The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

China Minister Hails 'Strong' Russia Ties in Putin Meeting

By AFP

April 17, 2023



Putin, Russia's Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu and China's Defense Minister Li Shangfu (R-L) meet at Moscow's Kremlin. **Pavel Bednyakov/POOL/TASS**

Chinese Defense Minister Li Shangfu on Sunday hailed ties with Moscow during a meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin in the Kremlin.

"We have very strong ties. They surpass the military-political alliances of the Cold War era... They are very stable," he said in translated remarks broadcast on Russian TV.

He added that Russia-China ties have "already entered a new era."

"This is my first overseas visit since taking over as China's defense minister. I specifically chose Russia for this in order to emphasize the special nature and strategic importance of our bilateral ties," Li said.

In the meeting also attended by Russia's Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu, Putin welcomed

military cooperation between Russia and China.

"We are also working actively through the military departments, regularly exchange useful information, cooperate in the field of military-technical cooperation, conduct joint exercises," Putin said.

"This is, undoubtedly, another important area that strengthens the exclusively trusting, strategic nature of our relations," he added.

Li's trip to Russia — which will last until April 19 — comes weeks after an official visit to Moscow of China's leader Xi Jinping last month.

During two days of talks, Putin and Xi hailed a "new era" in their relationship and discussed Beijing's proposals to end the Ukraine conflict.

Moscow and Beijing have over the past years ramped up cooperation, both driven by a desire to counterbalance U.S. global dominance. Their partnership has only grown closer since Putin launched an offensive in Ukraine last February.

China has sought to portray itself as a neutral party in the Ukraine conflict, but Washington has accused Beijing of mulling arms exports to Moscow — claims China denied.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2023/04/17/china-minister-hails-strong-russia-ties-in-putin-meeting-a80850