

Putin Personally Approved Arrest of U.S. Journalist – Bloomberg

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The Kremlin on Thursday denied claims that Russian President Vladimir Putin personally endorsed the arrest of Wall Street Journal reporter Evan Gershkovich for espionage.

Citing sources “familiar with the situation,” Bloomberg on Wednesday [reported](#) that the initiative to arrest Gershkovich came from “hawks among top officials of Russia’s security services.”

Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov called the American journalist’s detention “the total prerogative of the special services” and not Putin’s decision.

Gershkovich, 31, was detained on a reporting trip in Russia’s fourth-largest city of Yekaterinburg on March 29 and is yet to be granted U.S. consular access.

Related article: [Biden Calls Russia's Imprisonment of Evan Gershkovich 'Out of Bounds'](#)

A court placed Gershkovich in pre-trial detention at Moscow's notorious Lefortovo Prison until May 29.

Peskov has said Gershkovich was caught "red-handed" without providing evidence. The Wall Street Journal, U.S. officials, and Gershkovich himself all reject Russia's espionage allegations.

The spying charges are the first against a U.S. reporter in 40 years, highlighting the growing influence of Kremlin hardliners pushing for deepening confrontation with the United States.

The U.S. State Department has formally designated Gershkovich, who previously worked for The Moscow Times and Agence France Presse, as "wrongfully detained."

That status puts the case in the hands of the special U.S. envoy for hostages and paves the way for negotiations for a possible prisoner exchange.

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