

‘A Real Genius’: Putin Showers Elon Musk With Praise

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Vladimir Putin. kremlin.ru

President Vladimir Putin [praised](#) American tech billionaire Elon Musk as a “real genius” on Wednesday for developing the Starlink satellite internet network, speaking as Russia works to deploy its own orbital constellation.

“We’re only taking our first steps,” Putin told delegates on the sidelines of the Russia-Africa summit, referring to Rassvet, a state-backed domestic satellite constellation designed to compete with Starlink.

The Russian leader made the remarks as Digital Development and Communication Minister Maksut Shadayev presented satellites used in the Rassvet project at the summit.

Putin said that Moscow remains in “close contact with our American partners, including with Mr. Musk, because in orbit, it’s very important not to interfere with one another and observe a certain discipline and order.”

“Both we and our American partners value this mutual respect, and together with them, despite all the political issues, we’re working closely,” he said.

Putin’s public call for coordination in space follows [allegations](#) from U.S. diplomats last week that Russia engaged in “deliberately reckless” behavior when a Russian military satellite maneuvered close to a U.S.-registered, Finnish-operated radar satellite supplying intelligence to Ukraine. Russia dismissed the claim as “absurd.”

Related article: [Starlink in Ukraine Back to Normal After Week of Throttling](#)

Putin previously [compared](#) Musk to legendary Soviet rocket engineer Sergei Korolev. His special envoy Kirill Dmitriev, who has similarly praised the tech billionaire, [proposed](#) that SpaceX and Roscosmos work on joint projects focused on Mars exploration.

Musk, the world’s wealthiest person and an ally of U.S. President Donald Trump, has become increasingly critical of Ukraine in recent years and insists that Kyiv must sign a peace agreement with Moscow.

Musk said this weekend that SpaceX had temporarily throttled Starlink satellite internet service in Ukraine, disrupting operations used by the Ukrainian military to defend the country against Russian attacks.

“Using Starlink, a civilian commercial service, for offensive drone strikes to kill people has never been allowed, nor should it be,” Musk wrote on X.

Starlink service in Ukraine was eventually [restored](#) following a reported request from Trump.

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109