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US Secretary of State Antony Blinken

Official Speech on US China Policy

Robert Lawrence Kuhn, May 26, 2022



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ANCHOR: Let's now speak to Mr. Robert Lawrence Kuhn, a commentator and author on China who is based in the US. He has advised and worked with Chinese leaders in Beijing for more than 25 years. Thank you very much for your time here on Tuesday.

I'd like to begin by asking you, straight up, what do you expect the reaction to be from the Chinese leadership on Mr. Blinken's comments [US Secretary of State Antony Blinken]?



ROBERT LAWRENCE KUHN: Overtly, they will, of course, criticize this severely, but I think privately they will appreciate that at least there's a coherence and a predictability. And for Chinese leadership that is very important. Under the prior administration, there was chaos and unpredictability, which actually becomes more dangerous. The downside, of course, is the coherence of the Biden policy, which Secretary Blinken articulated today — which people on both sides of the aisle have been clamoring for since the Biden administration took office.



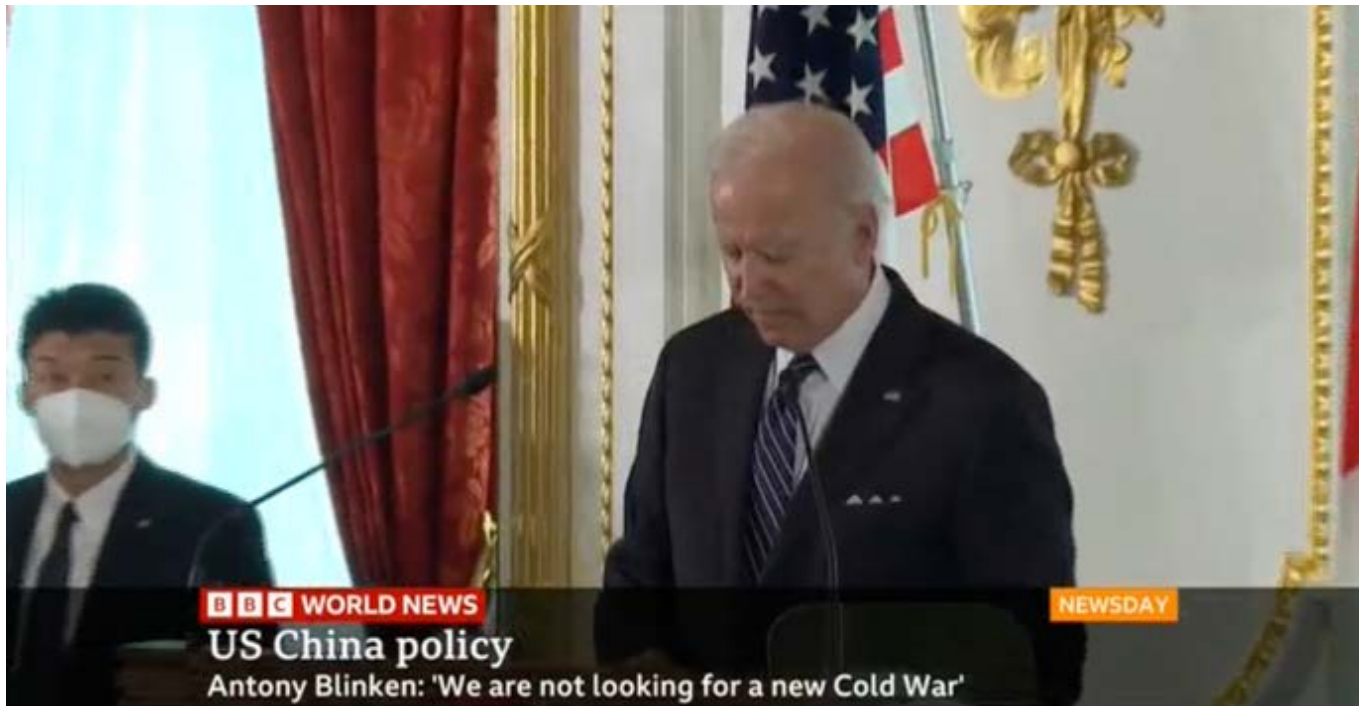
KUHN: This was a very clear articulation of that, and it not only set the guidelines for US-China competition and distinct differences on the world scene, but also framed the possibility of cooperation, particularly in climate control.



KUHN: And it set very clear boundaries about Taiwan, which is probably the most sensitive issue. So, in that sense, the predictability is good, although the effort of the Biden administration to rally allies around the world, not only in Europe but in Asia — given a boom by the horrific Russian invasion of Ukraine, which gave unity to the West and to most of the developed world — that is definitely a negative from China's point of view, as they would see it.



BBC ANCHOR:
Mr. Kuhn, how much pressure will China be feeling at the moment, considering that we had the QUAD meeting earlier this week, you had President Biden statements on Taiwan, and now the statement coming in from Mr. Blinken?



ROBERT LAWRENCE KUHN: Yes, clearly this is a time when the West is more unified than in recent memory — again triggered by the Ukraine situation — but also in recognition of China's awkward position on Ukraine. They say they're neutral, but their statements are definitely pro Russian, and that has given a very bad flavor to many people in the developed world at this point.



KUHN: But there is opportunity, and Blinken tried to make a distinction between the Chinese people, whom he gave credit — for their culture, their history, their achievements — and [Blinken said] the US is not trying to stop China from its rightful place in the world, not trying to stop the development of China for the benefit of the people. So that's good.



ROBERT LAWRENCE KUHN: He was distinguishing between the government and the Party, the Communist Party, and the people. I thought that it could have been more nuanced because he presented it all in a very negative way. And to the Chinese people, that's not the case. The Chinese people see that the government and the Party has, for example, eliminated extreme poverty in China. A remarkable development. Xi Jinping said that this was his most important piece of business over a period of time.



KUHN: So, I mean there could have been more nuance in terms of understanding the relationship between the people and the government because we don't want to inflame nationalism, which is a disease that most countries have.

BBC ANCHOR: Mr. Kuhn, very quickly, I'm running out of time, but how do you see this playing out? Do you see any common ground? Quick last comments?



ROBERT LAWRENCE KUHN: Yes, of course I see common ground. And John Kerry and Xie Zhenhua, the Chinese climate representative, have had good relationships and have sent a signal recently, very recently. I'm sure it was no accident that there is cooperation there. There will be efforts to make cooperation, recognizing the big picture that there is competition in the future.

BBC ANCHOR: All right, Robert Lawrence Kuhn, I appreciate you joining us here on **Newsday**. Thanks for your comments.

