80 times Trump talked about Putin



Throughout the 2016 presidential campaign, Donald Trump consistently broke from political orthodoxy in his effusive praise of Russian President Vladimir Putin.

His glowing statements on Putin have become central in stoking the suspicion that he and his campaign were somehow connected to Russian interference in the election.

A CNN KFile review of Trump's public statements — from the years immediately before his presidential campaign to present — reveal that Trump has contradicted himself over the years about the nature of his relationship with Putin.

Since 2013 — when Trump's Miss Universe pageant was held in Moscow — Trump has at least nine times claimed to have spoken to, met, or made contact with Putin. But as the 2016 campaign wore on and his statements on Putin began to attract more scrutiny, Trump changed course, denying having ever met the Russian president.

"I never met Putin," Trump said at a July 2016 news conference. "I don't know who Putin is. He said one nice thing about me. He said I'm a genius. I said thank you very much to the newspaper and that was the end of it. I never met Putin."

June 18, 2013

Trump tweets:

Sept. 13, 2013

Trump praises Putin for his criticism of the term "American exceptionalism:"

"You think of the term as being fine, but all of sudden you say, what if you're in Germany or Japan or any one of 100 different countries? You're not going to like that term," Trump told CNN. "It's very insulting and Putin really put it to him (Obama) about that."

Sept. 16, 2013

Trump notes he's invited Putin to Miss Universe:

"So we've invited President Putin, that'll be interesting," Trump said on "Fox and Friends." "I know he'd like to go."

Oct. 3, 2013

Trump tells Larry King on Ora TV that Putin has done "a really great job outsmarting our country."

Oct. 17, 2013

Trump tells David Letterman that he's done "a lot of business with the Russians" and says they are "smart" and "tough" and that they don't look "so dumb right now." He calls Putin a "tough guy" and says that he "met him once."

Oct. 18, 2013

Trump says on MSNBC that he invited Putin to Miss Universe:

"I know for a fact that he wants very much to come, but we'll have to see. We haven't heard yet, but we have invited him," Trump said.

November 2013

Trump says he has a relationship with Vladimir Putin:

"I do have a relationship and I can tell you that he's very interested in what we're doing here today," he said on MSNBC of the Miss Universe pageant. "He's probably very interested in what you and I are saying today, and I'm sure he's going to be seeing it in some form, but I do have a relationship with him and I think it's very interesting to see what's happened."

Nov. 11, 2013

Trump on "Fox and Friends" says of his trip to Moscow for the Miss Universe pageant:

"I was in Moscow and I was in Russia and they treated me so fantastically. I met so many incredible people."

Feb. 10, 2014

Trump says Putin contacted him during Miss Universe and was "so nice:"

"When I went to Russia with the Miss Universe pageant, (Putin) contacted me and was so nice. I mean, the Russian people were so fantastic to us," he said on "Fox and Friends." "I'll just say this, they are doing – they're outsmarting us at many turns, as we all understand. I mean, their leaders are, whether you call them smarter or more cunning or whatever, but they're outsmarting us. If you look at Syria or other places, they're outsmarting us."

March 3, 2014

Amid Russian aggression in Ukraine, Trump tells "Fox and Friends" that Mitt Romney was right about Russia being a "geopolitical foe."

"Well Mitt Romney was so right, and nobody knew how right he was going to be, and you look at Obama's response and just take a look at what's going on," said Trump. "Syria was propped up by Russia. Syria's now back in their fold 100% and that whole deal is coming to an end because Russia's taken over."

Trump added, "There are a lot of things we could be doing economically to Russia. Russia is not strong economically and we could do a lot of different things to really do numbers on them if we wanted to."

March 6, 2014

Trump tells a crowd at CPAC that Putin sent him a present during Miss Universe with a note and he "spoke to all of his people."

March 13, 2014

Trump tells NBC's "Today" that the US should "definitely do sanctions" against Russia for their aggression in Ukraine.

"And we have to show some strength. I mean, Putin has eaten Obama's lunch, therefore our lunch, for a long period of time," he said. "And I just hope that Obama, who's not looking too good, doesn't do something very foolish and very stupid to show his manhood. I just hope that doesn't happen."

March 21, 2014

Trump tweets:

March 24, 2014

Trump tells "Fox and Friends" Mitt Romney was right that Russia was "our biggest problem."

"Well, Mitt was right, and he was also right when he mentioned in one of the debates about Russia, and he said, 'Russia's our biggest problem, and Russia is, you know, really something,'" Trump said.

"He said it's a hell of a problem, and everybody laughed at him, including certain media, by the way," continued Trump. "They laughed. It turned out that he's absolutely right. You look at what Russia's doing with Iran, how they controlled the situation, and Syria, and virtually every other place that ... We were thrown out of every place. I'm not saying we should be there. We should rebuild our own schools and our own bridges and highways and everything else. To be scoffed at and thrown around the way we're being thrown around is absolutely unthinkable."

April 12, 2014

Trump tells Fox Business' Eric Bolling that Putin was nice to him during Miss Universe.

"We just left Moscow," Trump said. "He could not have been nicer. He was so nice and so everything. But you have to give him credit that what he's doing for that country in terms of their world prestige is very strong."

In the same interview, Trump praises Putin's invasion of Crimea.

"Well, he's done an amazing job of taking the mantle," Trump said. "And he's taken it away from the President, and you look at what he's doing. And so smart. When you see the riots in a country because they're hurting the Russians, OK, 'We'll go and take it over.' And he really goes step by step by step, and you have to give him a lot of credit."

April 12, 2014

Trump says at a New Hampshire event that Putin is "absolutely having a great time." He says "Russia is like, I mean they're really hot stuff" and "and now you have people in the Ukraine — who knows, set up or not — but it can't all be set up, I mean they're marching in favor of joining Russia."

April 16, 2014

"Putin is having a great time toying with the President," Trump says on Fox News' "Hannity."

April 28, 2014

Trump tweets:

May 27, 2014

Speaking at the National Press Club, Trump says he spoke "indirectly and directly" with Putin at Miss Universe.

"I own Miss Universe, I was in Russia, I was in Moscow recently and I spoke, indirectly and directly, with President Putin, who could not have been nicer, and we had a tremendous success."

June 20, 2014

Trump tells Jeffrey Lord of the American Spectator that Putin treated him "unbelievably well" during Miss Universe and cites Putin to say the term "American exceptionalism" is a "dangerous term."

"Well, I think it's a very dangerous term in one way, because I heard Putin saying, 'Who do they think they are, saying they're exceptional?' You can feel you're exceptional, but when you start throwing it in other countries' faces or other people's faces, I actually think it's a very dangerous term to use," Trump tells Lord, a CNN contributor. "Well, I heard that Putin was saying to somebody—you know I had the Miss Universe contest over in Moscow recently, six months ago, and Putin, by the way, treated us unbelievably well. And it was at that time that Putin said, 'Who do they think they are saying they're exceptional?' And I understand that. You know, he said, 'Why are they exceptional? They have killings in the streets. Look at what's going on in Chicago and different places. They have all of this turmoil, all of the things that are happening in there.'"

July 22, 2014

During an appearance on WTOP radio, Trump says that Putin is not yet finished in Ukraine and that "the United States has to take stand." Trump says Putin has become "quite the terror."

"I think I became much richer because I can understand people and read people and Putin is not finished. Putin has got a long way to go," Trump says.

Nov. 25, 2014

Trump tweets:

Dec. 16, 2014

Trump tells Fox News host Neil Cavuto that Putin is like a "wounded animal" due to the Obama administration's actions against Russia.

"We've hurt Russia and we've done certain things that have really hurt Russia," he said. "And I don't know is that a good thing or is that a bad thing? We'll see what happens."

He added that Putin is "wounded" and that "wounded people and wounded animals can do lots of strange things and we'd better be a little bit careful."

March 18, 2015

Trump tells the Daily Mail about his relationship with Putin: "the relationship is great, and it would be great if I had the position I should have."

Trump also said he received "a gift from Putin – an award and a beautiful letter." He does not confirm or deny meeting with Putin when asked.

June 16, 2015

Trump makes similar comments to Fox News' Bill O'Reilly.

"I was over in Moscow two years ago and I will tell you – you can get along with those people and get along with them well. You can make deals with those people. Obama can't."

June 18, 2015

Trump answers "yes," when asked by Fox News' Sean Hannity if he's had any contact with Vladimir Putin.

"So I was there two years ago. We had a tremendous success with the Miss Universe contest in -- I own Miss Universe, Miss USA, all of that, and it does great," Trump said. "It's on NBC, but that's OK. But it does fantastically well. And two years ago, we had it in Moscow, and it was a tremendous success. And I got to meet everybody. I got to meet all —"

When asked if he spoke to him during pageant, Trump responds, "I don't want to say." Trump says Putin hates Obama and when Hannity asked if Putin told him that, Trump again says, "I don't want to say."

June 29, 2015

Speaking on Putin, Trump says he "got to know these guys well" during Miss Universe.

"I had the Miss Universe over there two years ago," Trump tells the City Club of Chicago. "I got to know these guys well. We can get along with them well."

July 8, 2015

Trump tells CNN's Anderson Cooper that if he becomes president, Putin would turn over Edward Snowden to the US.

"I think I get along with him fine," Trump said of the Russian president. "I think he would be absolutely fine. He would never keep somebody like Snowden in Russia. He hates Obama. He doesn't respect Obama. Obama doesn't like him either. But he has no respect for Obama. Has a hatred for Obama. And Snowden is living the life. Look if that -- if I'm president, Putin says, hey, boom, you're gone. I guarantee you this."

July 15, 2015

Trump tells Fox News' Sean Hannity, "Putin has no respect for President Obama, and Obama doesn't like him much either in all fairness."

July 26, 2015

Retweets someone saying Putin will respect him:

July 30, 2015

During a trip to his golf resort in Scotland, Trump says he thinks he'd get along well with Putin:

"I think I'd get along very well with Vladimir Putin, I just think so. "People say 'what do you mean?' I think I'd get along well with him."

Trump also said Putin "hates Obama and Obama hates him, we have unbelievably bad relationships."

Aug. 12, 2015

Trump says on Fox News that he would meet with Putin when the Russian president came to New York for the UN General Assembly.

"Frankly, I'd get along great with him," he said. "You gotta get along with these people."

Aug. 14, 2015

Trump says he'd get along well with Putin:

"I think I'd get along well with Putin. I know many of the people. I had a major event there two years ago in Moscow, as you know. It was a tremendous success. An amazing success. I think I'd get along well with Putin."

Aug. 20, 2015

Trump tells Fox Business' Maria Bartiromo that Putin is "somebody that can be dealt with."

"I actually think that he is somebody that can be dealt with," he said. "I think his dislike of President Obama is so intense, that it really has affected the whole relationship. We've driven them into the arms of China, so that now these two are together, which is also a been the great sin. Don't ever let Russia and China get together. We've driven them together. I think he is somebody that I would have a very decent relationship with if I ever win."

Aug. 23, 2015

Trump says on Fox News that he'd get along with Putin, citing Miss Universe:

"I feel that Putin is somebody I would actually get along with him. I get a lot of heat for that. I had a big event in Moscow about two years ago, I think I would have a good relationship."

Aug. 29, 2015

Trump says that Putin "hates Obama," but that he would get along great with the Russian president.

"Putin hates us," he said. "He hates Obama. He doesn't hate us. I think he'd like me. I'd get along great with him I think. If you want to know the truth."

Sept. 23, 2015

Trump says at a town hall event in Columbia, South Carolina, that he will "get along with Putin."

Sept. 27, 2015

Retweeted someone on Putin's "brilliance":

Sept. 28, 2015

Trump tells reporters at Trump Tower that "Putin is a nicer person than I am."

Sept. 29, 2015

Trump tells Bill O'Reilly that Putin gets an 'A' for leadership.

"I will tell you that I think in terms of leadership, he is getting an 'A,' and our president is not doing so well," Trump said. "They did not look good together."

Oct. 2, 2015

Trump tells Sean Hannity that "Putin has no respect for our president whatsoever."

Oct. 6, 2015

Trump tells conservative radio host Michael Savage he's met Vladimir Putin.

"Yes," Trump says. "Yes, a long time ago. We got along great, by the way."

Oct. 11, 2015

Trump said on CBS's "Face the Nation" that he and Putin had "fantastic ratings on '60 Minutes' together" and again said he thought they'd get along well.

"I think the biggest thing we have is that we were on '60 Minutes' together and we had fantastic ratings. One of your best-rated shows in a long time," Trump said. "So that was good, right? So we were stablemates."

He added, "I think that I would probably get along with him very well. And I don't think you'd be having the kind of problems that you're having right now."

Oct. 13, 2015

Trump asserted in an interview with the Guardian that Putin was going into Syria to combat ISIS.

"He's going to want to bomb ISIS because he doesn't want ISIS going into Russia and so he's going to want to bomb ISIS. Vladimir Putin is going to want to really go after ISIS, and if he doesn't it'll be a big shock to everybody," Trump said.

Still, in mentioning Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, he noted that Putin is "an Assad person" and "the United States doesn't like Assad."

Oct. 14, 2015

Told Bill O'Reilly that Putin was his "stablemate" on 60 Minutes.

"Well, you know, I actually hosted it 10 years ago and Lorne Michaels called me up the other day. He said I'd love to have you host and I agreed to it because it's an honor. I did 60 Minutes last week — that was an honor. My stablemate was Vladimir Putin and we did very well."

Nov. 10, 2015

Asked a Republican debate what he would do as president in response to Russian aggression, Trump said, "Well, first of all, it's not only Russia. We have problems with North Korea where they actually have nuclear weapons. You know, nobody talks about it, we talk about Iran, and that's one of the worst deals ever made. ... So, we have more than just Russia."

He went on to say, "I got to know (Putin) very well because we were both on '60 Minutes,' we were stablemates, and we did very well that night. But, you know that."

"But, if Putin wants to knock the hell out of ISIS, I'm all for it 100% and I can't understand how anybody would be against that," he added.

Nov. 13, 2015

Trump walks back his Putin stablemate comment, saying his 60 Minutes segment was separate from Putin's.

Dec. 18, 2015

Trump said on Morning Joe that Putin was a better leader than Obama, and dismissed Joe Scarborough's allegations that the Russian president "kills journalists that don't agree with him."

"He's running his country and at least he's a leader, unlike what we have in this country," Trump said.

He added: "I think our country does plenty of killing also, Joe, so you know. There's a lot of stupidity going on in the world right now, a lot of killing going on, a lot of stupidity."

Dec. 20, 2015

In an interview with ABC's "This Week," Trump defends against allegations Putin has ordered the killings of journalists and dissidents.

"As far as the reporters are concerned — as far as the reporters are concerned, obviously I don't want that to happen. I think it's terrible — horrible. But, in all fairness to Putin, you're saying he killed people. I haven't' seen that. I don't know that he has. Have you been able to prove that? Do you know

the names of the reporters that he's killed? Because I've been — you know, you've been hearing this, but I haven't seen the name. Now, I think it would be despicable if that took place, but I haven't' seen any evidence that he killed anybody in terms of reporters."

Dec. 21, 2015

Trump tells Iowa radio host Simon Conway, "I've always had a good instinct about Putin. I just feel that that's a guy—and I can analyze people and you're not always right, and it could be that I won't like him. But I've always had a good feeling about him from the standpoint."

Dec. 30, 2015

Trump says at an event in South Carolina that Putin says he's "brilliant." And attacks his opponents, saying, "they want me to refute his statement."

Jan. 26, 2016

In an interview with Fox Business' Maria Bartiromo, Trump discusses the 2006 murder of Alexander Litvinenko, a former Russian security agent, and the 2016 findings of a British inquiry that Putin "probably approved" his poisoning.

"Have they found him guilty?" Trump said. "I don't think they've found him guilty."

"If he did it, fine. But I don't know that he did it. You know, people are saying they think it was him, it might have been him, it could have been him. But Maria, in all fairness to Putin—I don't know. You know, and I'm not saying this because he says, 'Trump is brilliant and leading everybody'—the fact is that, you know, he hasn't been convicted of anything."

Feb. 15, 2016

Trump says at a news conference he'd be a better negotiator with Putin than his rivals.

"You want to make a good deal for the country, you want to deal with Russia – and there's nothing wrong with not fighting everybody, having Russia where we have a good relationship as opposed to all the stupidity that's taken place."

Feb. 17, 2016

Trump says at a rally that he has no relationship with Putin.

"I have no relationship with him other than he called me a genius," Trump said. "He said, 'Donald Trump is a genius and he is going to be the leader of the party and he's going to be the leader of the world or something."

Feb. 26, 2016

Trump says at a press conference that he can't imagine Marco Rubio meeting with Putin.

"I joked recently about, 'can you imagine Putin sitting there waiting for a meeting and Rubio walks in and he's totally drenched," Trump said. "I don't know what it is, but I've never seen a human being sweat like this man sweats."

Feb. 28, 2016

Trump says at campaign rally in Alabama he'd be a better negotiator with Putin than his rivals.

He says Putin has been "very nice" to him.

March 12, 2016

Trump says at a rally that the media falsely claims he admires Putin:

"Putin said good things about me. He said, 'he's a leader and there's no question about it, he's a genius.' So they all said, the media, they said -- you saw it on the debate -- they said, 'you admire President Putin.' I said, I don't admire him. I said he was a strong leader, which he is. I mean, he might be bad, he might be good. But he's a strong leader."

March 21, 2016

Speaking at the Old Post Office, Trump says, "Putin says very nice things about me. I think that's very nice and it has no effect on me other than I think it's very nice."

April 26, 2016

Trump says during a victory speech "We're going to have a great relationship with Putin and Russia."

April 28, 2016

Trump says Putin has been "very nice" to him:

"I'm saying that I'd possibly have a good relationship. He's been very nice to me," Trump told Bill O'Reilly. "If we can make a great deal for our country and get along with Russia that would be a tremendous thing. I would love to try it."

May 2, 2016

Trump tells Indiana radio host Charly Butcher that the US should call Putin to ask him to stop Russian planes from barrel-rolling over US aircraft, but that if they didn't stop, "at a certain point...you gotta shoot."

May 5, 2016

Asked if he's ever spoken to Vladimir Putin, Trump gives a "no comment" to Fox News' Bret Baier.

"Yeah, I have no comment on that," he said. "No comment."

When Baier pressed him, "Yeah, but I don't want to comment because, let's assume I did. Perhaps it was personal. You know, I don't want to hurt his confidence. But I know Russia well. I had a major event in Russia two or three years ago – Miss Universe contest – which is a big, incredible event, and incredible success. I got to meet a lot of people. And you know what? They want to be friendly with the United States. Wouldn't it be nice if we actually got with somebody?"

May 27, 2016

Trump calls Putin "a strong leader" at a rally.

June 3, 2016

At a rally in California, Trump mocked those who wanted him to "disavow" Putin's praise of him.

"Then Putin said, 'Donald Trump is a genius, he's going to be the next great leader of the United States.' No, no, think of it. They wanted me to disavow what he said. How dare you call me a genius. How dare you call me a genius, Vladimir. Wouldn't it be nice if we actually got along with Russia? Wouldn't that be good?"

July 25, 2016

Trump tweets:

July 27, 2016

Trump tells a local Miami CBS affiliate that he has nothing to do with Russia and has never met Putin, saying, "But I have nothing to do with Russia, nothing to do, I never met Putin, I have nothing to do with Russia whatsoever."

July 27, 2016

Trump says at a news conference that he had never met Putin and didn't know who he was:

"I never met Putin," Trump said. "I don't know who Putin is. He said one nice thing about me. He said I'm a genius. I said thank you very much to the newspaper and that was the end of it. I never met Putin."

He also said, "I would treat Vladimir Putin firmly, but there's nothing I can think of that I'd rather do than have Russia friendly, as opposed to the way they are right now, so that we can go and knock out ISIS with other people."

In the same news conference, Trump called on Russia to find Hillary Clinton's deleted emails as secretary of state.

July 27, 2016

Talking about Putin at a campaign rally in Scranton, Trump says, "wouldn't it be a great thing if we could get along with Russia."

July 31, 2016

Trump tells ABC's George Stephanopoulos that if he were to be elected president, Putin is "not going into Ukraine."

"He's not going into Ukraine, OK, just so you understand," Trump said. "He's not going to go into Ukraine, all right? You can mark it down. You can put it down. You can take it anywhere you want."

Asked about Putin's previous invasion of Crimea, Trump said, "OK -- well, he's there in a certain way. But I'm not there. You have Obama there. And frankly, that whole part of the world is a mess under Obama with all the strength that you're talking about and all of the power of NATO and all of this. In the meantime, he's going away. He takes Crimea."

Aug. 5, 2016

Trump again says at a campaign rally in Green Bay that he doesn't know Putin and attacks Hillary Clinton for saying he wants to be friend him:

"And I'm saying to myself what's wrong with that? That's good," Trump said.

Sept. 7, 2016

Trump says in a town hall with NBC's Matt Lauer that he considers Putin a stronger leader than Barack Obama.

"If he says great things about me, I'm going to say great things about him. I've already said, he is really very much of a leader. I mean, you can say, 'Oh, isn't that a terrible thing' -- the man has very strong control over a country," Trump said. "Now, it's a very different system, and I don't happen to like the system. But certainly, in that system, he's been a leader, far more than our president has been a leader."

Oct. 5, 2016

Trump said of Putin at a rally, "I don't love, I don't hate."

"I don't love, I don't hate," he said in Nevada. "We'll see how it works. We'll see. Maybe we'll have a good relationship. Maybe we'll have a horrible relationship. Maybe we'll have a relationship right in the middle."

Oct. 9, 2016

Trump said at presidential debate: "I don't know Putin. I think it would be great if we got along with Russia because we could fight ISIS together, as an example. But I don't know Putin."

Oct. 17, 2016

Trump tells radio host Michael Savage that he might meet with Putin prior to the start of his administration.

"I think I could see myself meeting with Putin and meeting with Russia prior to the start of the administration," he said. "I think it would be wonderful."

In the interview, he also said that Clinton shouldn't talk "so tough" on Russia, saying "She talks tough with Russia. She shouldn't be talking so tough. Frankly, if we got along with Russia and knocked out ISIS, that would be a good thing, not a bad thing."

Oct. 19, 2016

At the third presidential debate, Trump denied Clinton's charge he was Putin's "puppet", saying "No puppet. You're the puppet."

He further denied having met Putin and said that Putin had "outsmarted" Clinton and Obama.

Oct. 27, 2016

Trump says at a rally in Ohio that it was not smart of Clinton to speak "very badly of Putin."

Dec. 23, 2016

Trump tweets out Putin's criticism of Hillary Clinton and the Democrats:

Jan. 11, 2017

Trump says he believes Russia was responsible for the hacking the Democratic National committee in 2016:

"I think it was Russia," Trump said, adding that Putin "should not be doing it."

"He won't be doing it. Russia will have much greater respect for our country when I am leading it than when other people have led it," Trump said.

Trump also said he believes a good relationship with Putin would be an asset.

"If Putin likes Donald Trump, I consider that an asset, not a liability, because we have a horrible relationship with Russia. Russia can help us fight ISIS, which, by the way, is, number one, tricky. I mean if you look, this administration created ISIS by leaving at the wrong time. The void was created, ISIS was formed."

Feb. 6, 2017

Trump says he respects Putin during a Super Bowl interview with Bill O'Reilly. Trump defends Putin when O'Reilly calls him a killer.

"There are a lot of killers," Trump says. "Do you think our country is so innocent? Do you think our country is so innocent?

Feb. 16, 2017

Trump says at a news conference that he has no deals in Russia:

"And I can tell you, speaking for myself, I own nothing in Russia. I have no loans in Russia. I don't have any deals in Russia. President Putin called me up very nicely to congratulate me on the win of the election," Trump said.

Trump adds, "I would love to be able to get along with Russia. Now, you've had a lot of presidents that haven't taken that tack. Look where we are now. Look where we are now. So, if I can - now, I love to negotiate things, I do it really well, and all that stuff. But - but it's possible I won't be able to get along with Putin."