crossing for terrorists.

Ms. Gould highlighted the business-like structure of human trafficking, where there is a division of labor among traffickers, including scouting victims, providing transportation, and creating false documentation. She also noted that trafficking networks operate globally, exploiting migration routes, unstable political conditions, and economic vulnerabilities. The cycle of victimization is often repeated, with victims trafficked across borders and subjected to various forms of exploitation.

She emphasized the importance of understanding human trafficking as a global issue that requires a coordinated effort to dismantle trafficking networks, protect vulnerable populations, and raise awareness. Ms. Gould called for an integrated approach to tackling the root causes of trafficking, such as poverty, instability, and weak governance. She concluded by urging action to protect individuals from exploitation, stressing that human beings should never be treated as commodities.

A GLOBAL SECURITY AGENDA FOR AFRICA

- **Mr. François Baird**, Chairman and Founder, Baird's US LLC/Baird's CMC Limited/Calbridge (Pty) Ltd/FairPlay, United States

Mr. Baird's speech focused on the urgent need for a new security agenda for Africa. Drawing from his experience growing up in South Africa and his work in the region, he highlighted Africa's rapid population growth, increasing instability, and the growing influence of China and Russia. He emphasized the importance of Africa's role in global security, particularly in the context of critical minerals, counterterrorism, food security, and energy independence.

Mr. Baird criticized Western policies that have largely ignored Africa's specific needs, focusing instead on domestic issues like climate change and cultural wars. He proposed a new approach that prioritizes affordable energy access, the promotion of strong legal institutions, and support for both democratic and military regimes in Africa to fight corruption and terrorism. He also called for stronger economic ties between the West and Africa, urging the renewal and expansion of the African Growth and Opportunities Act (AGOA) to include more countries.

In his conclusion, Mr. Baird stressed the importance of engaging Africa as a serious partner for global security, suggesting that by investing in Africa's development, the West could create more capable allies and counter the influence of malign actors. He called for a strategic shift to ensure Africa's growth and stability, ultimately benefiting both the continent and the world.

- **Hon. Sha'aban Ibrahim Sharada**, Honorary President Network of African Parliamentarians for Diffence and Security Committees, Nigeria

Mr. Sharada addressed the assembly on Africa's global security agenda, emphasizing the continent's challenges, including terrorism, poverty, and instability. He highlighted the role of groups like Boko Haram, which exploit governance weaknesses and socio-economic disparities. He called for a global security agenda tailored to Africa, with international support in military aid, development, and strengthening institutions. He stressed the importance of addressing poverty, inequality, and education to ensure long-term stability. Mr. Sharada urged African nations and international partners to collaborate on governance, rule of law, and security, with a focus on Africa's agency in security, trade, and development.

- **Hon. Bol Gai Deng**, Candidate for President, Republic of South Sudan

Mr. Deng, a presidential candidate for South Sudan, shared his personal journey, highlighting his experiences as a former slave and his struggle against dictatorship in South Sudan. He recounted an assassination attempt on his life in 2018 by two generals, which led him to send a letter to Kenya President William Ruto. He criticized Kiir's regime, which has delayed elections multiple times, and expressed the need for international support to ensure free and fair elections in South Sudan in 2025. Mr. Deng emphasized the importance of democracy and the role of the international community in securing peace, liberty, and freedom for the people of South Sudan.

DECEMBER 5

PARLIAMENTARY INTELLIGENCE-SECURITY FORUM ON THE INDO-PACIFIC

VENUE: KENNEDY CAUCUS ROOM, 325 RUSSELL SENATE OFFICE BUILDING

PRAYER BREAKFAST

KEYNOTE REMARKS

- **Mr. J.C. Boggs**, Esq., Partner, King & Spalding; Board Member, Parliamentary Intelligence-Security Forum (Welcome/Introduction) *MODERATOR*
- **Sen. Bill Hagerty** (R-TN), former U.S. Ambassador to Japan, Ranking Member, Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee on International Operations, United States Senate

Senator Bill Hagerty emphasized the Indo-Pacific's critical importance due to its population, economic activity, and growth potential. He highlighted challenges like China's aggressive posture and North Korea's increased threats, stressing the need for strong alliances with Japan, South Korea, Australia, and other regional partners. Hagerty shared a key example of economic-security cooperation: preventing Chinese buyers from acquiring the Subic Bay Shipyard in the Philippines by collaborating with private firms and Japan. The shipyard now supports U.S., South Korean, and Japanese naval operations, showcasing how economic collaboration can enhance security. He advocated for deeper partnerships in technology, trade, and defense, including greater European involvement in the Indo-Pacific and increased focus on Africa to counter Chinese influence. Hagerty reaffirmed the strength of U.S. alliances and emphasized that economic strategies are essential for global security.

Rep. Zach Nunn, Member, U.S. House of Representatives.

Rep. Zach Nunn outlined the significant threat posed by China's global strategy, which includes technology theft, economic coercion, and military modernization. He described China's approach as "killing with a borrowed knife," using indirect methods to undermine the U.S. and its allies.

Key challenges include China's aggressive cyberattacks, exploitation of forced labor, and global surveillance campaigns targeting both businesses and governments. Rep. Nunn emphasized China's focus on emerging technologies like AI, biotechnology, and quantum computing to gain a strategic edge, while also pursuing geopolitical dominance, particularly over Taiwan. Rep. Nunn proposed countermeasures, including removing Chinese technology from U.S. systems, strengthening export controls to prevent critical technologies from reaching Beijing, and fostering innovation among allies. He stressed the importance of collective action to safeguard democracy and counter China's expanding influence globally.

- **Hon David Malpass**, former President, The World Bank Group; former Under Secretary of the U.S. Treasury for International Affairs

Hon. David Malpass, in his address, highlighted the erosion of U.S. soft power and the economic challenges faced globally, emphasizing the need for systemic overhauls. He pointed to worsening

conditions in regions like Africa, citing the failure of global institutions such as the G20 to effectively address critical issues like debt restructuring, development, and trade. Hon. Malpass described a lack of leadership in tackling these challenges, leading to a stagnant global economy and exacerbated inequality.

He criticized the role of China's financial dominance, particularly through initiatives like the Belt and Road, which profit from developing nations while sidestepping meaningful debt relief. China's practices, Malpass argued, exploit global systems to maintain control over debtor nations and enhance its geopolitical influence.

Domestically, he argued for greater U.S. leadership to rebuild soft power, suggesting the private sector and sound economic policies as essential to fostering global development. He stressed the need for reforms in institutions like the World Bank, emphasizing a focus on real outcomes for people rather than perpetuating elite-driven systems. Hon. Malpass also noted the breakdown of global trade frameworks and the challenges posed by currency instability, especially in developing countries. He called for significant changes to foster equitable growth, counter China's economic strategies, and restore effective international cooperation.

NATIONAL/REGIONAL SECURITY

- **Rear Adm. Mark A. Melson (retired)**, Commander, Logistics Group Western Pacific; Commander, Task Force SEVEN THREE; Founder/CEO, Melson Maritime Group

Rear Adm. Mark A. Melson shared insights from his recent tenure in Singapore, focusing on U.S. joint force readiness, allied cooperation, and maritime security in the Indo-Pacific. He commended Japan's proactive role in the region, emphasizing its critical contributions to interoperability and interchangeability among allies.

He highlighted the U.S. joint force's preparedness for peer conflict, acknowledging shifts away from permissive environments and the need to sustain operations in protracted conflicts. He stressed the importance of allied platforms, such as Japanese cruisers, Australian vessels, and European deployments like those of the *Charles de Gaulle* and *Prince of Wales*.

Rear Adm. Melson also underlined regional maritime security initiatives, including Coast Guard collaboration, illegal fishing deterrence, and integration of navies and Coast Guards. He praised Singapore's leadership in information sharing and disaster response, citing their Fusion Cell and Disaster Response Center as models of regional cooperation.

Finally, he discussed expanding U.S. posture in the region, highlighting progress in Australia and the Philippines. He underscored the importance of enhancing access, resupply, and intelligence sharing, particularly in the Philippines, as essential to regional stability and future U.S. strategy.

- **Col. Wes Spurlock (USAF, retired)**, former Senior Advisor to the Director, Office of Strategic Capital, Department of Defense

Col. Wes Spurlock emphasized the growing importance of economic security as a pillar of national security, highlighting the shift in global innovation dynamics. With 80% of R&D now driven by the private sector, he stressed the need for the U.S. government, particularly the Department of Defense (DoD), to partner with private capital and technology developers rather than solely acting as a customer. Col.

Spurlock noted challenges such as intellectual property theft, supply chain vulnerabilities, and the predatory practices of nations like China, including debt-trap diplomacy and technology replication. He pointed to initiatives like the Development Finance Corporation and the newly established DoD Office of Strategic Capital, which leverages loans and investments to support critical technologies. These programs, along with efforts like AFWERX, which provides seed funding for emerging tech companies, aim to attract private sector innovators who have historically been disconnected from government collaboration. Notably, 70% of the companies AFWERX founded last year had never worked with the government before.

Col. Spurlock underscored the need for a balanced approach, combining incentives with accountability to build sustainable partnerships with allies and private entities. He highlighted the importance of leveraging these tools to secure access to cutting-edge technologies, bolster supply chains, and maintain a competitive edge in national security without resorting to predatory methods.

- **Dr. Kaush Arha**, President of the Free & Open Indo-Pacific Forum; Senior Fellow, Atlantic Council's Global China Hub and Institute for Tech Diplomacy at Purdue

Dr. Kaush Arha discussed the United States' geopolitical challenges, emphasizing two principles from President Trump's administration: avoiding new wars and urging allies to share responsibilities. He highlighted debates over prioritizing U.S. efforts in Ukraine versus Taiwan and stressed the need for a comprehensive strategy addressing interconnected threats posed by adversaries like Russia, China, Iran, and North Korea.

Dr. Arha praised NATO's progress toward defense spending goals and proposed applying its collective security model to the Indo-Pacific. He suggested an Indo-Pacific Treaty Organization to foster regional partnerships and reduce reliance on unilateral U.S. security guarantees. Referencing Shinzo Abe's "Free and Open Indo-Pacific" vision, he advocated expanding this concept globally to counter authoritarian influence.

He highlighted the Arctic's strategic significance and called for greater Arctic-Nordic-Baltic commitment for a Free North Strategy. During the Q&A, he addressed challenges like educating Chinese students in the U.S., balancing openness with security, and refining vetting protocols. On Taiwan, he supported strengthening its international presence while avoiding military conflict with China.

Dr. Arha concluded by urging nuanced policymaking, international collaboration, and strategic action to address evolving global threats.

- **Rep. Nancy Mace**, Member, U.S. House of Representatives

Rep. Nancy Mace emphasized the critical role of cybersecurity and technology in national security, highlighting its global impact, particularly in the Indo-Pacific region. Drawing from her bipartisan delegation trip, she underscored the importance of understanding the military, cyber, and technological landscapes to ensure global safety.

As Chair of the Subcommittee on Cybersecurity and Technology Innovation, Rep. Mace stressed the bipartisan nature of her work, citing the successful passage of a quantum computing bill with Rep. Ro Khanna. She called cybersecurity a national priority, transcending politics.

Rep. Mace discussed Taiwan's strategic importance in the Indo-Pacific, noting the inevitability of conflict involving China. She advocated for supporting allies through economic and technological partnerships and highlighted emerging technologies like AI and machine learning in shaping defense strategies.

She praised private-sector collaboration, urging industry experts to advise policymakers on potential legislation impacts. Rep. Mace concluded by encouraging continued innovation and engagement with her office to craft policies that protect national security while advancing technology.

- **Hon. Takehiro Shimada**, Deputy Chief of Mission, Embassy of Japan in the U.S.

Hon. Takehiro Shimada emphasized the critical role of the Japan-U.S. alliance in addressing growing global security challenges, including threats from China, North Korea, and Russia. He highlighted Japan's efforts to strengthen its defense capabilities, such as increasing its defense budget to 2% of GDP by 2027 and acquiring advanced U.S. military equipment like Tomahawk missiles and F-35 jets. He underscored the importance of maintaining peace in the Taiwan Strait, noting Taiwan's significance in global semiconductor production and the risks posed by potential Chinese aggression. Hon. Shimada also detailed Japan's vision for a free and open Indo-Pacific, advocating for multilateral collaborations like the QUAD and regional partnerships to uphold a rules-based international order.

Concluding his remarks, he reaffirmed Japan's commitment to working with the U.S. and like-minded countries to promote global peace and prosperity, expressing gratitude for the continued support of the alliance.

THE PHILIPPINES

- **The Honorable Jose Manuel G. Romualdez**, Ambassador of the Republic of the Philippines to the U.S.

The Honorable Jose Manuel G. Romualdez, Philippine Ambassador to the United States, addressed the Parliamentary Intelligence-Security Forum, emphasizing the critical importance of the Indo-Pacific region in global security. Acknowledging the presence of Filipino parliamentarians, he stressed the role of lawmakers in shaping security agendas that benefit their constituents.

Ambassador Romualdez highlighted the South China Sea as a top priority for the Philippines, reaffirming the nation's commitment to the rule of law and the 2016 arbitral award. He outlined efforts to address rising tensions through diplomacy, regional cooperation, multilateral partnerships, maritime dialogues, and public awareness.

He praised the strong alliance between the Philippines and the United States, citing ongoing military modernization and economic collaboration to ensure peace and stability in the region. Ambassador Romualdez concluded by inviting attendees to the next Parliamentary Intelligence-Security Forum in the Philippines in February 2025.

RESPONDING TO EMERGING TRENDS IN FINANCIAL CRIME

- **Hon. Brent McIntosh**, former Under Secretary of Treasury for International Affairs

Hon. Brent McIntosh addressed the emerging threats of financial crime, emphasizing its critical role in destabilizing global geopolitics and supporting bad actors worldwide. He highlighted how financial crimes such as money laundering, sanctions evasion, and export control violations are becoming increasingly interconnected, sophisticated, and globalized, especially in the Asia-Pacific region.

Hon. McIntosh noted the misuse of financial systems by actors like Russia, Iran, and North Korea to bypass international sanctions, often through complex networks of shell companies, and he highlighted malign actors' use of emerging technologies such as digital assets, artificial intelligence, and deepfakes. He also underscored the challenges posed by fragmented privacy regulations, alternative financial channels, and the lack of harmonized global standards, which allow criminals to evade detection.

To combat these threats, Hon. McIntosh called for a proactive and predictive approach, urging financial institutions and governments to invest in advanced compliance programs, enhance due diligence, and foster global coordination for information sharing. He cited successful initiatives such as Singapore's COSMIC platform and encouraged stronger partnerships to close regulatory gaps. He concluded by emphasizing the shared responsibility of all stakeholders to protect the integrity of the global financial system.

ECONOMIC SECURITY/TRADE

- **Hon. Gilbert Kaplan**, former Under Secretary of Commerce for International Trade; Senior Fellow, Manufacturing Policy Initiative

Hon. Gilbert Kaplan discussed how U.S. tax reforms helped industries absorb the costs of tariffs imposed on Chinese goods, though he warned that future fiscal policies might not provide the same flexibility. He highlighted that China countered tariffs by devaluing its currency and subsidizing its industries, yet Academic researchers and the Federal Reserve have estimated that the tariffs have increased inflation by only about 0.5.%. Mr. Kaplan suggested that the U.S. should consider a "managed trade" approach with China, similar to the past agreement with Japan that protected the U.S. semiconductor industry.

- **Ms. Diana Furchtgott-Roth**, Director, Center for Energy, Climate, and Environment; The Herbert and Joyce Morgan Fellow in Energy and Environmental Policy, The Heritage Foundation

Ms. Diana Furchtgott-Roth emphasized the demographic and economic challenges facing China, including its aging workforce and overinvestment. She cautioned against overstating China's economic and military power due to these internal issues. Additionally, Ms. Furchtgott-Roth proposed that Africa develop its fossil fuel resources to meet its growing energy demands and foster economic growth, rather than being required to use renewables. She argued that affordable, resilient, and reliable energy

is essential for vibrant manufacturing and agricultural sectors, which will in turn lead to job creation and a reduction in poverty.

- **Mr. Daniel Bob**, former staff member, Senate Foreign Relations and House Foreign Affairs committees

Mr. Daniel Bob's speech called for approval of the acquisition of U.S. Steel by Japan's Nippon Steel, emphasizing its strategic importance to the U.S.-Japan alliance. He argued that the deal, despite facing political opposition, would modernize U.S. Steel, strengthen national security, and enhance competitiveness against China's growing dominance in steel. Mr. Bob highlighted the alignment the deal had with both President Biden's and former President Trump's Indo-Pacific policies, fostering economic ties and resilient supply chains. He urged approval of the deal, calling it a vital step in addressing global challenges and reinforcing the U.S.-Japan partnership.

KEYNOTE REMARKS

- **Rep. Young Kim**, Chair, Subcommittee on Indo-Pacific, House Foreign Affairs Committee, U.S. House of Representatives

Hon. Young Kim, U.S. Representative from California, highlighted her recent re-election and ongoing leadership roles in the House Foreign Affairs Committee's Indo-Pacific Subcommittee and Financial Services Committee. She emphasized the importance of U.S. engagement in the Indo-Pacific, citing adversarial alliances between China, Russia, North Korea, and Iran as critical threats.

Rep. Kim stressed the need for strong alliances through frameworks like the Quad, AUKUS, and U.S.-Japan-South Korea partnerships, along with joint maritime exercises to counter China's aggression in the South China Sea. She also called for resolving defense equipment backlogs for Taiwan and expanding trade agreements, including re-engaging with the CPTPP and enhancing ties with South Korea.

She underscored the value of interparliamentary exchanges in strengthening global relationships and reaffirmed her commitment to preserving a free and open Indo-Pacific through robust U.S. leadership and collaboration with allies.

THE KOREAN PENINSULA

- **Dr. Jae H. Ku**, Senior Fellow, U.S.-Korea Relations, Center for the National Interest

Dr. Jae H. Ku, Senior Fellow for U.S.-Korea Relations at the Center for the National Interest, analyzed South Korea's current political and security crisis following President Yoon Suk-yeol's martial law declaration. Framing the measure as a defense of democracy against "anti-state forces," the president

faced swift backlash, including a National Assembly resolution voiding the law. While President Yoon accepted the resolution, he accused the opposition of creating chaos.

With impeachment proceedings likely to succeed due to opposition control and defections from the ruling party, South Korea could face a snap presidential election in spring 2024, favoring opposition leader Lee Jae-myung. Dr. Ku warned that such political turmoil might strain U.S.-South Korea relations, particularly under a Lee administration, complicating trilateral cooperation with Japan and weakening the alliance during a critical time for regional security.

- **Mr. Sydney Seiler**, Senior Advisor, Korea Chair, Center for Strategic and International Studies

Mr. Sydney Seiler reflected on the political developments in Korea, contrasting South Korea's democratization progress since the 1980 martial law with North Korea's enduring totalitarian regime. He emphasized North Korea's 79-year-long de facto "martial law" as a symbol of its repression.

Mr. Seiler provided an overview of U.S.-DPRK relations, especially during the Trump administration, describing the unorthodox diplomatic approaches by Trump and Kim Jong Un's failure at the 2019 Hanoi summit to seize an opportunity to advance relations with the United States. He highlighted how Kim Jong-un's expectations for sanctions relief and recognition as a nuclear power by President Trump were unmet, leading North Korea to shift its strategy. Kim's current approach rejects denuclearization talks, prioritizes self-reliance, and fosters partnerships with nations like Russia that align with its terms.

He raised concerns about the evolving North Korea-Russia alliance, which bolsters North Korea's weapons programs and conventional forces, potentially destabilizing the region. This partnership, driven initially by Russia's need for munitions, may enable North Korea to modernize its military capabilities, posing increased threats to South Korea and the broader regional security landscape.

On U.S. policy, Mr. Seiler underscored the consistent approach of maintaining military deterrence, economic sanctions, and openness to dialogue while resisting concessions without tangible commitments from North Korea. He expressed concerns about potential shifts in U.S.-ROK relations, especially under a progressive South Korean government that might push for reduced military exercises and extended deterrence measures.

Despite uncertainties, Mr. Seiler highlighted the resilience of the U.S.-South Korea alliance over 70 years, emphasizing its role in supporting South Korea's democratization and maintaining regional stability. He concluded by expressing cautious optimism that the alliance could navigate future challenges, even amid political changes on the Korean Peninsula.

- **Mrs. Rachel Minyoung Lee**, Senior Fellow for the Stimson Center's Korea Program and 38 North

Mrs. Rachel Minyoung Lee provided insights into the future trajectory of U.S.-North Korea relations, emphasizing the significant impact of the failed Hanoi Summit (2019) on North Korea's strategy. She explained that the summit's collapse reinforced Kim Jong-un's view of a long-term confrontation with the United States, prompting a shift in policy—abandoning denuclearization in favor of self-reliance and strategic confrontation.

Mrs. Lee noted that for meaningful nuclear negotiations to resume, the U.S. would need to offer major concessions, such as ending joint military drills with South Korea and significantly reducing (or withdrawing) U.S. forces from the Korean Peninsula. Without such conditions, substantive progress is unlikely.

Discussing North Korea's foreign policy reorientation, Lee highlighted the strengthening relationship with Russia. While the long-term nature of this relationship remains uncertain, she argued that Kim Jong-un sees it as strategic. Immediate benefits for North Korea include financial support, wheat supplies, military technology transfers, and battlefield experience through troop deployments. Longer-term goals involve revitalizing North Korea's munitions industry, boosting the civilian economy, and enhancing diplomatic leverage on the global stage.

Mrs. Lee also addressed how this pivot to Russia impacts North Korea-China relations. She suggested that North Korea appears to be diversifying its economic and trade partnerships to reduce reliance on China. This shift raises questions about whether it represents a temporary tactical adjustment or a more significant strategic change in North Korea's policy toward China..

CRITICAL MINERALS/GLOBAL SUPPLY CHAIN

- **Hon. Robert Cresanti**, former Under Secretary of Commerce for Technology

Honorable Robert Cresanti began by reflecting on the precarious state of global affairs but emphasized the need for optimism and practical solutions. He challenged the assumption that the U.S. inherently possesses a technological advantage in critical minerals and related sectors, noting that countries like China have developed significant expertise through sustained efforts. Hon. Cresanti highlighted the importance of fostering domestic capabilities in mining, manufacturing, and related fields, as the U.S. cannot rely solely on historical advantages.

Drawing on personal and professional experiences, he emphasized the enduring strengths of the U.S., such as high-quality resources, a skilled and motivated workforce, and a culture of innovation. He also noted the nation's ability to attract global talent and create unique ecosystems like Silicon Valley, which remain unmatched despite global competition.

Hon. Cresanti advocated leveraging these advantages while deepening collaborations with allies, particularly in Southeast Asia. By building productive partnerships and sharing expertise, the U.S. can reclaim leadership in critical sectors and ensure mutual benefits for itself and its allies.

- **Prof. Milos Ivkovic**, MA, LL.M., LL.M. - International Arbitrator/Advisor to Governments; Washington University School of Law

Prof. Milos Ivkovic emphasized the urgent need to define the problem before seeking solutions to the global supply chain challenges for critical minerals. He pointed out that the current distortion and over-reliance on China in this sector pose a significant national security threat to the United States and other nations, and this dependency is largely by design.

Prof. Ivkovic highlighted that many of the resources China now exploits were originally developed with U.S. expertise and taxpayer funding, making the situation partly self-inflicted. While collaboration with allies is essential, he cautioned that asking partner nations to immediately build refineries or battery facilities is unrealistic due to the lack of infrastructure and energy access in many regions. Moreover, current financing in these areas predominantly comes from China, further complicating the issue.

The first step, he argued, is for Washington to resolve domestic policy and investment challenges, creating conditions for allies to participate effectively in the supply chain while respecting their sovereignty, given that they control the critical mineral deposits needed.

The second step involves taking a stronger stance against human rights abuses and unethical practices in Chinese-operated mines and markets. Prof. Ivkovic criticized the existing sanctions regime as insufficient and called for aggressive criminal prosecution and sanctions against bad actors benefiting from exploitative practices. By addressing these abuses, the U.S. and its allies can create a level playing field and incentivize ethical market behavior.

- **Prof. Jamil Jaffer**, Founder and Executive Director of the National Security Institute at the Antonin Scalia Law School at George Mason University; Board Member, U.S. Strategic Metals

Professor Jamil Jaffer introduced the critical importance of the global supply chain for essential minerals and metals, emphasizing their central role in modern technology, the transition to electric vehicles (EVs), and defense industries. He highlighted recent challenges, particularly China's potential restrictions on critical materials such as gallium, germanium, and graphite, which threaten not only to the U.S. but also to its allies and the global economy.

Jaffer stressed the need for robust strategies to mitigate supply chain vulnerabilities, leveraging technological innovation, public policy, and international collaboration. He underscored the urgency of developing resilient supply chains for critical minerals to ensure technological competitiveness and national security.

In introducing the panel, Prof. Jaffer emphasized their diverse expertise in technology, law, renewable energy, and global economic policy. He framed the discussion around how the U.S. can harness its technological and strategic advantages to strengthen supply chains and promote resilience in collaboration with global partners.

- **Mr. Dave McMurtry**, CEO, The McMurtry Group, Investor and Advisor in the Lithium-Ion Battery Supply Chain Industry

Mr. Dave McMurtry offered a grounded perspective on building companies in alignment with the policy decisions made in Washington, drawing from his experience in the lithium-ion battery industry. He acknowledged the impressive accomplishments of his co-panelists and emphasized his practical, hands-on approach to the topic.

Mr. McMurtry highlighted how the U.S. played a significant role in the early development of battery technologies but failed to capitalize on its innovations. For example, CATL, now the world's largest battery company, was built using technology acquired from American and Japanese firms. This missed

opportunity, he noted, stemmed not from a lack of capability but from policy and market decisions in the early 2000s that prioritized fossil fuels over advanced battery technology.

He described the challenge of reshaping the battery supply chain as a 25-year problem, drawing parallels to the decades-long journey of lithium-ion battery development. He explained that while modern batteries may seem technologically complex, they are based on materials like nickel, manganese, and cobalt, which need to be mined or recycled. Despite significant progress in battery energy density, with modern batteries reaching 250 Wh/kg, the recycling rate for lithium-ion batteries remains low—around 5%, compared to the 95% recycling rate for lead-acid batteries, driven by legislation and market incentives.

China's likely strategic manipulation of metal prices was another key point. By keeping prices low, China has made it cheaper to mine new materials rather than recycle existing ones, consolidating its control over the battery supply chain. Mr. McMurtry stressed the importance of addressing this issue, as demand for critical minerals like nickel and cobalt is projected to skyrocket by 2050, reaching 10 million tons and 5 million tons annually, respectively.

To achieve sustainability, Mr. McMurtry proposed a long-term vision: leveraging modern recycling technologies that can recover 99.5% of valuable metals from used batteries. With sufficient recycling infrastructure, mining for materials like nickel and cobalt could eventually become unnecessary, much as lead mining has been largely replaced by recycling. This approach, combining technological innovation with strong policy and market incentives, would enable the U.S. and its allies to build a more resilient and sustainable battery supply chain.

CHINA COMPETITION

- **Mr. Piero Tozzi**, Staff Director, Congressional-Executive Commission on China

Mr. Piero Tozzi emphasized the importance of accurately defining "China competition," arguing it is not with the Chinese people but with the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), which seeks to displace the international rules-based order. He criticized oversimplified economic views of competition, pointing instead to the CCP's systemic ambitions, including intellectual property theft, forced labor, and efforts to set global standards in technology, finance, and human rights.

Mr. Tozzi highlighted Taiwan as a critical challenge to the CCP's legitimacy and warned against Western complicity in supporting forced labor through trade and supply chains. He urged stricter enforcement of U.S. regulations, like SEC rules, to hold companies accountable for such practices.

Concluding, Mr. Tozzi referenced China's historical cycles of unity and division, suggesting current tensions within the CCP could lead to internal change. He called for an end to Western subsidies of authoritarianism while empowering the Chinese people to determine their future.

- **Mr. Robert Daly**, Director of the Wilson Center's Kissinger Institute on China and the United States

Mr. Robert Daly discussed the nature of competition with China, focusing on the global order and the values that shape international institutions. He emphasized that at the heart of this competition is China's vision for world order, which aligns with its domestic principles. He provided a Chinese

perspective, explaining that China sees itself as having a natural right to sovereignty, development, security, and a role in shaping global order, similar to the U.S. Historically, China seeks to expand its influence and create a global environment that mirrors its governance model.

He acknowledged China's positive contributions, such as its role as the world's largest trading nation and its efforts to help other nations, but also highlighted troubling aspects, including its growing military buildup, increasing international coercion, and the development of an authoritarian system at home. He argued that China's vision for global order is rooted in maintaining control, limiting dissent, and ensuring that no obstacles or objections are allowed to hinder its goals. This approach, according to Mr. Daly, is not about global domination but about building influence through dependence.

Mr. Daly described China as a frustrated superpower, seeking to assert its position on the global stage without disrupting the established order. He stressed the importance of transparency in diplomacy as a critical tool to counter China's influence and urged the U.S. and its allies to provide alternatives to Chinese infrastructure offerings, which many countries find beneficial. He concluded by emphasizing the need for open and transparent dialogue as a key weapon in dealing with China.

- **Hon. Brian Hart**, Deputy Director and Fellow of the China Power Project at the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS)

Hon. Brian Hart discussed Taiwan and China's military activities, emphasizing the increasing tension between the U.S. and China. He highlighted Taiwan's importance as a core issue in U.S.-China relations, as demonstrated by Chinese President Xi Jinping's recent meeting with President Biden, where Taiwan was listed as a top red line.

He focused on China's PLA (People's Liberation Army) actions, particularly the October 2024 military exercises around Taiwan. These exercises followed Taiwan President Lai's National Day speech, with significant PLA activity, including over 100 aircraft sorties. Hon. Hart also noted a growing role for China's Coast Guard alongside the PLA, suggesting preparations for potential blockades or quarantines.

Furthermore, he pointed out China's expanding ties with authoritarian partners like Russia, North Korea, and Iran, as shown by high-level meetings during the PLA exercises. This shift signals China's strategic engagement with allies while conducting military operations.

Looking ahead, Hon. Hart predicted continued PLA activity, driven by Beijing's increasing confidence and military capabilities. He stressed the potential for a blockade or quarantine of Taiwan, alongside a full invasion, posing risks to global commerce. The Taiwan Strait, with \$2.5 trillion worth of trade passing through annually, is a critical global trade route. Disruptions there could affect both economies and international relations.

- **Hon. John Strand**, CEO of Strand Consult, Denmark; Board Member, Parliamentary Intelligence-Security Forum

Hon. John Strand discussed China's use of "lawfare," a strategy in which the Chinese government and companies abuse legal systems in the U.S. and Europe to silence critics and suppress dissent. He

explained how Chinese companies like Huawei use lawsuits and legal threats to pressure governments, media outlets, companies, and academics to withdraw or alter their positions. This is done not only to manage reputation but also to create a "chilling effect" on free speech and intellectual freedom.

Hon. Strand cited multiple cases in which Chinese government actors and firms attempted to silence US and EU individuals, journalists, academics, and former diplomats. He stressed the need for the U.S. and Europe to recognize this abuse of democratic legal systems and to work together to stop it. He also called for greater transparency in identifying US and EU law firms and individuals (including former US and EU government officials) aiding China's efforts to attack democratic institutions. Ultimately,

CLOSING REMARKS



