

White House says it has invited Vladimir Putin to Washington

White House reveals it has invited Vladimir Putin to Washington after Bolton warned Russia's interference in the elections created 'distrust and animosity'

- National Security Advisor John Bolton said Friday the Russian president has been invited to visit
- President Trump invited Putin to visit following their summit in Helsinki, where Trump accepted Putin's denial of election meddling
- Trump then faced blowback at home and the summit was put on hold
- Bolton visited Moscow this week and said the effort to interfere was 'objectionable'
- He said the outcome 'would have been the same' but it still created animosity

The White House has invited Russian President Vladimir Putin to visit Washington after the new year, setting up another high stakes summit days after President Trump's national security advisor said its interference didn't change the outcome of the election.

National Security Advisor John Bolton said Friday the White House has formally invited Putin to visit returning to an idea that was put on hold in July amid anger in the U.S. over the prospect of such a summit.

He spoke following his own visit to Moscow, where he said Russian election interference was 'objectionable' and had contributed to animosity in the bilateral relationship.

'What the meddling did was create distrust and animosity within the United States, and particularly made it almost impossible for two years for the United States and Russia to make any progress,' Bolton said. 'That's a huge loss for both countries, particularly for Russia,' he added. 'So it's a lesson I think: Don't mess with American elections.'

Trump also said this week he would probably meet Putin in Paris next month. 'It's

being discussed right now,' he said. But the certainty of the information was undercut when he inaccurately referred to Bolton as 'Mike Bolton' when discussing it.

'I think we probably will. It hasn't been set up yet but it probably will be,' he said. Such a meeting would occur at the 100th anniversary of the World War I armistice in Paris.

The summit would put the two leaders together after the outcome of the 2018 midterm elections is determined, well into the second year of special counsel Robert Mueller's Russia probe, which has led to the indictment of 13 Russians accused of setting up cutouts, fake Facebook ads, spreading disinformation, and other efforts meant to sow divisions and interfere in the elections.

U.S. Intelligence also included Russia's military intelligence hacked Democratic emails including those of Hillary Clinton's campaign chair, during the elections.

Trump held a summit with Putin in Helsinki, the Finnish capital, and then issued Putin an invitation to visit Washington in the autumn. But that was postponed after Trump faced allegations of cozying up to the Kremlin.

'We have invited President Putin to Washington,' Bolton said at a news conference during a visit to ex-Soviet Georgia, days after meeting Putin and senior security officials in Moscow.

Bolton said he gave Putin an invitation to visit next year during his trip to Moscow, U.S. broadcaster RFE/RL reported.

It was not immediately clear if Putin had accepted the invitation. Putin last held a meeting with a U.S. president on American soil in 2015 when he met Barack Obama on the sidelines of a U.N. General Assembly.

Trump's earlier invitation to Putin sparked an outcry in Washington, including from Republican lawmakers who argued that Putin was an adversary not worthy of a White House visit.

Trump has said it is in U.S. interests to establish a solid working relationship with Putin.

Bolton said that the Paris meeting would be brief.

In his earlier comments in Moscow, Bolton argued that the effort to interfere on its own was problematic.

“it’s the effort alone to interfere in our elections that are objectionable.

“The fact was that the outcome would have been the same by all the evidence we have,” Bolton said following talks with Putin.

Source: <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-6319807/Trump-advisor-Bolton-says-U-S-invited-Putin-Washington.html>

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