

## SPAT OVER ELECTION HACKING JOINS LIST OF RUSSIA-US FEUDS

**WASHINGTON:** US relations with Moscow during and after the Cold War have been marred by diplomatic dustups ranging from espionage scandals to an Olympics boycott. Current tensions, highlighted by President Barack Obama's decision to impose sanctions and expel 35 Russian diplomats, are exceptional because they stem from US allegations of Russian cyber meddling in the presidential election and because they are playing out during a White House transition. They also coincide with a collapse of military-to-military relations and nervousness in Europe over Russia's annexation of Crimea and aggression in eastern Ukraine.

Some of the more significant episodes of the past three decades: **MAY 2013:** A US diplomat was expelled after the Kremlin's security services said he tried to recruit a Russian agent, and they displayed tradecraft tools that seemed straight from a spy thriller: wigs, packets of cash, a knife, map and compass, and a letter promising millions for "long-term cooperation." The FSB, the successor agency to the Soviet-era KGB, identified the diplomat as Ryan Fogle, a third secretary at the US Embassy in

Moscow. The Fogle case was a reminder that years after the Cold War ended with the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Russia and the United States still spy on each other and maintain active counterespionage operations.

**DECEMBER 2012:** President Vladimir Putin signed into law a ban on adoptions of Russian children by American citizens. The ban was a blow to US-Russian diplomatic relations and was imposed in response to Russian accusations of abuses of adopted Russian children in the United States. It was included in a broader Russian law retaliating for US passage of the Magnitsky Act, an effort to punish Russian human rights violators.

**JULY 2010:** In the biggest spy swap since the Cold War, 10 confessed Russian agents who infiltrated suburban America as "sleeper" agents were ordered deported in exchange for four people convicted of betraying Moscow to the West. The agents, many speaking in heavy Russian accents despite having spent years in the US, pleaded guilty to conspiracy, were sentenced to time served and were ordered out of the country. The 10 were

accused of embedding themselves in ordinary American life while leading double lives complete with false passports, secret code words, fake names, and encrypted radio.

**FEBRUARY 2001:** A veteran FBI counterintelligence agent, Robert P. Hanssen, was arrested and charged with committing espionage for Russia and the former Soviet Union by providing highly classified national security information to intelligence officers assigned to the Soviet embassy in Washington. In the aftermath, the US expelled 50 Russian diplomats. The FBI has called Hanssen the most damaging spy in the bureau's history.

**FEBRUARY 1994:** The US expelled Russian senior intelligence officer Alexander Lysenko, saying he was in a position to be responsible for the spying of CIA agency Aldrich Ames. This was just days after Ames and his wife, Rosario, were arrested on charges of selling secrets to Moscow from at least 1985 to 1993. Even in expelling Lysenko, the administration of President Bill Clinton softened the blow by emphasizing the importance of strong ties with Russia and the continuation of reforms under Boris

Yeltsin, who was seen as key to Russia's move toward democracy.

**OCTOBER 1986:** In one of the more memorable tit-for-tat expulsions for alleged espionage activities, President Ronald Reagan ordered 55 Soviet diplomats in Washington and San Francisco to leave the U.S., shortly after expelling 25 others from the Soviet mission to the United Nations. The Soviets retaliated each time, kicking out American diplomats and announcing that the US missions in Moscow and Leningrad could no longer employ Soviet workers.

**MARCH 1980:** In response to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979, President Jimmy Carter announced the United States would boycott the Summer Olympic Games scheduled to be held in Moscow. He acted when the Soviets refused to comply with Carter's ultimatum for the withdrawal of their troops from Afghanistan by February. The Soviets retaliated by leading a communist-bloc boycott of the 1984 Summer Olympic Games held in Los Angeles. The Soviet army did not leave Afghanistan until 1989. —AP



A police car guards at the entrance of Killenworth, an estate built in 1913 for George du Pont Pratt and purchased by the former Soviet Union in 1951, in Glen Cove, New York on Friday. Killenworth is one of two Russian compounds in Glen Cove with Norwich House, nearby, being closed to Russian officials as part of the sanctions ordered by US President Barack Obama in retaliation for suspected Russian hacking during the US elections. —AFP

## RUSSIA, BRUSHING OFF OBAMA, LOOKS TO FRIENDLIER TRUMP

### STUNNING EMBRACE OF LONG-TIME US ADVERSARY

**HONOLULU:** Stung by new punishments, Russia is looking straight past President Barack Obama to Donald Trump in hopes the president-elect will reverse the tough US stance toward Moscow of the last eight years. In a stunning embrace of a longtime US adversary, Trump is siding with Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Whether Trump steers the US toward or away from Russia upon taking office is shaping up as the first major test of his foreign policy disposition and his willingness to buck fellow Republicans, who for years have argued Obama wasn't tough enough. Now that Obama has finally sanctioned Russia over hacking allegations, Putin has essentially put relations on hold till Trump takes over.

"Great move on delay (by V. Putin)," Trump wrote Friday on Twitter. "I always knew he was very smart!" He was referring to Putin's announcement that Russia won't immediately retaliate after Obama ordered sanctions on Russian spy agencies, closed two Russian compounds and expelled 35 diplomats the US said were really spies. Though Putin reserved the right to hit back later, he suggested that won't be necessary with Trump in office.

Brushing off Obama, Putin said Russia would plan steps to restore US ties "based on the policies that will be carried out by the administration of President D. Trump." Not only would Russia not

kick Americans out, Putin said, he was inviting the kids of all US diplomats to the Kremlin's New Year's and Christmas parties. "At this point, they're trolling Obama," said Olga Olikier, who directs the Russia program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

The Obama administration said it had seen Putin's remarks but had nothing more to say. Trump's move to side with a foreign adversary over the sitting US president was a striking departure from typical diplomatic practice. In a sign he wanted maximum publicity, Trump pinned the tweet to the top of his Twitter page so it would remain there indefinitely.

Russia denies the US intelligence community's assessment that in an attempt to help Trump win the presidency, Moscow orchestrated cyber breaches in which tens of thousands of Democrats' emails were stolen and later made public. Trump, too, has refused to accept that conclusion and insisted the country should just "move on," though he has agreed to meet next week with intelligence leaders to learn more.

Notably, after the US on Thursday issued a report it said exposed Russia's cyber tactics, Putin's aides didn't offer any specific rebuttal. The report included detailed technical information like IP addresses and samples of malware code the US said Russia uses. One utility company,

Burlington Electric Department in Vermont, reported Friday that it had detected the malware on a company laptop that was not connected to its grid systems. Burlington said, "We took immediate action to isolate the laptop and alerted federal officials of this finding."

There's little certainty about how Trump will actually act on Russia once he takes office Jan. 20. Though he's praised Putin as a strong leader and said it would be ideal for the two countries to stop fighting, he also suggested this month the US might mount a new nuclear arms race, triggering fresh anxieties about a return to Cold War-style tensions.

Ambassador Michael McFaul, Obama's former envoy to Russia, said while Trump has defined his top objective as "getting along with the Kremlin," Putin has higher goals, including the lifting of economic sanctions and, ideally, US recognition of Russia's annexation of Crimea.

"Obviously, Putin's not responding because he's waiting for Jan. 20," McFaul said in an interview. "He's got these much more important objectives to him than getting into a tit-for-tat response with the outgoing administration."

Trump's warm outreach to Putin, combined with picks for secretary of state and national security adviser who are seen as friendly to Russia, have left hawkish Republicans with a particularly unpleasant choice: look hypocritical for backtracking on their own tough talk, or risk a public rift with their party's new president.

In the House, many Republicans who have long called for tougher sanctions have been silent or vague about Obama's penalties and Trump's positions. But a handful of GOP senators have shown they have no intentions of letting up pressure on the Kremlin.

"We intend to lead the effort in the new Congress to impose stronger sanctions on Russia," said Republican Sens. John McCain of Arizona and Lindsey Graham of South Carolina. McCain, who chairs the Senate Armed Services Committee, scheduled a hearing next week on "foreign cyber threats" in an attempt to further spotlight Russia's actions.

Even if Trump opts to pull back Obama's sanctions and overlook hacking allegations, he may find rapprochement with Russia isn't that simple. The past two presidents both tried to reach out to Russia early in their terms but left office with relations in no better shape.

Though Trump has suggested the US and Russia should align strategies in Syria by focusing on their mutual enemy, the Islamic State group, Russia's military campaign has almost exclusively targeted American-backed Syrian rebels, the US has said. Nor is it clear whether Trump and Putin share a common approach to Europe's security issues. And if Trump follows through on his vow to renegotiate the Iran nuclear deal, he won't find a receptive audience in Moscow. Putin's government brokered the deal with the US, Iran and other world powers and has no intention of slapping sanctions back on Iran. — Reuters

## GRAND OLD PARTY? TRUMP REMAKING GOP IN HIS IMAGE

**WASHINGTON:** For eight years, a leaderless Republican Party has rallied around its passionate opposition to President Barack Obama and an unceasing devotion to small government, free markets and fiscal discipline.

No more. On the eve of his inauguration, Donald Trump is remaking the party in his image, casting aside decades of Republican orthodoxy for a murky populist agenda that sometimes clashes with core conservative beliefs. Yet his stunning election gives the GOP a formal leader for the first time in nearly a decade. The New York real estate mogul becomes the face of the party, the driver of its policies and its chief enforcer.

Despite their excitement, Republican loyalists across the country concede that major questions remain about their party's identity in the age of Trump. The simple answer: The modern-day Republican Party stands for whatever Trump wants it to. "He's a sometime-Republican," American Conservative Union Chairman Matt Schlapp said. "Donald Trump was elected without having to really put all the details out on all these questions. We are going to see in the first six months how this plays out. Does government get bigger or does it get smaller?"

Trump is eyeing a governing agenda that includes big-ticket items that Schlapp and other conservative leaders would fight against under any other circumstances. Yet some see Trump's agenda as more in line with the concerns of average Americans, which could help the party's underwhelming public standing and keep them in power. The president-elect initially promised a massive infrastructure spending bill to update the nation's roads and bridges, an investment that could dwarf the infrastructure spending Republicans opposed when it appeared in Obama's 2009 stimulus package. Trump has also vowed to put the federal government in the child care business by allowing parents to offset child care costs with tax breaks. And he has railed against regional trade deals and

threatened to impose tariffs on some imports, a sharp break from the free-market approach that has defined Republican policies for decades.

"From a policy perspective, he might be one of the more flexible Republican presidents. He's just not encumbered with 30 years of Republican ideology," said veteran Republican operative Barry Bennett, a former Trump adviser.

"If there's a win involved, he's interested," Bennett said. Republicans in Congress and elsewhere have expressed some hesitation, but most appear to be willing to embrace the incoming president's priorities - at least at first. There are indications that Trump may initially avoid issues that would divide his party. That's according to Trump's incoming chief of staff, Reince Priebus, who said in a recent radio interview that the new administration will focus in its first nine months on conservative priorities like repealing Obama's health care law and rewriting tax laws.

In a post-election interview with The New York Times, Trump acknowledged that he didn't realize during the campaign that New Deal-style proposals to put people to work building infrastructure might conflict with his party's small-government philosophy.

"That's not a very Republican thing - I didn't even know that, frankly," Trump said. Trump's confusion can be forgiven, perhaps, given his inexperience in Republican politics. He was a registered Democrat in New York between August 2001 and September 2009. And once he became a Republican, his political views were shaped from his perch in New York City, where the Republican minority is much more liberal - particularly on social issues - than their counterparts in other parts of the country.

Trump said he was "fine" with same-sex marriage in a post-election interview in November, for example. And while he opposes abortion rights, he supported Planned Parenthood's non-abortion-related women's health services throughout his campaign. —AP



**WASHINGTON:** In this Nov 10, 2016 file photo, President-elect Donald Trump (center) walks with Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell of Ky after a meeting on Capitol Hill in Washington. — AP

## KENNEDY KIN'S MURDER CONVICTION REINSTATED

**NEW YORK:** Connecticut's top court reinstated Friday the murder conviction of a nephew of the slain Robert F. Kennedy over the beating death of a 15-year-old girl more than four decades ago. In a 4-3 decision, a divided Connecticut Supreme Court ordered a lower court to reject an appeal by Michael Skakel, a nephew to Kennedy through the late attorney general's widow Ethel.

Defense attorney Hubert Santos did not immediately respond to requests for comment. Skakel was found guilty in 2002 of murdering Martha Moxley when both were just 15 years old in 1975.

But Skakel was released in 2013 on \$1.2 million bail after a judge granted him a new trial based on claims that he was inadequately represented by his attorney at the time. The Connecticut high court, however, concluded that Skakel's trial attorney "rendered constitutionally adequate representation."

Moxley's body was found under a tree after a pre-Halloween party on the Skakel family's Belle Haven estate. There were no witnesses to the murder and no hard forensic evidence. A golf club used in the murder was later traced to a set

once owned by Skakel's late mother.

The prosecution's case was based largely on the testimony of people who said they heard Skakel confess and boast that his famous family connections would prevent him from being brought to justice. The Skakel family spent years, and millions of dollars, appealing the guilty verdict. — AFP



**STAMFORD:** This file photo taken on November 21, 2013 shows Michael Skakel as he is granted bail at Stamford Superior Court in Stamford, Connecticut. — AFP

## SHOOTINGS DRIVE UP NUMBER OF POLICE KILLED IN LINE OF DUTY

**NEW YORK:** Ambushes in Dallas and Baton Rouge, Louisiana, and other shootings around the country led to a sharp increase in the number of police killed in the line of duty this year. From Jan 1 through Wednesday, 135 officers lost their lives. Some died in traffic accidents, but nearly half were shot to death. That's a 56 percent increase in shooting deaths over the previous year.

Of the 64 who were fatally shot, 21 were killed in ambush attacks often fueled by anger over police use of force involving minorities. "We've never seen a year in my memory when we've had an increase of this magnitude in officer shooting deaths," said Craig Floyd, president and chief executive of the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund. "These officers were killed simply because of the uniform they wear and the job they do. This is unacceptable to the humane society that we are."

In Dallas, a sniper on July 7 attacked at the end of what had been a peaceful rally against police brutality. He killed five law enforcement officers and wounded nine others - the largest death toll among law enforcement from a single event since the 9/11 attacks, which killed 72 officers. Months later, Dallas

businesses and residents still display blue ribbons and banners declaring, "We support our Dallas police officers."

But even amid community support, the police department remains unsettled. Hundreds of officers have retired or left the force over the past six months as the city struggles to find a way to increase pay and save a failing police and fire pension system. Former Chief David Brown, who became a national figure in the aftermath, was among those who opted to retire. And interim Dallas Police Association president Frederick Frazier said that morale is "almost nonexistent."

"A lot of us are going through the motions at work. We're hoping things will get better with our struggle," he said. Frazier added that the attack was a "game changer. It changed the perception of law enforcement. It reversed the role after Ferguson. We were the pursuer and now, we're being pursued."

Less than two weeks after the Dallas attack, a lone gunman in Baton Rouge shot and killed three officers and wounded three others outside a convenience store in the weeks after a black man, 37-year-old Alton Sterling, was shot and killed by police during a struggle. —AP