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Putin Says 'Ready' to Talk With 'Courageous' Trump

By AFP

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Putin speaking at the Valdai Discussion Club in Sochi on Thursday. **kremlin.ru**

Russian President Vladimir Putin on Thursday said he was "ready" to hold discussions with "courageous" Donald Trump, as he congratulated him on his victory in the U.S. presidential election.

"I take this opportunity to congratulate him," Putin said in remarks to the Valdai forum in the southern city of Sochi.

Asked whether he was open to holding talks with Trump, the Russian leader said: "Ready."

Ahead of the U.S. vote, Putin had publicly said he would prefer to see Joe Biden, and then Kamala Harris, in the White House, when asked which candidate might be best for Russia.

But Moscow has long been seen as welcoming Trump's anti-establishment credentials and

the chaos he has injected into American and global politics.

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Moscow was widely accused of interfering in the 2016 presidential election to boost Trump's campaign against Hillary Clinton. The Kremlin has repeatedly rejected those charges.

The Kremlin leader on Thursday also said he was impressed by how Trump handled himself during an assassination attempt at a rally earlier this year.

"He turned out to be a courageous person," Putin said.

"People show who they are in extraordinary circumstances. This is where a person reveals himself. And he showed himself, in my opinion, in a very correct manner, courageously. Like a man," Putin said.

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