The Moscow Times
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Russia Says Better Ties With U.S. Up to Biden

By AFP

January 20, 2021



Joe Biden is set to become the 26th President of the United States on Wednesday. **Jim Watson / AFP**

The Kremlin said Wednesday that any improvement in Moscow's tense relationship with Washington would depend on Joe Biden when he enters the White House.

The United States recently blamed Kremlin-backed hackers for a massive cyberattack that breached government institutions, adding to a long list of grievances plaguing ties between the former Cold War rivals.

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"Russia will live as it has lived for hundreds of years: seeking good relations with the United States," the Kremlin's spokesperson Dmitry Peskov said.

Whether or not Washington works towards achieving the same goal "will depend on Mr. Biden and his team," Peskov added.

Despite disagreements surrounding conflicts in Ukraine and Syria, as well as U.S. election meddling and hacking allegations against Russia, the countries will be in a race to extend a landmark nuclear weapons accord shortly after Biden is sworn in.

The 2010 New START treaty — the last remaining nuclear pact between the countries — limits both sides to 1,500 nuclear warheads each and is set to expire Feb. 5.

Peskov said Wednesday that President Vladimir Putin has "consistently" advocated for the preservation of the treaty and that it was now up to Washington to preserve the pact.

Negotiations under the administration of President Donald Trump stalled as Washington pushed for China to join the agreement even though Beijing said it had no intention of joining.

Biden's aides have indicated that the incoming U.S. leader will work towards extending the treaty, but he also vowed to take a tougher stance on Russia during the campaign.

Peskov said Wednesday that the change in the U.S. presidency will make no difference to Russia and that the Kremlin was not making any preparations for Biden's inauguration.

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