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Brazil's Lula Pitches 'Strategic Partnership' With Russia

May 09, 2025



Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva and Vladimir Putin. **Alexander Shcherbak / TASS**

Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva offered Russian President Vladimir Putin wide-ranging cooperation on nuclear energy, defense and space during his first visit to Moscow in 15 years, the Kremlin said Friday.

Lula was among more than two dozen foreign leaders who attended the Victory Day military parade on Red Square, which the Kremlin promoted as a sign of continued international support more than three years into its full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

"My visit today is aimed at strengthening the building of our strategic partnership," Lula told Putin in the Kremlin, according to a Russian-language readout.

He expressed "great interest" in Russia's small nuclear reactors and said his delegation had prepared bilateral memoranda on cooperation in energy, science and technology.

"We're interested in discussing military, space, scientific, economic, educational and above

all energy," Lula said.

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The Brazilian leader also criticized U.S. President Donald Trump's global tariff policies for undermining free trade, multilateralism and respect between states.

Putin, in turn, praised Brazil as one of Russia's biggest food suppliers and noted that Russia is Brazil's top oil and fertilizer exporter.

Lula's visit came after he declined an invitation to travel to Russia in June 2023. Putin on Friday attributed that snub to Lula's "work commitments."

Brazil is a founding member of the BRICS group of emerging economies, which also includes Russia, India, China and South Africa.

Since Russia's 2022 invasion of Ukraine, Lula has attempted to position himself as a mediator in the war, launching a group of nations aiming to broker a negotiated peace.

He faced backlash in 2022 for saying Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky was "as responsible" for the war as Putin.

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