

Recorded video remarks for the Civil Society Capstone for the second US-Taiwan Consultations on Democratic Governance in the Indo-Pacific Region

Assistant Secretary Destro;

Director Christensen;

Distinguished guests and friends joining us online:

Greetings!

It's my pleasure to speak at the second US-Taiwan Consultations on Democratic Governance in the Indo-Pacific Region.

First, I would like to express my appreciation to Brent and his fantastic team at the AIT. And I'd also like to thank the representatives joining us today from the Taiwan Foundation for Democracy, the IRI, the NDI, and other civil society organizations.

Last year, I was very proud to launch this new annual dialogue alongside Director Christensen and Deputy Assistant Secretary Busby. It was an important milestone for the Taiwan-US partnership in terms of advancing democracy, transparency,

human rights, and good governance.

This year, it's been wonderful to see even greater US commitment to these Consultations. The two sides had a very fruitful in-person meeting on September 18 when Assistant Secretary Destro and Ambassador Currie visited Taiwan. Our extensive discussions looked at how Taiwan and the US should continue to strengthen cooperation to promote freedom, democracy, women's empowerment, and good governance in the Indo-Pacific region.

Last year, Brent mentioned in his remarks that these Consultations aim to promote Taiwan as a model of good governance for the entire region. So it's gratifying to see that, a year later, the effectiveness of the Taiwan Model has stood the test of one of the major challenges of modern times. In our fight against COVID-19, Taiwan has shown the world that transparency is the key to successfully containing pandemics. Our success story underlines the fact that transparency not only leads to economic and social prosperity, but also saves lives in times of crisis.

Today, Taiwan stands firm as a bulwark for freedom and

democracy against the expansion of authoritarianism. China has never ceased in its attempts to threaten Taiwan's sovereignty and democracy. It has sought to undermine our government institutions through disinformation campaigns and influence operations. PLA fighter jets have repeatedly crossed the median line of the Taiwan Strait and intruded into our Air Defense Identification Zone. These destabilizing provocations, targeting Taiwan as only their first step, are sure to grow and expand to the entire region and beyond.

Let me be clear: the people of Taiwan will never give up their democratic way of life. We are determined to defend ourselves, just as we are determined to speak up for those longing for freedom, democracy, and the protection of human rights. Be it the situation in Hong Kong, the plight of Uyghurs in Xinjiang, or the persecution of Christians in China—I won't hesitate to call out these grave human rights violations.

I would like to remind you that at the very beginning of the COVID-19 outbreak, it was vigilance and advance preparedness that saved Taiwan from large-scale transmissions. Past experience had taught us well—perhaps too well—about the heavy price that comes with neglect and indecision in the face of

destructive forces from the other side of the Taiwan Strait.

As we find ourselves on the frontline once again, this time fending off authoritarian aggression, I call on all democratic allies and partners to exercise the same vigilance and proactive preparation in solidarity. And for our part, you can rest assured that we are determined to safeguard our sovereignty and our shared values, because we know that as an outpost of democracy, Taiwan plays a key role in deciding whether democracy prevails or perishes.

We know we are not alone in this battle. We deeply appreciate the staunch support of the United States. Time and again, the US has demonstrated its commitment to Taiwan as we work to pursue peace and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific region. I have every confidence that our aspirations will be further echoed throughout the region and beyond.

Once again, thank you all for taking part in this year's Consultations. I look forward to achieving even more milestones for a free, open and prosperous Indo-Pacific.

Thank you!