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Putin Talks about Being a Villain, Annexing Crimea and Trusting Women in New Documentary

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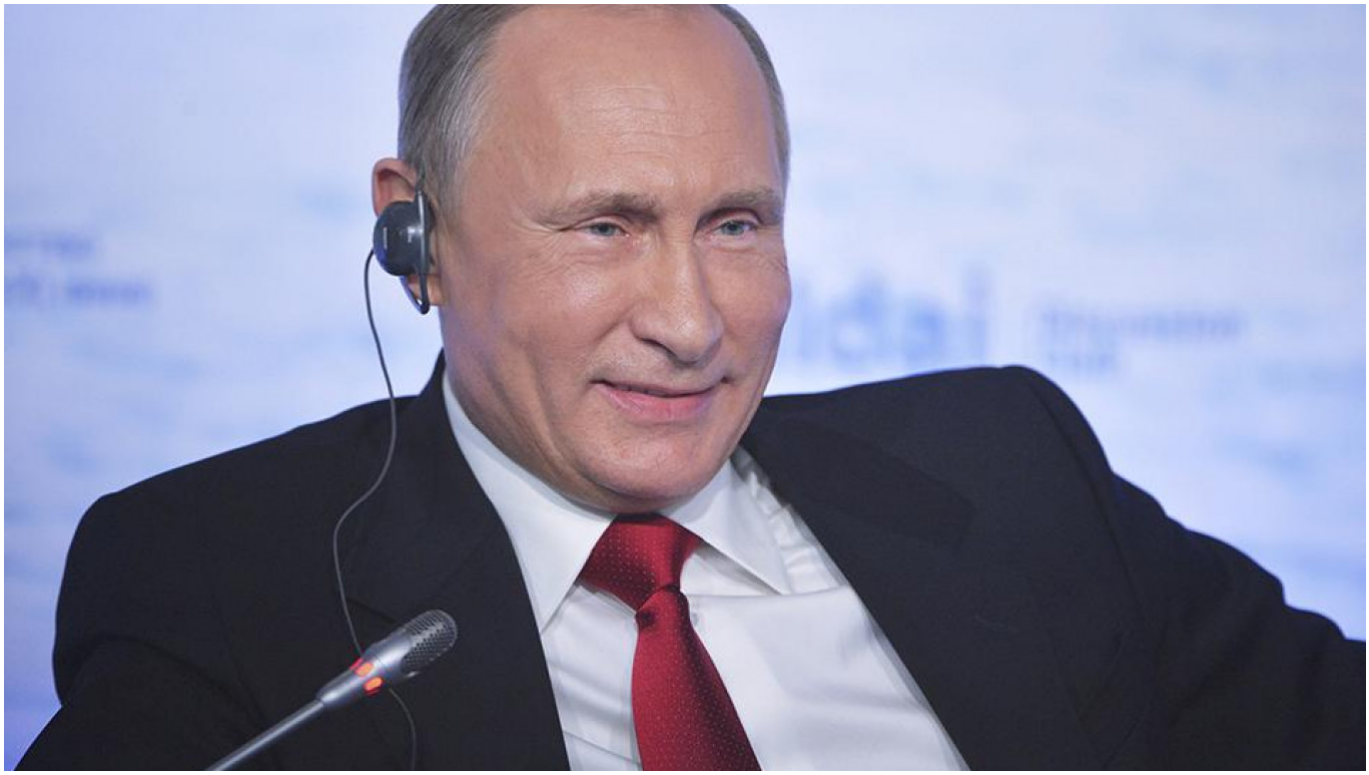

RIA Novosti / Reuters

Pro-Kremlin pundit Vladimir Solovyov has published his "World Order 2018" series of interviews with President Vladimir Putin online ahead of its release on state television.

In the documentary, the 65-year-old leader talks about topics ranging from the necessity of Crimea's annexation to his reputation as a global villain.

We watched it so you don't have to. Here are the highlights:

On the 2014 annexation of Crimea from Ukraine

"I sometimes think that [...] someone deliberately tipped us to the edge, where — once there — we had to act in the way that we did."

On expecting western sanctions post-Crimea

"I had no doubt that [sanctions would be imposed after Russia's annexation of Crimea]."

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"I had to put Crimea's return and the possible repercussions on the scales. But when you consider the fates of millions of people on one side— there are more than 2 million people living in Crimea, especially those who wanted to return to Russia — and difficult relations with other countries on the other, of course, the first is incomparably more important."

On overcoming sanctions

"Our opponents and partners have developed a very good tactic and, to a certain extent, are achieving their tactical goals. But I think we will still win in the long run."

On his attitude towards being labeled a 'global villain'

"Ask the villains. This is only the opinion of Western sources, and far from all of them."

"I've gotten used to it [being called a villain] a long time ago... My guiding light is the interest of Russia and its people. If I feel that I haven't strayed and that I'm going in the right direction, then I don't care about anything else.

On the U.S. 'lying through their teeth' about Ukraine's 2014 Maidan Revolution

"This is perhaps the first [time the U.S. deceived Russia] so grossly and brazenly."

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"We were approached by our American partners, who asked us to do everything — I'm practically literally citing their request — to make sure [Ukraine's ex-president Viktor] Yanukovych didn't use the army [...] We said OK. A day later, there was a coup d'etat. They could have called at least or done something or said something. Instead, they gave full support to those who overthrew the government."

On trusting countries and women

"If you would have asked me now: 'Can you trust women?' I would have mused on this question. But when you [ask] whether it's possible to trust certain countries — that's a completely different matter."

On Russia's involvement in the war in Ukraine

"The current Ukrainian government tells me that soldiers in the Ukrainian army are being killed by arms supplied from Russia. When I think about this, it leaves a deep impression on me. I actually think that everyone there is our people. But I always want to ask: whose shells and bullets are killing the innocent citizens of Donbas? We should speak about how to end this and how to achieve peace instead of about arms.

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