

Trump's Cabinet Picks Aren't Looking Good for Peace in Ukraine

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*Conventional wisdom about the outgoing Biden administration's [reckless escalations](#) in Ukraine these past few days is that things will cool down once **Donald Trump** takes office, but Trump's cabinet picks aren't really selling this idea.*

While Trump did campaign on ending the war in Ukraine, the president elect has given multiple cabinet appointments to strategists who say that the way to achieve that peace is to substantially escalate aggressions against Russia. [Michael Tracey](#) has been doing a great job compiling footage of Trump's recent cabinet picks advocating extreme measures which happen to be in perfect alignment with the nuclear brinkmanship of the demented outgoing president and his handlers.

Sebastian Gorka, who Trump [has named](#) as his next senior director for counterterrorism, [is on record](#) saying that Trump has told him he plans on saying to Putin,

"You will negotiate now or the aid that we have given to Ukraine thus far will look like peanuts."



Michael Tracey ✓
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Sebastian Gorka, who Trump just named a Director of national security policy in the White House, says that Trump's strategy for ending the Ukraine war will include threatening Putin to provide Ukraine with exponentially more military "aid"



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Mike Waltz, who Trump has selected as his next national security advisor, promotes a similar vision. Waltz [says](#) Russia can be pressured to come to the negotiating table via increased energy sanctions combined with “taking the handcuffs off of the long-range weapons we provided Ukraine.” Biden has since removed those very “handcuffs” by [authorizing Kyiv](#) to use US-supplied long-range missiles to attack Russia.

If it seems like these remarks from Trump’s incoming administration work very nicely with the actions of the outgoing administration, then you may find it interesting that Waltz just [told Fox News Sunday](#) that the two administrations are working “hand in glove” as the presidency changes over.

“Jake Sullivan and I have had discussions, we’ve met,” Waltz said. “For our adversaries out there that think this is a time of opportunity, that they can play one administration off the other—they are wrong. We are hand in glove. We are one team with the United States in this transition.”

This would seem to be an oblique reference to Russia specifically, since that's the only US adversary with any hope that the incoming administration might be a bit less hawkish toward it than the outgoing one, and since years of mass media coverage went into spinning narratives about Trump being a pawn of Vladimir Putin.

But Trump was never a pawn of **Vladimir Putin**. Contrary to the narratives of both Democrat-aligned punditry and Republican-aligned punditry while he was in office, Trump spent his entire term [ramping up cold war aggressions](#) against Russia which [helped pave the way](#) to the war and brinkmanship we are seeing in Ukraine today. Tracey recently [shared an audio clip](#) of Gorka on X Spaces back in January 2023 exuberantly boasting about the way Trump ordered the US military to [kill hundreds of Russian mercenaries](#) in Syria in 2018. Putin himself [cited](#) the Trump administration's withdrawal from the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces treaty in 2019 when defending his decision to [hit Ukraine](#) with a new type of intermediate-range missile the other day in response to its use of US- and UK-supplied long-range missiles to strike inside Russia.

Other cabinet appointments who have taken extremely hawkish positions on Russia include secretary of state nominee **Marco Rubio**, secretary of defense nominee **Pete Hegseth**, CIA director nominee **John Ratcliffe**, and National Security Council appointee **Doug Burgum**. But it's those comments from Waltz and Gorka which I find most concerning, because they explicitly refer to escalatory strategies that Trump might employ once he takes office.

This all comes out as [we get news](#) that US and European officials recently discussed providing nuclear weapons to Ukraine under the gamble that Putin will not escalate against the west before Trump takes office. The more aligned the Trump administration's posture toward Russia appears to be with that of the Biden administration, the less safe a gamble this appears to be.

It seems likely that the Trump administration will end the Ukraine proxy war at some point down the road in order to reallocate those resources toward preparation for war with Iran and/or China. But it is not at all clear that this will happen soon enough before soaring escalations spin out of control into the single worst-case scenario that could possibly unfold on this planet.

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