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U.S. Conservative Pundit Tucker Carlson Confirms Putin Interview

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Tucker Carlson in Moscow. **screen grab / Tucker Carlson Network**

Updated with Kremlin's remarks.

Former Fox News star Tucker Carlson confirmed Tuesday that he has traveled to Moscow to interview President Vladimir Putin, putting an end to speculation surrounding the purpose of his visit to Russia and whether he intended to ultimately meet with the Russian leader.

"We're here to interview the president of Russia, Vladimir Putin. We'll be doing that soon," Carlson said in a video posted on X (formerly Twitter).

"There are risks to conducting an interview like this obviously. So we've thought about it carefully over many months," he added.

Carlson, known for far-right views and his long association with former U.S. President Donald Trump, did not specify when the interview would be broadcast but said it would be free to watch through his online streaming platform Tucker Carlson Network.

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"We're in journalism. Our duty is to inform people. Two years into a war [in Ukraine] that is reshaping the entire world, most Americans are not informed," Carlson said.

"They have no real idea what is happening in this region. Here in Russia or 600 miles away in Ukraine. But they should know. They're paying for much of it."

Earlier on Tuesday, The Moscow Times, citing multiple sources close to the Kremlin, reported that Russian authorities hope to use Carlson's visit to influence American public opinion given his reach among conservative voters in the U.S., but also to boost Putin's image among Russians as he seeks re-election for a fifth term in office.

"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," a Russian official told The Moscow Times.

Later on Wednesday, the Kremlin confirmed the American pundit had interviewed Putin the day before.

"[Tucker Carlson's] views differ from those of the rest," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told journalists.

"They're not at all pro-Russian, they're not pro-Ukrainian. Rather, they're pro-American," he said.

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.

AFP contributed reporting.

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