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Putin's Russia 'has become a fascist state' and must be stopped in Ukraine, says ex-diplomat who defected after the invasion

cdavis@insider.com (Charles R. Davis) - 4h ago



🔗 Russian President Vladimir Putin. Gavriil Grigorov/Sputnik/AFP/Getty Images
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- Russia "has become a fascist state," argues an ex-diplomat who resigned over the war in Ukraine.

- Boris Bondarev was at the Russian mission to the United Nations Office at Geneva when the war began.
- The war "made it impossible to deny just how brutal and repressive Russia had become," he wrote.

If Russia is not defeated in Ukraine, then it will likely move on to attack other former Soviet states, according to a former Russian diplomat who argues that Russian President Vladimir Putin has turned his country into a "fascist state."



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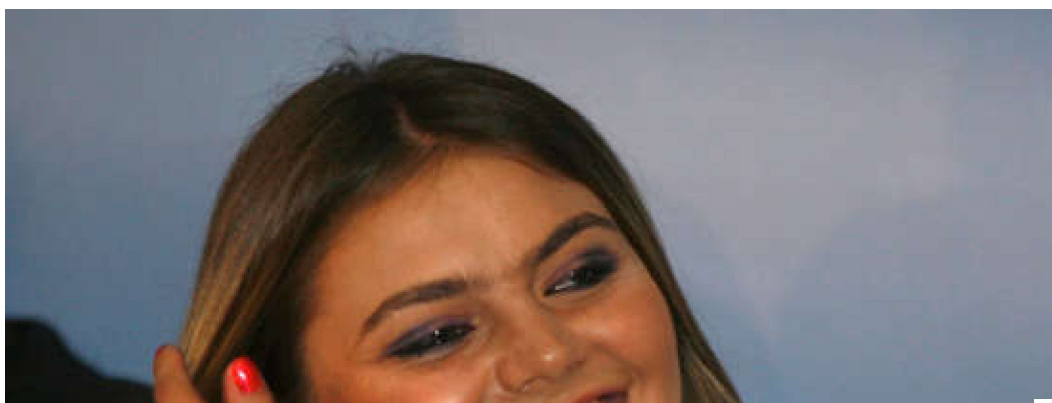


In an essay [published by Foreign Affairs](#) on Monday, Boris Bondarev described a feeling of dread waking up to the news in February that Russia had invaded Ukraine. The 20-year diplomat resigned his post at the Russian Mission to the United Nations Office at Geneva soon after Russian forces attacked the former Soviet republic.

"The invasion of Ukraine made it impossible to deny just how brutal and repressive Russia had become," Bondarev wrote. "It was an unspeakable act of cruelty, designed to subjugate a neighbor and erase its ethnic identity."

"The war," he continued, "shows that Russia is no longer just dictatorial and aggressive; it has become a fascist state."

Bondarev recounts taking part in negotiations with the United States in January 2022, when Russia was building up troops and equipment on Ukraine's borders while making [demands of the US and NATO that were simply non-starters](#). The negotiations, he recalls, convinced him that the Kremlin was "laying the groundwork for war or had no idea how the United States or Europe worked — or both."





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Her father was a professional football player.

Kabaeva was born on May 12, 1983, in Tashkent, the capital of Uzbekistan, according to her [brief ESPN bio](#).

Sparse information from reliable sources exists online regarding Kabaeva's upbringing.

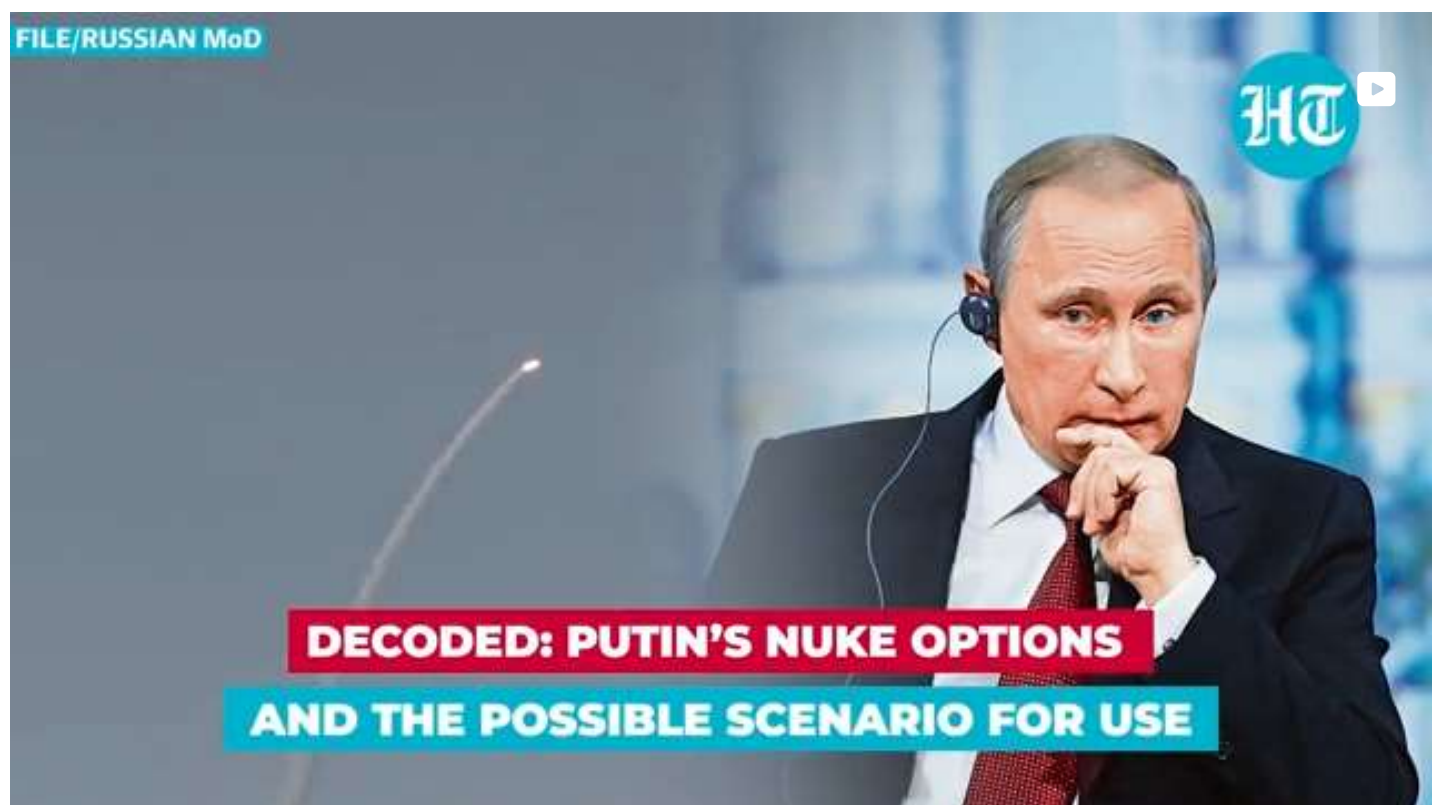
[According to a Russian business news outlet](#), Kabaeva's father was a professional soccer player.

[An online soccer database](#) says that he played for the Pakhtakor Tashkent football club from 1980 to 1986, before he went on to play for the Dnipro football club for Ukraine in 1989.

Kabaeva also has a younger sister, Leysan Kabaeva.

His office was bewildered as well. "No one could understand how we would go to the United States with a document that demanded, among other things, that NATO permanently close its door to new members," he wrote.

Related video: Putin to turn to 'tactical' nukes in Ukraine? Possible scenarios of what may lie ahead



'Warped by its own propaganda'

Fascist states exploit two undeniable themes found in Putin's Russia: a national sense of

aggression. Putin's strongest play at home is appealing to nostalgia for a Russian empire. Without it, Bondarev maintains, he has nothing — and Western policy toward Ukraine should reflect this.

"To justify his rule, Putin wants the great victory he promised and believes he can obtain," Bondarev wrote. "If he agrees to a cease-fire, it will only be to give Russian troops a rest before continuing to fight."

And if he wins, "Putin will likely move to attack another post-Soviet state, such as Moldova, where Moscow already props up a breakaway region," Bondarev wrote, referencing Transnistria, [which Insider visited](#) soon after the invasion of Ukraine.

There is "only one way to stop Russia's dictator," according to Bondarev, and that is defeat. "With broad support from NATO, Ukraine is capable of eventually beating Russia in the east and the south, just as it has done in the north," he wrote.

A defeated Putin will have to answer to Russians now living under sanctions in a pariah state.

Fascist states have a tendency to implode as dictators surround themselves with sycophants, frank counsel replaced with pleasant lies. With Ukraine, for instance, there are indications that Russian leadership was misled on anticipated Ukrainian resistance and Russia's ability to wage war.

Bondarev describes this as Moscow being "slowly warped by its own propaganda." Sanctions against Russia over its 2014 illegal annexation of Crimea, for example, had a devastating impact even as they were publicly derided as a minor irritant — a denial that those at the highest levels of power appeared to buy into themselves.

As a diplomat working on export and arms control issues, Bondarev saw how Russia's vaunted military-industrial complex was dependent on Western companies for everything from radiation-proof electronics used in satellites to the cloth used in their aircraft.

"The sanctions suddenly cut off our access to these products and left our military weaker than the West understood," Bondarev wrote. "But although it was clear to my team how these losses undermined Russia's strength, the foreign ministry's propaganda helped keep the Kremlin from finding out."

The delusion at the highest levels of Russia is why negotiations will not work, Bondarev wrote, arguing that any [peace deal rushed into now will only serve as a delay tactic](#).

"There's only one thing that can really stop Putin," Bondarev wrote, "and that is a comprehensive rout."