# Putin and Xi Discuss Strengthening Economic and Military Ties Amid Rising Geopolitical Tensions



Russian President Vladimir Putin and Chinese President Xi Jinping met in Beijing towards the end of the week for their 43rd meeting, marking Putin's 19th visit to the Chinese capital in 24 years. The leaders discussed enhancing their economic and military ties amid escalating tensions between Russia and the West, particularly in the context of Russia's ongoing conflict with Ukraine. Putin and Xi reaffirmed their shared goal of challenging the influence of the United States and its allies.

This summit occurred alongside an assassination attempt on Slovakian Prime Minister Robert Fico, a pro-Kremlin figure. The attempt, which left Fico critically ill in hospital, highlighted internal threats faced by democracies, exacerbated by foreign influence and misinformation. In recent years, countries like Slovakia have experienced heightened polarization, partly due to extensive propaganda efforts by Russia.

Trade between Russia and China has seen significant growth, with bilateral trade reaching $240 billion in the previous year. Despite claims of adhering to Western sanctions, China has been providing Russia with "dual-use" items like semiconductor chips and navigation equipment, which can be employed for both civilian and military purposes. This aid has been pivotal for Russia as it rebuilds its military capabilities during its conflict with Ukraine.

Moreover, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken noted that China's support is crucial for Russia’s defense production, allowing it to maintain and enhance its military operations. The White House has responded by imposing sanctions on Chinese companies involved in providing military support to Russia.

As these developments unfold, geopolitical tensions continue to rise, with significant implications for global stability and the economic landscape.