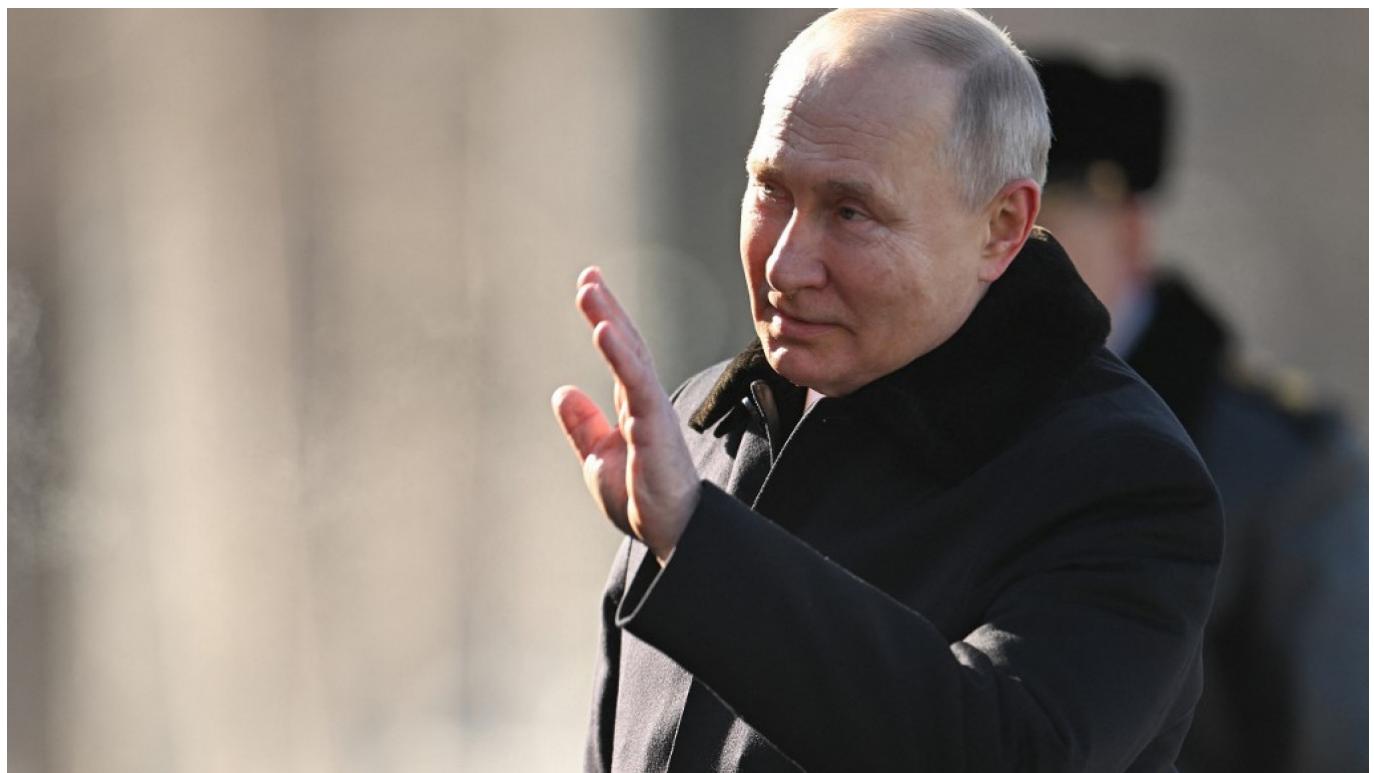


Putin Calls Russia's Armed Forces 'Guarantor of Stability' on Military Holiday

By [AFP](#)

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Pavel Bednyakov / Sputnik / AFP

President Vladimir Putin on Thursday called Russia's military a "guarantor of national stability," promising to boost arms production nearly a year after the start of the Ukraine offensive.

"A modern, efficient army and navy are a guarantee of the country's security and sovereignty, a guarantee of its stable development and its future," Putin said in a video address to mark the annual Defender of the Fatherland Day holiday in Russia, which falls a day before the first anniversary of Moscow's offensive in Ukraine.

"That's why, as before, we will pay priority attention to strengthening our defense capabilities," he added.

Putin said Russia would "conduct the balanced and high-quality development of all components of the armed forces" in particular by equipping troops with "new strike systems, reconnaissance and communication equipment, drones and artillery systems."

"Now our industry is rapidly increasing production of an entire range of conventional weapons," he said in the video released by the Kremlin.

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The president also hailed Russian soldiers, who he said were fighting "heroically" in Ukraine and "defending our people in our historical lands."

Russia's "unbreakable unity is the key to our victory," he said.

Later in the day, state TV showed images of Putin laying a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier outside the Kremlin and speaking to veterans attending the ceremony.

"It is the sacred duty of the state to take care of those who defend the country," he said.

Putin sent Moscow's troops into Ukraine on Feb. 24, 2022, launching what he called a "special military operation" there.

In the autumn he announced the mobilization of 300,000 reservists to boost Russia's ranks in Ukraine.

During his two decades in power, Putin has made strengthening the armed forces a top priority and introduced hypersonic weapons, which he has described as "invincible," to Russia's arsenal.

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