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March 4, 2024

The Honorable Jennifer Granholm
Secretary
U.S. Department of Energy
1000 Independence Ave., SW
Washington, D.C. 20585

Dear Secretary Granholm,

I am writing to express my deep concerns regarding a series of meetings and exchanges between Department of Energy (DOE) officials and members of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). I have learned that these meetings went beyond mere diplomatic courtesies. In some instances, they served as forums in which the taxpayer-funded research and development of our national labs was offered up for the benefit of Chinese state-owned enterprises (SOEs) and, by extension, the CCP.

The fact that DOE engaged in such misguided interactions, especially in light of the People's Republic of China's (PRC) persistent and pervasive theft of the United States' scientific and intellectual assets, is profoundly alarming. The apparent desire to keep these meetings shielded from the American public's scrutiny, with coverage found exclusively within Chinese media outlets, raises significant concerns about DOE's transparency and broader collaboration with the CCP.

Amid the PRC's escalating assertiveness in the world, DOE seems not just willing but eager to deepen ties, effectively rewarding its aggressive posture. This constitutes a clear and present danger to our nation's economic and national security. The following occurrences are only but a few of the troubling interactions between DOE and CCP officials that were uncovered by my staff.

Meeting between Stephanie Duran, DOE's China Office Director, and Sun Ying, President of the State-owned China Construction Technology Company (CCTC) - October 11, 2023, Beijing, China

On October 11, 2023, the Director of DOE's China Office, Stephanie Duran, together with additional staff from the U.S. Embassy in Beijing, met with Sun Ying (Figures 1-3),¹ President

¹ [美国能源部中国办公室主任/美国驻华大使馆能源参赞杜采诗到访中国建科 - 集团要闻 - 中国建设科技集团股份有限公司 \(cctc.cn\)](https://www.energy.gov/press/2023/10/11/american-energy-officials-meet-with-chinese-officials)

of CCTC and an avid member of the CCP (Figure 4).² She is an awardee of the title of “Outstanding Communist Party Member of Central Enterprises [translated].”³

In this meeting, Ms. Duran stated she would support providing CCTC with the technical expertise of Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory and other premier national laboratories in the United States. According to a translated readout from CCTC:

Stephanie Duran agreed with China Construction Technology Company’s proposal to deepen cooperation. She introduced the relevant work of the U.S. Department of Energy in energy policy formulation, energy industry management, and technology research and development, and expressed that she would support Lawrence Berkeley and other U.S. national laboratories to carry out technical exchanges and cooperation with China Construction Technology Company in clean energy and carbon emission reduction [translated]...⁴

This commitment by Ms. Duran to align with CCTC's proposals for deepening U.S.-China cooperation raises serious concerns. It reveals a severe miscalculation by DOE of CCTC's actual intentions, which starkly contrast with the professed shared ambition of mitigating carbon emissions. DOE’s miscalculation is further illuminated by Sun Ying's comments to the Chinese media, where she stated:

Over the years, [CCTC] has greatly improved its ability to serve the country's major development strategies through technological innovation. We have been thoroughly implementing the spirit of General Secretary Xi Jinping’s important instructions on self-reliance and self-improvement in science and technology, and constantly enhance our historical awareness of serving national development with scientific and technological innovation [translated].⁵

Visit to Zhengzhou University of Light Industry by Chao Ding, an Energy Technology Researcher at Lawrence Berkley National Laboratory – October 16, 2023, Zhengzhou, China

On October 16, 2023, Chao Ding, a scientist from Lawrence Berkley National Laboratory, visited⁶ the School of Energy Power and Engineering at Zhengzhou University of Light Industry, a PRC university with a dedicated CCP support structure.⁷ The school’s dean, Wu Xuehong,

² [社长专访 | 中国建设科技集团总裁孙英：为建设世界一流科技型企业而奋斗 创新发展 战略 \(sohu.com\)](#)

³ [副会长简介-孙英 - 中国房地产业协会官方网站 中房网 \(fangchan.com\)](#)

⁴ [美国能源部中国办公室主任/美国驻华大使馆能源参赞杜采诗到访中国建科 - 集团要闻 - 中国建设科技集团股份有限公司 \(cctc.cn\)](#)

⁵ [社长专访 | 中国建设科技集团总裁孙英：为建设世界一流科技型企业而奋斗 创新发展 战略 \(sohu.com\)](#)

⁶ [美国劳伦斯伯克利国家实验室丁超研究员来我院进行学术交流 \(zzuli.edu.cn\)](#)

⁷ [党委概况 \(zzuli.edu.cn\)](#)

gave Ding a tour, during which Ding offered “opinions and suggestions on the construction and development [translated]” of a new laboratory at the university.⁸

Whether known or unknown to Mr. Ding, Wu Xuehong is an enthusiastic member of the CCP and sworn member of the college’s support arm of the United Front Work Department (UFWD).⁹ After the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, Wu Xuehong stated:

As a member of the college’s United Front Work Committee and a scientific researcher, I will put into action the major decisions and arrangements made at the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, deeply study and understand General Secretary Xi Jinping’s important expositions on doing a good job in ethnic work and religious work, do a solid job in the college’s united front work, and build a solid sense of the Chinese nation’s community [translated].¹⁰

Chao Ding’s interactions with Wu Xuehong are especially troubling in light of this statement. As China scholars have explained:

“UFWD coordinates the [CCP’s] efforts to strengthen its influence and co-optation of representatives of different parts of society, both domestically and internationally...Groups targeted by united front work range from...business leaders to Chinese diaspora communities and intellectuals...Co-opted individuals and groups can be mobilized [by the United Front] as needed for specific ends. Those ends include technology transfer.”¹¹

As highlighted by the case of Chao Ding, DOE scientists are primary targets for the CCP. It is almost certain that the PRC is targeting a significant number of DOE experts for their specialized knowledge and technological insights.

Meeting between Noah Deich, then DOE Deputy Assistant Secretary for Carbon Management, and Zhang Guangjun, the PRC’s then Vice Minister of Science and Technology – November 13, 2023, Beijing, China

On November 13, 2023, Noah Deich, then DOE Deputy Assistant Secretary for Carbon Management, and Zhang Guangjun, the PRC’s then Vice Minister of Science and Technology, met in Beijing (Figure 6)¹² to discuss “relevant science and technology issues [translated].”¹³

Zhang Guangjun is not only a longstanding member of the Chinese Communist Party. Guangjun is also a member of the 14th Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference. Additionally, he

⁸ [美国劳伦斯伯克利国家实验室丁超研究员来我院进行学术交流 \(zzuli.edu.cn\)](http://zzuli.edu.cn)

⁹ [能源与动力工程学院党委委员热议党的二十大 \(zzuli.edu.cn\)](http://zzuli.edu.cn)

¹⁰ Id.

¹¹ Alex Joske and Jeffrey Stoff, “The United Front and Technology Transfer,” Chapter 15, Hannas, Tatlow, eds., *China’s Quest for Foreign Technology: Beyond Espionage*, Routledge, 2020.

¹² [科技部副部长张广军会见美国能源部副助理部长诺亚·戴驰 - 中华人民共和国科学技术部 \(most.gov.cn\)](http://most.gov.cn)

¹³ Id.

served as Vice President of Beijing University of Aeronautics and Astronautics.¹⁴ As outside observers have stated, this university is one of the “Seven Sons” universities “that directly support[s] the country’s defense research and industrial base and that operate[s] as [a] prime pathway[...] for harvesting US research and diverting it to military applications.”¹⁵

Meeting between David Turk, Deputy Secretary of Energy, and PRC Officials to Launch the “Working Group on Enhancing Climate Action in the 2020s” – January 12, 2024

According to the WeChat account of the PRC’s Ministry of Ecology and Environment, on January 12, 2024, U.S. officials, including Deputy Secretary Turk, and PRC officials kicked off the “Working Group on Enhancing Climate Action in the 2020s” via video link.”¹⁶ According to *China Daily*, an English-language daily newspaper owned by the Central Propaganda Department of the Chinese Communist Party, “[t]he two sides agreed to maintain close communication, exchange experiences and deepen practical cooperation...in accordance with the consensus outlined in the Sunnylands Statement on Enhancing Cooperation to Address the Climate Crisis.”¹⁷

According to this joint U.S.-China statement, “[t]he Working Group will carry out information exchanges on policies, measures, and technologies for controlling and reducing emissions, share their respective experiences, [and] identify and implement cooperative projects...”¹⁸ With Deputy Secretary Turk’s endorsement, instances of DOE-CCP engagement and exchange will not only continue but increase in scope and severity.

Despite what Biden Administration officials believe, it is increasingly clear that the CCP’s true intent is not to walk hand-in-hand with the United States towards environmental stewardship. The PRC has brazenly wielded its climate “cooperation” as a tool to insidiously increase its soft power in the West while maintaining an autocratic, dictatorial regime at home. The CCP will undoubtedly siphon even more of America’s technological and intellectual bounty under the guise of good-faith collaboration, just as it has been doing for decades.

On February 2, 2023, Deputy Secretary Turk claimed to the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources that DOE was navigating the CCP threat to American technological development with an “eyes-wide-open” strategy. Yet, when it comes to the DOE’s entanglements with the CCP, it’s clear that “eyes-wide-open” translates to willful blindness. DOE is openly inviting the compromise of our nation’s taxpayer-funded research, development, and technical expertise. This is a dangerous gamble with our future economic and national security that must end immediately.

¹⁴ [张广军同志任华中科技大学党委书记 - 中华人民共和国教育部政府门户网站 \(moe.gov.cn\)](http://moe.gov.cn)

¹⁵ Tiffert, Stoff, Gamache, "Under the Radar: National Security Risk in US-China Scientific Collaboration," *Global Engagement: Rethinking Risk in the Research Enterprise*, 2020, https://www.hoover.org/sites/default/files/research/docs/tiffert_globalengagement_full_0818.pdf.

¹⁶ [中美气候行动工作组启动会顺利召开-中新网 \(chinanews.com.cn\)](http://chinanews.com.cn)

¹⁷ [Work group with US eyes climate plan - Chinadaily.com.cn](http://chinadaily.com.cn)

¹⁸ [Sunnylands Statement on Enhancing Cooperation to Address the Climate Crisis - United States Department of State](http://www.state.gov)

I request that you provide detailed responses to the following questions, along with the relevant documentation, no later than March 18, 2024. Additionally, I am requesting that DOE provide my staff with a comprehensive briefing regarding its activities in mainland China. The urgency and severity of this matter cannot be overstated. I anticipate your prompt and comprehensive reply.

Sincerely,



John Barrasso, M.D.
Ranking Member

Questions

1. Please provide a complete list of official trips taken by Department of Energy employees to the PRC since January 20, 2021.
 - a. Please include with each documented trip:
 - the name(s) of each DOE employee on the trip
 - where within DOE the employee is assigned
 - the nature of the trip
 - the name(s) of the authorizing official(s) who signed off on the trip
 - the names of the PRC citizens whom DOE employees interacted with in the course of official business
2. What, if any, national security/counterintelligence analysis is conducted before DOE officials are permitted to meet with officials of our greatest geopolitical rival on their own soil?
 - a. Does DOE consult with other intelligence community partners within the U.S. government before agreeing to such meetings?
 - If not, why not?
 - b. Was such analysis and consultation conducted in the case of any of the official trips listed in response to question 1 above?
 - If not, why not?
3. Do DOE officials undergo pre-trip security/counterintelligence training as well as a counterintelligence debriefing upon return?
 - a. If not, why not?
 - b. Was pre-trip security/counterintelligence training provided and a subsequent counterintelligence debriefing upon return administered in the case if any of the official trips listed in response to question 1 above?
 - If not, why not?
4. Please provide a comprehensive overview of the authorization process for such official trips taken to the PRC.
5. Please provide a complete list of agreements, whether formal or informal, that DOE officials have entered into with PRC officials, CCP members, or private citizens subsequent to such trips listed in response to question 1 above.
6. Despite a deluge of enthusiastic PRC media coverage of the meetings detailed in this letter, it appears DOE has made the conscious decision not to publicize these meetings to the American public.
 - a. Why?
 - b. Is the PRC's media coverage of these meetings inaccurate?
 - If so, please correct the record.

Figures

Figure 1. October 11, 2023 meeting between U.S. delegation and CCTC, a PRC state-owned enterprise.



Figure 2. Sun Ying, President of CCTC, left, and Stephanie Duran, Director of DOE's China Office, right.



Figure 3. U.S. delegation and CCTC cohort at CCTC headquarters in Beijing.



Figure 4. Sun Ying, CCTC's President and longtime CCP member.



Figure 5. Lawrence Berkley National Lab scientist, Chao Ding, touring CCP-affiliated university where he reportedly offered advice on the construction of a new laboratory.



Figure 6. Meeting between Noah Deich, then Deputy Assistant Secretary for Carbon Management, and the PRC's then Vice Minister of Science and Technology and Seven Sons affiliate, Zhang Guangjun

