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## **russia warns it will ‘gain world’s attention’ on first anniversary of Ukraine war**

### ***росія попереджає, що «приверне увагу всього світу» у перші роковини війни в Україні***

*Американський аналітичний центр «Інститут вивчення війни» (ISW) вважає, що до річниці вторгнення в Україну російські війська спробують захопити Донецьку та Луганську області. На думку аналітиків ISW, путін, можливо, також придивляється до транскордонних рейдів на північний схід України, щоб притиснути ЗСУ до прикордонних районів на півночі та відволікти їх від лінії фронту на сході. Посилаючись на недавнє рішення Німеччини поставити Україні сучасні бойові танки Leopard, путін попередив, що "сучасна війна з росією буде для них зовсім іншою".*

<https://nypost.com/2023/02/02/russia-warns-it-will-gain-worlds-attention-year-into-war/>

Russia’s top diplomat issued a chilling warning Thursday that Moscow “will do everything” to “gain the world’s attention” on the first anniversary of the war in Ukraine — as the Kremlin was said to be preparing to launch a new offensive with up to 500,000 conscripts.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov warned that Moscow would take great measures to overshadow anti-Russia events allegedly being planned by the West to mark the war’s anniversary on Feb. 24.

“Our diplomacy will do everything to ensure that the anti-Russian sabbaths planned for the end of February — as if timed to coincide with the anniversary of the special military operation, both in New York and at other sites that the West is now actively working on together with the Kyiv regime — so that this will not turn out to be the only events that will gain the world’s attention,” the country’s top envoy said in a wide-ranging interview to state TV Russia 24 and RIA Novosti.

Vladimir Putin’s chief representative revealed that Russia is working on “reports” detailing the events of the past year surrounding the invasion of Ukraine, including allegations of “direct participation” of the US in the sabotage of the Nord Stream pipeline linking Russia to Germany under the Baltic Sea.

Kyiv expects Putin to “attempt something” on Feb. 24, Ukrainian Defense Minister Oleksii Reznikov told France’s BFM network.

According to Reznikov, Russia has massed “close to 500,000 troops” in preparation for the looming onslaught, which the minister said could take place on two fronts: in the Donbas region in the east and in the south.

Russian President Vladimir Putin delivers his speech as he attends commemorations marking the 80th anniversary of the Soviet victory in the battle of Stalingrad in the southern Russian city of Volgograd Thursday.

Vladimir Putin is said to be plotting a massive offensive in Ukraine, which could involve up to 500,000 troops.

AP

“Officially, they announced 300,000 (conscripts) but when we see the troops at the borders, according to our assessments it is much more,” Reznikov said during the TV interview Wednesday night.

The minister said the Ukrainian military will work to prepare for a counter-offensive ahead of Russia’s push, adding that Ukraine “cannot lose the initiative” on the battlefield.

He stressed Kyiv’s urgent need to obtain new weapons from its Western allies without delay.

“We are telling our partners that we too need to be ready as fast as possible,” Reznikov said.

President Biden has ruled out providing F-16 fighter jets to Ukraine, which the country has sought. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin said Thursday that the focus of American aid is to increase Ukraine’s military capabilities by sending artillery, armor and air defense, and training Ukrainian troops.

The US is “focused on providing Ukraine the capability that it needs to be effective in its upcoming anticipated counteroffensive in the spring,” Austin said.

“And so we’re doing everything we can to get them the capabilities that they need right now to be effective on the battlefield,” he said.

Washington was reportedly preparing a new package of military aid for Ukraine worth \$2.2 billion, which is expected to include longer-range rockets for the first time.

Lavrov said Russian forces would respond to the delivery of the long-range weapons by trying to push Ukrainian troops farther away from the borders.

“We’re now seeking to push back Ukrainian army artillery to a distance that will not pose a threat to our territories,” he added. “The greater the range of the weapons supplied to the Kyiv regime, the more we will have to push them back from territories which are part of our country.”

The Institute for the Study of War, a Washington, DC-based think tank, said in its latest update Wednesday that Ukrainian top military brass anticipate that Russian forces will try to capture Donetsk and Luhansk provinces, which make up the contested Donbas region.

According to ISW analysts, Putin may also be eyeing cross-border raids into northeastern Ukraine to pin Kyiv’s forces against border areas in the north in order to distract them from the front lines in the east.

The think tank previously said that Russia’s offensive in eastern Ukraine, where the fighting has been the bloodiest in recent months, was “imminent.”

Oleksiy Danilov, secretary of the National Security and Defense Council of Ukraine, said in a sit-down with Sky News Tuesday that the next two to three months will be “defining” in the war.

“Russia is preparing for maximum escalation,” Danilov said. “It is gathering everything possible, doing drills and training.”

Meanwhile on Thursday, Putin marked the 80th anniversary of the World War II Soviet victory over Nazi German forces in the battle of Stalingrad, and invoked the long and grueling fight — regarded as the bloodiest in history — as justification for the conflict in Ukraine.

Putin laid a wreath at the eternal flame of the memorial complex to the fallen Red Army soldiers in Volgograd, the current name of the city, where some 2 million people lost their lives in the course of five months between August 1942 and February 1943.

Afterward, he said: “Now, regrettably, we see that the ideology of Nazism, in its modern guise, in its modern manifestation, once again poses direct threats to the security of our country. Again and again we are forced to repulse the aggression of the collective West.”

Communist's party supporters with Red flags gather around the statue of Soviet Marshal Georgy Zhukov after a wreath-laying ceremony at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier near the Kremlin Wall. Russians supporting the war in Ukraine have invoked the bloody Battle of Stalingrad as justification for the conflict in Ukraine.

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Referring to Germany's recent decision to supply advanced Leopard battle tanks to Ukraine, Putin warned that “a modern war with Russia will be quite different for them.”

284

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“It's incredible, but it's a fact: They are threatening us again with German Leopard tanks with crosses painted on their armor,” Putin said.

“And they are again going to fight Russia on the territory of Ukraine with the hands of Hitler's followers, the Banderites,” he said, referring to WWII-era Ukrainian nationalist leader Stepan Bandera, who was widely considered to be a Nazi collaborator.