

Opening Remarks
SFRC Confirmation Hearing
Ambassador Designate David Perdue
April 3, 2025

Chairman Risch, Ranking Member Shaheen, members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and staff, good morning and thank you for this opportunity to meet with you today. Senator Daines, thank you as well for your generous introduction.

It is my high honor to have been nominated by President Trump to become our country's 14th Ambassador to the People's Republic of China. As a former member of this committee, though, I must tell you it feels very strange sitting on this side of the dais this morning instead of sitting over there.

Supporting me here today is my wife, Bonnie, whom I met in first grade. Our sons, David III and Blake, their wives, Danielle and Charlotte, and our grandsons, David IV, Jack and Hudson are all watching this morning as well.

As a Fortune 500 CEO, as a U.S. Senator, and as an expat living in Europe and Asia, I developed a global perspective on the relationship between our two countries.

As chair of the SFRC State Department Oversight Subcommittee and the SASC Sea Power Subcommittee, I have witnessed firsthand the complexities of our relationship with China, which is the most consequential diplomatic challenge of the 21st century.

Since establishing formal relations with the PRC in 1979, the United States has opened its markets to China and has supported its economic rise. More than 2 million Chinese students have been educated in American universities. With U.S. support, China has taken full advantage of Most Favored Nation status, WTO membership, and Developing Nation status, but has often failed to live up to commensurate responsibilities. China has also expanded its authoritarian influence in international organizations like the UN, the WHO, and the World Bank.

Marxist nationalism is reshaping China, and their global ambitions threaten the current world order. Since 2000, China has doubled its nuclear arsenal and grown its military at a pace unseen since WWII. They have militarized the South China Sea and violated their agreement in Hong Kong. Their Social Credit Score system and extensive policing capability are designed to enforce domestic state control. Their Belt and Road Initiative and their Made in China 2025 statements demonstrate their global ambitions. They speak of a global "community of common destiny for all mankind." Put simply, they want a world more in line with their authoritarian principles.

Complicating the current situation, unfettered globalization with minimal national security constraints has led to the situation today where many of America's key strategic supply chains are in the hands of our adversaries.

President Trump's America First strategy is not isolationist. Just the reverse. America will be a stronger ally and partner by rebuilding our strategic supply chains at home and with our friends. It is not inconsistent that while we are negotiating for fair trade, we are also seeking to strengthen our ties with our allies. Our relationship with members of the QUAD, AUKUS, ASEAN and NATO will continue to be extremely important.

The Chinese respect strength and President Trump's strategy is focused on making America safer, stronger, and more prosperous. That means that reciprocity and U.S. security should be considered in all dealings between China and the United States.

Our approach to China should be nuanced, nonpartisan, and strategic. Our two countries will naturally have areas of disagreement and we should actively engage on these. We should seek areas where our interests align to develop a better and safer working relationship.

As Ambassador, I will support our strategy to lead with diplomacy to ensure our own national and economic security remains uncompromised. I will remain committed to promoting democratic ideals and an open, free, and fair international system.

As Ambassador, I will support the United States' one China policy, guided by the Taiwan Relations Act, the three Joint Communiques, and the Six Assurances. We remain committed to a peaceful resolution that is acceptable to the people on both sides of the Strait. We oppose unilateral changes to the status quo.

As Ambassador, I will ardently communicate our objections to China's penetration into our power grid, our ports, and our personal lives. Having participated in U.S. FONOP exercises in the South China Sea, I've seen first-hand China's militarization and will work to support open and free navigation wherever international law allows.

I will also ensure focus on our priority to eliminate fentanyl precursors and hold China accountable on human rights. I will work to increase the tempo of diplomatic dialogue to get results and to achieve fair and reciprocal trade between our two economies.

I will uphold American values, represent American interests, and support strong partnerships with our friends.

Finally, if confirmed, I look forward to working with America's dedicated foreign and civil service personnel and their families who are at the tip of the spear promoting and protecting American interests in a very challenging environment in China.

I approach this nomination with a strong sense of responsibility. I am energized and sobered about this opportunity to impact the most important diplomatic relationship of our time.

Thank you for your consideration and I look forward to your comments and questions.

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