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## Remarks in an Exchange With Reporters Prior to Departure for Lorain, Ohio
*February 17, 2022*

*Russia/Ukraine*

*Q.* Mr. President. How high is the threat of a Russian invasion right now?

*The President.* It's very high.

*Q.* Why?

*The President.* It's very—because they have not—they have not moved any of their troops out. They've moved more troops in, number one. Number two, we have reason to believe that they are engaged in a false-flag operation to have an excuse to go in. Every indication we have is, they're prepared to go into Ukraine, attack Ukraine—number one.

Number two, I've been waiting for a response from Putin for my letter that—my response to him. It's come to that—Moscow Embassy. They're faxing it here. Not faxing it, they're sending it here. I have not read it yet. I cannot comment on it.

*Q.* Have you been briefed on it in any way?

*The President.* No——

*Russia/Ukraine*

*Q.* Do you think he's going to go through with this, sir? Is your sense that this is going to happen now?

*The President.* Yes. Not——

*Q.* When?

*The President.* I—my sense is, this will happen within the next several days. Thank you.

*Q.* How many days are we talking?

*Q.* What does it say—[*inaudible*]?

*President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin of Russia/Ukraine*

*Q.* Is there any diplomatic path still available, Mr. President?

*The President.* Yes, there is. There's a clear diplomatic path. That's why I asked Senator—Senator—[*laughter*]—Secretary Blinken to go to the United Nations and make his statement today. He'll lay out what that path is. I've laid out a path to Putin as well on, I think, Sunday. And so there is a path. There is a way through this, but by diplomacy.

*Q.* Are you going to call Putin?

*Q.* Will you speak with Putin again?

*Q.* Are you going to call Putin?

*The President.* I'm not calling Putin. I have no plans to call Putin right now. Thank you.

*Q.* What about the——

*Q.* Do you think he's made a final decision, sir?

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:17 a.m. on the South Lawn at the White House prior to boarding Marine One.

*Categories:* Interviews With the News Media : Exchanges with reporters :: White House.

*Locations:* Washington, DC.

*Names:* Blinken, Antony J.; Putin, Vladimir Vladimirovich.

*Subjects:* Communications : News media :: Presidential interviews; Russia : International diplomatic efforts; Russia : President; Russia : Relations with Ukraine; State, Department of : Secretary; Ukraine : Russia, role.

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