

## US rolls back China Covid flight curbs again

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**New York: Flights between the US and China will increase to 70 a week starting November 9, American officials said, as the two world’s largest economies gradually lift limits on services imposed during the pandemic.**

The number of flights rises from 48 a week, with the equivalent round-trips increasing to 35 from 24, the US Department of Transportation said in a filing Friday. The limit of 24 kicks in on Sunday, after an earlier agreed relaxation from 12.

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The department said it was seeking an “ongoing and productive dialogue” with its counterparts in China at the Civil Aviation Administration of China “to facilitate a gradual, broader reopening of the US-China air services market.”

“The Department intends to establish a roadmap that will provide for a phased and predictable return to the capacity entitlements,” according to the filing.

The increase in flights comes hours after Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi concluded two days of talks in Washington with Secretary of State Antony Blinken and National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan, and met with President Joe Biden. The

officials agreed in principle on a meeting between Biden and President Xi Jinping.

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A United Airlines Holdings executive told Bloomberg News on Friday the airline was in favor of a gradual increase in the restoration of US-China flights.

Flights between the two countries, which averaged 340 a week before the pandemic, have struggled to recover as the US blocked any increase, with officials arguing that China had violated an existing agreement between the two nations with its strict Covid control measures.

The US Department of Transportation in August agreed to raise the number of round-trips from 12 a week for each nation to 24 from October 29, shared between the three largest US carriers and six Chinese airlines.

United said earlier that it will resume flights between San Francisco and Beijing in November as part of the earlier increase.

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