

Plenary session of the World Russian People's Council

Vladimir Putin spoke via videoconference at the plenary session of the World Russian People's Council. The central theme of the forum dedicated to the 30th anniversary of the organization's founding is "The Present and Future of the Russian World."

November 28, 2023

17:55

Sochi

The work of the cathedral was attended by Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia, representatives of the Russian Orthodox Church and other centralized religious organizations of Russia, government bodies, public associations, scientists and cultural figures.

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Vladimir Putin: Your Holiness! Dear friends!

I greet all participants in the World Russian People's Council. It was established in 1993. We remember what a time it was - a difficult, turning point for the country. Then the cathedral was able to unite around common goals representatives of the Russian Orthodox Church, other religious organizations, political parties and movements, cultural figures, scientists, entrepreneurs, people of different views, beliefs, nationalities, but united in the main thing - in their firm patriotic position.

First of all, I would like to thank you for your support, for your contribution to the strengthening of Russian statehood, civil peace and harmony, to the consolidation of society and for the help that you always provide to your compatriots, to everyone united by the great Russian world.

I know that many representatives of the World Russian People's Council are now in the Donbass and Novorossiya among volunteers and volunteers, in the ranks of military

units, together with their comrades in arms defending our brothers and sisters, millions of people in the Donetsk and Lugansk people's republics, in the Kherson and Zaporozhye regions . I am sincerely grateful to the participants of the World Russian People's Council for the assistance you provide to the front and to the families of our fallen heroes. They fought for us, for our Motherland. Eternal memory to them. [Announced] a minute of silence].

(Minute of silence.)

Dear friends, our battle for sovereignty, for justice, without any exaggeration, is of a national liberation nature, because we defend the security and well-being of our people, the highest, historical right to be Russia - a strong, independent power, a country-civilization. It is our country, the Russian world, as has happened more than once in history, that has blocked the path of those who claim world domination and their exclusiveness.

We are now fighting for the freedom of not only Russia, but the whole world. We openly say that the dictatorship of one hegemon - we see it, everyone sees it now - is becoming decrepit. She has become, as they say, a peddler and is simply dangerous to those around her. This is already clear to the entire world majority. But, I repeat, it is our country that is now at the forefront of creating a more equitable world order. And I want to emphasize: without a sovereign, strong Russia, no lasting, stable world order is possible.

We know what threat we are up against. Today, Russophobia and other forms of racism and neo-Nazism have become almost the official ideology of the Western ruling elites. They are directed not only against the Russians, but against all the peoples of Russia: Tatars, Chechens, Avars, Tuvinians, Bashkirs, Buryats, Yakuts, Ossetians, Jews, Ingush, Mari, Altaians. There are many of us, I won't name them all now, but, I repeat, this is directed against all the peoples of Russia.

The West, in principle, does not need such a large and multinational country as Russia. Our diversity and unity of

cultures, traditions, languages, and ethnic groups simply do not fit into the logic of Western racists and colonialists, into their cruel scheme of total depersonalization, disunity, suppression and exploitation. Therefore, they again launched the old barrel organ: they say that Russia is a “prison of nations”, and the Russians themselves are a “people of slaves”. Have heard this many times over the centuries. We also heard that Russia, it turns out, needs to be “decolonized” today. But what do they really need? In fact, Russia needs to be dismembered and plundered. If you can’t do it by force, then you can sow confusion.

I want to emphasize: we regard any outside interference, provocations with the aim of causing interethnic or interreligious conflicts as aggressive actions against our country, as an attempt to once again throw terrorism and extremism at Russia as a tool to fight us, and we will react accordingly accordingly.

We have a large, diverse country. And in this diversity of cultures, traditions, customs is our strength, a huge competitive advantage and potential. We must constantly strengthen it, protect this diverse harmony, our common heritage. I draw the attention of the leaders of all subjects of the Federation to this and count here on the authority of the shepherds of our traditional religions, on the responsibility of all political forces and public organizations.

I think that we all remember, we need to remember the lessons of the revolution of 1917 and the subsequent Civil War, the collapse of the USSR in 1991. It would seem that so many years have passed, but people of all nationalities living now, even those born in the 21st century, are still, even decades later, paying for the miscalculations made then, for indulging in separatist illusions and ambitions, for the weakness of the central government, for the policy of artificial , the violent division of the great Russian nation, the triune people - Russians, Belarusians and Ukrainians. The bloody pockets that arose after the collapse of the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union not only still smolder, but

sometimes flare up with renewed vigor. And these wounds will not heal for a long time.

We will never forget these mistakes and should not repeat them. I want to emphasize again: any attempts to sow ethnic and religious hatred, to split our society, are a betrayal, a crime against all of Russia. We will not allow anyone to divide Russia, which we have alone. About her, about our Fatherland, are our prayers, which sound in different languages.

And in this audience I would like to recall the words of St. Gregory the Theologian: "Honoring your mother is a holy thing. But everyone has their own mother, and the common mother is the Motherland."

Your Holiness! Dear Colleagues!

The theme of the current cathedral is "The Present and Future of the Russian World." The Russian world is all the generations of our ancestors and our descendants who will live after us. The Russian world is Ancient Rus', the Muscovite Kingdom, the Russian Empire, the Soviet Union, this is modern Russia, which is returning, strengthening and increasing its sovereignty as a world power. The Russian world unites everyone who feels a spiritual connection with our Motherland, who considers themselves a native speaker of the Russian language, history, and culture, regardless of even their national or religious affiliation.

But I want to emphasize: without Russians as an ethnic group, without the Russian people, there is and cannot be the Russian world and Russia itself. This statement does not contain any claim to superiority, exclusivity, or chosenness. This is simply a fact, as is the fact that our Constitution clearly enshrines the status of the Russian language as the language of the state-forming people. Russian is more than a nationality. This has always been the case, by the way, in the history of our country. This includes cultural, spiritual, historical identity. Being Russian is, first of all, a responsibility. I repeat, there is a huge responsibility for

preserving Russia, this is where true patriotism lies. And as a Russian person, I want to say: only a united, strong, sovereign Russia is capable of guaranteeing the future and original development of both the Russian people and all other peoples who have lived and are living in our country for centuries, united by a common historical destiny.

What does sovereignty mean for our state, for every family, for every person? What is its meaning, value, real content? This is first of all freedom. Freedom for Russia and for our people, and therefore for each of us. Because in our tradition, a person cannot feel free if his loved ones, children, and his Fatherland are not free. It is this kind of genuine freedom that our boys, our men, soldiers and officers, daughters of the Fatherland are now defending.

A free people, who understand their responsibility to today and future generations, is the only source of power, sovereign power, which is called upon to serve all people, the entire people, and not, of course, serve someone's private, corporate, class, especially strangers, foreign interests.

A truly free person is always a creator. We will support everyone's desire to benefit the country, society, and people. This is what constitutes sovereign development in national interests.

We have to solve colossal tasks in developing vast spaces from the Pacific Ocean to the Baltic and the Black Sea. Our economy, industry, agriculture, new industries, creative industries, national business must increase their potential manifold.

I am now addressing entrepreneurs, of whom I know there are also many in this room. I would like to especially thank you, dear friends, for your well-coordinated work. It was by combining the efforts of the state and business that we thwarted the unprecedented economic aggression of the West; its sanctions blitzkrieg failed.

Russia will increase support for sovereign national entrepreneurship. For this purpose, we now have fundamentally new tools. Invest in Russia, create jobs, develop production, participate in personnel training - and then the growth of the national economy will translate into new successes and opportunities for your companies. National business, working to strengthen sovereignty, itself becomes stronger and more sovereign, and becomes less dependent on all components of today's world order.

The sovereign development of the country, economy, business, and social sphere must bring prosperity to all citizens, all Russian families, and therefore be fair. This is not about primitive leveling, of course not. Justice means, first of all, decent living conditions, modern cultural, healthcare, and sports facilities in all regions of the country. This is a skilled, well-paid job. High social prestige of a worker, engineer, teacher, doctor, artist, cultural figure, entrepreneur, every conscientious specialist, craftsman. Justice also means equal, broad opportunities for education, a start in life, and self-realization for young people.

In the West, they are now practicing not only the policy of "cancel culture," but also the actual abolition of liberal arts education. As a result, both culture and education become primitive. Many classical subjects are simply thrown out of Western curricula, replaced by some kind of gender and similar sciences - pseudosciences, of course. But we, on the contrary, need a real breakthrough in cultural life. And here we have a lot to learn from our ancestors, who, both in traditional and, by the way, in avant-garde art, set models for the whole world. I am convinced that the country's sovereignty and the strengthening of its role in the world are impossible without the flourishing of its original culture in all its manifestations.

And of course, it is important for us to take all the best that the domestic and world system of classical education has

accumulated. At the same time, our schools, universities, colleges must be modern, open to everything advanced. We need a holistic sphere of education in which the family, education system, national culture, the work of children's, youth, sports, military-patriotic organizations, a broad mentoring movement and, I would add, the wise word of spiritual shepherds, are simply necessary.

Yes, the church is separated from the state, and Patriarch [Kirill] has told me more than once, despite this, we have a unique relationship between church and state. What would you like to note in this regard? But it is impossible to separate the church from society and from people. I completely agree with this. And therefore, I again emphasize the importance of the participation of representatives of all Russian traditional religions in the education and upbringing of our youth and, of course, in strengthening spiritual, moral, and family values. It is of lasting importance that our pastors from all our traditional religions participate.

Your Holiness! Dear friends!

You know that a Decree has already been signed to declare the next year, 2024, the Year of the Family in Russia. And I would like to especially note that such a decision is truly based on the position of the absolute majority of our society. I am sure that the World Russian People's Council also unanimously supports it.

And what do I want to say and emphasize here? It is impossible to overcome the most difficult demographic challenges that we face only with the help of money, social payments, allowances, benefits, and individual programs. Yes, of course, the figures for budget "demographic" expenses are extremely significant, but that's not all. A person's life guidelines are much more important. At the heart of a family, in the birth of a child, are love, trust, and strong moral support. We should never and under no circumstances forget about this.

Many of our peoples, thank God, maintain the tradition of a strong, multi-generational family, where four, five or more children are raised. Let us remember that in Russian families, many of our grandmothers and great-grandmothers had seven or eight children, and even more.

Let's preserve and revive these wonderful traditions. Large families and large families should become the norm, a way of life for all peoples of Russia. And the family is not just the basis of the state and society, it is a spiritual phenomenon, a source of morality.

Support for family, motherhood, and childhood should cover the work of all areas of government without exception, our economic, social, infrastructural policies, education and health care, of course. The activities of all public associations and our traditional religions are also necessary precisely to strengthen the family. Saving and increasing the people of Russia is our task for the coming decades, and I'll say more right away: for generations to come. This is the future of the Russian world, a thousand-year, eternal Russia.

Your Holiness! Dear friends!

We are faced with many large-scale tasks, their solution requires truly conciliar work, and we are ready for it. We have become stronger. Our historical regions have returned to Russia. Society abandons everything superficial and turns to true, authentic values.

Pyotr Arkadyevich Stolypin at one time emphasized that the highest thing is the right, based on the power of the people. And together we showed such a nationwide strength, and such a nationwide will, a determination to defend our own fundamental interests, the fundamental interests of the peoples of Russia, to be guided not by strangers borrowed from someone else, but by our own sovereign worldviews, our understanding of how the family should develop and the entire state, to build Russia for ourselves and for our children.

I would like to thank you again for your support, for your patriotic spirit and, of course, congratulate you on the 30th anniversary of the World Russian People's Council. But I want to say special words of gratitude to its head - Patriarch of Moscow and All Rus' Kirill.

I know what tireless work you, Your Holiness, are carrying out for the spiritual revival of Russia. How significant and weighty your position is, I want to emphasize this. How much the Russian Orthodox Church, clergy and laity, is doing under your leadership to implement social, charitable, and volunteer projects. What support is provided to our soldiers and their families. How our soldiers and officers on the front line await the word of the Patriarch.

Today, at the World Russian People's Council, I am glad to congratulate you on being awarded the 2023 Presidential Prize for your contribution to strengthening the unity of the Russian nation. Low bow to you. I wish the cathedral successful work.

Thank you.