

# Russia's 2020 Foreign Policy. A Thaw in US-Russia Relations? Foreign Minister Lavrov

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Region: [Russia and FSU](#)

Theme: [History](#)

*Russian **Foreign Minister Lavrov** held his annual press conference last week reviewing his country's foreign policy over the preceding year, the top two dozen highlights of which are touched upon in this analysis for those who don't have the time to read the full transcript from this lengthy event.*

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Keeping with tradition, Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov held his annual press conference last week reviewing his country's foreign policy over the preceding year. The transcript from this extended event was shared [on his Ministry's official website](#), but it's extremely long so it's understandable why many people might not have read it. For that reason, the present article touches upon the top two dozen highlights by presenting a paraphrased summary of the most important points followed by the actual words that he said. This will hopefully enlighten the largest number of people possible about how Russia's top diplomat views some of the most pressing issues of the day.

## **Russia Is Ready To Cooperate With The Whole World On Vaccines:**

"We reiterate what President of Russia Vladimir Putin said in August 2020 when announcing the registration of the world's first coronavirus vaccine: we are wide open to cooperation in these matters. We had a positive response to the proposals that the Russian Direct Investment Fund (RDIF) had made to its foreign partners with regard to organising licensed production. This topic is being discussed with our colleagues in Asia, the Arab East, Africa and Latin America."

## **Some Countries Tried To Exploit The Pandemic For Political Purposes:**

"Some of our Western colleagues, primarily the United States and its closest allies, tried to take advantage of the situation and to ratchet up pressure, blackmail, ultimatums and illegitimate actions while introducing unilateral restrictions and other forms of interference in the internal affairs of many countries, including our closest neighbour Belarus."

## **The West's Insistence On Continuing Unilateral Sanctions Made Life Worse For So Many People:**

"The West unanimously ignored the calls by the UN Secretary General and the

UN High Commissioner for Human Rights to suspend, at least for the duration of the pandemic, unilateral and illegitimate sanctions regarding the supply of medications, food and equipment needed to fight the virus while Russia was ready to back up this approach.”

### **The EU Wants To Monopolize, and Consequently Weaponize, The Concept Of Multilateralism:**

“One of the manifestations of these rules on which the West would like to establish a new international order is the concept of multilateralism, which our German and French colleagues have started promoting in the past two years. The descriptions of this concept in the public statements of the German and French foreign ministers make it very clear that the EU wants to present itself and everything it does as a foreign policy ideal. The EU views the establishment of specific rules as its exclusive right in the belief that all others must follow these standards. Examples are many.”

### **Russia Is Deeply Concerned About The Emergence Of “Technological Empires” Run By “Half A Dozen People”:**

“There are situations where half a dozen people that have created their own technological empires do not even want to know what rights they have in their own states. They determine their rights themselves proceeding from so-called corporate standards and completely ignore the constitutions of their states. We have seen this clearly in the US and this is a source of deep concern. Much has been said about this recently in television reports and special analytical materials.”

### **Russia Is Ready To Clarify All Conspiracy Theories That It’s Accused Of:**

“Russia strives to act as constructively as possible in the international arena. We are convinced that we must sit down and discuss all existing grievances rather than wrangle with each other. We have always been ready to do so: back when Russia was accused of “interference” in the US elections, in Barcelona, during Brexit, the Skripal case, the Malaysian Boeing, which was shot down over Ukraine in July 2014, and with regard to Alexey Navalny.”

### **The Greater Eurasian Partnership Remains One Of President Putin’s Foreign Policy Priorities:**

“President Putin’s initiative, which we are promoting, is to form the Greater Eurasian Partnership that is open to all Eurasian countries without exception by way of an equal collective dialogue. This covers the EU countries along with the EAEU, the SCO and ASEAN members. Generally speaking, it covers countries that are not part of any regional organisations, but are located in Eurasia.”

### **Russia’s Relations With Italy Are Among The Best That It Has In Europe:**

“Relations between Russia and Italy are good. Italy is one of those EU countries

that follow the discipline and principles of solidarity in the EU, but that still do not consider it appropriate to take an aggressive position against the Russian Federation. Conscientiously, in joining the consensus on certain sanctions, Italy does not consider them to be effective tools for influencing anyone, in this case the Russian Federation. Not without objections from Brussels, Italy insists on its right to develop bilateral relations with Russia and does so sincerely.”

### **The Lack Of Press Freedom In The Baltics Is Unacceptable:**

“Whenever we have incontestable and hard facts that freedom of the media has been flagrantly violated coupled with threats to bring criminal charges, the mechanisms existing in the UN human rights formats – and there are plenty of speakers there reporting on various aspects of human rights violations; they have the Commissioner for Human Rights at the Council of Europe and the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media – cannot justify what they are doing to you. Quite a few incidents like this happen now and then in the neighbouring Baltic States.”

### **Big Tech’s Censorship Spree “Tramples” On The US’ International Information-Related Obligations:**

“Access to information is provided for by the numerous decisions of the OSCE. It is guaranteed by the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. This principle of access to information was recently trampled underfoot in the United States to the accompaniment of perplexed silence or indistinct comments by US allies. Now attempts are being made to hush it all up by saying that Donald Trump’s Facebook account has been restored (but not his Tweeter account). But this is not about Trump but about the big failure of the state to comply with its commitments to ensure access to information.”

### **The US’ New Foreign Policy Team Won’t Really Change Much Of Anything:**

“In brief – we do not expect any radical changes. However, the methods of promoting US “leadership” will be somewhat different.”

### **There’s A Possibility, However Faint, Of A Thaw In Russian-American Relations:**

“When Russian President Vladimir Putin congratulated Joe Biden on his victory in the presidential election, he reaffirmed our commitment to cooperation with the United States on all issues of mutual interest and importance for the world. This can be interpreted as invitation to dialogue. The most important thing is that our proposals on cybersecurity and on investigations into our alleged interference in US affairs, as well as on space projects and arms control, are on the table. As recently as in September 2020, President Putin publicly invited the United States – not President Trump or anyone else, but the United States as a power which, we hope, has retained at least a degree of respect for continuity and compliance with foreign policy agreements – to reboot our relations in the sphere of cybersecurity and non-intervention into internal affairs of each other.”

### **Russian-Chinese Relations Soar To New Heights As The Eurasian Union & BRI**

## **Continue To Align:**

“We are cooperating within the framework of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) and BRICS. The People’s Republic of China and the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) have signed a cooperation agreement. We are aligning integration within the EAEU and China’s Belt and Road Initiative. Last December, we signed a protocol on extending the agreement on notification of the launch of ballistic missiles and space carrier rockets for another 10 years. Also in December 2020, the Chinese Air Force and the Russian Aerospace Forces conducted the second joint patrol mission over the Sea of Japan and East China Sea. This is evidence of the trust-based and forward-looking nature of Russian-Chinese relations and our mutual commitment to maintaining stability in the Asia-Pacific region.”

## **The US Has An International Legal Responsibility To Rein In Big Tech:**

“The Helsinki Final Act and an entire series of OSCE documents (the Charter of Paris for a New Europe, the Charter for European Security adopted in Istanbul in 1999) say that every person has the right to freely express their opinion. This right includes the freedom to search, receive and distribute various kinds of information and ideas regardless of state borders, by mouth, in writing, using the press, creative forms of expression or other means. ‘Other means’ meant the visionary prediction that social networks would appear. There is no exception to this. It is said that each person has the right to access information. The state signed under it. So, claiming that Google, Facebook, YouTube and other corporations have no responsibilities is childish nonsense. The state has to assume responsibly for them, and if they misbehave, the state must bring them to order and to its legal obligations.”

## **The US Believes That Neo-Nazis Have The Right To Freedom Of Speech Under The First Amendment:**

“Speaking of the freedom of speech. Every year, the UN General Assembly at our initiative adopts a resolution on inadmissibility of glorification of Nazism and other forms of racism, racial discrimination and xenophobia, and the US votes against it saying that the voting for prohibiting neo-Nazi movements is a violation of the First Amendment. They state this openly.”

## **The Navalny Incident Is Artificially Being Exploited In The Foreign Policy Domain:**

“A foreign policy aspect has been added to the Navalny case artificially and without any justification. Everything associated with his return and detainment is the competence of the law enforcement authorities. There is a detailed statement by the Federal Penitentiary Service, which provides facts and violations and explains why the complaints have been put forth. This is not something that can be placed on the Foreign Ministry’s doorstep. The matter concerns compliance with Russian laws.”

## **The Final Political Status Of Nagorno-Karabakh Will Be Decided Later:**

“Exactly because the problem of the status of Nagorno-Karabakh is controversial, if we take the positions of Yerevan and Baku, the three leaders

decided to leave it be for future consideration.”

### **Russia Is Optimistic That Ties With Greece & Cyprus Will Survive American Pressure:**

“I have recently visited Greece and Cyprus. Moreover, I have recently talked with Foreign Minister of Cyprus Nikos Christodoulides by telephone. I can see no reason why these countries should be persuaded that Russia is an enemy of theirs or has carried out an unfriendly policy towards them. Someone is trying to convince them, but politicians with common sense can see the whole truth: that they are only trying to make an enemy out of the Russian Federation and saying that our presence in the Balkans prevents these countries from moving into NATO, hinders their Euro-Atlantic integration. There is no diplomacy here, only crude public leverage. Not everyone in such countries as Cyprus and Greece can publicly respond to such battle cries because they are scared to offend “Big Brother.” There is no underlying enmity between anyone in Russia, Greece and Cyprus.”

### **Moscow Is Confident That New Delhi’s Indo-Pacific Policy Will Remain Positive And Constructive:**

“I know that in India this issue is very actively discussed. And I know that India is not going to move this Indo-Pacific cooperation in a way that would be not positive and not constructive. I say so in much detail because some of my previous statements on this issue have been widely discussed in the Indian media which I believe is not very friendly towards the Indian government, but we don’t want any misunderstanding with our friends, the Indian people: we are friends with India. We are doing our utmost to make sure that India and China, our two great friends and brothers, live in peace with one another.”

### **Russian-Chinese Military Cooperation Isn’t “Spearheaded” At Japan:**

“Touching upon the military situation in the region, it is true that Russia and China are working together, including in the form of military exercises. Russian-Chinese military exercises are nothing new at all. We have held several army exercises within the framework of the SCO and at the bilateral level. We have held joint exercises of our aerospace forces. They are not spearheaded at Japan but are held to check the combat readiness of our air forces, which are guarding the safety of Russian and Chinese borders. What is threatening them? There are quite a few threats, including the one you have mentioned, the US plans to deploy ballistic missile defence systems and ground-launched medium and shorter-range missiles, which were prohibited by a treaty from which Washington has withdrawn, in Japan and South Korea.”

### **Russia Is Disappointed With The UK’s Double Standards Towards The Malvinas/Falklands & Crimea:**

“The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland insisted very sternly that the residents of the Islas Malvinas (that London calls the Falkland Islands) have a right to self-determination. We reminded the UK’s representatives about this when they became overexcited about the March 2014 referendum in Crimea. We asked them whether the Islas Malvinas, located 10,000 miles away

from the UK, had the right to self-determination, and whether the people of Crimea who have been part of this country all their life were denied this right. The answer was very simple; they replied that these were two different matters. Let this rest with their conscience.”

### **Implementing The Minsk Accords Is The Only Solution To The Ukrainian Civil War:**

“In our opinion, the only way out is to implement the Minsk agreements.”

### **Russia Can't Militarily Expel The US From Syria, All That It Can Do Is Promote De-Confliction:**

“Yes, we maintain contacts between the military with the United States but we are not doing this because we recognise the legitimacy of their presence there but simply because the United States must act within certain boundaries. We cannot expel it, and we will not clash with US forces. Now that US forces are deployed there, we are conducting a dialogue with US representatives on so-called deconfliction.”

### **Russia Will Swiftly Neutralize All Security Threats To “Israel” Coming From Syria Upon Tel Aviv's Request:**

“To our Israeli colleagues: please notify us immediately of any facts that a threat to your state emanates from some part of Syrian territory. We will act to neutralise this threat. So far, we have received no specific reply to this appeal, but we continue to press the point.”

### **MAGA Is Facing Persecution In Biden's America:**

“We have already spoken, in part, about this subject. As for whether this is reminiscent of anything to me, I will not answer this question, because this may be reminiscent of different things to different people. There have been different periods and forms of persecution in different periods of human history. I don't think people can easily forget this. Although people tend to have a short memory, we have history textbooks and we must teach historical truth to our young people. Otherwise, future generations may decide that there has never been anything apart from Twitter, Facebook, YouTube and other platforms, which have a monopoly on the truth. Like all other normal people, I take no pleasure in watching problems come to a head in the United States.”

### **Uncontrollable Big Tech Liberals Are Meddling More Abroad Than The American Government Is:**

“During the past few years President Donald Trump has been saying that there would be no wars during his term. No new wars have been launched indeed. But US interference in the internal affairs of others went on very energetically. The physical methods of interference are giving way to interference through social media. Reliance on NGOs and the nursing of opposition forces loyal to the West are complemented with a dramatic increase in the power of social media and their capabilities. The American state is now facing the issue of

whether they should be taken under control or left with regulation “standards” based on the liberal ideology and world outlook.”

### **America’s Massive Mail-In Voting Was Plagued With Serious Problems:**

“Many people are talking now about the things that were obvious from the very beginning but have been glossed over. Two months before the actual election day, ballot papers were mailed to voters in several states for casting postal votes. They mailed 95 million ballots. Two-thirds of them turned out to be filled in prior to the election day. One-third of the ballots were not completed despite aggressive encouragement. This campaign of forcing people to cast their ballots by postal vote did not fit in with the US election standards. When both candidates got more than 40 percent of the vote, postal voting became a serious problem.”

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**Andrew Korybko** is an American Moscow-based political analyst specializing in the relationship between the US strategy in Afro-Eurasia, China’s One Belt One Road global vision of New Silk Road connectivity, and Hybrid Warfare. He is a frequent contributor to Global Research.

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