

Putin sets partial military mobilization, won't 'bluff' on nukes

The mobilization could add an additional 300,000 troops to Russia's forces.

KYIV, Ukraine — Russian President Vladimir Putin ordered a partial mobilization of reservists Wednesday to bolster his forces in Ukraine, a deeply unpopular move that sparked rare protests across the country and led to almost 1,200 arrests.

The risky order follows humiliating setbacks for Putin's troops nearly seven months after they invaded Ukraine. The first such call-up in Russia since World War II heightened tensions with Ukraine's Western backers, who derided it as an act of weakness and desperation.

The move also sent some Russians scrambling to buy plane tickets to flee the country.

In his 14-minute nationally televised address, Putin also warned the West that he isn't bluffing about using everything at his disposal to protect Russia — an apparent reference to his nuclear arsenal. He has previously rebuked NATO countries for supplying weapons to Ukraine.

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