

# US-Russia Reset in 2015? Putin Bashing Remains Intense

By [Stephen Lendman](#)

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

Theme: [US NATO War Agenda](#)

*On New Year's eve, Bloomberg's Josh Rogin [headlined](#) "Inside Obama's Secret Outreach to Russia."*

Saying administration officials have been "working behind the scenes for months to forge a new working relationship with Russia..."

At a time Putin bashing remains intense. Blaming him wrongfully for US crimes.

Claiming he "has shown little interest in repairing relations with Washington or halting his aggression in neighboring Ukraine."

Putin wants cooperative relations with all nations "on an equal basis," he said at his yearend press conference.

"(O)n the condition that (Russia's) national interests are respected, in the sphere of security and in the sphere of the economy."

"The problem (with) international relations is that" Washington and EU nations have other ideas.

He defended Russia's Ukraine policy. Going all out to resolve crisis conditions peacefully.

Debunking notions otherwise. Criticizing US hypocrisy. Saying "(t)o take Texas from Mexico is fair, but when we make decisions about our territories, it is unfair."

"I believe we are right in the Ukrainian crisis and our Western partners are wrong."

America's empire of bases is everywhere, he said. "(A)ll over the world, and you're trying to say that we're being aggressive."

America's military budget is over tenfold greater than Russia's. "Do we place our troops at US borders? Who is placing NATO troops, military infrastructure closer to us?"

"Does anyone listen to us, talk to us about it? No, nothing. There is always the same response. It's not your business."

Washington's menacing missile defense system threatens Russia.

"They have been deploying strategic missile defense elements not only on Alaska, but also in Europe, in Poland and Romania, right at our borders," said Putin.

Putin blamed Western countries for Ukrainian crisis conditions. "But for the West's position, there wouldn't be civil war in Ukraine," he said.

The road to peace requires building common humanitarian space. Not walls, he stressed. "Russia pays the cost of remaining a nation, a civilization and a state."

According to Rogin:

"Obama's National Security Council finished an extensive and comprehensive review of US policy toward Russia that included dozens of meetings and input from the State Department, Defense Department and several other agencies, according to three senior administration officials."

"At the end of the sometimes-contentious process, Obama made a decision to continue to look for ways to work with Russia on a host of bilateral and international issues while also offering Putin a way out of the stalemate over the crisis in Ukraine."

One official told Rogin he sees no major reset coming. Washington wants to see what Moscow is "actually willing to do...Regardless of the likelihood of success."

In other words, to what extent can America convince Moscow to bend to its will? Accept Washington rules. Sacrifice Russian interests in the process.

Putin is very clear. So are other key Kremlin officials. Russian sovereignty is inviolable. Too important to compromise.

Relations with other countries must be based on mutual respect for each other's interests. Equal give and take. According to international law.

Not one nation dominating others. Longstanding US policy. Claiming what it says goes. Seeking unchallenged global hegemony.

Staging coups to install subservient regimes. Wars elevating handpicked stooges to power.

Wanting all independent governments ousted. Replaced by pro-Western ones. Especially key rivals China and Russia.

Rogin said John Kerry is Obama's point man. Intended a fall meeting with Putin. Negotiations got to the point of scheduling.

Then "scuttled because (of) little prospect of demonstrable progress." White House officials even approached Henry Kissinger to help, said Rogin.

It's unclear what followed. On the one hand, Kerry and Sergey Lavrov meet often. Maintain ongoing diplomatic relations.

On the other, "Obama and Putin...are known to have an intense dislike for each other and very rarely speak," said Rogin.

In discussions with Lavrov, Kerry floated notions about easing US sanctions, Rogin added. Provided "Russia adher(s) to September's Minsk agreement and ceas(es) direct military support for the Ukrainian separatists."

"The issue of Crimea would be set aside for the time being, and some of the initial sanctions that were put in place after Crimea's annexation would be kept in place."

Administration officials said Washington is "willing to isolate the issues of Donetsk and Lugansk from the issue of Crimea."

"If there was a settlement on Donetsk and Luhansk, there could be a removal of some sanctions while maintaining sanctions with regard to Crimea. That represents a way forward for Putin."

It bears repeating. Washington blames Russia for its own wrongdoing. Its imperial adventurism. Ousting Ukraine's legitimate government. Elevating fascist putschists to power.

Co-opting Ukraine as America's newest colony. A dagger pointed at Russia's heartland. Threatening its security. Obama making outrageous statements.

Saying "Russian aggression in Europe recalls the days when large nations trampled small ones in pursuit of territorial ambitions."

Polar opposite Moscow's policies. Describing America's longstanding agenda. "Trampl(ing)" over one nation after another.

Kerry is testing the waters. Can he get Moscow to bend? How far? Short of mutual cooperation between both nations on equal terms. What Washington never tolerates.

Believing US policies are working. Weakening Russia's economy. Including sanctions. Market manipulated lower oil prices. Attacking the ruble.

One US official told Rogin "(w)e'll see how they feel as their economy continues to deteriorate..."

Putin and Lavrov insist Russia won't roll over for anyone. No nation ever defeated it. Not Napoleon. Not Hitler. Nor will America.

Its policies belie its rhetoric. Its word isn't its bond. The Ukraine Freedom Support Act (UFSA) of 2014 targets Russia.

Authorizing lethal and non-lethal aid. Besides what's already supplied. Approved more sanctions. Other measures targeting Russia's economy.

In mid-December, Obama embargoed Crimea. By executive order "prohibit(ing) the export of goods, technology, or services to Crimea and prohibits the import of goods, technology, or services from Crimea, as well as new investments in Crimea."

(A)uthoriz(ing) the Secretary of the Treasury to impose sanctions on individuals and entities

operating in Crimea.”

Russia’s Foreign Ministry called his action “politicized discrimination.” Against Russia and its people. Lavrov said:

“We have repeatedly stressed that attempts to speak to Russia using the language of ultimatums is totally unacceptable and will yield no results.”

“We are ready to develop mutual and equal relations with all those who show an oncoming willingness to do that.”

“...(E)very nation has the inalienable right to self-determination and the sovereign right to choose its own path of development.” Russia respects this choice.

Containment won’t work,” he stressed. “The White House has set a course for confrontation, blaming Russia for all sins in connection with the Ukrainian crisis that they had provoked to a significant extent.”

US-led NATO shows hostile intentions. “(S)trenghen(ing) (its) military capacity at Russia’s borders.”

Obama irresponsibly includes Russia on his list of global threats. Regime change is a longstanding US policy.

Reset is wishful thinking. Expect no easing of US relations toward Russia ahead.

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