

Trump blames Obama, not Putin, for Russia seizing Crimea



President Trump blamed the last U.S. president for Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea in 2014, praising [President Vladimir Putin](#) for outsmarting President Obama and saying he thought Russia should be welcomed back into the annual meeting of the leaders of the world's largest economic powers.

Speaking in France at the G-7 conference, Trump repeatedly expressed his disagreement with the decision to suspend Russia's membership in what was then called the G-8 over its seizure of the crucial peninsula of Crimea from the Ukraine. He claimed that Obama was "embarrassed" and "outsmarted by Putin."

"Would I invite [Putin]? I would certainly invite him," Trump said, in answer to a question about next year's meeting, which will be hosted by the U.S. But he expressed concern that the Russian

president's feelings were hurt by the earlier expulsion. "Whether or not he could come psychologically, I think that's a tough thing for him to do."

[The Guardian reported Sunday](#) that Trump's suggestion that Russia be readmitted to the G-7 was not supported by the other world leaders in attendance.

"It was sort of taken away from President Obama, not taken away from President Trump," the president explained. "President Obama was not happy that this happened and it was embarrassing to him, right? It was very embarrassing to him, and he wanted Russia to be out of what was called the G-8. That was his determination. He was outsmarted by Putin. President Putin outsmarted President Obama. I can understand how President Obama would feel, he wasn't happy."

[Trump had previously sided with Putin](#) against U.S. intelligence agencies at a 2018 meeting in Helsinki. He didn't answer a question Monday about possible Russian meddling in the next presidential election.

President Trump speaks during the G-7 summit on Monday in Biarritz, France. (Photo: Francois Mori/AP)

A reporter pressed Trump on his assertion that Obama was behind Russia's departure from the G-8. Its annexation of Crimea in violation of international law resulted in sanctions by both the United States and the European Union, and a condemnation from NATO, which said in a statement, "We strongly condemn this act, which we do not and will not recognize." On the fifth anniversary of Russia's takeover in March, EU foreign policy head Federica Mogherini said, "We stand in full solidarity with Ukraine, supporting its sovereignty and territorial integrity."

"It was annexed during President Obama's term. If it was annexed during my term, I would say, 'Sorry, folks, I made a mistake' or 'Sorry, folks,'" said Trump, adding, "President Obama was pure and simply outsmarted. They took Crimea during his term. That was not a good thing. It could have been stopped. It could have been stopped with the right... whatever. It could have been stopped, but President Obama was unable to stop it and it's too bad."

Story continues