

Putin Warns of ‘Military-Technical’ Response to Western ‘Aggression’

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Russian President Vladimir Putin. kremlin.ru

President Vladimir Putin [threatened](#) a “military-technical” response Tuesday to what Russia perceives as threatening moves from the West, marking a new escalation of rhetoric amid Moscow's ongoing tensions with Western countries over Ukraine.

The West has for weeks raised alarm over Russian military buildup near Ukraine and fears of a Russian invasion of its ally. Moscow denies planning an invasion into Ukraine and accuses U.S.-led NATO of threatening its security by expanding its presence near Russian borders.

“If our Western colleagues continue the obviously aggressive stance, we will take appropriate retaliatory military-technical measures and react harshly to unfriendly steps,” Putin said at a Defense Ministry board meeting, according to the state-run TASS news agency.

He did not specify which “military-technical” measures would be taken.

The Russian president stressed that Moscow “doesn't want armed conflicts or bloodshed”

and that it “has every right” to take what he views as steps that ensure the country’s security and sovereignty.

Related article: [Russia Demands ‘Urgent’ U.S. Talks, Warning of ‘Military Response’ to NATO Activity](#)

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, meanwhile, said the U.S. has “expressed readiness” to launch dialogue with Russia on its proposed security guarantees that seek to limit NATO’s eastward expansion.

But Putin stressed that Moscow will only accept “long-term, legally binding guarantees” with Washington, accusing the U.S. of withdrawing from international treaties “that for one reason or another become uninteresting to them.”

Russia last week [sent](#) the U.S. a list of sweeping demands that seek guarantees for NATO to abandon its military activities in Eastern Europe and Central Asia; to block future NATO membership for any post-Soviet country; and for the U.S. not to establish any new military bases on the territory of former Soviet states.

The U.S. and European Union have issued repeated warnings to Russia that any military action in Ukraine would be met with sanctions far worse than those it levied in 2014, when Moscow annexed Crimea from Kiev and conflict broke out between Ukrainian forces and pro-Russian separatists in eastern Ukraine.

Following Putin’s comments, NATO chief Jens Stoltenberg [said](#) the alliance will “not compromise” on Ukraine’s right to “choose its own path” and seek NATO membership.

Also at Tuesday’s Defense Ministry meeting, Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu [claimed](#) that U.S. private military companies have stationed troops in the Donetsk region of eastern Ukraine and are preparing a “provocation using unknown chemical components.”

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