

Remarks Prior to a Virtual Meeting With President Xi Jinping of China
November 15, 2021

President Biden. Good to see you, Mr. President. Next time, I hope we get to do it face to face like we used to when we traveled through China. We've spent an awful lot—a lot of time talking to one another, and I hope we can have a candid conversation tonight as well.

Maybe I should start more formally, although you and I have never been that formal with one another.

Good evening to everyone here in the United States, and good morning to you, Mr. President, in Beijing. I'm happy we had found time to meet, and I look forward to a candid and forthright discussion like all the discussions we've had thus far.

As I've said before, it seems to me our responsibility as leaders of China and the United States is to ensure that the competition between our countries does not veer into conflict, whether intended or unintended. Just simple, straightforward competition.

It seems to me we need to establish some commonsense guardrails, to be clear and honest where we disagree, and work together where our interests intersect, especially on vital global issues like climate change.

None of this is a favor to either of our countries—what we do for one another—but it's just responsible world leadership. And you're a major world leader, and so is the United States. How our bilateral relationship evolves, seems to me, will have a profound impact not only on our countries, but quite frankly, the rest of the world.

We have a responsibility to the world, as well as to our people. It's why we believe—and you and I have talked about this—all countries have to play by the same rules of the road, why the United States is always going to stand up for our interests and values and those of our allies and partners.

If past is prologue, I am sure that today we'll be discussing those areas where we have concerns: from human rights, to economics, to ensuring a free and open Indo-Pacific.

And I think it's very important, as I've told other world leaders when they ask about our relationship, is that we have always communicated with one another very honestly and candidly. And it's—we never walk away wondering what the other man is thinking.

And to—I think that's an important ingredient for this relationship: to be open and candid, in terms of our relationship. And I think it's important we communicate honestly and directly to one another about our priorities and our intentions.

I look forward to getting down to business and—on the extensive and substantive of agenda we have ahead of us. And I thank you very much. And thank you for your congratulatory call when I won the election. It was very gracious of you.

Thank you. Thank you, thank you, thank you.

President Xi. Good to see you, Mr. President, and your colleagues.

It's the first time for us to meet virtually. Although it's not as good as a face-to-face meeting, I'm very happy to see my old friend.

President Biden. Thank you.

President Xi. Right now both China and the United States are at critical stages of development, and humanity lives in a global village, and we face multiple challenges together. As the world's two largest economies and the permanent members of the U.N. Security Council, China and the United States need to increase communication and cooperation.

We should each run our domestic affairs well and, at the same time, shoulder our share of international responsibilities and work together to advance the noble cause of world peace and development. This is the shared desire of the people of our two countries and around the world, and the joint mission of Chinese and American leaders.

A sound and steady China-U.S. relationship is required for advancing our two countries' respective development and for safeguarding a peaceful and stable international environment, including finding effective responses to global challenges such as climate change, which you referenced, and the COVID pandemic.

China and the United States should respect each other, coexist in peace, and pursue win-win cooperation. I stand ready to work with you, Mr. President, to build consensus, take active steps, and move China-U.S. relations forward in a positive direction. Doing so would advance the interests of our two peoples and meet the expectation of the international community.

I now look forward to a wide-ranging and a comprehensive discussion with you, Mr. President, on overarching issues.

Thank you.

President Biden. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:46 p.m. from the Roosevelt Room at the White House. President Xi spoke in Chinese, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter.

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