



Introduction to Secretary Blinken's address to the Asia Society, Washington D.C.

May 26, 2022

**The Hon. Kevin Rudd AC
President & CEO, Asia Society
President, Asia Society Policy Institute
26th Prime Minister of Australia**

Secretary Blinken, members of the administration, members of the Congress, members of the diplomatic corps, distinguished guests, ladies, and gentlemen.

Welcome to the Asia Society here in Washington, D.C.

I'm Kevin Rudd, global president of the Asia Society. And, together with my Vice Presidents, Danny Russel and Wendy Cutler, we are delighted to today host the Secretary of State outlining the administration's China policy.

Founded in 1956, the mission of the Asia Society is to navigate shared futures between the United States and the countries of Asia.

And over the last 65 years, and across our 15 centers around the world, and across constantly evolving geopolitical circumstances, we have sought to do just that.

I would also like to acknowledge our colleagues from George Washington University, where we meet today, including President Mark Wrighton and distinguished Sinologist, and dear colleague, Professor David Shambaugh.

The future policy of the United States towards the People's Republic of China is of fundamental consequence — not just to these two countries, but to all countries of the Indo-Pacific region, and indeed for the future of the global order itself.

Both U.S. policy, together with China's response, will determine whether ours will be a future of strategic stability, economic prosperity, and environmental sustainability.

Or whether it will be one of crisis, escalation, conflict, or even war.

History, of course, is our somber guide on such questions.

But none of us are so captured by some pre-determined forces of history that we cannot still secure with our Chinese friends a shared future for us all.

The truth is that China under Xi Jinping has changed.

China has become more powerful.

And China under Xi Jinping now seeks to assert that power in the region and in the world in a manner we have not seen in half a century.

That is because President Xi now seeks to change the status quo in a manner that advances his definition of China's national interests and values.

The United States, together with its friends, partners and allies around the world, is now responding to that challenge.

The Secretary of State and the Biden administration have, as those of us across the analytical community observe, indeed been active on this score.

The administration has been rebuilding U.S. alliances both in Europe and in Asia.

U.S. leadership has now seen NATO, for the first time, focus fully on China's rise.

At the same time, the administration has elevated the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue to summit level.

Indeed, Mr. Secretary, together with the President, you've just returned from Tokyo from the fourth summit level meeting of the Quad since President Biden took office.

This week's Quad communique also announced the Indo-Pacific Partnership for Maritime Domain Awareness to provide comprehensive aerial surveillance for the exclusive economic zones of small island developing economies of both the Indian and the Pacific oceans to help them preserve their valuable fish stocks and other maritime resources.

I know from my own experience that this is welcome across the small island countries of the Pacific.

You've also just held substantive discussions with Prime Minister Kishida, Prime Minister Modi, and my own successor as Australian Prime Minister, Mr. Albanese. And earlier, the newly elected leader of the Republic of Korea, President Yoon.

The administration also recently gathered ASEAN Leaders here in the United States for a landmark summit.

Meanwhile, beyond the national security and foreign policy agenda, the President also this week released the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework drafted by Secretary Gina Raimondo.

This embraces future coordination, cooperation, and where possible integration, across a number of new drivers of pan-regional economic growth, including digital commerce, the renewable energy revolution, and supply chain security.

It seems therefore, Mr. Secretary, that you've had a few things on your plate.

Indeed, across the wider region, there is an emerging sense that America is now well and truly back.

For the world at large, what is also important, is that the United States has been able to prosecute this significant strategic agenda in Asia while at the same time dealing with the strategic crisis that now affects Europe.

The Russian invasion of Ukraine, in total violation of Article II of the UN Charter, represents a signal challenge for all democracies around the world (whether they are in Europe, or in Asia, or beyond).

Indeed the Russian invasion puts at risk the fundamental principles of territorial integrity and political sovereignty for all member states of the United Nations system.

For the international community, it has been important to see the United States, as a leader of the free world, comfortably managing both these challenges, in Europe and in Asia, at the same time. Such is the lot of global leadership.

Finally, Mr. Secretary, on responding to the complexity and the intensity of China's rise, the international community appreciates the administration's continued efforts to carve out sufficient diplomatic and political space in the U.S.-China relationship for strategic cooperation where there are common global interests are at stake.

We commend Secretary Kerry and Xie Zhenhua's continued efforts on climate change.

Just as we would encourage continued collaboration between the U.S. Federal Reserve and the People's Bank of China on our common interest in maintaining global financial stability in these deeply uncertain global economic times.

And given how we all fell short in the management of the COVID crisis, how we could all better manage the next global public health challenge when it inevitably arises.

Mr. Secretary, you have always been a welcome guest among us at the Asia Society.

We very much look forward to your remarks here today.

Please welcome the Secretary of State of the United States, Antony Blinken.

[ENDS]