

December 14, 2021

President Joe Biden
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

I write with regard to the first Summit for Democracy that concluded on December 10. While I strongly support democracy promotion, I am deeply disappointed by how your administration handled Taiwan's participation.

Taiwan was represented by Audrey Tang, a Minister-without-Portfolio who manages digital democracy programs, and Hsiao Bikhim, Taiwan's representative to the United States. While both of these officials are highly accomplished and impressive in their own right, neither of them was elected to the position that they currently occupy, and most importantly, the other nations at the summit were represented by their heads of state. Countries that asked to delegate their representation to a lower level reportedly met stiff resistance from your administration.

Decades of a failed engagement policy should have taught us by now that making concessions to Beijing is a one-sided and fruitless endeavor. And yet it continues. The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) never reciprocates such concessions, nor do they exercise constraint, or otherwise modify their bombastic response to our perceived political offences. All that your administration accomplished in downgrading Taiwan's representation was to once again signal weakness rather than resolve. The CCP still threatened Taiwan and railed against the summit.

Unlike United Nations organizations in which the United States cannot unilaterally decide whether Taiwan is allowed to participate, you had carte blanche to determine which countries participated in the summit, and at what level. When you had the opportunity to set equitable rules of the road for a new international forum, free from Beijing's malign influence because the CCP is, by its nature, disqualified from attending, you still chose to accommodate the CCP's unreasonable demands.

Sadly, your administration's attempts to accommodate Beijing did not stop with downgrading Taiwan's representation. According to widely available press reports, White House officials cut off the transmission of Minister Tang's video while she was presenting because Tang had a map that displayed China and Taiwan in different colors. If true, this is yet another concession to the CCP.

Taiwan should have been represented at the summit by its duly-elected head of state, President Tsai Ing-wen, not by an unelected lower-level official of your choosing. The *Taiwan Travel Act* (P.L. 115–135) stipulates that U.S. policy should “allow high-level officials of Taiwan to enter the United States, under conditions that demonstrate appropriate respect for the dignity of such officials, and to meet with officials of the United States...” While this summit was virtual and did not require travel, your decision to invite a lower-level official to represent Taiwan was clearly at odds with the spirit of the *Taiwan Travel Act*.

In closing, I request answers to the following questions:

- Who made the decision to downgrade the level of representation for Taiwan and when did they make it? What were the factors behind that decision?
- Why wasn't Taiwan afforded the opportunity to be represented, as others were, by its head of state?
- What steps does your administration plan to take to make amends for this mistake?

I understand that the summit will convene again next year. It is my hope that you clarify and correct this mistake going forward, and prove beyond a shadow of a doubt that the United States' commitment to democracy will not be calibrated in the futile pursuit of the approval of our authoritarian rivals.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



Marco Rubio
U.S. Senator