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China Offers Ukraine To Mediate To End War With Russia

Why In The News?

- Chinese President Xi Jinping In His First Phone Call With His Ukrainian Counterpart Volodymyr Zelenskyy On Wednesday Offered To Mediate To Bring About A Ceasefire And Political Settlement To End The Russia-Ukraine Conflict.
- "There Is No Winner In A Nuclear War. On The Nuclear Issue, All Relevant Parties Must Stay Calm And Exercise Restraint, Truly Act In The Interests Of Their Own Future And That Of Humanity, And Jointly Manage The Crisis," Xi said, Apparently Cautioning Against A Prolonged Conflict.

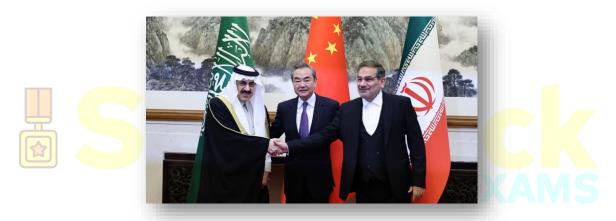


Why Does This Matter?

- China Is The **Only Major Government With Friendly Relations With Moscow** And Economic Leverage As The **Biggest Buyer Of Russian Oil And Gas** After The United States And Its Allies Cut Off Most Purchases.
- Beijing, Which Sees Moscow As A Diplomatic Partner In Opposing U.S.
 Domination Of Global Affairs, Has Refused To Criticize The Invasion And Used Its Status As One Of Five Permanent UNSC Members To Deflect Diplomatic Attacks On Russia. Zelenskyy Earlier Welcomed A Chinese Offer To Mediate.

Why Did China Do This?

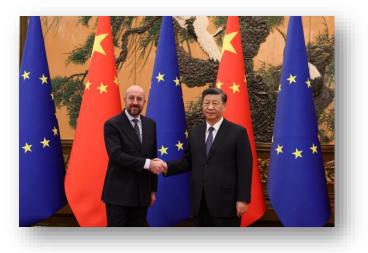
- Xi's Government Has Pursued A Bigger Role In Global Diplomacy As Part Of A Campaign To Restore China To What The Ruling Communist Party Sees As Its Rightful Status As A Political And Economic Leader And To Build An International Order That Favors Beijing's Interests.
- That Is A Sharp Reversal After Decades Of Avoiding Involvement In Other Countries' Conflicts And Most International Affairs While Focused On Economic Development At Home.
- In March, Saudi Arabia And Iran Issued A Surprise Announcement, Following Talks In Beijing, That They Would Reopen Embassies In Each Other's Capitals Following A Seven-year Break. China Has Good Relations With Both As A Big Oil Buyer.



 Last Week, Foreign Minister Qin Gang Told His Israeli And Palestinian Counterparts That His Country Is Ready To Help Facilitate Peace Talks. Warning Against The Dangers Of Nuclear War, Suggesting Beijing Might Also Have Been Motivated By What It Sees As The Growing Danger Of A Destructive Conflict.



 Mediating Between Ukraine And Russia Would Increase China's Presence In Eastern Europe, Where Beijing Has Tried To Build Ties With Other Governments. That Has Prompted Complaints By Some European Officials That China Is Trying To Gain Leverage Over The European Union.



What Are China's Relations With Russia?

- China Is The Closest Thing President Vladimir Putin's Isolated Government Has To A Major Ally. Xi And Putin Issued A Joint Statement Ahead Of The February 2022 Invasion That Said Their Governments Had A "No Limits Friendship."
- Beijing Has Tried To Appear Neutral But Has Repeated Russian Justifications For The Invasion. Xi Received A Warm Welcome From Putin During A Visit To Moscow In March. The Chinese Defense Minister Visited Russia This Month.
- China Has Stepped Up Purchases Of Russian Oil And Gas For Its **Energy-hungry Economy**, Helping To Offset Lost Revenue Resulting From Western Sanctions. In Exchange, China Gets Lower Prices, Though Details Haven't Been Disclosed.





What Are China's Relations With Ukraine?

- China Was Ukraine's Biggest Trading Partner Before The Invasion, Though On A Smaller Scale Than Chinese-Russian Trade. In 2021, Ukraine Announced Plans For Chinese Companies To Build Trade-related Infrastructure.
- Zelenskyy's Government Was **More Ambivalent Toward Beijing** After It Was Clear **Xi Wouldn't Try To Stop Putin's War**, But The Two Sides Have Remained Amicable.
- Qin, The Foreign Minister, Promised This Month China Wouldn't Provide Arms To Either Side, A Pledge That Benefits Ukraine, Which Has Received Tanks, Rockets, And Other Armaments From The United States And European Governments.





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