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Russians Don't Believe Putin Interfered in U.S. Election, Poll Finds

By Bloomberg

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Vladimir Putin / Bloomberg

Most Russians don't believe their government interfered in the 2016 American presidential election but do think the U.S. regularly meddles in other countries' internal affairs.

Western sanctions fueled in part by U.S. intelligence findings of election meddling nonetheless are worrying the Russian public, according to a Pew Research Center survey released Tuesday.

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Seventy-one percent of Russians said they don't believe Vladimir Putin's government tried to influence the U.S. election, the poll found. Just 15 percent said Russia did intervene.

While Russians were split over whether their government generally seeks to influence other

countries' internal affairs, 85 percent believe the U.S. does.

The findings come amid Special Counsel Robert Mueller's investigation in the U.S. into Russian election interference and as President Donald Trump seeks to portray the inquiry as a witch hunt against him.

Eight in 10 Russians are concerned that Western sanctions are affecting their economy — with 47 percent characterizing the impact as major. Sixty-nine percent identify inflation as one of their most pressing concerns.

Still, 81 percent of those surveyed expressed confidence in Putin's handling of international affairs, and nearly three-fourths say Russia plays a more important global role than a decade ago.

The findings released Tuesday come from Pew's Spring 2018 Global Attitudes Survey. The survey was based on face-to-face interviews of 1,000 adults throughout Russia, conducted May 22 to June 23, 2018. It has a margin of error of plus or minus 4.4 percentage points.

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