

Russian Envoy Planning U.S. Return After Biden 'Killer' Comment

March 30, 2021



Anatoly Antonov was recalled to Moscow for emergency consultations after U.S. President Joe Biden described President Vladimir Putin as a "killer." **Sergei Savostyanov / TASS**

Russia's ambassador to the United States [plans](#) to return to Washington soon following talks in Moscow on the future of bilateral ties after U.S. President Joe Biden called his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin a "killer."

Ambassador Anatoly Antonov, who was recalled for emergency consultations on March 21, told the state-run TASS news agency Monday that he doesn't anticipate a long stay in Moscow.

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"I expect [to return] in the near future," TASS quoted Antonov as saying without disclosing his intended departure date.

The Kremlin said earlier Monday that Putin has not yet met with Antonov to discuss the state of Russian-U.S. ties in the wake of Biden's comments. Analysts [interviewed](#) by the *Vedomosti* business daily interpreted this as a sign that Putin decided against escalating the crisis.

Russia's upper house of parliament [tweeted](#) that members of its defense and international affairs committees plan to sit down with Antonov on Wednesday afternoon.

Antonov had met with lower-house lawmakers earlier, [saying](#) they shared dialogue-building recommendations "so that our relationship doesn't completely fall into the abyss."

Biden's characterization of Putin as a "killer" in a television interview spurred a terse schoolyard taunt from Putin that translates roughly as "he who said it, did it."

The exchange plunged relations, already suffering from election interference claims and the jailing of poisoned Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny, to a new low.

Antonov's return to Moscow underscored the severity of the diplomatic crisis, with the Kremlin describing Biden's remarks as "very bad."

Russia last summoned its ambassadors in the U.S. and Britain in 1998 over NATO air strikes against Iraq. Putin had held back on recalling Russia's U.S. envoy after the White House warned of repercussions for annexing Crimea from Ukraine in 2014.

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