Putin praises Elon Musk: 'A smart guy'

Russian President Vladimir Putin speaks during his annual news conference in Moscow, Russia, Thursday, Dec. 14, 2023. (AP Photo/Alexander Zemlianichenko, Pool)

Russian President Vladimir Putin heaped praise on billionaire tech mogul Elon Musk during an interview he granted to pundit Tucker Carlson that was posted online Thursday.

"I think there's no stopping Elon Musk," Putin told Carlson after the pundit asked him about the growing prevalence of artificial intelligence. "He will do as he sees fit. Nevertheless, you'll need to find some common ground with him. Search for ways to persuade him. I think he's a smart person. I truly believe he is. So you'll need to reach an agreement with him because this process needs to be formalized and subjected to certain rules."

Musk has sparked controversy in recent months over his retooling of X, the platform formerly known as Twitter, and his embrace of antisemitic and other unproven theories.

Musk, who owns several major media and technology companies, oversees a vast communications network that is crucial to Ukraine's fight against Russia.

Last year, Putin called Musk "an outstanding person" after he acknowledged he blocked off internet access from his Starlink satellites during a Ukrainian raid.

Carlson has also praised Musk for his handling of X, the platform on which the former cable news host launched his new show after being pulled off the air by Fox News last April.