

Belarus Seeks Chinese Aid as Devaluation Looms

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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With the impending possibility of the country's second currency devaluation, Belarus has decided to partner up with China to stimulate its dwindling economy, a news report said Tuesday.

The partnership between the two countries was kickstarted with a three day visit of President Alexander Lukashenko to Beijing on Monday, Kommersant reported.

With an injection of trade from China, Belarus may be able to prevent an economic collapse. In return, China will receive free access to the Russian market through Belarus' membership in a customs union with Russia.

Experts believe that Belarus' "strategic partnership" with China is seen as an alternative to Russian aid.

“If in 2011 Russia saved Lukashenko from the effects of the devaluation, this time around, in the case of a repeated devaluation shock, there is no guarantee that Moscow will give support,” said Andrei Suzdaltsev, a professor at the Higher School of Economics.

Suzdaltsev added that the partnership is Belarus’ way of provoking a competitive rivalry between China and Russia that would result in Belarus receiving financial support from both countries.

On Monday, Lukashenko met with Chinese government officials, including President Xi Jinping and Prime Minister Li Keqiang. During the three-day visit more than 20 agreements, documents and protocols are expected to be signed regarding trade and investment. The two countries will also issue a joint declaration outlining their relationship.

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