



Adult Learning Within Reach

## Member Lecture – 25 November 2021

Who is that Mr Putin?

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Questions answered post-lecture

**Q1 You mentioned Dr Fiona Hill's book – 'Mr Putin: Operative in the Kremlin'. Is this the same person who testified at the Trump impeachment hearings?**

Yes, it is the same person.

**Q2 I imagine most of us don't speak Russian. What is the quality of English translation, say on the Kremlin website?**

The Kremlin website is translated automatically by Google, on clicking the option at the top right on opening the site.

**Q3 Could the positive comments on Putin by Russian people be a result of fear in saying what they really think?**

I agree it could be, but only partially. I think the majority seemed to be quite sincere, judging by their body language and intonation. The repressions in Russian in 2016 when the street poll was done were not as severe as they are now.

**Q4 What is Putin's attitude towards China?**

This isn't an area of my expertise, so in answer, I offer an excerpt from an article by Simon Sarajyan, Founding Director of 'Russia Matters', in the magazine 'Russian in Global Politics' (5 Aug 2020) - <https://globalaffairs.ru/articles/a-vdrug-rossiya-v-nato-i-es/>

Relations between China and Russia are indeed steadily strengthening. To be convinced of this, it is enough to look at the schedule of official visits of Xi Jinping and Vladimir Putin. China became the first country that Putin has visited since his inauguration for a third presidential term in May 2012, and Xi Jinping's return visit took place in 2013. In total, as of June 2019, the leaders met almost 30 times and did not get tired of each other. Putin calls Xi "dear friend" and "good old friend." Xi is even more complimentary: "He is my best friend in the heart. I really appreciate our friendship. "As shown in a recent poll by the Chinese newspaper *Global Times*, a third of the Chinese consider Russia to be the number one of the countries influencing China, similar polls in Russia consistently show that the majority of Russians have a positive attitude towards China. In addition to strengthening political ties, Russia and the PRC are expanding military and security cooperation, including joint air patrols and maneuvers in the Mediterranean. In addition, Russia is helping China develop its own early warning radar system. In the report of the Ministry of Defense of the PRC, the relations between the two countries are called "a comprehensive strategic partnership", in the English-language version of the foreign policy doctrine of the Russian Federation (2016), Russian-Chinese relations are assessed as "a comprehensive equal partnership based on trust and strategic cooperation" [3].

### Q5 What is the hold Putin had on Trump, any theories?

Best to listen to Mr Putin himself talking about Donald Trump in an interview in July 2016 - [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FEB9a\\_m8kr0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FEB9a_m8kr0)

### Q6 Would Russia ever really want to be part of the EU if it was asked?

This isn't an area of my expertise, so in answer, I offer an excerpt from an article by Simon Sarajyan, Founding Director of 'Russia Matters', in the magazine 'Russian in Global Politics' (5 Aug 2020) - <https://globalaffairs.ru/articles/a-vdrug-rossiya-v-nato-i-es/>

Russia could have moved closer to the West, but this did not happen

Today it is difficult to imagine, but Russian and Western leaders thought about Russia's membership, if not in the EU, then in NATO in the 1990s and even in the early 2000s. The last Soviet leader, Mikhail Gorbachev, raised the issue of Soviet NATO membership three times in 1990, recalled James Baker, then US Secretary of State. Later, Boris Yeltsin called Russia's accession to NATO "a long-term political goal." The 1993 State Department documents even set the deadline for Russia - and Ukraine - to join NATO (2005). In addition to Yeltsin himself, his Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev dreamed of Russia's membership in the European Community, the predecessor of the European Union, and British Prime Minister John Major called for "expanding the boundaries of imagination" and inviting Russia. Ten years later, European leaders such as Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi Moscow was still offered to join the European Union, while President Vladimir Putin said: "Of course, Russia is more than a diverse country, but we are part of Western European culture. Wherever our people live - in the Far East or in the south, we are Europeans". Initially, Putin continued the policy of his predecessor to harmonize Russian legislation with European and partnership with NATO.[1] .

In addition to Russian leaders, some foreign policy experts, including [Sergei Karaganov](#) , [Timofey Bordachev](#) and [Igor Yurgens](#) [2] , also once assumed that Russia would eventually integrate into NATO. Their western colleagues spoke about the same. Baker saw Russia's joining the alliance as a win-win for both sides. In the 1990s, such experts as [Graham Ellison](#) , [Karl Kaiser](#) , [Daniel Ergin](#) and [Thein Gustafson](#) believed in the integration of Russia into the Western club .

But in the end, the waves of NATO enlargement and the "color revolutions" convinced the Russian leadership that the West is ready to integrate the post-Soviet neighbors to the west and south of Russia, but is in no hurry to accept Moscow as an equal member of the club. Guided by this conviction, Russia launched military incursions into Georgia in 2008 and Ukraine in 2014 to prevent these countries from approaching NATO and EU membership. Today, the prospects for Russia's joining both blocs seem as dim as they were during the Cold War. Russia has distanced itself from the West, which, according to the Kremlin, is in decline, and is actively supporting a rising China. This alienation has led some analysts, including [Stephen Walt](#), to say that "the ineffective American approach to Russia strengthens the strategic partnership between Moscow and Beijing." Graham Ellison also voiced concern about the emerging strategic alliance, which he believes poses a threat to the United States.

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