

Kremlin girds itself for a Biden presidency, while still refusing to acknowledge his electoral victory

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Speaking to a press outlet on Tuesday, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov reported that the Kremlin is “carefully following what is happening on the other side of the Atlantic,” but continued to refrain from acknowledging Joe Biden as president-elect of the United States.

“It is premature to assess the consequences of the elections in the US for international relations before the announcement of official results,” stated Lavrov, adding that Russia “is prepared for any development of events.”

Should Biden assume the presidency, the foreign minister indicated that the Kremlin expects a return to Obama-era policies. Anticipating the possible coming to power of a rabidly anti-Russian White House in January, Lavrov insisted that collaboration with any American government be based on “honesty, mutual respect, and non-interference in internal affairs.”

Despite endless efforts by the Democratic Party and leading American press outlets to portray Trump as “soft” on Russian President Vladimir Putin, the Kremlin is aware of the immense threat to Russia’s geopolitical and economic interests posed by a successful Trump coup. As was made clear by the recent US and Israeli-orchestrated assassination of Iran’s top nuclear scientist, the crazed policies of the Trump administration are no less likely than those of a future Biden administration to draw Russia into a disastrous war.

The same day that Lavrov issued his comments, NATO representatives meeting virtually identified Russia as the alliance’s major security threat, insisting that Moscow’s growing influence in Belarus and Nagorno-Karabakh and alleged deployment of “new

missiles from the Far North to Syria to Libya” required new efforts “to contain Russia.”

While the Trump administration implemented numerous aggressive measures against the Kremlin—scrapping major nuclear treaties, extending anti-Russian sanctions and funneling hundreds of millions of dollars towards Ukraine’s military—the government being prepared by president-elect Biden is packed with anti-Russian fanatics who have been braying for war with Moscow and centrally involved in efforts to destabilize the country through the installation of pro-Western regimes across the post-Soviet sphere. The sense in Moscow is that however much hopes for an easing of tensions with the US were dashed by the realities of Trump’s four years in office, the situation is likely to become even worse under Biden.

Antony Blinken, Biden’s proposed secretary of state, avidly backed the US-orchestrated anti-Russian regime change operation in Ukraine in 2014. He advocated the use of harsh sanctions to punish the Russian population as a whole over the Russian annexation of the Black Sea peninsula Crimea. In comments made throughout the summer and fall of 2020, Blinken has promised that a Biden administration will aggressively “impose costs” and “deter” Russia through the expansion of NATO and stepped-up measures intended to wreck the Russian economy.

Jake Sullivan, who is slated to be Biden’s national security adviser and was a key figure in the Obama administration, played a central role in the Democratic Party’s effort to tar Trump with allegations of collusion with Russia as part of the Democrats’ impeachment drive. Avril Haines, who will take the post of Director

of National Intelligence, was also deeply involved in claims of Russia's supposed meddling in the 2016 elections. Jen Psaki, Biden's pick as White House press secretary, was the spin doctor who sought to cover up the implications of the revelations made in 2014 by US Ambassador Victoria Nuland that the US had poured \$5 billion into "promoting democracy" in Ukraine.

In response to the news of the Biden appointments, Yuri Rogulev, director of the Foundation for the Study of the USA at Moscow State University, pointed in particular to the political resumes of Sullivan and Psaki and noted, "Nothing good looms for our country." In a popular reflection of this mood, a survey by the news outlet Russia Matters found that just 10 percent of Russians anticipate that the country's relationship with the US will improve under a Biden presidency and 30 percent think it will deteriorate.

Speaking on Wednesday at a meeting of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), an alliance of post-Soviet states, Putin warned against "outside interference: financial injections, informational support, political support and so forth" in the affairs of CSTO member states. His remarks were directed in particular at the situation in Belarus. Currently, the Kremlin is pressuring Belarusian President Aleksandr Lukashenko to leave office in an effort to prevent months of mass popular protests against Lukashenko from turning into a pressure point in the hands of imperialist powers allying themselves with so-called "democratic forces" in Belarus.

It is increasingly clear that this is precisely what is being prepared. The same day that Putin issued his warning about interference in the CSTO, the European Commission (EC)—the executive branch of the European Union—released a statement outlining its expectation that a Biden administration will defend the "territorial integrity and energy security" of Ukraine and "step up support for a peaceful democratic transfer of power" in Belarus. The EC appealed for Biden to hold a "summit on democracy."

The Russian Air Force said Tuesday that so far this year it has detected 1,300 foreign spy planes operating near Russian territory. The same day the military made this announcement, Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Rybakov expressed objections over US moves to deploy low-yield nuclear weapons to countries near Russia's borders, which he described as a clear sign of

"the return of the concept of limited nuclear war."

The course which the conflict between the United States and Russia takes is also highly dependent on US policy towards China, which for both American political parties is emerging the primary target, as well as US relations with Europe.

Fyodor Lukyanov, one of Russia's top foreign policy analysts and an adviser to the Kremlin, noted recently, "The rapid deterioration of the US-China relationship will define the whole atmosphere in the middle and long term ... for Russia, it's a big difference whether we face full-scale bipolar conflict between the United States and China which will require all other countries to take sides."

He added, "Of course, in the Russian case, for now, there is no reason at all to expect Russia to lean toward the United States. But at the same time there is a growing and deepening debate in Russia about the relationship with China, which is very important."

Tensions between the United States and various European countries with regards to Russia are also evident. At the center of the present situation is the construction of Nord Stream 2, a gas pipeline connecting Russian suppliers to Germany via the Baltic Sea. After delays brought on by US sanctions, it was just announced early this week that the companies involved in Nord Stream 2—Gazprom and a number of European partners—had secured full financing for the project and even chosen the ship that would finish laying the pipeline.



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