

Russia is now fighting NATO in Ukraine, top Putin ally says

MOSCOW, Jan 10 (Reuters) - One of President Vladimir Putin's closest allies said on Tuesday that Moscow was now fighting the U.S.-led NATO military alliance in Ukraine and that the West was trying to wipe Russia from the political map of the world.

Putin casts the war in Ukraine as an existential battle with an aggressive and arrogant West, and has said that Russia will use all available means to protect itself and its people against any aggressor.

Russian Security Council Secretary Nikolai Patrushev is seen by diplomats as one of the major hardline influences on Putin, who has promised victory in Ukraine despite a series of battlefield setbacks.

"The events in Ukraine are not a clash between Moscow and Kyiv - this is a military confrontation between Russia and NATO, and above all the United States and Britain," Patrushev told the Argumenti i Fakti newspaper in an interview.

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