

What Did Pompeo Discuss With Putin in Russia?

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Mike Pompeo and Vladimir Putin [Kremlin.ru](https://kremlin.ru)

U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo traveled to Russia for talks with President Vladimir Putin and Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov on Tuesday.

Pompeo's trip marked the first high-profile U.S. visit to Russia since allegations of Russian meddling in the 2016 U.S. presidential election and a subsequent investigation rankled bilateral relations.

Meeting in the southern city of Sochi, Pompeo, Putin and Lavrov expressed a mutual desire to improve their countries' battered ties.

At the same time, Pompeo clashed with Lavrov on a number of foreign policy issues. A Kremlin aide said the talks did not result in a breakthrough, but added that they were held in a business-like atmosphere.

Here's what they discussed:

Restoring U.S.-Russia ties

Putin to Pompeo: "I've formed the impression that your president [Donald Trump] wants to repair Russia-U.S. ties and contacts and wants to solve issues which are of common interest for us. We've said many times that we also want to fully restore our relations. I hope that the necessary conditions for that to happen will now be created."

Embed:

[#Putin](#) tells [#Pompeo](#) he wishes to restore relations with US
pic.twitter.com/M4lShIByZD

— Ruptly (@Ruptly) [May 14, 2019](#)

Pompeo: "The United States stands ready to find common ground with Russia as long as the two of us can engage seriously. President Trump has made clear that his expectation is that we will have an improved relationship. This will benefit each of our peoples. And I think that our talks here today were a good step in that direction."

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Election meddling

Pompeo: "I made clear to Foreign Minister Lavrov... that interference in American elections is unacceptable. If the Russians were engaged in that in 2020, it would put our relationship in an even worse place than it has been. I'd encourage them not to do that. We would not tolerate that."

Detained U.S. citizens in Russia

Pompeo said he had complained to Lavrov about U.S. citizens being detained in Russia, a reference to the case of Paul Whelan, a former Marine accused of espionage, and Michael Calvey, an investor accused of fraud. Both men deny wrongdoing.

Ukraine

On Ukraine, Pompeo told Lavrov the United States would not recognize Moscow's 2014 annexation of Crimea and would keep in place economic sanctions imposed on Russia over that move.

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Russia should now work with Ukraine's new president-elect Volodymyr Zelensky to bring

peace to eastern Ukraine, said Pompeo, adding that he wanted Moscow to free a group of captured Ukrainian sailors.

Venezuela

The two sides clashed over Venezuela, with Lavrov sharply criticizing Washington for trying to undermine President Nicolas Maduro, who Pompeo said must step down in the face of an economic crisis and large-scale protests against his rule.

North Korea

Pompeo: "I think we share the same objective [of denuclearization] and I hope that we can find ways that we can work together. He [Putin] understands that the U.S. is going to be in the lead, but I think there are places we can work together."

Reuters contributed reporting to this article.

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