

## Video: President Putin Expressed Optimism: “The Ball is In Their Court”

By [South Front](#)

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*Russian President Vladimir Putin held his annual press conference on December 23, 2021. Expanded meeting of the Board of the Ministry of Defense took place on December 21, 2021.*

“The ball is in their court.”

*Putin expressed optimism toward talks with Washington on security guarantees proposed by Moscow. He called the current negotiations with the U.S. “positive” and hinted at fresh direct talks in Geneva in 2022.*

*But “Russia’s actions will depend on whether the unconditional guarantee of Russia’s security will be ensured rather than on the results of negotiations.”*

[https://southfront.org/wp-content/uploads/video/24.12.2021\\_IMR\\_Russia.mp4](https://southfront.org/wp-content/uploads/video/24.12.2021_IMR_Russia.mp4)

*“NATO’s eastward expansion is unacceptable... They lied to us. There’ve been five waves of NATO’s enlargement. And here’s the result – Romania and Poland received missile systems. We are not the ones threatening someone. We are not the ones approaching the US or British borders... The West must provide us with guarantees immediately. Now.”*

“Not too much to ask”

*“It was the United States that came to our home with its missiles ... Is this too much to ask for? Not to place attack systems near our home? What is so unusual here?”*

Earlier, Putin claimed that Moscow is

*“ extremely concerned that elements of the US global missile defense are being*

*deployed near Russia. The Mk 41 launchers located in Romania and planned to be deployed in Poland are adapted to the use of Tomahawk systems. If this infrastructure is moved towards, if the US and NATO missile systems are deployed in Ukraine, then their flight time to Moscow will be reduced to seven to ten minutes, and when placing hypersonic weapons - up to five. This is a serious challenge for us - a challenge to our security."*

Russian Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu: *"US units with a total number of about 8000 military personnel are deployed in the countries of Eastern Europe. Infrastructure is being created to accommodate the US armored brigade. The deployment of the Aegis Ashore anti-missile complex is being completed in Poland. In Romania, combat duty is already being carried out at a similar missile defense facility.*

"Third Military Operation"

*"There is an impression that, maybe, they are preparing for the third military operation [in Ukraine] and give us a fair warning: do not intervene, do not protect these people but if you do intervene and protect them, there will be new sanctions. Perhaps, we should prepare for that."*

Sergei Shoigu :

*"The United States and NATO are purposefully increasing the scale and intensity of troop training activities near Russia with increased involvement of strategic aviation, carrying out conditional launches of nuclear missiles at our facilities. The number of their flights near the Russian borders has more than doubled. NATO pays special attention to the transfer of troops to the eastern flank of the alliance, including from the USA."*

He added that advisers from U.S. private military companies (PMCs) have been dispatched to Ukraine's Donbass setting up firing positions and defences, training Ukrainian special forces. He claimed that provocations with chemical weapons are prepared in Eastern Ukraine.

*"The situation is aggravated by the supply of helicopters, attack unmanned aerial vehicles, ATGMs by the US and its allies. The presence of more than 120 employees of American private military companies in the settlements of Avdiivka and Priazovskoye in the Donetsk region has been reliably confirmed."*

Sanctions for Democracy

Putin:

*"It is a strange situation: if someone thinks that Crimea is occupied then Crimeans are victims of aggression. So why are they being punished more? But if they chose to rejoin Russia in a referendum then it is a display of democracy.*

*Are they [the West] fighting democracy? The answer is: they don't give a damn about the interests of Crimeans and Russia or democracy. They are pursuing their geopolitical agenda. That's all. We understand it and we will respond accordingly".*

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