

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

October 7, 2021

The Honorable Robert Menendez
Chairman
Senate Foreign Relations Committee
423 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable James Risch
Ranking Member
Senate Foreign Relations Committee
423 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Menendez and Ranking Member Risch:

We write to request that the Senate Foreign Relations Committee (SFRC) hold regular Member-level classified briefings with cabinet-level officials from the Biden administration's State Department and Defense Department about U.S. strategy toward the People's Republic of China and U.S. policy regarding Taiwan. We also request that SFRC hold an open full committee hearing on Taiwan.

President Biden last night told news reporters that he had spoken with Xi Jinping, General Secretary of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), about Taiwan:

"I've spoken with Xi about Taiwan. We agree ... we'll abide by the Taiwan agreement," he said, adding: *"We made it clear that I don't think he should be doing anything other than abiding by the agreement"* (emphasis added).

It is unclear when President Biden spoke with CCP General Secretary Xi about Taiwan—in particular, whether it was before or after the People's Liberation Army (PLA) flew nearly 150 military aircraft, including fighters and nuclear-capable bombers, into Taiwan's air defense identification zone (ADIZ) over a four-day period, the largest incursion ever by the Chinese military. Moreover, it is unclear to what "Taiwan agreement" between the United States and China President Biden was referring—whether he merely meant America's longstanding policy towards Taiwan and China, respectively, or some new undisclosed agreement or understanding on Taiwan between Washington and Beijing.

In this context, questions about the direction of U.S. policy toward Taiwan and China, respectively, have become more urgent as National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan meets with Yang Jiechi, a Politburo member and head of the CCP's Central Foreign Affairs Commission, in Switzerland this week.

Given these and other concerning developments among the United States, China, and Taiwan, we therefore request that SFRC host classified briefings on U.S. strategy toward the China challenge and U.S. policy toward Taiwan with cabinet-level officials from the Biden administration. While we understand the Subcommittee on East Asia held an open hearing on Taiwan in June, we believe this important topic requires a full committee hearing. Because these are increasingly urgent foreign policy matters, making unclear statements and stances about U.S. policy harms our national security. The 21st century will be largely defined by whether the United States and its allies and partners meet the diplomatic, economic, technological, and military challenges posed by China. Regular and timely briefings and hearings on these matters are critical to ensure senators have the best available knowledge to make necessary decisions and perform important oversight responsibilities on U.S. strategy and policy.

Sincerely,



Bill Hagerty
United States Senator



Ron Johnson
United States Senator



Marco Rubio
United States Senator



Ted Cruz
United States Senator



John Barrasso
United States Senator



Todd Young
United States Senator