

Fury Over Foreign Aid Budget Being Used to Train Russia's Future Leaders at British Universities

MPs and campaigners accuse government of aiding Vladimir Putin's regime as we reveal it has relaxed a ban on Russians joining 'emerging leaders' scholarship programme – fully funded by British taxpayers

By [Archie Mitchell](#)

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[The Independent](#)

Region: [Europe](#), [Russia and FSU](#)

Theme: [Intelligence](#)

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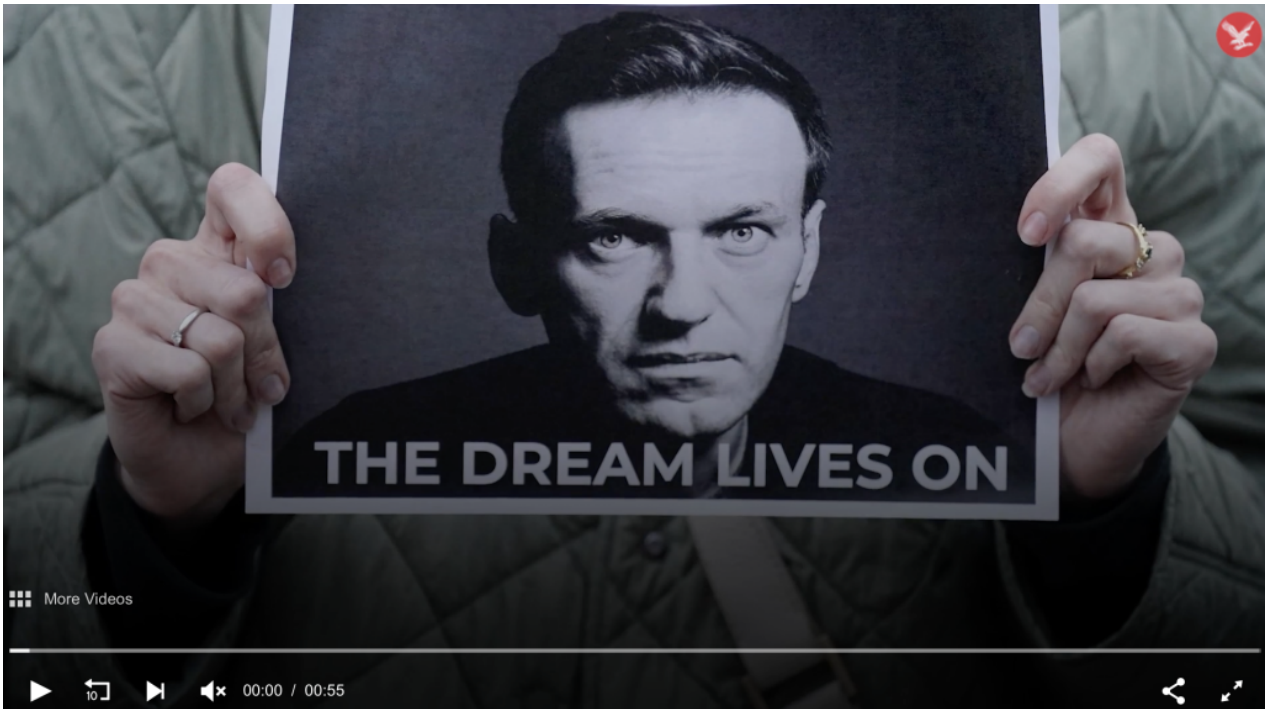
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[Rishi Sunak](#) has been accused of aiding [Vladimir Putin's](#) regime over the government's plans to spend hundreds of thousands of pounds of [taxpayers'](#) money training up [the next generation of Russian leaders](#).

Britain barred Russians from applying to [the Chevening scholarship programme](#) – a fully funded masters degree aimed at “emerging leaders” from all over the world – after Mr Putin [invaded Ukraine two years ago](#).

But, [despite the conflict still going on](#) – and Britain ramping up sanctions on Moscow [in response to the death](#) of opposition leader [Alexei Navalny](#) – *The Independent* can reveal that the scheme has been reopened to applicants from [Russia](#).



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The prime minister is now facing calls to reverse the decision, with MPs and campaigners criticising the decision to use [foreign aid money](#) in this way. One MP said: “It will only possibly benefit apparatchiks of Putin’s regime.”

Bill Browder, the US anti-corruption campaigner, told *The Independent* it is “highly inappropriate” to reinstate the scheme.

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