

What Are Russian State Media Saying About Ukraine? | Feb. 21

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Russia 24

Russian state media's Sunday evening primetime coverage gave extensive airtime to alleged Ukrainian shelling of separatist-held eastern Ukraine and the separatists' evacuation of civilians to Russia.

Similarly to previous reports, state media blamed Ukraine and the West for aggravating tensions in the region, spreading misinformation and ignoring Russia's security demands.

Channel One

News about the Beijing Winter Olympics almost always preceded coverage of the Russia-Ukraine crisis on leading state news broadcaster **Channel One**.

Anchors again condemned Western "hysteria" toward Russian aggression, singling out the United States. The anchors also claimed that Ukraine was waging a "non-fictional war" against its own citizens in the Donbas, forcing them to flee.

The channel's anchors reiterated Russia's talking point that it needs legally binding security guarantees from NATO and the U.S. They add that Russia cannot trust its Western partners, who keep ignoring Russian demands for security guarantees and who "lied" to Russia when they allegedly promised not to expand NATO eastward in the 1990s.

Putin's concerns about Ukraine joining NATO were backed by Channel One commentators, who described NATO as a "military bloc whose purpose is to fight," adding that "any country would be concerned if a huge war machine was inching toward its borders."

Apart from the Olympics and escalating tensions between Russia and the West, Channel One also reported on the joint military drills between Russia-Belarus. The channel also focused on the wave of evacuees fleeing Donbas due to alleged shelling by Ukraine's military. The anchors said Russia is ready to accept and help the refugees.

Rossia 1

Vesti Nedeli, a weekly news roundup show on the state-run Rossia 1 broadcaster, dedicated most of its two-hour broadcast to Russia's tensions with Ukraine and NATO.

Host Dmitry Kiselyov alleged that Ukraine is being pushed to escalate war in the Donbas by the United States and other NATO countries.

Russia does not want war and neither do the separatist republics of DPR and LPR, Kiselyov said, adding that Ukraine is preparing to conduct an assault on the Donbas and already launching "sabotage and terrorist attacks" in Donetsk and Luhansk.

Kiselyov also claimed that U.S. President Joe Biden's warning about an upcoming Russian invasion of Ukraine actually means the opposite.

"What it really means is that in the next few days, next week, America will come up with a provocation, or has already come up with it, in order to claim that Donbas, and Russia, have attacked Ukraine," Kiselyov said.

He said that the U.S. started the wars in Vietnam and Iraq by launching provocations and presenting false intelligence data. Thus, Kiselyov dismissed all information about potential Russian invasion of Ukraine as fake news and claimed that it's leaders of U.K., U.S., France and Turkey who really need war so they could distract the public eye from scandals at home.

Rossia 1's popular show "**Evening with Vladimir Solovyov**" featured a segment titled "There are explosions in the Donbas and people are dying."

But an hour and a half of the show was [dedicated](#) to Ukraine's 2014 Maidan revolution, with guests including four former Ukrainian security service officials who fled to Moscow after Maidan.

"I hope representatives of the Russian authorities are watching and listening to us carefully because we need to conclude... It is better to learn from the tragic fate of our neighbors to prevent such events in our homeland," Solovyov said.

NATO's non-expansion, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy's speech at the Munich

security conference, and German Chancellor Olaf Scholz's comments on the Donbas conflict were the main topics of discussion. At one point, Solovyov [compared](#) Zelenskiy's stance on European security to Hitler's.

In his weekly **YouTube livestream** — whose episode this week was titled “Russia Saves Donbas” — Solovyov reiterated the points he made on television. He also [addressed](#) Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu and President Vladimir Putin, saying: "This is it. It's time to go," in reference to reports of alleged current Donbas casualties. However, he was recently [spotted](#) sending delayed tweets for terror attacks in the Donetsk region that hadn't happened yet.

Newspapers

The state-run [RIA Novosti](#) news agency, [Izvestia](#), state-run [RT](#) broadcaster and other pro-Kremlin news outlets covered alleged Ukrainian diversions, sabotage and terrorist attacks in the separatist-held republics of eastern Ukraine.

[Izvestia](#) reported that an alleged saboteur blew himself up in Donetsk, while [RT](#) quoted the “ombudsman” for the self-proclaimed Donetsk People's Republic as claiming that Ukrainian artillery is intentionally targeting civilian infrastructure. [Rossiyskaya Gazeta](#) ran a new documentary titled “They Are Protecting the Motherland” about separatist soldiers.

Meanwhile, RIA Novosti [reported](#) on how Russian towns are starting to deal with the influx of evacuees from the Donbas.

On Monday, newspaper coverage mostly focused on the events in the Donbas, but Putin's emergency Security Council meeting also [received](#) front-page coverage.

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