



Committee of 100

EXTRAORDINARY CHINESE AMERICANS

Ensuring Full Inclusion in America,
Advancing U.S.-China Relations

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September 6, 2023

Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave., NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

As Chairman of Committee of 100, as both the former U.S. Ambassador to the People's Republic of China (PRC) and the U.S. Secretary of Commerce, and as a former college president, I write today to urge you to renew for another five years the Agreement between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the PRC on Cooperation in Science and Technology (STA). The STA offers the United States significant benefits to advance scientific progress in many fields and in people-to-people exchanges, and it presents minimal risks to American national security.

Committee of 100 is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization of prominent Chinese Americans. Formed in the aftermath of Tiananmen Square at the recommendation of Dr. Henry Kissinger, Committee of 100's twin missions are to promote the advancement and full inclusion of Chinese Americans in all aspects of American society and constructive and peaceful relations between the United States and Greater China. Several Committee of 100 members are distinguished leaders in American science, technology, business, higher education, and the arts.

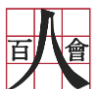
Since the STA's inception under President Carter in 1979, this agreement has provided a sturdy framework to encourage mutually beneficial bilateral exchanges in science, technology, and higher education. The practical effects of the STA are as significant as its symbolism. The STA and the nearly 60 other bilateral agreements that the United States has with other nations have enabled decades of international cooperative scientific research and data sharing. These discoveries have led to American achievements in public health, environmental protection, and many other areas of public good. Among many successes, the STA with the PRC has aided U.S. research projects to lower air pollution, to reduce the rates of birth defects due to nutritional deficiencies, and to develop better methods of HIV/AIDS prevention.

Committee of 100 fully supports recent U.S. government efforts to combat PRC threats to proprietary American advancements in science and technology. However, allowing the current expiring STA simply to lapse would not advance these efforts. The agreement is a framework structure for engagement and bilateral collaboration in fundamental research meant for publication in open scientific literature. The STA is not and never was intended to deal with any classified national security research or with proprietary corporate research and development. It provides no funding whatsoever and does not direct any particular form of cooperation.

Moreover, as shown by multiple previous STA renewals over the past four decades under both Democratic and Republican administrations, the U.S. has been able to negotiate safeguards in STA terms to protect identifiable national interests. Thus, just as the 2018 renewal of the STA added stipulations to protect American intellectual property interests, this latest renewal could be conditioned on similar amendments, rather than just completely scrapping the STA. An STA renewal with appropriate modifications could address pertinent national security concerns, reflecting our nation's shifting relationship with the PRC, while still encouraging mutually beneficial scientific collaboration. In other words, such adjustments to the existing STA would then align with the Administration's other efforts to de-risk the U.S.-PRC relationship rather than to decouple the United States entirely from the PRC.

Committee of 100 stresses the importance of nuance and balance in U.S. interactions with the PRC, including with the STA. Some relatively recent government attempts to confront potential national security threats from the PRC at the expense of scientific collaboration have been strikingly counterproductive. For example, the prior Administration's so-called "China Initiative" ultimately harmed U.S. higher education and its talent retention much more than it ever exposed and removed PRC security threats. Your Administration, acting through the Department of Justice, wisely chose to cancel the China Initiative and to replace it with a much more sophisticated approach so that, once again, America's academic, scientific, and research institutions could attract and retain the most exceptional minds from around the world -- including from the PRC itself -- and can harness that talent to foster genuine innovation.

It is a false dichotomy to argue there must be some kind of "choice" between STA renewal or protection of U.S. national security. The United States has a formidable array of other policies and laws to address the national security issues posed by technology sharing with the PRC, including both U.S. export control laws and more recent measures such as the CHIPS and Science Act and National Security Presidential Memorandum 33 that is already being implemented by your White House Office of Science and Technology Policy.



Committee of 100 believes renewing the STA for another five-year term will enhance American scientific and technological achievement and promote U.S. leadership in open and transparent scientific cooperation globally. Conversely, Committee of 100 argues that allowing the STA to expire would disrupt mutually beneficial scientific exchange and disrupt peaceful people-to-people ties between the U.S. and the PRC. For these reasons, Committee of 100 urges you and your Administration to renew the STA with whatever additional safeguards your national security advisors deem appropriate and not simply to abandon this proven framework for constructive bilateral engagement.

Committee of 100 appreciates your attention to this issue and hopes that we can continue to work with you and your Administration to support the national interests of the United States. Thank you for considering our views and for your service to our nation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gary Locke". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Gary" and the last name "Locke" clearly legible.

Gary F. Locke

