

Trump Administration Hands Putin Three Major Wins

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Donald Trump's move to sanction the International Criminal Court (ICC) has been welcomed by the Kremlin, it has been reported, amid a suite of measures by the new U.S. administration which could play into [Vladimir Putin](#)'s hands.

Trump's executive order to impose sanctions on the ICC, comes in a week in which Attorney General [Pam Bondi](#) halted a federal law enforcement effort to combat secret influence campaigns by Russia and other adversaries.

The U.S. Justice Department is also disbanding an effort to enforce sanctions and target oligarchs close to the Kremlin.

However, Russia could face tougher U.S. sanctions to push Putin to the negotiating table, Trump's envoy to Ukraine, retired Gen. Keith Kellogg, told *The New York Post*.

Newsweek has contacted the Kremlin for comment.





This image from July 16, 2018 in Helsinki shows Donald Trump (L) and Vladimir Putin. GETTY IMAGES

Why It Matters

The ICC issued an arrest warrant for Putin, accusing him of war crimes, so the Trump administration's sanctions ease pressure on the Russian president. Kremlin propagandists have [welcomed the rhetoric and decisions](#) coming from the new U.S. administration, amid speculation that they may benefit Moscow.

What To Know

After hosting Israel's Prime Minister [Benjamin Netanyahu](#) at the White House, Trump signed an executive order [to sanction the ICC](#), accusing the court of "illegitimate and baseless actions" against the U.S. and Israel.

In May 2024, the Hague-based court has issued an arrest warrant for Netanyahu and then-Defense Minister Yoav Gallant over the war in Gaza.

The Trump decision, which could mean financial and visa restrictions on anyone aiding ICC probes against U.S. citizens or allies, has been condemned by the court and 79 of its signatories who say it could erode international law.

But Moscow has welcomed the move, according to The Moscow Times, which cited a high-ranking Kremlin official as describing it as "great news" and that the ICC "had gotten too arrogant, and now Washington has put them in their place."

One unnamed Russian diplomat told the publication that Trump's move was "a gift to Moscow."

The ICC issued an arrest warrant for Putin and his children's rights commissioner Maria Lvova-Belova for the illegal deportations of Ukrainian children. After the warrant, Putin did not travel to the 2023 BRICS summit in South Africa which is a signatory to the Rome statute governing the court.

Policy Memos

On Wednesday, Bondi issued policy memos that could also have a significant impact on Russia. One memo disbanded the Task Force KleptoCapture instigated by the Biden administration to sanction Kremlin-linked oligarchs and seize their yachts.

Bondi said that the policy which aimed to freeze Russia out from global markets would now be redirected to countering cartels.

The task force will still investigate cases but its work will no longer be centralized at Justice Department headquarters, but there will likely be a decline in targeting Russian figures, Reuters reported.

Another directive by Bondi will halt a federal law enforcement effort to combat secret influence campaigns by Russia and other adversaries like China which try to sow chaos in American politics.

However, it is not all potentially welcome news for Moscow, with Trump's envoy for Ukraine, Keith Kellogg, saying that the Trump administration could increase sanctions on Moscow to end the war it started.

He told *The New York Post* that sanctions enforcement on Russia fell far short of what they could be and

there was room to ratchet them up.

What People Are Saying

President Donald Trump's executive order: "The United States will impose tangible and significant consequences on those responsible for the ICC's transgressions."

Unnamed Kremlin official told The Moscow Times: "The ICC had gotten too arrogant, and now Washington has put them in their place."

Unnamed Russian diplomat to the same publication: "It gives the (Russian) President, his team and his security services more maneuverability when planning travel."

Ret. General Keith Kellogg to *The New York Post*: "You could really increase the sanctions."

What Happens Next

Regarding the measures against the ICC, it is unclear when the U.S. will announce names of people sanctioned or what effect the international condemnation will have on the move.

However, Kellogg's comments suggest that the Trump administration is still considering further sanctions on Russia to move the dial on the war in Ukraine.



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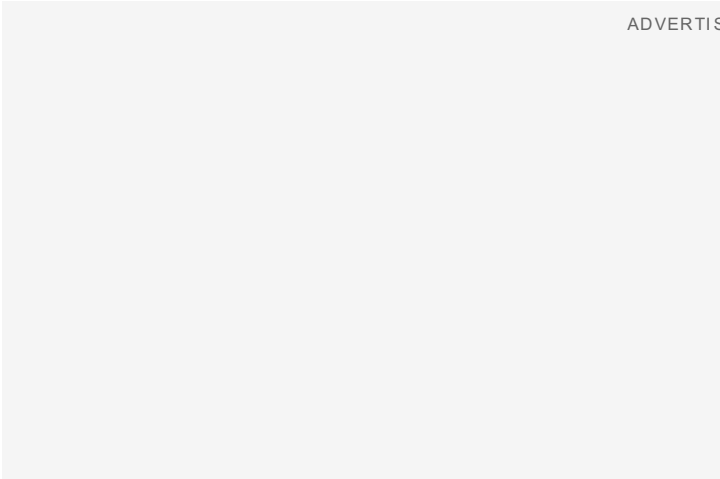
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