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Russia and China Vow to Tighten Military Ties

By The Moscow Times

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Russia and China have been deliberately building up cooperation over recent years, a process that has accelerated since Russia's relations with the West froze over the crisis in Ukraine.

High-ranking Chinese and Russian officials on Wednesday vowed to deepen military-industrial cooperation between their countries amid political unrest across the globe.

Citing "difficult" situations in the Pacific Rim, North Africa and elsewhere, Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu said Russia's military and military-industrial cooperation with China is "acquiring a special significance," news agency TASS reported.

Shoigu's words follow the two sides' agreement on Tuesday to hold joint naval exercises next year in both the Pacific Ocean and the Mediterranean Sea, the Financial Times reported.

"The strategic partnership between China and Russia has entered a new stage of development, which makes us very happy," Colonel General Xu Qiliang, vice chairman

of China's Central Military Commission, was quoted as saying by TASS.

Russia and China have been deliberately building up cooperation over recent years, a process that has accelerated since Russia's relations with the West froze over the crisis in Ukraine.

This is a significant shift for the neighbors. Their historical antagonism dates back to the early Cold War, when the Soviet Union and China clashed on communist ideology and nearly went to war after a series of border conflicts in 1969.

Now, they appear to be closer than ever. China is one of Russia's largest arms export markets, and a number of joint ventures have been announced between Russian and Chinese defense firms on the creation of new aircraft, helicopters and other military hardware.

Caution still lingers, however. Russia doesn't sell its most sophisticated military technology, such as advanced jet engines and fighter aircraft, to China, and China has been careful to balance increased cooperation with Russia ties with tighter ties to the U.S. and its allies.

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