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## Putin seeks Chinese support amid Ukraine crisis

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Russian President Vladimir Putin’s upcoming visit to China on Thursday aims to bolster support for his actions in Ukraine and address economic challenges. It’s his first trip abroad since re-election in March and the second to China in six months, highlighting the significance of Sino-Russian relations.

Despite Western criticism, Xi Jinping reaffirmed China’s strong ties with Moscow, emphasizing

their limitless partnership, especially in energy cooperation through projects like the Power of Siberia gas pipeline.

Observers note the genuine camaraderie between Putin and Xi, highlighting their personal friendship. However, Chinese banks, wary of potential US sanctions, are cautious in their dealings with Russia.

The discussions between Putin and Xi are expected to cover various aspects of their strategic partnership, including economic cooperation and regional issues. Putin lauded China's role in addressing the Ukraine crisis, emphasizing Beijing's constructive engagement.

Meanwhile, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken criticized China for indirectly supporting Russia's actions in Ukraine. Despite claiming neutrality, China faces pressure to balance its relations with Russia and the West.

Trade between China and Russia soared to \$240 billion in 2023, but concerns about US sanctions have affected Chinese exports to Russia. President Biden's executive order allows for secondary sanctions on foreign banks dealing with Russia, complicating China's economic ties with Moscow.

As China seeks to rebuild relations with the United States, Beijing may tread cautiously in openly supporting Russia amidst the Ukraine crisis. The evolving dynamics between China, Russia, and the West underscore the complexities of global geopolitics.