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## Morrison Tells US Congress China Targeted Australia for Its US Alliance

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Former Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison addressed the U.S. House Select Committee on the Strategic Competition Between the United States and the Chinese Communist Party, warning that China's trade sanctions against Australia were intended to penalize Canberra for its alliance with Washington.

Speaking alongside former U.S. Ambassador to Japan Rahm Emanuel, Morrison described the sanctions as an effort by Beijing to isolate a close U.S. ally and reshape Indo-Pacific dynamics. His appearance marked a rare intervention by a former Australian leader on foreign soil and emphasized growing concern over China's use of economic leverage in international relations.

Morrison referred to the 2020 trade measures—including tariffs and import bans on Australian wine, barley, coal, and other goods—as a “calculated punishment” following Australia's call for an independent investigation into the origins of COVID-19. He described these measures as part of a broader strategy of economic coercion by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP).

“Beijing sought to isolate a key U.S. ally in the Indo-Pacific,” Morrison said, adding that the sanctions aimed to deter other countries from aligning with the United States on strategic issues.

Committee members John Moolenaar (Chair) and Raja Krishnamoorthi supported Morrison's remarks, reiterating the importance of maintaining strong alliances such as the Australia-United Kingdom-United States (AUKUS) security pact in the face of regional power shifts.

During his tenure as Prime Minister (2018–2022), Morrison maintained a firm stance against Beijing's actions, redirecting key Australian exports to alternative markets, including India and Southeast Asia. He cited these adjustments as evidence of economic resilience and urged both Australia and the U.S. to collaborate on diversifying supply chains, particularly for strategic resources like rare earth elements.

“A strong America is essential to ensuring secure partnerships across the Indo-Pacific,” Morrison said.

He also advocated for the expansion of AUKUS beyond military technology sharing, calling it a cornerstone of strategic alignment in a contested region.

Morrison’s testimony included criticism of the current Australian Labor government’s diplomatic posture toward China. While he did not directly name Prime Minister Anthony Albanese, Morrison suggested that Beijing’s conciliatory tone could result in policy drift that risks diluting Australia’s alignment with U.S. strategy.

Opposition Leader Peter Dutton echoed Morrison’s remarks in domestic statements, supporting closer strategic coordination with Washington and greater transparency on the Albanese government’s stance regarding China and AUKUS commitments.

China’s list of 14 formal grievances issued to Australia in 2020, which included objections to Australia’s defense policies and public statements on human rights, was cited as evidence of a coordinated diplomatic and economic campaign. Morrison characterized these actions as efforts to “reshape the rules-based order” and expand Beijing’s influence in the Indo-Pacific.

The hearing also came at a pivotal time for the AUKUS agreement, which is under policy review by the new U.S. administration. Morrison’s remarks were intended to reinforce bipartisan support for the pact and urge continuity in defense and intelligence cooperation.

Morrison's appearance before the U.S. Congress highlights the ongoing strategic challenges posed by China's trade and foreign policy tactics. His message—focused on alliance durability, economic resilience, and shared democratic values—underscored Australia's role as a central partner in maintaining Indo-Pacific stability.