

United States Senate

August 17, 2023

The Honorable Antony Blinken
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Secretary Blinken:

I understand that the State Department is currently considering a renewal of the U.S.-China Science and Technology Agreement (STA), which was originally signed in 1979. This agreement purportedly encouraged cooperation between our countries in scientific and technological fields of mutual interests in the fields of agriculture, energy, space, health, environment, earth science, engineering and other areas. I write today to urge you to reject a renewal of this agreement and stand firmly in protecting U.S. policies and human rights by ensuring that the U.S. does not enter into any international agreements that hurt our economic growth, compromise American innovation, or undermine our values.

Communist China has chosen to be America's enemy. The brutal regime of Xi Jinping has made clear, through increased military aggression, data and intellectual property theft and the issuance of false economic data, that it has no interest in maintaining a productive working relationship with America.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Communist China showed a willingness to hide and obfuscate the truth. Article 7 of the STA allows for "...prompt entry into and exit from its territory of equipment and personnel of the other side, and also to provide access to relevant geographic areas, institutions, data and materials." However, Communist China failed to follow the agreement, and rejected all efforts related to transparency or sharing of materials from the Wuhan Institute of Virology (WIV) to the World Health Organization and the international community during the COVID-19 investigation. The WIV has refused to provide information to the National Institutes of Health despite the fact that hardworking U.S. taxpayers funded WIV's research. In fact, the WIV was so negligent in their research and obstinate in their refusal to provide data as required in their research agreement that the U.S. Department of Health and Human

Services (HHS) Office of Inspector General recommended, and the HHS implemented, the debarment of WIV from any future federal contract or grant opportunity.¹

Communist China also has a history of actively stealing American intellectual property. The Chinese Communist government often pressures U.S. companies to partner with a Chinese company if they wish to sell to China, and then uses the Chinese company to steal American intellectual property. In 2018, the U.S. estimated that Communist China inflicts \$50 billion yearly in damages to U.S. companies.² Chinese nationals were found engaging in theft from American farms to steal their seeds in an effort to gain access to genetically modified technology.³

Furthermore, Communist China is guilty of numerous human rights violations and it is unthinkable for the U.S. to cooperate with a country actively undermining our promotion of human rights and human liberty. In January 2019, the U.S. State Department made a determination that the Chinese Communist government was committing genocide against the Uyghurs, a predominantly Muslim ethnic group, and other ethnic and religious minority groups in Xinjiang.⁴ The U.S. government cannot reward this flagrant violation of human rights and religious liberty by rewarding Communist China with a renewal of the STA.

In light of the growing concerns regarding Communist China's lack of transparency during the COVID-19 pandemic, its disregard for intellectual property rights, and its egregious human rights violations, it becomes evident that cooperation with a nation so contrary to American values is untenable. Instances of intellectual property theft, economic coercion, and human rights abuses underscore the need for the U.S. to reevaluate its engagement with the Communist Chinese Government and prioritize collaborations that align with our values and long-term interests.

¹ <https://sam.gov/exclusions-new?pirKey=511431&pirValue=1689613794347723>

² <https://www.wsj.com/articles/how-china-systematically-pries-technology-from-u-s-companies-1537972066>

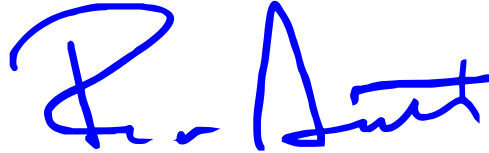
³ <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-china-seeds/in-iowa-corn-fields-chinese-nationals-seed-theft-exposes-vulnerability-idUSKCN0X80D6>

⁴ <https://www.state.gov/reports/2021-report-on-international-religious-freedom/china/xinjiang/>

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I urge you to reject a renewal of this agreement and display an unwavering commitment to safeguarding our principles and security while steering us toward partnerships that promote not only our economic growth but also the fundamental ideals upon which the U.S. was founded.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Rick Scott". The signature is stylized with a large initial "R" and a prominent "S".

Rick Scott
United States Senator