

Chinese politics & policy

China warns of retaliation if hit by Russia sanctions fallout

Beijing slams what it calls US efforts to spread disinformation and 'distort and smear' its position on Ukraine



Chinese foreign minister Wang Yi: 'China is not a party to the crisis, nor does it want sanctions to affect China' © Sam McNeil/AP

William Langley in Hong Kong, **Tom Mitchell** in Singapore and **Sun Yu** in Beijing 6 HOURS AGO

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China is concerned it could be hit by western sanctions imposed on Russia for its invasion of Ukraine and will retaliate if necessary, the Chinese foreign minister has said.

“China is not a party to the crisis, nor does it want sanctions to affect China,” Wang Yi told his Spanish counterpart, José Manuel Albares, in remarks published by the Chinese foreign ministry on Tuesday.

“China has a right to safeguard its legitimate rights and interests,” he added.

A series of sanctions rolled out by the US and its allies has hit equity markets around the world and sent the cost of some commodities, such as oil and wheat, soaring. China is a large importer of Russian energy and agricultural commodities.

[Chinese equities](#) have been hit particularly hard, with Hong Kong-listed Chinese stocks on Monday falling their most since the global financial crisis in 2008.

The sell-off has gathered pace following a report in the Financial Times that US officials believe [China responded positively](#) to Russian requests for weapons and

military assistance. Beijing has hit back at what it says are US efforts to spread disinformation and “distort and smear” its position on the Ukraine war.

President Xi Jinping and other senior Chinese officials have insisted that Beijing is a neutral party, but they and state media continue to repeat and bolster Russian justifications for its invasion.

In a further reflection of the Chinese government’s de facto support for President Vladimir Putin, who met Xi in Beijing a few weeks before the invasion, a US organisation that published a Chinese scholar’s criticism of the war said on Tuesday that one of its websites had been blocked in China.

The [article](#) by Hu Wei, a Shanghai-based political scientist affiliated with the State Council’s research office in Beijing, was first published on March 12 by the Carter Center in Atlanta.

“Russia’s ‘special military operation’ against Ukraine has caused great controversy in China, with its supporters and opponents being divided into two implacably opposing sides,” Hu wrote in what he described as an “objective analysis” of the situation in Ukraine and its potential implications for China.

Hu was highly critical of Putin’s war, which he called “an irreversible mistake” that China should disassociate itself from immediately. “The bottom line is to prevent the US and the west from imposing joint sanctions on China,” he said.

“China cannot be tied to Putin,” Hu added. “China can only proceed by safeguarding its own best interests, choosing the lesser of two evils, and unloading the burden of Russia as soon as possible.”

He said: “At present, it is estimated that there is still a window period of one or two weeks before China loses its wiggle room. China must act decisively.”

The Carter Center said it had not commissioned the article, which Hu had submitted. Hu was not immediately available for comment.

“Our English and Chinese-language websites are now completely inaccessible in China,” Yawei Liu, director of the Carter Center’s China programme, [said on Twitter](#). “But we do not regret publishing Hu Wei’s voice.”

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