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Putin Won't Congratulate Trump Just Yet, Top Spokesman Says

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Sergei Savostyanov / TASS

Russian President Vladimir Putin does not plan to offer his congratulations to Donald Trump, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Wednesday, as the former U.S. president was on the cusp of securing a second term in the Oval Office.

"I'm not aware of any plans by the president to congratulate Trump," Peskov told reporters shortly after Trump claimed a "magnificent" victory over his Democratic opponent and U.S. Vice President Kamala Harris.

"Let's not forget that we're talking about an unfriendly country that's both directly and indirectly involved in a war against our nation," he added.

Moscow has designated dozens of countries as "unfriendly" over actions it considers hostile to Russia's interests, including economic sanctions and support for Ukraine as it defends itself against invading Russian forces.

“Since the United States fuels and participates in this conflict, then yes the United States is capable of changing the trajectory of this foreign policy,” Peskov said, referring to the ongoing war in Ukraine. “Whether it will be done and how it will be done, you and I will see after [Trump’s inauguration in] January.”

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While the Kremlin leader remains “open” to having contact with Trump, Peskov said that authorities in Russia “shouldn’t be the ones to ask” about making the first steps toward establishing contact.

Later on Wednesday, the independent news website Vyorstka, citing anonymous sources close to the Kremlin, reported that Putin and other Russian officials extended their “unofficial” congratulations to Trump “through acquaintances” in the Russian Foreign Ministry.

“There is hope, first of all, for a reduction in aid to Ukraine,” one of the sources was quoted as saying. “Trump is certainly much more capable of making a deal, and one that is better for us, than Harris.”

The Kremlin later denied that report.

Meanwhile, in Kyiv, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky was quick to congratulate Trump on an “incredible election victory” and commended him for his “commitment to the ‘peace through strength’ approach in global affairs.”

On the campaign trail, Trump slammed U.S. President Joe Biden’s handling of the war in Ukraine and claimed that, had he still been in office, Russia would never have launched its full-scale invasion.

Claiming that he has a “good relationship” with both Putin and Zelensky, Trump promised to end the war in Ukraine before being sworn into office if elected to a second term. Part of his peace plan would force Kyiv to cede land to Russia.

Peskov on Wednesday described Trump’s call for peace as an “important statement,” but stressed that Moscow would still “draw from” statements issued by the Biden administration until the next president takes office in early January.

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