

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

July 20, 2023

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

Dear Secretary Blinken,

We write to express our deep concern that the Biden Administration is welcoming a role for the People's Republic of China (PRC) in the diplomatic mediation of Russia's war in Ukraine. A role for China in Ukraine will significantly undermine U.S. interests, Ukraine's future in Europe, and overall European security. The administration's policy should not allow China to absolve itself for its support of Russia or use this war for its longer-term political and economic benefit.

We are concerned that the administration – by supporting a role for China in diplomacy over Ukraine – believes it can exploit what it has mistakenly perceived to be daylight between Russia and China. China views Russia as its key partner in countering the United States. Its support for Moscow through high-level engagements, the provision of lethal aid, and economic support allows Russia to continue its war of aggression. The erroneous assumption that a division is growing between China and Russia simply lays the groundwork for a policy that badly misunderstands PRC interests, and how it views its relationship with the Putin regime.

First, openness to PRC diplomatic involvement in Ukraine will set a precedent for allowing PRC involvement in European security issues, the consequences of which would undermine U.S. and allied security interests for decades. It also allows Xi Jinping to present himself as a responsible party not only to European countries, but also to nations that have remained neutral on Russia's invasion.

Second, China's role in a diplomatic peace settlement in Ukraine will clear the way for its substantial involvement in Ukraine's reconstruction. Ukraine inherited roughly one third of the Soviet Union's defense-industrial base and 15 percent of Soviet military research and development facilities. Unsurprisingly, China has viewed Ukraine as a valuable source of critical military technology and expertise since the fall of the Soviet Union. It would continue to prioritize investment in Ukraine's strategic sectors, such as its high-profile bid to acquire Motor Sich.

As the Biden Administration focuses on initiatives to counter malign PRC influence and strategic investments globally, it is inconceivable that it would facilitate PRC investments in Ukraine's critical sectors and invite China into critical discussions about European security. In addition, PRC investments have a track record of spreading corruption and undermining the rule of law. Allowing a PRC role in Ukraine reconstruction would undercut extensive U.S. and European

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efforts to align Ukrainian governance and anti-corruption standards with Western institutions. We therefore expect U.S. assistance to Ukraine for reconstruction will be designed to prevent U.S. tax dollars from supporting PRC-owned or controlled companies.

Third, heavy PRC influence in Ukraine would set back the latter's progress in aligning with the standards required for its prospective entry into NATO and the European Union (EU). The United States and our European allies have worked closely to help Ukraine with NATO and EU standards related to military interoperability, procurement and accounting practices, anti-corruption, rule of law, and governance norms. Heavy PRC influence in post-war Ukraine would also provide it with unparalleled opportunities to collect intelligence on Ukrainian and foreign-supplied military capabilities, as well as steal the intellectual property of Ukrainian companies. These risks cannot be overstated.

Fourth, a self-assured China will not work to constrain Russia after the war and will use a foothold in Ukraine to serve its own interests. In 2021, the Chinese government leveraged its provision of COVID-19 vaccines to coerce Ukraine into signing a joint statement lauding Beijing's human rights record in Xinjiang. How much more leverage would China have should Ukraine depend on its investment for reconstruction?

The administration must abandon the notion that it can drive a wedge between Moscow and Beijing. Instead, the United States should plan ahead for Ukraine reconstruction with European and Indo-Pacific partners so China cannot pursue its unilateral interests. We should openly communicate to European partners and the Ukrainian government the risks of PRC involvement, work with European partners to push back on China's support of Russia, and do far more than press China to be "vigilant" about its companies supplying lethal items to Russia.

Thank you for your attention, and we look forward to your timely response to these concerns.

Sincerely,



JAMES E. RISCH
Ranking Member
Senate Foreign Relations Committee



MIKE CRAPO
United States Senator



TED CRUZ
United States Senator



MARCO RUBIO
United States Senator

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