

Russian-American Relations Under Biden: More of the Same Except for One Thing

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Region: [Russia and FSU](#), [USA](#)

Theme: [Intelligence](#)

Russian-American relations will remain just as bad under Biden as they were under Trump except for the 46th President's desire to extend the New START for another five years as part of an implied nuclear detente with Moscow after his administration also announced that it'll investigate Russia for alleged cyber spying, interfering in last year's elections, poisoning anti-corruption blogged and accused US intelligence asset Navalny, and putting out bounties on American servicemen in Afghanistan.

A Nuclear Detente

The Biden Administration inherited plenty of messes at home and abroad that it plans to clean up during the next four years, but it nevertheless still aspires to continue Trump's policy of unprecedentedly hostile relations with Russia. The only exception to the latter vision is its desire to extend the New START for another five years, which was done not as an olive branch to the Eurasian Great Power, but out of simple pragmatism because the US has its hands full dealing with all sorts of other challenges that it might not be able to pull everything off that it wants to if it's mired in an increasingly intense New Arms Race with Russia too. This nuclear detente of sorts [comes with strings attached](#), however, since the Biden Administration also announced that it'll investigate the Kremlin for alleged cyberspying, interfering in last year's elections, poisoning anti-corruption blogger and accused US intelligence asset Navalny, and putting out bounties on American servicemen in Afghanistan.

Cyberspying

Regarding the first of these allegations, it was the general consensus in the former Trump Administration that Russia was responsible for the SolarWinds cyber breach, [though](#) the Commander-in-Chief at the time publicly speculated that China might have actually been the culprit. As of now, no conclusive evidence one way or another has been publicly presented so it might have even been North Korea for all that anyone knows. Either way, those accusations conformed to the pattern of blaming Russia for everything that goes wrong in the US, which is politically convenient for its [de facto one-party governing elite](#). As is now seen, that won't stop with the advent of a new administration but will likely continue for the indefinite future since the political Russophobes who staff the Biden team have even more of a reason to keep this debunked myth alive. Going forward, it can be expected that they'll blame Russia for any future cyber attacks as well.

Meddling

On the second topic of supposed Russian interference in last year's elections, nothing of

concrete substance has ever been determined. It certainly seems to have been the case that a Russiagate 2.0 narrative was being preemptively manufactured in order to explain the possible scenario of Trump's electoral victory, but the contentious outcome of the vote which decisively pushed Biden ahead in the dead of the night at the very last minute ensured that such a fallback plan didn't have to be relied upon. It might very well be that the Biden Administration amplifies the fake news accusations from last summer about sites such as OneWorld meddling in the vote through purported COVID-19 "disinformation" — [which never happened in reality](#) — in order to artificially produce yet another false pretext for censoring social media, among other dark scenarios. In any case, this is the least original of the strings that Biden is attaching to his implied nuclear detente with Russia.

Navalny

Moving along, the next topic being investigated are the Western Mainstream Media allegations that Russia poisoned [anti-corruption blogger and accused US intelligence asset Navalny](#). This individual recently returned to Russia from Berlin where he was receiving treatment for his mysterious illness, after which he was promptly arrested for violating his probation. The Biden Administration is trying to assemble a so-called "[Alliance of Democracies](#)" to strengthen the US' global network of partnerships in Eurasia, to which end it'll probably seek to portray Navalny as the poster child for generating intense interest among its potential members to work closer together in pursuit of this ideological end. The real purpose, however, is to establish closer socio-political and intelligence ties between NATO, the GCC+ (the "+" refers to Egypt, "[Israel](#)", and Jordan), and the Quad, ideally on an anti-Russian basis. Some of the US' relevant partners like [India](#) and "[Israel](#)" already enjoy excellent and almost allied-liked ties with Russia, however, so this scheme will only go so far with them.

Afghanistan

Finally, the last of the four strings attached to Biden's implied nuclear detente is to investigate last summer's Russian bounty scandal in Afghanistan. [Moscow does indeed have political contacts with the Taliban](#) for pragmatic reasons related to the peace process and countering ISIS' spread in Afghanistan even though the Kremlin officially regards the organization as a banned terrorist group, but it certainly never conspired with it to endanger the lives of American servicemen. The revival of this long-discredited narrative speaks to the Biden Administration's willingness to play the Russian card in the Afghan file for the purpose of delaying, if not reversing to an undetermined but presumably low extent, the former Trump Administration's military drawdown from that country. It shouldn't be taken seriously in any sense other than looked at as a "publicly plausible" pretext for his team to present to the American people for justifying those possible decisions. Even so, it's extremely unlikely that he'll resort to an Obama-like "surge" in that scenario.

Concluding Thoughts

Altogether, it's clear that Biden's implied nuclear detente with Russia comes with four very important strings attached, but the Kremlin is likely to tacitly accept them no matter how much it might publicly grumble about the unnecessary and irrelevant politicization of this important global strategic security decision. The fact of the matter is that when all things are considered, the outcome of extending the New START for another five years far outweighs the other four issues that the US wants to exploit in terms of the overall global good that the former will lead to. It would of course be ideal if the Biden Administration

didn't attach any strings to its implied nuclear detente with Russia, but there was never any realistic chance that it could be any other way, especially since his team is comprised of political Russophobes who just spent the past four years obsessively pushing the discredited fake news infowar narrative that Trump was Putin's puppet. Thus, there was no way that they'd be able to pursue a nuclear detente with Russia without pressuring it elsewhere on false pretexts.

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