

Putin Questions Moderna's 'Best' Coronavirus Vaccine Recognition

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Putin remarked in a televised meeting that Russian-made vaccines are “reliable as a Kalashnikov assault rifle.” Kremlin.ru

Russian scientists and President Vladimir Putin raised objections Thursday after an annual vaccine conference named Moderna’s coronavirus jab the best in the world.

The U.S. pharmaceutical giant’s jab was recognized as the world’s best Covid-19 vaccine at the annual World Vaccine Congress earlier in the day, edging out competitors including Pfizer-BioNTech and Russia’s Sputnik V.

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Putin, speaking at a televised video conference with an official who heads the national coronavirus response, questioned the congress’ selection as premature.

“I understand that world markets have decided to support the American vaccine Moderna,

which is competing aggressively with another American-European company Pfizer," Putin said.

"Our colleagues abroad say that this will be a completely innovative, very modern drug," he was quoted by the state-run TASS news agency as saying. "However, whether this will actually be the case will only be clear 10 years after application and analysis of the results."

Putin, a vocal proponent of Sputnik V since its authorization in Russia last summer, [contrasted](#) Moderna's previously unproven messenger RNA technology with "technologies and platforms that have been used for decades" like Sputnik V's adenovirus vector technology.

Russian vaccines, Interfax quoted him as saying, "are very modern and without a doubt the most reliable and the safest today."

"As one European expert said, they're reliable as a Kalashnikov assault rifle. I think he's certainly right."

Alexander Gintsburg, who heads the state research center that developed Russia's Sputnik V vaccine, [called](#) the World Vaccine Congress' decision a "strange choice."

"I can say that it's absolutely unclear how all this was evaluated, given the high mortality rate from mRNA vaccines," TASS quoted Gintsburg as saying.

"It's unclear on what grounds and on what particular unbiased criteria this was based."

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