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Tenuous situation continues in Ukraine; Putin: no interest in restoring borders of Russian Empire



US Secretary of State Antony Blinken on Tuesday announced that he has cancelled plans to meet with his Russian counterpart, Sergey Lavrov, in Geneva later this week, as Russia pressed ahead with the recognition of two separatist regions of Ukraine.
Blinken told reporters that Russia's actions indicated that Moscow was not serious about a diplomatic path to resolving the crisis.

Echoing US President Joe Biden, Blinken said Russian President Vladimir Putin's decision to recognize the independence of Ukraine's Donbass region was a violation of international law.

Meanwhile, Ukraine's president this week called up some of the country's military reservists, but added that there is no need for a full military mobilization.

Conversely, Russian President Vladimir Putin on Tuesday flatly dismissed an accusation that he’s plotting to restore his vast country to the borders of the Russian Empire, insisting that Moscow recognizes the independence of post-Soviet states.

In an exchange held with his Azerbaijani counterpart on Tuesday, Putin assured that, while he had anticipated Western backlash over his decision to formally recognize the breakaway republics of Donetsk and Lugansk, the return of the Russian Empire was not on the table.