



Rocky Russia Reset

As Obama Prepares To Meet The Press, How Will He Explain His "Rocky" Reset Of Diplomacy With Russia?

OBAMA PROMISED A "RESET" IN RELATIONS WITH RUSSIA – A POLICY THAT'S NOW UNRAVELING

***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)

- **The Obama Administration's Policy Has Been Defined By "Seeking Accommodation With The Russian Leader While Playing Down Issues Of Democracy And Human Rights."** "That's why many Russians expect Mr. Putin will stick with repression and the anti-American policies he has adopted in recent months. If so, it will be time for the Obama administration to set aside its policy of seeking accommodation with the Russian leader while playing down issues of democracy and human rights. The United States must begin to focus on Russians who represent the country's future. Mr. Putin is not among them." (Editorial, "Vladimir Putin's Tears," [The Washington Post](#), 3/6/12)

Secretary Hillary Clinton, In 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)

- **Clinton: "We Want To Reset Our Relationship, And So We Will Do It Together."** "So when Secretary of State Hillary Clinton greeted Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov in Geneva

Friday before sitting down to their working dinner, she was all smiles when she presented him a small green box with a ribbon. ... 'I would like to present you with a little gift that represents what President Obama and Vice President Biden and I have been saying and that is: 'We want to reset our relationship, and so we will do it together.'"' (Jill Dougherty, "Clinton 'Reset Button' Gift To Russian FM Gets Lost In Translation," [CNN](#), 3/6/09)

- **Clinton Even Presented Her Russian Counterpart With A "Reset" Button – A Gift That Ultimately Proved Embarrassing Due To An Accidental Misspelling.** "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)

In 2009, Vice President Biden Told An International Security Conference That The White House Intended To "Press The Reset Button" With Russia. "Vice President Biden told an international security conference here Saturday that the White House wants to 'press the reset button' on one of Washington's biggest challenges: its increasingly troublesome relationship with Russia. Biden ticked off a list of security headaches that the Kremlin has the potential to help or hinder, including the faltering war in Afghanistan and fruitless efforts to persuade North Korea and Iran to forswear nuclear weapons." (Craig Whitlock, "'Reset' Sought On Relations With Russia, Biden Says," [The Washington Post](#), 2/8/09)

Obama's 2012 Campaign Even Mocked Mitt Romney For Being Stuck In A "Rocky IV" "Mind Warp"

Then-Sen. John Kerry Mocked Mitt Romney For Claiming Russia Was A "Geopolitical Foe" By Claiming Romney Sounded Like "He's Only Seen Russia By Watching 'Rocky IV.'" "He went on to criticize Romney for opposing Obama's nuclear arms treaty with Russia, which was backed by an array of former Republican Secretaries of State, and for labeling the nation America's 'number one geopolitical foe.' Kerry argued actions like these reflected an antiquated Cold War mentality. 'Sarah Palin said she could see Russia from Alaska,' he said. 'Mitt Romney talks like he's only seen Russia by watching 'Rocky IV.'"' (Benjy Sarlin, "2004 Revisited: Kerry Rips Romney As Foreign Policy Flip-Flopper," [Talking Points Memo](#), 9/6/12)

- **The Obama Campaign "Stepped Up Its Mockery" By Creating A Fake Movie Poster That Featured Kerry's "Rocky IV" Claim.** "The Obama campaign has stepped up its mockery of Mitt Romney's foreign policy views, continuing a theme rolled out at the Democratic National Convention to portray the Republican candidate, who has limited foreign policy experience, as out of his depth in international affairs. The latest installment: a fake movie poster that uses the line Senator John Kerry debuted in his speech two days ago at the convention, where he compared Mitt Romney's national security ideas to those of Sarah Palin. 'Sarah Palin said she could see Russia from Alaska,' Kerry said on Thursday. 'Mitt Romney talks like he's only seen Russia by watching Rocky IV.'"' (Michael Hastings, "Obama Campaign Debuts 'Rocky IV' Movie Poster," [BuzzFeed](#), 9/8/12)

Obama Even Accused 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)

AFTER MORE THAN FOUR YEARS OF THE SO-CALLED RESET, IT'S OBAMA WHO CLAIMS OUR RELATIONSHIP HAS HIT ROCK BOTTOM

Obama, On Recent Challenges With Russia: "It's Reflective Of Some Underlying Challenges ... There Have Been Times Where They Slip Back Into Cold War Thinking And A Cold War Mentality."

BARACK OBAMA: "And in some ways it's reflective of some underlying challenges that we've had with Russia lately. A lot of what's been going on hasn't been major breaks in the relationship, and they still help us on supplying our troops in Afghanistan; they're still helping us on counterterrorism work; they were helpful after the Boston bombing in that investigation. And so there's still a lot of business that we can do with them. But there have been times where they slip back into Cold War thinking and a Cold War mentality." (NBC's "Tonight Show," 8/6/12)

- **White House Press Secretary Jay Carney, On If The Relationship With Russia Is In Worse Condition Today: "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)

After Four Years, 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, "Obama's Russia Reset Unravels," [Politico](#), 8/7/13)

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

***Politico*: "The U.S.-Russia Relationship Is Now So Frosty That It Didn't Appear The Two Presidents Would Actually Accomplish Enough" To Merit "A High-Profile Meeting."** "National Security Agency leaker Edward Snowden extended his 15 minutes of fame Wednesday, as headlines tied his saga to President Barack Obama's decision to cancel a planned summit meeting in Moscow next month with Russian President Vladimir Putin." "But analysts said the talk of Snowden's role in the cancellation obscured a more basic reality: The U.S.-Russia relationship is now so frosty that it didn't appear the two presidents would actually accomplish enough to merit such a high-profile meeting." (Josh Gerstein, "Obama's Russia Reset Unravels," [Politico](#), 8/7/13)

The Edward Snowden Case Adds To The Damage Of "An Important Relationship Already In Decline." "President Obama canceled an upcoming summit with Russian President Vladimir Putin on Wednesday, a rare, deliberate snub that reflects the fresh damage done by the Edward Snowden case to an important relationship already in decline." (Anne Gearan and Philip Rucker, "Obama Cancels Summit Meeting With Putin Over Snowden Case," [The Washington Post](#), 8/7/13)

- **"Russia's Decision To Grant Temporary Asylum To Edward Snowden Opened A Fresh Wound In Moscow's Battered Relations With The United States."** "Russia's decision to grant temporary asylum to Edward Snowden opened a fresh wound in Moscow's battered relations with the United States, even as it ended the bizarre two-month odyssey that began when the former National Security

Agency contractor leaked details of top-secret U.S. surveillance operations.” (Isabel Gorst and Joby Warrick, “Snowden Granted Asylum In Russia, Leaves Moscow Airport,” [The Washington Post](#), 8/1/13)

Former Clinton Defense Secretary William Cohen, On The U.S.-Russia Relationship: “We May Be At A Low Point Now.” WILLIAM COHEN: “The relationship with Russia doesn’t have to get worse. It has to get better. So, we may be at a low point now. But I think it’s the time that we find ways to make it better.” (NBC’s “Nightly News,” 8/7/13)

NBC’s Andrea Mitchell: Relations With Russia In “Deep Freeze” And “Could Be Headed For Divorce.” NBC’s ANDREA MITCHELL: “President Obama’s relationship with Vladimir Putin was always frosty before Edward Snowden. Now that Snowden has been given asylum in Russia, though, it’s more like a deep freeze. This is not a match made in heaven. Seen in what could charitably be called happier times, the Obama/Putin marriage could be headed for divorce or at least some serious counseling.” (NBC’s “Today,” 8/8/13)

Recent Conflicts Aren’t The First Time Obama’s Russia Reset Has Been Questioned

The Washington Post: “Mr. Obama’s Apparent Faith That Mr. Putin Is Ready To Do Business With Him Is At Odds With The Strongman’s Recent Behavior.” “Mr. Obama’s apparent faith that Mr. Putin is ready to do business with him is at odds with the strongman’s recent behavior — including his abrupt cancellation of a planned visit to Camp David.” (Editorial, “Time For U.S. Leadership On Syria,” [The Washington Post](#), 5/29/12)

In June, Obama And Russian President Putin Engaged In A “Tense Two-Hour Meeting” Over The Conflict In Syria That Ended With Putin Glowering Through Even A Light-Hearted Exchange. “At the end of a tense two-hour meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin, Barack Obama - slumped over and serious - tried to lighten the mood with a joke about their favorite sports. ‘And finally, we compared notes on President Putin’s expertise in judo and my declining skills in basketball,’ the U.S. president told reporters at the G8 summit, after the two men gave formal statements emphasizing their common ground rather than their sharp differences on how to end the Syrian crisis. ‘And we both agreed that as you get older it takes more time to recover,’ Obama said. Putin - who folded his hands and glowered through most of the exchange - was having none of it. He waited for the audience to finish laughing, smiled icily and stuck in his spear.” (Guy Faulconbridge and Timothy Heritage, “Analysis: Putin Basks In Isolation Over Syria As Obama’s Charm Falls Flat,” [Reuters](#), 6/19/13)

- **“The Tense Exchange Between Putin And Obama Marks Full Circle Since The Administration Of The Newly Elected Obama Called For A ‘Reset’ In Ties With Russia In 2009...”** “The tense exchange between Putin and Obama marks full circle since the administration of the newly elected Obama called for a ‘reset’ in ties with Russia in 2009 after a row between the Cold War foes over Russia’s 2008 war against U.S.-ally Georgia. Obama has touted the Russia reset - in which his then Secretary of State Hillary Clinton presented her Russian counterpart with a big red ‘reset’ button - as one of his signature foreign achievements. (Clinton’s aides notoriously mistranslated the button and labeled it ‘overload’ in Russian.)” (Guy Faulconbridge and Timothy Heritage, “Analysis: Putin Basks In Isolation Over Syria As Obama’s Charm Falls Flat,” [Reuters](#), 6/19/13)

“In A Private Conversation About The Planned U.S.-Led NATO Missile Defense System In Europe, Obama Asked Outgoing Russian President Dmitri Medvedev For Space On The Issue.” (Brianna Keilar, “Open Mic Catches Obama Asking Russian President For Space On Missile Defense,” [CNN](#), 3/26/12)

- **Obama To Russian President Medvedev: “After My Election I Have More Flexibility.”** OBAMA: “On all these issues, but particularly missile defense, this, this can be solved but it’s important for him to give me space.” PRESIDENT MEDVEDEV: “Yeah, I understand. I understand

your message about space. Space for you..." OBAMA: "This is my last election. After my election I have more flexibility." MEDVEDEV: "I understand. I will transmit this information to Vladimir." (Jake Tapper, "[President Obama Asks Medvedev For 'Space' On Missile Defense - 'After My Election I Have More Flexibility'.](#)" [ABC News](#), 3/26/12)

- ***The Washington Post*: "Obama's Assurance To Mr. Medvedev ... Raised A Reasonable Question: What 'Flexibility' Will Mr. Obama Be Prepared To Offer On Missile Defense" Given Putin's Opposition.** "Mr. Obama's assurance to Mr. Medvedev, meanwhile, has raised a reasonable question: What 'flexibility' will Mr. Obama be prepared to offer on missile defense, given that Mr. Putin surely will not be satisfied with anything short of scrapping the system or giving Russia a veto over its use?" (Editorial, "President Obama's Bad Bet On Vladimir Putin," [The Washington Post](#), 3/28/12)

In A "Blow" To Obama's Reset And Pro-Democracy Organizations, Moscow Demanded That The U.S. Cease All USAID Operations In Russia. "The United States said Tuesday it is ending the U.S. Agency for International Development's operations in Russia after a Kremlin demand that the aid organization leave the country, dealing a blow to President Barack Obama's policy of 'resetting' relations between Washington and Moscow. State Department spokeswoman Victoria Nuland told reporters that Russia sent a letter last week saying it didn't need Washington's help anymore. She didn't cite a political reason for the closure, but President Vladimir Putin has long complained about U.S. democracy and human rights promotion efforts." ("USAID Work Halted In Russia, Dealing Blow To Obama's 'Reset' In US-Russian Relations," [The Associated Press](#), 9/18/12)