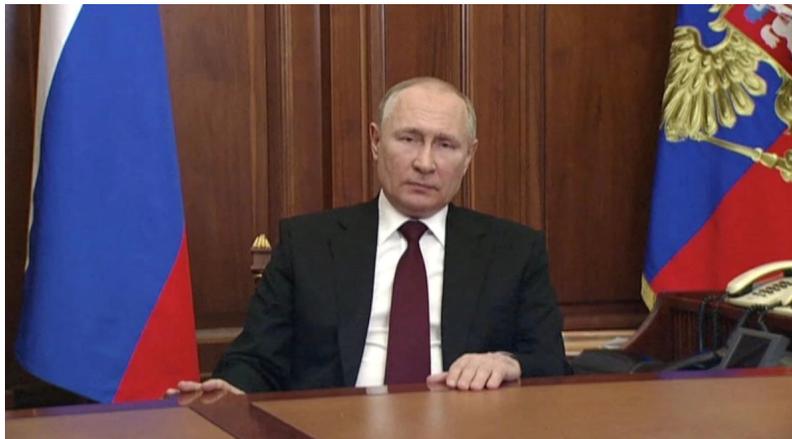


# Extracts from Putin's speech on Ukraine

[Reuters](#)

February 21, 2022 3:39 PM EST Last Updated a day ago



MOSCOW, Feb 21 (Reuters) - Following are extracts from a televised speech on Monday by Russian President Vladimir Putin on Ukraine:

[read more](#)

## ON DONBASS

"Those who embarked on the path of violence, bloodshed, lawlessness did not recognize and do not recognize any other solution to the Donbass issue, except for the military one. In this regard, I consider it necessary to take a long overdue decision to immediately recognize the independence and sovereignty of the Donetsk People's Republic and the Luhansk People's Republic. I ask the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation to support this decision, and then to ratify the treaties of friendship and mutual assistance with individual republics. These two documents will be prepared and signed in the very near future. And from those who seized and hold power in Kyiv, we demand

an immediate cessation of hostilities.

### **Register now for FREE unlimited access to Reuters.com**

"Otherwise, all responsibility for the possible continuation of the bloodshed will be entirely on the conscience of the regime ruling on the territory of Ukraine. Announcing the decisions taken today, I am confident in the support of the citizens of Russia. Of all the patriotic forces of the country."

### ON UKRAINE MEMBERSHIP OF NATO

"If Ukraine was to join NATO it would serve as a direct threat to the security of Russia."

### ON ORIGINS OF MODERN UKRAINE

"Modern Ukraine was entirely created by Russia, more precisely, Bolshevik, communist Russia. This process began immediately after the revolution of 1917..."

"As a result of Bolshevik policy, Soviet Ukraine arose, which even today can with good reason be called 'Vladimir Ilyich Lenin's Ukraine'. He is its author and architect. This is fully confirmed by archive documents ... And now grateful descendants have demolished monuments to Lenin in Ukraine. This is what they call decommunisation. Do you want decommunisation? Well, that suits us just fine. But it is unnecessary, as they say, to stop halfway. We are ready to show you what real decommunisation means for Ukraine."

### ON UKRAINIAN STATEHOOD

"Ukraine never had a tradition of genuine statehood."

## ON BREAK-UP OF USSR

"Russia assumed obligations to repay the entire Soviet debt in return for the newly independent states giving up part of their foreign assets. In 1994, such agreements were reached with Ukraine, but they were not ratified by Ukraine...

"(Ukraine) preferred to act in such a way that in relations with Russia they had all the rights and advantages, but did not bear any obligations...

"From the very first steps they began to build their statehood on the denial of everything that unites us. They tried to distort the consciousness, the historical memory of millions of people, entire generations living in Ukraine."

## ON NATO'S 2008 MEMBERSHIP PROMISE TO UKRAINE AND GEORGIA

"Many European allies of the United States already perfectly understood all the risks of such a prospect, but were forced to come to terms with the will of their senior partner. The Americans simply used them to carry out a pronounced anti-Russian policy. A number of member states of the alliance are still very skeptical about the appearance of Ukraine in NATO. At the same time, we are receiving a signal from some European capitals, saying what are you worried about, this will not happen literally tomorrow. Yes, in fact, our American partners are also talking about this. Well, we answer, if not tomorrow, so the day after tomorrow. What does this change in a historical perspective? Basically, nothing. Moreover, we know the position and words of the U.S. leadership that active hostilities in eastern Ukraine do not exclude the possibility of this country joining NATO if it can meet

the criteria of the North Atlantic alliance and defeat corruption. At the same time, they try to convince us over and over again that NATO is a peace-loving and purely defensive alliance, saying that there are no threats to Russia. Again they propose that we take them at their word. But we know the real value of such words."

## ON THREATS TO RUSSIA

"We clearly understand that under such a scenario, the level of military threats to Russia will dramatically increase many times over. I pay special attention to the fact that the danger of a sudden strike against our country will increase many times over. Let me explain that U.S. strategic planning documents contain the possibility of a so-called preemptive strike against enemy missile systems. And who is the main enemy for the U.S. and NATO? We know that too. It's Russia. In NATO documents, our country is officially and directly declared the main threat to North Atlantic security. And Ukraine will serve as a forward springboard for the strike. If our ancestors had heard about it, they probably would simply not have believed it. And today we don't want to believe it, but it's true."

## ON SANCTIONS

"They are trying to blackmail us again. They are threatening us again with sanctions, which, by the way, I think they will introduce anyway as Russia's sovereignty strengthens and the power of our armed forces grows. And a pretext for another sanctions attack will always be found or fabricated. Regardless of the situation in Ukraine. There is only one goal - to restrain the development of Russia. And they will do it, as they did before. Even without any formal pretext at all. Just because we exist, and we will never compromise our sovereignty, national interests

and our values. I want to say clearly and directly that in the current situation, when our proposals for an equal dialogue on fundamental issues have actually remained unanswered by the United States and NATO, when the level of threats to our country is increasing significantly, Russia has every right to take retaliatory measures to ensure its own security. That is exactly what we will do."

**Register now for FREE unlimited access to Reuters.com**

Reporting by Moscow bureau, Editing by Tomasz Janowski, Jon Boyle and Grant McCool

Our Standards: [The Thomson Reuters Trust Principles.](#)