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Billion-Dollar Palace in Navalny Investigation ‘Doesn’t Belong to Me,’ Putin Says

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The viral video report into Putin's alleged seaside palace helped spark nationwide protests over the weekend. **Alexei Druzhinin / POOL / TASS**

President Vladimir Putin denied ownership of a $1.3 billion seaside palace in his first public reaction to jailed opposition leader Alexei Navalny’s viral video investigation that helped spark nationwide protests.

Navalny’s feature-length video, which alleges that Putin’s inner circle had funded the lavish property through an elaborate corruption scheme, has racked up 86 million views in five days. The Kremlin dismissed allegations last week that Putin owns a palace.

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“I didn’t watch this movie simply because I don’t have enough free time [...] but I flipped

through the video collections that my assistants brought me," Putin said.

"To answer your question right away: nothing that is listed there as my property does not and never has belonged to me or my close relatives," Putin told students.

Putin also addressed Saturday's unauthorized nationwide rallies demanding Navalny's release, echoing his subordinates' criticism of the protests for involving minors and citing the Jan. 6 U.S. Capitol riots whose participants are now facing long jail terms.

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The Russian president did single out a vineyard listed in Navalny's investigation as a pursuit he would be interested in after retirement.

"It's a very good and noble type of activity, but not as a business," Putin said.

"I have an adviser, Boris Titov, who owns a large [winemaking] company with a good background," he added in televised comments. "When I finish my work, maybe I'll go work as an adviser to him. But not as a businessman but as a legal expert."

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