The Moscow Times
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INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Bolsonaro Beams as Putin Praises His 'Masculinity'

By AFP

November 19, 2020



Putin lavished praise on Bolsonaro in an address to the BRICS group of emerging economies. **Edu Chaves / ZUMA / TASS**

Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro was beaming Wednesday after his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin praised his "masculinity" in a speech, triggering a flood of jokes online about a budding "bromance."

Putin lavished praise on Bolsonaro Tuesday in an address to a virtual summit of the BRICS group of emerging economies (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa), saying the far-right president was an example of "courage" for his management of the coronavirus pandemic.

Embed:

> - Palavras do Presidente da Rússia, Vladimir Putin, ao término do encontro do BRICS.
>
> . Link no YouTube: https://t.co/DR60KPr7CJ pic.twitter.com/DmQ3SbLAML
>
> — Jair M. Bolsonaro (@jairbolsonaro) November 17, 2020

"You were even infected personally by this disease, and withstood the ordeal with great courage," Putin said of Bolsonaro's July illness, according to a transcript that the Brazilian himself posted on Facebook.

"I know that moment must not have been easy, but you faced it like a real man and showed the best qualities of masculinity, such as strength and willpower," he added.

Besides posting the video and transcript online, Bolsonaro proudly brought up the speech with a group of supporters outside the presidential palace.

"Anyone see the Russian president's speech yesterday? Did anyone catch that?" he asked.

The episode gave birth to a flood of memes poking fun at the Russian strongman and the Brazilian populist.

In one, a bare-chested Bolsonaro sits behind an also-shirtless Putin atop his horse.

Embed:

> Putin elogia o Bolsonaro e eu só consigo pensar nessa imagem: pic.twitter.com/B8jt0vAqql
>
> — Geriston Silva’s Sebastião (@geristonsilvas) November 18, 2020

Others joked that Bolsonaro was apparently flirting with a new partner after "breaking up" with his political idol, U.S. President Donald Trump, after the latter lost his re-election bid two weeks ago.

Despite Putin's praise, public health experts have sharply criticized Bolsonaro's handling of Covid-19, which he has sought to minimize even as it has killed more than 166,000 people in Brazil — the second-highest death toll worldwide, after the United States.

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