

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM
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WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6143

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<https://oversight.house.gov>

April 23, 2026

The Honorable Michael G. DeSombre
Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Assistant Secretary DeSombre:

The House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, including the Subcommittee on Military and Foreign Affairs, is investigating significant gaps in the federal government's ability to monitor and track Science and Technology Agreements (STAs) between U.S. federal agencies and foreign governments, particularly the People's Republic of China (PRC).¹ While STAs serve as established instruments of diplomatic cooperation and scientific exchange, entering into such agreements with adversarial nations poses acute risks to U.S. economic competitiveness and national security.² Accordingly, the Committee respectfully requests that the Department of State provide written responses to the questions set forth in this letter to inform its oversight of the current sub-agreement framework.

Under an STA, federal agencies can enter sub-agreements with foreign governments which allow for the sharing of research and technology information.³ Although an STA is created and maintained by the Department of State, the sub-agreements are coordinated and conducted at the discretion of the entering agency.⁴ There are no requirements for federal agencies to inform the Department of their entrance into such an agreement with a foreign country or disclose the terms of such agreements nor is there a centralized system in the U.S. government which tracks these sub-agreements.⁵

The U.S. has 60 bilateral and multilateral STAs with the European Union (EU) (and separately with certain EU member states), Japan, South Korea, Australia, Brazil, and Canada; however, the U.S.'s collaboration with the PRC exceeds that of the other agreements.⁶ The PRC has been cited as an unreliable and untrustworthy partner, greatly prioritizing its own benefit

¹ Protocol Amending and Extending the Agreement on Cooperation in Science and Technology, U.S.-China, Dec. 13, 2024, TIAS 24-1213.

² Emily Blevins & Karen Sutter, U.S. CONG. RESEARCH SERV., IF12510, U.S.-CHINA SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY COOPERATION AGREEMENT, (Dec. 13, 2024) [hereinafter "CRS STA"].

³ *Id.*

⁴ *Id.*

⁵ *Id.*

⁶ *Id.*

from cooperation while actively restricting its partners from receiving similar benefits.⁷ For example, the PRC reportedly has withheld influenza strains required for U.S. flu vaccines.⁸ In 2019, the PRC cut off access to U.S.-funded coronavirus work at the Wuhan Institute of Virology.⁹ Additionally, the PRC has historically weaponized science and technology cooperation to steal the Intellectual Property (IP) and trade secrets from its “partner” countries and companies.¹⁰ The PRC frequently uses cooperation agreements to gain access to and subsequently steal science and technology capabilities to supplement their own.¹¹ The PRC’s 14th Five Year Plan (2021 – 2025) specifically stated that the PRC would prioritize basic research capabilities to advance the PRC as a global center for science and technology research as well as utilize science and technology agreements to attain more foreign made IP.¹²

The PRC’s deliberate manipulation of cooperation agreements renders the lack of tracking and oversight of STA sub-agreements a direct national security vulnerability, not merely an administrative deficiency. Further, U.S. federal agencies, each operating without visibility into what other agencies have shared, are unable to identify this pattern of accumulation as it occurs. In 2017, U.S. Patent and Trademark Office officials identified over 400 PRC patents directly tied to STA-linked projects that the PRC had commercialized for its own economic benefit, with no corresponding benefit to the United States.¹³

To assist the Committee in understanding the extent to which the Bureau for East Asia and Pacific Affairs is tracking STAs with the PRC and any sub-agreements with the PRC and other federal agencies, please answer the following questions no later than May 7, 2026:

1. Does the Department of State have a centralized system for tracking the sub-agreements with the PRC made by U.S. federal agencies under STAs?
 - a. If yes, please provide a description of the system.
2. Are U.S. federal agencies required to report to the Department of State any STA sub-agreements they enter into with a foreign government?

The Committee on Oversight and Government Reform is the principal oversight committee of the U.S. House of Representatives and has broad authority to investigate “any matter” at “any time” under House Rule X. Additionally, Committee Rule 6(a)(E) charges the Subcommittee on Military and Foreign Affairs with oversight jurisdiction over “national security” and “foreign operations.” To arrange for delivery of the written response or to ask any

⁷ *Id.*

⁸ *Id.*

⁹ *Id.*

¹⁰ FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION, CHINA: THE RISK TO CORPORATE AMERICA.

¹¹ CRS STA, *supra* note 1.

¹² Michael Sutherland & Karen Sutter, U.S. CONG. RESEARCH SERV., IF11684. CHINA’S 14TH FIVE-YEAR PLAN: A FIRST LOOK (Jan. 5, 2021).

¹³ CRS STA, *supra* note 1.

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related follow up questions, please contact the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform Majority staff at (202) 225-5074. Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

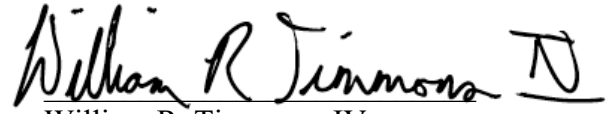
Sincerely,



James Comer

Chairman

Committee on Oversight and Government Reform



William R. Timmons, IV

Chairman

Subcommittee on Military and
Foreign Affairs

cc: The Honorable Robert Garcia, Ranking Member
Committee on Oversight and Government Reform

The Honorable Suhas Subramanyam, Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Military and Foreign Affairs