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Putin and Xi Tout Growing Partnership During Video Call

By AFP

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Russian President Vladimir Putin and Chinese President Xi Jinping praised their growing partnership during a video call on Tuesday, hours after Donald Trump was inaugurated as the 47th president of the United States.

Trump, who has pledged a tougher stance on Washington's adversaries, has threatened heavy tariffs on China and warned Russia of "big trouble" if it refuses to bring an end to its war against Ukraine.

Putin, addressing Xi, said Russia and China were strengthening ties "on the basis of friendship, mutual trust and support" despite external pressures.

"Russia and China's joint efforts play an important stabilizing role in international affairs," the Kremlin leader said.

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Xi, for his part, expressed hope to elevate ties with Moscow to "new heights" this year, according to Chinese state broadcaster CCTV.

"Both sides should continue to deepen strategic coordination, resolutely support each other and safeguard the legitimate interests of both countries," CCTV quoted Xi as saying. He also called for expanding bilateral relations and advancing "practical cooperation."

Moscow and Beijing have bolstered military and trade ties since Russia launched its full-scale invasion of Ukraine, prompting alarm in the United States, which views both nations as major threats to global stability.

China has maintained a stance of neutrality regarding the conflict but remains a close political and economic ally of Moscow, refraining from condemning Russia's actions.

The Chinese and Russian leaders emphasized their personal rapport during Tuesday's call, with Xi referring to Putin as his "best friend" and Putin describing Xi as a "reliable partner."

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