
China Briefs

Wang Yi tells Blinken, 'None of ASEAN Countries Agrees with You'

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken, addressing the East Asia Summit Ministerial on Aug. 5, took the opportunity to repeat his rants against China over human rights in Tibet, Hong Kong and Xinjiang. Foreign Minister Wang Yi took the floor to respond, saying that, as expected, the United States will use the multilateral platform to attack and smear China's internal affairs. "These clichés are not worth refuting, and none of the ASEAN countries agrees with you, but out of the principle of reciprocity, China certainly has the right to refute them. But for such abominable behavior, we will resolutely make refutation each and every time it comes up."

Blinken: All Nations Want Afghanistan Peace, China Playing Positive Role

In an interview with CNN on July 28, Secretary of State Antony Blinken addressed the Afghan situation—correctly, for a change—as one which concerns all nations, leaving out only the urgency for development as the basis for peace. Asked about the Taliban meeting with Chinese leaders, he responded:

"Well, I think many countries immediately neighboring Afghanistan and in the broader region, including China, have interests in Afghanistan. And as it happens, those interests largely align. No one, whether it's the

United States, China, India, Pakistan, Iran, Russia, Central Asian countries—no one has an interest in Afghanistan falling into an enduring civil war. No one has an interest in a military takeover of the country by the Taliban, the restoration of an Islamic emirate. Everyone has an interest in a peaceful resolution of the conflict and some kind of government that emerges that's truly representative and inclusive. And so, if China is acting on those interests, if other countries are acting on those interests, that's a positive thing."

Singapore PM Warns Aspen Forum Against U.S. Conflict with China

Opening the Aug. 3-4 Aspen Security Forum, Singapore Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong warned of the continued tensions between the U.S. and China. He said that U.S. friends in the region do not want to choose between the two powers. "But here, when all of the countries in Asia and many of the countries in Europe have China as their biggest trading partner and America as a very major friend, and sometimes ally, to have to have a bifurcation means they've got to split down the middle of many societies, which I think is going to be very hard," Lee said.

He continued, "No good outcome can arise from a conflict. It's vital for the U.S. and China to strive to engage each other to head off a clash, which would be disastrous for both sides and the world.... I don't know whether Americans realize what a formidable adversary they would be taking on if they decide that China is an enemy. China's not going to disappear. This is

not the Soviet Union. It is not the Potemkin village front. This is a country with enormous dynamism, energy, talent and determination to take its place in the world again."

Wang Yi Meets with Taliban Representatives, Promises Cooperation

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi met on July 28 with Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar, the head of the Afghan Taliban Political Committee, and other Taliban leaders. "Afghanistan belongs to the Afghan people, and the future and destiny of Afghanistan should be in the hands of the Afghan people," Wang said. He called the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Afghanistan a sign of the "failure" of U.S. policy there, and said that now the Afghan people have the opportunity to stabilize and develop.

Wang said that the Afghan Taliban is a pivotal military and political force in Afghanistan and is expected to play an important role in the process of peace, reconciliation and reconstruction in Afghanistan. He urged Afghanistan to take measures against any terrorist groups that try to establish themselves in Afghanistan, particularly the East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM), which is identified by the UN as a terrorist organization. "East Turkestan" is the terrorists' name for China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region.

Baradar expressed his gratitude for the opportunity to visit China, saying that China has always been a trustworthy and good friend of the Afghan people, and that he appreciated China's

fair and active role in the peace and reconciliation process in Afghanistan. He expressed the hope that China would participate in the reconstruction process of Afghanistan, adding that the Taliban would help create a suitable investment environment to this end.

China's New Ambassador to U.S.: Let's Put Our Relations Back on Track

China's new ambassador to the United States, Qin Gang, arrived on July 28 and gave a brief address to the media. He was recently China's Vice Foreign Minister. He replaces Cui Tiankai, who served in Washington, D.C., for eight years.

Qin said that he would work "to safeguard the foundation of China-U.S. relations, uphold the shared interests of the two peoples, and endeavor to bring China-U.S. relations back on track, turning the way for the two countries to get along with each other—mutual respect, equality, win-win cooperation and a peaceful coexistence—from a possibility into a reality." He said that the world hopes for a sound, growing, healthy China-U.S. relationship. He explicitly referred to the principle enunciated in the recent Xi-Biden phone discussion, to build bridges of communication and cooperation.

28 Nations in China's Belt and Road Partnership on COVID Vaccines

On June 23, at the Asia and Pacific High-Level Conference on Belt and Road Cooperation, presided over by China's Foreign Minister, Wang Yi, 28 nations joined in launching the China Initiative for Belt and Road Partnership on COVID-19 Vaccine Cooperation. The statement announcing this

initiative stressed that international cooperation and solidarity are key to fighting the pandemic, that "people and their lives" must be put first, and that no one is safe until everyone is safe. It emphasized that vaccines must be equitably distributed and that there must be "open, fair and non-discriminatory international cooperation on vaccines."

The Chinese have established vaccine production facilities (filling and packaging the vaccines, using the vaccine ingredients imported from China) in eight countries, with discussions ongoing with ten others. The countries which now have production facilities are Brazil, UAE, Egypt, Indonesia, Turkey, Malaysia, Mexico, and Pakistan.

China has organized and implemented vaccine aid programs for 88 countries and four international organizations, *China Daily* reported on June 8. In Africa, 17 countries have adopted vaccines developed by China, whereas only three countries have access to the U.S.-made vaccines, according to statistics of the Africa Data Hub.

On Aug. 5, Chinese President Xi Jinping sent a written message to the International Forum on COVID-19 Vaccine Cooperation, at which the announcement was made that China would be providing two billion doses and \$100 million in funds to COVAX. Xi made the overall point that vaccines are a "global public good," and that health security is in the common interest of all.

Global Times Ridicules British Navy

Lin Lan in the July 27 *Global Times* ridiculed the deployment of the British carrier strike group to the South China Sea, led by the HMS *Queen Elizabeth* aircraft carrier. The group is worthless, he said. The UK has new imperial ambitions ("Global Britain"), but its navy is in shambles—only one out of five

destroyers is operational, and was just beaten up in the Black Sea by the Russians; the country is in a recession; one-fifth of its pensioners are poor; and the deployment of a naval squad in the Asia-Pacific will prove a bottomless pit that will suck money and aggravate the economic crisis. China will make clear to Washington that Britain will be punished if it provokes China, he added.

Austin Targets China in Singapore Speech

U.S. Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin toured Southeast Asia in late July, with stops in Singapore, Vietnam, and the Philippines, where he tried to rope governments into joining the U.S. in anti-China efforts. In a speech delivered July 27 in Singapore that was full of platitudes about deterrence, diplomacy, and partnerships, Austin declared:

"Beijing's claim to the vast majority of the South China Sea has no basis in international law. That assertion treads on the sovereignty of states in the region. We continue to support the region's coastal states in upholding their rights under international law. And we remain committed to the treaty obligations that we have to Japan in the Senkaku Islands and to the Philippines in the South China Sea. Unfortunately, Beijing's unwillingness to resolve disputes peacefully and respect the rule of law isn't just occurring on the water. We have also seen aggression against India ... destabilizing military activity and other forms of coercion against the people of Taiwan ... and genocide and crimes against humanity against Uyghur Muslims in Xinjiang."

Nonetheless, Austin claimed that "we are not asking countries in the region to choose between the United States and China."