

# China agrees to nuclear arms-control talks with US: WSJ

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**Online Desk:** China and the United States will discuss nuclear arms control next week, the first such talks since the Obama administration, the Wall Street Journal reported on Wednesday.

China's Foreign Ministry said on Monday after a visit by Foreign Minister Wang Yi to Washington that the two countries would hold "consultations on arms control and non-proliferation" in the coming days, as well as separate talks on maritime affairs and other issues.

Those arms talks would be led on Monday by Mallory Stewart, a senior State Department official, and Sun Xiaobo, the head of the arms-control department at China's Foreign Ministry, the Wall Street Journal report said.

The US State Department and China's embassy in Washington did not immediately respond to requests by Reuters for comment on the timing or format of the talks.

US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan said in 2021 that the Chinese and US presidents had agreed to "look to begin to carry forward discussion on strategic stability", a reference to Washington's concerns about Beijing's nuclear weapons build-up.

But the White House was quick to say at the time that the discussions would not resemble formal arms reduction talks, like those the US has had with Russia.

Since then, US officials had expressed frustration that China showed little interest in discussing steps to reduce nuclear weapons risks.

China has more than 500 operational nuclear warheads in its arsenal and will probably have over 1,000 warheads by 2030, the Pentagon said in October. But Beijing has long argued that the US already has a much larger arsenal. The arms talks would occur before a likely meeting between US President Joe Biden and Chinese President Xi Jinping in San Francisco in November, although a senior Biden administration official said on Tuesday important details have yet to be hammered out.

A flurry of China-US diplomatic engagements in recent months, largely at Washington's request, has sought to salvage what were rapidly deteriorating ties between the two countries following the US downing in February of a suspected Chinese spy balloon over the United States.

Daryl Kimball, executive director of the Washington-based Arms Control Association, said the overdue arms talks would likely focus on promoting greater transparency of each countries' nuclear doctrines and more effective crisis-communication channels.

"I don't think, however, we should expect breakthroughs in the near term. That's going to take time and give and take from both sides," Kimball said.