

# [***Putin Warns of 'Full-Scale World War III' in Victory Speech***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BK7-XK51-DY68-1009-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Length:** 464 words

**Byline:** Brendan Cole

**Highlight:** The Russian leader made the comment after claiming victory in an election with no genuine opposition allowed to stand.

**Body**

Vladimir Putin has spoken of the prospect of a full-scale conflict between Moscow and [*NATO*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/nato?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) that would lead to a "full-scale Third World War," after he claimed victory in an election condemned by the West as neither free nor fair.

After the Kremlin said he had won nearly 88 percent of the vote, the Russian president addressed a press conference in which he took aim at those "want to intimidate us." He said such a move "has not worked now and will not work in the future. Never."

Taking questions from reporters, Putin was asked about the possibility of a conflict between Russia and the West. He replied: "I think that everything is possible in the modern world.

"But I have already said, and it is clear to everyone, that it will be one step away from a full-scale third world war. I think hardly anyone is interested in this," Putin added. *Newsweek* has emailed NATO for comment.

The Kremlin wanted the tightly controlled election to see Russians back Putin's full-scale invasion of Ukraine where voting was also held in Russian-occupied territories.

However, Western leaders have raised the alarm that Putin will set his sights beyond Ukraine after the war. On January 19, Dutch Admiral Rob Bauer, the chair of the NATO military committee, [*said that members needed to prepare for a war*](https://www.newsweek.com/nato-official-says-alliance-ready-direct-confrontation-russia-1777362?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) with Russia in the next 20 years.

A similar call was made by the commanders-in-chief of the armies and defense ministers of the security bloc's members including the U.K., Denmark, and Poland.

"If he succeeds in Ukraine, he will probably seek to challenge U.S. NATO allies, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, whose membership in NATO he has always seen as a threat to Russia," Randall Stone, ***politics*** professor at the University of Rochester in New York state, told *Newsweek*. "He may even seek to dominate Poland, which he describes as a historical antagonist of Russia.

"The war has shifted Russian strategy and economic ties away from the West and towards China, Iran and India, so Putin can be expected to be more antagonistic to the West in the future," Stone said.

The American Institute for the Study of War ([*ISW*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/isw?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships)) has said that Putin is preparing for a large-scale war with NATO in the long term. Meanwhile, U.S. President [*Joe Biden*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/joe-biden?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) warned in December that Putin would attack NATO after Ukraine, which the Russian leader [*has dismissed*](https://www.newsweek.com/vladimir-putin-nato-countries-war-ukraine-joe-biden-1853113?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) as "nonsense."

Wobbles among Ukraine's Western allies and the continued push by Russian forces after their capture of Avdiivka in the Donetsk oblast have handed the momentum to Putin.

"He currently thinks that military developments are moving in his favor," said Stone. "He hopes that [*Donald Trump*](https://www.newsweek.com/topic/donald-trump?utm_source=Synacor&utm_medium=Attnet&utm_campaign=Partnerships) will win the election in November and paralyze U.S. assistance to Ukraine, which would allow him to dismember Ukraine or negotiate from a position of strength."

[*Link to Image*](https://d.newsweek.com/en/full/2363364/russian-president-vladimir-putin.jpg)

**Graphic**

Russian president Vladimir Putin

Getty Images

Vladimir Putin speaks during his press conference at his campaign headquarters, early March,18,2024, in Moscow, Russia.

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