

United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6225

December 19, 2024

The Honorable Antony Blinken
Secretary
Department of State
2201 C Street N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Secretary Blinken:

We write to object to the Biden Administration's decision to renew the U.S.-People's Republic of China (PRC) Science and Technology Cooperation Agreement (STA) for an additional five years.

The era in which U.S.-PRC science and technology (S&T) cooperation made sense is long gone. The PRC wants to dominate the technologies of the future and will use whatever legal and illegal means it takes to get there. The Chinese government's control of its economic and research ecosystems allows it to leverage S&T ties with the United States and other countries to acquire technology, fill knowledge gaps, and develop critical talent that advances its strategic and economic objectives. Renewal of the STA provides top cover to universities, businesses, and professional bodies to continue S&T research cooperation with the PRC. The U.S. government should send the opposite signal.

The risks are clear. We already know the PRC has leveraged research cooperation enabled by the STA to support state-led industrial development and advance military objectives that harm U.S. interests. The PRC has also limited access to U.S.-funded research data, in violation of previous agreements. We should also consider the safety of U.S. researchers, given the PRC's record of using U.S. citizens as bargaining chips to secure the release of PRC nationals in U.S. custody.

The Department of State provided several briefings to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on the STA. Even so, we continue to have deep concerns about the adequacy of measures to protect American researchers, enforce strong intellectual property protections, and safeguard against illicit knowledge transfer. Members of Congress of both chambers have since introduced legislation to increase congressional oversight of the STA and require guardrails for dual-use research and human rights protections.

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STA renewal during the last days of this administration denies the incoming administration a chance to weigh in on this highly controversial agreement. The Biden Administration should reverse course.

We look forward to your response on this urgent matter.

Sincerely,



JAMES E. RISCH
United States Senator



JOHN BARRASSO, M.D.
United States Senator



PETE RICKETS
United States Senator



TODD YOUNG
United States Senator



BILL HAGERTY
United States Senator