**On May 25, 2023 it was reported that Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo and her Chinese counterpart, Wang Wentao were going to meet in Washington to talk for the first time. While nothing substantial is likely to happen at their level of contact, we hope that it is the beginning of a thaw in the tense and dangerous relationship between the world’s super powers.**

**Earlier, in May 10-11, Sullivan and Wang Yi, China’s top foreign-affairs official, met in Vienna and discussed ways to restore high-level exchanges.**

**More important will be the potential meeting between President Biden and Chinese President Xi Jinping in November.**

**Both sides appear to want stability and less stress in their relationship, but each side has its own demanding objectives.**

**China wants sanctions removed from their Defense Minister, and the U.S. wants China to reduce its military pressure on Taiwan, and a greater effort to convince Russia to resolve the Ukraine situation peacefully. They are also very concerned about sanctions designed to disrupt the flow of technologies related to microchip development.**

**Both sides realize that conflict over Taiwan will be most dangerous and if not handled properly, could mean WWIII.**

**Both sides realize, but will not openly admit that a China-US conflict would damage both sides economically, and would have powerful political consequences because neither side is strong enough to win such a war, so the political leaders on both sides will have to pay a high price for entering a very expensive war with no victory.**

**Both countries are 4,000 square miles and neither side has the military capacity to conquer, occupy and control a foe that large. The likely result of a China-US conflict will be many dead and no victory. Neither side wants that conclusion. (This is the opinion of our Historian and China specialist.)**

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**Source:**

[***The Wall Street Journal***](https://wallstreetjournal-ny.newsmemory.com/)**|**[**Page A001**](https://wallstreetjournal-ny.newsmemory.com/?selDate=20230525&editionStart=The+Wall+Street+Journal&goTo=A001)**, Thursday, 25 May 2023**

**U.S. and China See Chance to Mend Ties**

U.S.-China relations, after months of recrimination, are entering a new phase likely to determine whether the two powers are able to restore high-level exchanges derailed by a Chinese balloon this year.

A first barometer of the chance for success is a dinner planned for Thursday in Washington, where Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo plans to sit down with her Chinese counterpart, Wang Wentao. It will be the first cabinet-level meeting in Washington between the two countries during the Biden administration.

Another test will be whether the top defense officials from both countries hold talks on the sidelines of an annual security forum in Singapore in early June, as has happened in the past. China wants the U.S. to lift sanctions placed years ago on China’s recently appointed defense minister as a precondition for the meeting. President Biden said last weekend that the demand is under discussion, though State Department and other officials later said it isn’t.

The planned bilateral meetings would represent a “thaw” in contacts as described by Biden— set in motion by an unexpected burst of diplomacy after months of at-times bitter sparring on the global stage.

The push to restore contacts is being driven by a shared desire for stability in the relationship from Beijing and Washington—but for different reasons. The Biden administration has pressed to steady matters in the midst of friction over Taiwan, the war in Ukraine and other issues. Its motivation is partly to prevent tensions from spiraling into conflict, but also to show allies and others that it can manage a working relationship with Beijing, current and former U.S. officials said.

While Beijing has largely given Washington a cold shoulder in recent months, it now has its own reasons for detente. Chinese officials point to a priority for Beijing: paving the way for Chinese leader Xi Jinping to attend an annual summit of Asia-Pacific leaders to be held in San Francisco in November—and possibly a separate meeting with Biden. However, Chinese and U.S. officials said, time is running out to lay the necessary groundwork.

Going into this year, both governments were looking to kick-start dialogue over geopolitics, the economy, trade and other issues that had dwindled following bitter disputes over Taiwan and technology controls. Then, a suspected Chinese spy balloon crossed North America before the U.S. shot it down in February, sending relations back into an acrimonious spiral.

The balloon incident led U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken to postpone a scheduled visit to China that was supposed to be the start of a series of high-level exchanges.

In the months since, tensions between the two powers continued to grow, and China repeatedly rebuffed U.S. requests for high-level talks. But behind the scenes, backchannel diplomacy hasn’t stopped.

In March, Beijing sent to Washington a delegation led by its retired ambassador to the U.S., Cui Tiankai. There, Cui, who was China’s longest-serving envoy to Washington, met with national security adviser Jake Sullivan and Deputy Secretary of State Wendy Sherman and talked about Beijing’s interest in brokering peace in Ukraine, people with knowledge of the matter said.

U.S. and other Western officials have cast doubt on Beijing’s ability and willingness to be a genuine peacemaker given its alignment with Moscow. Meeting with Sullivan and Sherman, Cui expressed China’s frustration that no matter what it does or says, the U.S. will take actions against it, the people with knowledge of the matter said.

Still, a takeaway for the Chinese delegation from the trip, the people said, was that Washington wanted some in-depth communication between the two sides. An initial sign of thawing relations: On May 10-11, Sullivan and Wang Yi, China’s top foreign-affairs official, met in Vienna and discussed ways to restore high-level exchanges.

Beijing’s recent tentative return to diplomacy with Washington came about, in part, be-cause the Chinese leadership sees itself in a stronger position than immediately after the balloon incident, a U.S. official said. Xi has hosted several European leaders in an attempt to divide the Western alliance and obtained a vow of strong trade ties and defiance of U.S. sanctions from Brazil’s president. “They think we don’t look great,” the U.S. official said.

China’s Foreign Ministry said in a faxed response to questions, “China and the U.S. are maintaining necessary communications.”

Meanwhile, any fledgling detente is likely to be fragile.

“There’s so little structural trust and so much animosity in the relationship that we’re just one news-cycle event away from knocking recent progress off-kilter, as we saw with the Chinese spy-balloon incident,” said Jude Blanchette, a China specialist at the Center for Strategic and Inter-national Studies.

Chinese officials are anxious about an analysis by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and other agencies of the electronic and other equipment carried by the balloon. They are also concerned about an expected Biden executive order banning U.S. investment in China’s chip and other critical tech sectors.

“China wants the U.S. side to show sincerity,” said Yun Sun, director of the China program at the Stimson Center, a Washington think tank. “It doesn’t want to have those talks, only to face more U.S. sanctions later.” *—Yuka Hayashi contributed to this article.*