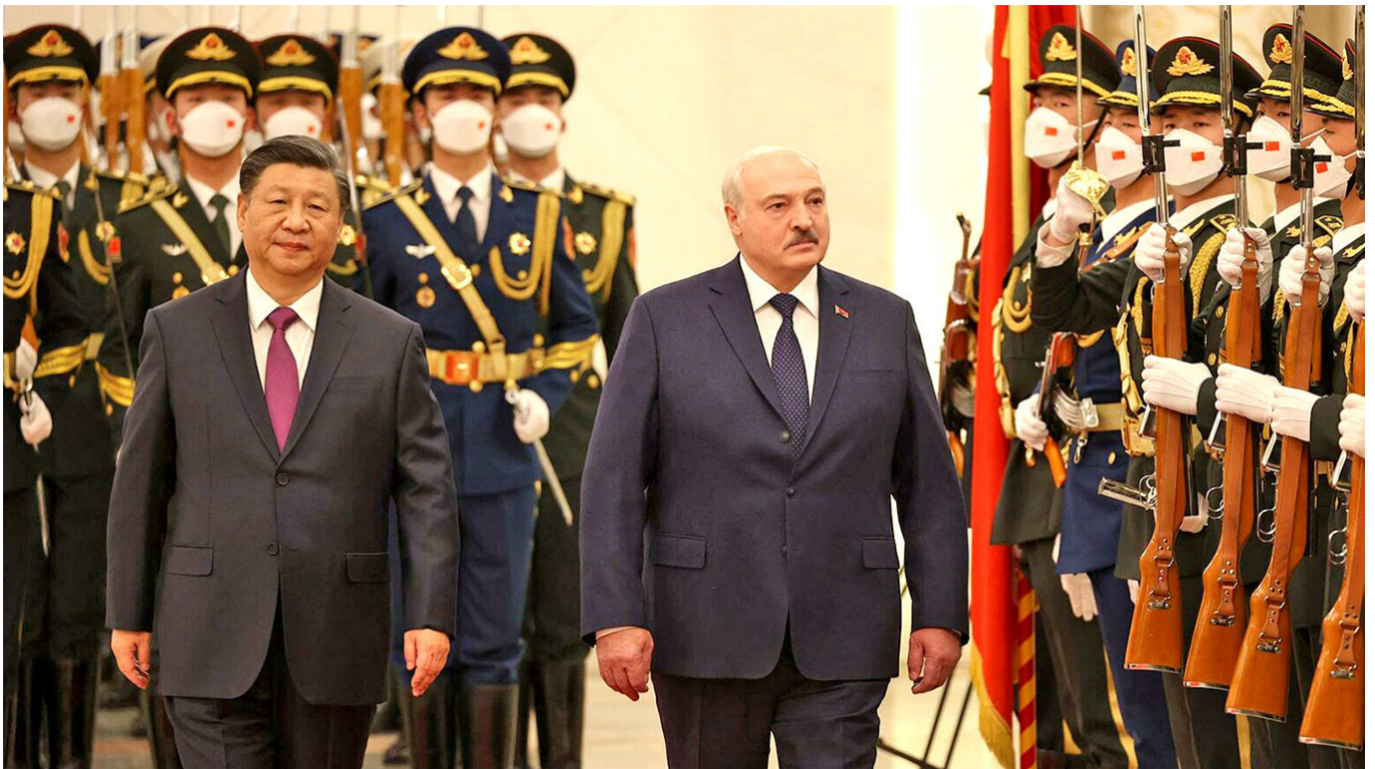


Belarus Leader 'Fully' Supports China's Ukraine Plan

By [AFP](#)

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Belarus President Alexander Lukashenko told his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping that his country "fully supports" Beijing's proposals for ending the Ukraine war when the two leaders met Wednesday.

The state visit to the Chinese capital by Lukashenko — a staunch ally of Russian President Vladimir Putin — comes after Beijing published a position paper on Moscow's war in Ukraine insisting it is a neutral party and calling for dialogue.

Western countries have criticized China for failing to condemn Moscow's invasion of Ukraine, while Beijing has reacted furiously to recent claims by the United States and NATO that it may be contemplating arms transfers to Russia.

The position paper was met with skepticism from Ukraine's allies, while Russia acknowledged

the proposal but said the conditions for a peaceful resolution of the conflict were not in place "at the moment."

But on Wednesday, Lukashenko threw his weight behind the plan.

"Today's meeting is taking place at a very difficult time, which calls for new, unorthodox approaches and responsible political decisions," Lukashenko said, according to remarks released by his aides.

"They should be aimed at first and foremost preventing a slide into a global confrontation that will see no winners," he told Xi.

"That is why Belarus is actively coming up with peace proposals, and fully supports the initiative on international security you have put forward."

According to a Chinese readout, Xi mentioned in the meeting that parties should discard "all Cold War mentality" and work to build a "balanced, effective and sustainable European security architecture."

Xi added that "relevant countries should stop politicizing and instrumentalizing the world economy and actually do things that will aid a ceasefire, cessation of war, and a peaceful resolution of the crisis."

'Cooperate in all avenues'

Lukashenko met Chinese Premier Li Keqiang earlier on Wednesday.

He said Beijing and Minsk "have no closed topics for cooperation," according to the Belarusian presidency's readout.

"We cooperate in all avenues. Most importantly, we have never set ourselves the task of being friends or working against third countries," Lukashenko said.

In an accompanying video clip, Li could be heard telling Lukashenko that the meeting with Xi would help "further plan the development of bilateral relations."

"We are confident that relations between Belarus and China will continue to move forward, building on the friendship between the two countries," Li said.

In a jovial run-up to the three-day trip, Beijing lauded its "all-weather and comprehensive" strategic partnership with Minsk, while Lukashenko said he was looking forward to meeting his "old friend" Xi.

The Belarusian leader also called China's position on the Ukraine crisis "a testimony to its peaceful foreign policy as well as a new and original step that will have a far-reaching impact all over the world," according to Chinese state news agency Xinhua.

Xi has spoken to Putin several times since the war began, but he has not talked with his Ukrainian counterpart Volodymyr Zelensky.

Belarus shares a border with both Ukraine and Russia, but is financially and politically dependent on the Putin administration.

Lukashenko allowed Russia to use Belarus as a staging ground for its Ukraine offensive, and Kyiv has expressed concern that Minsk may provide further support in Moscow's war effort.

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