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Russian Officials Cautiously Welcome Donald Trump's Re-Election

By Moscow Times Reporter

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Mikhail Metzel / TASS

Donald Trump claimed a "magnificent" victory over Kamala Harris in the fight for the presidency on Wednesday as results put him on the verge of one of the most stunning comebacks in U.S. political history.

A Trump victory holds immense significance not only for Americans, but also for international relations — particularly with Russia.

U.S.-Russia ties have stood at a historic low in recent years amid tensions fueled by the Kremlin's war in Ukraine, sanctions, diplomatic standoffs, and accusations of Moscow's election meddling. But Trump has long expressed admiration for President Vladimir Putin, boasting that he has a "a very good relationship" with the Russian leader.

While Putin has yet to comment on the results of Tuesday's election in the U.S., Kremlin pool

reporters reposted Putin's congratulations he sent to Trump in 2016 following his first presidential win.

Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova told the state-run Rossia 24 TV channel that it was very important that Trump "started talking about how America is sick and that the problems of American society need to be addressed" in his victory speech.

"Those who win are the ones who live with love for their own country, not with hatred toward others," Zakharova also wrote on Telegram.

Throughout his campaign, Trump has indicated he will cut aid to Kyiv in its fight against invading Russian forces.

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Former Russian President Dmitry Medvedev referred to that in a Telegram post, saying: "Trump has one quality that's useful to us. He absolutely hates spending money on various hangers-on and freeloaders — on foolish allies, pointless charity projects and bloated international organizations.

"Toxic Banderite Ukraine falls into that same category. The question is how much Trump will be made to contribute to the war. He's stubborn, but the system is stronger," Medvedev added.

Indeed, most officials in Moscow expressed a wait-and-see approach to Trump's second presidential term.

Valentina Matviyenko, the speaker of Russia's upper house of parliament, the Federation Council, said that Russia was ready for cooperation and dialogue with the new U.S. leadership, but wouldn't expect a sharp change in Washington's policy.

"I don't think there should be heightened expectations. It seems to me that U.S. policy will not change drastically. At least for now, there is not much reason to think otherwise," Matviyenko told reporters as cited by Interfax news agency.

"We are committed to cooperation, we are not inclined toward any kind of confrontation," she said, adding that she hoped that "all the ardent Russophobes who have acted against Russia will leave the White House team."

Russian deputy Leonid Slutsky, the head of the State Duma's Foreign Affairs Committee, suggested that there might be "an opportunity" for relations between Moscow and Washington to improve as "the Republican team does not intend to keep funneling American taxpayers' money into a proxy war against Russia."

"What will Donald Trump's new presidency and the arrival of his team in the White House mean for U.S.-Russia relations? His previous term ended (as often noted) with a record number of anti-Russian sanctions, and the level of cooperation had been reduced practically to zero. And not through our fault. Given the entrenched bipartisan consensus on Capitol Hill against Russia, expecting an immediate thaw or swift reset would be naive," he said in a post

on Telegram.

“Russia has always remained open to dialogue but only on equal, mutually respectful and honest terms,” Slutsky added.

AFP contributed reporting.

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