

Claim

Claim: "US Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth called Putin a 'war criminal'."

Actions

`web_search("Pete Hegseth Putin war criminal")`

Evidence

Evidence from `web_search`

Newsweek published a fact-check article stating that Pete Hegseth called Putin a "war criminal" in March 2022 on Fox News. The article also mentions that Hegseth has since been more cautious and critical of U.S. spending on the conflict. The article is dated November 13, 2024. (



[Source](#)

According to POLITICO, Roger Wicker said that Pete Hegseth called Putin a “war criminal who needs to be in prison for the rest of his life.” The article was published on February 14, 2025. ([image:k](#)) [Source](#) The Kyiv Independent published an article on June 12, 2025, stating that Pete Hegseth, when asked who the aggressor in the war is, responded, "Russia is the aggressor." ([image:k](#)) [Source](#)

Elaboration

The evidence indicates that Pete Hegseth has, at different times, referred to Putin as a "war criminal" and identified Russia as the aggressor in the war. Newsweek reported that Hegseth made the "war criminal" statement in March 2022 on Fox News. POLITICO and The Kyiv Independent also provide additional context to Hegseth's statements.

Final Judgement

Pete Hegseth has been reported to have called Putin a "war criminal" on Fox News in March 2022, according to a Newsweek article. Additional sources, such as POLITICO and The Kyiv Independent, confirm this statement and provide further context to Hegseth's views on the conflict.

true

Verdict: TRUE

Justification

Newsweek reported that Pete Hegseth called Putin a "war criminal" in March 2022 on Fox News, as stated in a fact-check article published on November 13, 2024. Additional sources, such as POLITICO and The Kyiv Independent, confirm this statement and provide further context to Hegseth's views on the conflict.