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Kremlin: Putin to Speak With China's Xi Jinping on Friday

By AFP

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Russian President Vladimir Putin will hold talks by video link with Chinese leader Xi Jinping on Friday, the Kremlin said, as Russia seeks to bolster ties with Beijing.

"It will be very important to exchange views on the most acute regional problems ... both those that are closer to us, to Russia, and those that are closer to China," Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov told reporters on Thursday.

"In the spirit of a real strategic partnership, our leaders will discuss these problems," Peskov said.

Putin is seeking to strengthen ties with Beijing and boost economic cooperation in the face of international condemnation and Western sanctions over his offensive in Ukraine.

Russia and China have already conducted joint naval drills this month, which Russia's army

chief described as a response to the "aggressive" U.S. military posturing in the Asia-Pacific region.

Last week, Putin inaugurated a gas field in eastern Siberia that will allow Russia to increase its energy exports to China as the West seeks to cut its dependence on Moscow following the Kremlin's invasion of Ukraine.

China and Russia have drawn closer in recent years as part of what they call a "no-limits" relationship acting as a counterweight to the global dominance of the United States.

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