

Putin Says Relations With U.S. Must Be Based on Mutual Respect

By [The Moscow Times](#)

November 19, 2014



Russian President Vladimir Putin (2nd R, front), Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov (R, back) and new U.S. ambassador to Russia John Tefft (L) attend a ceremony to hand over credentials at the Kremlin in Moscow on Nov. 19, 2014.

President Vladimir Putin said Wednesday that Russia was ready for cooperation with the United States, provided it was based on respect for each others' interests and non-interference in internal affairs.

Putin, who has fiercely criticized Washington over the crisis in Ukraine that has strained U.S.-Russian relations, spelled out his basic terms for better ties after receiving the credentials of the new U.S. Ambassador to Russia, John Tefft.

Putin and Tefft briefly stood side by side, posing for photographers, but said little to each other at a Kremlin ceremony where several other envoys also handed the president their credentials.

"We are ready for practical cooperation with our American partners in different fields, based on the principles of respect for each others' interests, equal rights and non-interference in internal matters," Putin later told the ceremony.

"We are working on the assumption that Russia and the United States bear special responsibility for upholding international security and stability, and counteracting global challenges and threats."

Putin's remarks echoed earlier comments he has made on relations with Washington, which he has accused of trying to dominate world affairs and prevent Russia increasing its global influence.

The United States and the European Union have imposed sanctions on Russia over its policies in Ukraine, where separatists have risen up against government forces in the east.

U.S. President Barack Obama warned on Sunday that Russia would remain isolated by the international community if Putin continued to violate international law in Ukraine. Putin has dismissed such criticism and blames the crisis on the West.

Moscow approved the appointment of Tefft even though Russian officials said privately he was not entirely to their liking.

Tefft was the United States' Ambassador to Georgia during its short war with Russia in 2008 and was the U.S. envoy to Ukraine for nearly four years until July last year. He was deputy chief of mission in Moscow in the second half of the 1990s.

The previous ambassador, Michael McFaul, left Russia in February after two years marked by controversy and tension.

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