



Putin's Major Wartime Speech Postponed In Highly Unusual Move

Description

RUSSIA: (Update1600ET): In a highly unusual move, after about two hours of waiting for Russian President Vladimir Putin to give a highly anticipated speech, Kremlin sources have said it has **been postponed until tomorrow**. Curiously, Russia's Channel One and RT within the last minutes have even removed the speech announcement. "Go to sleep," RT editor Margarita Simonyan [wrote](#) on Telegram.

Amid continued speculation over the nature of what was likely to signal major changes in the way Russia is executing its "special operation" in Ukraine, including the likelihood that Putin was to declare and confirm popular referendums toward joining the Russian federation across occupied parts of Ukraine, one question remains: was he poised to issue formal declaration of war? Perhaps there was last-minute internal Kremlin scrambling and second-guessing? Possibly top decision-makers representing the US and NATO reached out in a last-ditch negotiation offer and effort to avoid full war?

Andrey Kartapolov, the chairman of the State Duma Defense Committee, has Tuesday evening been cited as [suggesting](#) "There will be no general mobilization, but martial law may be imposed in some places."

It remains that a lot happened on Tuesday, with things seeming to lead to some kind of climactic declaration, anticipated as centered on Putin's now rescheduled speech. As a BBC Moscow correspondent summarizes of how fast events have been moving early [this week](#):

- *Parliament passes law introducing concepts of mobilization & martial law*
- *Rebel 'republics' in east Ukraine (under Kremlin control) announce "referenda" on joining Russia for 23-27 Sept*
- *Putin urges industry to boost weaponry production*
- *Pop legend Alla Pugacheva may be investigated under 'discrediting Russian armed forces' law for anti-war post*
- *Army recruitment center for foreign citizens to be set up at Moscow migrant center*
- *Parliament approves law for such recruits to receive Russian passports*

There are unconfirmed reports that the speech could yet come by early Wednesday...

Citing two sources, [@ForbesRussia](#) says Putin's pre-recorded address will be aired when the country's "Far East wakes up." Kremlin pool journalist Dmitry Smirnov says the address will be at 8am Moscow time — The Guardian correspondent

— Stefanie Kammerman/The Stock Whisperer (@VolumePrintcess) [September 20, 2022](#)

Meanwhile, Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan has said during a [PBS News interview](#) on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly in New York that he's seeking to mediate a comprehensive peace settlement. According to his key statements of his words via *Bloomberg*:

*"Russia should return occupied territory to Ukraine as part of a peace settlement"...
Erdoğan says he had 'very extensive discussions' with President Vladimir Putin last week in Uzbekistan.*

"He is actually showing me that he's willing to end this as soon as possible," Erdoğan who has pushed Turkey as a mediator in the conflict told the broadcaster. "That was my impression, because the way things are going right now are quite problematic."

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Update(1055ET): Russia's President Putin is set to give a major speech Tuesday evening (Moscow time) amid announcements by pro-Russian authorities in occupied regions of Ukraine that referendums to join the Russian Federation will be held in the coming days.

Russian media is reporting within the last hours (machine translation): "President Vladimir Putin may speak on Tuesday, September 20, regarding referendums in the territories of the LPR, DPR, Kherson and Zaporozhye regions. RBC was told about this by three sources close to the presidential administration. The speech is expected before the end of the day, what exactly the head of state will say is unknown to RBC's interlocutors."

There are reports that Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu will also be by Putin's side, leading some pundits to speculate we are about to see a possible formal declaration of war and "national mobilization" of Russian society.

BREAKING: Putin may hold a speech today regarding the referendums in the territories of the LPR, DPR, Kherson and Zaporozhye, sources tell RBC

The speech is expected before the end of the day, what exactly he will say, is unknown
<https://t.co/slsvS5ElrK>

— Faytuks News ? (@Faytuks) [September 20, 2022](#)

Putin is holding a meeting with leaders of the Russian Military Industrial Complex. There is

heavy speculation that the current 200k force engaging Ukraine will be heavily increased and expanded. pic.twitter.com/8KoydcPkFE

— LogKa (@LogKa11) [September 20, 2022](#)

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Multiple pro-Moscow officials in Ukraine on Tuesday announced their intent to stage **referendums on joining Russia**, including the head of the Donetsk People's Republic Denis Pushilin, as well as the Russia-installed official over the southern Kherson region, Vladimir Saldo. "I think that people have long been waiting for a referendum here and it will probably be a political move that will help ensure the safety of civilians," Pushilin [said](#) Tuesday.

The neighboring Luhansk People's Republic, where fierce battles took place ahead of and into the summer wherein Russia definitively gobbled up most territory, has also adopted a law on holding a vote, now announced for **September 23-27**.



AFP/Getty Images

Bloomberg in reporting the announcement suggests that Ukraine's counteroffensive in the east may have actually hastened Moscow's timeline on annexation:

*The Kremlin is moving hastily to stage sham votes on annexing the regions of Ukraine its forces still control, after Kyiv's military drove Russian troops from large areas of territory taken in their seven-month-old invasion. The so-called Luhansk People's Republic may **hold its vote as soon as this weekend**, Interfax quoted a senior legislator as saying Tuesday.*

Kherson region's Vladimir Saldo too said that "the leadership of the Kherson region administration decided to prepare and hold a referendum" after what he described as a public appeal, saying in a [video message](#):

"We have set a course for reunification, a return to Russia. And we will not turn away from it."

As for the two self-proclaimed republics in the Donbas, this has long been seen as perhaps inevitable since the war began, but even **partially Russian-controlled Zaporizhzhia region has seen pro-Russian officials already talking about a referendum**, based on the "We are together with Russia" movement.

Kremlin officials have long been on record as saying Ukrainian regions which hold a referendum vote in the affirmative will be recognized and granted admission to the Russian Federation. At the same time Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky has vowed his forces will not stop fighting until every inch of Ukraine territory is liberated, including even the Crimea – under Russian control since 2014. The hardening of resolve on both sides have made negotiations essentially impossible at this point.

Ukrainian gains in Kharkiv counter-offensive



Referendums in occupied territory will further ensure the warring sides deem direct talks as not a real

option. *Bloomberg* notes further of how the referendums are likely to change the battlefield dynamic:

*By making the occupied zones formally part of Russia under the country's laws, the votes may also **allow the Kremlin to deploy conscript troops there, in addition to the current force of contract soldiers and military contractors.***

Dmitry Medvedev, the deputy head of Russia's Security Council, said that the referendums will result in greater protection of residents from Ukrainian attacks. "Encroachment onto the territory of Russia is a crime which allows you to use all self-defense forces," he [said](#) on Telegram.

So far in the Donbas – in the DPR and LPR regions – the main fighting forces have been the pro-Russian separatist militias. Making these Russian territory opens the door for 'legal' (in Moscow's eyes) entry of regular conscripts and even **permanent military bases**.

Meanwhile, amid reported devastating losses and a general pullback from positions near Kharkiv, Russia is believed to be on the brink of major escalation...

Looks like Russia may be ready to take things up a gear in Ukraine.

The Duma just passed a bill introducing the concepts of "mobilization" and "martial law" into law. The upper house could approve it tomorrow, after which Putin will sign it.

<https://t.co/AcyPw45HLW>

— max seddon (@maxseddon) [September 20, 2022](#)

Throughout this month there have been persisting rumors that Putin could be ready to formally declare a state of war against Ukraine. State media sources are on Tuesday reporting that Russian parliament appears to be taking legal steps to pave the way for national mobilization of forces:

*The State Duma immediately in the second and third readings unanimously approved the amendments, including the introduction of the **concepts of "mobilization" and "wartime" into the Criminal Code**, as well as establishing responsibility for looting and voluntary surrender.*

Given the series of occupied Ukraine regions now declaring intent to hold referendums, coming just as news of these key changes being pushed through the State Duma emerge on Tuesday, it does seem Russia is about to quickly "answer" the ongoing Ukraine counteroffensive in a dramatic way.

Margarita Simonyan, the Editor-in-chief of state-funded RT news, made the following ominous prediction: "By what is happening and still about to happen, **this week marks either the eve of our imminent victory, or the eve of nuclear war. I can't see anything third.**"

by Tyler Durden

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