

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

June 29, 2021

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Majority Leader Schumer and Minority Leader McConnell,

We strongly urge you to delay any further action on the nomination of Ambassador Bonnie Jenkins to Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security until she clarifies her role ending the original COVID-19 origins investigation.

While Ambassador Bonnie Jenkins served on the State Department Review Team for the Biden-Harris Transition Team, the Biden Administration ended an inquiry into the origins of the COVID-19 pandemic that was investigating whether the virus originated in the Wuhan Institute of Virology.

We urge you to delay any further action on this nomination until Ambassador Jenkins answers key questions related to her role, including:

1. Who did you meet with in the Bureau of Arms Control, Verification and Compliance and when?
2. Did you discuss the ongoing work to determine the underlying military links between the Wuhan Institute of Virology, its associated facilities and the People's Liberation Army? Do you support this work?
3. Does the Bureau of Arms Control, Verification and Compliance continue to explore the dual use nature of gain of function research and other genetic engineering techniques that could be weaponized?
4. Were you briefed on the potential inconsistencies in Chinese confidence building measure as they pertain to Article X of the Biological Weapons Convention specific to SARS coronavirus research?
5. Were there any efforts to communicate with the Chinese government regarding what it knew and when?
6. Were you aware of any efforts by the French government to communicate with the U.S. Intelligence Community or U.S. State Department or other non-proliferation officials regarding China halting its partnership with France at the Wuhan Institute of Virology in 2017?

7. Did you discuss terminating the Bureau of Arms Control, Verification and Compliance investigation into potential Chinese biological weapon violations with Senior Bureau Official Turner or Deputy Assistant Secretary Bell?
8. Should the Bureau of Arms Control, Verification and Compliance continue to explore Chinese dual-use technologies that could be weaponized through advanced biotechnology research such as CRISPR and gain-of-function research which would include serial passaging of naturally occurring pathogens?

The results of a nonpartisan arms control investigation into dual use research and potential Biological Weapons Convention violations at the Wuhan Institute of Virology are crucial to understanding the origin of the coronavirus. Any nomination for Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security must state their full support for reopening this investigation.

The American people deserve transparency from senior government officials. However, we will present the opportunity to answer these questions in classified setting should it be necessary. We call on the Ambassador Jenkins to provide answers to these key questions by July 12, 2021.


Sincerely,



Roger Marshall, M.D.
U.S. Senator



Marsha Blackburn
U.S. Senator



Bill Hagerty
U.S. Senator