

With Smiles, Obama and Putin Greet Each Other

By [The Moscow Times](#)

September 05, 2013

The  Moscow Times

Putin shaking hands with U.S. President Barack Obama outside Konstantinovsky Palace in St. Petersburg. **Dmitry Lovetsky**

ST. PETERSBURG — President Vladimir Putin welcomed U.S. President Barack Obama with a smile and a handshake to the Group of 20 summit, in one of the most closely watched greetings of international diplomacy. (See [Photo Gallery: Day One of the G20 Summit](#))

The 15-second exchange at the entrance to St. Petersburg's grand Konstantinovsky Palace drew widespread media attention as a potential telltale sign of relations between the U.S. and Russia.

The exchange was their only planned one-on-one appearance at the summit in the midst of tensions between the two leaders over Syria and Russia's granting of asylum to U.S. intelligence leaker Edward Snowden. Obama had planned to hold talks with Putin before

the summit but canceled them over Snowden and a lack of progress on key bilateral issues.

As Obama shook hands and smiled broadly, he thanked his host and nodded toward the palace, pronouncing it "beautiful."

Obama arrived in his armored limousine, unlike other summit leaders who rode in G20 Mercedes cars.

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