

# Tucker Carlson Tonight: 2024 GOP Presidential Candidates on War In Ukraine

By

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Tucker Carlson asked every announced and potential 2024 Republican presidential candidate to answer six key questions on the war in Ukraine. Question and candidates full responses are below.

1. Is opposing Russia in Ukraine of vital strategic interest for America?
2. What's our objective in Ukraine?
3. How are we going to know when we've achieved it?
4. What is the limit of money and weapons you'd be willing to send to Zelensky?
5. Have U.S. sanctions been effective?
6. Does the United States face the risk of nuclear war with Russia?

## Former President Donald J Trump Answers Our Ukraine Questionnaire:

"Like inflation and numerous other self inflicted wounds and mistakes made over the past two years, Russia would definitely not have raided and attacked Ukraine if I was your President. In fact, for four years they didn't attack, nor did they have any intention of doing so as long as I was in charge. But the sad fact is that, due to a new lack of respect for the U.S., caused at least partially by our incompetently handled pullout from Afghanistan, and a very poor choice of words by Biden in explaining U.S. requests and intentions (Biden's first statement was that Russia could have some of Ukraine, no problem!), the bloody and expensive assault began, and continues to this day. That is all history, but how does it end, and it must end, NOW! Start by telling Europe that they must pay at least equal to what the U.S. is paying to help Ukraine. They must also pay us, retroactively, the difference. At a staggering 125 Billion Dollars, we are paying 4 to 5 times more, and this fight is far more important for Europe than it is for the U.S. Next, tell Ukraine that there will be little more money coming from us, UNLESS RUSSIA CONTINUES TO PROSECUTE THE WAR. The President must meet with each side, then both sides together, and quickly work out a deal. This can be easily done if conducted by the right President.

Both sides are weary and ready to make a deal. The meetings should start immediately, there is no time to spare. The death and destruction MUST END NOW! Properly executed, this terrible and tragic War, a War that never should have started in the first place, will come to a speedy end. GOD BLESS AMERICA!!!”

Is opposing Russia in Ukraine a vital American national strategic interest?

“No, but it is for Europe. But not for the United States. That is why Europe should be paying far more than we are, or equal.”

What specifically is our objective in Ukraine, and how will we know when we’ve achieved it? “

Our objective in Ukraine is to help and secure Europe, but Europe isn’t helping itself. They are relying on the United States to largely do it for them. That is very unfair to us. Especially since Europe takes advantage of us on trade and other things.”

What is the limit of funding and materiel you would be willing to send to the government of Ukraine?

“That would strongly depend on my meeting with President Putin and Russia. Russia would have never attacked Ukraine if I were President, not even a small chance. Would have never happened if I were President, but it has. I would have to see what the direction in which Russia is headed. I want them to stop, and they will, depending on the one that delivers that message. But with everything said, Europe must pay. The United States has spent much more than Europe, and that is not fair, just, or equitable. If I were President, that horrible war would end in 24 hours, or less. It can be done, and it must be done– now!”

Should the United States support regime change in Russia?

“No. We should support regime change in the United States, that’s far more important. The Biden administration are the ones who got us into this mess.”

Given that Russia’s economy and currency are stronger than before the war, do you believe that U.S. sanctions have been effective?

“No, they have not been effective. Just the opposite. They drove Russia, China and Iran into an unthinkable situation.”

Do you believe the United States faces the risk of nuclear war with Russia?

"It depends on who the President of the United States is. At the moment, with Biden as president, absolutely yes. He says and does all the wrong things at the wrong time."

## Florida Governor Ron DeSantis Answers Our Ukraine Questionnaire:

"While the U.S. has many vital national interests – securing our borders, addressing the crisis of readiness within our military, achieving energy security and independence, and checking the economic, cultural, and military power of the Chinese Communist Party – becoming further entangled in a territorial dispute between Ukraine and Russia is not one of them. The Biden administration's virtual "blank check" funding of this conflict for "as long as it takes," without any defined objectives or accountability, distracts from our country's most pressing challenges.

Without question, peace should be the objective. The U.S. should not provide assistance that could require the deployment of American troops or enable Ukraine to engage in offensive operations beyond its borders. F-16s and long-range missiles should therefore be off the table. These moves would risk explicitly drawing the United States into the conflict and drawing us closer to a hot war between the world's two largest nuclear powers. That risk is unacceptable.

A policy of "regime change" in Russia (no doubt popular among the DC foreign policy interventionists) would greatly increase the stakes of the conflict, making the use of nuclear weapons more likely. Such a policy would neither stop the death and destruction of the war, nor produce a pro-American, Madisonian constitutionalist in the Kremlin. History indicates that Putin's successor, in this hypothetical, would likely be even more ruthless. The costs to achieve such a dubious outcome could become astronomical.

The Biden administration's policies have driven Russia into a de facto alliance with China. Because China has not and will not abide by the embargo, Russia has increased its foreign revenues while China benefits from cheaper fuel. Coupled with his intentional depletion of the Strategic Petroleum Reserve and support for the Left's Green New Deal, Biden has further empowered Russia's energy-dominated economy and Putin's war machine at Americans' expense.

Our citizens are also entitled to know how the billions of U.S. taxpayer dollars are being utilized in Ukraine.

We cannot prioritize intervention in an escalating foreign war over the defense of our own homeland, especially as tens of thousands of Americans are dying every year from narcotics smuggled across our open border and our weapons arsenals critical for our own security are rapidly being depleted.”

## Former Vice President Mike Pence Answers Our Ukraine Questionnaire

Is opposing Russia in Ukraine a vital American national strategic interest?

“When the United States supports Ukraine in their fight against Putin, we follow the Reagan doctrine, and we support those who fight our enemies on their shores, so we will not have to fight them ourselves. There is no room for Putin apologists in the Republican Party. This is not America’s war, but if Putin is not stopped and the sovereign nation of Ukraine is not restored quickly, he will continue to move toward our NATO allies, and America would then be called upon to send our own.

Vladimir Putin has revealed his true nature, a dictator consumed conquest and willing to spend thousands of lives for his commitment to reestablish the Greater Russian Empire. Anyone who thinks Putin will stop at Ukraine’s border is not owning up to the reality of who Putin is. We need to be clear-eyed about the Russian threat: that Georgia, the Crimea, and Ukraine are merely at the top of Putin’s lists, they are not the only countries he’s aiming for. And by supporting Ukraine, we have told China we will support Taiwan, should they follow Russia in an attempt to invade.”

What specifically is our objective in Ukraine, and how will we know when we’ve achieved it?

“Victory for Ukraine, where Ukraine’s sovereignty and peace are restored as quickly as possible. Unfortunately, the Biden administration slow walked aid to Ukraine, every response has been too slow from providing intelligence to Ukraine, to hammering Russia with sanctions, to providing military equipment and fighter jets to Ukraine.

Ukraine’s victory should be an unmistakable, undeniable defeat for Russia and its allies.”

What is the limit of funding and material you would be willing to send to the government of Ukraine?

"As a fiscal conservative, I do not believe in sending blank checks and want oversight of government spending at home and abroad. But withholding or reducing support will have consequences: If Putin is not stopped now and he moves into NATO-controlled territory, the cost will be far greater."

Should the United States support regime change in Russia?

"That is a better question for the thousands of Russian citizens jailed for protesting the Russian invasion of Ukraine. As many as 200,000 Russian troops have been killed or wounded in Putin's invasion of Ukraine, that question should be asked to those families grieving their loss, ask if they'd support a regime change."

Given that Russia's economy and currency are stronger than before the war, do you believe that U.S. sanctions have been effective?

"The Trump-Pence administration established a devastating sanctions program and was the toughest US administration on Russia since the Cold War. Sanctions against Russia could have had even more painful consequences if the Biden administration moved quicker with new sanctions and western Europe had heeded US warnings to look elsewhere for energy sources."

Russia's economy and currency are not stronger than before the war. The Russian economy is in free-fall. The Russian ruble is still afloat because of the extremely costly measures Russia has taken to keep their currency at pre-war levels in the face of sanctions. Russia is currently being propped up by China, and if China withdraws their support, Putin could run out of money by as soon as 2024; Russia is not in a strong economic position. This war is costing Russia their economy, their military prowess, their position on the world stage, and it's costing lives."

Do you believe the United States faces the risk of nuclear war with Russia?

"Putin is still 'the small and bullying leader of Russia,' his talk of nuclear war is a bullying tactic that he used at the start of the invasion. But Putin should know the United States will not be bullied. This administration has not led with strength on the world stage, but America is still a nation that believes peace comes through strength."

## Vivek Ramaswamy Answers Our Ukraine Questionnaire (1/3)

Is opposing Russia in Ukraine a vital American national strategic interest?

"No, it is not "vital." Rather, this is a stark reminder of what is a vital American national strategic interest: national energy independence. This war is a symptom of America's lack of self sufficiency. Putin is a tyrant and started this needless war, but he did so because we created incentives that tipped the balance of his decision-making in favor of invading: if he knows the West relies on him to provide oil and gas (because the U.S. and Western Europe have self-inflicted limitations on their own ability or willingness to produce), then Putin is in a stronger position—and that led him to think he could win. The Biden Administration weakened our energy security, which created the conditions for Putin to invade Ukraine, which is of course an undesired outcome. Biden, in turn, responded by calling for more oil and gas production, pretty much everywhere in the world other than in the U.S. itself.

The more America is reliant on foreign energy and oil, the less leverage we have with petro dictators.

The Europeans need to be the main upholders of European security. The Europeans, starting with the Germans, need to do more for themselves. Unfortunately, the Germans chose to 'go green' on energy, and so they're looking to us to shoulder the load on Ukraine, as well as defense in general. We spend close to 4 percent of our GDP on defense, and the Germans spend barely over 1 percent. Ukraine is in their backyard, not ours. If the Germans and other European countries can't or won't produce their own energy, they should buy natural gas from Louisiana and Texas—and from Pennsylvania and my home state of Ohio. Foreign policy is all about prioritization, my top two foreign policy priorities are to Declare Independence from Communist China and to annihilate the Mexican drug cartels.

The main thing should be the main thing: focus on China. China wants the Ukraine war to last as long as possible to deplete Western military capacity before invading Taiwan. It's working: we think we appear stronger by helping Ukraine, but we actually become weaker vis-à-vis China.

We've spent 20 years droning people in caves in the Middle East and Central Asia and have little to show for it. We should be taking out the people who have caused the death of more than 100,000 Americans every year—the Mexican drug cartels."

What specifically is our objective in Ukraine, and how will we know when we've achieved it?

"Our objective in Ukraine should be to respect any prior legal treaty commitments the U.S. has made, so as to preserve our credibility when it comes to commitments in the future, which I believe we have already fulfilled – and indeed gone beyond. (I make a clear distinction between commitments to which Congress was made aware and approved, and whatever secret deals the Biden administration might have cooked up.)

The Budapest Memorandum, signed by Russia, Ukraine, the U.S. and the U.K., was supposed to assure Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. Ukraine gave up its nuclear weapons, a massive stockpile, and received security protections—but not an alliance or pledge to go to war, just a commitment to respect the sovereignty of existing borders. Whether that was the right decision to make in 1994 is a point of reasonable debate, but it is in our long-term self interest to stick by our word. And we have.

But now it's time to move on."

## Vivek Ramaswamy Answers Our Ukraine Questionnaire (2/3)

"A key objective has already been achieved by revealing Russia to be a "paper tiger." Russia's military capabilities are far weaker than the U.S. defense establishment previously had assumed (their track record of being blatantly wrong about "intelligence" assessments only grows each year): recall how they predicted that Ukraine would fall within days—the same defense establishment who wrongly predicted that Kabul would not fall to the Taliban. Time to find a different term for our "intelligence experts."

Our second objective is to deter Putin from aggression against other European nations, including NATO powers. But we can achieve that goal in part by guaranteeing America's energy independence, which our own President has unilaterally undermined. It is stunning that Biden lobbied against the EU adopting its Russian oil ban, while simultaneously sending \$113 billion in aid to Ukraine to fight against Russia. In other words: Biden helps fund Putin's war machine with one hand, and yet he sends money to Ukraine with the other. More importantly, if you want to deter Putin from invading Poland, then move the idle tens of thousands of troops we have from Germany into Poland to send a signal – not by fighting a war in Ukraine.

A third objective is nudging—shaking, if necessary—the Europeans to take care of themselves. I believe in America First 2.0, and we should at least get the

Europeans to Europe First 1.0. We actively undermine this very objective by offering a bottomless pit of aid to Ukraine.”

What is the limit of funding and material you would be willing to send to the government of Ukraine?

“Generally speaking, I don’t think it’s wise to telegraph our ends, and I believe the facts in January 2025 may be very different from where they are today. But let me be clear: if I were president right now, I would limit any further funding or support to Ukraine.

Ukraine isn’t in the top five of American foreign policy priorities right now, and yet merely questioning whether the money we’ve spent on the war is being done effectively or perhaps even prolonging the war is seen as disloyal. We get accused by both Democrats and Republicans of being “Putin sympathizers.” The Washington uni-party and defense contractors want this conflict to go on forever; for the sake of the global economy and peace, we should be doing everything we can to end it tomorrow.

As I mentioned, Biden gives \$113 billion in aid to Ukraine while he lobbied against the EU ban on Russian oil imports on the other hand. The U.S. has shot itself in the foot with its own production capabilities. It’s unclear who wins this game, but the loser is clear: America.

I’ll say again: the Europeans need to do more, a lot more — it’s their backyard, it’s their borders. The Europeans have gotten used to freeloading, and we know what happens to freeloaders — they become dependent, even lazy. We can’t be the nanny of Europe forever; we have too much to take care of here at home. We have a swiss-cheese of a southern border that pours in fentanyl killing hundreds of thousands of Americans every year. It’s time to secure our border before taking care of someone else’s. This would be an appropriate and morally justified use of military force: secure our southern border and annihilate the drug cartels responsible for countless American deaths on our own soil.

We’ve discovered a big problem on our end—the weakness of our industrial base. I’m disturbed by reports that our aid to Ukraine has drained away munitions and other material that we could potentially need for our own defense.”

## Vivek Ramaswamy Answers Our Ukraine Questionnaire (3/3)

“There is opportunity cost in depleting these defense resources—especially in protecting our own soil and border from Mexican cartels or in the case of



Communist China. Critics of this view would say that these defense capabilities are different—that we need enhanced naval capabilities to counter China and defend Taiwan. That’s a hubristic view that we shouldn’t indulge when we have major future unknowns—opportunity costs are opportunity costs, period.”

Should the United States support regime change in Russia?

“No. We’ve seen this movie before—Libya, Yemen, Afghanistan, the list goes on. History shows the U.S. is abysmal at effectuating regime change. And, even when we do, we usually end up regretting it. Regime change is riddled with unintended consequences. The bigger risk we need to worry about is driving Putin into Xi’s hands. Our policies are having precisely that effect right now.”

Given that Russia’s economy and currency are stronger than before the war, do you believe that U.S. sanctions have been effective?

“Clearly not. Russia is stronger because of higher oil and gas revenue owing to higher prices. The lesson for the U.S. and the West should be to abandon the climate cult that shackles the West while leaving Russia and China untouched. We restrict our own energy while the Russians and Chinese go pedal-to-the-metal on their own energy, including coal. The Biden administration jovially sacrifices our energy dominance on the altar of green goals—some mythical target in the far future that the world will never hit. As President I will end that foolish and self-destructive game.”

Do you believe the United States faces the risk of nuclear war with Russia?

“The risk of nuclear war goes up the more that China begins to back Russia – which is happening now before our eyes. This is the #1 risk factor to the U.S. taking an aggressive posture towards Russia while going soft on China: we drive Putin straight into Xi Jinping’s hands.

The foreign policy establishment has demonstrated weakness time and time again when it comes to Russia—including in our nuclear arms negotiations with the Russian Federation, which continues even now. Putin and the Russians, and the Soviets before them, not only brazenly violated every nuclear arms control treaty we have with them, but the U.S. gives up any semblance of negotiating leverage. It’s humiliating. The Trump Administration, rightly, began to walk away from the New START Treaty as the Biden Administration swooped in and stopped that process, squandering all negotiating power and absurdly signed a five-year extension.

Russia may be a third-world gas station with an economy the size of Pennsylvania. But, they are a third world gas station with more nuclear warheads than any other nation on the planet, including the U.S. The global defense establishment must dig its head out of the sand and buck up to the fact that China, who is not constrained by any nuclear arms treaty, is secretly building up its nuclear stockpile. They are nearing nuclear parity.

For these reasons, it serves US national security interests to move ahead with full-spectrum missile defense to protect US soil. We cannot afford a bottomless pit of military spending and need to focus on the priorities that actually advance our national defense interests."

## South Dakota Governor Kristi Noem Answers Our Ukraine Questionnaire:

Q: Is opposing Russia in Ukraine a vital American national strategic interest?

A: "The primary external threat to the United States is Communist China. Our opposition to Russia has heightened this threat for a number of reasons. One, it's pushing Russia into an alliance with China – meaning Russia may soon draw from China's large weapon arsenal. Two, we're weakening our own military by sending weapons to a corrupt country. And three, we're taking our eyes off the ball and allowing China to put favors in their bank. This should be Europe's fight, not ours. We should not waste taxpayer dollars at the risk of nuclear war."

Q: What specifically is our objective in Ukraine, and how will we know when we've achieved it?

A: "The American people didn't get us into this war – Joe Biden did. Biden has this fantasy that he can do the same kind of thing to Russia that Ronald Reagan did to the Soviet Union; that, somehow, through American military weight, we're going to bring Putin to his knees. His fantasy is wasting a lot of American money and killing too many people.

If we had a President who pursued peace through strength, Putin never would have dared to invade Ukraine. The only way to avoid these kinds of conflicts is to project strength. That's why voters must remove Biden and the Democrats from office."

Q: What is the limit of funding and materiel you would be willing to send to the government of Ukraine?

A: "We've already over-extended ourselves in our largesse to Ukraine. And the Ukrainian government is not made up of angels – they have a long history of corruption scandals, and recent news indicates that this issue is ongoing.

The federal government is closing in on \$200 billion in aid to Ukraine. We haven't spent that much to protect our border in the last 5 years combined. We must question whether we should prop up a corrupt regime to our own financial detriment."

Q: Should the United States support regime change in Russia?

A: "Not at this time, as it could lead to an even more destabilized Europe and cause escalation up the nuclear ladder."

Q: Given that Russia's economy and currency are stronger than before the war, do you believe that U.S. sanctions have been effective?

A: "The United States has come to rely far too heavily on financial sanctions as a weapon of deterrence. Now, nations that hate America are consciously moving away from the US dollar as the world's reserve currency.

Sanctions against China, Iran, and Russia have bolstered the Russian ruble and enabled China to establish trade in Chinese money rather than in US dollars.

One of the worst side effects of these sanctions has been the skyrocketing cost of oil and natural gas in America and around the world. Russia is selling less of its oil and gas, but they are doing so at a much higher price.

It's counterfactual to say that Russia's economy is stronger in the wake of the war. The more appropriate phrase here is "more resilient." Russia has ridden out the sanctions remarkably well, but its economy remains weak. And it'll get sucked into the global recession that it helped cause."

Q: Do you believe the United States faces the risk of nuclear war with Russia?

A: "The Biden regime is taking us quickly up the escalatory ladder with a series of provocative actions and statements. We cannot back down from any legitimate threat that Putin makes against the United States. We are closer now to the use of tactical nuclear weapons than we have ever been. That would be what Putin would use first. This is not about dropping "the big one" on New York or Los Angeles. Putin would slaughter thousands of souls in a contained fighting environment."

## Texas Governor Greg Abbott Answers Our Ukraine Questionnaire:

Governor Greg Abbott on Ukraine: "President Biden's blank check foreign policy in Ukraine has drawn nothing but ridicule and disdain from our adversaries and has diverted funding from essential needs in the United States. Throwing money at Ukraine with no accountability or objective is clearly failing. Worse is that President Biden's approach to Ukraine has been at the expense of underfunding, or ignoring, priorities at home. Before he sends any more money or assets to Ukraine's border, he must enforce our immigration laws and secure our southern border. As Governor of Texas, I am focused on responding to this Biden-made border crisis and delivering real results for Texans this legislative session."

## South Carolina Senator Tim Scott Answers Our Ukraine Questionnaire:

"You have Americans who are frustrated because of the lack of leadership on domestic issues that only exacerbates the situation we see today in Ukraine. Here's where we need the president to lead: what is our nation's vital interest in Ukraine? And it should start with degrading the Russian military is in our vital national interest. In addition to that, we are not going to simply degrade the Russian military. We are gonna have accountability for every single dollar spent. There is no such thing as a blank check. We are going to make sure that there's accountability. And the last point I'd make on the Ukraine front is that China has chosen a side. They are partnering, they are partnering with Putin, which means it's enmity with us. China is a risk that continues to rise, an adversarial position they have taken against the American people. We should hear what they're telling us. Believe them and act accordingly."

## Former New Jersey Governor Chris Christie Answers Our Ukraine Questionnaire:

"Russia's aggression against Ukraine is a national security issue that threatens our alliances and our standing in the world. Our objective is to assist Ukraine sufficiently to enable them to defeat Russian forces and restore their sovereignty. This effort is not about regime change in Russia; it is about respecting the sovereignty of free nations. Also, this is a proxy war being waged by Russia's ally China against the United States. Due to their assistance to Russia and China's recent action in the Middle East, it would be naive to call this anything but Chinese aggression. Our allies and our enemies are watching us. It is on us to assist our democratic allies in defending themselves against

authoritarian aggression. If we do not, this aggression will spread and the void we leave will be filled by authoritarian regimes like China, Iran, North Korea and an empowered Russia if they triumph over Ukraine.”

## Following GOP Presidential Hopefuls Did Not Respond:

Nikki Haley

Mike Pompeo

Asa Hutchinson

Ambassador John Bolton

Governor Chris Sununu