

U.S.-CHINA TALKS END ON SUBDUED NOTE

Relevant for: International Relations | Topic: Effect of policies and politics of developed & developing countries on India's interests

Fiery start: Secretary of State Antony Blinken addressing the press as NSA Jake Sullivan, right, looks on, in Anchorage. AP/FREDERIC J. BROWN

The U.S.-China talks started with a bang but ended with a whimper as Chinese officials left the site of the talks in Anchorage without a press conference on Friday and the rancour and sparring evident in Thursday's opening session did not have a sequel to match.

While the Chinese delegation left without addressing the press, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken and National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan spoke to reporters, saying the two sides were "fundamentally at odds" on a number of issues but suggesting they would work together on others. Mr. Blinken listed Iran, North Korea, Afghanistan and climate change as areas of common interest.

"And we certainly know and knew going in that there are a number of areas where we are fundamentally at odds, including China's actions in Xinjiang, with regard to Hong Kong, Tibet, increasingly Taiwan, as well as actions that it's taken in cyberspace," Mr. Blinken said.

The U.S. has determined that the Chinese government is engaged in a "genocide" on the Uighur Muslim minority in Xinjiang. Days before the talks, the State Department announced sanctions against Chinese and Hong Kong officials for increasing Beijing's control over Hong Kong's legislature. "And it's no surprise that when we raised those issues clearly and directly, we got a defensive response," Mr. Blinken said.

"But we were also able to have a very candid conversation over these many hours on an expansive agenda. On Iran, on North Korea, on Afghanistan, on climate, our interests intersect," he said.

In matters of trade, technology and economic, Mr. Blinken said the U.S. told China that it is working with Congress and its allies and will move forward in a way that "fully protects and advances the interests of workers and our businesses".

In line with expectations that U.S. officials had attempted to set prior to the talks, there was neither a joint statement nor a clear identification of deliverables after the meetings. This, despite the U.S. and China (along with Russia and Pakistan) signing a joint statement on the Afghan peace settlement in Moscow.

"We were clear-eyed coming in, we're clear-eyed coming out, and we will go back to Washington to take stock of where we are," Mr. Sullivan told reporters on Friday. "We'll continue to consult with allies and partners on the way forward and, of course, on issues ranging from Iran to Afghanistan through the normal diplomatic channels. We'll continue to work with China going forward."

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