

Kremlin Notes U.S. Invite, Says Putin and Trump Have Other Chances to Meet

By [Reuters](#)

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The Kremlin was reticent on Tuesday about whether it would accept an invitation from U.S. President Donald Trump to hold a summit with Vladimir Putin in Washington later this year, saying only that the two men had other chances to meet as well.

The Kremlin's failure to swiftly accept Trump's invitation for a Washington summit has been noticeable. Though Moscow saw the Helsinki summit the two leaders held last week as a success, the fiercely negative reaction by some U.S. politicians to Trump's performance has taken some in Russia aback.

Kremlin aide Yuri Ushakov said that though Washington and Moscow agreed there was a need for another Putin-Trump meeting, Russia had not yet begun any practical preparations for a new meeting.

"There are other options [to meet] which our leaders can look at," Ushakov told reporters, citing a meeting of G20 leaders in Argentina which starts at the end of November.

"Maybe there will be other international events which Trump and Putin will take part in."

'Let the Dust Settle'

Ushakov did not explain why Moscow had not yet accepted Trump's invitation. But when he was asked for details about how Trump had behaved at the Helsinki summit, he declined, citing a desire not to inflame what he described as an already overheated U.S. political situation.

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"After the [Helsinki] summit you know what kind of atmosphere there is around its outcome," Ushakov told reporters. "I think it would be wise to let the dust settle and then we can discuss all these questions in a business-like way. But not now."

Russia's ambassador to the United States, Anatoly Antonov, was also cautious on Friday about the prospects of a new summit, saying only that Moscow was ready to discuss the proposal.

Before the Helsinki summit, Russian state TV expressed unease about the idea of Putin and Trump meeting in Washington, recalling how the U.S. leader had humiliated other foreign leaders, such as French President Emmanuel Macron, on home soil, something he would find harder to do on neutral ground.

For Putin, the fact that the Helsinki summit happened at all was a geopolitical victory, which Moscow interpreted as U.S. recognition of Russia's status as a great power and an overdue U.S. realisation that its interests must be taken into account.

But its hopes of a gradual thaw in troubled U.S.-Russia relations now hang in the balance after Trump faced a squall of criticism at home over his failure to publicly confront Putin over Moscow's meddling in the 2016 election, something Russia denies.

Trump's unexpectedly rapid invitation to Putin to come to Washington for another summit — only three days after Helsinki — has only deepened criticism of Trump's handling of Russia, overshadowing the so-far meagre results of the Helsinki summit.

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