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INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Flamboyant Russian Nationalist Throws Party in Parliament to Celebrate Trump Victory

By Katie Davies, Daria Litvinova and Jim Kovpak

November 09, 2016



Nationalist politician Vladimir Zhininovsky, pictured in a 2012 campaign ad. **YouTube**

The flamboyant leader of the nationalist LDPR party, Vladimir Zhininovskiy, has thrown a party at Russia's State Duma on Wednesday to celebrate Donald Trump's win in the U.S. presidential election. Zhininovskiy organized a reception with champagne, and sweets, sausages and traditional Russian Olivier salad worth more than 100,000 rubles ($1,560), the RBC news website reported.

Earlier on Wednesday, news that Republican billionaire Donald Trump would become next U.S. president was greeted by thunderous applause in Russia's State Duma, Russian media have reported.

Embed:

> Russian MP Zhirinovsky celebrating Trump's victory with champagne today in the State Duma (via @ru_rbc) pic.twitter.com/pcxJtwKx2y
>
> — Ivan Nechepurenko (@INechepurenko) November 9, 2016

The businessman snatched victory from his Democrat opponent Hillary Clinton in the early hours of Wednesday morning in the United States, as Russia's lower house of parliament gathered for its morning session.

In his telegram to the new U.S. leader, Russian President Vladimir Putin wished Trump "every success" in his new role.

Putin also expressed his hopes that new administration would work to pull Russian-American relations out of their current crisis, the Kremlin's official website announced. The president said that he hoped Trump's appointment would "lead to constructive dialogue between Moscow and Washington based on equality and respect, benefiting not only the interests of their respective countries, but the world as a whole."

Embed:

> Vladimir Putin congratulated Donald Trump on his victory in the US presidential election https://t.co/JgNJ6DYVLs
>
> — President of Russia (@KremlinRussia_E) November 9, 2016

Putin went on to congratulate Trump for a second time at a reception with foreign ambassadors on Wednesday afternoon.

“During the campaign, we heard statements from Trump about restoring relationships between the United States and Russia. We understand and acknowledge that will be a difficult process, considering how far Russia-U.S. relations have deteriorated. As I have already repeated multiple times, that is not [Russia's] fault,” Putin said.

The president stressed that Russia was ready and willing to "do its part" in a bid to restore ties. “Both the Russian and the American people could benefit,” he said.

Embed:

> Putin: "This would serve the interest of the Russian and American peoples." Says

> both have "special responsibility" for global security.
>
> — max seddon (@maxseddon) November 9, 2016

Other prominent Russian figures also rushed to congratulate Trump,▪who has long been seen as the Kremlin's preferred choice in the White▪House. The governor of Russia's Siberian region of▪Omsk even declared at a meeting of Russia's Federation Council▪that Putin's United Russia had “won the U.S. election,” according▪to reports.

Sergei Zheleznyak, the deputy secretary of the general council of▪Putin's ruling United Russia party, claimed that the vote proved▪that people were "tired of the artificial confrontation and▪the imposed globalization."

He blamed the defeat of Democrat nominee Hillary Clinton on▪"bellicose rhetoric, rabid anti-Russian hysteria, the desire to▪dictate America's will to the world and to solve problems at the▪expense of American wallets."

"We respect America's choice and look forward to building a▪constructive relationship with the new U.S. leadership on the basis▪of equal dialogue and cooperation," Zheleznyak said in▪a
statement on the party's▪website.

Zhirinovskiy also blamed Clinton's loss on her anti-Russia rhetoric.

“We are, of course, very happy to see that the better of the two candidates won,” Zhirinovskiy was quoted by the state-run RIA Novosti news agency. “Hillary threatened war: for her, Russia was the main enemy. Most Americans simply want peace.”

"Go on, Grandma Hillary," he said. "It's time for you to have a rest."

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> pic.twitter.com/kRcPMXZUta
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> — Đ▪Đ¸ĐºĐ¸Ñ▪Đ° Đ▪Đ°Ñ▪Đ°Đ»Đ¾Đ² (@nikbatalov) November 9, 2016

Photo: Flowers laid outside the U.S. embassy in Moscow on the morning after the election. The sign, a parody of the "Je Suis Charlie" placards which pledged solidarity with France in the wake of the Charlie Hedbo terror attacks, reads "I am the USA."

Some▪ felt that Vladimir Putin may have found a good match in the outsider ▪candidate.

Exiled Russian oligarch Mikhail Khodorkovsky wrote on The ⊠Question website that Trump's victory was "fair." "Real elections are ⊠unpredictable. Trump's victory was fair. New policies will be ⊠unpredictable, so Putin's signature unpredictability will have a decent ⊠alternative," the billionaire wrote.

In his Twitter account, however, Khodorkovsky was more categorical. "Putin supporters wanted Trump. Here he is. I'm getting popcorn. First, sign off on oil prices plummeting. And remember Reagan," he wrote.

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> — Ð¥Ð¾Ð´Ð¾Ñ⊠Ð°Ð¾Ð²Ñ⊠Ð°Ð¸Ð¹ Ð⊠Ð¸Ñ⊠Ð°Ð¸Ð» (@mich261213) November 9, 2016

Yet not all politicians were optimistic that Trump's victory heralded a new golden age of Russian-American relations.

The head of the Duma's Committee for International Affairs, Leonid Slutskiy, warned that Trump's pre-election promises to mend ties with Moscow could soon be broken.

"[Trump] has said that the United States need to build a constructive relationship with Russia. Yet we have many examples when such pre-election promises have turned into negative policies towards Russia," he told the Moskva news agency.

"It's possible that Trump was merely playing up to voters who did not agree with the harsh words of Clinton [towards Russia], Slutskiy said.

The Russian Orthodox Church also greeted the news with guarded optimism. "I do not think we should indulge in euphoria over the victory of the Republican candidate," church spokesman Metropolitan Ilarion of Volokolamsk told the Interfax news agency.

"Time will tell how the president will be, whether he'll implement the promises made during the election campaign. But with his election there is hope that international relations will improve, and that we could see the creation of a single global coalition against terrorism."

Embed:

> Putin was informed when the result of the election was clear, but "he wasn't glued to the TV -- he's the president of Russia!", Peskov says
>
> — Jack Farchy (@jfarchy) November 9, 2016

Russia's Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov was concise. He promised that Moscow will “judge” the new president by his actions. “I can't say that all the previous leaders were predictable in every situation – it's part of life, part of politics. ... We've heard a lot of words, but we will judge [the new White House administration] by their actions, and respond with actions, too,” Lavrov told the state-run TASS news agency.

Russia “is ready to work with whoever is the president,” he said.

The longtime leader of Russia’s Communist party Gennady Zyuganov maintained that neither Trump, nor Clinton were "good" for Russia. “No matter who won there, it’s six of one, half a dozen of the other,” Zyuganov said at a press conference in the party headquarters. “The American strategy has remained the same for the past 200 years: expansion, asserting their priority and seizing the most important global resources," he said.

Margarita Simonyan, head of the state-funded RT TV channel, claimed that the Western political classes were simply out of step with ordinary people.

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> — Ð¾Ð°Ñ‚Ð³Ð°Ñ‚Ð¸Ñ Ð¡Ð¼Ð¾Ð¾Ñ‚ÐµÑ (@M_Simonyan) November 9, 2016

"[British political leader, Jeremy] Corbyn. Brexit. Trump. Does anyone still have any doubts? The world is sick of the establishment, and the lies it tells through its arrogant mainstream media," she said on Twitter. "People are tired of war. They're tired of the mass media. They're tired of aggressive liberalism. They're tired of immigrants. Whether it's good or bad, it's simply a fact."

Former Russian Finance Minister Alexei Kudrin also drew parallels with Brexit, calling Trump's election a "continuation of the same trend."

"The American elections have shown that the current dynamics of global processes are unsatisfactory," Kudrin wrote on Twitter on Wednesday.□□"But despite some of the

statements Trump has made on economic issues, he depends on the existing system. It smooths out his ambiguous intentions."

Russia's Foreign Ministry outspoken spokeswoman Maria Zakharova reacted to Trump's victory by attacking the former U.S. ambassador to Russia, Michael McFaul. She claimed that "media reports" had spotted McFaul delete a tweet which accused the Kremlin of meddling in the U.S. election. The tweet allegedly read: "Putin interfered with out elections and succeeded. Молодец ['well done']."

"First [the U.S. President Barack] Obama's administration appoints 'McFauls' to important positions and trust them with governing not only their country, but many vassal states as well," Zakharova wrote on Facebook. Then, when the situation turns desperate, [the administration] screams that Moscow is to blame for everything," she said.

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> — Ð Ð»ÐµÐºÑ Ð Ñ Ð´Ñ Ð¸Ð½ (@Aleksei_Kudrin) November 9, 2016

Embed:

> Russian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Maria Zakharova tells me Moscow's heard previous US presidents promise better ties with Russia pic.twitter.com/VVXz5pYlCk
>
> — Steve Rosenberg (@BBCSteveR) November 9, 2016

Not all Russian officials have been able to keep a straight face over Trump's victory. The Russian Culture Ministry linked the elections to one of the Soviet Union's most loved cartoons — Winnie the Pooh — with a playful reference to a song from the iconic show. "TRUMP-param-param-param-param-pam-pam," the ministry wrote on its official Twitter account, "the Culture Ministry has made its choice!"

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Trump, who has never held a political office, had been considered an outsider by many political experts.

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