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Putin Says if West Wants to Defeat Russia on Battlefield, 'Let Them Try'

By AFP

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Alexey Nikolsky / POOL / TASS

President Vladimir Putin on Thursday challenged the West to try and defeat Russia "on the battlefield" and said Moscow's intervention in Ukraine marked a shift to a "multi-polar world."

Delivering one of his strongest speeches since he sent troops to Ukraine on February 24, Putin also raged against "totalitarian liberalism" that he said the West has sought to impose on the entire world.

"Today we hear that they want to defeat us on the battlefield. Well, what can you say here? Let them try," Putin told senior lawmakers on the 134th day of Russia's offensive in Ukraine.

He accused "the collective West" of unleashing a "war" in Ukraine and said Russia's intervention in the pro-Western country marked the beginning of a shift to a "multi-polar

world."

"This process cannot be stopped," he added.

He also warned Kyiv and its Western allies that Moscow has not even started its military campaign in Ukraine "in earnest."

"Everyone should know that we have not started in earnest yet," he said.

"At the same time we are not refusing to hold peace negotiations but those who are refusing should know that it will be harder to come to an agreement with us" at a later stage.

Putin said most countries did not want to follow the Western model of "totalitarian liberalism" and "hypocritical double standards."

"People in most countries do not want such a life and such a future," he said.

"They are simply tired of kneeling, humiliating themselves in front of those who consider themselves exceptional."

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