

Vladimir Putin And Donald Trump To Speak By Phone On Saturday: Kremlin

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Moscow, Russia: US President Donald Trump and Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin will on Saturday hold their first phone conversation since the American leader's inauguration, the Kremlin said.

"I can confirm that a telephone conversation is planned. It will be Saturday evening Moscow time," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told journalists on Friday.

Peskov said Putin would congratulate Trump on officially becoming president and the two would likely discuss the "state of bilateral ties".

But Putin's spokesman refused to comment on rumours that Trump might already be gearing up to roll back sanctions against Moscow that have helped drive ties to their lowest point since the end of the Cold War.

"This is the first contact by phone since President Trump assumed office so it is hardly likely there will be substantive contact on all issues. Let's be patient," he said.

The two leaders already spoke by phone in November following Trump's election, and agreed to "normalise" US-Russia relations, which have suffered notably since the crisis in Ukraine.

Throughout the election campaign, Trump praised Putin and was accused by his Democratic rival Hillary Clinton of being Putin's "puppet."

Less than one month before leaving the White House, former president Barack Obama took action against Moscow over what he said was Russian meddling in the US presidential election.

The measures by Obama, who accused Moscow of "efforts to harm US interests," included the expulsion of 35

alleged intelligence agents and financial sanctions on Russia's top intelligence agencies.

Trump has pledged to mend ties with Putin's government, and is angered by suggestions that his victory was aided by illegal Russian interference.

(Except for the headline, this story has not been edited by NDTV staff and is published from a syndicated feed.)
