



June 25, 2013

Russia Rebuke Replaces Reset

Last week was a tour-de-force for the failed Obama Administration reset in relations with Russia. The week began with President Obama continuing his hat-in-hand diplomacy to Russia on the matter of Syria; continued with the use of the “flexibility” on nuclear matters he previously had promised Russia he would have after his election; and ended with Russia aiding a U.S. person escape criminal justice for the compromise of critical national security information.

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- June 17** — On Syria, President Obama [noted](#), “we do have different perspectives on the problem, but we share an interest in reducing the violence” there.
- The facts of course suggest otherwise, as Russia continues to arm the Syrian regime—hardly the action of someone interested in reducing violence.
 - As the Washington Post [reported](#) at the beginning of the month: “Sophisticated technology from Russia and Iran has given Syrian government troops new advantages in tracking and destroying their foes, helping them solidify battlefield gains against rebels. ... ‘We’re seeing a turning point in the past couple of months, and it has a lot to do with the quality and type of weapons and other systems coming from Iran and Russia,’ said a Middle Eastern intelligence official.”
 - Russia has vetoed every resolution to come before the United Nations Security Council on the issue of Syria since the beginning of the conflict.
- June 19** — President Obama [announced](#) he would seek “negotiated cuts with Russia” to our nuclear arsenals, without [promising](#) those cuts would be in treaty form.
- June 23** — Russia admits without a valid passport Edward Snowden, a fugitive from U.S. justice.
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Obama’s Russia Relations

The first time President Obama completed an arms control treaty with Russia—New START—then-Secretary of State Clinton [promised](#) such arms control cooperation “would also continue our progress toward broader U.S.-Russian cooperation.”

That cooperation is most recently manifest in Russia continuing to help the Syrian regime slaughter its own citizens and helping a U.S. citizen escape the consequences of his alleged

criminal behavior. Yet, President Obama thinks this behavior is something to reward in the form of future arms control negotiations. Russia has made clear its position is to extract from the United States in these negotiations a legally binding agreement limiting U.S. missile defense systems.

In his [speech](#) accepting the Nobel Peace Prize, President Obama said support for human rights was critical to peace and emphasized that America's interests are not served "by the denial of human aspirations." The Washington Post recently [editorialized](#) on President Obama's "starry-eyed" view of Putin: "In an attempt to suppress swelling protests against his rigged reelection and the massively corrupt autocracy he presides over, Mr. Putin has launched what both Russian and Western human rights groups describe as the most intense and pervasive campaign of political repression since the downfall of the Soviet Union."

Past arms control capitulations by the United States were supposed to yield a more beneficial relationship with Russia under the guise of a "reset." Until the U.S. relationship with Russia actually gets reset in practice, rather than just in Obama Administration rhetoric, it is difficult to see why Russia should continue to be rewarded with arms control negotiations potentially resulting in limitations on U.S. missile defenses.

At a minimum, the Senate [must](#) be able to pass on the wisdom of whatever comes out of those negotiations by considering them in treaty form, just as our founders demanded, and just as we have done for the considerable part of our arms control history.