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PUTIN-TRUMP: HOW WILL THE NEXT MEETING LOOK LIKE?



After the midterm elections in the Congress on November 6, Donald Trump will finally obtain an opportunity to shape up the foreign policy, because now he is completely engaged with the domestic affairs. He needs to win this “autumn marathon”. He is most likely to win it.

For **Donald Trump**, foreign policy is a secondary thing. The problem he really concentrates on is the US economy. He wants to have his country stronger (“Make America Great Again”). That means that he needs to accelerate the internal dynamics, economic growth, provide people with jobs – that is, do everything to strengthen his electoral base.

In his foreign policy, Trump seems to act in order to prevent a crisis that would not allow him to shape an offensive economic policy, including the revision of the treaties America signed with the rest of the world, to invert the flows and return works to the US.

Thus, the agenda of all the talks he has, including **that with the DPRK leader Kim Jong Un** and **Russian President Vladimir Putin**, is rather economical than political. He wanted to “demine” these relations in order to gain greater freedom of action, for example, with the EU or with China. That is, to “reconcile” in some places and to be able to “advance” in others. This is his game.

Now he will engage completely with domestic affairs to win the midterm elections. He is most likely to win it. It does not mean that he has to change the balance of power in Congress seriously: if he prevents the Democrats to win the real majority – that will be his victory.

What could happen after the elections? Most likely, the game he is playing will start to reform. The political moment will change, the opposition will quiet down, Trump will

obtain the greater freedom, and it will be easier for him to deal with foreign policy, in particular – with the Russian-American relations.

Moreover, the **July 16 Putin-Trump summit in Helsinki** has formed all the conditions for this. Despite the ongoing hysterical scream and the sanctions the Congress could introduce simply to aggravate the situation, it is important to note that the first full-format meeting was a watershed, so now the leaders of the two great powers have an understanding of how they could cooperate, and there are a lot of areas to do it.

Attacks against Trump – be it direct accusations in Congress, or the so-called “cases” – are the expected reaction from the group that does not want Trump to conduct an independent foreign policy. Their only possibility is to discredit Trump as a politician and disavow Russia as a worthy partner. They try, and we should treat this calmly, because it was clear long before the meeting.

What do we have in the end? The leaders met and identified a whole range of problems they could work on. Some solutions were already drawn. The Helsinki summit was a turning point, and where this turn will lead and how quickly – time will tell.

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