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Kremlin Denounces U.S. 'Peak Hysteria' After Putin-Biden Call

By AFP

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Kremlin Aides Yury Ushakov and Sergei Lavrov **EPA/ALEXANDER NEMENOV /POOL**

The Kremlin on Saturday denounced U.S. "peak hysteria" surrounding the Ukraine conflict but said Russian President Vladimir Putin and U.S. leader Joe Biden had agreed to continue dialogue.

Speaking after new phone talks between Putin and Biden, the Kremlin's top foreign policy advisor Yury Ushakov told a conference call: "Hysteria has reached its peak."

Ushakov said that the U.S. side had requested to arrange phone talks between Biden and Putin on Saturday even though such a call had initially been planned for Monday.

The two leaders spoke after Washington warned that an all-out Russian invasion of Ukraine could begin "any day".

Ushakov complained about the U.S. claims, saying that Americans even released "the date of

the Russian invasion".

"We don't understand why false information about our intentions is being passed to the media," he told reporters.

He said that Putin once again complained that the West has been arming Ukraine and that Kyiv authorities have been "sabotaging" Western-brokered peace agreements to end a years-long conflict in eastern Ukraine.

At the same time Ushakov called the one-hour phone talks between the two leaders "balanced and business-like" and added that "the presidents have agreed to continue contacts at all levels".

Russia is demanding binding security guarantees from the West that includes a pledge to roll NATO forces out of eastern Europe and to never expand into Ukraine.

Washington has flatly rejected the demands while offering to discuss a new European disarmament agreement with Moscow.

Ushakov said Moscow would take into account Biden's point of view as it prepares to respond to Washington and NATO's proposals.

"The Russian side will carefully analyse Biden's concerns."

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