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Putin Meets Senior Chinese General, Hails Growing Military Ties

By AFP

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Vladimir Putin and Chinese general Zhang Youxia. **Sergei Bobylev, TASS / kremlin.ru**

Russian President Vladimir Putin hailed strengthening military ties with Beijing on Wednesday as he hosted a senior Chinese general in Moscow.

Russia has bolstered ties with its Chinese neighbor in the last year, as it seeks allies against the backdrop of its dragging offensive on Ukraine.

"Our contacts in the military and military-technology spheres are becoming increasingly important," Putin told Zhang Youxia, a high-ranking general and vice chairman of Beijing's Central Military Commission.

In televised remarks, the Russian president said Moscow and Beijing were not building a Cold War-style "military alliance," but said cooperation between them is "a serious factor stabilizing the global situation."

He said the United States was boosting its military presence in the Asia-Pacific region, and that Russia and China would react "calmly, carefully and by strengthening our defense capabilities."

Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu had earlier welcomed Zhang and a Chinese military delegation in a red-carpet ceremony in the Russian capital.

Zhang told Putin he had come to Russia "to further strengthen military-technical cooperation," according to a translation of a broadcast on Russian state TV.

His visit came three weeks after Putin went to Beijing in a rare trip abroad.

Beijing has become Russia's key political and economic ally amid Moscow's isolation on the world stage, and Putin and Chinese leader Xi Jinping have presented a united front against the West.

The two countries signed a "no limits" strategic partnership just days before Russia launched its offensive on Ukraine last February, and have staged multiple rounds of joint military drills since.

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