

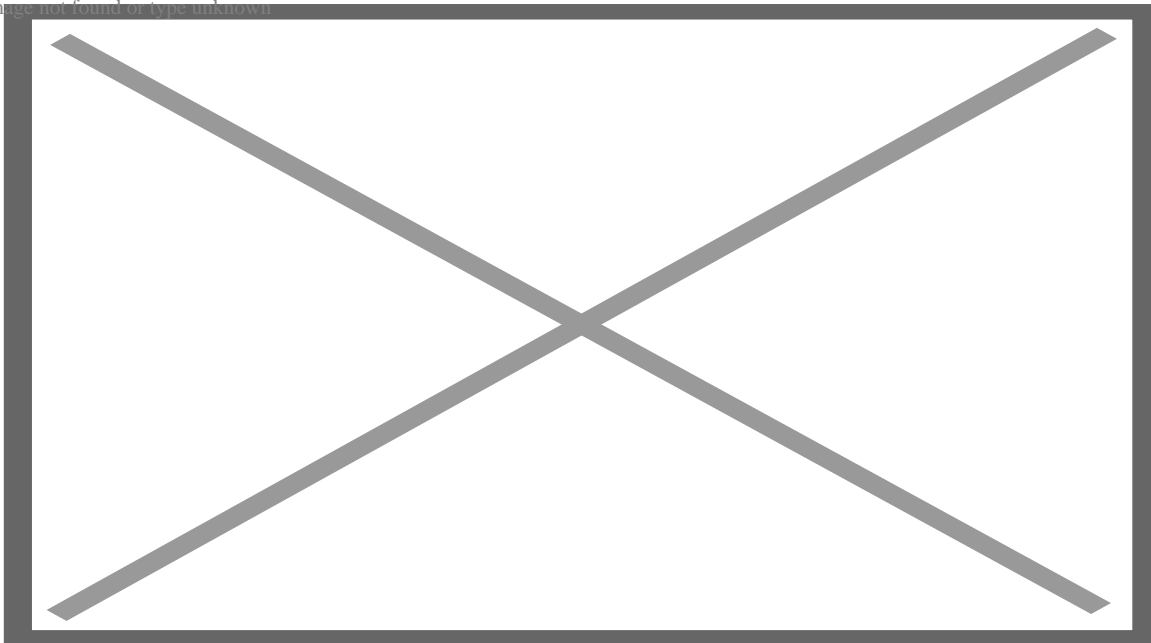


Tucker Carlson Asked GOP Presidential Hopefuls About Ukraine: Trump Calls for Peace in Europe, Regime Change at Home; DeSantis Response Stuns Establishment

Description

Fox News Channel host Tucker Carlson asked Republican presidential hopefuls, those who have announced and those exploring a bid, about their policy on Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine. Carlson reported the responses on Monday night's show and posted the responses in full on Twitter.

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Nikki Haley, John Bolton, Mike Pompeo, Asa Hutchison and Chris Sununu opted to not participate. But the number of politicians who did respond is impressive, considering as Carlson acknowledged that it was “presumptuous” of a cable news show to conduct such a query.

Those who answered: President Trump, former Vice President Mike Pence, Gov. Ron DeSantis (FL),

Gov. Kristi Noem (SD), Greg Abbott (TX), Sen. Tim Scott (SC), former Gov. Chris Christie (NJ) and Ohio businessman Vivek Ramaswamy.

President Trump called for peace in Europe (but not at any price) and for regime change at home. Pence supports (but no blank check) Ukraine so as to stop Russia's ambitions and set an example for China. DeSantis stunned the establishment by spelling out a position close to Trump's, saying of the U.S. national interest, "a territorial dispute between Ukraine and Russia is not one of them."

The responses were posted in a Twitter thread starting with this tweet.

We asked every potential 2024 GOP presidential candidate to answer six key questions on the war in Ukraine. As promised, their full responses are below. pic.twitter.com/tjcM4w54cR

— Tucker Carlson (@TuckerCarlson) [March 14, 2023](#)

President Trump, DeSantis and Pence's responses in full below. Others can be read on Twitter (links below).

Trump:

"Like inflation and numerous other self inflicted wounds and mistakes made over the past two years, Russia would definitely not have raided and attacked Ukraine if I was your President. In fact, for four years they didn't attack, nor did they have any intention of doing so as long as I was in charge. But the sad fact is that, due to a new lack of respect for the U.S., caused at least partially by our incompetently handled pullout from Afghanistan, and a very poor choice of words by Biden in explaining U.S. requests and intentions (Biden's first statement was that Russia could have some of Ukraine, no problem!), the bloody and expensive assault began, and continues to this day. That is all history, but how does it end, and it must end, NOW! Start by telling Europe that they must pay at least equal to what the U.S. is paying to help Ukraine. They must also pay us, retroactively, the difference. At a staggering 125 Billion Dollars, we are paying 4 to 5 times more, and this fight is far more important for Europe than it is for the U.S. Next, tell Ukraine that there will be little more money coming from us, UNLESS RUSSIA CONTINUES TO PROSECUTE THE WAR. The President must meet with each side, then both sides together, and quickly work out a deal. This can be easily done if conducted by the right President. Both sides are weary and ready to make a deal. The meetings should start immediately, there is no time to spare. The death and destruction MUST END NOW! Properly executed, this terrible and tragic War, a War that never should have started in the first place, will come to a speedy end. GOD BLESS AMERICA!!!"

Is opposing Russia in Ukraine a vital American national strategic interest?

"No, but it is for Europe. But not for the United States. That is why Europe should be paying far more than we are, or equal."

What specifically is our objective in Ukraine, and how will we know when we've achieved it?

"Our objective in Ukraine is to help and secure Europe, but Europe isn't helping itself. They are relying on the United States to largely do it for them. That is very unfair to us. Especially since Europe takes advantage of us on trade and other things."

What is the limit of funding and materiel you would be willing to send to the government of Ukraine?

"That would strongly depend on my meeting with President Putin and Russia. Russia would have never attacked Ukraine if I were President, not even a small chance. Would have never happened if I were President, but it has. I would have to see what the direction in which Russia is headed. I want them to stop, and they will, depending on the one that delivers that message. But with everything said, Europe must pay. The United States has spent much more than Europe, and that is not fair, just, or equitable. If I were President, that horrible war would end in 24 hours, or less. It can be done, and it must be done— now!"

Should the United States support regime change in Russia?

"No. We should support regime change in the United States, that's far more important. The Biden administration are the ones who got us into this mess."

Given that Russia's economy and currency are stronger than before the war, do you believe that U.S. sanctions have been effective?

"No, they have not been effective. Just the opposite. They drove Russia, China and Iran into an unthinkable situation."

Do you believe the United States faces the risk of nuclear war with Russia?

"It depends on who the President of the United States is. At the moment, with Biden as president, absolutely yes. He says and does all the wrong things at the wrong time."

Pence:

Is opposing Russia in Ukraine a vital American national strategic interest?

"When the United States supports Ukraine in their fight against Putin, we follow the Reagan doctrine, and we support those who fight our enemies on their shores, so we will not have to fight them ourselves. There is no room for Putin apologists in the Republican Party. This is not America's war, but if Putin is not stopped and the sovereign nation of Ukraine is not restored quickly, he will continue to move toward our NATO allies, and America would then be called upon to send our own."

Vladimir Putin has revealed his true nature, a dictator consumed conquest and willing to spend thousands of lives for his commitment to reestablish the Greater Russian Empire.

Anyone who thinks Putin will stop at Ukraine's border is not owning up to the reality of who Putin is. We need to be clear-eyed about the Russian threat: that Georgia, the Crimea, and Ukraine are merely at the top of Putin's lists, they are not the only countries he's aiming for. And by supporting Ukraine, we have told China we will support Taiwan, should they follow Russia in an attempt to invade."

What specifically is our objective in Ukraine, and how will we know when we've achieved it?

"Victory for Ukraine, where Ukraine's sovereignty and peace are restored as quickly as possible. Unfortunately, the Biden administration slow walked aid to Ukraine, every response has been too slow from providing intelligence to Ukraine, to hammering Russia with sanctions, to providing military equipment and fighter jets to Ukraine.

Ukraine's victory should be an unmistakable, undeniable defeat for Russia and its allies."

What is the limit of funding and material you would be willing to send to the government of Ukraine?

"As a fiscal conservative, I do not believe in sending blank checks and want oversight of government spending at home and abroad. But withholding or reducing support will have consequences: If Putin is not stopped now and he moves into NATO-controlled territory, the cost will be far greater."

Should the United States support regime change in Russia?

"That is a better question for the thousands of Russian citizens jailed for protesting the Russian invasion of Ukraine. As many as 200,000 Russian troops have been killed or wounded in Putin's invasion of Ukraine, that question should be asked to those families grieving their loss, ask if they'd support a regime change."

Given that Russia's economy and currency are stronger than before the war, do you believe that U.S. sanctions have been effective?

"The Trump-Pence administration established a devastating sanctions program and was the toughest US administration on Russia since the Cold War. Sanctions against Russia could have had even more painful consequences if the Biden administration moved quicker with new sanctions and western Europe had heeded US warnings to look elsewhere for energy sources.

Russia's economy and currency are not stronger than before the war. The Russian economy is in free-fall. The Russian ruble is still afloat because of the extremely costly measures Russia has taken to keep their currency at pre-war levels in the face of sanctions. Russia is currently being propped up by China, and if China withdraws their support, Putin could run out of money by as soon as 2024; Russia is not in a strong economic position. This war is costing Russia their economy, their military prowess, their position on the world stage, and it's costing lives."

Do you believe the United States faces the risk of nuclear war with Russia?

“Putin is still “the small and bullying leader of Russia,” his talk of nuclear war is a bullying tactic that he used at the start of the invasion. But Putin should know the United States will not be bullied. This administration has not led with strength on the world stage, but America is still a nation that believes peace comes through strength.”

DeSantis:

“While the U.S. has many vital national interests – securing our borders, addressing the crisis of readiness within our military, achieving energy security and independence, and checking the economic, cultural, and military power of the Chinese Communist Party – becoming further entangled in a territorial dispute between Ukraine and Russia is not one of them. The Biden administration’s virtual “blank check” funding of this conflict for “as long as it takes,” without any defined objectives or accountability, distracts from our country’s most pressing challenges.

Without question, peace should be the objective. The U.S. should not provide assistance that could require the deployment of American troops or enable Ukraine to engage in offensive operations beyond its borders. F-16s and long-range missiles should therefore be off the table. These moves would risk explicitly drawing the United States into the conflict and drawing us closer to a hot war between the world’s two largest nuclear powers. That risk is unacceptable.

A policy of “regime change” in Russia (no doubt popular among the DC foreign policy interventionists) would greatly increase the stakes of the conflict, making the use of nuclear weapons more likely. Such a policy would neither stop the death and destruction of the war, nor produce a pro-American, Madisonian constitutionalist in the Kremlin. History indicates that Putin’s successor, in this hypothetical, would likely be even more ruthless. The costs to achieve such a dubious outcome could become astronomical.

The Biden administration’s policies have driven Russia into a de facto alliance with China. Because China has not and will not abide by the embargo, Russia has increased its foreign revenues while China benefits from cheaper fuel. Coupled with his intentional depletion of the Strategic Petroleum Reserve and support for the Left’s Green New Deal, Biden has further empowered Russia’s energy-dominated economy and Putin’s war machine at Americans’ expense.

Our citizens are also entitled to know how the billions of U.S. taxpayer dollars are being utilized in Ukraine.

We cannot prioritize intervention in an escalating foreign war over the defense of our own homeland, especially as tens of thousands of Americans are dying every year from narcotics smuggled across our open border and our weapons arsenals critical for our own security are rapidly being depleted.”

More responses at Twitter:

[Greg Abbott.](#)

[Kristi Noem.](#)

[Tim Scott.](#)

[Chris Christie.](#)

[Vivek Ramaswamy](#)

Sample of establishment reaction to DeSantis:

National Review's Jay Nordlinger: "Ron DeSantis calls the Ukraine war a "territorial dispute." In fact, it is an attempt by Russia to obliterate the Ukrainian nation and re-subjugate it — to drag it back into an empire ruled by the Kremlin. DeSantis betrays a fundamental misunderstanding of a crucial issue."

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— Jay Nordlinger (@jaynordlinger) [March 14, 2023](#)

HuffPo's S.V. Dáte: DeSantis tells Tucker Carlson that Russia's invasion of Ukraine is a "territorial dispute." Sort of in the way that 1939-40 was a territorial dispute between Germany and Poland. And Belgium. And France. And ..."

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— S.V. Dáte (@svdate) [March 14, 2023](#)

The Atlantic's David Frum: "The logic of the DeSantis statement on Ukraine also implies abandonment of Taiwan if the Chinese start pushing hard."

The logic of the DeSantis statement on Ukraine also implies abandonment of Taiwan if the Chinese start pushing hard.

— David Frum (@davidfrum) [March 14, 2023](#)

Mark Levin: "This is very disappointing."

This is very disappointing. I'll discuss on radio this evening. <https://t.co/PfWduAktuO>

— Mark R. Levin (@marklevinshow) [March 14, 2023](#)

NY Times 'conservative' columnist David French: "DeSantis actually called Russia's grotesque, aggressive invasion of a sovereign country a "territorial dispute." Now both front-runners for the GOP nomination are weaker on Russian aggression than Joe Biden. Astonishing. Dangerous."

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Astonishing. Dangerous. <https://t.co/xeaFyGugL8>

— David French (@DavidAFrench) [March 14, 2023](#)

by Kristinn Taylor

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