

NBC's *Today 3rd Hour*

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9:00:31 a.m. [TEASE]

21 seconds

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: State of the Union]

CRAIG MELVIN: This morning on the third hour of Today, standing with Ukraine.

PRESIDENT JOE BIDEN: He has no idea what's coming.

MELVIN: President Biden using his State of the Union address to condemn Vladimir Putin's invasion of Ukraine, laying out new punishment for Russia, but promising no U.S. troops will enter the fight. We're live in Washington and on the ground once again in Ukraine.

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9:01:38 a.m.

4 minutes and 19 seconds

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Biden Condemns Russia in State of the Union]

MELVIN: Let's just get right to President Biden's first State of the Union address. The president immediately talked about the situation in Ukraine. He sent a direct message to Vladimir Putin. The President also laid out new punishment for Russia, announcing that Russian flights will no longer be allowed in U.S. air space. NBC's chief White House correspondent Peter Alexander live for us this morning in Washington. So, Peter, we saw a lot of blue and yellow during the address last night. We saw the entire chamber standing for the Ukrainian ambassador, a clear act of solidarity. But with regard to what the President said, his message to Putin last night. What was it?

PETER ALEXANDER: Yeah, Craig, we also saw some of the most bipartisan applause that we've seen since perhaps the months and years that followed 9/11. Republicans and Democrats united in their condemnation of Vladimir Putin. And really their support for the heroism that the President hailed by the people of Ukraine, including its president, Volodymyr Zelensky. But, as you said, the President was — he did slam Vladimir Putin saying this is effectively his war. He says as a function of the sanctions now in place that Russia, specifically Putin is more isolated than he has ever been before. The President said that this effort, this war is backfiring on Putin in the process by bring those NATO allies together. Here's more of the President last night.

BIDEN: Putin's latest attack on Ukraine was premeditated and totally unprovoked. He rejected repeated — repeated efforts at diplomacy. He thought the west and NATO wouldn't respond. He thought he could divide us at home in this chamber and this nation. He thought he could divide us in Europe as well. But Putin was wrong.

ALEXANDER: There were plenty of powerful moments last night. Not the least was a standing ovation for the Ukrainian ambassador to the United States, who also received a hug from the First Lady, Jill Biden. She was there as the First Lady's guest in the room. You see all the blue and yellow, Craig, that you made note of. One other moment that caught my attention was the president — and we were given his remarks as he was delivering them, so you could tell when he was ad libbing — he said specifically Putin has no idea what's coming. You played that in the beginning of this hour and lot of people were wondering exactly what that meant. Would American military join this force — this effort in any way? To be clear, the White House says that is not the case. Americans are not going to engage Russians, not on the ground. They're not going to do it in the skies enforcing a no fly zone of some kind. Instead, it really was an effort to say that Putin has miscalculated as the President, Craig and Jacob and Dylan, Putin effectively thinking that the world and Ukraine would roll over and promising more sanctions to come. And I just spoke to some aides here who are saying they are already today discussing additional sanctions to expand punishments for the oligarchs, Russians — Russia's elites, some of those closest to Vladimir Putin.

JACOB SOBOROFF: Peter, I think that moment stood out to a lot of us. Another thing that stood out is domestic issues. Inflation has become a key issue domestically. Somebody sent a picture from my neck of the woods in LA with the gas prices just yesterday. The President has a very long to-do list when it comes to the domestic agenda. That was only one of the items he addressed.

ALEXANDER: Yeah, that's exactly right. It kind of was, Jacob, a tale of speeches, right? First, the state of Ukraine and then the more traditional state of the union. In inflation, the President said is his top priority. Gas prices, everybody sees them right now, certainly in our home state of California. They're paying now a record high price for gas right now. The President said — he laid out some proposals, some ideas to help try to bring down costs for Americans, to try to help with those rising prices right now, but a lot of these policies have run into challenges on Capitol Hill. They have run into a brick wall there in effect right now. And the President's idea here is to try to sort of encourage companies to keep up with the demand of Americans as opposed to something that might slow hiring or lower pay for Americans right now with inflation at a 40 year high. He really does face a major challenge on that. It's one that officials behind the scenes acknowledge to me is their biggest challenge right now.

MELVIN: Peter Alexander, our chief White House correspondent, co-host of weekend *Today*. Thank you, my friend. Appreciate your work.

SOBOROFF: Thanks Peter.