

# [***China's Xi Jinping rolls out red carpet for close friend Putin in strong show of unity***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C1P-72M1-JBSS-S019-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Body**

Hong Kong (CNN) &#8212; Chinese leader Xi Jinping and [*Russian*](https://www.cnn.com/world/europe/russia) President Vladimir Putin pledged to deepen their strategic partnership in Beijing on Thursday, in a stark show of their [*growing alignment*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/05/14/china/xi-putin-china-summit-intl-hnk/index.html) as Moscow's [*troops advance in Ukraine*](https://www.cnn.com/world/europe/ukraine).

Putin - whose delegation includes top defense and security officials - was welcomed by Xi to Beijing's Great Hall of the People earlier with full military pageantry, heralding the start of the Russian president's [*two-day state visit*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/05/14/china/xi-putin-china-summit-intl-hnk/index.html).

A sweeping joint statement released by the two leaders laid out their countries' alignment on a host of issues including energy, trade, security, and geopolitics with specific references to Ukraine, Taiwan and conflict in the Middle East.

The visit - Putin's symbolic first overseas foray since starting a [*new term as Russia's president*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/05/07/europe/putin-inauguration-russia-president-fifth-term-intl/index.html) last week - is the latest sign of tightening relations as the two bind their countries closer in the face of heavy friction with the West.

The statement proclaimed that China-Russian relations have stood "the test of rapid changes in the world, demonstrating strength and stability, and are experiencing the best period in their history," the two leaders calling each other "priority partners."

Putin, whose country's [*economy has become increasingly reliant*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/05/15/business/china-russia-ties-ukraine-war-intl-hnk-dg/index.html) on China since his February 2022 invasion of Ukraine, hailed the countries' "practical cooperation" in meetings with Xi, noting their record bilateral trade last year, while stressing the importance of bolstering energy, industrial, and agriculture cooperation, according to Russian state media Tass.

Their meeting is Putin and Xi's fourth time speaking face-to-face since Russia launched its invasion of Ukraine - weeks after the two declared a "no limits" partnership on the sidelines of the Winter Olympics in Beijing.

This week's state visit comes amid mounting international concern about the direction of the war in Ukraine amid delays to aid for Kyiv and as Russia's economy and defense complex appears unbowed by Western sanctions - a situation that United States officials [*have alleged*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/04/12/politics/china-russia-support-weapons-manufacturing/index.html) is linked to Chinese support, which Beijing denies.

Putin says he and Xi will discuss the war in Ukraine in informal talks later Thursday evening, which are expected to include Russia's [*newly appointed*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/05/12/europe/sergei-shoigu-putin-replaces-defense-minister-intl-latam/index.html) Defense Minister Andrey Belousov and his predecessor Sergei Shoigu, now secretary of Russia's Security Council.

Mounting international pressure over Ukraine

Putin's red-carpet welcome to Beijing comes a day after Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky announced via his office that he would [*halt all upcoming international visits*](https://www.cnn.com/europe/live-news/russia-ukraine-war-news-05-15-24/h_21259bf930caaa0277f97be717b8bcb5), as his troops defend against a [*surprise Russian offensive*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/05/12/europe/russia-kharkiv-region-offensive-ukraine-intl/index.html) in his country's northeastern Kharkiv region.

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken was in Kyiv earlier this week to [*reaffirm the Biden administration's support*](https://www.cnn.com/europe/live-news/russia-ukraine-war-news-05-15-24/h_4eb07310b8e7129d1af6b48e1b59c150) for Ukraine after months of Congressional delay in approving American military aid to the embattled country. Blinken pledged [*$2 billion*](https://www.cnn.com/europe/live-news/russia-ukraine-war-news-05-15-24/h_4eb07310b8e7129d1af6b48e1b59c150) in foreign military financing and said much-needed ammunition and weapons are being rushed to the front lines.

Pressure has also been mounting on Xi from both the US and Europe to ensure [*soaring exports from China*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/05/15/business/china-russia-ties-ukraine-war-intl-hnk-dg/index.html) to Russia since the start of the war aren't propping up the Kremlin's war effort.

White House officials in recent weeks have [*confronted Beijing*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/04/26/politics/blinken-china-interview-intl-hnk/index.html) on what they believe is [*substantial support*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/04/12/politics/china-russia-support-weapons-manufacturing/index.html) for Russia's defense industrial base - in the form of goods like machine tools, drone and turbojet engines and microelectronics exported from China. Beijing has [*slammed*](https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/xwfw_665399/s2510_665401/202404/t20240423_11287884.html) the US as making "groundless accusations" over "normal trade and economic exchanges" between China and Russia.

Beijing has never condemned Russia's invasion, rather it claims neutrality in the conflict and has released a vaguely articulated 12-point position on its resolution. Ahead of an expected peace conference in Switzerland next month, Xi has [*called for peace talks*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/05/07/china/china-xi-jinping-europe-macron-france-serbia-intl-hnk/index.html) that take both sides' positions into account.

"China hopes for peace and stability in Europe soon, and continues to play a constructive role," Xi said in a joint press appearance with Putin.

On Ukraine, Russia said in Thursday's joint statement that it welcomed the readiness of China "to play a constructive role" in the political and diplomatic settlement of the conflict and that "it is necessary to eliminate its root causes and adhere to the principle of the indivisibility of security," in an apparent allusion to their shared view that NATO is responsible for the conflict in Ukraine.

Alignment on shared frictions

This week's visit marks the leaders' 43rd meeting in the more than one decade that Xi has been in power. Xi and Putin, known for their close personal chemistry, have steadily expanded their countries' diplomatic coordination and economic and security cooperation in that time - as both faced mounting frictions with the US and its allies.

Even as Xi seeks to [*repair frayed relations with Europe*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/05/07/china/china-xi-jinping-europe-macron-france-serbia-intl-hnk/index.html) and stabilize his country's ties with the US, he is widely seen as unwilling to sacrifice his partnership with Putin, who the Chinese leader sees as an indispensable partner in reshaping a world order both believe is unfairly dominated by the US and seeking to contain them.

This shared worldview was also on show Thursday as Xi, speaking alongside Putin, decried a lingering "Cold War mentality," and said "unilateral hegemony, camp confrontations and power ***politics*** threaten world peace and security of every country" - using language typical of Beijing and Moscow's criticisms of the US and its allies.

The two leaders said in the joint statement they will "deepen trust and cooperation" in the military field by expanding the scope of joint exercises and combat training, regularly conducting joint sea and air patrols and improving the "capabilities and level of joint response to challenges and threats."

Putin nodded to Xi's concerns about rising engagement between NATO and like-minded countries in Asia, calling for a "reliable and adequate architecture of security in the Asia-Pacific region, in which there will be no place for closed military-political alliances."

"We think the creation of such alliances to be counterproductive and harmful," Putin said following meetings Thursday.

In the statement, the two countries also expressed "very deep concern" over what they described as US military activity with allies "that have a clear anti-Russian and anti-Chinese orientation," calling the actions "extremely destabilizing."

The two leaders "reaffirmed there can be no winners in a nuclear war and it should never be fought," and called for revisions to global security arrangements to prevent military confrontation.

Besides engagements in Beijing, which are expected to include a "gala" marking the two countries' 75 years of diplomatic ties, Putin is also expected to attend trade and cooperation forums in Harbin, the capital of China's northeastern Heilongjiang province bordering Russia's Far East.

The region is historically a site of long-simmering border tensions between the two neighbors, which erupted in conflict between China and the Soviet Union in 1969. It has seen increasing connectivity with parts of Russia's Far East in recent years.

Putin is also expected to meet with the students and faculty of the Harbin Institute of Technology, a university [*sanctioned by*](https://2017-2021.commerce.gov/news/press-releases/2020/05/commerce-department-add-two-dozen-chinese-companies-ties-wmd-and.html) the US government in 2020 for its alleged role in procuring items for China's military.

CNN's Wayne Chang contributed to this report.

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