

The United States Ambassador to the United Nations — Nikki Haley at their annual policy retreat to Republicans that Russia remains an adversary, more than a year on from the U.S intelligence agency findings that Russia meddled in the U.S presidential elections.



Russia is not a friend to the U. S. and will not be until its government has “the values that it has,” U.S. Ambassador to the UN Nikki Haley said | Image Press Hearld

“Russia is not our friend,” Haley told GOP lawmakers during a dinner as they worked out their 2018 legislative agenda and drew up a game plan for the upcoming midterm elections at a resort in West Virginia Thursday.

“There may be some things we can work with them on, and we should do that where we can,” Haley [said](#). But she added Russia “will not be our friend as long as their government has the values that it has, and as long as it conducts itself the way it does internationally.”

Haley acknowledged the Kremlin worked to interfere in the election, but she [said](#): “there is no reason to think the Russian interference made any difference between who won and lost.”

“I have no idea what Russia expected from the American elections. But I have to tell you, they are not happy with what they ended up with,” Haley said. “That fact is this: In the last year, this administration has been tougher on Russia than any American administration since Ronald Reagan.”

The U.S. has pushed back against Russian-backed separatists in Ukraine, saying it will [arm](#) Kiev’s forces with anti-tank missiles late last year, Haley pointed out during her 20-minute speech. She also cited the Trump administration’s strike inside Syria against Russia’s ally President Bashar al-Assad.

The Trump administration also [shut more](#) diplomatic sites in the U.S. in 2017 after the Obama administration seized two diplomatic facilities in retaliation for election meddling.

Yet the administration drew criticism early this week after it failed to deploy bipartisan sanctions that Congress passed last summer meant to discourage foreign businesses from

doing deals with Russian defence and intelligence. Some have accused the Trump administration of taking a soft stance against Russia during its first year.

The move would give the Kremlin a “safe space,” wrote former U.S. diplomat Aaron David Miller, on Twitter Tuesday. Instead of activating the sanctions on deadline, the Trump administration [released](#) a list of Russian oligarchs cribbed from Forbes magazine’s 200 richest businessmen in Russia 2017.

Last summer President Donald Trump called the sanctions “seriously flawed” and his administration argued Monday the threat of sanctions was acting as a “deterrent.” Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin [told](#) Congress Tuesday they will see more sanctions “in the near future.”

Trump has praised Russian President Vladimir Putin, called Moscow’s election interference a “hoax” and dismissed investigations of it by Congress and by special counsel Robert Mueller as a political “witch hunt.” Republican perceptions of Putin have been on the rise, [according](#) to polling.

At the beginning of his presidency, Trump called for a reset of U.S.-Russian relations. Yet few gains have been made as Secretary of State Rex Tillerson [pointed out](#) last December.

Relations are not likely to improve quickly. Early this week CIA Director Mike Pompeo [told](#) the BBC he has “every expectation” the Kremlin will attempt to interfere in America’s 2018 midterm elections and that the U.S. will push back.

The U.S., said Haley Thursday, will continue to take a hard stance against “until Russia starts to act like a responsible country.”

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