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CHINA'S RUSSIA DEALINGS IRK US, BUT DON'T BREACH SANCTIONS

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Joe McDonald

Chinas support for Russia through oil and gas purchases is irking Washington and raising the risk of U.S. retaliation, foreign observers say, though they see no sign Beijing is helping Moscow evade sanctions over its war on Ukraine.

Beijings importance as a lifeline to Russian President Vladimir Putin rose Monday after the 27-nation European Union, the main market for fossil fuels that supply most of Moscows foreign income, agreed to stop oil purchases.

President Xi Jinpings government declared ahead of Russias Feb. 24 attack that it had a no limits friendship with Moscow and has kept the West guessing about whether it might bail Putin out.

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