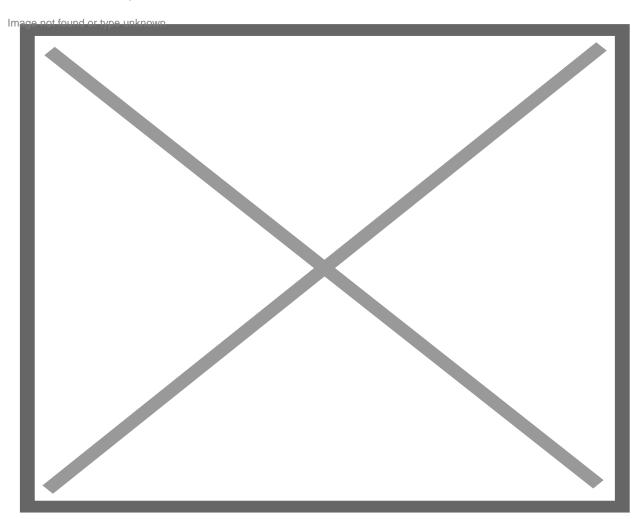# Putin Threatens Nuclear Response, Calls Up 300,000 Reservists as Russia's War Against Ukraine Turns New Chapter

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Russian President Vladimir Putin addresses his country on Wed. Sept. 21, 2022. By. YOUTUBE

Russian President Vladimir Putin during a national address Wednesday threatened the use of nuclear weapons in the country's conflict against Ukraine, in a speech that has exposed Russia's disastrous war against its neighbors where a recent Ukrainian offensive has led to massive gains for the defenders.

In the bellicose speech, Mr. Putin said, "Russia will use all the instruments at its disposal to counter a threat against its territorial integrity—this is not a bluff."

The Russian strongman accused the leaders of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, or NATO, of concluding that it would be acceptable to use nuclear weapons against Russia. Mr. Putin did not provide any proof that his remarks were factual.

"To those who allow themselves such statements, I would like to remind them, Russia also has many types of weapons of destruction, the components of which in some cases are more modern than those of the countries of NATO," he said.

Mr. Putin also accused NATO of concocting to breakup Russia and falsely accused the West of stirring a rebellion on Russia's borders and arming terrorists in the country's south which is dominated by Muslims. He further falsely accused the West of planning a coup in Ukraine in 2014 that Mr. Putin said turned the country into an "anti-Russian bridgehead, turning the Ukrainians themselves into cannon fodder."

The address follows annexation plans announced by Russian-installed officials in four parts of Ukraine currently under Russian control. This would allow Mr. Putin to claim those areas as legitimate Russian territory and that any attacks on the annexed lands would equate to an attack on Russia itself.

Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu said 300,000 reservists would be mobilized to bolster forces already deployed in Ukraine in an attempt to hold onto gains, including the partial capture of Kherson and the Donbas Region.

President Joe Biden is expected to use a speech at the United Nations today to rally the world against Russian efforts of annexation. The president is expected to seek vast support during his speech, shaping the conflict as unprovoked Russian aggression against a sovereign country that must be unwaveringly opposed. The U.S. has described Moscow's conscription of reservists as a desperate move unlikely to stop Ukraine's military gains.

Mr. Biden "will underscore the importance of strengthening the United Nations and reaffirm core tenets of its charter at a time when a permanent member of its security council has struck at the very heart of the charter by challenging the principle of territorial integrity and sovereignty," said Jake Sullivan, Mr. Biden's national security adviser.

U.S. Secretary of State Anthony Blinken said, "None of this — the sham referenda, the potential mobilization of additional forces — is a sign of strength. On the contrary, it's a sign of weakness. It's a sign of Russian failure."

Mr. Blinken further stated that the U.S. would never accept the claimed results of the "sham referenda." Regarding Mr. Putin's plan to deploy 300,000 reservists, Mr. Sullivan said the Russian president "may be resorting to partial mobilization, forcing even more Russians to go fight his brutal war in Ukraine."

Even so, Mr. Blinken did not see the announcements by Russia turning the tide against Ukraine, whose recent offensives — most notably in the Kharkiv Region — has led to swift gains.

"In terms of Russia being able to put more troops onto the battlefield, obviously that will have an impact on the battlefield equation, but we do not believe at this point that will undermine Ukraine's ability to effectively repel Russian aggression and to continue making gains," Mr. Sullivan said.

Last updated at 10:46 a.m. on Wed. Sept. 21, 2022.