

Trump, Putin to Meet July 16 in Helsinki

By [Reuters](#)

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Kremlin.ru

U.S. President Donald Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin will meet on July 16 in Helsinki, the Kremlin and the White House said on Thursday, a first official summit that will be closely watched by nervous U.S. allies in Europe and critics of Russia in America.

The two countries announced the details simultaneously a day after striking a deal on holding the meeting following a visit to Moscow on Wednesday by U.S. national security adviser John Bolton.

"The two leaders will discuss relations between the United States and Russia and a range of national security issues," the White House said in a statement.

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Trump and Putin have met twice before on the sidelines of international gatherings.

Their summit could irritate U.S. allies who want to isolate Putin, such as Britain, or who are concerned about what they see as Trump's overly friendly attitude toward the Russian leader.

It is also likely to go down badly among critics who question Trump's commitment to the NATO alliance and who have been concerned about his frictions with longtime allies such as Canada and Germany over trade.

Trump has long expressed a desire for better relations with Moscow, even as Washington tightens sanctions.

Hanging over relations with Russia since Trump took office in January last year is the conclusion of U.S. intelligence community that Moscow sought to interfere in the 2016 presidential campaign to tilt the election in Trump's favor.

Moscow has long denied any meddling. A special counsel is investigating possible collusion by the Trump campaign with Russia, which Trump has denied.

Bolton told reporters in Moscow he expected Russian meddling in U.S. politics to be discussed at the summit.

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He said he did not rule out Trump discussing Russia rejoining the Group of Seven industrialized countries to make it the G8 again.

After Trump and Putin met briefly in Vietnam in November 2017, Trump was criticized in the United States for saying he believed Putin when the Russian president denied accusations that Russia meddled in the 2016 election.

In a Twitter post on Thursday before the Helsinki meeting was announced, Trump again appeared to cast doubt on Russian involvement. "Russia continues to say they had nothing to do with Meddling in our Election!" he wrote.

In Washington on Wednesday, Trump hinted that the summit venue might be the Finnish capital and listed Syria and Ukraine as being among the many subjects he would discuss with Putin.

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