

---

Pompeo says Trump wants to improve Russia relations as talks with Lavrov begin in Sochi

---

14/05/2019



US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov have sat down to talks in Sochi, Russia. Although both officials welcomed the chance to thaw Russia-US relations, they have much to discuss first.

Speaking before the meeting on Tuesday, Lavrov stated that *“it is time to build a new, more constructive and responsible”* relationship between Washington and Moscow. *“It’s not destiny that we’re adversaries on every issue,”* Pompeo added, touting the cooperation between both nations on counterterrorism issues.

*“I’m here today because President [Donald] Trump is committed to improving this relationship,”* Pompeo said. *“I hope that we can find places where we have a set of overlapping interests, and can truly begin to build out strong relationships.”*

Despite a warm introduction, both diplomats have a lot to talk about. Nuclear arms control is expected to be near the top of the agenda, following the Trump Administration’s recent withdrawal from the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty, and China’s refusal to participate in a renegotiated pact. Pompeo and Lavrov will likely clash on the current crisis in Venezuela, with Washington lending its support to opposition leader and self-declared interim president Juan Guaido, and the Kremlin sticking by its embattled ally, President Nicolas Maduro.

[Also on rt.com Pompeo ahead of meeting Putin: We need to ‘find a way forward’ in US-](#)

[Russia relations...](#)

Geopolitically, tensions in the Persian Gulf are probably the most pressing issue. As Pompeo and Lavrov prepared to meet, the United States sailed an aircraft carrier group and flew B-52 bombers into the gulf, saying it is to deter an unspecified Iranian plot to *“attack US interests.”* Both the US and Iran have ramped up their rhetoric, with President Trump warning Tehran it will *“suffer greatly”* if it does *“anything,”* and clerical leader Ayatollah Yousef Tabatabai-Nejad stating that the US’ *“billion-dollar fleet can be destroyed with one missile.”*

[READ MORE: NATO ally Spain pulls warship from US strike group ‘to avoid being dragged into conflict with Iran’](#)

With much at stake, Pompeo and Lavrov are slated to meet again at next month’s G20 summit in Osaka, Japan. President Trump announced on Monday that he will meet with Russian President Vladimir Putin at the summit, as well as with Chinese President Xi Jinping. The Kremlin, however, said that no preparations are currently underway as no offer for the presidential meeting has been received.

[Also on rt.com Trump says he will meet with Xi and Putin at G20](#)

---