

Putin's Decree Triggers Ominous Alaska Calls

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Russian President [Vladimir Putin](#) has signed a new decree relating to Moscow's historic real estate holdings abroad, a move interpreted by ultranationalist bloggers as a foundation for future revanchism against Russia's neighbors—and even the U.S.

The decree, signed by the president late last week, allocates funds for the search, registration, and legal protection of Russian property abroad, including property in the former territories of the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union.

This would include Alaska, swathes of eastern and central Europe, large chunks of central Asia, and parts of Scandinavia.

Russia's Foreign Ministry and its presidential administration's Foreign Property Management Enterprise are directed to carry out the work, ordered to find, register, and protect "property" in question.



Russian President Vladimir Putin at a meeting in Moscow, on January 17, 2024. Putin has signed a new decree relating to Moscow's historic real estate holdings abroad.

GAVRIIL GRIGOROV/POOL/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

The Institute for the Study of War noted that the "exact parameters of what constitutes current or historical Russian property are unclear." *Newsweek* has contacted the Kremlin by email to request comment.

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"The Kremlin may use the 'protection' of its claimed property in countries outside of its internationally recognized borders to forward soft power mechanisms in post-Soviet and neighboring states ultimately aimed at internal destabilization."

One prominent ultranationalist, pro-war military blogger framed the decree as a step towards new territorial conflicts with Russian neighbors, including the U.S.

"We suggest starting with Alaska," the Two Majors Telegram channel—which has more than 530,000 subscribers—wrote. Beyond that, the blogger wrote that the Kremlin should look to "Dnieper Ukraine, Bessarabia, the Grand Duchy of Finland, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, the Central Asian states of Russian Turkestan, most of the Baltic provinces, and a significant part of Poland."

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"Property can be searched both in the [German Democratic Republic] and in other Warsaw Pact countries," the channel wrote, referring to the Cold War era parts of Germany and other central European nations under Soviet control. "An expedition of combat legal defenders has already set out for Africa," it added, perhaps in a reference to Moscow's burgeoning "Africa Corps."

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Putin has previously downplayed the 1867 sale of Alaska to the U.S. He has called the deal "[inexpensive](#)" and said people should "not get worked up about" the event. But some of his allies have suggested that Moscow may [re-open the issue](#) as a territorial dispute.

The [ISW](#) said such ambitions are implausible, but the reaction of the Two Majors speaks to the deep-set revanchist sentiment within Russia's ultranationalist community. There, criticism of Moscow's war on Ukraine stems from Russia's failure to achieve its goals, and Putin's apparent hesitation to order full national mobilization.

There is speculation that the Kremlin may begin a new round of mass mobilization after the March presidential election, which Putin is sure to win. The Russian leader has shown no sign of downgrading his maximalist goals in Ukraine, and Kyiv is preparing for a new major Russian offensive operation in 2024.