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Article by Vladimir Putin "Russia and China: A Future-Oriented Strategic Partnership" for the Chinese News Agency Xinhua • President of Russia

9-11 minutes

On the eve of my upcoming visit to China, I am pleased to address directly the large Chinese and foreign audience of Xinhua, the world's largest news agency.

Our countries are close neighbours bound by centuries-old traditions of friendship and trust. We highly appreciate that Russian-Chinese relations of comprehensive partnership and strategic cooperation, entering a new era, have reached an unprecedented level and have become a model of efficiency, responsibility, and aspiration for the future. The basic principles and guidelines for joint work were defined by our countries in the Treaty of Good Neighborliness and Friendly Cooperation, the twentieth anniversary of which we celebrated last year. These are, first and foremost, equality, consideration of one another's interests, freedom from political and ideological circumstances, as well as from the vestiges of the past. These are the principles we are consistently building on year after year in the spirit of continuity to deepen our political dialogue. Despite

the difficulties caused by the coronavirus pandemic, we are striving to dynamically build the capacity of economic partnerships and expand humanitarian exchanges.

During the upcoming visit, the President of the People's Republic of China Xi Jinping and I will thoroughly discuss key issues on the bilateral, regional, and global agendas. It is symbolic that our meeting will take place during the Spring Festival – the Chinese Lunar New Year. After all, as the Chinese saying goes, "make your whole year's plan in the spring".

The development of business ties will certainly be given special attention. There is every opportunity for this as our countries have substantial financial, industrial, technological and human resources allowing us to successfully resolve long-term development issues. By working together, we can achieve stable economic growth and improve the well-being of our citizens, strengthen our competitiveness, and stand together against today's risks and challenges.

At the end of 2021, the volume of mutual trade increased by more than a third, exceeding the record level of 140 billion U.S. dollars. We are well on the way towards our goal of increasing the volume of trade to 200 billion U.S. dollars a year. A number of important initiatives are being implemented in the investment, manufacturing, and agro-industrial sectors. In particular, the portfolio of the Intergovernmental Commission on Investment Cooperation includes 65 projects worth over 120 billion U.S. dollars. This is about collaboration in such industries as mining and mineral processing, infrastructure construction, and agriculture.

We are consistently expanding the practice of settlements

in national currencies and creating mechanisms to offset the negative impact of unilateral sanctions. A major milestone in this work was the signing of the Agreement between the Government of Russia and the Government of the PRC on payments and settlements in 2019.

A mutually beneficial energy alliance is being formed between our countries. Along with long-term supplies of Russian hydrocarbons to China, we have plans to implement a number of large-scale joint projects. The construction of four new power units at Chinese nuclear power plants with the participation of Rosatom State Corporation launched last year is one of them. All this significantly strengthens the energy security of China and the Asia region as a whole.

We see an array of opportunities in the development of partnerships in information and communication technologies, medicine, space exploration, including the use of national navigation systems and the International Lunar Research Station project. A serious impetus to strengthening bilateral ties was given by the cross Years of Russian-Chinese Scientific, Technical and Innovative Cooperation in 2020–2021.

We are grateful to our Chinese colleagues for their assistance in launching the production of Russian Sputnik V and Sputnik Light vaccines in China and for the timely supply of necessary protective equipment to our country. We hope that this cooperation will develop and strengthen.

One of Russia's strategic objectives is to accelerate the social and economic upliftment of Siberia and the Russian Far East. These territories are immediate neighbors of the PRC. We also

intend to actively develop interregional ties. Thus, the modernization of the Baikal-Amur Mainline and the Trans-Siberian Railway has been started. By 2024, their capacity must increase one and a half times through higher volumes of transit cargo and reduced transport time. The port infrastructure in the Russian Far East is also growing. All this should further enhance the complementarity of the Russian and Chinese economies.

And, of course, the conservation of nature and shared ecosystems remains an important area of bilateral cross-border and interregional cooperation. These issues have always been the focus of our countries' public attention, and we will certainly discuss them in detail during the negotiations, as well as a wide range of humanitarian topics.

Russia and China are countries with thousands of years of unique traditions and tremendous cultural heritage, the interest in which is persistently high both in our countries and abroad. It is true that in the last two years the number of tourists, joint mass events, and direct contacts between our citizens has reduced due to the pandemic. However, I have no doubt that we will catch up and, as soon as the situation allows, will launch new outreach and educational programs to introduce our citizens to the history and present-day life of the two countries. Thus, President Xi Jinping and I have agreed to hold the Years of Russian-Chinese cooperation in physical fitness and sports in 2022 and 2023.

Certainly, an important part of the visit will be a discussion of relevant international topics. The coordination of the foreign policy of Russia and China is based on close and coinciding approaches to solving global and regional issues. Our countries

play an important stabilizing role in today's challenging international environment, promoting the democratization of the system of interstate relations to make it more equitable and inclusive. We are working together to strengthen the central coordinating role of the United Nations in global affairs and to prevent the international legal system, with the UN Charter at its centre, from being eroded.

Russia and China are actively cooperating on the broadest agenda within BRICS, RIC, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, as well as other associations. Within the G20, we are committed to taking national specifics into account when formulating our recommendations, be it the fight against pandemics or the implementation of the climate agenda. Thanks to a large extent to our countries' shared solidarity, following the 2021 G20 Summit in Rome informed decisions were made on international cooperation to restore economic growth, recognize vaccines and vaccine certificates, optimize energy transitions, and reduce digitalization risks.

We also have convergent positions on international trade issues. We advocate maintaining an open, transparent and non-discriminatory multilateral trading system based on the rules of the World Trade Organization. We support relaunching of global supply chains. Back in March 2020, Russia proposed an initiative on "green trade corridors" that excludes any sanctions, political and administrative barriers. Its implementation is a useful aid to overcoming the economic consequences of the pandemic.

The XXIV Olympic Winter Games starting in Beijing are a major event of global significance. Russia and China are leading sporting nations renowned for their sporting traditions and not once have

hosted the largest international competitions with dignity. I fondly remember my visit to Beijing in August 2008 to attend the 2008 Summer Olympics opening ceremony. Guests and athletes from Russia will remember the vivid performance for a long time, and the Games themselves were organized with the scale and exceptional hospitality inherent to our Chinese friends. For our part, we were delighted to host President Xi Jinping at the opening of the 2014 Winter Olympics in Sochi.

Sadly, attempts by a number of countries to politicize sports to the benefit of their ambitions have recently intensified. This is fundamentally wrong and contrary to the very spirit and principles of the Olympic Charter. The power and greatness of sports are that it brings people together, gives moments of triumph and pride for the country and delights with fair, just and uncompromising competition. And these approaches are shared by most of the states participating in the international Olympic Movement.

Our Chinese friends have done tremendous work to prepare well for the Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games. I am convinced that China's extensive experience in the excellent organization of representative international competitions will make it possible to hold this festival of world sports at the highest level. I would like to wish the Russian and Chinese teams impressive results and new records!

I send my warmest congratulations to the friendly people of China on the occasion of the Spring Festival, which marks the beginning of the Year of the Tiger. I wish you good health, prosperity, and success.

