

Putin Touts 'Futuristic' Weapons, Chides Exiled Elites in Far East Forum Address

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President Vladimir Putin at the Eastern Economic Forum in Vladivostok. **Alexander Wilf, RIA Novosti / kremlin.ru**

Russian President Vladimir Putin delivered a wide-ranging address on Tuesday at the annual Eastern Economic Forum in Vladivostok, touching upon Moscow's protracted war against Ukraine and anti-war elites in exile, while also [playing up](#) Russia's development of "weapons based on new physical principles."

Putin's remarks come ahead of a rare and closely watched summit with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, whose armored train crossed into Russia early Tuesday, with experts saying that Moscow will likely seek artillery shells and anti-tank missiles from Pyongyang to bolster its nearly 19-month invasion.

"Weapons on new physical principles will ensure the security of any country in the near future. We understand this very well and we're working on it," the Russian leader said at the forum's plenary session.

Putin did not elaborate on the types of futuristic arms his country was working on, but the state-run TASS news agency [said](#) they include laser, ultrasonic and radio-frequency weapons.

War in Ukraine

Putin repeated previous assertions that Kyiv's ongoing counteroffensive to recapture occupied territories was failing.

He claimed that Ukrainian forces had lost some 71,500 soldiers, 18,000 armored vehicles and 543 tanks since launching the counteroffensive in June. These figures could not be independently confirmed, but Putin's tally was [significantly higher](#) than the Russian Defense Ministry's own estimate of Ukraine's equipment losses for the entire period since Moscow invaded Ukraine in February 2022.

Putin also claimed that 270,000 people had volunteered to sign contracts with the Russian military over the past six months.

Meanwhile, the Russian leader blamed Ukraine for refusing to negotiate an end to the conflict, arguing "first they need to revoke their [decree](#) that bans talks and announce their readiness, then we'll see."

Business and economy

Shifting to business and the economy, the main topics of the forum, Putin sought to alleviate concerns that his government was [expropriating](#) private enterprises amid the Kremlin's efforts to entice wealthy Russians to bring their assets back home.

"There won't be any de-privatization, I can tell you that for sure. As far as the prosecutor's office actively working on certain areas and companies, law enforcement agencies have the right to assess the specific cases of what's happening in the economy," he said.

However, Putin came down hard on his former aide Anatoly Chubais, who [resigned](#) and left the country shortly after Russia invaded Ukraine in early 2022, and tech billionaire Arkady Volozh, who was among the few members of the Russian business elite to [condemn](#) the invasion.

"Anatoly Borisovich [Chubais] is hiding there [in Israel] for some reason. I was shown some photo from the internet where he's no longer Anatoly Borisovich Chubais, but Moisha Israeliyevich. I don't understand why he ran away."

Putin suggested that Chubais may have fled the country due to fears of criminal prosecution over a "big financial hole" in the state nanotechnology company Rusnano, which he [headed](#) until 2020.

Related article: [Yandex Co-Founder Arkady Volozh Condemns 'Barbaric' War in Ukraine](#)

Likewise, Putin offered his views on Volozh's recent condemnation of Russia's "barbaric invasion of Ukraine" and self-identification as a "Kazakhstan-born tech entrepreneur" who has been living in Israel since 2015.

“[Volozh] sat silent for a long time, then decided to make statements,” the Russian leader said. “God bless him, may he live well there. To be honest, it doesn’t affect us.”

But Putin made little effort to conceal his true feeling that the founder of the tech giant Yandex — which Volozh resigned from in mid-2022 — had betrayed Russia.

“If a person grew up on this soil, got an education, became successful, [then] they should have a sense of conscience about the country that gave them everything.”

“One can adopt the position of our geopolitical opponents and play along with them, thus damaging one’s country, or one can behave differently.”

Foreign affairs

On the foreign affairs front, Putin said he did not expect a change in the United States’ policies toward Russia after the 2024 U.S. presidential elections, as he accused Washington of stoking anti-Russian feelings among ordinary Americans.

Putin then spoke out in defense of former U.S. President Donald Trump, slamming the legal proceedings against him as “politically motivated persecution” that “shows the rottenness of the American system.”

“This shows who we’re fighting,” the Russian leader said. “As they said in Soviet times — ‘the bestial face of American capitalism’.”

Related article: [Russia Summons Armenian Ambassador Over 'Unfriendly Steps'](#)

Putin also denied a rift in Russia’s relations with allied Armenia, where frustrations mounted over what Yerevan sees as Moscow’s failure to act as a security guarantor over tensions with regional rival Azerbaijan.

He said Armenia itself has recognized Azerbaijan’s sovereignty over the disputed territory of Nagorno-Karabakh, where a shipment of Russian humanitarian aid had arrived earlier Tuesday.

Amid ongoing U.S.-Armenian military drills, which kicked off Monday and drew sharp criticism from the Kremlin, Putin maintained: “We don’t have any problems with Armenia.”

AFP contributed reporting.

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