
Highlights of Putin's Latest Interviews

Description

Plenary session of Russian Energy Week

Vladimir Putin and Prime Minister of the Republic of Iraq Muhammed Shia Al Sudani took part in the plenary session of the Russian Energy Week international forum.

<http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/72480>

- “I repeat, there are different approaches: the Central Bank has its own views, the Government its own, and the Executive Office has slightly different ones. But the signed executive order is the result of a compromise among specialists and experts. And, of course, there is logic in the decisions made.”
- “According to our experts, there is only 0.5 percent growth in the Eurozone, which can primarily be attributed to Italy and Spain. It remains to be seen why these economies are seeing some growth; it may be related to real estate sales and the post-pandemic recovery of the tourism sector. Overall, the industrial sector is experiencing a decline which impacts the entire economy. Industrial output dynamics in the EU for July showed a decline of 2.4 percent; energy output dropped by 4.7 percent and for the first half of this year there was a 5 percent drop.
- These developments have impacted household incomes. Real disposable incomes in the Eurozone for the first quarter of this year (quarter to quarter, from 2023 to 2022) fell by 1.2 percent. I would like to remind you that, in the Russian Federation, there was a 4.4 percent increase during the same period, and in the second quarter, there was a 5.3 percent increase. These are the actual disposable income growth rates in Russia.
- Clearly, the baselines are different, but the trend is what matters. It reflects the quality of economic policies. Sometimes I look at them and wonder what they are doing there. Well, it's their choice.”
- “According to experts, the combined contribution to the global economy by the five largest Asian economies – China, India, Indonesia, Malaysia and Vietnam – has surpassed the aggregate share of the United States and all EU countries together. This gap is expected to widen in the coming decades, there is no doubt about it. In the case of China and the United States, projections indicate that by 2028 China's share in the global economy will increase to 19.7 percent, while that of the United States will decrease to 14.5 percent based on purchasing power parity, of course.”

Valdai International Discussion Club meeting (transcript concluded)

Vladimir Putin took part in the plenary session of the 20th anniversary meeting of the Valdai International Discussion Club.

<http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/72444>

- “Regarding whether Russia and Serbia are targeted by certain circles in the West, they are, it is a

fact. No specific evidence is needed to corroborate this; it is a cold hard fact. Frankly, I am not sure why Serbia is a target.

- It is just like in the early 1990s ? after the Soviet Union had broken up and thinking that times had changed ? Russia was willing to make almost any sacrifice in order to establish good relations with Western nations. What did we get in return? They provided direct political, information, financial, and even military support to separatism and terrorism in the Caucasus. I served as the Director of the FSB back then, and I watched with bewilderment as these events unfolded, wondering why they were doing this at a time when we were on the same side. However, they pursued these actions without hesitation. Frankly, I have no clear understanding of it to this day.
- I believe it may stem from a lack of education, perhaps a misunderstanding of global trends and a lack of comprehension of Russia's nature, as well as an unawareness of where such actions might lead. They may have sought to pressure us into submission using brutal force. Sanctions are, in fact, a different form of force. There appears to be a complete absence of a willingness to seek compromises. Those barks that I mentioned earlier, like "you must," "you are under obligation," or "we are warning you" are also about the use of force or an attempt to exert force. It all comes down to the same thing.
- Concerning at first Yugoslavia and then Serbia, the question is why? Serbia appeared to be ready to engage in discussions on virtually all matters as well. However, they chose to apply pressure, more and more. I have heard them say phrases like "we need to pressure them into accepting our terms" or "it is a weak point" on numerous occasions. This is their prevailing philosophy. Why did they choose to do this to Serbia? Frankly, I have no idea.
- Furthermore, during times when I had candid conversations and good relations with some leaders, they would tell me "we need to pressure them into" doing a particular thing, I often responded by asking "Why?" but I never got an answer. It is part of their philosophy or paradigm: issues should be resolved by applying force in order to get the desired outcome.
- However, that is not who Serbs are with their history and culture. I will even say something that may sound ominous: it might be possible to destroy the Serbs, but pressing them into anything or subduing them is not possible. Regrettably, they do not understand this, either.
- Nonetheless, I am hopeful that sooner or later they will come to realise this component of European and global politics. They will finally understand that it is essential to engage in constructive talks rather than to attempt to exert force."
- "Russia is also a distinct civilisation. Look, we have over 190 peoples and ethnic groups living in Russia, with over 270 tongues and dialects. Surely that is a civilisation, is it not? India is also an enormous multi-confessional and multi-ethnic country. We need to dialogue between all civilisations – we are not the only civilisations in the world – as well as achieve a balance of interests and ways to maintain this balance."
- "BRICS was actually conceived in Russia. Let me remind you how it happened. First, we suggested having a three-party forum for Russia, India and China. We agreed to hold regular meetings. This is how RIC came about, which stands for Russia, India and China. Then Brazil expressed interest in joining these discussions. And we became BRIC. Next was South Africa, hence BRICS.
- Now, we have reached the point when we are ready to expand the number of members – and we have done so. In my opinion, this fact is very important and indicates that our authority is growing and, most importantly, that countries want to join a format that does not impose any obligations but simply creates conditions for compromise and addressing issues of interest for all the participating countries. We are happy to see it and believe it is a positive process."

- “The people who, for some reason, started fighting today’s Russia after 1991 – I mentioned some of it in my remarks... I have no idea why they did it. Perhaps, they did it out of arrogance or foolishness, I cannot find another explanation. I keep asking myself: Why? After all, we opened our arms and said, “We are here for you.” But instead they tried to finish us off. Why? Nonetheless, they began doing this. This led us to the only remaining choice which was to strengthen our sovereignty in the economy, finance, technology, and security.
- So, the people who began this and brought us to the current phase of the already heated confrontation began to impose sanctions on us and accomplished the opposite of what they expected to accomplish. We are witnessing a clear shift in the structure of the Russian economy. I have already mentioned this: we have added three percent to GDP from oil and gas, and 43 percent from the processing industries, including defence, but also electronics, optics, and machine building. They have left our market, probably thinking that everything would collapse, but instead things are only getting stronger.”