

## Russia, China Poised to Forge Alliance

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*The Chinese Communist Party newspaper Global Times has disclosed, citing high-level “source”, that Beijing had no intentions to invite US and Western politicians to the 2022 Winter Olympics on February 4-20. This followed the US **President Joe Biden’s** [innuendo](#) that he’s considering a diplomatic boycott of the Games.*

The White House apparently sensed that Biden was unlikely to be on Beijing’s guest list. Period. [Tass had quoted](#) Russian **Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov** as saying following a meeting with his Chinese counterpart, **Wang Yi**, in Dushanbe on September 16 that **President Vladimir Putin** had accepted “with delight” an invitation to the Games from Chinese President Xi Jinping.

Biden waited for two more months to arrive at the conclusion that he’s not on Xi’s list of invitees. The Olympic rules stipulate that for politicians to attend the Games, they must first be invited by the host country while the International Olympic Committee endorses it.

The [Global Times report](#) said that “as the host country, China has no plan to invite politicians who hype the “boycott” of the Beijing Games.” It noted wryly that Biden’s talk of boycott was “nothing but self-deception.”

In an indirect reference to the pandemic conditions in the US, Global Times observed, “Given the grave situation of the COVID-19 pandemic globally, it is not proper to invite foreign guests on a large scale, which can be easily understood by people with common sense.”

The snub comes hardly a fortnight after Biden’s virtual meeting on November 15 with Xi Jinping. In a larger perspective, though, this extraordinary episode falls in place, given the provocative manner in which the Biden Administration has been taunting Beijing by transgressing over China’s core interests lately.

On the other hand, Xi’s exceptional gesture toward Putin by personally conveying the invitation to the Games in a phone call in August bears testimony to the high quality of the two countries’ “comprehensive strategic partnership of coordination for a new era”.

In a [lengthy commentary on the topic](#) on November 30 pinned on the regular bilateral consultation between the heads of governments of China and Russia yesterday, Global Times singled out the rapidly expanding and deepening ties between the two armed forces. It pointedly noted,

“On military cooperation, the two countries recently signed a roadmap for closer ties, which, according to military experts, indicates that Russia and China have common interests and views on strategic stability and regional security, especially in the Pacific region.

“Such enhancement of cooperation in the defence sector is also viewed as a reaction to the West’s pressure on Russia and to the alarming signals that China received from the US and its allies, experts said.

“Wu Qian, spokesperson for the Ministry of National Defense, said at a press conference on Thursday that the Chinese military expects an even better relationship with its Russian counterpart, and is willing to play a bigger role with it in safeguarding world peace and stability.”

The above two reports in the Global Times appeared on a day when the Kremlin signalled that Russia-China strategic relations are poised for a historic leap. In separate remarks yesterday, Putin and Russian **Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin** beckoned Moscow’s willingness for a de facto alliance with Beijing.

Putin [positively evaluated](#) China’s “growing defence potential as it (Russia) enjoys the highest level of relations with the country and is itself ramping up its armed forces.” In his characteristic nuanced way, Putin drew a loaded comparison with the existing alliance between the US, UK and France!

Again, during the consultations between the two prime ministers yesterday, [Mishustin proposed to Premier Li Keqiang](#) that in the prevailing “complex external environment” of sanctions, “unfriendly actions”, “unfair competition” and “illegitimate unilateral sanctions as well as political and economic pressure,” Russia and China should also “team up” for their joint development.

Mishustin pointed at an intertwining of plans between the Moscow-led Eurasian Economic Union and China’s Belt and Road initiative. “This is important for bolstering the interconnection in Eurasian space, it will help guarantee the economic progress of Russia and China and create a solid foundation for the formation of a Greater Eurasian partnership,” Mishustin told Li, while also reiterating that Putin had earlier presented this idea.

To be sure, Putin’s visit to Beijing in February holds the promise of a profound elevation of the Sino-Russian partnership from its already high level. A transition is under way from the close cooperation between the two powers to coordination and active pooling of resources to support each other not only for safeguarding their core interests in the face of the growing belligerence in the Biden Administration’s strategies but also at a global level to build network of regional alliances.

The Pentagon’s [2021 Global Posture Review](#), which was announced on Monday signals a global posture and the intention to develop a “global response capability” that embraces not

only the Indo-Pacific and Europe but also includes “enduring posture requirements” in the Middle East, in Africa and Latin America. This is a far cry from the pacifist agenda Biden had previously espoused and his loud claim at the very inception of his presidency that diplomacy “is back at the centre” of US foreign policy.

Significantly, Putin’s remarks yesterday also touched on [third-country cooperation](#) between Russia and China as a major vector of their partnership. “We have many fields of cooperation with China. One of them concerns our work in third countries. It is well underway but it may be expanded further. Why? Because we share roughly the same approaches and principles, ” Putin said.

Putin stressed that Moscow supported Beijing’s efforts to create a global infrastructure of trade routes. “We support our Chinese friends’ efforts based on the One Belt One Road strategy,” Putin said.

Interestingly, Putin singled out West Asia as potentially a theatre of Russia-China coordination. Indeed, Putin spoke in this vein as the Sino-Russian coordination has shifted to a common stance robustly endorsing the Iranian demand on the lifting of US sanctions and the Vienna negotiations getting off to a [promising start](#).

The bottom line is that by any reckoning of diplomatic practice, the co-authorship of a powerful opinion piece in an influential American magazine last week by the Russian and Chinese ambassadors in Washington Anatoly Antonov and Qin Gang lambasting Biden’s Summit of Democracy proclaims that the Sino-Russian alliance is already sailing on the Potomac River. Alas, the National Interest was ordered to remove the piece from its website! ([read it here](#))

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