



ATTORNEY GENERAL OF MISSOURI  
ERIC SCHMITT

March 8, 2022

Merrick Garland  
U.S. Department of Justice  
950 Pennsylvania Ave, NW  
Washington, DC 20530-0001

Dear Attorney General Garland:

Ominous events from around the world, including Russian aggression and invasion, Iranian and North Korean nuclear provocation and war-like belligerence by Communist China, are tremendously concerning to the America people. Our citizens sense the danger. They see international threats rising while at home prices on consumer goods and energy continue to skyrocket. Unfortunately, these sobering international events have failed to galvanize this Administration to focus, with laser-like intensity, on protecting the American people by meeting and defeating each of these threats by all means necessary. Instead, top leaders from the White House to senior military commanders continue to weaken our readiness by pandering to radical elements of the political left. Rather than training to meet and defeat our enemies these leaders push radical wokism and critical race theory. In fact, the Department of Justice (DOJ) recently announced it was discontinuing the successful "China Initiative" (counter-espionage) policy established by the Trump Administration in 2018 due to concerns over the perception of racism.

Make no mistake, these misguided attempts to play politics while real threats gather on the horizon undermine our nation's security. Our armed forces and national security agencies have one primary mission – to protect and defend the United States of America from foreign enemies. That's it. That's their mission. When the President and the military's top brass lose focus on this mission, our enemies cease to fear us, our soldiers, sailors, airmen and marines are more likely to be attacked, our nation and its citizens are less safe and eventually, people will die.

The world is indeed a dangerous place but as the oft-quoted Chinese military strategist of the sixth century B.C. Sun Tzu noted, accurately assessing a country's strengths in light of the international threats they face is key to maintaining robust national security. "Know thy self, know thy enemy. A thousand battles, a thousand victories" admonished Sun Tzu. It is with this in mind that I am baffled by the Department of Justice's recent decision to discontinue the successful "China Initiative" policy. This policy took into account the threats to the United States from a variety of foreign actors and prudently selected the communist government of the People's Republic of China (PRC) as the most urgent. In the words of Assistant Attorney

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General Matthew Olsen, “it is clear that the government of China stands apart” and, quoting the FBI Director, “the threats from the PRC government are **‘more brazen [and] more damaging than ever before.’**”<sup>1</sup>

In fact, the Biden Administration publicly details a litany of threats from the PRC that directly impact the security of the United States. In their own words, here is a list of PRC espionage efforts:

“First, it [the PRC] has targeted U.S. citizens with connections to the intelligence community to obtain valuable government and military secrets...

Second, the government of China has also used espionage tools and tactics against U.S. companies and American workers to steal critical and emerging technologies...

Third, the PRC government has used malicious and unlawful cyber campaigns to pursue technological advancement and profit...

Finally, China’s government has gone to great lengths to silence dissent. It has intimidated journalists and employed a variety of means to attempt to censor and punish U.S. citizens, residents, and companies for exercising their rights to free expression.”<sup>2</sup>

In addition to the threats listed by the DOJ above, the PRC also presents a unique threat due to its immense size. Nearly one-sixth of the population of the entire world lives in China and these vast human resources are being harnessed to fuel an increasingly robust economic engine. The PRC is motivated by a virulent communist ideology with its fundamental disregard for the rights of any individual. Add to this that the PRC is actively building up its military with increasingly advanced weapons systems. This, coupled with its existing nuclear capabilities, leaves no doubt that the PRC represents a threat that is like no other in the current geopolitical makeup of the world. If any doubt remained, one need only look at China’s aggressive posture towards the free and democratic people of Taiwan. Increasingly bellicose statements from PRC leaders as well as numerous incursions by military aircraft into Taiwanese airspace leave the region on the verge of open war.

In light of these realities, the decision by the Trump Administration to launch the China Initiative was a reasonable and even necessary reaction based on accepted military doctrine stretching back over two millennia that preparedness comes from knowing our enemy. Yet alarmingly, the Biden Administration has chosen to embrace political correctness over the safety of American citizens by replacing the China Initiative, laser-focused on rooting out the agents of our nation’s most aggressive and potent adversary, with a more generalized effort that includes additional nations like Russia, North Korea and Iran. This decision was made, according to a statement by the Department of Justice, because some groups complained that the China

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<sup>1</sup> “Assistant Attorney General Matthew Olsen Delivers Remarks on Countering Nation-State Threats”, Washington, DC, Wednesday, February 23, 2022.

<https://www.justice.gov/opa/speech/assistant-attorney-general-matthew-olsen-delivers-remarks-countering-nation-state-threats>

<sup>2</sup> Id.

Initiative “fueled a narrative of intolerance and bias.”<sup>3</sup> The DOJ further explained that their decision was also due to “concerns from the academic and scientific community” that the China Initiative “can lead to a chilling atmosphere for scientists and scholars that damages the scientific enterprise in the country.”<sup>4</sup>

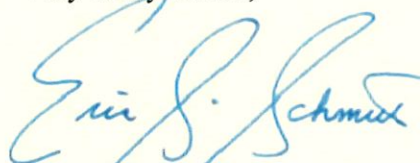
The Biden administration must be reminded that words matter. Despite assurances that surveillance of PRC activities will not suffer, at a minimum this move demonstrates that political correctness rather than national security is paramount and this speaks volumes to the valiant men and women of our intelligence and military services.

For a stark example of how this decay in leadership has made us vulnerable, one need look no further than the disastrous withdrawal from Afghanistan last year. This debacle, by senior political and military leaders should have prompted an immediate inquiry to get to the bottom of the breakdown of planning and intelligence, leaving no stone unturned until the structural failures were identified and fixed and negligent officers replaced.

Sadly, top-ranking officials in America’s military, intelligence and diplomatic communities and their political leaders have demonstrated no appetite to learn the lessons of this failure but our enemies have. Sensing weakness from the Biden Administration, close on the heels of the catastrophic withdrawal from Afghanistan, Russia launched a massive attack, North Korea has been emboldened to resume missile testing, Iran appears close to winning a strategic victory at the negotiating table and China appears poised to test American resolve by threatening to make a move on Taiwan.

The world is a dangerous place and liberty is not preserved with pandering and political correctness. It is preserved by singleness of mind and mission, to constantly hone and practice the lethal skills of war, to be willing and able to meet any enemy on any field of battle and emerge victorious. Anything short of this is unacceptable. Make no mistake, our enemies are dangerous, motivated and intent on our harm. Yet despite these realities, our top leaders are content to play politics and to divert our focus from the real and present danger posed by the communist dictatorship of the People’s Republic of China. This decision by President Biden and his senior leadership projects weakness, emboldens our enemies, makes our country less safe and puts at risk the personal security of each and every American citizen.

Very Truly Yours,



Eric S. Schmitt  
Attorney General

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<sup>3</sup> Id.

<sup>4</sup> Id.