

Donald Trump: Vladimir Putin 'Always Wanted Ukraine' but I Said 'You Can't Do It'

[Charlie Spiering](#) 23 Feb 2022



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Former President Donald Trump said Tuesday he knew that Russian President Vladimir Putin always wanted to take over Ukraine, but that as president he refused to let it happen.

"I knew that he always wanted Ukraine," Trump said in an [interview](#) with radio hosts Clay Travis and Buck Sexton. "I used to talk to him about it."

The former president recalled that he understood Putin, but said he would not allow him to invade his neighboring country.

"I said, 'You can't do it. You're not gonna do it,'" Trump said. "But I could see that he wanted it. I used to ask him. We used to talk about it at length."

Trump flattered Putin, recalling he "got along with him great."

"He liked me. I liked him. I mean, you know, he's a tough cookie, got a lot of the great charm and a lot of pride," he said. "But the way he — and he loves his country, you know? He loves his country."

Trump spoke about Putin after the Russian president recognized two regions in Ukraine as "independent," sending more Russian troops in the region to act as "peacekeepers."

"I said, 'How smart is that?'" Trump said, recalling when he saw the news about Putin's actions. "And he's gonna go in and be a peacekeeper. That's the strongest peace force ... we could use that on our southern border. That's the strongest peace force I've ever seen."

Trump claimed Putin would not have acted in Ukraine if he was still the president.

"Had I been in office, not even thinkable. This would never have happened," he said, but added, "You gotta say that's pretty savvy."

Trump ridiculed President Joe Biden for failing to react immediately to Putin's move in Ukraine.

"You know what the response was from Biden? There was no response," he said. "They didn't have one for that. No, it's very sad. Very sad."

Later Tuesday, Biden [announced](#) a "first tranche" of economic sanctions to punish Russia.

"Who in the Lord's name does Putin think gives him the right to declare new so-called countries on territory that belonged to his neighbors?" Biden asked during his speech.