Putin calls on Ukraine military to overthrow government, agree peace deal

'Take power into your own hands,' says Russian president.

Putin asks Ukrainian military to overthrow the government in exchange for peace | Alexey Nikolsky/Sputnik/AFP via Getty Images

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February 25, 2022 4:32 pm

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Russian President Vladimir Putin called Friday on the Ukrainian military to overthrow the country's political leaders and agree a peace deal, as Russian forces attacked Kyiv.

"Take power into your own hands," Putin said in an opening video [statement](#) before a meeting of the Russian Security Council, a day after ordering troops into Ukraine.

"It seems that it will be easier for us to come to an agreement than with this gang of drug addicts and neo-Nazis, who occupied Kyiv and took the entire Ukrainian people hostage," he added. Ukraine's democratically elected president, [Volodymyr Zelenskiy](#), is Jewish.

Putin repeated earlier slurs against the Ukrainian government, saying without evidence that it was a bandit cabal responsible for committing genocide against ethnic Russians in the disputed Donbass region in the east of the country.

Far from surrendering, Ukrainian forces have engaged in heavy fighting with Russian troops across the country, and claim to have killed hundreds of the invaders, destroyed tanks and shot down aircraft. The Russians, however, are claiming to control a strategic airfield to the the northwest of the city, where their main army units are joining up with airborne units that flew in earlier.

Western intelligence sources say Putin wants to "decapitate" the Ukrainian government. Putin proposed earlier to hold peace talks with the Ukrainian leadership mediated by Belarus, Russian officials said — a proposal that was hardly acceptable because Belarus served as a launchpad for the Russian assault on Kyiv.