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Russia Promises ‘Strong Response’ to U.S. Sanctions Over Ukraine

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The Russian Foreign Ministry. **MFA Russia / flickr (CC BY-NC-SA 2.0)**

Russia promised Wednesday a “strong” response to U.S. sanctions imposed for President Vladimir Putin’s recognition of Ukraine’s breakaway republics.

“There should be no doubt that a strong response will be given to the sanctions,” Russia’s Foreign Ministry said in a statement.

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It provided no specifics, noting only that Russia will take asymmetrical and “measured” retaliatory steps targeting “sensitive” U.S. interests.

The Biden administration imposed the “first tranche” of economic measures in response to what it referred to as the beginning of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine.

These include moves against Russian banks, cutting the country off from Western financing

by targeting Moscow's sovereign debt, and penalizing oligarchs and their families who are part of Putin's inner circle.

Germany on Tuesday halted certification of the Nord Stream 2 pipeline and the European Union is set to announce wide-reaching sanctions on hundreds of Russian officials and lawmakers.

The United States and allies have warned of further sanctions should Putin extend his country's military presence beyond the two territories in the eastern Donbas region which Moscow recognized as independent this week.

In its statement, Russia's Foreign Ministry dismissed the "reflexive" measures as "blackmail, intimidation and threats" that have failed to deter Russia since it annexed Crimea and backed the Donbas separatists in 2014.

"Russia has proven that, with all the sanctions costs, it is able to minimize the damage. And even more so, sanctions pressure is not able to affect our determination to firmly defend our interests."

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