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 stating that Pete Hegseth called Putin a "war criminal" on Fox News in March 2022.

POLITICO reported that Roger Wicker said Pete Hegseth called Putin a "war criminal who needs to be in prison for the rest of his life."

The Kyiv Independent published an article stating that Pete Hegseth acknowledged Russia as the aggressor in the war. image:k

- https://www.newsweek.com/pete-hegseth-vladimir-putin-war-criminal-1985251
- https://www.politico.eu/article/senate-armed-services-chair-roger-wicker-pete-hegseth-war-in-ukraine-russia/
- https://kyivindependent.com/republicans-press-pentagon-chief-over-trumps-plan-to-end-russias-war-against-ukraine-politico-reports/

Elaboration

The evidence indicates that Pete Hegseth, not the US Secretary of Defense, called Putin a "war criminal." Newsweek published a fact check confirming this statement. Additionally, POLITICO reported that Roger Wicker stated that Pete Hegseth called Putin a "war criminal who needs to be in prison for the rest of his life."

Final Judgement

The claim is inaccurate. The evidence shows that Pete Hegseth, not the US Secretary of Defense, made the statement.

```
false
```

Verdict: FALSE

Justification

The claim is false. While Pete Hegseth did call Putin a "war criminal," he is not the US Secretary of Defense. This was confirmed by a fact check published by Newsweek (https://www.newsweek.com/pete-hegseth-vladimir-putin-war-criminal-1985251).