



Written by [R. Cort Kirkwood](#) on February 9, 2024

Putin: Ready to End War in Ukraine, Reach Agreement to Release Journalist

In a [wide-ranging interview](#) with independent conservative journalist Tucker Carlson, Russian President Vladimir Putin said he is ready to negotiate an end to the war with Ukraine.

He also said that former President Bill Clinton said Russia could join NATO, that the CIA supported terrorists who tried to bring down his government, and implied the United States blew up the Nord Stream pipeline.

And he believes he can reach an agreement to release imprisoned *Wall Street Journal* writer Evan Gershkovich.



tuckercarlson.com

Ep. 73 The Vladimir Putin Interview pic.twitter.com/67YuZRkfLL

— Tucker Carlson (@TuckerCarlson) [February 8, 2024](#)

Clinton, Ukraine

Putin began the two-hour interview with a long disquisition about the history of Russia and Ukraine before the conversation segued into a discussion of more recent events.

When the Soviet Union collapsed, Putin said, Russia expected friendly relations with the United States.

“After 1991, when Russia expected that it would be welcomed into the brotherly family of civilized nations,” he said, “nothing like this happened.” The United States “tricked us.”

Continued Putin:

The promise was that NATO would not expand eastward. But it happened five times. There were five waves of expansion. We tolerated all that. We were trying to persuade them. We were saying, please don't. We are as bourgeois now as you are. We are a market economy and there is no Communist Party power. Let's negotiate. Moreover, I have also said this publicly before. There was a moment when a certain rift started growing between us. Before that, Yeltsin came to the United States. Remember, he spoke in Congress and said the good words: God bless America. Everything he said were signals, let us in.

But that didn't happen.

And outgoing President Clinton, he said, even hinted that Russia might be allowed join NATO.

When Putin asked Clinton whether Russia could join NATO, Clinton replied affirmatively, Putin claimed. “You know, it's interesting. I think so.”



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But then, all of a sudden, Clinton changed his mind at a state dinner.

“You know, I’ve talked to my team, no, it’s not possible now,” were Clinton’s words, Putin said:

You can ask him. I think he will watch our interview, he’ll confirm it. I wouldn’t have said anything like that if it hadn’t happened. Okay, well, it’s impossible now....

If he had said yes, the process of rapprochement would have commenced, and eventually it might have happened if we had seen some sincere wish on the side of our partners. But it didn’t happen. Well, no means no, okay, fine.

As for the war in Ukraine, Putin said it could have ended 18 months ago if the United States hadn’t sent British Prime Minister Boris Johnson to tell Ukraine not to negotiate a settlement and instead keep fighting.

Putin said peace was in the offing when Johnson intervened. Zelensky “publicly stated to the whole world, we were ready to sign this document but Mr. Johnson, then the Prime Minister, came and dissuaded us from doing this, saying it was better to fight Russia,” Putin said:

They would give everything needed for us to return what was lost during the clashes with Russia. And we agreed with this proposal. Look, his statement has been published. He said it publicly.

Putin added that the United States won’t permit Ukraine to negotiate.

“We’re willing to negotiate,” he said:

It’s the western side, and Ukraine is obviously a satellite state of the US. It is evident.... The financial support. 72 billion U.S. dollars was provided. Germany ranks second, then other European countries come. Dozens of billions of U.S. dollars are going to Ukraine. There’s a huge influx of weapons. In this case, you should tell the current Ukrainian leadership to stop and come to a negotiating table....

Well if the Zelensky administration in Ukraine refused to negotiate, I assume they did it under the instruction from Washington. If Washington believes it to be the wrong decision, let it abandon it. Let it find the delicate excuse so that no one is insulted. Let it come up with a way out. It was not us who made this decision. It was them. So let them go back on it. That is it. However, they made the wrong decision. And now we have to look for a way out of this situation to correct their mistakes. They did it, so let them correct it themselves. We support this.

The CIA, Nord Stream

Putin repeated his claim that [he asked](#) President George W. Bush to stop U.S. support for “terrorist groups in the Caucasus”:

I once raised this issue with my colleague, also the president of the United States. He says it’s impossible. Do you have proof? I said yes, I was prepared for this conversation, and I gave him that proof of motive. He looked at it and you know what he said? I apologize, but



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that's what happened. I'll quote, he says, "well, I'm gonna kick their a**." We waited and waited for some response. There was no reply. I said to the FSB director: "Write to the CIA." What is the result of the conversation with the president? He wrote once, twice. And then we got a reply. We have the answer in the archive. The CIA replied: "We have been working with the opposition in Russia. We believe that this is the right thing to do and we will keep on doing it."

And Putin implied the [United States sabotaged](#) the Nord Stream pipeline:

You know, I won't get into details, but people always say in such cases, look for someone who is interested. But in this case, we should not only look for someone who is interested, but also for someone who has capabilities, because there may be many people interested, but not all of them are capable of sinking to the bottom of the Baltic Sea and carrying out this explosion. These two components should be connected. Who is interested and who is capable of doing it?

As for Gershkovich, who awaits trial for espionage, Putin explained why the writer was arrested last year in March.

"If a person gets secret information and does that in conspiratorial manner, then this is qualified as espionage," Putin said:

And that is exactly what he was doing. He was receiving classified, confidential information, and he did it covertly.... He was caught red handed when he was receiving this information. If it had been some farfetched excuse, some fabrication, something not proven, it would have been a different story then. But he was caught red handed when he was secretly getting confidential information.

Still, Putin said he can envision releasing the journalist, repeating [what he said](#) late last year.

[The Wall Street Journal denied](#) that Gershkovich is a spy. Last week, [a court ruled](#) that he would be detained through March.



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