



Written by [Angeline Tan](#) on October 26, 2023

China Calls for Stable Bilateral Ties With U.S.; Defense Ministry Slams Pentagon's Yearly Report

On October 25, Chinese leader Xi Jinping said that his country was open to collaborating with the United States as both sides address their differences to tackle global challenges, Chinese state media reported.

Whether the U.S. and China could determine the “right” way of getting along would be essential for the world, Xi declared in a letter that was delivered at a yearly dinner of the New York-headquartered National Committee on U.S.-China Relations.

Xi's statements urging for more stable bilateral relations, which he claimed should be premised on the principles of “mutual respect, peaceful coexistence and win-win cooperation,” came ahead of Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi's visit to Washington from October 26 to 28. Wang's trip has been touted as the highest-level in-person meeting before an anticipated meeting between U.S. President Joe Biden and Xi in San Francisco at the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit in November.

Wang is also scheduled to meet U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken and National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan, officials revealed, though declining to verify if Wang will meet Biden as well. Wang's trip comes after various top U.S. officials, including Blinken, visited Beijing this summer.

“Chinese observers believe the visit (by Wang) will pave the way for a possible meeting between the heads of the two states but added that Washington needs to make concrete efforts to address Beijing's concerns and show its sincerity,” China's state-controlled *Global Times* penned in a commentary.

Officially, Washington has expressed hope that its intense rivalry with Beijing, as well as their widespread disagreements over various issues ranging from the South China Sea to Taiwan, does not end up in a hot conflict.

“We continue to believe that direct face-to-face diplomacy is the best way to raise challenging issues, address misperception and miscommunication, and explore working with the Chinese where our interests intersect,” said one official on condition of anonymity.

Wang's visit comes amid the ongoing war between Israel and Hamas, as well as the Russo-Ukrainian conflict. The same official indicated that the United States would “push the Chinese to take a more constructive approach on both.”



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Although Washington has dispatched military aid to Israel and Ukraine, Beijing has inched closer to Russia since the Russo-Ukrainian conflict erupted in February 2022, and has asked for a ceasefire between Israel and Hamas. Moreover, China has ramped up its criticism of Israel and rallied for the Palestinian cause.

Washington has highly staked its bets on China's regional clout with Iran. During his trip last week to the Middle East, Blinken held a phone call with Wang asking him to use Beijing's influence to ensure the conflict remained contained.

U.S. officials said that territorial disputes in the South and East China Seas would also be discussed during Wang's visit, adding that China's "destabilizing and dangerous actions" in the South China Sea have stoked Washington's fears. Reinstating military-to-military ties with China remains an important U.S. priority, officials disclosed, adding that it meant sustained communications down the ranks, and that China's lack of a defense minister would not be an impediment. Chinese state-run CCTV announced on October 24 that General Li Shangfu had been removed as defense minister, with no successor declared yet.

Also on October 25, California Governor Gavin Newsom (D) met Xi Jinping to discuss "climate change" and other matters, including Israel and the deadly drug fentanyl. Newsom had begun his weeklong trip to China on October 23, visiting Hong Kong and Shenzhen before meeting senior officials in Beijing, including foreign minister Wang Yi.

October 25 also saw China's defense ministry decry the [U.S. Defense Department's annual report on China](#), saying it distorts the country's security policy and military strategy.

Over the next ten years, China intends to overhaul, diversify, and enlarge its nuclear forces, the Pentagon proclaimed in its report to the U.S. Congress, explaining China's national ambitions, including its defense stance and military strategies.

The Pentagon said China has over 500 nuclear warheads now, and will probably have over 1,000 warheads by 2030, and indicated that China would use new fast-breeder reactors and reprocessing equipment to manufacture plutonium for its nuclear weapons, despite publicly saying the technologies are meant for peaceful purposes.

"We express our strong dissatisfaction and resolute opposition to this report," Chinese Defense Ministry spokesman Wu Qian said in a statement, adding that the U.S. report "exaggerates and hypes the non-existent 'Chinese military threat'."

Wu said the development of China's armed forces was meant to deter war, protect the country's own security, and ensure world peace, rather than being aimed at any particular country or target.

Recently, China and the U.S. mutually criticized one another over security matters, military interactions in the South China Sea, and the issue of self-governing Taiwan, which China deems as its territory, to be reunified by force if necessary. In 2022, the Pentagon mentioned that China "amplified diplomatic, political, and military pressure against Taiwan."

Hailing bilateral military ties as a vital element of Sino-U.S. relations, Wu said, "we maintain frank and effective communication with the United States through military diplomacy." Nonetheless, he elaborated that the U.S. was the party responsible for creating challenges hindering closer relations between the Chinese and American militaries.

"The United States pretends to be confused, while doing things that harm China's security interests, but



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at the same time shouting that it wants to manage the crisis and strengthen communication,” Wu contended.

The latest exchange of words between the U.S. and China comes days before China is poised to host foreign defense officials at the 10th Xiangshan Forum in Beijing from October 29 to 31. Washington accepted China’s invitation after China declined a meeting a few months ago between the two countries’ defense chiefs.

Although the speakers list for the Xiangshan Forum has yet to be revealed, Cynthia Xanthi Carras, principal director in the office of the deputy assistant secretary of defense for China, Taiwan and Mongolia, is scheduled to lead the U.S. entourage.

China had suspended military dialogue with the United States following an August 2022 visit to Taiwan by then-U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, and Beijing has been riled by U.S. sanctions on former Defense Chief Li Shangfu over his role in buying Russian arms.



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