G7 leaders warn Russia on cyberattacks, chemical weapons usage

Russian President Vladimir Putin. Photo: Sergei Ilyin/Sputnik/AFP via Getty Images

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The Group of Seven leaders ended their summit on Sunday by demanding that Russia take action and investigate the use of chemical weapons within its territory and hold accountable those behind ransomware attacks and other cybercrimes.

Why it matters: The allied language come as all eyes turn to President Biden's Wednesday meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin in Geneva.

The state of play: The leaders called on Russia to "end its systematic crackdown on independent civil society and media."

- They also reiterated their support for Ukraine and pressed Russia to deescalate tensions between the two nations by withdrawing troops from

Ukraine's eastern border and the Crimean peninsula.

The big picture: Secretary of State Antony Blinken made the rounds on the Sunday talk shows and tried to temper expectations about the upcoming meeting between Biden and Putin, saying that it would not be a "flip-the-light switch moment" for U.S.-Russia relations.

- Biden himself told reporters on Sunday that he agreed with Putin's recent comments that U.S.-Russia relations are at their lowest point in years, per Reuters.
- A recent ABC News/Ipsos poll found that 49% of Americans trust Biden to negotiate on their behalf with Putin.

But, but, but: Lawmakers from both parties want Biden to take a tough stance with Putin on the issue of ransomware gangs, and convey the message that if Russia doesn't crack down on cyber criminals within its borders, the United States will, according to Politico.

- Putin has expressed willingness to hand over cybercriminals to the United States if the United States returns the favor, per Reuters.
- Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky has also expressed reservations about the upcoming Biden's decisions vis-a-vis Russia.

Of note: The issues of chemical weapons and cyberattacks are in the spotlight at this year's G7 summit in light of the poisoning of Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny with a chemical nerve agent and the ransomware attack on America's Colonial Pipeline, reports Reuters.

- The Colonial Pipeline attack was carried out by Darkside, a Russia-based cybercrime group.