The Putin Interview 14/02/2024

Tucker asked him why he started the renewed attack on Ukraine, saying that NATO/the US would attack Russia. Putin says he didn't say the US was going to launch a surprise strike on Russia – "are we having a talk show or a serious conversation?"
→ forced laugh from Tucker
Putin then asks Tucker if he understands correctly that Tucker's "basic education is in history." Tucker agrees. Putin then says he will take 30 seconds or one minute to give Tucker "a short reference to history / for giving [him] a little historical background." → coughs and launches into half an hour lecture

Putin has "documents" prepared to substantiate his historic views. ↳ archival documents
general staff

Poland (and later Austrian before WWI) propagating the idea of a Ukrainian ethnicity (previously, "ukraina" meant "on the edge" of the empire)

"the idea that had emerged in Poland, that people in that territory were – allegedly – not really Russians, but rather belonged to a special ethnic group, the Ukrainians, started being "propagated" by the Austrian general staff

Tucker actually asks Putin why he didn't just take Ukraine when he became president.
"You have nuclear weapons, they don't..."
"Why did you wait so long?"

Putin calls his lecture to Tucker a "briefing".

Putin says Lenin and Stalin gave the Ukraine SSR lands that were never Ukrainian and a degree of autonomy for "unexplicable reasons"

→ in reality, this was Realpolitik based on the political realities at the time (the USSR was far from stable or all-powerful at that point)

"Ukraine is an artificial state that was shaped at Stalin's will"

↓

he blames Stalin for this situation

Tucker tries to get back to the "physical threat from NATO" in Putin's justification of the renewed hostilities
→ Putin reiterates that his historical lecture is important to have a "serious talk" and not a "talk show"
→ again, forced laugh from Tucker (he seems annoyed)

Putin says when the USSR collapsed, the Russian leadership assumed — since there were no longer ideological differences — Russia would be welcomed by the West. → he seems deeply disappointed (even feels betrayed) that this didn't happen

"If NATO expands, everything would be the same as during the Cold War — only closer to Russia's borders" (apparently quoting Egon Bahr)

"As Bismarck once put it: Potentials are the most important." ?

Economic potential Europe <=> Africa ?

Yugoslavia

Yeltsin / support for Serbs -> Kosovo war

US aggression —

Apparently Putin had floated the idea of joining NATO with Clinton (outgoing) when he became President

"If he had said yes, the process of rapprochement would have commenced and eventually it might have happened if we'd seen some sincere wish on the part of our partners"

"too big a country with its own opinion and so on"

Putin advocated for a joint US/EU/Russia missile defense system (against Iran)

Putin says Russia was promised "not an inch to the East" of NATO expansion, but was then betrayed - "it was not enshrined on paper"

Putin says European countries (Germany, France) didn't want Ukraine and Georgia in NATO but were pushed by the US — 2008

"Where are the guarantees?"

EU membership issue in Ukraine — open borders and customs union would have let to flooding of Russian markets because Russia had a free trade zone and open customs borders with Ukraine → Putin said Russia would have closed its customs border with Ukraine

→ this made Yanukovich rethink the EU deal

→ Maidan ~~B~~ "a coup in Ukraine"

Putin says the entire Ukrainian economy was based on cooperation with Russia

"coup d'etat"

"we should thank God, they didn't let you in"

Putin says the CIA ("the organisation you wanted to join back in the day, as I understand") backed the "coup in Kiev"

On CIA: "They have always been our opponents. A job is a job."

Technically they did everything right, they achieved their goal of changing the government. However, from a political standpoint it was a colossal mistake. ~~B~~ They should have seen what it would evolve into."

the political leadership

"They launched the war in Donbass in 2014"

Tucker: What was the trigger for 2022?

"Initially it was the coup in Ukraine that provoked the conflict."

"We would never even have considered to lift a finger, if it hadn't been for the bloody developments of Maidan."

'And what triggered the latest events? Firstly, the current Ukrainian leadership declared that it will not implement the Minsk Agreements.'

Putin: Former leaders of Germany & France said openly to the whole world that they never planned to implement the Minsk Agreements.

"They simply lead us by the nose."

"It was they who started the war in 2014."
"Our goal is to stop this war. And we did not start the war in 2022. This is an attempt to stop it."

Haven't achieved aims yet → De-Nazification

Putin says he withdrew his troops from Kiev as a result of the Istanbul peace talks in March 2022.

Putin claims Ukraine's national identity is built on collaboration with Hitler.

(angry)
Tucker: "Would you be satisfied with the territory that you have now?"

→ Putin evades → De-Nazification

Putin brings up the Canadian parliament episode

Putin says peace talks were "almost finalized". After he withdrew his troops from Kiev, he claims, "the other side threw away all of these agreements"

He says Ukraine obeyed the instructions of the US & European countries to fight Russia to the bitter end.

Putin hasn't talked to Biden since the hostilities started in 2022.

"Certain contacts are being maintained, though."

"If you really want to stop fighting, stop supplying weapons."

Threat of nuclear war being promoted in the West is a "fake"

We have no interest in Poland, Latvia etc.

"The goal is to weaken Russia as much as possible"

On American troops in Ukraine: "Don't you have anything better to do?"

Tucker (dead serious): "Who blew up Nord Stream?"

"You for sure." (smiles)

Tucker (smiles): "I was busy that day."

Putin laughs a lot.

"You personally may have an alibi, but the CIA has no such alibi!"

→ who benefits
→ who has capabilities

Tucker: "The biggest act of industrial terrorism ever."

"And the largest emission of CO_2 in history." ?
→ largest methane emission ever recorded

Tucker: If you had evidence why wouldn't you present it and win a propaganda victory?

Putin laughs. "In the war of propaganda, it is very difficult to defeat the United States. Because the United States controls all the world's media. It is cost-prohibitive ~~for~~ to speak to get involved in this work."

→ we will expose our sources of information and achieve nothing in result

Tucker: "The Germans clearly know that their NATO partner did this, and it damaged their economy greatly – it may never recover. Why are they being silent about it? That's very confusing to me. Why wouldn't the Germans say something about it?"

Putin: "This also confuses me. But today's European leadership is guided by the interest of the collective West, rather than its national interests. Otherwise it is difficult to explain the logic of their action or inaction."

Putin knocks on wood. "This is what it is like in their heads. Those are highly incompetent people."

"The world should be a single whole. Security should be shared, rather than meant for the golden billion."

→ "I think that thanks to honest journalism this could somehow be reached."

The US dollar is the main weapon used by the United States to preserve its power across the world.

"We are neighbours with China. You cannot choose neighbours, just as you cannot chose close relatives. We share a border of 1000 kilometers with them."

"China's foreign policy ~~strategy~~ philosophy is not aggressive. It's idea is always to look for compromise. And we can see that."

"I had a very good relationship with... say... Bush."

It's not about the personality of the leader.

"I had such personal relationship with Trump as well."

It is not about the personality of the leader.
It is about the elite's mindset.

We have become the biggest economy in Europe, despite the sanctions everywhere.

"The tools that the US uses, don't work."

Policy of pressure:

- NATO expansion
- Support for separatists in the Caucasus (?) never happened
- Creation of a missile defense system
- Dragging Ukraine into NATO

He always calls Ukraine a "territory"

NATO essentially began to create bases in Ukraine

"All this together led to the decision to end the war that neonazis started in Ukraine in 2014."

Tucker: "Do you think Zelensky has the freedom to negotiate an end to this conflict?"

Do not know. Difficult for me to judge. "I believe he had. In any case he used to have."

"His father fought against the fascists, Nazis, in World War II. I once talked to him about this. I said: Volodimir, what are you doing? Why are you supporting neo-nazis in Ukraine today, while your father fought against fascism? He was a frontline soldier. I will not tell you what he answered. That is a separate topic."

Putin says Boris Johnson dissuaded the Ukrainians from the Istanbul peace deal

"For some reason, everyone had the illusion that Russia could be defeated on the battlefield."

Tucker asks about religion and god at work, being a Christian leader...

"I think there is no stopping Elon Musk. He will do as he sees fit. Nevertheless, you need to find some common ground with him. Search for ways to persuade him. This process needs to be formalised and subjected to certain rules."

Putin thinks we need to regulate research into AI and genetics.

Evan Gershkovich: Asks Putin if he will release him to Tucker as "a sign of his decency"

Putin (grave, sighs heavily): "We have done so many gestures of goodwill out of decency that I think we have run out of them. We have never seen anyone reciprocate to us in a similar manner. In theory, we can say that we do not rule out that we can do that. If our partners take reciprical steps. When I talk about the partners I, first of all, refer to special services. Special services are in contact with one another; they are talking about the matter in question."

Tucker: Everyone knows the kid is not a super-spy.

Putin: "He was working for the US special services. Some other agencies."

Putin seems to suggest that, in exchange, he wants a murderer (political assassin) released.
"It's not just a journalist...
* "He is a journalist who was secretly getting confidential information."

Putin does not want to contact the US to look for peace. He obviously wants to be contacted by them. Is it a pride thing?

He wants to get back to the alleged Istanbul peace deal document. (That Johnson apparently talked the Ukrainian delegation out of!)

Is it too embarrassing for NATO?
"Let them do it with dignity. There are options, if there's a will."

Putin thinks that a strategic defeat of Russia on the battlefield is "impossible by definition".

"It would be funny if it were not so sad."

"What is happening is, to a certain extent, an element of a civil war."