

Kamala Harris and the PRC

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Kamala Harris formally accepted the Democratic Party's presidential nomination on August 22 2024, the final day of the Democratic National Convention held in Chicago. In her acceptance speech, she stated that as president she would ensure that 'America, not China, wins the competition for the 21st century'.¹

One persistent view, and a line of attack recently adopted by Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump and vice-presidential nominee JD Vance,² is that Vice President Harris is lacking in foreign policy experience.

Her time as Attorney General of California (2011 to 2017) and San Francisco District Attorney (2004 to 2011) necessitated an exclusively domestic focus, with greater exposure to foreign policy issues when she became Senator for California in 2017, during which time she was a member of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence and the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Senate Committee. As Vice President (2021 to present) she represented US interests to foreign governments, advancing, in particular, alliances and partnerships in Southeast Asia. She told *The Washington Post*, 'If you just look down the path of the next couple decades and think about what's going to be important right now to do, strengthening relationships in this part of the world [Southeast Asia] is going to be a big part of that. Showing up is very important ... but it's not enough.'³ She has also been vocal in her support for Ukraine and for upholding US obligations to NATO.

On relations with the People's Republic of China (PRC), Vice President Harris has over the last seven years fleshed out views and stances on US-PRC political and trade relations, on Beijing's human rights abuses, economic coercion, and aggression in the South China Sea and East China Sea, and on relations with Taiwan.

As Senator, she opposed the Trump administration's trade war, but also called for adherence to export restrictions on military technologies and dual-use technologies, as well as denial of export privileges to PRC telecommunications company ZTE, and criticised Beijing's industrial policies and theft of American intellectual property.

She emphasised the need to confront the PRC's economic practices, but through leveraging alliances and partnerships as opposed to taking unilateral action. She underlined, too, the need to continue to partner with the PRC to address issues such as climate change and North Korea.

Senator Harris introduced legislation to strengthen the US' ability to respond to PRC cyber theft, and cosponsored legislation addressing PRC human rights violations in Xinjiang and Hong Kong. She also co-sponsored legislation removing an offset reducing the number of visas for individuals from the PRC.

As Vice President, while emphasising the importance of holding the PRC 'to account', she asserted the importance of distinguishing between US-PRC 'competition' and 'conflict', noting it was crucial not to

1 'Full transcript of Kamala Harris's Speech at the Democratic Convention', *New York Times*, August 23 2024 <<https://www.nytimes.com/2024/08/23/us/politics/kamala-harris-speech-transcript.html>>.

2 Glen Charier, 'Trump, Vance attack Harris on Afghanistan exit, foreign policy at North Carolina event', *NC Newsline*, August 21 2024 <<https://ncnewsline.com/2024/08/21/trump-vance-attack-harris-on-afghanistan-exit-foreign-policy-in-north-carolina/>>.

3 Josh Rogin, 'Vice President Harris says showing up in Asia is important, but not enough', *The Washington Post*, September 12 2023 <<https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2023/09/12/kamala-harris-southeast-asia-china/>>.

conflate the two. She also highlighted the need to maintain open lines of communication between Beijing and Washington.

Enhancing maritime security in the South China Sea was a focus of her vice presidency, working in particularly with the Philippines and embarking on a historic visit to Vietnam – the first US vice president to travel to the country since 1975 – to offer US support. She also continued to express concerns about human rights violations by Beijing.

In what appears to constitute a signal about her presidential priorities, Vice President Harris has chosen as her running mate on the presidential ticket Minnesota Governor Tim Walz who has had long, personal experience with the PRC, with over 30 visits to the country. He taught English in Guangdong in the 1980s and founded a company which organised summer trips to the PRC for US students. In 1990, he told the *Star-Herald*, a local Nebraskan paper, that while going to the PRC was ‘one of the best things’ he had ever done, he felt the Chinese people were subject to mistreatment by their government. ‘If they had the proper leadership, there are no limits on what they could accomplish. They are such kind, generous, capable people,’ he said.⁴

While serving as Congressman for Minnesota (2007 to 2019) Mr Walz met with the Dalai Lama and Hong Kong democracy activist Joshua Wong.

Beijing has officially refrained from commenting on the Democratic nominees, but PRC state-backed news outlet the *Global Times* cited PRC observers who termed Vice President Harris ‘mediocre’ and lacking the ‘experience and achievements to serve as president.’⁵

This UTS:ACRI Brief lays out Vice President Harris’ contributions to discourse on the PRC in descending chronological order.

November 2023: Support for the Philippines in the South China Sea

On November 16 2023, Vice President Harris met with Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr in Washington, her fifth meeting with the leader, on the margins of the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Leaders’ Meeting in San Francisco. According to a White House readout of the meeting, security ties featured prominently in the meeting, particularly US support for the Philippines in the South China Sea.⁶

The Vice President said that the US ‘stands shoulder-to-shoulder in defending the Philippines’ sovereign rights and jurisdiction in the South China Sea’ and ‘reaffirmed the United States’ defence commitment to the Philippines under Article IV of the 1951 US–Philippines Mutual Defense Treaty, underscoring that an armed attack on Philippine armed forces, public vessels, or aircraft in the Pacific, including in the South China Sea, would invoke US mutual defence commitments.’⁷

The meeting built on discussions on maritime security in the South China Sea between Vice President Harris and President Marcos over four previous meetings in 2023 and 2022, including during a September 2023 trilateral meeting with Japanese Prime Minister Kishida Fumio,⁸ in a bilateral meeting on the sidelines of the East Asia Summit in Jakarta that same month,⁹ a meeting at the US Naval Observatory in Washington DC in May 2023,¹⁰ and during Vice President Harris’ visit to Manila in November 2022.¹¹

September 2023: An outline of US policy on the PRC

On September 7 2023, Vice President Harris attended the East Asia Summit in Jakarta. According to a White House readout of her participation, the Vice President emphasised the importance of respect for freedom of navigation and overflight in the East China and South China Seas, reaffirming US support for the 2016 UN

4 Amy Qin and Keith Bradsher, ‘Tim Walz’s long relationship with China defies easy stereotypes’, *New York Times*, August 11 2024 <<https://www.nytimes.com/2024/08/11/us/tim-walz-china.html>>.

5 Bloomberg News, ‘China focuses on Kamala Harris’ weaknesses after Biden exits’, *Bloomberg Government*, July 23 2024 <<https://news.bgov.com/bloomberg-government-news/china-social-media-embraces-trump-after-harris-steps-into-race>>.

6 The White House, ‘Readout of Vice President Harris’s meeting with President Marcos of the Philippines’, November 16 2023 <<https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2023/11/16/readout-of-vice-president-harris-meeting-with-president-marcos-of-the-philippines-3/>>.

7 *Ibid.*

8 The White House, ‘Readout of Vice President Harris’s trilateral meeting with President Marcos of the Philippines and Prime Minister Kishida of Japan’, September 7 2023 <<https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2023/09/07/readout-of-vice-president-harris-trilateral-meeting-with-president-marcos-of-the-philippines-and-prime-minister-kishida-of-japan/>>.

9 The White House, ‘Readout of bilateral meeting Between the Vice President Kamala Harris of the United States and President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. of the Philippines’, September 6 2023 <<https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2023/09/06/readout-of-bilateral-meeting-between-the-vice-president-kamala-harris-of-the-united-states-and-president-ferdinand-marcos-jr-of-the-philippines/>>.

10 The White House, ‘Remarks by Vice President Harris and President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. of the Philippines at arrival greet’, May 2 2023 <<https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2023/05/02/remarks-by-vice-president-harris-and-president-ferdinand-marcos-jr-of-the-philippines-at-arrival-greet/>>.

11 The White House, ‘Readout of Vice President Harris’s Meeting with President Marcos of the Philippines’, November 21 2022 <<https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2022/11/21/readout-of-vice-president-harris-meeting-with-president-marcos-of-the-philippines/>>.

arbitral tribunal ruling in favour of the Philippines and underlining ‘the importance of maintaining peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait.’¹²

The Vice President also raised concerns regarding ‘the grave human rights abuses’ being committed by Beijing.¹³

In an interview with CBS’ *Face the Nation* on September 10 2023, Vice President Harris said there was ‘a great symmetry’ between US and Southeast Asian nations’ policies on the PRC:¹⁴

[T]he issue that is most present here among the southeast Asian leaders is that there be a respect for and enforcement of international rules and norms. But they hope that there will be an avoidance of conflict. And that there is a great symmetry between that and our policy toward China.

She said that there was a ‘tension’ between the US and the PRC in that both were engaged in competition, ‘but that does not mean that we are seeking conflict’. She emphasised that it was ‘important to not conflate the two.’ She also noted that it was ‘important to the order of things... the stability of things, that we keep open lines of communication’ between the US and the PRC.¹⁵

She said further that US policy towards the PRC was not about decoupling, but rather about de-risking, and about ensuring the US remained ‘a leader in terms of the rules of the road’:¹⁶

We, as the United States, and our policy is not about decoupling, it is about de-risking. It is about understanding.

...

It’s not about pulling out [US military], but it is about ensur[ing] that we are protecting American interests and that we are a leader in terms of the rules of the road, as opposed to following others’ rules.

November 2022: Brief exchange with President Xi Jinping; Support for the Philippines in the South China Sea

On November 19 2022, Vice President Harris engaged in a brief exchange with PRC President Xi Jinping while heading into an APEC summit meeting in Bangkok.

She wrote on Twitter:¹⁷

I greeted President Xi before the APEC Leaders Retreat. I noted a key message that President Biden emphasised in his November 14 meeting with President Xi: we must maintain open lines of communication to responsibly manage the competition between our countries.

After APEC, the Vice President embarked on a three-day visit to the Philippines, stopping in Palawan, an island bordering the South China Sea, to deliver a speech aboard the BRP Terese Magbanua, a Philippine coast guard ship, on November 22 2022. She said that the US ‘stands with the Philippines in the face of intimidation and coercion in the South China Sea’ and that the US would ‘continue to rally’ its allies and partners against Beijing’s ‘unlawful and irresponsible behaviour’.¹⁸

She noted that the US and the international community ‘have a profound stake in the future of this region. America’s prosperity relies on the billions of dollars that flow through these waters every day.’¹⁹

September 2022: Criticisms of Beijing’s use of economic coercion and actions in the South and East China Seas and the Taiwan Strait; Pledge to continue to deepen unofficial ties with Taiwan

In a speech to naval forces aboard the USS Howard at the Yokosuka Naval Base in Japan on September 28 2022, Vice President Harris criticised the PRC for ‘undermining key elements of the international rules-based

¹² The White House, ‘Readout of Vice President Harris’s participation in the East Asia Summit’, September 7 2023 <<https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2023/09/07/readout-of-vice-president-harris-participation-in-the-east-asia-summit/>>.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ CBS, ‘Full transcript of “Face the Nation”’, September 10 2023 <<https://www.cbsnews.com/news/face-the-nation-full-transcript-09-10-2023/>>.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ Kamala Harris (@VP), Twitter, November 19 2022 <<https://x.com/VP/status/1593838484116176897>>.

¹⁸ Kamala Harris, ‘Remarks by Vice President Harris aboard the Philippine Coast Guard Ship Teresa Magbanua’, November 22 2022 <<https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2022/11/22/remarks-by-vice-president-harris-aboard-the-philippine-coast-guard-ship-teresa-magbanua/>>.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

order', pointing to its use of economic coercion and behaviour in the South and East China Seas, as well as its actions in the Taiwan Strait in the wake of former US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's visit to Taiwan.²⁰

China has challenged the freedom of the seas. China has flexed its military and economic might to coerce and intimidate its neighbours. And we have witnessed disturbing behaviour in the East China Sea and in the South China Sea, and, most recently, provocations across the Taiwan Strait.

She stated that the US would 'continue to oppose any unilateral change to the status quo' in the Taiwan Strait, as well as 'continue to support Taiwan's self-defence'.

She also said that the US would 'continue to deepen... unofficial ties' with Taiwan.

January 2022: Brief exchange with then-Vice President of Taiwan Lai Ching-te

While in Honduras for the inauguration of Xiomara Castro, Vice President Harris briefly spoke with Vice President of Taiwan Lai Ching-te on January 27 2022. She told press that the 'brief conversation' focused on 'a common interest' in Central America and 'apparently Taiwan's interest in our root causes strategy [to curb migration].' She noted that Lai had approached her.²¹

Taiwan's Vice President told reporters in his travelling party that he had thanked the US Vice President for the US' 'rock solid' help to Taiwan, stating that he thought she was a 'very capable person'.²²

Taiwan's Central News Agency described the interaction as a 'simple greeting'.²³

A PRC Foreign Ministry spokesperson on January 28 criticised the interaction, saying that the US should 'stop all forms of official interactions with Taiwan and avoid sending wrong signals to "Taiwan independence" forces.'²⁴

August 2021: Criticisms of Beijing's South China Sea incursions; Reassurances to Southeast Asian and Indo-Pacific nations of US commitment to the region; Offer of US support to Vietnam in South China Sea

On August 24 2021, Vice President Harris delivered a speech in Singapore outlining the Biden administration's foreign policy in the region.

During her address, she stated that 'Beijing continues to coerce, to intimidate, and to make claims to the vast majority of the South China Sea.' She noted that these actions 'threaten the sovereignty of nations' and said that the US 'stands with our allies and partners in the face of these threats.'²⁵

She also used the speech to offer reassurances that Washington's engagement in Southeast Asia and the Indo-Pacific was 'not against any one country, nor... designed to make anyone choose between countries.'

The Vice President then travelled to Hanoi, the first visit by a US vice president to Vietnam since 1975, meeting with Vietnamese leaders on August 25.

In remarks before a meeting with Vietnamese Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh, she said the US and Vietnam needed to 'find ways to pressure and raise the pressure... on Beijing to abide by the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, and to challenge its bullying and excessive maritime claims.' She stated that the US Navy would 'maintain a strong presence' in the South China Sea.²⁶

As she concluded her trip on August 26, she told a press conference:²⁷

We welcome stiff competition, we do not seek conflict but on issues such as the South China Sea, we are going to speak up.

We are going to speak up when there are actions that Beijing takes that threaten the rules-based international order.

20 The White House, 'Remarks by Vice President Harris aboard the USS Howard naval ship', September 28 2022 <<https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2022/09/28/remarks-by-vice-president-harris-aboard-the-uss-howard-naval-ship/>>.

21 Reuters, 'China angered over Kamala Harris meeting with Taiwan vice president', January 29 2022, *NBC News* <<https://www.nbcnews.com/news/world/china-anger-kamala-harris-meeting-taiwan-vice-president-honduras-rcna13922>>.

22 *Ibid.*

23 *Ibid.*

24 Embassy of the People's Republic of China in Jamaica, 'Foreign Ministry spokesperson Zhao Lijian's regular press conference on January 28 2022', January 28 2022 <http://jm.china-embassy.gov.cn/eng/wjbfyrth/202201/t20220128_10636091.htm>.

25 The White House, 'Remarks by Vice President Harris on the Indo-Pacific Region', Gardens by the Bay, Singapore, August 24 2021 <<https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2021/08/24/remarks-by-vice-president-harris-on-the-indo-pacific-region/>>.

26 The White House, 'Remarks by Vice President Harris and President Phuc of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam in Hanoi, Vietnam', August 25 2021 <<https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2021/08/25/remarks-by-vice-president-harris-and-president-phuc-of-the-socialist-republic-of-vietnam-in-hanoi-vietnam/>>.

27 Reuters Staff, 'Kamala Harris says US will "speak up" on South China Sea', August 26 2021 <<https://globalnation.inquirer.net/198760/kamala-harris-says-us-will-speak-up-on-south-china-sea>>.

Beijing was spurred by the Vice President's Vietnam visit to attempt to stage its own diplomatic coup, with an unannounced meeting between the PRC's Ambassador to Vietnam, Xiong Bo, and Vietnamese Prime Minister Pham taking place a few hours before Harris' arrival in Hanoi. During the meeting, the PRC Ambassador pledged a donation of two million COVID-19 vaccines.²⁸ A Vietnamese government statement issued after the meeting said that 'Vietnam does not align itself with one country against another.' It said further that territorial disputes in the South China should be settled according to international law and 'high-level common sense'.²⁹

November 2020: Congratulatory message received from PRC Vice Premier Wang Qishan three weeks after elections

On November 3 2020, Joe Biden was elected the 46th president of the US and Kamala Harris elected vice president. Ten days later, on November 13, a PRC Foreign Ministry spokesperson told a media briefing, 'We respect the choice of the American people and convey our congratulations to Mr Biden and Ms Harris. We understand that the outcome of the American elections will be decided according to their laws and procedures.'³⁰

Three weeks after the US presidential elections, on November 25, PRC Vice Premier Wang Qishan sent a congratulatory message to Kamala Harris on her election. President Xi had sent a message of congratulations to President Biden on the same day.³¹

May 2020: Co-sponsorship of legislation to impose sanctions on foreign individuals and entities responsible for human rights abuses in Xinjiang

On May 14 2020, Senator Harris joined a bipartisan group of 65 senators to co-sponsor the Uyghur Human Rights Policy Act introduced by Republican Senator Marco Rubio. The bill sought to impose property-blocking and visa-blocking sanctions on foreign individuals and entities responsible for human rights abuses in Xinjiang. It became law on June 17 2020.³²

October 2019: Co-sponsorship of legislation supporting Hong Kong human rights and democracy

On October 21 2019, Senator Harris co-sponsored the Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act, which directed US government departments 'to assess whether political developments in Hong Kong justify changing Hong Kong's unique treatment under US law' and imposed sanctions on individuals 'responsible for committing acts that violate internationally recognised human rights in Hong Kong'. A bipartisan group of 56 senators joined as co-sponsors of the bill, which became law on November 27 2019.³³

August 2019: Articulation of support for Hong Kong's pro-democracy protesters

On August 14 2019 Senator Harris tweeted her support for Hong Kong's pro-democracy protesters:³⁴

I stand with the people of Hong Kong and affirm the fundamental right of all people to peacefully protest for their rights.

September 2019: Description of US-PRC relationship as 'complicated', pointing to need to both hold PRC to account and partner with it

During the third Democratic presidential debate in Houston on September 12 2019, Senator Harris described the US-PRC relationship as 'complicated'.

She stated that 'We have to hold China accountable' as '[t]hey steal our products, including our intellectual property. They dump substandard products into our economy.' At the same time, she said, 'We also need to partner with China on climate and the crisis that that presents. We need to partner with China on the issue of North Korea.'³⁵

28 James Pearson and Nandita Bose, 'U.S. VP Harris forges on with Vietnam trip despite mystery "health incident"', *Reuters*, August 25 2021 <<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/eve-harris-trip-vietnam-tells-china-it-does-not-pick-sides-2021-08-24/>>.

29 *Ibid.*

30 BBC Staff, 'US election: China congratulates Biden after long silence', *BBC*, November 13 2020 <<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/election-us-2020-54871890>>.

31 Embassy of the People's Republic of China in the Commonwealth of Australia, 'Xi congratulates Biden on election as US president', November 25 2020 <http://au.china-embassy.gov.cn/eng/zgxw_4/202011/t20201125_743552.htm>.

32 Congress.gov, S.3744 - Uyghur Human Rights Policy Act of 2020, 116th Congress (2019-2020), accessed August 14 2024 <<https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/senate-bill/3744>>.

33 Congress.gov, S.1838 - Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act of 2019, 116th Congress (2019-2020), accessed August 14 2024 <<https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/senate-bill/1838>>.

34 Kamala Harris (@KamalaHarris), Twitter, August 14 2019 <<https://x.com/kamalaharris/status/1161454936791666688>>.

35 ABC News, 'Read the full transcript of ABC News' 3rd Democratic debate', September 13 2019 <<https://abcnews.go.com/US/read-full-transcript-abc-news-3rd-democratic-debate/story?id=65587810>>.

July 30 2019: Call for the PRC's human rights record to feature more prominently in US policy

In a written response to a Council on Foreign Relations' presidential candidates' question-and-answer on foreign policy issues, Senator Harris discussed her stance on the PRC's human rights record.

In response to the question, 'How, if at all, should China's treatment of the Uighurs and the situation in Hong Kong affect broader US policy toward China?', Senator Harris wrote:³⁶

China's abysmal human rights record must feature prominently in our policy toward the country. We can't ignore China's mass detention of more than a million Uighur Muslims in "re-education camps" in the Xinjiang region, or its widespread abuse of surveillance for political and religious repression. We can't ignore Beijing's failure to respect the rights and autonomy of Hong Kong's people and the Hong Kong government's excessive use of force against peaceful protestors. President Trump has consistently turned a blind eye to these abuses in hopes of earning a 'win' in his trade war, all to no avail.

Under my administration, we will cooperate with China on global issues like climate change, but we won't allow human rights abuses to go unchecked. The United States must reclaim our own moral authority and work with like-minded nations to stand up forcefully for human rights in China and around the world.

May 2019: Support for addressing trade challenges related to the PRC in concert with allies over unilateral action

In an interview with *CNN* on May 12 2019, Senator Harris spoke of the need to work in concert with US allies, partners and friends in addressing trade challenges related to the PRC instead of engaging in purely 'unilateral action'.³⁷

She criticised the Trump administration for 'fail[ing] to understand that we are stronger when we work with our allies on every issue, China included... in terms of the threat that it presents to our economy, the threat it presents to American workers and American industries.'

February 2019: Co-sponsorship of legislation removing an offset reducing the number of visas for individuals from the PRC

On February 7 2019, Senator Harris co-sponsored the Fairness for High-Skilled Immigrants Act of 2019 which sought to increase the per-country cap on family-based immigrant visas, eliminate the cap on employment-based immigrant visas and remove an offset that reduced the number of visas for individuals from the PRC.³⁸

December 2018: Introduction of legislation to strengthen the US' ability to respond to PRC cyber theft

On December 12 2018, Senator Harris introduced the DEFEND (Deterring Espionage by Foreign Entities through National Defense) Act, which sought to amend the 1996 Economic Espionage Act in order to strengthen the US' ability to combat economic and industrial espionage by increasing punitive damages, extending the statute of limitations for filing a claim and expanding the law's scope to offences committed outside the US.³⁹ The bill died in committee.

Senator Harris presented to move to introduce the legislation at a Senate Committee on the Judiciary hearing on 'China's non-traditional espionage against the United States: The threat and potential policy responses', in the context of combating cyber aggression by the PRC.⁴⁰

August 2018: Call for a reconsideration of proposed tariffs on consumer electronics and electric components imported from the PRC

On August 16 2018, Democratic Senators for California Harris and Dianne Feinstein wrote to US Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer calling for a 'reconsideration' of the Trump administration's proposed tariffs

36 Council on Foreign Relations, 'Candidates Answer CFR's Questions: Kamala Harris', August 21 2019 <<https://www.cfr.org/article/presidential-candidates-china-and-human-rights>>.

37 CNN, 'Interview with Sen. Kamala Harris (D-CA)', May 12 2019 <<http://edition.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS/1905/12/sotu.01.html>>.

38 Congress.gov, S.386 – Fairness for High Skilled Immigrants Act of 2019, 116th Congress (2019-2020), accessed August 14 2024 <<https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/senate-bill/386>>.

39 Congress.gov, S.3742 – DEFEND Act', 115th Congress (2017-2018), accessed August 15 2024 <<https://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/senate-bill/3743>>.

40 US Senate Committee on the Judiciary, 'China's non-traditional espionage against the United States: The threat and potential policy responses', Full Committee Hearing, December 12 2028 <<https://www.judiciary.senate.gov/committee-activity/hearings/chinas-non-traditional-espionage-against-the-united-states-the-threat-and-potential-policy-responses>>.

on consumer electronics and electronic components imported from the PRC, stating they were harmful for American businesses and workers, and would also raise consumer prices. They wrote:⁴¹

While we agree with the findings of your office's recent investigation into China's unfair industrial policies and outright theft of American intellectual property, we are concerned that the Administration's trade actions are counterproductive to its goal of ensuring a level playing field for American companies.

Many American companies in this sector have complex global supply chains, and are unable to quickly reconfigure their supply chains to shift sourcing away from China without significant and costly disruptions to their operations.

They urged the Trump administration 'to rethink its escalating tariffs' and 'instead urgently convene negotiations' with the PRC.⁴²

May 2018: Call for restrictions on ZTE, restrictions on military technologies and dual-use technologies to be adhered to

The US Commerce Department in April 2018 imposed a denial of export privileges against PRC telecommunications company ZTE, preventing ZTE from purchasing a wide range of technology products from US suppliers.⁴³ The following month, then-President Trump said the original penalty was too harsh,⁴⁴ and Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross announced that his department would look at 'alternative remedies' to address concerns around ZTE.⁴⁵

In a May 22 2018 letter to Treasury Secretary Steve Mnuchin, Commerce Secretary Ross and US Trade Representative Lighthizer, Senator Harris joined a bipartisan group of 26 senators to urge the Trump administration 'to reject any proposal to soften restrictions on the transfer to China of US-made military technologies and advanced dual-use technologies, including semiconductors.'⁴⁶

The senators urged the Trump administration 'not to compromise lawful US enforcement actions against serial and pre-meditated violators of US law, such as ZTE.' They stated that:

This is particularly critical when the violators are state-owned and -influenced, part and parcel of China's policies and practices designed to strengthen its own national security innovation base, and essential tools of efforts to spread China's influence in other countries that pose national security threats to the United States.

The senators also expressed agreement with General Joe Dunford, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, that 'within seven years, China will pose the greatest threat to US national security of any nation.' They wrote:

There can be no question that China seeks to surpass the US both economically and militarily and become the world's foremost superpower, and neither the Federal Government nor private US companies should aid and abet that effort.

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41 Congressional Documents and Publications, 'Feinstein, Harris to Trump: Rethink escalating tariffs with China; Sen. Feinstein, Dianne - (D - CA) news release', US Government Publishing Office, August 16 2018 <https://justfacts.votesmart.org/public-statement/1271135/letter-to-robert-lighthizer-ambassador-of-the-office-of-the-united-states-trade-representative-feinstein-harris-to-trump-rethink-escalating-tariffs-with-china>

42 *Ibid.*
43 Covington & Burling LLP, 'Department of Commerce activates denial order against Chinese telecommunications company ZTE', April 20 2018 <https://www.cov.com/-/media/files/corporate/publications/2018/04/departments_of_commerce_activates_denial_order_against_chinese_telecommunications_company_zte.pdf>

44 Brent D. Griffiths and Annie Karni, 'Trump says he'll help Chinese company that violated U.S. sanctions', *Politico*, May 13 2018 <<https://www.politico.com/story/2018/05/13/trump-zte-china-sanctions-korea-iran-584244>>

45 Eli Okun, 'Wilbur Ross: We're exploring 'alternative remedies' for ZTE ban', *Politico*, May 14 2018 <<https://www.politico.com/story/2018/05/14/wilbur-ross-zte-ban-584713>>

46 Mark R. Warner, 'Warner, colleagues urge administration to protect American technology from China', press release, May 22 2018 <<https://www.warner.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/2018/5/warner-colleagues-urge-administration-to-protect-american-technology-from-china>>