Address to the citizens of Russia

President Vladimir Putin • 24 June 2023

[Transcribed from original by the Parley Policy Initiative]

I am addressing citizens of Russia, the personnel of the Armed Forces, law enforcement agencies and security services, and the soldiers and commanders who are now fighting in their combat positions, repulsing enemy attacks and doing it heroically – I know this as I spoke once again with the commanders of all sections of the frontline last night. I am also addressing those who were dragged into this criminal adventure through deceit or threats and pushed onto the path of a grave crime – an armed mutiny.

Today, Russia is waging a tough struggle for its future, repelling the aggression of neo-Nazis and their patrons. The entire military, economic and informational machine of the West is directed against us. We are fighting for the lives and security of our people, for our sovereignty and independence, for the right to be and remain Russia, a state with a thousand-year history.

This battle, when the fate of our nation is being decided, requires consolidation of all forces. It requires unity, consolidation and a sense of responsibility, and everything that weakens us, any strife that our external enemies can use and do so to subvert us from within, must be discarded.

Therefore, any actions that split our nation are essentially a betrayal of our people, of our comrades-in-arms who are now fighting at the frontline. This is a knife in the back of our country and our people.

A blow like this was dealt to Russia in 1917, when the country was fighting in World War I. But the victory was stolen from it: intrigues, squabbles and politicking behind the backs of the army and the nation turned into the greatest turmoil, the destruction of the army and the collapse of the state, and the loss of vast territories, ultimately leading to the tragedy of the civil war.

Russians were killing Russians and brothers were killing brothers, while all sorts of political adventurers and foreign forces profited from the situation by tearing the country apart to divide it.

We will not allow this to happen again. We will protect our people and our statehood from any threats, including from internal betrayal.

What we are facing is essentially a betrayal. Inflated ambitions and personal interests have led to treason – treason against our country, our people and the common cause which Wagner Group soldiers and commanders were fighting and dying for shoulder to

shoulder, together with our other units and troops. The heroes who liberated Soledar and Artyomovsk, towns and villages in Donbass, fought and gave their lives for Novorossiya and the unity of the Russian world. Their memory and glory have also been betrayed by those who are attempting to stage a revolt and are pushing the country towards anarchy and fratricide – and ultimately, towards defeat and surrender.

Once again, any internal revolt is a deadly threat to our statehood and our nation. It is a blow to Russia, to our people. Our actions to defend the Fatherland from this threat will be harsh. All those who have consciously chosen the path of betrayal, planned an armed mutiny and taken the path of blackmail and terrorism, will inevitably be punished and will answer before the law and our people.

The Armed Forces and other government agencies have received the necessary orders. Additional counterterrorism measures are now in effect in Moscow, the Moscow Region and several other regions. Resolute action will also be taken to stabilise the situation in Rostov-on-Don. It remains difficult; in effect, the work of civil and military authorities has been blocked.

As the President of Russia and Supreme Commander-in-Chief, and as a citizen of Russia, I will take every effort to defend the country and protect the constitutional order as well as the lives, security and freedom of our citizens.

Those who staged the mutiny and took up arms against their comrades – they have betrayed Russia and will be brought to account. I urge those who are being dragged into this crime not to make a fatal and tragic mistake but make the only right choice: to stop taking part in criminal actions.

I am certain that we will preserve and defend what we hold dear and sacred, and together with our Motherland we will overcome any hardships and become even stronger.