Twitter Thread by David B. Larter



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It's the most wonderful tiiiiime of the yeeeear ■■

It's time for 2 hours of Putin's squirrely bullshit.

> #LIVE Russian President Putin holds an annual press conference https://t.co/Ical3R9Av1
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> — ANews (@anewscomtr) December 17, 2020

Putin spent the last 5 minutes reaffirming that Coronavirus happened, it's a thing, everybody dealt with it, and when you think about it, it really hasn't been that bad!

Like any good bureaucrat (and make no mistake, Putin is a great bureaucrat) he is filibustering with facts that sound good, while not addressing the bad facts (but waving to the the fact that other fact may exist, but you are really focusing on the wrong thing).

Being in a relationship with this man must be a complete, uninterrupted mindf---

Putin projects mastery of the facts while also delivering it in a boring way so you tune out and say "He seems like he has it." And he does it for everything from agriculture markets to fomenting frozen conflicts -- making it seem like just another boring thing.

"How has the Russian healthcare system coped with the pandemic?"

This is a softball that invites another long filibuster with a string of "facts" that make it seem like, yes, there were challenges, but we did really good and here's how.

This is a brand of "transparency" the tries to make you believe that talking questions and talking for a long time without saying anything means that you have been transparent.

I ♥■ the question from the guy asking "Why did our hackers not win the election for Trump, have they all moved to Silicon Valley?" ■

That's probably the best question of the whole presser because it gets at standard of living and malign activities. I wanna

buy that guy a beer.

"Russian hackers have never helped any American President win any election."

Putin calls Biden an experienced politician who he hopes will help resolve lingering issues between the US and Russia. And says he doesn't believe Trump will need political asylum in Russia because he commands support from half the country.

"Why has there been no criminal investigation into the Navalny poisoning?"

Calls reports information warfare

I didn't even read the report, I couldn't even bring myself to read it. Starts nitpicking things in the report that he found inaccurate but doesn't address the substance

By the way, he really hated that question about Russian hackers. That rankled him. He keeps bringing it up. That guy may want to move if he lives on a high floor.

If you are a politician or someone who interacts with the press, Putin is masterful in the art of bullshit. You could take notes, study these pressers and never say anything to the press again, no matter how many words you speak to journalists.

Says Navalny is playing a political game by accusing Putin of trying to kill him so he looks more important than he is.

I go back to my original point about how being in a relationship with this man must be awful.

Russia and Ukraine relations:

"Well, the state of relations with Ukraine is up to Ukrainian leadership."

Interesting: Question about distance learning, how did it go and is it here to stay?

Que another softball opportunity for Putin to demonstrate that he keeps up with everything.

Says in 2021, all schools will be provided with high-speed internet but said "Online education will ever replace direct, face-to-face contact with the teacher."

Says he wants to see more schools, colleges and universities to do online educations. But mass online edu not a thing

Says hybrid education is the way forward.

OMG he is just reciting everything he knows about education. AHHHHHHHHHHHH

An actual question:

"We hear a lot of stories about bad officials, but there are many examples of good officials who put in the time and effort for the good of the people." Then tells a batshit crazy story about a bonfire at an old ammo depot with predictable results.

Apparently they had a bonfire for Putin's birthday at this ammo depot, and old artillery shells caught fire and started exploding. And a local official saved a bunch of people, and she's wondering if he should be declared a Hero of Russia.

What. The. F***.

Now there is a really weird situation about corruption at a power plant, a leaked video report that has triggered social media backlash and Putin is acting like he's just learning about it, crediting the journalist with bringing it to light, and praising him for his work.

Weird

Question from St. Petersburg local media: Asks about when travel will open up again, says its important for the economy.

[All snark aside, my dad went to St. Petersburg and enjoyed it greatly. It was a gift from his children.]

Now Putin sings the city's praises.

Now he's listing all the things the state has done for St. Petersburg, and all the things he knows about the city.

Says while COVID is going down, it's not possible to open up tourism.

Very nervous journalist trying to ask a tough question, ends up asking four questions: Rookie mistake. Pick one, make it pointed like ma boy "Why didn't our hackers help Trump win this time?".

Asking four questions invites another filibuster.

The deflection of responsibility is astounding. If you point to some outrageous failure of the state, he says "Yes, we had some issues. But overall we had a great response." What are you supposed to say to that? That's why you ask pointed questions.

Apparently federal healthcare cuts in Russia were called an "optimization" program? You can than the Pentagon for that Orwellian export.

Putin giving his philosophy of realpolitik, which is disingenuous given his long history of lashing out.

He has this image of himself as a kind of powerful monk who only acts in Russian interests.

Anyway, he says he hopes Biden Administration will promote fair competition in relation to the Nord Stream 2 pipeline.

If I can read between the lines here, and this is not unique to Russia, but the healthcare system seems to be struggling and it seems to be causing a good deal of discontent. "Sometimes it happens that hospitals shut down in small settlements

because it's not profitable."

Says that if its the only option, state should keep it open.

Oh FFS. Here's the question about his 2024 ambitions but then goes to another question about a jailed journalist over an article that exposed classified information. Says the guy was super honest and didn't deserve it.

Putin looks miffed, actually.

On 2024: He's considering it

On the jailed journalist (Ivan Safronov, who was actually working for the Russian Space Agency at the time). Says he's not being tried for being a journalist. Charges unconnected to his work as a journalist. Says he is being charged with espionage.

On Safronov, said its up to the courts, but said telling secrets to foreign intelligence agencies is the biggest sin we can commit.

Whether he can be pardoned? Said he'll cross that bridge. (Doesn't seem likely tho...)

Putin is taking a funny question about an athlete's leaked sex tape. Says it should have no effect on his career or anyone's career. Asks the journalist if she watched it. Journalist says "I think the whole country watched it."

That breaks up the monotony a bit.

Rural healthcare seems to be significant issue, it keeps coming up. Guy says he only has one ambulance and one clinic, and the doctor is 86 and is losing it.

Putin chides him for disrespecting his elders ■

*Rural healthcare is a problem in most countries, in the United States, Veterans in particular have struggled with access to healthcare -- something that the VA has been trying to address for years.

But this sounds particularly bad.

Putin pretending to be mortified by Sergei Furgal's charges of being part of organized crime, when asked if he is being oppressed for being part of a different party.

"This isn't robbery or corruption, we're talking about murders!"

An interesting question about environmental accidents and whether people should be held responsible for the damage to the environment [Asks woman to please sit down, she does not. A+, m'lady]

Putin says there is there is still accumulated damage from soviet era.

Says local governments are responsible for mitigating that. Says law enforcement needs to ascertain level of responsibility and says polluters need to be held to account. Says he won't interfere and says the penalties are strict.

All told that was a pretty lame answer from Putin on environmental safety. And amazing power move on the woman's part for not sitting down when asked.

A really good question [Which when a journalist says that, means a question that I'm interested in] about tensions inside the Commonwealth of Independent States, specifically from Moldova. Ukraine and Georgia have both left the CIS, both have Russian troops as special guests.

Putin sounds a bit flustered for the first time, he may actually just be getting tired. But this question kinda seems to be throwing him a bit.

Basically flubs an answer about how everyone is figuring out their place in the world, the post-Soviet governments don't have the benefit of long histories. Says there is a CIS event coming up to hash shit out.

I haven't seen anything on Aegis Ashore or BMD, which used to be regular talking points. He may be keeping some maneuver space.

Weird freaking question from RT about how Russia condemns terrorism, but also condemns publications of images of the Prophet Muhammad. "Where is the threshold between human rights and the publication of materials offensive to religion."

I don't know, maybe violence?

"Those people who brazenly try to offend people's religious feelings, they have to understand they will receive blowback. But this reaction should not be violent."

Now Putin says all religion should be peaceful.

Oh FFS, now we're getting Putin's absurd and revisionist version of WWII. Come on, man, get back to the press conference.

Anyway, says materials offensive can't be allowed in Russia because it could tear the country apart internally. Says Russia is a bastion of tolerance compared to Europe because it has always had many other religions and they all live together in societal bliss.

Would be interested to hear Ukrainian Orthodox opinions on how tolerant Russia's history is. Or Russian Jews.

In Putin's version of Russian History, Russia is tolerant because they weren't the ones who carried out the Holocaust of the same people they systematically persecuted for generations with pogroms.

Putin says in Azerbaijan should revert to status quo and work out an agreement to give Armenians access to families and contacts. "It's all pretty simple, really" he says, before backpedaling to say "It's actually pretty complicated" Says Nagorno-Karabakh is part of Azerbaijan.

Putin looks sharp, FWIW.

Putin, addressing pension reform (raising age), says they are going up by 6 percent every year. Says "NOBODY GOT A PENSION IN THE SOVIET UNION."

He seems to have an issue with rising expectations.

Amazing broach from the lady who asked the pension question.

BBC gets a question: Question about whether the Russia and "The West" are a Cold War. Says the Russians always blame the US and foreign powers, asks whether he thinks he may be also to blame: Use of chemical weapons in Salisbury, Navalny poisoning.

Here's the issue: You thrw the question away when you brought up Salisbury and Navalny because he's now just going to deny any involvement and he won't answer the original question beyond "There have been issues, yes, but the actions of the United States blah blah blah."

Putin says he feels he is personally responsible for the wellbeing of the Russian People and says he did what he did in Ukraine because the Russian People decided it was in their interest through democratic means■

Then goes to twist history again.

Now he's on a long tirade about all the ills of the United States.

He seems to want to bargain his new super weapons as part of new arms deals, but instead he sees everyone just trying to match it.

The US has taken the position that China needs to be part of future agreements, one of the main reasons why INF died is it didn't limit China.

That and Russia wasn't in compliance any longer.

But anyway, I would have just left the question at "What have you done to contribute to the tensions with The West?"

Chechen journalist extols the great leadership of Ramzan Kadyrov and questions why the United States would target such a wonderful man doing so many good things?

Putin waxes poetic about how dedicated a servant of the Chechen people is Kadyrov.

Here's some background on Kadyrov, who is a tyrant. https://t.co/88mRS9OMQw

I am behind, by the way, because I had to walk and feed my dog. So this feed is about 42 minutes lagged.

Question about promoting Russian culture, points to Masha the Bear, which has been criticized as propaganda.

Putin now talking about soft power. Putin among the global leaders most well known as a practitioner of soft power.

State does a lot to promote culture, should do more.

Talks about promoting more "Positive content." Of course if you let your kids watch the news coverage of Russia's actions in Syria your child would be positively traumatized.

Love this question from a kid: "Why do other countries not like Russia when we haven't done anything wrong to them?"

■■■

OK, an INF treaty question!!!! Journalist asks what the prospects are, and if it will trigger a new arms race.

Putin says "President Biden has expressed willingness to extend New Start but we are waiting for an official reaction."

Says the arms race is already on.

Says the INF Treaty forced Russia's hand. Putin references Conventional Prompt Strike. Says US doesn't have hypersonic missiles but that they will and it needs to be addressed. Refers to Avangard as Russia's response. Says they are fielding a series of new weapons to counter.

To clarify, Putin says Russia is willing to extend New Start, but wants to get the official word from Biden.

On journalism:

"I agree that a civil society is important and that having a media that is alive ... alive and active is important to that."

Little Freudian slip there at the 4 hour mark, Vlad?

The question was from a journalist whose editor was fired after critical coverage of the local government. Putin says he'll investigate and ask for an explanation.

I shit you not, Icelandic journalist is basically taking time to sing Putin's praises and say that its all the media's fault for the negative perception of Russia around the world. And asks Putin -- I'm not joking -- what the secret to happiness is.

Good question, bro.

Putin says that "love is the secret to happiness. ... There should be love in international relations as well."

Putin says we should all drink to Russia on New Years.

Putin says he's sending checks of about $70 per child to every family in Russia who has a child under 7.

That's nice.

Conference over.

I think I need a shower.