

Boris Johnson's First Russia Visit, the Highlights

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Boris Johnson (Russian Foreign Ministry / Flickr (CC BY-NC-SA 2.0))

British Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson's first visit to Russia delivered heated discussions and memorable quotes about snacks, spycraft and the importance of his first name.

He was the first top British diplomat to visit Russia in 5 years.

Johnson traded barbs with Russia's Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov over Russia's alleged interference in the 2016 Brexit vote and the suppression of gay rights in Chechnya.

Britain's top diplomat also emphasized London's attempts to improve ties with Russia and the increased trade turnover between the two countries.

Here are some of the highlights of Johnson's [comments](#) from a bilateral press conference.

On Bentleys and Kettle Chips

“I think we export about 5 billion pounds worth to Russia at the moment. It’s good news that Russian customers are buying loads more British things — from Kettle Crisps [Chips] to Bentleys, and I would in no way discourage that.”

On Trusting Russia

“It’s a measure of my trust that, as soon as I got into this excellent Foreign Ministry, I immediately handed my coat, my hat, my gloves, and indeed everything that was in my pocket — secret or otherwise — to Sergei Lavrov, in the knowledge that he would look after it and it would come to no harm.”

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“So you’ve searched it already?” Johnson said after Lavrov quipped that “there was nothing in Boris’ pockets.”

On Johnson's Russian First Name

“I am a committed Russophile [...] I’m certain that I’m the first foreign secretary in the history of my office to be called Boris and probably quite likely to be the last for some time.”

On Brexit Meddling Allegations

“You should recognize that Russian attempts to interfere in our elections, in our referendums, whatever they may have been, have not been successful. So you can reassure yourself on that point. And that’s an important consideration because had they been successful, that would have been an entirely different matter.”

On Ronald Reagan’s “Trust But Verify” quote to Mikhail Gorbachev

“I can’t remember what that is in Russian, ‘Dobroye Na Probroye’ or something.” [Doveryai no Proveryai]

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