

Boris Johnson Has Changed His Mind on ‘Reset’ with Russia

By [Johanna Ross](#)

Global Research, December 26, 2019

Region: [Europe](#), [Russia and FSU](#)

Theme: [Intelligence](#)

Recently **Boris Johnson** was quoted as saying he had ‘changed his mind’ on whether there could be a ‘reset’ in relations between Britain and Russia. Interviewed when on a visit to Estonia, he said that despite remaining an optimist and hoping for an improvement in bilateral relations, he found that the situation was ‘very, very disappointing’ and that there were ‘terrible problems’ that prevented cooperation between the two nations. He was in particular referring to, of course, the attempted murder of ex-double agent Sergei Skripal on the streets of Salisbury last year, which the UK has always blamed the Russian government for, despite the lack of evidence.

So should we be surprised by this? After all, Boris Johnson has in some ways maintained a more positive attitude towards Russia, despite being Foreign Secretary at the time of the Skripal case. He said back in 2017 that he was a ‘[committed Russophile](#)’ and that he wanted to see an improvement in relations with Russia, joking that he was the first ever Foreign Secretary to be called ‘Boris’. In an interview with Deutsche Welle he said that he loved Russia and that the UK had ‘no quarrel’ with the country. Even as recently as November this year he spoke quite sensibly on the topic of alleged [Russian interference](#) in UK elections, stating “There’s no evidence of that and you’ve got to be very careful... you simply can’t cast aspersions on everybody who comes from a certain country, just because of their nationality.”

As Mayor of London, Boris forged friendships and contacts within the Russian community, many of whom became wealthy donors to the Conservative party. Sergei Nalobin, a Russian diplomat and son of a former KGB general, was one such member of the now defunct Conservative Friends of Russia, who once tweeted that he was a ‘good friend’ of Boris Johnson. And as recently as the day after the election, Johnson was at a party held by media guru Evgenii Lebedev, son of Alexander Lebedev, an ex-KGB agent. Indeed before the December election the Prime Minister was having to defend his delay of a controversial report into Russian interference in UK politics, as rumours began it had been suppressed due to details of substantial donations made by Russian oligarchs to his party. Lyubov Chernukhin, wife of Vladimir Chernukhin, paid £200,000 to the Conservative party in recent times, and in the past £160,000 for a tennis match with Johnson and £135,000 for a night with former Prime Minister Theresa May.

And yet, when it comes to policy towards Russia, Johnson has toed the establishment line. He was criticised at the time of the Skripal case for accusing the Russian President Vladimir Putin for being personally responsible for the poisoning, without any concrete evidence. He had said that the scientists at the UK’s chemical weapons centre at Porton Down assured him the ‘novichok’ had come from Russia. Later it emerged that Porton Down did not in fact

ascertain that the poison had come from Russia, and it was established that Russia had ceased production of the substance long ago. He then asserted that only Russia had the motivation for targeting Skripal, as he was a defector, and yet as some have pointed out, the UK had equal motive. There are indeed many [discrepancies](#) in the UK version of events.

This is where Johnson's Russia policy is laced with hypocrisy. For on the one hand, the country is treated as a pariah state, but on the other, he is more than willing to accept donations from wealthy individuals connected to the Kremlin. Indeed it is likely that if the UK had a similar trade relationship to the one it has with Saudi Arabia, its policy towards Russia would be quite different. One only has to look at the horrific murder of dissident journalist Jamal Khashoggi in the Saudi embassy in Istanbul, and its aftermath, to realise that UK foreign policy is very much determined by economic factors, not moral ones. Arms deals worth billions of pounds dictate that Britain will never do more than criticise the murder in passing, despite clear links to Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman and international condemnation of the Saudis and their human rights record. The UK court of appeal in fact ruled recently that British arms sales to Saudi Arabia are 'unlawful' because of their use in the Saudi onslaught of Yemen. And yet no such Cold War will be waged against the Saudi kingdom, which continues to be an ally of the US and UK in the Middle East.

So, no, we are not to be surprised at Johnson's statement. British foreign policy towards Russia is consistent in its disdain and contempt for this Eurasian nation, which it has never really understood, or properly attempted to. As Winston Churchill once declared, Russia was a 'riddle, wrapped in a mystery, inside an enigma'. We are no further forward today...

*

Note to readers: please click the share buttons above or below. Forward this article to your email lists. Crosspost on your blog site, internet forums. etc.

This article was originally published on [InfoBrics](#).

Johanna Ross is a journalist based in Edinburgh, Scotland.

Featured image is from TruePublica

The original source of this article is Global Research
Copyright © [Johanna Ross](#), Global Research, 2019

[Comment on Global Research Articles on our Facebook page](#)

[Become a Member of Global Research](#)

Articles by: [Johanna Ross](#)

Disclaimer: The contents of this article are of sole responsibility of the author(s). The Centre for Research on Globalization will not be responsible for any inaccurate or incorrect statement in this article. The Centre of Research on Globalization grants permission to cross-post Global Research articles on community internet sites as long as the source and copyright are acknowledged together with a hyperlink to the original Global Research article. For publication of Global Research articles in

print or other forms including commercial internet sites, contact: publications@globalresearch.ca

www.globalresearch.ca contains copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available to our readers under the provisions of "fair use" in an effort to advance a better understanding of political, economic and social issues. The material on this site is distributed without profit to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving it for research and educational purposes. If you wish to use copyrighted material for purposes other than "fair use" you must request permission from the copyright owner.

For media inquiries: publications@globalresearch.ca