

[US presidential election 2024](#)

Putin says he prefers Joe Biden over Donald Trump in US election

Comments come after US president urges Congress to back aid for Ukraine's war effort against Russia



Vladimir Putin: 'If the US think they don't need [Nato] anymore, then that's their decision' © Sergei Karpukhin/Sputnik/AP

Max Seddon in Riga YESTERDAY

Vladimir Putin has said Joe Biden would be a better US president for Russia than Donald Trump and dismissed concerns over his counterpart's age and acuity for the role.

Putin's comments late on Wednesday marked his first foray into this year's presidential election as tensions between Democrats and Republicans rise over the White House's efforts to send more military aid to Ukraine.

Asked in a state television interview to choose between Biden and Trump, [Putin](#) said the US leader was "more experienced, predictable, an old-school politician", adding that Russia would "work with any US leader who wins the trust of the American people".

The Russian president's comments came a day after [Biden](#) accused Trump of having "bowed down to a Russian dictator" as he urged Republicans in Congress to defy Trump and back more funding for Ukraine.

Trump's presidency from 2017 to 2021 was dogged with accusations that he was too sympathetic to Putin. US intelligence assessed that Russia had interfered in the 2016 White House race to help Trump defeat Hillary Clinton.

Putin suggested on Wednesday that [concerns over Biden's age and mental acuity](#) were part of the US election campaign “getting more and more vicious” and said he had seen no evidence his counterpart was not fit for office.

PLAY | 00:18

Russian President Vladimir Putin says he would prefer Joe Biden to win the US election rather than Donald Trump © KREMLIN.RU / Reuters

At their last meeting in Geneva in 2021, Putin recalled, “they were already saying Biden wasn’t competent [. . .] but I saw nothing of the sort. Yes, he looked at his notes, and to be honest, I looked at mine. No big deal. So he banged his head on the helicopter when he was getting out of it — who of us hasn’t banged their head on something?”

Despite his guarded backing of Biden, Putin said American policy on Russia was “harmful and mistaken” and suggested Trump was right to cast aspersions on the future of Nato.

The US has provided crucial military and financial aid to Ukraine since Putin ordered the full-scale invasion of the country two years ago, but is [struggling to secure congressional support](#) for a new \$60bn round of funding amid a wave of Republican hostility led by Trump.

The former US president, who is all but certain to challenge Biden as the Republican nominee in November, said last week he would encourage Russia to do “[whatever the hell they want](#)” to Nato countries that did not meet defence spending targets.

“There is probably some logic in his point of view” to conditioning US support for Nato allies on meeting the alliance’s target, currently at 2 per cent of gross domestic

product, Putin said. “There is no logic from the Europeans’ point of view — they want the US to keep carrying out some functions for free, as they have done since Nato was founded.”

“If the US think they don’t need [Nato] anymore, then that’s their decision,” Putin added, saying that Trump “had his own views on how US relations with their allies should develop”.

[Copyright](#) The Financial Times Limited 2024. All rights reserved.
