

Biden in the White House: What it Means for Russian Foreign Policy and for the Russian-US Relations

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Specially for Trialogue Club

From where we came to Joe Biden in Russia

- Lowest level of trust to the “collective West”. Ever
- Lowest influence of what could be called “pro-Western forces”. Ever
- Lowest level of expectations for US politics towards Russia
- Decreasing level of “in field” cooperation (Syria, anti-terrorism)
- Expectation for the new wave of sanctions
- Nearly dismantled arms control agenda.
- Informational wars and some elements of hybrid ones (cyberwarfare at least).

Wow!!!! As Hillary Clinton used to say

What a strange pro-Russian person
Donald Trump was.....

Couple of things to know about modern Russia

- ▶ Clear understanding of new era and “no way back”. Things are developing much quicker than in early 2020.
- ▶ Gambling of towers as a political reality. “Perestroyka 2.0” is dead idea.
- ▶ Anti-elite moods are strong. But against nearly ALL groups of elite.
- ▶ Moderate leftist inclining
- ▶ Media based structured opposition with limited (and decreasing) public representation.
- ▶ Public opinion matters. Probably more that any other time in history.
- ▶ Generational gap exists but there are several “young generations” and they are VERY different.
- ▶ Economy matters but not so much. Economic arguments work poorly.
- ▶ Quite wide spectrum of political debate.
- ▶ Public understanding that not so strong but not so weak.
- ▶ Crimea – is Russia



Who is Joe Biden (conventional wisdom)

- **Rusophobe**
- **Obama's father**
- **Up to his ears in Ukrainian corruption**
- **Hostage of George Soros**
- **Chinese puppet**
- **Hostage of Clinton family**
- **Friend of BLM**
- **Weak and hardly legitimate president**
- **Space-filler for Kamala Harris**
- **Pro-NATO**
- Do you really think Russia could deal with him?
- OK. We also don't
- But than what?
- **In Russia only very selected minority still has the idea that the dialogue with US should be preserved at any cost.**



Easy answer

➤ Joe Biden in the White House does not mean too much

- The problem is that easy answers are rarely correct
- The details matter
- The personalities matter
- ~~Shit~~ Bad things happen and that matters now (sorry)
- **Third parties matter**

Domestic political drivers of attitude towards US

Truly domestic

- Aspirations of some clans (and related towers) for political transferee
- Concept of “Perestroika 2.0” going down
- Crisis of political liberalism. “Beacon of freedom” has gone.... For some time at least.
- **Crisis of the concept of “open” (“integrated”) financial system**

Semi domestic

- Surges in politics towards “the Ukraine”
- Stalemate in Eurasian relations
- Approach to point of no return in gambling with China
- Threshold situation with Turkey

What a surprise....

- ▶ In fact Joe Biden in the White House is a factor in quite a number of important situations in Russia.
- ▶ He is a concealed player in Russian politics. Does he know by the way?
- ▶ Do not tell him he is mostly a factor for a negative attitude. If you want to spoil something in Russia just tell Biden can support.
- ▶ Only Ronald “Dog” Reagan can compete with Joe Biden in sincerity of feelings of Russians.

Small notes

- If we look at the situation in the retrospect we in fact will be able to find that beginning with April at most early May there are no indications that Kremlin regards Trump as better choice.
- All those sentiments are either political phantoms or some Russian conservatives personal illusions and activities.
- Or the desire of selected Russian liberals to find “defeats of Kremlin” everywhere.
- The conclusion that could and should be made:
- Kremlin was tired of Trump who is quite antipode to what Vladimir Putin sees and “ideal partner”
- Kremlin was ready for Joe Biden in the White House long ago.
- **Kremlin is in fact puzzled with the case of legitimacy of new administration**

Even smaller notes

- ▶ What Kremlin could not have been ready for is the procedure violations at the elections and the number of radicals accompanying Joe Biden.
- ▶ What Kremlin looks like also not being prepared for, is the behavior of beloved “European Partners”
- ▶ Kremlin regards the practice of President of nuclear power being installed by (media)corporations as a threat to itself.

Russian cards on the table (not by Agata Christie)

- ▶ No good expectations. Putin's congratulations' telegram is an indication: no hope.
- ▶ Death of Europocentric approach and related energy politics. Big deal in fact.
- ▶ Readiness for practical dialogue. No desire for any "ideologic" matters.
- ▶ Military force is a legitimate instrument in the world of illegitimacies. But for all. Russia has no longer any allergy for use of force outside of its borders. 1990s are over.
- ▶ Little necessity for manifestation of political liberalism (if any) in domestic policies.
- ▶ Caribbean crisis is an acceptable option. But only Biden remembers what nuclear deterrence is

Putin – Biden agenda: points of disagreement and tension

Strong

- Ukraine
- Democracy/minorities/LGBT
- US military pressure
- Cyberwarfare
- Gaz to Europe
- Foreign sponsorship of opposition and NGO.

Enforce cleaning of foreign participation in political transfer

Not so strong

- Arms control
- Environment
- NATO
- Iran deal

Good and bad news

- The good news is that we still have something to talk about
- The bad news is that the “dialogue points” are very low in Russia’s list of priorities
- Except one point
- **And that is Iran**
- If Russia and US can make an working modus operandi (not “good deal”) in Iran case that can give a perspective.

Rest of the garbage.....

Non critical

- Rhetoric

Only some care

- Russian hackers

- Informational sanctions

- Economic sanctions (SWIFT switching off is left)

No news. Idiots, but we can live with that

Critical

- Political interference with cash for opposition

- Attack on LDPR.

Instant conclusion – US behind that

- Ukrainian attack against Crimea

- Cyberattack against government digital systems

- **Oil embargo**

And that would play both ways. Let's make peace in oil

Final observations

- ▶ **Less than no trust.** And no chances to restore it. It is better to forget.
- ▶ Little space for political dialogue. Not wider for expert dialogue except the dialogue between “good old friends” from 1990s.
- ▶ Surrender is not an option (as John Bolton made it). Why and to whom? But one can continue to believe in the mighty liberal forces in elite.
- ▶ And the question is: do you really think that Biden could be elected that way without consent of Kremlin? A good joke.
- ▶ We all now have 4 years to understand which part of this phrase is a joke in fact



Let me speak from my heart....

- ▶ We are all open for substantive cooperation
- ▶ Blah-blah-blah
- ▶ Coronavirus

To commercial

- ▶ Only old good arms control and non-proliferation agendas are left



Thank you for your attention

And take care