



Written by [James Murphy](#) on March 18, 2021

Biden Threatens Putin, Says Russian Leader Will “Pay a Price” for Election Meddling

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In remarks aired Wednesday, President Joe Biden let Russian President Vladimir Putin know that he would face dire consequences for any alleged election interference that Putin or his country attempted in the 2020 election on behalf of former President Donald Trump.

In a wide-ranging and mainly soft-ball interview with ABC’s George Stephanopolous, Biden let the Russian leader know that the interference outlined in a [declassified intelligence report](#) released on Tuesday would not go unanswered.

“[Putin] will pay a price,” Biden said. When asked what that price would be, Biden answered, “You’ll see shortly.”

According to the report: “We assess that Russian President Putin authorized, and a range of Russian government organizations conducted, influence operations aimed at denigrating President Biden’s candidacy and the Democratic Party, supporting former President Trump, undermining public confidence in the electoral process, and exacerbating sociopolitical divisions in the U.S.”

While the declassified document stopped short of claiming that the Russians engaged in the type of cyber efforts they were accused of in the 2016 election cycle, it did claim that Russia used its proxies to bring to light allegations against Biden, and presumably his son Hunter, which dogged Biden’s campaign.

“A key element of Moscow’s strategy this election cycle was use of its proxies linked to Russian intelligence to push influence narratives — including misleading or unsubstantiated allegations against President Biden — to U.S. media organizations, U.S. officials, and prominent U.S. individuals, including some close to former President Trump and his administration.”

The report also accused Iran, Cuba, Venezuela, and Lebanese Hezbollah of attempting to influence the 2020 election. It also claimed that China “did not deploy interference efforts.”

Representative Adam Schiff (D-Calif.) the chairman of the House Intelligence Committee, stated, “Russia ran a successful intelligence operation that penetrated the former president’s inner circle.” According to Schiff, the Russians did this “with the intent of denigrating now-President Biden and damaging his candidacy.”



AP Images



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Schiff was one of the Democrats who was largely responsible for pushing the discredited theory that President Trump colluded with Russia during the 2016 campaign, and wasting two years on a fruitless investigation into those allegations.

Also in the interview, President Biden said simply, "I do," when Stephanopolous asked him if he thought Putin was a "killer." This remark prompted a stern reply from Putin and the Russian government, which recalled its ambassador, signaling a new low in Russian/American relations.

Putin promptly responded to Biden's "killer" remark. "It takes one to know one," the former KGB officer said of President Biden.

"As for the statements of my American colleague, what would I answer him? I would say to him, 'I wish you good health,'" Putin said. Putin then spoke of U.S. history and what he referred to as the "murder" of Native Americans by European settlers.

"We always attribute to other people ... what we essentially are," Putin said.

Putin spokesman Dmitry Peskov lamented that Biden's "killer" comment was "a very bad statement by the U.S. president" that made clear that Biden "doesn't want to normalize relations."

"[Biden] clearly does not want to improve relations with our country, and we will be proceeding based precisely on this," Peskov told reporters. "There hasn't been anything like this in history."

Russia has demanded an apology for Biden's "killer" remark but, according to Press Secretary Jen Psaki, Biden has no regrets about what he said: "No, the president gave a direct answer to a direct question," Psaki told the press corps.

While saying that the White House was still willing to negotiate with the "killer" Putin, Psaki let it be known that Biden won't hold back on tough talk or actions when he deems it necessary.

"We are confident that we can continue to look for ways where there's a mutual interest — mutual national interest," said Psaki. "But the president is not going to hold back, clearly, when he has concerns when he has them, whether it is with words or actions."

Just what exactly Biden's tough remarks for Putin ultimately mean is anyone's guess. Will the New START treaty on nuclear arms reduction be affected? Will Biden pressure Putin on Russia's involvement in the Syrian Civil War?

Thus far, President Biden has not declared what "price" Russia will pay for its alleged election meddling, although CNN has said that State Department officials have told them that the White House is expected to announce sanctions related to election interference as early as next week.



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