



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

December 17, 2020

The Honorable Mike Pompeo
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Secretary Pompeo:

As Members of Congress who strongly support the U.S.-Taiwan relationship, we write regarding three matters in our bilateral relationships. We wish to raise two protocol issues between the U.S. Department of State and the representatives of Taiwan in the United States – namely the name provided for Taiwan’s representative entity in Washington and the guidelines with which the State Department interacts with its employees – as well as the prospects for a free trade agreement between our two countries.

Throughout your tenure as Secretary of State, you have shown tremendous support for U.S.-Taiwan relations. Indeed, the State Department has taken several recent actions that have strengthened our relationship. These include increased sales of U.S. arms to Taiwan in accordance with the Taiwan Relations Act and the Six Assurances; advocacy for Taiwan’s participation in international organizations; the recently announced U.S.-Taiwan economic dialogue; and several meaningful implementations of the Taiwan Travel Act. In light of these significant milestones, we believe that now is the right time to raise three issues with respect to the U.S.-Taiwan bilateral relationship.

The first of these is the name of Taiwan’s Representative Office here in the United States, namely the “Taipei Economic and Cultural Representative Office.” For the past forty years, the State Department has not referred to Taiwan as “Taipei”, “Chinese Taipei,” “Taiwan, China,” or some other name. The use of the word “Taipei” fails to accurately reflect the strong ties the United States has not only with national-level governmental officials in Taiwan’s capital city, but with many subnational governments as well the people of Taiwan. Furthermore, Congress has historically referred to Taiwan as “Taiwan” or “the Republic of China (Taiwan).” Specifically, the Taiwan Relations Act does not use the term “Taipei,” nor was the word “Taipei” mentioned during substantial conference committee debate on the name of the Taiwan Relations Act.

In May 2019, you took an important first step by negotiating a change of the name of the “Coordination Council for North American Affairs” (CCNAA) in Taipei to “Taiwan Council for U.S. Affairs” (TCUSA). We believe that the United States should extend that policy a step further and change the name of TECRO to the simple, and more accurate, Taiwan Representative Office (TRO).

We would also like to raise the State Department’s guidelines on relations with Taiwan, which we understand are under review. For years, these guidelines have imposed more restrictions on our bilateral relations than are required by the absence of diplomatic relations. These self-imposed restrictions, including where U.S. officials are permitted to meet with TECRO diplomats, appear designed primarily to manage tensions with China, rather than to advance U.S. interests in U.S.-Taiwan relations. Pursuant to the Taiwan Relations Act, the absence of diplomatic relations with Taiwan does not preclude a far more normalized relationship, yet successive iterations of the State Department’s guidelines have imposed limits on this relationship to the detriment of U.S. foreign policy and national security interests with regard to Taiwan.

We hope that you will promptly reissue revised guidelines, taking into consideration the growing strength of our relationship with Taiwan and the position of the State Department to build on this momentum by concluding guidelines that reflect the importance of this bilateral relationship.

The final issue is the negotiation of a bilateral free trade deal. With recent decisions on pork and beef that have been made by the Tsai Administration, Taiwan is ready to begin the always difficult process of negotiating a bilateral free trade agreement. Failure to capitalize on the momentum that has been generated by this decision would truly be a missed opportunity. We believe the United States should reciprocate this gesture of goodwill as soon as possible. We believe the American people would strongly support such a move, as evidenced by the overwhelming bipartisan support for trade negotiations between our countries that recent letters from both Houses of Congress have demonstrated.

Furthermore, in light of the recently signed, Beijing-led Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), we believe that the United States must take every opportunity to expand market access in Asia. Without such initiatives, we believe that United States companies will be placed at a competitive disadvantage in the global marketplace.

While we recognize that the State Department is not the lead agency with respect to trade, we wanted to praise your initiative in starting a new bilateral economic dialogue with Taiwan and urge you to use your position to continue to advocate for closer economic ties between the United States and Taiwan.

The Trump Administration has taken bold action to adjust U.S. policy toward China and position our great nation to continue to be a force for peace, prosperity, and democratic values in Asia for years to come. It is important that this vision continues into the future. We hope that as you continue to make enduring changes toward the Indo-Pacific you take the actions outlined above. It is our belief that doing so will greatly enhance our enduring relationship with the people of Taiwan and demonstrate the United States’ commitment to the region.

Sincerely,



STEVE CHABOT
Member of Congress



MARIO DIAZ-BALART
Member of Congress

MICHAEL T. MCCAUL
Member of Congress

TED S. YOHO
Member of Congress

CHUCK FLEISCHMANN
Member of Congress

TOM TIFFANY
Member of Congress

NEAL DUNN
Member of Congress

MIKE GALLAGHER
Member of Congress

TROY BALDERSON
Member of Congress

STEVE KING
Member of Congress

BRUCE WESTERMAN
Member of Congress

RON WRIGHT
Member of Congress

AUMUA AMATA COLEMAN RADEWAGEN
Member of Congress

RALPH NORMAN
Member of Congress

PETE OLSON
Member of Congress

WILLIAM TIMMONS
Member of Congress

BRIAN BABIN, D.D.S.
Member of Congress

KEN BUCK
Member of Congress

PAUL A. GOSAR, D.D.S.
Member of Congress

MARK WALKER
Member of Congress

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GUY RESCHENTHALER
Member of Congress

RON ESTES
Member of Congress

DON YOUNG
Member of Congress

BILLY LONG
Member of Congress

ADAM KINZINGER
Member of Congress

JOHN CURTIS
Member of Congress

MIKE KELLY
Member of Congress

BARRY LOUDERMILK
Member of Congress

JOHN JOYCE, M.D.
Member of Congress

MIKE SIMPSON
Member of Congress

EARL L. "BUDDY" CARTER
Member of Congress

H. MORGAN GRIFFITH
Member of Congress

JENNIFFER GONZALEZ-COLON
Member of Congress

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Member of Congress

GARY PALMER
Member of Congress

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Member of Congress

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MICHAEL GUEST
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Member of Congress

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Member of Congress

RANDY K. WEBER
Member of Congress

RALPH ABRAHAM, M.D.
Member of Congress

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DEBBIE LESKO
Member of Congress

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Member of Congress

FRANCIS ROONEY
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ROGER MARSHALL, M.D.
Member of Congress

JOHN H. RUTHERFORD
Member of Congress

VIRGINIA FOXX
Member of Congress

LANCE GOODEN
Member of Congress

DAVID SCHWEIKERT
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JAIME HERRERA BEUTLER
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CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH
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ADRIAN SMITH
Member of Congress

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Member of Congress

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BEN CLINE
Member of Congress

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Member of Congress

JACKIE WALORSKI
Member of Congress

MICHAEL C. BURGESS, M.D.
Member of Congress

ANDY BIGGS
Member of Congress

JOHN R. CARTER
Member of Congress

WILL HURD
Member of Congress

SCOTT DESJARLAIS, M.D.
Member of Congress

cc: Keith Krach, Under Secretary for Economic Growth, Energy, and the Environment
David R. Stillwell, Assistant Secretary of State, East Asian and Pacific Affairs