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Putin and Xi to Hold Talks in September

By The Moscow Times

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Russia's Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov greets Chinese State Council member Yang Jiechi during their meeting in Moscow **Sergei Karpukhin / REUTERS**

President Vladimir Putin will hold talks with his Chinese counterpart, Xi Jinping, next month, Interfax reported Thursday.

The two leaders will meet on the sidelines of the G20 summit in St. Petersburg scheduled for Sept. 5 to 6, the agency quoted a senior state official as saying.

Earlier this month, U.S. President Barack Obama cancelled a meeting with Putin due to be held ahead of the same summit, in retaliation for Moscow granting ex-spy agency contractor Edward Snowden asylum.

Moscow and Beijing have progressively strengthened political and commercial ties since the Soviet era, when relations were often strained. Both countries now say they need a counterweight to U.S. influence in the world.

As members of the United Nations Security Council, Russia and China have repeatedly ruled out sanctioning Syria and vetoed three Western and Gulf Arab-backed resolutions condemning President Bashar Assad for a brutal civil war.

In March, Xi paid his first foreign state visit as president to Moscow.

Trade flows between Russia and China more than doubled to $87.5 billion in the five years to 2012, still far below the levels of Russia's trade with the European Union and China's with the U.S.

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