

Putin Tells West: Russia Cannot Be Defeated in Ukraine

By [Danny Kemp for AFP](#) and [Sebastian Smith for AFP](#)

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President Vladimir Putin said in an interview released Thursday with controversial right-wing U.S. journalist Tucker Carlson that the West should understand it is "impossible" to defeat Russia in Ukraine.

In a two-hour interview with the former Fox News host — coming just ahead of the two-year anniversary of Russia's invasion of Ukraine — Putin also said a deal "can be reached" on imprisoned Wall Street Journal reporter Evan Gershkovich.

"Certain terms being discussed via special services channels," he said, while insisting that the reporter is a spy — something the Journal and U.S. government vehemently deny.

It was the first one-on-one interview of Putin by someone from the Western media since 2019.

However Carlson, who is close to White House candidate and former president Donald Trump, asked few tough questions and largely listened while the Kremlin leader lectured him on his views of Russian history, portraying the country as a victim of Western betrayals.

Putin defended his decision to invade Ukraine in February 2022. And he said the West now realizes that Russia will not be defeated, despite US, European and NATO help to Ukraine.

"Up until now, there has been the uproar and screaming about inflicting a strategic defeat to Russia on the battlefield. But now they are apparently coming to realize that it is difficult to achieve, if possible, at all. In my opinion, it is impossible by definition," he said.

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He also aimed a message at the U.S. Congress, where Trump-dominated Republicans are increasingly reluctant to keep backing Ukraine with weapons and other military aid.

"I will tell you what we are saying on this matter and what we are conveying to the U.S. leadership. If you really want to stop fighting, you need to stop supplying weapons," he said.

When asked if Moscow would consider invading other countries in the region — NATO members Poland and Latvia — or generally across the European continent, Put said that was "out of the question."

"We have no interest in Poland, Latvia or anywhere else. Why would we do that? We simply don't have any interest. It's just threat-mongering," Putin said.

A war with Poland, he said, would happen "only in one case: if Poland attacks Russia."

Asked about a possible change in leadership after the U.S. election, where Biden is expected to face off against Trump in a rematch of their 2020 contest, Putin indicated he would see little change.

"You just asked me if another leader comes and changes something? It is not about the leader. It is not about the personality of a particular person."

Carlson rarely pushed back in his interview — recorded Tuesday and posted on Carlson's own website — and did not challenge Putin over his relationship with Trump.

While president and since being defeated by Biden, Trump has repeatedly praised Putin and failed to condemn the invasion of Ukraine — saying that if he was reelected he would be able to solve the war in "24 hours," though not saying how.

By contrast, Biden has branded Putin a "war criminal" and has made backing for Ukraine's elected, pro-Western government one of the key priorities of his presidency.

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