



## Cabinet of the Russian Federation (2022)

Esteemed Ministers of the Russian Federation,

Welcome. I hope this memorandum finds you well. I have convened this emergency summit to discuss matters of profound importance to the state. The following report has been prepared for you all to brief you on the current geopolitical situation and crises across and within our borders and their consequent geo-economic and societal impacts on our country and state policy.

Ministers, I expect you all to review the below report and arrive at this summit ready to discuss all possible policy options regarding the evolving situations from Ukraine to Belarus and Bosnia and Herzegovina, but also to the growing civil unrest within our own borders over a number of issues. We are in challenging times, but even during a global pandemic, we must take every opportunity that presents itself to strengthen our position on the world stage. Through statecraft or through steel.

### Regarding Domestic Affairs:

Domestically, we are facing growing instability, especially in our urban centers. Allegations of corruption, rising anti-government sentiments, growing protests, foreign interference and sanctions, and the ever-continuing SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) pandemic have brought unprecedented challenges to our administration. Alexey Navalny, the prominent leader of the Russia of the Future party, has become a messianic figure for anti-government protestors across the country after his detention earlier in January 2021<sup>1</sup>. Our police forces arrested almost 1,700 protestors who marched the streets for the release of Navalny in April 2021<sup>2</sup>. There have been hundreds of thousands who have marched across Russia in support of this opposition leader. Ministers, we must devise a course of action to quell these anti-government rioters by any means necessary.

Additionally, countries of the West have expanded their sanctions on our nation. The sanctions of the United States<sup>3</sup> are grounded on the baseless allegations of interfering in the American election of 2016 as well as the SolarWinds cyberattack<sup>4</sup>. The United Kingdom has also recently threatened to levy sanctions against us<sup>5</sup>, in partnership with other Western nations, over our national security infrastructure near Ukraine. We have long been sanctioned by the United States, and it is unlikely that these sanctions will be lifted unless we were to acquire significant leverage

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-16057045>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.npr.org/2021/04/22/989694331/at-least-1-700-protesters-in-russia-arrested-after-nationwide-anti-putin-rallies>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.gibsondunn.com/biden-administration-imposes-additional-sanctions-on-russia/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/jy0127>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/world/uk/britain-warns-russia-over-ukraine-were-working-high-impact-sanctions-2022-01-06/>

against Washington's interests. However, we do risk increased European sanctions against us for any further escalation in Ukraine. We must be prudent in our dealings, for risk of a complete economic disaster if we were to lose access to European markets.

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused severe trauma to our people, and continues to significantly spread and kill thousands of Russians. We are currently leading in the number of COVID-19 related deaths in Europe with over 700 daily deaths, and percent daily infections have increased 70% since last week<sup>6</sup>. The Omicron variant of COVID-19 has shown to spread with significant speed, and we must take further action to reduce the spread of the virus while balancing the needs of our people and the state.

#### *Regarding Possible Actions in Ukraine:*

We are also facing numerous challenges and opportunities for growing our influence abroad. On January 10th, 2022, we exited negotiations<sup>7</sup> with the United States and Ukraine, without resolution, regarding our positioning of military infrastructure in Eastern Europe and Ukraine's dangerous movement towards the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)<sup>8</sup>. It is imperative that Ukraine not join NATO, and we must be ready to exercise all possible actions to prevent this. Losing Ukraine to NATO would deal a blow to Russian sovereignty, and could create escalation of conflict in Crimea.

The American media is attempting to cast our actions as imperialist and war hungry<sup>9</sup>, yet we understand that the people of Ukraine need Russian support now more than ever. We have done our due diligence, and 3,000 troops, 300 tanks, and anti-infantry vehicles have been deployed to perform security exercises in the regions bordering Ukraine and Belarus<sup>10</sup>. We must be prepared, however, for more severe actions that the United States could take against us in Ukraine. Though it appears unlikely, especially in the eve of the withdrawal from Afghanistan, we cannot rule out the possibility of an American intervention in Ukraine if tensions escalate.

#### *Regarding Possible Actions in Belarus:*

Belarus, whose administration is closely tied with our own, has also been at the forefront of our attention due to various issues. Belarus and its authoritarian president Alexander Lukashenko have been cultivating closer economic and political ties to Russia and has been consistently alienating its other European neighbors over the past years. A commercial airplane holding a prominent opposition leader, Roman Protosevich, was downed at the request of the state, and he was taken into custody in May 2021<sup>11</sup>. This was a highly controversial event that caused

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<sup>6</sup> <https://graphics.reuters.com/world-coronavirus-tracker-and-maps/countries-and-territories/russia/>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/01/10/world/europe/russia-us-ukraine-talks.html>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.nato.int/nato-welcome/index.html>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-60048395>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2022/01/12/russia-launches-military-drills-near-ukraine-as-invasion-fears-remain-high-a76017>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/05/23/world/europe/ryanair-belarus.html>

European airlines to ban Belarusian airspace and reroute all flights that passed through its borders<sup>12</sup>. There is also currently an impasse regarding migrants, mostly Iraqi Kurds, who have been stranded at the Belarus-Poland border<sup>13</sup>. The migrants have been stranded in the forests at the border in freezing temperatures. Belarus has also been accused of encouraging migrants to fly to its capital Minsk, where the migrants were then sent to the border with Poland<sup>14</sup>. It appears that neither side is seeking to allow the migrants to enter their country and seek lawful asylum. This is an extreme human rights crisis, and we need to ensure a resolution as the leading power in the region. Lukashenko has also reaffirmed his threat to sever energy transit from Russia to Germany if Poland closes its borders with Belarus in response to the migrant crisis<sup>15</sup>. It appears that without intervention, this crisis will only escalate, and our economic interests can become targets in the political crossfire between Poland and Belarus. Our Gazprom pipelines must not be severed by Belarus, at the risk of severe economic impacts as well as reputational damages.

Lukashenko is a wildcard, and it is difficult to predict how Belarus will respond to future crises. We must closely monitor this situation, as it is an opportunity for our nation to serve as a diplomatic mediator and increase our influence in the region. We cannot allow Belarus to destabilize or delegitimize our influence in the region, and we will consider all options if Lukashenko attracts any serious interventions by other nations.

*Regarding Escalating Secessionist Sentiments in Bosnia and Herzegovina:*

Bosnian Serb leader Milorad Dodik, a member of the three-person presidential body that governs the country, has been stoking ethnic and religious tensions in Bosnia and Herzegovina<sup>16</sup>. Bosnian Serbs have flocked to the streets to protest for more rights regarding self-determination for the Republika Srpska within Bosnia and Herzegovina. This movement, led by Dodik, seems to be escalating to threats of secession. The European Union threatened all actions under the E.U. policy toolkit against the Republika Srpska, and its leader, for their allegedly seditious and Islamophobic rhetoric that goes against the principles of their united constitution. Dodik also presided over the officially banned celebration of the Day of Republika Srpska on January 9th<sup>17</sup>. The holiday was ruled unconstitutional by the constitutional court of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and it originally celebrates the day when Bosnian Serbs declared independence from Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1992. The celebrations saw armed police and other participants chanting songs celebrating the war, praising the massacre of non-Serbs, and insulting Islam<sup>18</sup>. The complex history of the Balkans presents a strategic opportunity for our nation to act as a regulator.

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<sup>12</sup> <https://www.npr.org/2021/06/04/1003173750/eu-bans-belarus-airlines-and-reroutes-flights-around-its-airspace>

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/world/migrants-stranded-freezing-cold-belarus-poland-border-rcna10285>

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.npr.org/2021/12/22/1067024851/belarus-is-still-using-migrants-as-a-political-weapon-against-the-eu>

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.politico.eu/article/lukashenko-renews-threats-to-cut-russian-gas-supplies-to-eu/>

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.politico.eu/article/secession-threat-bosnia-milorad-dodik-eu-limited-options/>

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/us-calls-probe-into-banned-bosnian-serb-commemoration-2022-01-11/>

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/osce-warns-against-hate-incidents-destabilising-bosnia-2022-01-12/>

This situation is evolving, but Russia can serve as a strong mediator between the Republika Srpska and Bosnia and Herzegovina. It is also imperative that we do not allow Bosnia and Herzegovina to join NATO. There have been growing calls from the West for Bosnia and Herzegovina to join NATO in order to further deter our influence in the Balkans<sup>19</sup>, however we have been successful in strengthening our ties with the Bosnian Serbs, and specifically in the economic and political interests of the Republika Srpska<sup>20</sup>. We must continue our commitment in protecting the right of the Bosnian Serbs' right of self-determination. Assisting in the possible creation of an independent Republika Srpska would help drive a strong wedge in NATO's influence in the Balkans, and would further grow Russian strategic interests.

Conclusion:

Ministers, we have much to discuss at our emergency summit. Please come prepared, and ready to utilize all possible policy prescriptions to address the various issues that we are facing abroad and at home. We are in a pivotal time where the influence of the United States is withering away, and it is a prime opportunity for us to catapult our nation into the undisputable role as the hegemon of Eurasia.

Best regards,



Vladimir Putin, President of the Russian Federation

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<sup>19</sup><https://www.newsweek.com/bosnia-join-nato-soon-possible-foreign-minister-bisera-turkovic-russia-looms-serb-crisis-balkans-1646250>

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.rferl.org/a/bosnia-russia-dodik-putin/31591167.html>

**Questions to Consider:**

1. How should the Russian Federation respond in a situation where NATO agrees to let Ukraine join? What leverage do we have against the West to make this an infeasible option for NATO?
2. How can we balance our state's interests and mitigate global pressures to quell anti-government sentiment in Russia? How do we eradicate Navalny's influence in Russia?
3. How can we increase vaccination in Russia, ensure that our people are protected from new variants of COVID-19, and reduce hospitalizations/death while keeping the country open and running? In the event of conflict, is our nation prepared for warfare during a pandemic?
4. How can we involve allied nations like the People's Republic of China and the Republic of Turkey to offset Western interests in Eastern Europe and the Levant? Can they play a role in supporting our interests in these regions?
5. How can we leverage the secessionist movement in Bosnia and Herzegovina to further cement Russian influence in the Balkans? Can we potentially serve as a mediator in this situation to deter the West in other affairs? Or would it be more prudent to support the Bosnian Serbs in creating an independent Republika Srpska?

**Key Terms:**

- Asylum
- Asylum-seeker
- Exclusion Clauses
- Gender-related persecution
- Local integration
- Resettlement
- Dayton Accords
- Build Back Better World (B3W)
- Belt Road Initiative (BRI)
- Cold War
- Strategic Nuclear Warhead
- Nuclear Arsenal
- Nuclear Demilitarization
- Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT)
- Hybrid and Multi-Facet Conflicts
- Uyghur Muslims

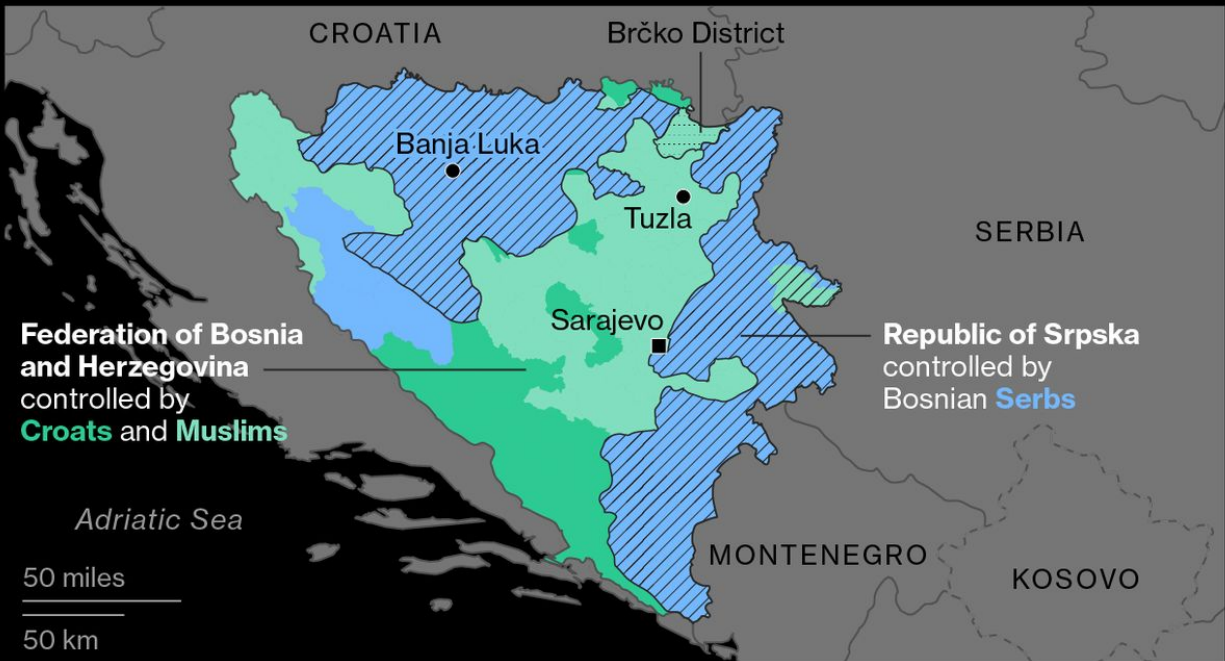
## Sources and Additional Reading

- Why the Belarus Crisis is different -  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vVb43-3AT7s&ab\\_channel=Vox](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vVb43-3AT7s&ab_channel=Vox)
- What Merkel's departure means for Europe -  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q7Eb4KVw4nE>
- [https://www.voanews.com/a/usa\\_us-offer-alternative-chinas-belt-and-road-initiative/6206928.html](https://www.voanews.com/a/usa_us-offer-alternative-chinas-belt-and-road-initiative/6206928.html)
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- <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/05/26/world/europe/whats-happening-in-belarus.html>
- Chinese Nuclear Weapon Program:  
<https://www.scmp.com/infographics/article/1618259/china-marks-50-years-nuclear-weapons>

## An Uneasy Peace

Bosnia has held together since 1995, though ethnic tension has never been far away

■ Bosnian Serbs ■ Bosnian Muslims ■ Bosnian Croats



Source: 2013 Census in Bosnia and Herzegovina

**Bloomberg**

