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Foreign Powers Targeting Russia 'From Outside and Within' — Putin

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Russian President Vladimir Putin speaks during a meeting at the Federal Security Service (FSB) headquarters in Moscow, Russia, Feb. 16, 2017. **Kremlin Press Service**

Foreign powers are attempting to destabilize Russia from outside and within, Russian President Vladimir Putin has claimed.

Speaking at a board meeting of Russia's Federal Security Service (FSB), Putin said NATO's growing presence on Russia's borders was proof that the West wanted to draw Russia into a confrontation. He also dismissed the organization's decision to categorize Russia as a "major security threat" saying the move was a ruse to justify extending NATO's influence.

The president also said Ukraine was another threat which wanted to draw Moscow into a military confrontation. He accused Kiev of trying to disrupt peace negotiations by aggravating conflict in the Donbass region.

"[The Ukrainian authorities] speak openly about carrying subversive activities, including in

Russia," he said. "It is a cause for concern."

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Despite his condemnation of Western governments, Putin did stress that Russian needed to restore dialogue with European and U.S. Intelligence agencies — primarily to better fight terrorism.

"Bloody conflicts involving international terrorist groups are continuing in a number of countries across the Middle East, Asia and Africa. These are in fact terrorist armies: receiving hidden and or explicit support from certain countries," he said.

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