



SOME OF WHAT PUTIN TOLD TUCKER CARLSON MISSED THE BIGGER PICTURE. THIS FILLS IN THE GAPS - ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Russian President Vladimir Putin sat down in the Kremlin for a two-hour interview with former Fox News host Tucker Carlson, pushing his views on the justification for the nearly 2-year-old war in Ukraine, the prospects of peace talks, and other issues. He also touched on the arrest of Evan Gershkovich, an American journalist for The Wall Street Journal, who is charged with espionage,

A look at some key quotes from Putin, supplying context and background:

WHO STARTED THE WAR

PUTIN'S QUOTE: "It was they who started the war in 2014. Our goal is to stop this war. And we did not start this war in 2022. This is an attempt to stop it."

THE CONTEXT: This statement refers to the violence in Ukraine that was sparked by the 2014 ouster of the Moscow-friendly president, Viktor Yanukovich, amid mass anti-government demonstrations in Kyiv. Russia responded by illegally annexing the Crimea region of Ukraine, and fighting broke out in the country's industrial east, where pro-Moscow separatists said they were trying to protect the Russian-speaking population.

When Putin sent troops into Ukraine on Feb. 24, 2022, Ukraine and its Western allies described it as an unprovoked act of aggression. Putin said Moscow was forced to act preemptively to stop Ukraine from joining NATO and prevent a large-scale offensive by Kyiv aimed at reclaiming those eastern regions. Russia has provided no evidence that any such operation was in the making.

'DENAZIFYING' UKRAINE

PUTIN'S QUOTE: "We haven't achieved our aims yet, because one of them is denazification. This means the prohibition of all kinds of neo-Nazi movements."

THE CONTEXT: Russian propagandists have repeatedly sought to portray Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy as a neo-Nazi or Nazi

sympathizer, even though he is Jewish and has said three of his grand-uncles died in the Holocaust. Putin has offered no proof to back his repeated claims that radical, ultranationalist groups in Ukraine influence Zelenskyy and have a decisive voice in shaping the country's policies.



INITIAL FAILURE OF PEACE TALKS

PUTIN'S QUOTE: "As soon as we pulled back our troops from Kyiv, Ukrainian negotiators immediately threw all the agreements reached in Istanbul into the bin and got prepared for a longstanding armed confrontation with the help of the United States and its satellites in Europe."

THE CONTEXT: Russian and Ukrainian officials negotiated a tentative peace deal in Istanbul in March 2022, a month after the start of the invasion, but it quickly collapsed. While Russia has portrayed the withdrawal of its troops from areas near Kyiv as a sign of goodwill, the Kremlin clearly was forced to retreat due to heavy losses and logistical problems while trying to capture the Ukrainian capital.

FUTURE NEGOTIATIONS

PUTIN'S QUOTE: "We haven't rejected negotiations."

THE CONTEXT: While insisting that Russia is open for talks, the Kremlin has maintained a tough negotiating stand, saying Ukraine will need to accept the gains Russia has made in eastern and southern parts of the country. Ukraine, for its part, says no talks are possible until Russia's complete withdrawal from occupied areas. In September 2022, Moscow illegally annexed the regions of Donetsk, Lugansk, Zaporizhzhia and Kherson, to go with its seizure of Crimea.

SPY CHARGES AGAINST AMERICAN EVAN GERSHKOVICH

PUTIN'S QUOTE: "He was caught red-handed when he was secretly getting classified information."

THE CONTEXT: Gershkovich, a reporter for The Wall Street Journal, was arrested in March 2023 on espionage charges and has been in jail ever since, pending his trial. Gershkovich and the Journal deny the allegations, and the U.S. government says he has been wrongfully detained. Russian authorities haven't released any of the evidence Putin cited to support the charges. Putin also suggested that a prisoner swap was possible.