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## **Biden Issues a New Warning to Russia Over Invading Ukraine**

### ***Байден попередив Росію про вторгнення в Україну***

*Президент Д. Байден заявив, що будь-яке переміщення російських військ через кордон України буде вторгненням і що Москва «заплатить високу ціну» за такі дії. Державний секретар США Е. Блінкен, перебуваючи у Києві, доклав усіх зусиль, щоб підкреслити, що США та їхні партнери єдині, зазначивши, що американські дипломати провели понад 100 зустрічей із союзниками за останні тижні, щоб переконатися, що ми говоримо і діємо єдиним фронтом, коли йдеться про Росію.*

<https://time.com/6140933/biden-russia-putin-ukraine/>

GENEVA — U.S. President Joe Biden said Thursday that any Russian troop movements across Ukraine’s border would constitute an invasion and that Moscow would “pay a heavy price” for such an action.

It was the latest White House effort to clear up comments Biden made a day earlier when he suggested that a “minor incursion” by Russia into Ukrainian territory could result in a more measured response by the United States and allies.

Facing an avalanche of criticism from Republican lawmakers and Ukrainian officials that Biden’s comments had invited limited military action by Russian President Vladimir Putin, Biden sought to clarify his remarks at the start of a meeting at the White House focused on domestic policy.

“I’ve been absolutely clear with President Putin,” Biden said. “He has no misunderstanding: Any, any assembled Russian units move across the Ukrainian border, that is an invasion,” said Biden, adding that an invasion would be met with a “severe and coordinated economic response.”

His comments came as U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken prepared to meet Friday in Geneva with Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov in a high-stakes bid to ease tensions that appears likely to fail. Biden said the U.S. was preparing for Russia to take action that fell outside the parameters of conventional warfare.

“Russia has a long history of using measures other than overt military action to carry out aggression — paramilitary tactics, so-called gray zone attacks and actions by Russian soldiers not wearing Russian uniforms,” he said.

On Wednesday, Biden said he thinks Moscow will invade and warned Putin that Russia would pay a “dear price” in lives lost and a possible cutoff from the global banking system if it does.

But Biden also prompted consternation among allies by saying the response to a Russian invasion “depends on what it does.”

“It’s one thing if it’s a minor incursion and then we end up having a fight about what to do and not do, et cetera,” he said.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy was among those expressing concern.

“We want to remind the great powers that there are no minor incursions and small nations. Just as there are no minor casualties and little grief from the loss of loved ones,” he tweeted.

Before traveling to Geneva, Blinken warned in Berlin that there would be a “swift, severe” response from the United States and its allies if Russia sent any military forces into Ukraine.

“If any Russian military forces move across the Ukrainian border and commit new acts of aggression against Ukraine, that will be met with a swift, severe, united response from the United States and our allies and partners,” Blinken told a news conference with his German counterpart.

Later, Blinken accused Russia of threatening the foundations of world order with its buildup of an estimated 100,000 troops near Ukraine.

Russia must face a concerted and severe global response if it invades, he said in a speech in Berlin, the city that symbolized the Cold War split between East and West.

“These are difficult issues we are facing, and resolving them won’t happen quickly,” Blinken said. “I certainly don’t expect we’ll solve them in Geneva tomorrow.”

He later told an audience at the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences that Russia’s actions toward Ukraine are an attempt to subvert international norms and just the latest in a series of violations of numerous treaties, agreements and other commitments Moscow has made to respect the sovereignty and territory of other countries.

“Perhaps no place in the world experienced the divisions of the Cold War more than this city,” Blinken said. “Here, President Kennedy declared all free people citizens of Berlin. Here, President Reagan urged Mr. Gorbachev to tear down that wall. It seems at times that President Putin wants to return to that era. We hope not.”

Blinken met earlier with top diplomats from Britain, France and Germany to project a united front over concerns that Russia may be planning to invade Ukraine. He met Ukraine’s president in Kyiv a day earlier.

Blinken took pains Thursday to stress the U.S. and its partners were united, noting that American diplomats have held more than 100 meetings with allies in recent weeks “to ensure that we are speaking and acting together with one voice when it comes to Russia.”

“That unity gives us strength, a strength I might add that Russia does not and cannot match,” he said.

“It’s why we build voluntary alliances and partnerships in the first place. It’s also why Russia recklessly seeks to divide us.”

In Washington, the Biden administration announced Thursday it has levied new sanctions against four Ukrainian officials who administration officials say are part of a Russian influence effort to set the pretext for an invasion. The sanctions name parliament members Taras Kozak and Oleh Voloshyn and two former government officials. All four have been intimately involved in disinformation efforts by Russia’s federal security service, known as the FSB, according to Treasury.

Russia denies it is planning an invasion and, in turn, accused the West of plotting “provocations” in Ukraine, citing the delivery of weapons to the country by British military transports in recent days.

Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova alleged Ukrainian and Western talk of an imminent Russian attack was a “cover for staging large-scale provocations of their own, including those of military character.”

Russia wants binding security guarantees, including a permanent prohibition on Ukrainian membership in NATO, to which Kyiv aspires, and the removal of most of the U.S. and allied military presence in eastern Europe.

The U.S. and its European partners say they are willing to consider certain less-dramatic gestures but that the Russian demands are out of the question and that Putin knows they are nonstarters. That, Blinken said, is proof of Putin’s ulterior motive.

“So far, our good-faith gestures have been rebuffed -- because, in truth, this crisis is not primarily about weapons or military bases,” he said. “It’s about the sovereignty and self-determination of Ukraine and other post-Soviet states. And at its core, it’s about Russia’s rejection of a post-Cold War Europe that is whole and free.”

Russia on Thursday announced sweeping naval maneuvers through February, some apparently in the Black Sea, involving over 140 warships and more than 60 aircraft. Separately, Spain’s defense minister said the country was sending two warships to the Black Sea with NATO approval.

Amid concerns that Putin may not be moved by threats of sanctions, Blinken made a direct appeal to the Russian people to oppose any intervention.

“You deserve to live with security and dignity, like all people everywhere, and no one — not Ukraine, not the United States, not the countries of NATO — is seeking to jeopardize that. But what really risks

your security is a pointless war with your neighbors in Ukraine, with all the costs that come with it — most of all, for the young people who will risk or even give their lives to it,” he said.

The U.S. and NATO face a difficult task on Ukraine. Biden has said he is not planning to send combat troops in the case of a further Russian invasion. But he could pursue less dramatic yet still risky military options, including supporting a post-invasion Ukrainian resistance.

The rationale for not directly joining a Russia-Ukraine war is simple: The U.S. has no treaty obligation to Ukraine, and war with Russia would be an enormous gamble. But doing too little has risks, too.

—*Associated Press* writers *Vladimir Isachenkov in Moscow and Vanessa Gera in Warsaw, Poland, contributed*