

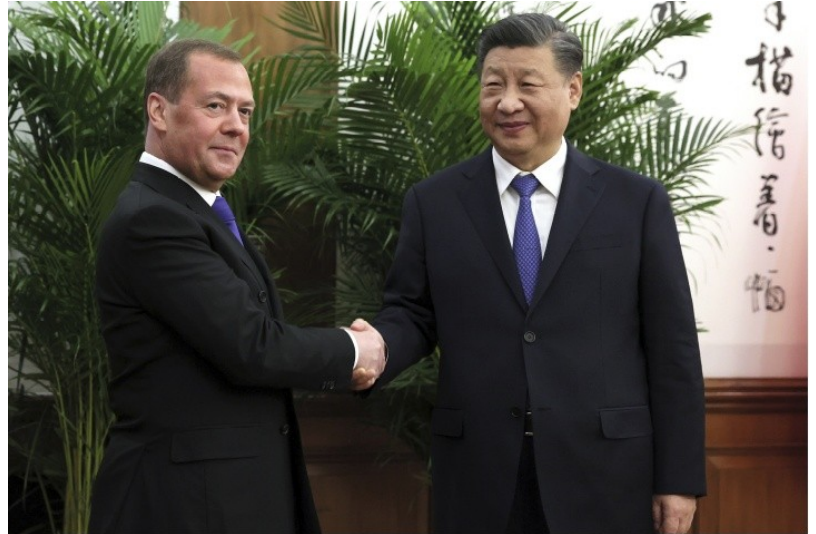


Written by [Angeline Tan](#) on December 22, 2022

Xi Tells Medvedev That China Wants Talks on Ukraine

SINGAPORE — Chinese President Xi Jinping told former Russian president Dmitry Medvedev on Wednesday that his country would like to see discussions on Ukraine, remarks that come amid Beijing's attempts to enhance ties with Europe.

Xi told Medvedev in Beijing that his administration has been “actively promoting peace and talks,” based on state broadcaster *China Central Television*. “China hopes relevant parties can stay rational and restrained, conduct comprehensive talks, and resolve mutual concerns on security via political methods,” Xi said.



AP Images
Dmitry Medvedev and Xi Jinping

Yet Xi added that Beijing still wants to cooperate with Russia to develop ties.

Medvedev, who is now deputy chairman of Russia's Security Council, published a video on social media of his meeting with Xi.

He said after the meeting that he and Xi talked about Russia and China's “strategic partnership,” cooperation between the two countries, and the Ukraine crisis.

Russia's Vladimir Putin and Xi declared a “no-limits” friendship just weeks before the start of the Russia-Ukraine crisis in February. Since then, Beijing has constantly affirmed that it would be willing to contribute to peace negotiations.

Unlike the United States and most Western European nations, China has refrained from condemning Russia over the war in Ukraine, instead blaming the expansion of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) for Moscow's actions.

Although Beijing signed off on a communique at the Group of 20 (G-20) summit in Indonesia in November that said “most members strongly condemned the war in Ukraine,” it still avoids labeling the Ukraine conflict as a “war.”

Following a congress of the ruling Chinese Communist Party in October, media reports indicate that Xi has been doing damage control and attempting to prevent already-tense relations with the European Union from plummeting even more.

In 2021, the EU stopped an investment agreement with China after both sides imposed sanctions on each other over Xinjiang, where the United States has accused Beijing of genocide. China dismisses those allegations.

In November this year, Xi told German Chancellor Olaf Scholz that he was against the use of nuclear force in Europe, indicating Beijing's desire to prevent Russia's war in Ukraine from intensifying.

Also, Xi called on the United States, NATO, and the European Union to organize “comprehensive dialogues” with Russia on Ukraine during his recent meeting with Biden.

Previously, Xi leveraged discussions with visiting European Council President Charles Michel to



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encourage efforts to address the crisis.

“Solving the Ukraine crisis through political means is in the best interest of Europe and the common interest of all countries in Eurasia,” Xi said after the meeting in Beijing, according to *China Central Television*. He added that “it is necessary to avoid escalation and expansion of the crisis,” while also advocating for peace talks.

Michel told Xi that the EU relied on China “to contribute to ending Russia’s brutal destruction and occupation,” a statement from Michel’s spokesman said. Both leaders “stressed that nuclear threats are irresponsible and highly dangerous” during their approximately three hours of discussions.

Speaking alone at a news conference after his meetings, Michel said Xi had also “made very clear” that China is not providing weapons to Russia.

“We all share the responsibility to work for peace and to respect the fundamental principles of the United Nations Charter,” Michel said. “I urged President Xi, as we did at our EU-China summit in April, to use his influence on Russia to respect the UN charter.”

Xi’s comments show China’s apparent attempt to put some distance between Beijing and Moscow since the crisis began.

The Xi-Michel meeting came as China’s zero-tolerance strategy to tackle Covid-19 had a severe impact on the country’s economy and on the mental well-being of the Chinese people. Before China loosened its stringent measures in response to nationwide protests last month, French companies had said that the initial changes China made to its Covid Zero strategy, including scaling back on testing, did not meet expectations. The European nation’s chamber of commerce urged the Chinese government to lift “unnecessary and excessive curbs.”

The statement from Michel’s spokesman mentioned he told Xi about “difficulties faced by EU companies and investors, which have been exacerbated by the pandemic.” The statement failed to include the nationwide protests that erupted against the nation’s strict Covid Zero rules.

At the news conference, Michel said he discussed the protests with Xi as well as the “acceptance by societies of the measures and the reactions by authorities.” He said that both sides had agreed to reboot a human-rights dialogue, adding that “for the EU, the right of assembly is an important fundamental right.”

Furthermore, China called for the finalization of an investment agreement with Europe. European lawmakers voted to stop ratification of the Comprehensive Agreement on Investment owing to a spat over human-rights issues.

The deal is “good for China, Europe and the world,” Shu Jueting, spokeswoman of the Ministry of Commerce in Beijing, said at a press briefing. “China and Europe should work together to push for signing and entering the agreement into force so that it can benefit companies and the public on both sides soon.”

Europe has seemingly been trying to forge a middle ground on diplomacy with the communist regime in Beijing. In contrast, the United States is hoping to persuade worldwide chipmakers to limit high-end exports to China to quell China’s technological and military ambitions.

Earlier in November, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi met his Russian counterpart Sergei Lavrov at the Group of 20 (G-20) summit in Bali.



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“China will continue to uphold an objective and fair position and play a constructive role in persuading peace and promoting talks,” Wang said in the meeting on Tuesday, based on a statement by the foreign ministry in Beijing.

Wang also pointed out that Moscow had announced that nuclear war was not an option, after Putin in October dismissed claims of his plans to use such weapons in Ukraine.

“China noticed that Russia has recently reaffirmed the established position that ‘a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought’, which shows Russia’s rational and responsible attitude,” Wang was cited as saying by state news agency *Xinhua*.

Wang also said during the discussions with Lavrov that China was pleased to see Russia indicate its willingness to participate in dialogue over Ukraine and agree to restart the Black Sea grain export deal, the Chinese foreign ministry statement said.

“China is willing to work with Russia to push forward their high-level exchanges and communication in various fields, deepen bilateral practical cooperation and facilitate personnel exchanges,” Wang said, according to *Xinhua* news agency.

The remarks from Wang come amid escalating pressure faced by Beijing from the United States and its allies in Europe to use its “no-limits partnership” with Moscow to call for an end to the Ukraine crisis.

Wang and Lavrov also talked about issues pertaining to the Asia-Pacific region, the Korean peninsula, and the Iranian nuclear issue, the foreign ministry said.



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