

Gallagher outlines broad agenda for new China committee

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Gallagher, the chairman of the new House committee on competition with China, wants to begin holding hearings in March. (Bill Clark/CQ Roll Call file photo)

The head of the newly created House committee centered on strategic competition with China expects the panel will lay down “supporting fire” to elevate the importance of selling military equipment to Taiwan.

Chairman **Mike Gallagher**, R-Wis., says his committee will occupy two lanes: owning niche topics — such as banning social media app TikTok — and shining a spotlight on discussions and work already being championed in the House, such as the importance of enhancing “hard power west of the international dateline.”

“How do we prevent Taiwan's future from becoming Ukraine's present? I think it's going to be a theme of what we do on this committee,” he said in an interview Friday.

Formed with strong bipartisan support at a time when the conservative wing of the chamber's Republican caucus has expressed skepticism toward bolstering the defense topline, the 16-member **Select Committee on Strategic Competition Between the United States and the Chinese Communist Party** will tackle a wide range of issues on the military, economy, technology and more.

The committee, which has **drawn concern that its establishment could further anti-Chinese discrimination**, builds on the preceding China Task Force, led by Rep. **Michael McCaul**, R-Texas.

Gallagher acknowledges the need to sprint to get the panel up and running in time to help shape military policy within the next Pentagon authorization bill. The annual National Defense Authorization Act, which takes months to assemble, is typically marked up in the summer with the goal of passage in the fall.

In the military realm, Gallagher, a Marine veteran, member of the House Armed Services Committee and self-proclaimed defense hawk, anticipates the panel will focus on making policy recommendations as opposed to weighing in on funding. For example, members may suggest certain policy overhauls or highlight initiatives led by allies in the Indo-Pacific region that could be ripe for American investment, he said.

But he stressed that he wants to avoid duplicating the work of the defense panel and the jurisdiction of other national security committees, adding his panel should “play a coordinating function” between them all.

On Taiwan, Gallagher — who in a joint op-ed with Speaker Kevin McCarthy, R-Calif., about the committee last month pledged the body “will make the urgent case for aiding Taiwan in its self-defense” — wants to look at what he said amounts to an \$18 billion backlog in weapons and military equipment that has not yet been delivered to Taiwan, despite winning prior approval.

The committee has the authority to spearhead wide-ranging investigations and issue subpoenas. Asked how it can leverage those capabilities, Gallagher said he wants to take a look at areas in which domestic industries may be too economically dependent on China or “corrupted by Chinese money and influence operations.”

He also wants to dive into Chinese land purchases near U.S. military bases, as well as the cropping up of suspected Chinese police outposts on American soil, as recently documented in The New York Times. The latter topic seems to fall into the committee’s aims to address more niche areas, which Gallagher had said could include addressing CCP efforts to “coerce or apply pressure to Chinese citizens living abroad” as well as Chinese Americans.

Members not yet selected

Aside from Gallagher, members of the panel, which will be comprised of nine Republicans and seven Democrats, have not yet been announced. Gallagher said that while he’s already provided his input, setting the roster is ultimately up to McCarthy.

“I think we’re aligned in terms of the type of members we want,” Gallagher said. “We want serious people with backgrounds that will bring a unique perspective to this issue.”

In the meantime, Gallagher expects that February will be taken up with the behind-the-scenes logistical work of finding office space and hiring staff, setting up an early March “at the latest” timeline for the panel’s first hearing.

Still, he’s hopeful the committee will be able to contribute to the forthcoming fiscal year 2024 defense policy bill.

“We can’t afford to let a whole NDAA cycle go to waste here,” he said.

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