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FM Lavrov Plans 2-Day China Visit This Week

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Russian Foreign Ministry / TASS

Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov will visit China this week to boost cooperation between the two countries and discuss the wars in Ukraine and Iran, Russia's Foreign Ministry said Monday.

The visit is scheduled for Tuesday and Wednesday and will include talks with China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi.

Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Guo Jiakun told reporters the two officials will "exchange views and coordinate positions on the development of bilateral relations, cooperation in various fields and international and regional issues of common concern."

Wang held a phone call with Lavrov on April 5, when the pair agreed that Beijing and Moscow would work together to de-escalate tensions in the Middle East.

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China and Russia have strengthened political and economic ties since President Vladimir Putin ordered the full-scale invasion of Ukraine in early 2022. The countries have declared a "no limits" partnership as they align themselves against the West.

Western officials have repeatedly accused China of aiding Russia's war machine, which Beijing denies.

At the same time, Chinese demand for Russian crude has soared after the U.S.-Israeli attacks on Iran led to the effective closure of the Strait of Hormuz. Before the war, China was the world's largest importer of oil through the narrow waterway.

Major state-owned Chinese oil companies have reportedly resumed purchases of Russian crude oil after pausing them late last year, when new U.S. sanctions took effect.

Russia is China's top supplier of oil, followed by Saudi Arabia. Putin has described Russia's energy partnership with China as "strategic."

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