

Moscow and Washington Strike Deal to Hold Putin-Trump Summit

By [Reuters](#)

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Moscow and Washington have struck a deal to hold a summit soon between Russian President Vladimir Putin and U.S. President Donald Trump, Kremlin foreign policy aide Yuri Ushakov told reporters on Wednesday.

Ushakov, speaking after Putin held talks with U.S. National Security Adviser John Bolton in the Kremlin, said the summit would take place in a mutually convenient third country and that several more weeks were needed to prepare for it.

"This meeting has been planned for a long time," said Ushakov. "It has enormous importance for Russia and America, but it (also) has huge importance for the whole international situation. I think it will be the main international event of the summer."

Such a summit is likely to irritate U.S. allies who want to isolate Putin, such as Britain or who

are concerned about Trump's attitude towards Russia. It is also likely to go down badly among foreign and domestic critics who question Trump's commitment to NATO and fret over his desire to rebuild ties with Moscow even as Washington tightens sanctions.

Ushakov said Moscow and Washington would announce the time and place of the summit on Thursday. Further details have yet to be worked out, he added.

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The meeting is expected to take place after Trump attends a NATO summit and visits Britain next month. A senior U.S. official said on Tuesday that Finland's capital Helsinki was being considered as a location.

Bolton, a lifelong hawk who warned last year before his own appointment that Washington negotiated with Putin's Russia at its peril, is due to give a news conference at 1600 GMT, where he may provide further details.

Trump congratulated Putin by phone in March after the Russian leader's landslide re-election victory and said the two would meet soon.

Since then, already poor ties between Washington and Moscow have deteriorated further over the conflict in Syria and the poisoning of a former Russian spy in Britain which sparked big diplomatic expulsions in both countries.

Washington and Moscow are also at odds over Ukraine and allegations of Russian interference in the 2016 U.S. presidential election, something Russia denies.

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Low Expectations

Expectations for the outcome of any Putin-Trump summit are therefore low, even though Trump said before he was elected that he wanted to improve battered U.S.-Russia ties.

A special prosecutor in the United States has indicted Russian firms and individuals for meddling in the presidential election to benefit Trump, and is investigating whether anyone in Trump's campaign helped the Russian effort. Trump denies wrongdoing and calls the investigation a "witch hunt".

U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said at the weekend that Washington was "trying to find places where we had overlapping interests, but protecting American interest where we do not."

The United States initially sanctioned Russia over its 2014 annexation of Ukraine's Crimea and its backing for a pro-Russian uprising in eastern Ukraine. Subsequent sanctions have punished Moscow for what Washington has called its malign behavior and alleged meddling in U.S. politics.

Some Trump critics say Russia has not significantly altered its behaviour since 2014 and should therefore not be given the prestige that they believe a summit would confer.

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