

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

October 29, 2021

President Joseph R. Biden
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Biden,

We write in support of your administration's recent moves to engage in diplomacy with the government of China to advance U.S. interests and values while reducing the potential for military confrontations that could threaten our national security.¹ We encourage you to maintain and strengthen diplomatic focus on other national security threats, in particular the immense danger posed by climate change.

Your diplomatic engagement comes after three years without formal, high-level strategic dialogues under the previous administration that has set us back in addressing national security concerns, including climate change.² As you have recognized in your January 27 executive order, “we have a narrow moment to pursue action at home and abroad in order to avoid the most catastrophic impacts of that crisis and to seize the opportunity that tackling climate change presents.”³ As the first and second leading countries in total carbon emissions, it is crucial that the U.S. and the government of China continue to strengthen communication and pursue cooperation to address the climate crisis.

U.S. collaboration with China on climate is fundamental due to China’s major role in emitting carbon dioxide but also as a leading producer of the green technologies required for decarbonization. Simply put, there is no conceivable way to address the climate crisis without substantially strengthening communication and collaboration between our nations. In preparation

¹ “China, US in talks on military relations amid strained ties,” *ABC News*, September 30, 2021, <https://abcnews.go.com/US/wireStory/china-us-talks-military-relations-amid-strained-ties-80321950> (In a statement issued in Washington, Department of Defense spokesperson Lt. Col. Martin Meiners said the meeting was “an important component of the Biden-Harris administration's ongoing effort to responsibly manage the competition between the U.S. and the PRC by maintaining open lines of communication with the PRC.”); “Readout of U.S.-PRC Defense Policy Coordination Talks,” *U.S. Department of Defense*, September 29, 2021, <https://www.defense.gov/News/Releases/Release/Article/2793577/readout-of-us-prc-defense-policy-coordination-talks/>; “Biden and Xi Jinping of China Agree to Hold a Virtual Summit,” *New York Times*, October 6, 2021, <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/10/06/us/politics/biden-xi-jinping-china-summit.html>

² “Why the U.S. and Chinese Militaries Aren’t Talking Much Anymore,” *Carnegie Endowment*, August 11, 2021, <https://carnegieendowment.org/2021/08/11/why-u.s.-and-chinese-militaries-aren-t-talking-much-anymore-pub-85123>

³ “Executive Order on Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad,” *The White House Briefing Room*, January 27, 2021, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/presidential-actions/2021/01/27/executive-order-on-tackling-the-climate-crisis-at-home-and-abroad/>

for the 2021 UN Climate Change Conference (COP-26), we hope that you will be able to work with China to fulfill the important commitments previously laid out.⁴

The U.S. will not neglect our values and interests, including speaking out against the Chinese Communist Party's numerous problematic and widely condemned actions and human rights violations. But this cannot prevent us from exploring potential areas where our nations may be able to reduce tensions and find greater understanding. Recent polling shows that 62 percent of U.S. voters agree that the U.S. should engage in official dialogue with China's government to reduce tensions.⁵ Given the unparalleled threat that climate poses to our planet, we shouldn't let any current friction in the relationship lead to irreversible climate change.

Evidence indicates that engagement does work: new research found that official dialogue processes between the U.S. and China were critical in advancing national and global security interests such as climate change mitigation.⁶ In particular, the Strategic and Economic Dialogue was instrumental in getting China to join the Paris Climate Agreement.⁷

Lastly, we applaud your recent pledge to increase the U.S. contribution to international climate finance to \$11.4 billion a year by 2024, and urge you to keep increasing these contributions.⁸ The U.S. has a responsibility as the largest historical emitter to assist poorer countries in mitigating climate change. Leading investment in the developing world's transition to green technology will not only create the green jobs of the future at home but will also be a signal to the developing world that the U.S. is committed to supporting their development and sustainability for decades to come. China's government should also be a critical partner in those efforts. Recent commitments by the government of China to end financing of coal-fired energy plants abroad show that they are feeling pressure to move their development efforts in a climate-friendly direction.

Positive-sum cooperation between the U.S. and China, and multilateral initiatives like the Green Climate Fund in support of green energy around the world could provide incentives for the

⁴ "U.S.-China Joint Statement Addressing the Climate Crisis," *U.S. Department of State Office of the Spokesperson*, April 17, 2021, <https://www.state.gov/u-s-china-joint-statement-addressing-the-climate-crisis/>; "US and China urged to find way to work together before Cop26", *The Guardian*, October 18, 2021, <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2021/oct/18/us-and-china-urged-to-find-way-to-work-together-before-cop26>

⁵ "New poll shows majority of U.S. favors diplomatic approach with North Korea and China", *American Friends Service Committee*, September 30, 2021, <https://www.afsc.org/newsroom/new-poll-shows-majority-us-favors-diplomatic-approach-north-korea-and-china>

⁶ "Engagement Revisited: Progress Made and Lessons Learned from the US-China Strategic and Economic Dialogue," *National Committee on American Foreign Policy*, September 13, 2021 <https://www.ncafp.org/new-report-us-china-strategic-economic-dialogues/>

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ "Biden Pledges to Double U.S. International Climate Finance," *Natural Resources Defense Council*, September 21, 2021, <https://www.nrdc.org/media/2021/210921>

government of China to fully execute on its commitments and create unparalleled opportunities for years to come. We urge you to explore these and other opportunities for joint action that can make the upcoming UN climate conference a success.

We stand ready to support your efforts to strengthen diplomacy, cooperation, and investment in green technology in America and around the world.

Sincerely,



Judy Chu
Member of Congress



Raúl M. Grijalva
Member of Congress



Adriano Espaillat
Member of Congress

Jared Huffman
Member of Congress

Rashida Tlaib
Member of Congress

Mark Pocan
Member of Congress

Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress

Karen Bass
Member of Congress

Earl Blumenauer
Member of Congress

Steve Cohen
Member of Congress

Ted W. Lieu
Member of Congress

Alan Lowenthal
Member of Congress

Bonnie Watson Coleman
Member of Congress

Jesús G. "Chuy" García
Member of Congress

Julia Brownley
Member of Congress

Andy Levin
Member of Congress

Darren Soto
Member of Congress

Grace Napolitano
Member of Congress

Ayanna Pressley
Member of Congress

Cori Bush
Member of Congress

Juan Vargas
Member of Congress

Pramila Jayapal
Member of Congress

Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez
Member of Congress

Linda T. Sánchez
Member of Congress

Jamaal Bowman Ed.D.
Member of Congress

Nanette Diaz Barragán
Member of Congress

Alma S. Adams PhD
Member of Congress

Ed Case
Member of Congress

David Trone
Member of Congress

Katie Porter
Member of Congress

Jimmy Gomez
Member of Congress

Jerrold Nadler
Member of Congress

Mark DeSaulnier
Member of Congress

Ro Khanna
Member of Congress