



## **"Putin won't stop trying to expand Russia"**

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LONDON -- After "annexing Crimea and with troops massed on the border of Ukraine," Vladimir Putin "will not stop trying to expand Russia."

The Independent quoted "one of his closest former advisers" as making the claim, and adding that Putin "will not stop until he has conquered Belarus, the Baltic states and Finland."

Andrei Illarionov served as the president's chief economic adviser from 2000 to 2005, and is now a senior fellow at the Cato Institute's Center for Global Liberty and Prosperity in Washington.

Illarionov told Sweden's Svenska Dagbladet that "Putin seeks to create 'historical justice' with a return to the days of the last Tsar, Nicholas II, and the Soviet Union under Stalin."

He also "warned that Russia will argue that the granting of independence to Finland in 1917 was an act of 'treason against national interests'."

"Putin's view is that he protects what belongs to him and his predecessors. Parts of Georgia, Ukraine, Belarus, the Baltic States and Finland are states where Putin claims to have ownership," said Illarionov.

He stated that "sanctions had helped rather than hindered Putin because they confirm his view of the world and that of "the Kremlin's propaganda," and added:

"We must offer resistance by all means available. I'm not a bloodthirsty person, but there is sometimes no other way than military power to stop an opponent. The only answer to pure aggression is demonstrating willingness to offer a collective defense."