

West must support Ukraine, or fallout might involve Taiwan: UK's Johnson

Written by Taipei Times
Monday, 21 February 2022 10:01 -



British Prime Minister Boris Johnson speaks to reporters during the Munich Security Conference in Germany on Saturday.

Photo: AFP

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson on Saturday said that if Western nations failed to fulfill their promises to support Ukraine's independence, it would have damaging consequences worldwide, including for Taiwan.

Russian troops are massed near Ukraine's borders, and Russian President Vladimir Putin has overseen military exercises by strategic nuclear missile forces, but Russia rejects Western concerns that it is poised to invade.

"We do not fully know what President Putin intends, but the omens are grim," Johnson told a security conference in Munich, Germany.

"If Ukraine is endangered, the shock will echo around the world, and those echoes will be heard in East Asia, will be heard in Taiwan," he said. "People would draw the conclusion that aggression pays and that might is right."

China has threatened the use of force to gain control of Taiwan.

Johnson said that Western nations have repeatedly told Ukraine that they would support its independence.

"How hollow, how meaningless, how insulting those words would seem, if at the very moment when their sovereignty and independence is imperiled, we simply look away," he said.

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On Tuesday, the UK said it could block Russian companies from raising capital in London, and passed legislation to widen sanctions on Russian businesses and individuals if the country invades Ukraine.

“We will sanction Russian individuals and companies of strategic importance to the Russian state, and we will make it impossible for them to raise finance on the London capital markets,” Johnson said.

Europe must also wean itself off Russian oil and gas supplies to stop being at risk of being blackmailed, he added.

Source: [Taipei Times - 2022/02/21](#)