



Committee Announces Bipartisan Task Force Combatting Chinese Government's Influence in the Indo-Pacific

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WASHINGTON, D.C. - Today, House Committee on Natural Resources Chairman Bruce Westerman (R-Ark.) and Ranking Member Raúl M. Grijalva (D-Ariz.) announced the formation of a bipartisan task force that will conduct oversight on issues facing the U.S. territories and Freely Associated States (FAS) in the Indo-Pacific region.

"There is perhaps no greater threat to America's national security and future prosperity than the continued growth of the People's Republic of China and its influence on the world stage," Westerman said. "The PRC has built a strategy to dominate the island nations and U.S. territories in the Pacific as a platform for the projection of its power. This strategy is a direct threat to our influence and economic interests in the region. Creating this task force with committee members on both sides of the political aisle is an essential step in understanding all the issues at play so we can better curtail the Chinese government's growing influence and strengthen and maintain America's relationship with the Freely Associated States."

"Our relationships with the U.S. territories and Freely Associated States in the Indo-Pacific region are critical to our national security, especially as we face mounting encroachment and aggression by the People's Republic of China," Grijalva said. "But we cannot forget that the value of our relationship with these important allies comes with the responsibility to support their economic development. I want to thank Chair Westerman, Congressman Sablan, and Congresswoman Radewagen for their bipartisan efforts in leading this Task Force to seek meaningful solutions that fulfill our obligations while continuing to build relationships with the Pacific territories and FAS."

Background

There are three U.S. territories in the Pacific: American Samoa, Guam and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. In addition, the U.S. has international agreements or Compacts of Free Association with three Pacific Island countries: the Republic of Palau, the Republic of the

Marshall Islands and the Federated States of Micronesia, collectively referred to as the Freely Associated States (FAS).

The U.S. has vital security and economic interests throughout the Indo-Pacific region, particularly amid rising competition with the People's Republic of China. The importance of the FAS cannot be overstated, given the proximity to the U.S. homeland areas and the broader geopolitical context.

While the U.S. has historically enjoyed good relations and ties in the Indo-Pacific region, the People's Republic of China (PRC) has increasingly sought to reshape regional political, economic and strategic alignments.

This has especially been the case with the U.S. Pacific territories and the FAS. The PRC has sought to take advantage of the relatively weak economies of island nations. Through offerings of economic aid and infrastructure development, the PRC has leveraged its resources to shape political outcomes and perceptions of the U.S. in the region while waging political warfare to gain undue influence and/or destabilize island nations.

The Indo-Pacific Task Force will discuss and advance solutions to counter the PRC's influence and to maintain America's capacity to secure its interests in order to remain engaged with the FAS region and respond to coercive activity by the PRC in the Pacific.

Watch the full livestream of the press conference [here](#).

Task Force Members: House Committee on Natural Resources Chairman Bruce Westerman (R-Ark.), Ranking Member Raúl M. Grijalva (D-Ariz.) and U.S. Reps. Amata Radewagen (R-American Samoa), Gregorio Kilili Camacho Sablan (D-CNMI), Ruben Gallego (D-Ariz.), Ed Case (D-Hawaii), Harriet Hageman (R-Wyo.), Teresa Leger Fernandez (D-N.M.), Doug Lamborn (R-Colo.), Jim Moylan (R-Guam), Melanie Stansbury (D-N.M.), Katie Porter (D-Calif.), Tom Tiffany (R-Wis.) and Rob Wittman (R-Va.)

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