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Takeaways From Russia's Treaties With Eastern Ukrainian 'Republics'

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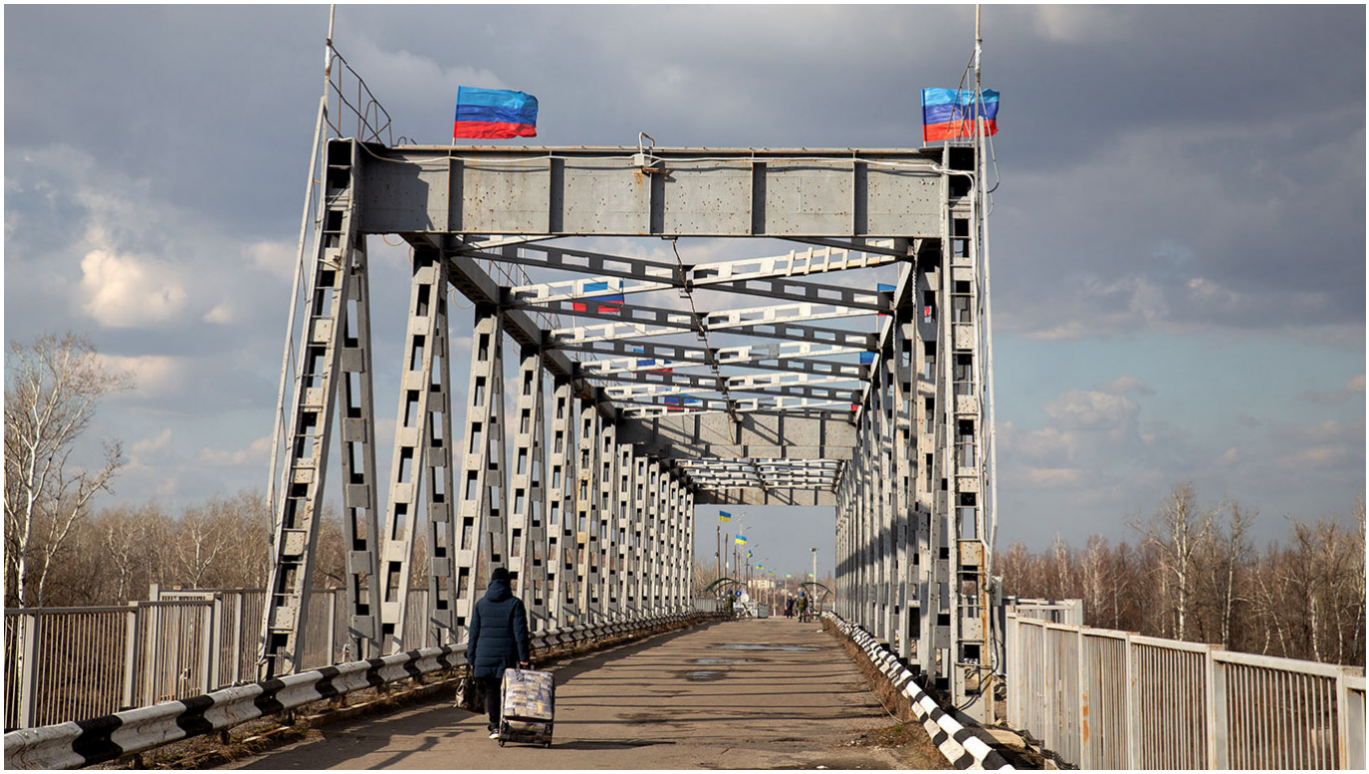

The Stanitsa Luganskaya crossing point on the contact line of the Lugansk region of eastern Ukraine.
Alexander Reka / TASS

Russian President Vladimir Putin recognized Eastern Ukraine's pro-Russian breakaway regions as independent republics on Monday, with a decree ratified in the Russian parliament on Tuesday.

Putin also signed "friendship and cooperation" treaties with the heads of the self-proclaimed Donetsk People's Republic (DNR) and Luhansk People's Republic (LNR) — a move set to give the two separatist regions a series of privileges.

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Here's a look at the key provisions contained in the treaties, which have also been ratified by the DNR and LNR's assemblies:

Military cooperation

The treaty will give both Russia and the separatist republics the right to "build, use and improve military infrastructure, bases and other objects" on each others' territory.

Article 5 of the treaty will permit Russia to move military infrastructure into separatist-held territory at a time when the West has raised alarm over the 150,000 Russian troops currently surrounding Ukraine.

Prevent the joining of opposing alliances

Article 6 gives Russia and the breakaway republics the right to prohibit each other from joining any blocs and alliances viewed as "directed against them."

This article comes as Russia demands binding guarantees that Ukraine will never join NATO, the U.S.-led military alliance.

Free movement

Article 11 of the drafted treaty allows for the free movement of citizens across Russia and the republics. This would "develop and implement an agreed set of measures to regulate the regime of entry into and exit from their territory of citizens of third countries."

The decree would establish joint border control between Russia and the newly recognized republics.

Protection of ethnic, linguistic, religious and cultural identities

Article 13 requires the parties to protect the "ethnic, linguistic, cultural and religious identity of national minorities in their territories and create conditions to preserve and develop [them]."

In his address to the nation Monday, Putin spoke of the alleged rise of "Russophobia and Neo-Nazism" in Ukraine, calling it an attempted "negation of everything that united us." The Russian president has also repeatedly alleged that Ukraine is carrying out a "genocide" against Russian speakers in the Donbas.

Financial integration and support

The treaty also says that Russia will undertake measures to support the DNR and LNR's financial and banking systems, including by adopting the Russian ruble as a means of payment on the territories.

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