



Written by [Angeline Tan](#) on May 8, 2023

China to Collaborate With Russia to Help End Ukraine Crisis

SINGAPORE — After meeting with his Russian counterpart Sergey Lavrov on May 4 on the sidelines of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization's summit for foreign ministers, Chinese Foreign Minister Qin Gang declared that his country would collaborate with Russia to facilitate peace between Moscow and Kyiv.

"China will continue to promote peace negotiations and is willing to maintain communications and coordination with Russia in order to make tangible contributions to the political settlement of the crisis," Qin was cited as saying by the Chinese Foreign Ministry.



AP Images
Qin Gang (left) and Sergey Lavrov

The Russian Foreign Ministry published a statement indicating that the diplomats discussed Ukraine among various "pressing issues."

Additionally, the statement elaborated, Lavrov and Qin decried the "modern practices of neocolonialism that have a destructive effect on the development of the majority of countries of the world and on all spheres of international relations."

In March, China's Xi Jinping met with Russia's Vladimir Putin in Moscow and spoke to Ukraine's Volodymyr Zelensky over the phone for the first time since the onset of the Russo-Ukrainian conflict in February 2022.

Beijing commissioned Li Hui, China's special envoy for Eurasian Affairs and former ambassador to Russia, to help bring about peace.

China has thus far refrained from decrying Russia's actions in Ukraine, and has backed Moscow's stance that NATO's expansion toward Russia's borders provoked Russia's so-called special military operation in Ukraine.

In February, China unveiled a [12-point roadmap](#) for peace, urging Moscow and Kyiv to restart direct talks. Although Putin remarked that many points of the Chinese plan were "in tune" with Russia's position, Zelensky's top advisor, Mykhailo Podolyak, blasted the plan for its pro-Moscow premises.

Podolyak also argued that China must follow the West's stance on Ukraine, failing which its global status and economic prowess would take a beating.

"Now China has to make a choice," Podolyak told Ukraine's *Rada TV* on Friday. "Either it works within the framework defined by international law, and then replaces Russia in the full sense of the word, or China continues to stand aside and then it will gradually lose its influence, including economic influence."

Podolyak's statement came two days after Zelensky and Xi's telephone conversation, the first public call



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of its kind since the outbreak of the Ukrainian conflict last year. Xi was cited as saying that Beijing's "core position" on the conflict is that "dialogue and negotiations are the only viable way out."

In the Italian newspaper *Corriere della Sera*, Podolyak wondered why China would "help Russia, which is experiencing the collapse of its civilization." "It would be an irreversible investment, and China is too pragmatic to make such mistakes," he posited.

The United States has frequently urged China to renounce Russian actions in Ukraine, though Beijing has resisted such pressure to do so. Even if China were to follow the U.S. lead in distancing itself from Russia, though, America would still regard China as an adversary, with the Pentagon's recent National Defense Strategy mentioning dealing with the "*threat posed by China*" as its number one priority. Also, Washington has banned the sale of some semiconductor manufacturing hardware to China and pressured its Asian allies to deprive Beijing of this sector.

Furthermore, the European Union (EU) announced measures to sanction Chinese firms that have trade links with Moscow, a recent *Financial Times* article reported. However, all 27 EU member states have to unanimously authorize the new sanctions for them to materialize.

The list of firms encompasses two mainland Chinese companies, 3HC Semiconductors and King-Pai Technology, and five from Hong Kong: Sinno Electronics, Sigma Technology, Asia Pacific Links, Tordan Industry, and Alpha Trading Investments.

These targeted businesses have been blamed for selling equipment that could be used by Moscow in weapons manufacturing. The European Commission believes it is "appropriate" to target certain entities "in third countries involved in the circumvention of trade restrictions" against Russia, the *Times* cited the sanctions proposal as saying.

Last month, the EU's chief diplomat, Josep Borrell, recognized that the bloc had almost run out of penalties to target Moscow. EU lawmakers are now allegedly contemplating penalizing countries that re-export goods to Russia, in order to prevent Moscow from circumventing trade restrictions.

Rather than capitulating to Western pressure, both Russia and China have bolstered their diplomatic and trade links, with officials from both countries lampooning Washington for attempting to enforce what it calls a "rules-based international order" through military force and sanctions.

Additionally, China and Russia have called for a multipolar system to replace American dominance in the world. "Right now there are changes — the likes of which we haven't seen for 100 years — and we are the ones driving these changes together," Xi told Putin.

In a bid to further tackle China's growing clout in the Asia-Pacific region, America will prepare a new fast-track defense package for Taiwan, according to a Bloomberg report that claimed the U.S. government would use the Presidential Drawdown Authority to speed up the shipment, citing anonymous "people familiar with the matter." With the drawdown authority, Washington would expedite the process of contracting and producing arms, a process that is likely to require a considerable amount of time. Bloomberg declared that the package, worth \$500 million, would leverage the American military's existing inventory of weapons and equipment.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning insisted that the United States was responsible for "turning Taiwan into a powder keg," which, she said, "only spells trouble for our Taiwan compatriots."

Beijing, which considers Taiwan to be a renegade province seized by separatists, called for Washington to "stop arms sales" to Taiwan and warned of "consequences."



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Washington has inked multiple weapons deals with Taiwan in recent years, such as a major sale of F-16 fighter jets. However, some of the deals have not materialized, leading to a sales backlog of \$19 billion, according to Representative Mike Gallagher (R-Wis.) in February.



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