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Elon Musk Held Secret Talks With Putin Amid Shifting Views on Ukraine – WSJ

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kremlin.ru; U.S. Air Force

U.S. billionaire Elon Musk held secret talks with Russian President Vladimir Putin throughout the war in Ukraine as his initial support for Kyiv appeared to shift in Moscow's favor, the Wall Street Journal reported Thursday, citing several anonymous current and ex-U.S., European and Russian officials.

The private conversations reportedly addressed personal topics, business and geopolitical tensions, and took place between October 2022 — when he proposed a controversial peace deal — and "into this year."

One current and one former intelligence source were cited as saying the contacts with Putin continued as Musk began increasingly criticizing U.S. military aid to Ukraine and endorsed former President Donald Trump's latest bid for office. WSJ noted that Musk's alleged engagement with Putin comes amid Trump's proposal to cut a deal over the war in Ukraine.

The newspaper also reported that the billionaire was having regular conversations with

“high-level Russians,” including Putin’s first deputy chief of staff Sergei Kiriyenko, amid pressure from the Kremlin on Musk’s businesses and “implicit threats against him.”

“They [the U.S. government] don’t love it,” one source was quoted as saying, referring to the reported Musk-Putin contacts, but adding that the Biden administration has not yet raised alerts over possible security breaches.

Related article: Elon Musk Has Ukraine, and the Future of the World, at His Mercy

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told WSJ that Musk and Putin had only one phone call, in which they discussed “space as well as current and future technologies.” The billionaire, who did not respond to the newspaper’s request for comment, said in October 2022 that he had discussed space with Putin in April 2021.

WSJ reported that Putin asked Musk to not activate his Starlink satellite internet service over Taiwan as a favor to Chinese leader Xi Jinping. Starlink does not currently provide service to the island nation.

The Kremlin later on Friday denied the allegations in WSJ’s report, saying “It’s all untrue.”

“Putin had only one conversation with Musk. It was reported, and it happened before 2022,” Peskov told journalists at a daily briefing. “They talked about visionary technologies, technological solutions for the future.”

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