

《普京：中俄关系进入新阶段》

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俄总统普京周六表示本周早前与习近平会面标志着中俄关系进入新阶段，两国将开展全面合作。

ST. PETERSBURG, Russia, May 24 (Xinhua) -- Russian President Vladimir Putin said Saturday that his meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping earlier this week in Shanghai marked that Russia-China relations have entered a new stage, and that the two countries will roll out all-around cooperation.

Putin made the comment in reply to a question on China-Russia ties raised by Zhou Shuchun, vice president of the Xinhua News Agency, during his meeting with representatives of world leading news agencies at the 18th St. Petersburg International Economic Forum.

Putin also said that the consensus reached and agreements signed in Shanghai demonstrated a big step forward for the relations between Russia and China.

The gas deal inked on Wednesday in Shanghai was historic and significant to both countries, Putin said. For Russia, it is an important opportunity to enter the largest market in the Asia-Pacific, while more natural gas use in China will help the country improve its energy mix and ecological environment in its large cities, Putin said.

Putin expressed the hope that Russia and China will continue to strengthen cooperation in nuclear energy, aviation, outer space exploration, medical care and public health, finance, and agriculture.

The two countries have started local currency settlement in bilateral trade and will strengthen cooperation in this respect, Putin added.

Putin was in Shanghai this week for a state visit and for a summit of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia.

China and Russia on Wednesday signed a long-awaited gas deal in Shanghai, ending a decade of natural gas supply talks between the two neighbors.

In reply to questions raised by leaders of other news agencies, Putin said Russia and China will jointly celebrate the 70th anniversary of the victory over fascism next year. He urged people not to forget the historical disaster of World War II.

On Sunday's presidential election in Ukraine, Putin said Russia will respect the choice of the Ukrainian people and will cooperate with the new authorities. But he held that presidential election in Ukraine should be preceded by a referendum to revise its constitution.

Putin said that sanctions imposed on Russia over the Ukraine issue are counterproductive and will lead the Russian, European and global economy to turbulence that is in no one's interests.

The ongoing St. Petersburg International Economic Forum shows the willingness of many foreign companies to invest in Russia, said Putin. Citizens in many European countries do not support sanctions against Russia, and policies should be based on people's will, he added.

Russia hopes to have fair dialogues on an equal footing with Western countries so as to solve problems in a peaceful way and to have cooperation, he said.

Asked about the disputed islands known as the Southern Kurils in Russia and the Northern Territories in Japan, Putin said Moscow is ready for talks with Tokyo over territorial disputes. But he said Moscow was confused by Japanese moves as the country had joined Western countries in imposing sanctions against Russia and halted negotiations over these islands with it.

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