

BIDEN WARNS PUTIN OF 'SEVERE COSTS'

Relevant for: International Relations | Topic: Effect of policies and politics of developed & developing countries on India's interests

Act of resistance: Ukrainians protesting against escalation of tensions with Russia in central Kiev on Saturday. AP | Photo Credit: [EFREM LUKATSKY](#)

U.S. President Joe Biden on Saturday again called upon President Vladimir Putin to pull back more than 1,00,000 Russian troops amassed near Ukraine's borders and warned that the U.S. and its allies would "respond decisively and impose swift and severe costs" if Russia invades, according to the White House.

Mr. Biden and Mr. Putin spoke for more than an hour the day after the U.S. President's National Security Adviser, Jake Sullivan, warned that U.S. intelligence shows that a Russian invasion could begin within days and before the Winter Olympics in Beijing end on February 20.

The Biden administration has been warning for weeks that Russia could invade Ukraine soon, but U.S. officials had previously said the Kremlin would likely wait until after the Games ended so as not to antagonize China.

Mr. Sullivan told reporters on Friday that U.S. intelligence gleaned show that Russia could take military action the during the Olympics.

Russia denies that it intends to launch an offensive against Ukraine.

With the risk of war looming larger, Russian President Vladimir Putin and U.S. President Joe Biden held a high-stakes telephone call on Saturday as a tense world watched and worried that an invasion of Ukraine could begin within days.

Before talking to Mr. Biden, Mr. Putin had a telephone call with French President Emmanuel Macron.

The closely watched call between Mr. Biden and Mr. Putin began shortly after 11 a.m. and lasted just over an hour, according to the White House. Mr. Biden conducted the call from Camp David. There were no immediate details about the discussion.

In a sign that American officials were getting ready for a worst-case scenario, the United States announced plans to evacuate its embassy in the Ukrainian capital, and Britain joined other European nations in urging its citizens to leave Ukraine.

'Speculations'

The U.S. picked up intelligence that Russia is looking at Wednesday as a target date, according to a U.S. official familiar with the findings. The White House publicly underscored that the U.S. does not know with certainty whether Mr. Putin is committed to invasion.

A Kremlin statement about the Putin-Macron call referred to "provocative speculations about an allegedly planned Russian 'invasion' of Ukraine."

Mr. Putin also complained in the call that the United States and NATO have not responded satisfactorily to Russian demands that Ukraine be prohibited from joining the military alliance

and that NATO pull back forces from Eastern Europe.

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