

U.S.-Russia Security Chiefs to Discuss Arms Control, Iran and Syria in Talks

By [Reuters](#)

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Nikolai Patrushev / Kremlin.ru

U.S. President Donald Trump's national security adviser John Bolton will discuss arms control treaties and Iran's role in Syria in talks with Russian counterpart Nikolai Patrushev in Geneva next week, an administration official said on Thursday.

The meeting is a follow-up to Trump's controversial summit with Russian President Vladimir Putin in Helsinki in July.

Trump held a one-on-one meeting with Putin during that summit and drew criticism for siding with Moscow over U.S. intelligence findings that Russia meddled in the 2016 presidential election. He later corrected his assessment about Russia's role.

The White House has not released many details about Trump's meeting with Putin. But the official offered a list of items he said the two men discussed.

The leading topic of their conversation was the war in Syria, he said, including Iran's role there and the humanitarian situation in the country.

The two agreed in principle that the Iranians should exit Syria but Russia saw that as a tough task, the official said.

Trump and Putin discussed arms control, including the New START treaty and the Cold War-era Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) treaty, which banned nuclear and conventional ground-launched ballistic and cruise missiles with a range of 500 to 5,500 kilometers.

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The official said the leaders did not agree on a way forward on arms control, however.

Bolton is a critic of the New START treaty, agreed during Democratic President Barack Obama's administration.

Trump also raised the issue of Russia's Nord Stream 2 natural gas pipeline to Germany, which he has criticized sharply, with Putin, the official said.

Directly after his meeting with Putin, which lasted more than two hours, Trump briefed Bolton, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and Jon Huntsman, the U.S. ambassador to Russia, about their meeting for about 15 minutes, the official said. Many topics they discussed were raised again in the larger group meeting that followed, the official said.

The official emphasized that Trump told Putin that Russian election meddling had to stop in 2018. The United States holds mid-term elections in November for Congress.

Putin said in separate meetings that the Russian state did not meddle in the U.S. election, but that left a "big expanse" of other Russian actors, the official noted.

Trump has sought to develop a positive relationship with Putin despite U.S. findings about election meddling. He has called an investigation into possible ties between his 2016 presidential campaign and Moscow a "witch hunt."

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