

After Russia Sanctions, State Dept. Advises 'Settle Things Down'

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A U.S. State Department spokesperson on Thursday said the United States and Russia may need to “settle things down a little” as the countries spat over fresh U.S sanctions imposed over Russia this week.

In a Facebook [post](#) on August 2, Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev said new sanctions signed by U.S. President Donald Trump on Wednesday “end hopes for improving [Russia’s] relations with the new U.S. administration,” adding they are “a declaration of a full-fledged economic war on Russia.”

In a press briefing with reporters Aug. 3, Heather Nauert downplayed Medvedev’s statement saying: “we have seen a lot of leaders, a lot countries say provocative things, and we may just need to settle things down a little bit.”

Pressed on whether the new U.S. sanctions represented a declaration of economic war, Nauert said “Russia is certainly entitled to say that.”

The State Department spokesperson also said Moscow and Washington should be able to work together in areas of mutual cooperation, but admitted the relationship was “at a low point.”

However, Nauert cited a newly brokered cease-fire in Syria as evidence the countries were able to work together. “If you look at the ceasefire in southwest Syria, that has now taken hold and, for the most part, succeeded for nearly a month now.”

Nauert later said that the United States would continue to hold Russia accountable for its “bad acts,” including in Ukraine, saying the U.S. was “passionate” about maintaining or getting back Ukraine’s “integrity and territorial sovereignty.”

U.S. President Donald Trump signed sanctions against Russia into law on Wednesday, in reaction to its alleged hacking of institutions related to the U.S. presidential election and its involvement in Ukraine.

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