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Congress of the United States
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May 11, 2021

The Honorable Antony Blinken
Secretary of State
2201 C St., N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Secretary Blinken,

I write to express my concern with Special Presidential Envoy for Climate (SPEC) John Kerry's taxpayer-funded world climate tour, and, especially, his latest meeting with China's climate envoy, Xie Zhenhua. The Chinese Communist Party is the United States' foremost geopolitical rival, and the timing of this summit with its sole focus on climate signals to Beijing that this issue is the Biden Administration's primary bilateral priority, as opposed to human rights or security issues. Fortunately, you have stated that climate concessions will not be traded for other CCP geopolitical goals. Nonetheless, Sec. Kerry's meeting and related jet-setting sends the wrong message and hands the CCP a public relations victory.

The Biden Administration said it plans to cooperate with the CCP on climate issues and the Paris Climate Accord, but, as Sec. Kerry should know, it is foolish to trust the CCP on this or nearly any other matter of immense geopolitical significance. China's carbon emissions have continued to rise year after year, and the country's commitments under the Paris Climate Accord are meaningless, as the CCP is permitted to continue increasing emissions until 2030. In fact, the CCP recently authorized the construction of 36.9 GW of new coal-fired capacity, bringing its coal power under development to a whopping 247 GW. Additionally, the CCP's Deputy Foreign Minister said recently that China should not be expected to risk its own economy by doing more to combat climate change.

China expects the U.S. to be held to a higher standard when it comes to climate and carbon goals. Unlike China, however, the U.S. is leading when it comes to a responsible approach to the environment. In 2019, America's carbon emissions were at their lowest level since 1992 and at their lowest level per capita since 1950. For this reason, I struggle to understand the importance of Sec. Kerry and Mr. Zhenhua's meeting and the broader Biden climate agenda and resources being utilized to effectuate it. I request answers to the following questions:

1. What duties and responsibilities will the 45 total personnel, as listed in the recent Congressional Notification 21-111, for the SPEC Office have? How many of those are political appointees?
2. What necessitates such a large office when the State Department already has an entire bureau devoted to Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs (OES), another devoted to

Energy Resources (ENR), and has ensured that climate will be made a priority in every bureau, office, and post?

3. I understand Sec. Kerry and his staff have different office spaces spread across the State Department and National Security Council. How many office spaces does Sec. Kerry retain, and where are all of his staff offices located?
4. What is the cost breakdown of the almost \$14 million annual operating estimate for the SPEC Office?
5. How much has each individual trip taken by Sec. Kerry cost U.S. taxpayers?
6. What has been the emissions impact of Sec. Kerry's travel via private jet for his official climate-focused duties?

Sec. Kerry's meeting lends China credibility on the world stage, while furthering the White House's partisan climate agenda. Continuing to engage with China will only distract from other pressing issues for which the CCP must be held accountable. Instead of answering for belligerence toward Taiwan, the genocide of the Uyghurs, the crackdown on democracy in Hong Kong, and the coverup of the origin of Covid-19, the CCP will tout its newfound climate legitimacy, courtesy of the United States of America. Thank you for your consideration of my serious concerns and your response to my questions regarding Sec. Kerry's role in the Biden Administration.

Sincerely,



Tim Burchett
Member of Congress