



How's That Reset Going, Hillary?

Five Years Ago Today, Hillary Clinton And The Obama Administration Pledged To “Press The Reset Button” With Russia – How's That Going?

FLASHBACK: FIVE YEARS AGO TODAY, HILLARY CLINTON SPEARHEADED THE “RESET” WITH RUSSIA

Five Years Ago Today, Then-Secretary Hillary Clinton Presented Her Russian Counterpart With A “Reset” Button Illustrating The Administration’s Desire To “Press The Reset Button” With Russia. “Russian media has been poking fun at US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton after she gave her Russian counterpart a ‘reset’ button with an ironic misspelling. Clinton's gift to Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov at their meeting in Geneva on Friday evening was meant to underscore the Obama administration's readiness to ‘to press the reset button’ in ties with Moscow. But instead of the Russian word for ‘reset’ (perezagruzka) it featured a slightly different word meaning ‘overload’ or ‘overcharged’ (peregruzka).” (“Russian Media Teases Clinton Over ‘Reset’ Button,” [Agence France-Presse](#), 3/6/09)

- **Clinton, 2009: “We’re Going To Hit The Reset Button And Start Fresh Because Clearly The Obama Administration Believes That There Are A Number Of Important Areas To Discuss With The Russians.”** NPR’s MICHELE KELEMEN: “Madam Secretary, you’ve exchanged letters, you met briefly in Egypt this week already with Sergey Lavrov, but this is going to be your first lengthy meeting with the Russian foreign minister tonight. How do you set the tone, because as you know your predecessor had quite a testy relationship with him?” HILLARY CLINTON: “Well, we’re going to hit the reset button and start fresh because clearly the Obama administration believes that there are a number of important areas to discuss with the Russians. We’re just at the beginning of this discussion, but I’m looking forward to it.” (Michele Kelemen, “Clinton Says She’ll Hit ‘Reset Button’ With Russia,” [NPR](#), 3/6/09)

But Clinton’s Reset Got Off To A Rocky Start

The Wall Street Journal Headline: “U.S. Gift Turns Into Gaffe” (Jay Solomon, “U.S. Gift Turns Into Gaffe,” [The Wall Street Journal](#), 3/6/09)

Clinton Had An Embarrassing Moment When She Presented A Gift To The Russian Foreign Minister That Was Meant To Display The Russian Word For “Reset.” “Secretary of State Hillary Clinton had an embarrassing moment when she presented a gift to Russian foreign minister Sergei

Lavrov that was intended to display the Russian word for 'reset' -- a reference to Vice President Joe Biden's statement that the U.S. wants to reset relations with Russia." (Jay Solomon, "U.S. Gift Turns Into Gaffe," [The Wall Street Journal](#), 3/6/09)

- **"It Didn't Quite Work Out As She Planned."** (David S. Cloud, "Video: Wrong Red Button," [Politico](#), 3/6/09)

To Clinton's "Clear Surprise," The "Reset" Button She Presented Contained A Translation Error.

"She handed him a palm-sized box wrapped with a bow. Lavrov opened it and pulled out the gift—a red plastic button on a black base with a Russian word 'peregruzka' printed on top. 'We worked hard to get the right Russian word. Do you think we got it?' Clinton said as reporters, allowed in to observe the first few minutes of the meeting, watched. 'You got it wrong,' Lavrov said, to Clinton's clear surprise. Instead of 'reset,' he said the word on the box meant 'overcharge.'" (David S. Cloud, "Video: Wrong Red Button," [Politico](#), 3/6/09)

- **Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov: "You Got It Wrong."** "Lavrov, who never misses an opportunity for a diplomatic jab, bluntly said, 'You got it wrong.' The word, he pointed out, was two letters off -- it should have been 'Perezagruzka.' What was there, he added, actually means 'overcharge.'" (Glenn Kessler, "Clinton 'Resets' Russian Ties—And Language," [The Washington Post](#), 3/7/09)

And Now Her Reset – And Association With Obama's Foreign Policy – Is Haunting Her Potential 2016 Campaign

Politico Headline: "Hillary Clinton's Ukraine—And 2016—Problem" (Maggie Haberman, "Hillary Clinton's Ukraine—And 2016—Problem," [Politico](#), 3/3/14)

The Crisis In Ukraine Underscores Clinton's Dilemma As She Looks Toward A 2016 Run:

"Separating From The White House Is A Very Difficult Proposition, If It's Possible At All." "Twelve years later, Clinton is inextricably tied to another administration over which she yielded only partial influence. And as President Barack Obama grapples to resolve the expanding crisis in Ukraine, the situation underscores Clinton's dilemma as she looks toward a potential presidential run in 2016: Separating from the White House is a very difficult proposition, if it's possible at all." (Maggie Haberman, "Hillary Clinton's Ukraine—And 2016—Problem," [Politico](#), 3/3/14)

- **Today, Clinton Is "Inextricably Tied" To The Obama Administration.** "Twelve years later, Clinton is inextricably tied to another administration over which she yielded only partial influence. And as President Barack Obama grapples to resolve the expanding crisis in Ukraine, the situation underscores Clinton's dilemma as she looks toward a potential presidential run in 2016: Separating from the White House is a very difficult proposition, if it's possible at all." (Maggie Haberman, "Hillary Clinton's Ukraine—And 2016—Problem," [Politico](#), 3/3/14)

Politico's Mike Allen: Clinton Was The Face Of The Administration's Russia "Reset." MIKE ALLEN:

"Willie, it was Senator Clinton, Secretary Clinton, who was the face of the 'reset.' You guys will remember we saw this on 'Morning Joe' back in 2009, in her second month in office. She was in Moscow at one of her first trips and she presented the Russian Foreign Minister with an actual gift wrapped red 'reset' button." (MSNBC's "Morning Joe," 3/4/14)

- **"The Conflict Is Another Instance In Which Clinton Is Tethered To The Administration's Decisions Heading Into 2016."** "Either way, the conflict is another instance in which Clinton is tethered to the administration's decisions heading into 2016 — more so than any other Democrat, with the possible exception of Vice President Joe Biden, who would be a heavy underdog against Clinton." (Maggie Haberman, "Hillary Clinton's Ukraine—And 2016—Problem," [Politico](#), 3/3/14)

“I Think Russia Is The Single Most Substantive Issue That She Failed At From Conception To Implementation,’ Argued Political-Risk Expert Ian Bremmer, Of The Eurasia Group.” (Maggie Haberman, “Hillary Clinton’s Ukraine—And 2016—Problem,” [Politico](#), 3/3/14)

CLINTON WASN’T ALONE: THE ENTIRE OBAMA ADMINISTRATION DISMISSED CONCERN OVER RUSSIA JUST TWO YEARS AGO

Obama, In 2012: “And The 1980s Are Now Calling To Ask For Their Foreign Policy Back Because, You Know, The Cold War’s Been Over For 20 Years.” OBAMA: “Governor Romney, I’m glad that you recognize that al-Qaeda’s a threat because a few months ago when you were asked, what’s the biggest geopolitical threat facing America, you said Russia — not al-Qaeda, you said Russia. And the 1980s are now calling to ask for their foreign policy back because, you know, the Cold War’s been over for 20 years.” ([2012 Presidential Debate](#), Boca Raton, FL, 10/22/12)

- **Obama Even Accused Gov. Mitt Romney Of Being “Still Stuck In A Cold War Mind Warp.”** BARACK OBAMA: “So now we have a choice. My opponent and his running mate are new to foreign policy, but from all that we’ve seen and heard, they want to take us back to an era of blustering and blundering that cost America so dearly. After all, you don’t call Russia our number-one enemy—not Al Qaida, Russia—unless you’re still stuck in a cold war mind warp.” (President Barack Obama, [Remarks At The Democratic National Convention](#), Charlotte, NC, 9/6/12)

Biden, On U.S.-Russia Policy In 2012: “On This And Everything Else, President Obama, In My View, Has Demonstrated That He’s Totally In Touch With Our Times.” JOE BIDEN: “Governor Romney, I think, is counting on collective amnesia of the American people. Americans know -- Americans know that we can’t go back to the future, back to a foreign policy that would have America go it alone -- shout to the world you’re either with us or against us, lash out first and ask the hard questions later, if they get asked at all, isolate America instead of isolating our enemies, waste hundreds of billions of dollars and risk thousands of Americans’ lives on a war that’s unnecessary -- and see the world through a Cold War prism that is totally out of touch with the realities of the 21st century. On this and everything else, President Obama, in my view, has demonstrated that he’s totally in touch with our times.” (Vice President Joe Biden, [Remarks At A Campaign Event](#), New York City, NY, 4/26/12)

- **Biden: Gov. Romney “Acts Like He Thinks The Cold War Is Still On” And That “Russia Is Still Our Major Adversary.”** BIDEN: “So-- and the second thing is, Governor Romney’s answer I thought was incredibly revealing. He acts like he thinks the Cold War is still on. Russia is still our major adversary.” (CBS “Face The Nation,” 4/1/12)

Then-Secretary Clinton On U.S.-Russian Relations In 2012: “In Many Of The Areas Where We Are Working To Solve Problems, Russia Has Been An Ally. ... So I Think It’s Somewhat Dated To Be Looking Backwards...” CLINTON: “Well, without getting into the political campaign, because that’s for others to comment on, I think if you take a look at the world today, we have a lot of problems that are not leftovers from the past, but are of the moment. We’ve just been talking about one, namely Iran. And in many of the areas where we are working to solve problems, Russia has been an ally. They’re in the P-5+1 talks with us, they have worked with us in Afghanistan and have been very helpful in the Northern Distribution Network and in other ways. So I think it’s somewhat dated to be looking backwards instead of being realistic about where we agree, where we don’t agree, but looking for ways to bridge the disagreements and then to maximize the cooperation.” ([CNN Interview With Secretary Of State Hillary Rodham Clinton](#), Istanbul, Turkey, 4/1/12)

Then-Sen. John Kerry, Clinton's Successor As Secretary Of State, Mocked Gov. Mitt Romney For Claiming Russia Was A "Geopolitical Foe," Claiming Romney Sounded Like "He's Only Seen Russia By Watching 'Rocky IV.'" JOHN KERRY: "But -- but -- but a Romney/Ryan foreign policy would be anything but funny. Every president of both parties for 60 years has worked for nuclear arms control, but not Mitt Romney. Republican secretaries of state from Kissinger to Baker, Powell to Rice, President Bush, 71 United States Senators all supported President Obama's new START treaty, but not Mitt Romney. He's even blurted out the preposterous notion that Russia is our number one political/geopolitical foe. Folks, Sara Palin said she could see Russia from Alaska. Mitt -- Mitt Romney talks like he's only seen Russia by watching Rocky IV." (John Kerry, [Remarks At Democratic National Convention](#), Charlotte, NC, 9/6/12)

BUT FAST FORWARD: IT'S CLEAR THE CLINTON-OBAMA "RESET" IS "NOT REALLY WORKING OUT WELL"

***The Wall Street Journal*: "One Of The Foreign Policy Priorities Of The Obama Administration Was To 'Reset' Relations With Russia. How's That Working Out?"** "One of the foreign policy priorities of the Obama Administration was to 'reset' relations with Russia. How's that working out? Dmitry Medvedev, the placeholder for Vladimir Putin in the presidency, gave one indication last week. He declared that Russia may deploy 'strike forces' and aim mid-range Iskander missiles at Europe. He also threatened to pull out of the 2010 New Start arms accord, which is supposed to be the hallmark achievement of the 'reset.'" (Editorial, "Our Friends The Russians," [The Wall Street Journal](#), 12/5/11)

CNN's Gloria Borger: Obama And Hillary's Russia Reset Is "Not Really Working Out Well." WOLF BLITZER: "And then President Obama took office in January 2009 and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, they wanted to reset relations with Russia and with Putin." GLORIA BORGER: "How'd that go?" BLITZER: "How's that working out?" BORGER: "Not really, not really working out well." (CNN's "Wolf," 3/3/14)

- **White House Press Secretary Jay Carney, On Whether The Relationship With Russia Is In Worse Condition: "Well, No Question. No Question."** JAY CARNEY: "I'm not minimizing the challenges we face or the disagreements we have with Russia, but I think that it's important not to imagine that everything was harmonious in our relationship with Russia a few years ago and is now lacking harmony of any kind at this time. There's no question that we have a number of disagreements with Russia. We certainly had some under President Medvedev, including over missile defense--" QUESTION: "It worse now." CARNEY: "Well, no question. No question." (White House Press Secretary Jay Carney, [Press Briefing](#), 8/8/13)

***Politico*: The Reset In U.S.-Russian Relations Has "Devolved Into A Chilly Standoff."** "After four years, the much-vaunted reset in U.S.-Russian relations has devolved into a chilly standoff over issues like the Kremlin's support for Syria and an intensifying crackdown on dissent in Russia. Instead, the White House's blunt public announcement Wednesday of the summit's cancellation evoked Cold War-era showdowns. (Josh Gerstein, "President Obama's Russia Reset Unravels," [Politico](#), 8/7/13)

- ***Politico* Headline: "President Obama's Russia Reset Unravels"** (Josh Gerstein, "President Obama's Russia Reset Unravels," [Politico](#), 8/7/13)

And After Recent Events In Ukraine, The Obama Administration Was Criticized For Having A Foreign Policy "Based On Fantasy"

***The Washington Post* Editorial Board: "President Obama's Foreign Policy Is Based On Fantasy"** (Editorial Board, "President Obama's Foreign Policy Is Based On Fantasy," [The Washington Post](#), 3/2/14)

- **“For Five Years, President Obama Has Led A Foreign Policy Based More On How He Thinks The World Should Operate Than On Reality.”** (Editorial Board, “President Obama’s Foreign Policy Is Based On Fantasy,” [The Washington Post](#), 3/2/14)
- **“Unfortunately, Russian President Vladimir Putin Has Not Received The Memo On 21st-Century Behavior.”** (Editorial Board, “President Obama’s Foreign Policy Is Based On Fantasy,” [The Washington Post](#), 3/2/14)

The Wall Street Journal Editorial: “The World Is Full Of Revisionist Powers And Bad Actors Looking To Exploit The Opening Created By Mr. Obama’s Retreat From Global Leadership...” “The world is full of revisionist powers and bad actors looking to exploit the opening created by Mr. Obama’s retreat from global leadership, and Mr. Putin is the leading edge of what could quickly become a new world disorder.” (Editorial “Putin Declares War,” [The Wall Street Journal](#), 3/2/14)

- **“[I]t’s Clear Mr. Putin Believes The American President’s Words Can’t Be Taken Seriously.”** “Mr. Obama and the West must act, rather than merely threaten, because it’s clear Mr. Putin believes the American President’s words can’t be taken seriously.” (Editorial “Putin Declares War,” [The Wall Street Journal](#), 3/2/14)

Facing The Current Crisis In Ukraine, “Obama Is Once Again Finding Himself Portrayed As A Weak Leader,” Outmaneuvered By Putin. “Facing his toughest test yet in Ukraine, Obama is once again finding himself portrayed as a weak leader, outmaneuvered by a wily, opportunistic Russian President Vladimir Putin intent on reviving the United States’ nemesis.” (Steve Holland, “Obama’s Caution In Ukraine May Loom Over Midterm Election,” [Reuters](#), 3/4/14)

- **“The Crisis Has Trained A Harsh Spotlight On Mr. Obama’s Foreign Policy, With Critics Asserting That He Has Been Too Passive.”** (Peter Baker, “Pressure Rising As Obama Works To Rein In Russia,” [The New York Times](#), 3/2/14)

And The Recent Crisis Has Revived Comparisons To “Cold War-Style Tensions”

Russia And The West Are Experiencing “The Most Serious Battle Since The End Of The Cold War For Influence Over Ukraine.” “Russia and the West are locked in the most serious battle since the end of the Cold War for influence in Ukraine, a former Soviet republic with historic ties to Moscow that is a major commodities exporter and strategic link between East and West.” (John Irish And Timothy Heritage, “Russia Rebuffs West On Crimea Amid Paris Talks,” [Reuters](#), 3/5/14)

- **Russia’s Invasion Of Ukraine Has Revived “Cold War-Style Tensions” And Obama Is “At Risk Of Suffering A Blow To His Credibility.”** “With Russia’s incursion into Ukraine reviving Cold War-style tensions, President Barack Obama is at risk of suffering a blow to his credibility at a time when he can least afford it: as he tries to convince voters to stick with his fellow Democrats in congressional elections that will help shape his legacy.” (Steve Holland, “Obama’s Caution In Ukraine May Loom Over Midterm Election,” [Reuters](#), 3/4/14)

“But As An Old Nuclear-Armed Adversary Returns To Cold War Form, The Consequences Seem Greater, The Challenges More Daunting And The Voices More Unified.” (Peter Baker, “Pressure Rising As Obama Works To Rein In Russia,” [The New York Times](#), 3/2/14)

The National Journal’s Ron Fournier: “Vladimir Putin Has Won.” (Ron Fournier, “Putin Has Won On Ukraine: Is He Savvy Enough To Seize Victory,” [The National Journal](#), 3/5/14)

- **“As Things Stand Now In Ukraine, Putin Has Succeeded To Divide His Enemies And Reclaim Soviet-Era Territory For Mother Russia.”** (Ron Fournier, “Putin Has Won On Ukraine: Is He Savvy Enough To Seize Victory,” [The National Journal](#), 3/5/14)