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## **DONALD TRUMP, VLADIMIR PUTIN GIVE THEIR SPINS ON HELSINKI SUMMIT**

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In an interview with US media, Trump claimed Germany's chancellor is "paying Russia billions of dollars." Putin claimed a probe into Russian meddling is just "political games." Both appeared fond of newfound relations.

In two separate interviews to US broadcaster Fox News, US President Donald Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin on Tuesday offered their views on the Helsinki summit, offering insight into their key takeaways.

The high-profile meeting on Monday saw Trump claim there was "no reason to believe" Moscow interfered in the 2016 presidential election, days after 13 Russian agents were arrested for allegedly meddling. Trump credited Putin's "strong" denial for his answer.

The meeting was met with widespread criticism from US Republican and Democratic lawmakers. Republican House Speaker Paul Ryan said Trump "must appreciate that Russia is not our ally" and that it "remains hostile to our most basic values and ideals."

But Trump appeared to see things differently. He later made false statements on Germany's relationship with Russia and defense spending in NATO, while siding with Putin's assessment of Russian meddling.

The Weirdest Moments of the Trump-Putin summit  
Stiff body language

Although the US President had nothing but warm words for his Russian counterpart ahead of their meeting, their posture upon meeting was significantly more awkward. As they met for a brief photo call before close-door talks, the two men avoided eye contact and seemed unsure of how best to approach one another, with Trump slouching in his seat and Putin remaining enigmatic.

What Trump said:

On German Chancellor Angela Merkel:

"She's paying Russia billions of dollars. Of course, that's her choice, but there's a little problem with that."

On Trump-Russia dossier:

Putin "said as strongly as you can say it, they have no information on Trump \* And one thing you

know: If they had it, it would have been out."

On the Russia probe and special counsel Robert Mueller:

"I don't think the people out in the country buy it, but the reporters like to give it a shot. I thought that President Putin was very, very strong."

On NATO:

"We are paying for 91 percent of the cost of keeping Europe safe \* NATO is wonderful, but it helps Europe a lot more than it helps us."

Donald Trump on NATO: Top quotes

Trump on NATO: A war of words

Even before taking office, US President Donald Trump's relationship with NATO has been a tumultuous one, to say the least. He has disparaged the trans-Atlantic alliance, once describing it as "obsolete" and a relic of the Cold War. Here are Trump's most memorable quotes about the military alliance, even if they are at times false.

What Putin said:

On Trump-Russia dossier:

"We don't have anything on him. There can't be anything on him. I don't want to insult President Trump ... but before he announced he would run for presidency, he was of no interest to us."

On the Russia probe and special counsel Robert Mueller:

"Those are internal political games of the US. Don't hold the relationship between Russia and the US hostage to this internal political struggle."

On the status of Crimea:

"We are aware of President Trump's posture, that Crimea is part of Ukraine. He told me this today."

Vladimir Putin: The road to power

KGB cadet

Born in St.Petersburg in 1952, Putin signed up with the Soviet intelligence agency the KGB right out of law school in 1975. His first assignment was to monitor foreign nationals and consulate employees in his home city, then called Leningrad. He was then assigned to Dresden, East Germany. He reportedly burned hundreds of KGB files after the fall of the Berlin Wall.

Is/aw (AP, AFP, dpa)

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