

# TRUMP'S BETRAYAL

## TRUMP IS MAKING RUSSIA GREAT AGAIN

**Far from placing “America First,” Trump has enacted a series of policies, committed a slew of blunders, and consistently betrayed our national security in ways that have benefitted no country more than Russia.**

Trump's steadfast deference to Putin undermines American leadership and harms democratic institutions at home and abroad, just as he has legitimized Putin's assault on liberal democracy. And by welcoming Russia's election interference, attacking our transatlantic alliances, and leaving a vacuum in fragile states, Trump does Putin's work for him—at the expense of our national security.

**Trump's constant attacks on our allies have been nothing short of a gift for Putin.** Our allies make us stronger, safer, and more respected around the world. They are the envy of our adversaries and an enduring advantage. But Trump has undermined them at every turn—in the process fulfilling one of Russia's core objectives, especially in Europe.

- During his 2017 Oval Office meeting with Lavrov and Kislyak, Trump reportedly revealed highly classified information regarding efforts to confront ISIS, damaging Israeli counterterrorism sources and methods.
- Later that month at a NATO summit, Trump refused to affirm the United States' commitment to Article 5, NATO's mutual defense pact and cornerstone.
- Senior administration officials have said that Trump repeatedly discussed his desire to withdraw from NATO in 2018—a fear that has prompted strong bipartisan rebukes.
- Trump dragged last summer's NATO summit into chaos by arriving late, insulting allies, and distracting from the goal of countering Russian aggression. The event was characterized as “one of the most divisive summits in [NATO's] 69-year history.”
- Trump then berated NATO ally Montenegro and again cast doubt on America's commitment to Article 5. In recent years, Russia has attempted to destabilize Montenegro, as it has previously done throughout Europe, and continued its

illegal aggression and territorial occupation in non-NATO countries on its border, including Ukraine and Georgia.

- In a call with former British Prime Minister Theresa May in the summer of 2018, Trump again sided with Putin over our allies by disputing British intelligence officials' conclusion that Russia had attempted to carry out an extrajudicial killing on British soil.
- Trump caved to a vast international lobbying effort by lifting sanctions that had been levied on seven Russian oligarchs in January 2019, including Oleg Deripaska, an ally of Putin with ties to former Trump campaign chairman Paul Manafort.
- Trump used NATO's 70th anniversary to bash our allies again, chastising NATO members for being "delinquent" and singling out Germany for "not paying their fair share" in April 2019—common refrains that have eroded trust in the Alliance.
- Days before the G7 summit in August 2019, Trump expressed his desire to welcome Russia back into this group of industrialized nations—even though it continues to illegally occupy Ukraine's sovereign territory. France, Germany, and Britain all vehemently opposed the suggestion.
- Trump's threats to withdraw from the Open Skies Treaty betray our allies and help only Russia. Open Skies allows us to acquire verifiable imagery on military movements throughout Europe and Russia. That is why we and our allies rely on the treaty to shine a light on Russia's aggression—just as we did in Ukraine, where imagery obtained under Open Skies exposed Russia's illegal occupation in the Donbas.

**While tearing down our allies, Trump has been all too quick to laud Putin and his authoritarian leadership, bestowing undue legitimacy in the process.**

- As a candidate, Trump praised Putin—calling him "highly respected in his own country and beyond"—and defended him against credible allegations of murdering journalists by saying, "I think our country does plenty of killing also."
- Shortly after assuming office, Trump reportedly fawned over Putin in a phone call, calling him a great leader and apologizing profusely for not calling him sooner.

- At the June 2019 G20 summit, Trump told a Russian state-media reporter that Putin is a “great guy” and a “terrific person.” The network later aired the exchange, effectively turning Trump’s words into state propaganda.

**Trump’s abdication of global leadership has left a worldwide void that Russia has rushed to fill.** Before the 2016 election, a pro-Russia proxy predicted that if Trump won, Russia would “drink champagne in anticipation of being able to advance its positions on Syria and Ukraine.” Russia has had plenty to celebrate ever since Trump’s victory: Trump has delivered Putin everything he could have hoped for in Syria and Ukraine, and given him the opportunity to expand Russia’s influence outside of these conflict zones to places like Libya, Venezuela, and Afghanistan.

- By conditioning military aid to Ukraine on investigating Trump’s domestic political rival, Trump betrayed American national security, corroded American power, and sent a signal to world leaders that America’s foreign policy is up for sale. No country suffered more from Trump’s betrayal than Ukraine, where Russia continues to illegally occupy its territory and undermine its internal affairs.
- Trump’s decision this month to carelessly withdraw U.S. troops from northeast Syria has allowed Russia to assert itself more prominently in the conflict. Trump’s betrayal of our Kurdish partners signaled that the United States is not a trustworthy ally, and created a glide path for Russia to continue its aggression in Syria and in the region.
- Trump’s feckless approach to Venezuela has allowed Russia to deepen its influence over both the country’s economy and its strongman, Nicolás Maduro.
- Trump’s failure to develop a coherent Libya policy has allowed Russia to expand its influence in Libya. In April 2019, Trump seemingly reversed U.S. policy by lauding Libyan General Khalifa Haftar—the man responsible for leading an assault against the U.S. recognized government in Tripoli—shortly before voting alongside Russia to veto a UN resolution to halt the fighting.
- Trump’s sudden torpedoing of peace talks in September 2019 handed Russia an opportunity to take on a greater leadership role in Afghanistan. Putin has seized that chance by undermining the authority of Afghan President Ashraf Ghani and supporting opposition figures, including the Taliban. Putin’s involvement weakens the prospects for peace—and reduces the chances that any future peace would advance U.S. interests.

**Trump has repeatedly demonstrated a willingness to help Moscow undermine our own elections.**

- In a July 2016 news conference, then-candidate Trump infamously invited Russia to interfere in the 2016 election on public television, imploring: “Russia, if you’re listening, I hope you’re able to find the 30,000 emails that are missing.”
- During a meeting with Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov and then-Russian Ambassador Sergey Kislyak in the Oval Office in May 2017, Trump reportedly told Lavrov and Kislyak that Russian interference in U.S. elections does not concern him.
- At a press conference during the July 2018 U.S.-Russia summit in Helsinki, Trump publicly sided with Putin over the United States when he rejected the U.S. Intelligence Community’s conclusion that Russia interfered in the 2016 election.
- By resurfacing a debunked conspiracy theory during his July 25 phone call with Ukrainian President Zelensky, Trump lent credence to the lie that Russia did not interfere in the 2016 election—a conspiracy that benefits Russia, Trump, and no one else.