

Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Wang Wenbin's Regular Press Conference on April 23, 2024

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Beijing Youth Daily: It is reported that US Secretary of State Antony Blinken will tell his Chinese counterpart that the US and its allies are becoming increasingly impatient with Beijing's refusal to stop providing Moscow with everything from chips to cruise missile engines to help rebuild its industrial base during his visit to China. Blinken did not reveal what measures the US will take, but several people familiar with the situation said it is considering sanctions on Chinese financial institutions and other entities. What is your comment?

Wang Wenbin: The United States keeps making groundless accusations over the normal trade and economic exchanges between China and Russia, while passing a bill providing a large amount of aid for Ukraine. This is just hypocritical and highly irresponsible. China firmly rejects this.

On Ukraine, China's position has been just and objective. We have worked actively to promote talks for peace and a political settlement. The government oversees the export of dual-use articles in accordance with the laws and regulations. China is neither the creator of the Ukraine crisis nor a party to it. We never fan the flames or seek selfish gains, and we will certainly not accept being the scapegoat.

Let me stress again that China's right to conduct normal trade and economic exchanges with Russia and other countries in the world on the basis of equality and mutual benefit should not be interfered with or disrupted. China's legitimate and lawful rights and interests should not be infringed on.

The US needs to know that to fan the flames or to smear others and shift the blame is no way to solve the Ukraine issue. Only by accommodating the legitimate security concerns of all parties and creating a balanced, effective, and sustainable European security architecture through dialogue and negotiation is the right way forward.

CCTV: Foreign Minister Wang Yi has just concluded his visit to Cambodia. Do you have any details to offer on his visit?

Wang Wenbin: From April 21 to 23, Member of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee, Director of the Office of the Central Commission for Foreign

Affairs and Foreign Minister Wang Yi paid an official visit to Cambodia. King Norodom Sihamoni, the President of the Senate of Cambodia Hun Sen and Prime Minister Hun Manet met with him respectively. He also co-chaired the Seventh Meeting of the China-Cambodia Intergovernmental Coordination Committee with Deputy Prime Minister Sun Chanthol, and held talks with Cambodian Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation Sok Chenda Sophea.

Foreign Minister Wang Yi said that China and Cambodia are iron-clad friends supporting each other and sharing weal and woe. Under the strategic guidance of President Xi Jinping and Cambodian leaders, the China-Cambodia community with a shared future has stayed at the forefront of the times and set a fine example for building a new type of international relations. China stands ready to work with the Cambodian side to deliver on the strategic consensus between the leaders of the two countries, enrich the "diamond hexagon" bilateral cooperation framework, and inject new impetus into the building of the "industrial development corridor" and the "fish and rice corridor", so as to make China-Cambodia friendship and solidarity firm and strong, just like iron and steel, and our cooperation will keep shining bright like the diamond. China will always be the most reliable partner and the strongest backing to Cambodia.

The Cambodian side noted that China is a close friend and strategic partner of Cambodia. Cambodia will not change its commitment to a policy of friendship with China and will not change its resolve to advance cooperation with China. Cambodia firmly believes that the Cambodia-China friendship will pass on from generation to generation and grow from strength to strength. Cambodia is firmly committed to the one-China policy, firmly supports China's position on issues bearing on China's core interests, actively supports the vision of building a community with a shared future for mankind and the Global Development Initiative, the Global Security Initiative and the Global Civilization Initiative proposed by President Xi Jinping, and stands ready to enhance cooperation with China in various areas and jointly safeguard peace and stability of the region.

During the visit, the two sides reached extensive common understandings. The two sides agreed to leverage the coordinating role of the China-Cambodia Intergovernmental Coordination Committee, usher in a new era of building a high-quality, high-level, and high-standard China-Cambodia community with a shared future, and jointly advocate free, open, equal, inclusive and universally beneficial multilateralism and economic globalization.

The two sides agreed to have closer high-level exchanges, deepen experience sharing on governance, work together to combat cross-border crimes such as online gambling, telecom fraud and drug trafficking, form closer synergy between the Belt and Road Initiative and Cambodia's Pentagonal Strategy, formulate a cooperation plan on the "industrial development corridor" at an early date, continue with the preliminary design of the China-Cambodia railway, deliver more early harvests of the "fish and rice corridor", such as the agricultural demonstration zones, and implement the China-Cambodia Free Trade Agreement with high quality.

The two sides agreed to take the opportunity of the 2024 China-Cambodia People-to-People Exchange Year to encourage tourism, increase the number of flights, and carry out more practical exchanges between the youths and friendship organizations and at the sub-national level. Cambodia will provide support for the reopening of the China Cultural Center in Cambodia.

The two sides reiterated their willingness to carry out cooperation under the frameworks of the Global Development Initiative, the Global Security Initiative and the Global Civilization Initiative, and enhance coordination on the platforms of Lancang-Mekong cooperation and China-ASEAN cooperation. The two sides agreed that it is in the common interests of countries in the region to safeguard peace and stability, which did not come easy, and promote development and prosperity of the region. The two sides stressed they will fully and effectively implement the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea, advance consultation on a code of conduct in the South China Sea (COC) and strive to conclude the COC at an early date.

Reuters: There are two parts to my question. The first is Wall Street Journal reported that the US is drafting sanctions that threaten to cut some Chinese banks off from the global financial system, which US officials hope will stop China's commercial support of Russia's military production. At the same time, a briefing by the Ministry's head of the department for North American affairs has called for the US to immediately stop imposing unilateral sanctions on Chinese companies and individuals and said that the Ukraine issue is not an issue between China and the United States. So my question is what is the Ministry's response to the Wall Street Journal report and also what kind of countermeasures would China take if these banking sanctions materialize?

Wang Wenbin: I answered this when I responded to the question from Beijing Youth Daily. I would like to reiterate that we firmly oppose the US's hypocritical moves of fanning the flames while deflecting the blame on China. China's right to normal trade and economic cooperation with Russia and all other countries should not be violated. We will firmly safeguard our lawful rights and interests.



Xinhua News Agency: The 80th session of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) is being held on April 22 and 23 in Bangkok, Thailand. The Chinese delegation attended the session. How does China view the session?

Wang Wenbin: The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) is the UN's most important comprehensive organization for socioeconomic development in the Asia-Pacific with important missions. Guided by the theme "Leveraging digital innovation for sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific," the session held in-depth discussions, built up consensus, and reached practical cooperation results. It sent out a strong message of upholding multilateralism, open cooperation, and innovation-driven development for inclusive and sustainable development in the Asia-Pacific, and maintained the positive momentum and right direction of Asia-Pacific cooperation. China's Vice Foreign Minister Ma Zhaoxu led the Chinese delegation to the session and addressed the general debate. He shared China's views on the Asia-Pacific situation and propositions on regional cooperation.

China, an important member in the Asia-Pacific, highly values the role of ESCAP. China will continue providing financial support through the China-ESCAP fund and other channels and further synergize Belt and Road cooperation, the Global Development Initiative and ESCAP to add strong impetus to Asia-Pacific cooperation. We will translate new achievements made through Chinese modernization into more opportunities for the Asia-Pacific to advance common development and prosperity in the Asia-Pacific and build an Asia-Pacific community with a shared future.

AFP: According to reports, the assistant of a German politician standing for this June's EU elections has been arrested on suspicion of spying for China. Do you have any comment on this?

Wang Wenbin: We noted relevant reports and the media hype. But the truth is there for all to see. The so-called "threat of Chinese spies" is not a new thing in Europe. Every time before or after China-Europe high-level interactions in recent years, there would be such a hype, with a clear intention of smearing and hitting China and souring the atmosphere of China-EU cooperation.

Let me stress that China carries out cooperation with European and all other countries on the basis of mutual respect and non-interference in each other's internal affairs, and advances mutually beneficial cooperation with relevant parties in accordance with laws and regulations. We hope that relevant people in Germany will ditch the Cold War mentality and stop the political manipulation aimed at China with so-called "spy risks."

Bloomberg: To follow up on the question from my colleague from the AFP, you said "the so-called China spy threat" in response to this specific case. Are you denying that this person who has been arrested in Germany is a spy for the Chinese government? And also on the three Germans who were arrested earlier, I think a couple of days ago, are you also denying that those three people are also spies for China?

Wang Wenbin: I shared China's position just now. Recent reports about so-called China's spying in Europe are all hypes aimed at smearing and hitting China. Not just in Germany, we also noted reports in the UK in the past few days. We firmly oppose such hype and we urge relevant parties to stop spreading disinformation about so-called "China spy threat" and stop political manipulation and malicious smears against China.

BBC: Following the previous questions, there are two men charged in Britain also accused of spying for China. Does the Chinese government deny that they were spying for China or does the Chinese government have any response to this?

Wang Wenbin: If you follow China's press statements, you will have noted that China already responded to relevant reports last September. We would like to reiterate that the claim that China could be stealing UK intelligence is a groundless accusation and malicious smear, and we firmly oppose that accusation. Such malicious manipulation aimed at China should stop.



Reuters: The Foreign Ministry's head of the department for North American affairs held a briefing on Blinken's visit this week and it covered a range of issues. On the point about overcapacity and US measures, such as export controls and so forth, the Ministry's official said the US has made repeated mistakes in launching Section 301 investigations out of domestic political needs in the US and that China will resolutely respond to US actions in these areas. What are the responses or actions China is considering taking?

Wang Wenbin: On this question, we have made clear China's position many times. Let me point out again that China-US economic ties benefit both sides and there's no winner in a trade war. The US's Section 301 tariffs on China have severely disrupted normal trade and economic exchanges between China and the US and harmed the interests of Chinese and American businesses and particularly American consumers. The WTO has already ruled that those tariffs violate WTO rules. We urge the US to follow WTO rules, lift all additional tariffs on China and stop imposing new ones. China will take all necessary measures to safeguard its rights and interests.

CCTV: The US State Department yesterday released the 2023 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices, saying that the PRC continues to carry out genocide, crimes against humanity in Xinjiang, dismantle Hong Kong's political freedoms and autonomy, and violate human rights in Xizang. Secretary of State Blinken attacked the human rights practices in Xinjiang in the preface of the report. What's China's comment?

Wang Wenbin: Year after year, the US creates so-called human rights reports that are filled with political lies and ideological biases on China. We strongly reject this.

The Chinese people have the best say on the human rights situation in China. China made history by eliminating absolute poverty. We practice whole-process people's democracy and provide the world's largest education system, social security system and medical care system in China. The Chinese people's sense of gain, happiness and security keeps getting stronger. We have found a path toward better human rights that reflects the trend of the times and fits our national realities. A Harvard University survey conducted over a period of more than 10 years straight shows that the Chinese government's satisfaction rate among the people stayed above 90 percent.

In this so-called Human Rights Reports, the US criticized the human rights situation of nearly 200 countries and regions and yet said nothing about the US itself. This is just another case of double standard. The hegemonic, domineering and bullying nature of the US and its selfishness and hypocrisy are on clear display. If the US truly cares about human rights, it should take seriously and properly address domestic gun violence, drug abuse, racial discrimination and other violations of human rights and dignity. It should face up to and reflect on its intervention operations in other countries and human rights catastrophes resulting from the US provision of weapons and fanning the flames in regional conflicts. The US, turning a blind eye to over 110,000 civilian casualties in Gaza, vetoed the UN Security Council's efforts for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza four times in a row. That alone says enough about how little human rights actually mean to the US and how it tramples on them.

The world is not blind to US hegemonism imposed on the world in the name of human rights. The US needs to examine its own behavior. It needs to take care of its own problems first, stop lecturing others on human rights, stop pointing fingers at other countries' human rights record, and stop meddling in other countries' internal affairs, violating their human rights and planting conflicts and chaos in the name of human rights and democracy.

Bloomberg: The German authorities have not released the full names of any of the people they have arrested on accusations of spying yet. And so we do not know any of the details, including who they are. Notwithstanding that, are you categorically denying that these four people are spies for China, even though you do not know their names?

Wang Wenbin: Although you don't know the full names of the arrested people, you do know that they've been publicly accused by Germany for "spying for China." Let me make it clear, the so-called "China spy threat" is purely groundless and a malicious smear.

BBC: You did touch on this subject already but was the Chinese government surprised that Antony Blinken mentioned, for example, that China was the "primary contributor to Russia's military industrial complex" and cautioned that "China can't maintain good relations with the west while simultaneously supporting Russia's war effort." Did it come as a surprise to the Chinese government that he would say something just before traveling to China? Having made those comments, will that hurt the possibility of having good talks on his visit?

Wang Wenbin: This is exactly the first question I took today.

BBC: The last follow-up question. More broadly, given the tensions between China and the US at the moment, what is the best-case scenario result of Antony Blinken's visit to China? What would China really hope to achieve from this?

Wang Wenbin: Secretary Blinken's visit to China is part of the efforts of the two sides to deliver on the common understandings reached by the two presidents in San Francisco, maintain dialogue, manage differences, promote cooperation and enhance coordination in international affairs. The two sides will focus on delivering on the two presidents' common understandings in San Francisco and their recent phone call and exchange views on bilateral relations and international and regional issues of mutual interest. Yesterday, the head of the Department of North American and Oceanian Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs gave a preview to the media. You may refer to relevant reports.



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