

Kremlin Woos Ex-Fox News Star Tucker Carlson to Spite Biden, Boost Putin's Campaign

By [Pyotr Kozlov](#)

February 06, 2024



Gage Skidmore (CC BY-SA 2.0)

President Vladimir Putin's administration is seeking to use former Fox News star Tucker Carlson's visit to Moscow as a propaganda coup both in Russia and the United States, four sources close to the Kremlin have told The Moscow Times on condition of anonymity.

"Tucker has been expected here for a long time. He is welcome here," a source close to the presidential administration told The Moscow Times. "Now everyone in the presidential administration has rolled up their sleeves and is working together."

The visit by Carlson, 54, has fueled [speculation](#) that the conservative pundit, who regularly voices criticism of Ukraine and its Western allies, plans to interview Putin for his online news show.

Neither the [Kremlin](#) nor Carlson [himself](#) have confirmed whether an interview will take place, with the latter merely saying “We’ll see.”

Alexei Venediktov, the former editor of the shuttered Ekho Moskv radio station, [hinted](#) Tuesday that Carlson “got what he wanted.”

Several of The Moscow Times’ sources believe an interview is almost guaranteed to happen.

“Even without an interview, Carlson's arrival is already a major benefit for the boss [Putin],” said a second source close to the Kremlin. “Look at what kind of reaction we’re already seeing ‘across the ocean.’ Tucker has a huge audience in the U.S.”

He added: “The interview is very likely to happen.”

A third source joked that Carlson has only two options after arriving in Moscow: “Either an interview or [going to] to the frontline in Donbas.”

Whether an interview takes place or not, Carlson, who remains one of the most prominent far-right figures in the United States, has given the Kremlin's PR people and Putin a major trump card with both Russia and the U.S. in an election year, two sources close to the Kremlin and one Russian government official told The Moscow Times.

Related article: [Why Russia Embraces Tucker Carlson](#)

The arrival of a well-known American media personality allows Putin and his entire propaganda ecosystem to boast to Russians that his hardline policy toward the Biden administration and the Democratic Party is justified.

“If the interview also comes out, our propaganda will blast Carlson's words criticizing the Democrats, which means he will confirm our hawks' line up to the tiniest detail,” a Russian government official, who requested anonymity because he is not authorized to speak to the media, told The Moscow Times.

“The chief [Putin] will win the election without Tucker's help,” the official added. “But access to an American audience through Carlson during the heated struggle between Biden and Trump is again an opportunity to exert that proverbial influence on the U.S. election, given Carlson's huge audience.”

In addition, the Kremlin simply desires to spoil the mood of U.S. President Joe Biden's inner circle as he grapples with his own re-election campaign.

“It’s that kind of message, saying, ‘You didn't expect that? We can do that too. Suck it, Joe!’” said a source close to the Kremlin.

Carlson is an ally of former U.S. President Donald Trump, who is now running in the primaries and is expected to clinch the Republican Party's nomination again.

Trump has [said](#) that he would consider choosing Carlson as his running mate this November, and there has been speculation in the U.S. media that he is even secretly working for Trump's

campaign.

The Moscow Times' sources said that the Kremlin wanted to [organize](#) a meeting and interview between Putin and Carlson at the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum in June 2023. These plans ultimately fell through, however.

Since Carlson requires a visa to enter Russia his arrival in the Russian capital could not have come as a surprise to the Kremlin.

Russian state media, including the Defense Ministry's [Zvezda](#) TV channel, pro-Kremlin TV celebrities and Telegram news channels have been diligently reporting on the former Fox News star's stay in Moscow since he [arrived](#) on Thursday

So far, Carlson has [visited](#) the Bolshoi Theater for a performance of the ballet "Spartacus," even going backstage afterward and pretending to be a dancer, [holding](#) a ballerina in his arms.

He also visited the "Russia" exhibition at VDNKh, Putin's pre-election PR project that boasts of the success of the economy of Russia's regions despite international sanctions.

On Monday, the state-run RIA Novosti news agency [reported](#) that Carlson visited a presidential administration building close to the Kremlin. After the meeting, he was seen leaving in a black minibus with tinted windows. No further details were disclosed.

But for some Russian public figures who support the invasion and favor a more open conflict with the West, the amount of media attention given to the former Fox host is a cause for irritation.

"For the third day, I am watching an amazing thing with interest: How people who ridicule Ukrainians for their subservient prostration before European politicians and public figures are meticulously recording Tucker Carlson's every move and sneeze in Moscow," Andrei Medvedev, a Moscow City Duma deputy and former state TV presenter, [wrote](#) on the Telegram messaging app.

"He flew in, he ate, he drank tea. How wonderful, an American has come to visit us! How happy we are. Comrades, do you feel bipolar?"

Original url:

<https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2024/02/06/kremlin-woos-ex-fox-news-star-tucker-carlson-to-spice-up-biden-boost-putins-campaign-a83994>