

WORLD POLITICS

## **Xi tells Blinken in high-stakes meeting: World needs stable U.S.-China relations**

**U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken on Monday ended a high-stakes visit to Beijing with an unexpected meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping.**

The latter stressed the importance of steady relations between the two nations after a period of simmering tensions.

During the meeting at the Diaoyutai state guest house — which lasted 35 minutes, according to the U.S. State Department — Xi said that the world needed a “generally stable” China-U.S. relationship, according to a translated readout from China’s foreign ministry.

Xi added that whether the two countries “can find the right way to get along bears on the future and destiny of humanity.”

“I hope that, through this visit, Mr. Secretary, you will make more positive contributions to stabilizing China-U.S. relations,” the Chinese leader said in a video carried by Chinese state television outlet CCTV, following “candid and in-depth discussions” between the two officials that led to progress and agreement on some undetailed “specific issues.”

**Blinken said both sides agreed on the need for the U.S. and China to stabilize bilateral ties, before adding that Washington had “no illusions” about the challenges of managing the relationship. Blinken said the U.S. was an advocate for “de-risking and diversifying” economic engagement with China, echoing an approach recently adopted by the G7.**

Blinken’s trip — which had not initially confirmed a meeting with Xi on the agenda — makes him the highest-level American official to visit China since U.S. President Joe Biden assumed leadership, as well as the first U.S. secretary of State to make the trip in nearly five years.

His original travel plans for February were disrupted by news of an alleged Chinese spy balloon flying over U.S. airspace, in an incident that stoked tensions between the world’s two largest economies.

The visit could pave the way for a November meeting between Biden and Xi, after the two world leaders last met in person on the sidelines of the G20 summit in Bali late last year.

Blinken’s encounter with Xi echoed the optimistic, communication-gearred tone of the state secretary’s other meetings with senior Chinese officials in recent days.

On Sunday, he undertook “candid, substantive, and constructive talks” with Chinese Foreign Minister Qin Gang, before speaking with top Chinese diplomat Wang Yi on Monday.

Upon seeing Wang, Blinken “underscored the importance of responsibly managing the competition between the United States and the PRC through open channels of communication to ensure competition does not veer into conflict,” State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller said in a statement.

Wang stressed that the Blinken visit came at a critical juncture in Sino-U.S. relations, in a statement released by the Chinese foreign ministry translated via Google. He said that the difficulties in the countries’ ties are rooted in the U.S.’ “erroneous perception of China, which leads to wrong policies towards China.”

Wang further urged Washington to give up its so-called “China threat theory,” to lift sanctions against Beijing and to no longer suppress China’s technological development.

The State Department did not immediately respond to a request for comment on Wang’s characterization of the nature of U.S.-China difficulties.

#### Getting down to business

**The high-level diplomatic engagements between Washington and Beijing come as several business leaders have embarked on visits to China in recent months, including Tesla and SpaceX CEO Elon Musk, JPMorgan CEO Jamie Dimon and Apple CEO Tim Cook.**

**China’s Xi held talks with Microsoft co-founder Bill Gates last week, saying he hoped the friendship between the people of China and the U.S. would continue.**

“I often say that the foundation of China-U.S. relations lies in the people. We always place our hopes on the American people and hope that the friendship between the two peoples will continue,” Xi said on Friday, according to CCTV.

Xi also told Gates he is the “first American friend” that he’d met in Beijing this year.