

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM

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June 17, 2026

Ms. Orice Williams Brown
Acting Comptroller General of the United States
U.S. Government Accountability Office
441 G Street NW
Washington, DC 20548

Dear Ms. Brown:

The House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform's Subcommittee on Military and Foreign Affairs is investigating significant gaps in the federal government's ability to monitor and track Science and Technology Agreement (STA) sub-agreements between U.S. federal agencies and foreign governments, particularly China. 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 due to intellectual property theft and information access manipulation.¹ Accordingly, the Subcommittee respectfully requests that the Government Accountability Office (GAO) conduct a comprehensive assessment of the Department of State's current capabilities and future needs to establish an effective process for tracking STA sub-agreements.

In a response to a previous letter, the State Department acknowledged that there is a tracking mechanism for sub-agreements; however, the determinations of which sub-agreements are reported is at the discretion of the agency that enters into the sub-agreement.² This process can result in underreporting sub-agreements to the Department of State if an agency incorrectly determines the significance of a sub-agreement. The lack of proper oversight and tracking of STA sub-agreements between federal agencies and foreign governments poses a grave risk to U.S. economic and national security, underscoring the need for a centralized tracking and management system for said sub-agreements. Specifically, we ask that your evaluation include STAs from January 31, 1979, to the present and:

1. Evaluate the Department of State's past practices in monitoring STA sub-agreements;
2. Identify the number and nature of STA sub-agreements between U.S. federal agencies and China;
3. Examine the sub-agreement tracking practices and approval processes within major federal agencies who enter into STA sub-agreements;

¹ Emily Blevins & Karen Sutter, U.S. CONG. RESEARCH SERV., IF12510, U.S.-CHINA SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY COOPERATION AGREEMENT, (Dec. 13, 2024).

² Letter from Paul Guaglianone, Department of State, to James Comer, Chairman, H. Comm. on Oversight and Gov't Reform (May 14, 2026).

Ms. Orice Williams Brown

June 17, 2026

Page 2 of 2

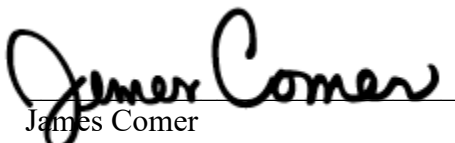
4. Examine the security vulnerabilities and documented consequences associated with insufficient monitoring and reporting of STA sub-agreements;
5. Assess the viability of a STA sub-agreement tracking program and compulsory reporting process with the Department's current resources;
6. Identify the financial and personnel requirements needed for the Department to implement an effective sub-agreement tracking system; and
7. Assess the organizational changes necessary within the Department to establish a sub-agreement tracking program.

An independent review by your office would provide Congress and the public with a clear understanding of how the Department of State can manage this process going forward as well as identify the risks associated with a continuation of the status quo.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. We ask that your office keep Committee staff apprised of your progress and work closely with them to appropriately scope and refine the parameters of this evaluation.

To ask any follow-up questions or questions related to the timing and sequencing of work, please contact Committee staff at (202) 225-5074. 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. 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