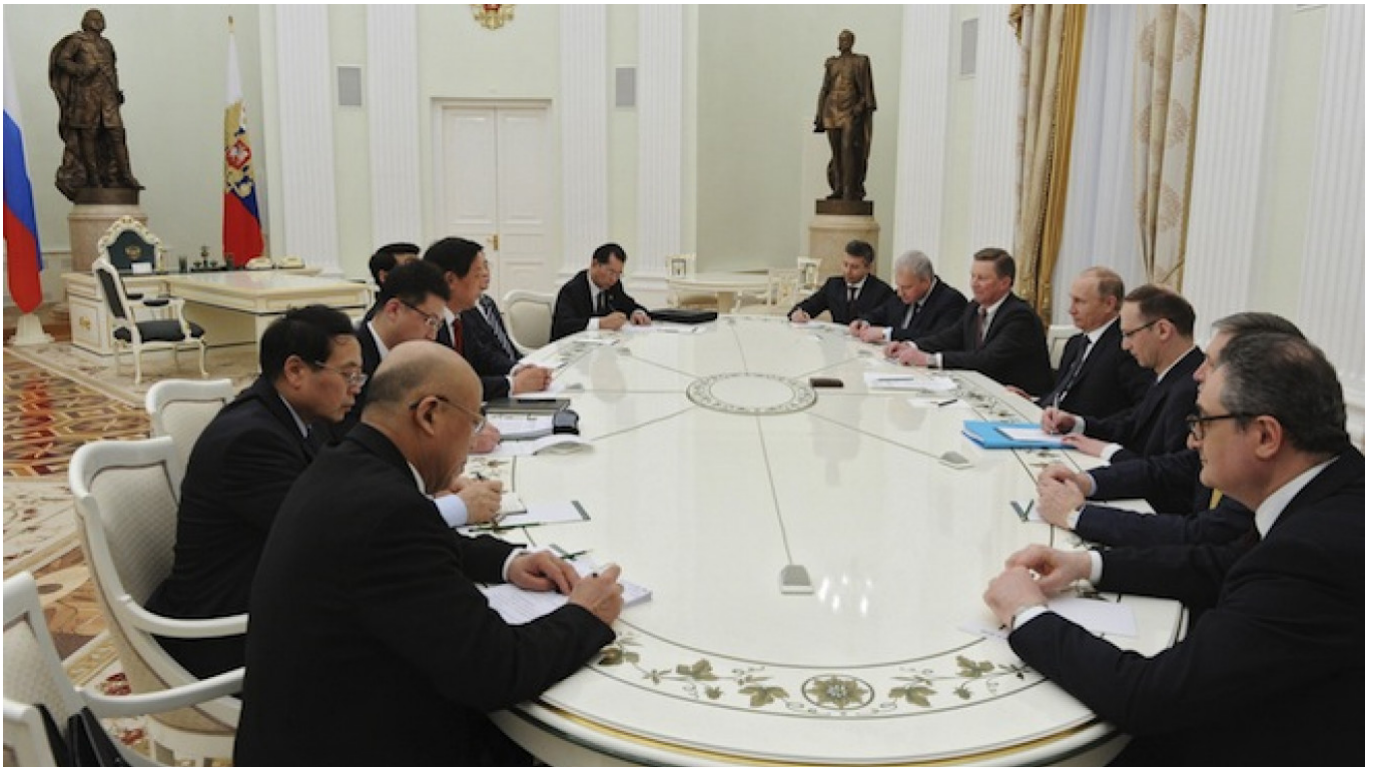


President Putin to Visit China for World War II March

March 20, 2015



The Russian delegation led by President Vladimir Putin (4th R) meets with the Chinese delegation, led by Li Zhanshu (4th L), head of the General Office of the Communist Party of China, at the Kremlin in Moscow, March 19, 2015.

Russian President Vladimir Putin has a visit planned to China in September, news agency Interfax reported Thursday, citing the Kremlin's chief of staff, Sergei Ivanov.

Interfax also reported that a Russian government delegation had been invited to a parade in China on Sept. 3 to mark 70 years since the end of the World War Two.

"We welcome this news," said Hong Lei, a spokesman for China's Foreign Ministry.

China will hold a military parade and series of other events in September, but has given no details yet of which countries it will invite, except for saying that parade invitees would include major war participants and other countries in the region.

The parade will be Chinese President Xi Jinping's first since he took over as Communist Party

and military chief in late 2012 and as president in early 2013.

The Russian Foreign Ministry said this week Xi had confirmed he would visit Moscow on May 9 to join in commemorations of the 70th anniversary of the end of World War Two in Europe. Other leaders, mainly from Asia, former Soviet republics and Latin America, will also be on hand.

China has yet to confirm Xi's visit.

Xi has made a big public show of underscoring the importance of ties with Russia, and Moscow was the first capital he visited as president. Xi also attended the Winter Olympics in Sochi at Putin's invitation.

Although the two see eye-to-eye on many international diplomatic issues, including the conflict in Syria, and generally vote as one on the United Nations Security Council, China has not proved so willing to support Russia on Ukraine.

China has said it would like to develop "friendly cooperation" with Ukraine, and repeatedly said it respected the ex-Soviet state's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity.

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