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Putin 'Physically Unremarkable,' Obama Writes in Memoir

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Russian President Vladimir Putin was a "tough" but "physically unremarkable" man, former U.S. President Barack Obama said in the first volume of his upcoming memoir.

According to a New York Times review of "A Promised Land," Obama likened Putin to "the tough, street-smart ward bosses who used to run the Chicago machine."

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Obama's personal relationship with Putin grew increasingly tense over years of failed attempts to "reset" ties with Russia that began in 2009, culminating in a famous staredown during their last face-to-face meeting in 2016.

"Physically, he was unremarkable," the 1.85-meter-tall Obama said of the 1.70-meter-tall

Putin in an excerpt from his 768-page memoir which goes on sale Tuesday, according to The New York Times.

Nigerian author Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, who reviewed "A Promised Land" for The New York Times, described Obama's biographical sketches as "masterful in their brevity and insight and humor."

The leaders exchanged the meme-ready "death stare," Obama later explained, during tense discussions where he raised the issue of Russian cyberattacks on the U.S. Washington later publicly accused Moscow of meddling in its presidential election to help Republican Donald Trump defeat Democratic candidate Hillary Clinton.

Russia continues to deny the accusations.

Following the 2016 election, Obama's outgoing administration expelled dozens of Russian diplomats and sanctioned intelligence services accused of hacking the Democratic National Committee. Putin, who had been anticipating warmer ties with the often effusive Trump and his incoming team, surprised observers by not reciprocating with similar expulsions.

In an interview published in 2019, Putin blamed Obama for "not keeping his promises" during his years in office. On Friday, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov pointed to the Obama administration as the "harbinger" of deteriorating U.S.-Russian ties.

Obama's vice president, Joe Biden, has been declared winner of the 2020 presidential race. Putin is among the shrinking number of world leaders who have yet to congratulate the president-elect in what the Kremlin waved off as diplomatic courtesy in anticipation of official results.

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