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Russia Issues Arrest Warrant for U.S. Senator Lindsey Graham

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Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky shaking hands with U.S. Senator Lindsey Graham. **Ukrainian Presidential press service**

Russia has issued an arrest warrant for United States senator Lindsey Graham for "Russophobic statements," Russian media reported Monday.

Russian officials and state-conotrolled media have slammed Graham for comments he made during a Friday meeting in Kyiv with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, the U.S. politician's third such visit since the start of the war.

In a video of the event, Zelensky, speaking in English, told Graham "Now we are free. And we will be."

"Yes. And Russians are dying," the U.S. senator replied.

The video — which was published to Zelensky's social media — then cuts to another angle, and Graham said: "It's the best money we ever spent."

The Russian authorities have responded to the video as though Graham's two separate statements about Russian soldiers dying and U.S. military aid to Ukraine were directly connected.

"It's difficult to imagine a greater shame for a country than having such senators," Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov said Sunday.

Russia's Investigative Committee ordered the opening of a criminal case against Graham on Sunday, stating that he "declared the financial involvement of the United States in causing the death of Russian citizens."

However, an unedited video of the exchange released later shows that the two phrases were not linked and that Graham actually made the comment about "the best money we ever spent" before anyone mentioned Russians dying in Ukraine.

The U.S. senator has brushed off the criticism.

"As usual the Russia propaganda machine is hard at work," Graham told Reuters. "It has been a good investment by the United States to help liberate Ukraine from Russian war criminals."

It was not the first time that Graham's comments on the war have drawn Moscow's ire.

After Russia launched its full-scale invasion last year, Graham tweeted that the only way the war could be won is if someone "takes out" Russian President Vladimir Putin.

At the time, Moscow's ambassador to Washington denounced the statement as "criminal" and a "call to terrorism."

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