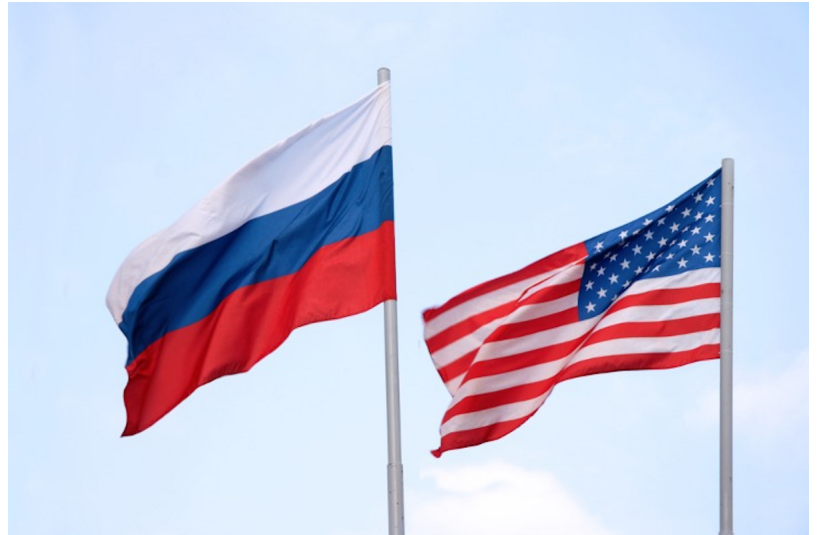




Trump Administration Disbands Russian-focus Government Group

The Trump administration has made another move indicating an American desire to normalize relations with Russia.

The administration recently shuttered a secret group created to drum up policies to exert pressure on Russia regarding Ukraine. The working group, created in March or April, “lost steam in May as it became increasingly clear to participants that [Trump] was not interested in adopting a more confrontational stance toward Moscow,” according to a Reuters [report](#). That development came about three weeks ago, when “most members of the White House National Security Council — including the entire team dealing directly with the Ukraine war — were dismissed as part of a broad purge.” The Russia/Ukraine group was set up by staffers of the National Security Council.



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The Reuters report is based on discussions with three officials. The disbanding of the group illustrates a consistent foreign policy pattern by this administration. That is, it wants to reverse the hostile posture toward Russia of the past administration.

Pro-Russia Overtures

On Monday, during his short appearance at the G7 summit in Banff, Canada, Trump [told reporters](#) it was a mistake to boot Russia out of the group:

I think you wouldn't have a war right now if you had Russia in.... You spend so much time talking about Russia, and [they're] no longer at the table. So it makes life more complicated.

Earlier this month, the administration also [diverted](#) anti-drone weaponry from Ukraine to the Middle East. That move was one of many actions illustrating that America does not see Ukraine's resistance against Russia as a priority. It was also, we [said](#) when it happened, part of America's preparation to aid Israel in its conflict with Iran.

After taking office this year, Trump immediately broke with the Biden administration's silent-treatment policy and instigated a phone call with Russian leader Vladimir Putin. There have been several conversations since. But none has yielded the peace Trump promised (in his typically overconfident manner) to deliver “on day one.” It turns out that getting bitter Eastern Bloc enemies to stop lobbing missiles and drone strikes at each other is beyond the persuasive powers of an American president who



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believes he's mediating a fight between two kids in a park. Someone should inform the president that his chances of success may improve if he refrains from comparing grown men, one of whom is the leader of the largest country by landmass in the world, to a child. Eastern strongmen don't take kindly to pompous Westerners who think they can order them around.

“Extending Commercial Relations”

Nevertheless, Trump has at least broken with what General Michael Flynn has dubbed an “irrational hatred for Russia,” which, despite the screeching and wailing of Democrats and their neoconservative allies in the Republican Party, is not new. As Council on Foreign Relations fellow Walter Russell Mead admitted back in February in a *Wall Street Journal* op-ed, “Trump's Russia policy is, in many respects, mainstream.” Mead went on to [say](#):

Like Gerhard Schröder and Angela Merkel, the president wants to look past political and ideological differences with Moscow to develop mutually beneficial economic links. Like Barack Obama, he believes that antagonism between the U.S. and Russia is an anachronistic echo of the Cold War.

Trump has floated the idea of a U.S.-Russian economic partnership multiple times. And, unless videos of Putin being open to the idea are deepfakes, the Russians are agreeable to this as well. Putin has pointed out that Mother Russia harbors a treasure trove of minerals and rare earths that America is seeking.

As abhorrent as this sounds to the neocons and warmongers in other factions, it aligns with the advice of one of America's most respected presidents. Before concluding his Farewell Address, George Washington dedicated the final portion of his speech to foreign policy. He [said](#):

Observe good faith and justice towards all nations; cultivate peace and harmony with all....
The great rule of conduct for us in regard to foreign nations is in extending our commercial relations, to have with them as little political connection as possible.

His advice would be lumped in the “isolationist” column by the propagandists churning out news articles and op-eds for legacy newspapers, TV networks, and neocon podcasts. But what Washington advocated is what Trump has been doing. *Never mind their politics, let's talk business.* This was especially evident in the president's speech and actions during his tour through the Middle East. While there, he hobnobbed with the leaders of autocracies and came back with trillions of dollars in investment. This is also the idea underpinning America's deeply intertwined, long-standing business ties with China, which is led by a communist oligarchy that has no qualms with putting minorities in gulags, harvesting citizens' organs, or smashing up churches and protests.

Neocon Plan to Break Up Russia?

Some believe the international cohort's anti-Russia campaign is part of a neoconservative plan hatched decades ago to break Russia apart. In 1992, shortly after the official collapse of the Soviet empire, then-Defense Secretary Dick Cheney [said](#) he wanted the rest of Russia dismembered, not just the Soviet Union. Then in 1997, President Jimmy Carter's national security advisor, Zbigniew Brzezinski, [wrote](#) in the Council on Foreign Relations mouthpiece *Foreign Affairs* that Russia should be broken up into three confederations. Some believe what we've been watching is a multi-decade neocon project to surround



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Russia with NATO in order to trigger a reaction that would lead to a war and result in the victorious Western powers getting their wish.

This would explain why major European powers, led by Germany, refuse to let the war in Eastern Europe conclude. As we [reported](#) here in May, Europe seems to be doing more than rebuilding its deteriorating defenses for the sole purpose of repelling a potential Russian invasion. It's egging on the war, pouring money and weapons into Ukraine while threatening to throw deadlier weapons into the mix, including long-range, German-made Taurus missiles.

The “Heartland” Theory

Some trace the Anglo-American internationalists' anti-Russia hysteria back to the Mackinder “Heartland” theory. Halford Mackinder was a British parliamentarian who believed that if the Anglo powers were to continue perpetuating global supremacy in the coming century, the Eurasian powers would have to be prevented from forming an alliance. Mackinder is considered the father of modern geopolitics, and geography served as the foundation for his theory.

In his book *Age of Iron: On Conservative Nationalism*, Colin Dueck described the Mackinder doctrine this way:

Mackinder asked his readers to envision continental Europe, continental Asia, and continental Africa as a single “World Island,” possessing most of the world's population and industrial potential. The core of this world island he called the Heartland, inaccessible to sea power—essentially, Russia, Mongolia, Tibet, and Central Asia, including parts of China and Iran. If the world island were ever united under a single political entity, with a base in the Heartland, then it would possess overwhelming economic and military advantages over the outer crescent of geographically insular maritime powers, such as Great Britain, Japan, and the United States. Mackinder's recommendation was for these maritime powers to encourage the creation of geopolitical buffer zones, for example in Eastern Europe.

To some, Mackinder's prediction has been coming to fruition. As Dueck [noted](#):

The Indo-Pacific, rather than Europe's Western half, is increasingly the focus of the world's greatest economies, militaries, and geopolitical ambitions. In particular, the dramatic long-term growth in China's economic capabilities allows it to build greater diplomatic and military assets.

Dueck concluded:

This long-term power shift has profound implications for America's interests, its allies, its primacy, and indeed the very idea of liberal world order.

Interestingly, while most analysts have focused on the Mackinder doctrine's impact regarding the West's anti-Russia campaign, it seems logical to wonder if the Iran saga we're watching in real time is part of it as well. Iran is part of the Heartland.



Flipping the Script

Nevertheless, Trump is clearly flipping the script on Russia. And while some may be tempted to embrace this under the misguided notion that Putin is the protector and savior of Western values, that would be delusional. Putin is still an autocrat. He crushes dissent among his people and has had no qualms getting rid of detractors and critics. But, as Trump [pointed out](#) in a speech in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, in May, it's not America's job to "look into the souls of foreign leaders and use U.S. policy to dispense justice for their sins."

Is Trump's new old Russia policy an attempt to break up the budding relationship between the bear and the dragon? If so, it would align with Mackinder's doctrine of preventing an alliance between the nations that make up the Heartland. However, it would also likely align with George Washington's advice to cultivate economic relations with countries despite their politics.



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