



Pope Admits NATO Likely Provoked Putin's Invasion: "Barking At The Gates Of Russia"

Description

Pope Francis has said that he's ready to meet President Vladimir Putin in Moscow in hopes of brokering an end to the war in Ukraine, according to the Vatican news agencies. He said in an interview published Tuesday by the Italian daily [Corriere della Sera](#), "I am not going to Kyiv for now; I feel that I must not go. **First I must go to Moscow. First I must meet Putin.** But I am also a priest, what can I do? I do what I can. **If Putin would only open the door...**".

The Roman Catholic leader's criticisms of Russia's actions in Ukraine were made clear throughout the interview, but among the more interesting and surprising lines came when he addressed the roots of the invasion and war which started on Feb.24. He [told the newspaper](#) that "**the barking of NATO at the gates of Russia**" is likely what motivated Putin to attack Ukraine.



During a Wednesday audience last month the Pope kissed a Ukrainian flag presented by refugees. Getty Images

Below is the relevant section of the interview, according to a machine translation [from the Italian](#):

Pope Francis' concern is that Putin, for the moment, will not stop . He also tries to think about the roots of this behavior, about the reasons that push him to such a brutal war. Perhaps the "barking of NATO at Russia's door" prompted the head of the Kremlin to react badly and unleash the conflict. **"I can't say if it was provoked, but perhaps, yes."**

Also interesting is that Francis came close to **condemning the international weapons transfers** now pouring into Ukraine, led by the US which has lately authorized an unprecedented billions in military aid to Ukraine's government.

"And now those who care about peace are faced with the great question of the supply of weapons by Western nations to the Ukrainian resistance," the Pope began with his thoughts on this question. He admitted the question is controversial even within the Catholic world.

"I can't answer, I'm too far away, to the question of whether it is right to supply the Ukrainians," he said, before taking a swipe at the weapons industry. "The clear thing is that weapons are being tested in that land. The Russians now know that tanks are of little use and are thinking of other things. **Wars are fought for this: to test the weapons we have produced.**"

"This was the case in the Spanish Civil War before the Second World War. **The arms trade is a scandal, few oppose it.**" He then invoked the case of the years'-long Saudi-US war on Yemen, describing that "Two or three years ago a ship loaded with weapons arrived in Genoa which had to be

transferred to a large freighter to transport them to Yemen. The port workers did not want to do it. They said: let's think of the children of Yemen. It's a small thing, but a nice gesture. There should be so many like that."

Pope Francis' words have already provoked an angry reaction among some American Catholic clerics...

First China and now Russia. [@Pontifex](#) is good on some issues but dreadful on others. We must work for peace but this doesn't preclude naming culprits. Expect the usual "explanations" and the "what he really meant" nonsense. <https://t.co/iJo2W1PX2P>

— Reverend Michael Coren (@michaelcoren) [May 3, 2022](#)

On the question of how quickly the war could wind down, Francis recalled an April 21 meeting with Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban at the Vatican. **Orban relayed that Putin told him of plans to end the war by May 9**, which is the commemorative 'Victory Day' in Russia.

"I hope that is the case, so we would also understand the escalation of these days," Francis remarked. He expressed worry about the war's spread to all of Ukraine. "Because now it's not just the Donbass, it's Crimea, it's Odessa, it's taking away the Black Sea port from Ukraine." He concluded on this point, "I am pessimistic but we must do everything possible to stop the war." He also mused that possibly the Russian Orthodox Church Patriarch Kyrill could try and intervene with Putin, but recounted that in a recent phone call he warned the patriarch not to be "Putin's altar boy".

On Monday Russian FM Sergey Lavrov addressed the international speculation over ending operations by May 9th and poured cold water on the reports, saying, "Our military will not artificially adjust their actions to any date, including Victory Day," and explaining, "The pace of the operation in Ukraine depends, first of all, on the need to minimise any risks for the civilian population and Russian military personnel."

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The Pope's comment of "NATO barking at the gates of Russia" also reflects some of the arguments of well-known University of Chicago professor and international relations analyst John Mearsheimer:

This Man Predicted The Outcome of [#UkraineConflict](#) Way Before Anyone Else...

pic.twitter.com/85yATl1zk4

— Rishi Bagree (@rishibagree) [February 26, 2022](#)

by Tyler Durden

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