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Putin Blows Off Trump Inauguration for Russian Ice-Swimming

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Reuters

Russian President Vladimir Putin will miss out on the inauguration of U.S.-President elect Donald Trump to enjoy traditional Russian ice swimming.

Putin will instead be attending an event to mark Russian Orthodox Epiphany, Presidential spokesperson Dmitry Peskov told the BBC.

The religious holiday is traditionally marked by believers plunging themselves into freezing ice water in lakes and rivers. Peskov did not reveal whether Putin would be taking to the water himself.

The Kremlin spokesperson stressed that Moscow would need to see real commitment from Washington before improving ties. He told the BBC that the Russian government wouldn't believe that relations had "fundamentally changed" until they saw that Trump was open to dialogue.

“We believe that we can't solve many global and regional problems without cooperation from the Americans," Peskov said. "That is why we desperately need to have a good relationship with Washington, but, as the saying goes, it takes two to tango."

Related article: Taking the Plunge, Russia Celebrates Epiphany

Peskov also dismissed anti-Russian statements made by incoming Trump officials, including Defense Minister General James Matiss, who claimed that Russia posed a serious threat to European security.

“Every man is a child of his environment. The environment in the United States right now is very hostile toward Russia, so we can understand such statements,” he said.

Republican candidate Donald Trump will be officially inaugurated as president on Friday, Jan. 20 in a ceremony outside the Capitol Building in Washington D.C.

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