

China Denies Asking Russia to Delay Invasion Until After Olympics

By [AFP](#)

March 03, 2022



China denies asking Russia to delay its invasion of Ukraine. **Andy Wong / AP / TASS**

China on Thursday denied a report it asked Russia to delay its invasion of Ukraine until after the Beijing Winter Olympics, as international scrutiny grows of warming ties between the two powers.

Beijing has taken a cautious line over the actions of its close ally and President Xi Jinping held a meeting last month with his Russian counterpart where the pair agreed to a "no limits" partnership.

Since then, Beijing has not condemned the invasion of Ukraine but has stopped short of outright support.

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The New York Times reported on Wednesday that Chinese officials had told senior Russian officials not to invade Ukraine before the end of the Winter Olympics, citing senior officials in the administration of U.S. President Joe Biden as well as a European official.

The report said Beijing had some level of direct knowledge about Russia's war plans or intentions before the invasion started last week four days after the Olympics closing ceremony.

When asked at a press briefing on Thursday, Beijing dismissed the report.

"The New York Times report is complete fake news. These kinds of diversionary, blame-shifting remarks are thoroughly despicable," said foreign ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin.

In the weeks leading up to the February 24 invasion, Chinese state media repeatedly dismissed Western warnings as US hype and did not evacuate its citizens from Ukraine.

Russian President Vladimir Putin was the first world leader to meet Xi in nearly two years and a guest of honor at the Winter Games opening ceremony.

The United Nations General Assembly on Wednesday overwhelmingly adopted a resolution condemning Moscow's invasion, which demanded that Russia "immediately" withdraw from Ukraine.

China was among 35 countries that abstained, while just five — Eritrea, North Korea, Syria, Belarus and Russia — voted against it.

The war has caused more than one million people to flee Ukraine, according to the United Nations.

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