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U.S. Doesn't Congratulate Putin Over 'Unsurprising' Election Win

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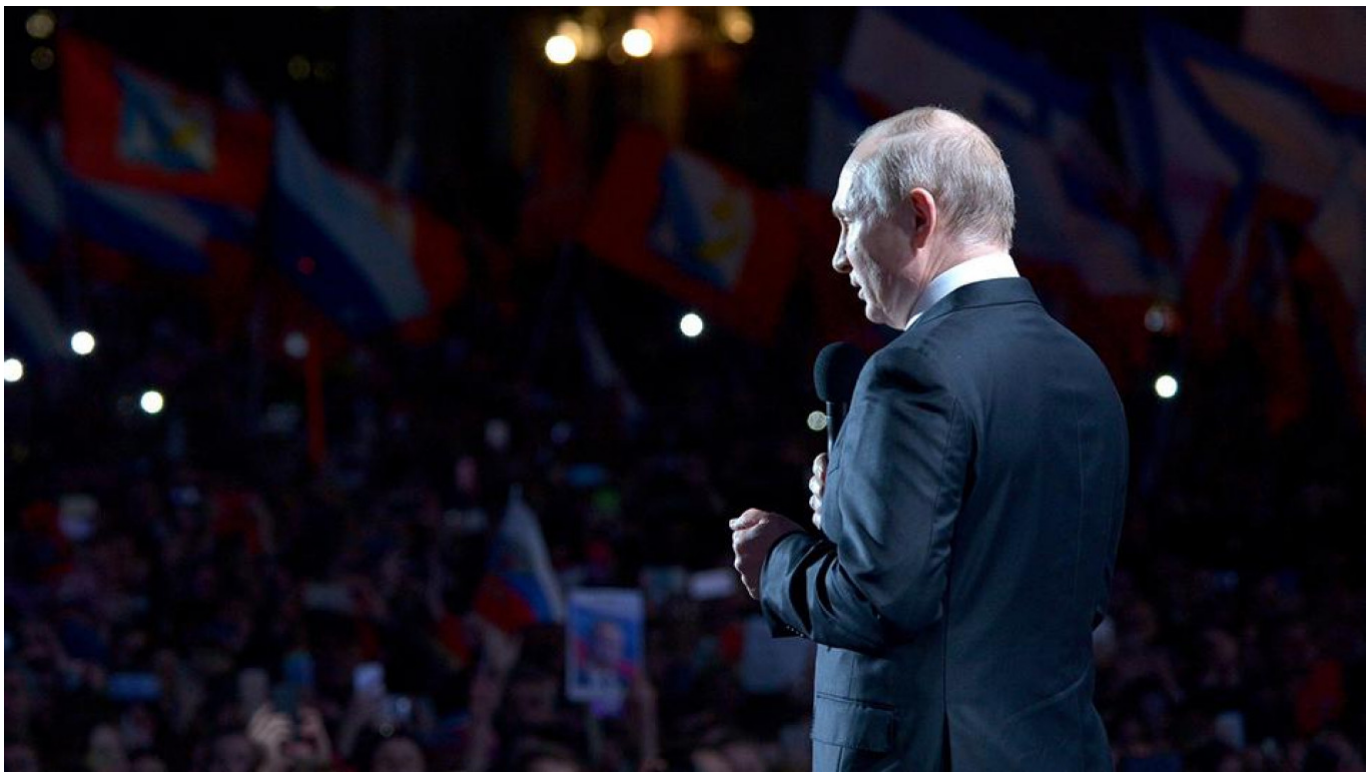

Vladimir Putin **Kremlin Press Service**

The White House stopped short of congratulating Russian President Vladimir Putin on Monday, saying his re-election victory was no surprise and that there was no scheduled congratulatory phone call with U.S. President Donald Trump.

Putin was re-elected to six more years with a record number of ballots on Sunday, extending his total time in the Kremlin to nearly a quarter of a century, amid deteriorating ties with the U.S. over Russia's alleged hacking of the 2016 presidential election, the war in Syria and nuclear arms control.

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White House spokesman Hogan Gidley told reporters on Air Force One, which was flying Trump to New Hampshire, that the United States will work with Russia where it can.

"We will work to cultivate the relationship with Russia and we will impose costs when Russia threatens our interests, but we will also look for places to work together when it serves our interests," Gidley said.

"We're not surprised by the outcome," he said of the Russian election.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said on a phone call with reporters that Moscow does not regard this as an unfriendly act. "As you know, President Putin is open to normalizing relations," he said.

The Kremlin said it received congratulatory phone calls from the heads of state of China, India, Japan and five former Soviet republics in Central Asia and Eastern Europe.

The leaders of Germany, Spain, France, Cuba, Venezuela and Bolivia, as well as Hungary and Serbia, among others, sent written letters of congratulations to Putin.

Reuters contributed reporting to this article.

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