

# Johnson campaign: **BREAKING: Lt. Gov. Barnes used by Putin's propaganda channels**

Posted on Thursday, Oct 13, 2022

>> **WisPolitics is now on the State Affairs network. Get custom keyword notifications, bill tracking and all WisPolitics content. [Get the app or access via desktop.](#)**

OSHKOSH – Breaking news from the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* ahead of the final U.S. Senate debate has revealed that Mandela Barnes repeatedly gave interviews to Russia Today, a state-run propaganda channel for the Russian government.

“Trashing American law enforcement on Russian state TV and allowing himself to be used by Vladimir Putin’s propagandists is as bad as it gets,” **said Alec Zimmerman, Communications Director for the Johnson campaign.** “Lt. Governor Barnes knew he was being used as a puppet for a foreign dictator in a Russian disinformation scheme and he should apologize to law enforcement in Wisconsin and across America. Mandela Barnes isn’t fit to represent anyone in the United States Senate.”

*Russia Today*, also known as RT, is the foreign propaganda channel of Vladimir Putin’s regime, that uses the channel to weaken his adversaries by sowing discord and division throughout the world. RT relentlessly spreads disinformation and accuses America of being a corrupt capitalist police state that is systematically racist and terrorizes other countries. Barnes’ interviews almost exclusively focused on denigrating American policing, aiding Russia’s propaganda efforts against America.

Read the full story [here](#) or find excerpts below:

***Mandela Barnes did several interviews with Russian-funded TV denouncing U.S. police***

*Daniel Bice*

*Milwaukee Journal Sentinel  
October 13, 2022*

*Records show that Barnes did six interviews with RT, formerly Russia Today, in 2015 and 2016, during his second term as a state lawmaker. RT is a Russian state-controlled international news television network funded by the Kremlin.*

*In May 2015, for instance, Barnes told RT that police brutality is a “total epidemic” in the United States. A month earlier, he posted a screenshot of his interview with RT on the Baltimore protests, commenting, “People are tired of being targets.”*

*In July 2016, after five police officers were shot dead in Dallas in retaliation against alleged racial discrimination by police, Barnes told RT that “police officers across the country haven’t reformed their patterns and practices” and that “police officers are over-exercising their badges.”*

*Barnes then thanked RT on Twitter for interviewing him. RT labels itself “Russia state-affiliated media” on its Twitter homepage.*

*In September 2016, Barnes said that Black Lives Matter protests that turn violent are a “human reaction” to the police. In that same interview, he says that if police officers are Black, it “doesn’t mean they are 100% behind the community.”*

*Earlier this year, the U.S. State Department said RT and another Russian-funded outlet are “critical elements in Russia’s disinformation and propaganda ecosystem.”*

*“The overall goals are to manipulate and weaken adversaries,” the State Department said in August 2021. “The main tactics for weakening adversaries are to discredit, divide, disarm, and demoralize them.”*

*The New York Times reported in 2020 that Russian President Vladimir Putin “has stepped up efforts to inflame racial tensions in the United States” ahead of the presidential election.*

*“Russia’s more public influence operations, like state-backed news organizations, have continued to push divisive racial narratives, including stories emphasizing allegations of police abuse in the United States and highlighting racism against African-Americans within the military,” the New York Times said.*

[Read the full story here.](#)