

《英语新闻评论：俄美两国会再次冷战吗？》

By Oleg Ivanov in Global Times

Last year many policymakers and experts held the opinion that Russian-US relations had reached their lowest point.

After Russian President Vladimir Putin and US President Donald Trump met on the sidelines of the G20 Summit in Hamburg, there was hope this situation could be reversed for the better.

However, this did not happen. US authorities imposed new tough sanctions on Russia that reminds one of the Cold War.

In light of this, we must ask: Are Russia and the US heading toward a new Cold War? Is Russia really a formidable threat to the US?

I tend to believe that despite deteriorating Russian-US relations it would be wrong to speak about a new Cold War.

Confrontation between Russia and the US does not have the global character it used to have in the 20th century. Russian policy is not driven by any ideology, unlike the US, which aims to expand and impose US values.

Some Western critics claim that Russia is a revanchist power trying to destroy the existing world order, but that is not the case.

The world's movement toward multipolarity is undeniable and Russia is acting with BRICS and SCO, regarding them as new collective centers of power.

It was not Russia that triggered the current confrontation between Russia and the US. After 35 Russian diplomats were ordered to leave the US at the end of 2016 and diplomatic compounds were closed for Russian diplomats in the US, the Russian leadership did not take any reciprocal measures but instead decided to wait.

What is more, Putin invited the children of US diplomats to take part in New Year festivities at the Kremlin and US diplomatic compounds were not closed in Moscow.

However, one can only wait for so long.

There was a hope in Moscow that Trump would be able to resist pressure from Congress

and the US media. However, that seems not to be the case.

The basic principle of diplomacy is reciprocity. That is why Putin made a decision to reduce the number of the US diplomats working in Russia by 755 to reach parity with Russian diplomats working in the US and to suspend access to US compounds in Moscow. The Russian leadership has to react, otherwise the country would not be respected in the world community. The peculiarity of the situation is that the consequences of the US' hostile policy toward Russia go beyond bilateral relations and impact other countries.

US sanctions impact the EU's economic interests and joint projects with Russia in the energy field. The US leadership is trying to pursue its interests by selling its supply of liquefied gas to the European market and push out Russian gas. Another goal is to disrupt the construction of the North Stream 2 pipeline.

These actions are an attempt to beef up the US' energy position in Europe. By doing so the US can kill two birds with one stone. In other words, punish Russia and at the same time earn a profit at the expense of its European allies. Indeed, the ends justifies the means.

Is further aggravation of Russian-US relations in our interests? Of course not. Both countries have huge nuclear arsenals and they play a major role in arms control and disarmament.

According to an opinion poll held in Russia after the two presidents' meeting in Hamburg, 48 percent of respondents believed that the meeting would be beneficial to Russia, while 41 percent of respondents did not expect to see any change. Now the situation is even more pessimistic.

My view is that US authorities should stop taking further steps in trying to punish Russia, and both sides should follow the principle of doing no more damage to each other, and instead focus on areas where the two can work together.

First of all, they can cooperate on establishing de-escalation zones in Syria and fighting terrorism.

During the Cold War two superpowers were competing for influence and supremacy. Today the US view is that the country does not face any one single challenge. CIA Director Mike Pompeo stressed that while China, Russia, and Iran were expected to pose significant problems in the future, China is a greater threat because of its robust economy and growing military power — both aimed at the US. This means that the US' next target is likely to be China.

Both China and Russia have a common interest in the stability of Russian-US relations as well as in Sino-US relations. To this end, both Russia and China should work on strengthening their cooperation.

That was the goal of the recent Sino-Russian joint naval exercises in the Baltic Sea and the symbolic participation of Chinese naval ships in the commemoration of the Russian navy holiday in Saint Petersburg on July 30.

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