



# Donald Trump Praises Vladimir Putin: 'I Always Knew He Was Very Smart!'

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The new sanctions imposed by the US marked a new low in US-Russian relations, which have deteriorated over serious differences on Ukraine and Syria.

President-elect Donald Trump distanced himself Wednesday night from President Barack Obama's administration's plans to punish Russian Federation for its alleged interference in the 2016 presidential election, telling reporters "I think we ought to get on with our lives".

Putin's decision seemingly "humiliated" Obama in its non-response and set the desired tone for his relationship with the US under President-Elect Trump's leadership.

On a visit to the Baltic states, Republican senator John McCain said in response: "I agree with the president-elect that we need to get on with our lives - without having elections being affected by any outside influence, especially Vladimir Putin, who is a thug and a murderer".

Mr Putin's unexpected response comes after President Obama reignited simmering diplomatic tensions with Moscow just three weeks before he leaves the White House.

Mr Obama, who will be replaced by Donald Trump on 20 January, vowed action against Russian Federation amid USA accusations that it directed cyber-attacks on the Democratic Party and Hillary Clinton's campaign. "It's *time* for our country to move on to bigger and better things", he said in a statement released by his transition team. "I will meet with leaders of the intelligence community next week in order to be *updated on the facts* of this situation", he said in the same statement in which he urged every one to "move on".

Emma Ashford, a foreign policy expert from the Cato Institute, told VOA Trump would face a lot of opposition from Congress if he tries to undo the sanctions.

US intelligence agencies say Russian Federation was behind *hacks* into Democratic Party organizations and operatives ahead of the November 8 presidential election.

Separately, the Russian embassy to the United Kingdom tweeted a visual gag calling the Obama presidency a *lame duck*. Putin's objective has been spelled out: He wants a Trump administration

to restore good relations with the Kremlin. The sanctions are the strongest ever taken by the U.S. against an alleged state-sponsored cyber attack.

He added that, while Russian Federation has "the right to retaliate", the government will not expel any us diplomats or declare any retaliatory measures at this *time*.

Opposition from Trump could generate bipartisan discord early in his administration.

"I think that's going to work out very easily", he said.

The talk of *retaliation* comes one day after 35 Russian spies were booted from the United States, and two Moscow-controlled locations in the USA, an estate in Maryland and a compound on Long Island, shuttered. The State Department originally said the 35 were diplomats.

The 45-acre complex in Maryland includes a Georgian-style brick mansion, swimming pool, tennis courts, and cottages for embassy staff. The Russian embassy declined to comment. The officials and their families were given 72 hours to leave the U.S.

News reports, later denied by Russian officials, claimed that Moscow was going to close the Anglo-American School, where the children of USA diplomats study. Senior administration officials cited the assault of a USA diplomat by a Russian police officer that was broadcast on Russian television in July.