

U.S. concerned by China-Russia ties as Putin signals Xi visit

MOSCOW/WASHINGTON, Feb 22 (Reuters) - The United States is concerned by greater alignment between China and Russia, the U.S. State Department said on Wednesday after Russian President Vladimir Putin hailed "new frontiers" in ties with Beijing and signalled China's Xi Jinping would visit his country.

Word of Xi's visit comes as Washington has said China is considering providing weapons for Russia's war in Ukraine, a move that would threaten to escalate the conflict into a confrontation between Russia and China on the one side and Ukraine and the U.S.-led NATO military alliance on the other.

Putin welcomed China's top diplomat, Wang Yi, to the Kremlin on Wednesday, telling him bilateral trade was better than expected and could soon reach \$200 billion a year, up from \$185 billion in 2022.

"We await a visit of the President of the People's Republic of China to Russia, we have agreed on this," Putin told Wang, referring to Xi.

"Everything is progressing, developing. We are reaching new frontiers," Putin said.

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