



Trump-Putin Summit

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US President Donald Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin met in the Finnish capital Helsinki in a summit that was closely watched across the world for its potential to reset relations between the two countries.

Key Highlights

- The new Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) is set to expire in 2021 and Russia has shown interest in extending it.
- From the crisis in Ukraine, the civil war in Syria, Iran nuclear deal and to the threat posed by nuclear weapons and intercontinental ballistic missiles, were discussed at the summit.
- Despite conclusive allegations of Russian meddling in U.S. politics by the U.S Intelligence Agencies, the US President claimed that he saw no reason to believe Russia interfered in the elections.

NOTE: Strategic Arms Reductions Treaty

- START I and START II, were agreements to reduce the number of long-range nuclear weapons in the United States and the former Soviet Union.
- START I was signed by the United States and the Soviet Union in 1991, and it was followed by the conclusion of the START II treaty between the United States and Russia in 1993.

Background

- The summit comes at a time of tensions with the US and its traditional allies in Europe and Asia on issues ranging from accusations by the United States on members of the NATO dependent on the US for their security to the tariffs and trade wars.
- It also comes amid a rise in tensions between Europe and Russia—Britain's accusations against Russia that it is responsible for a deadly nerve agent attack on its territory and the latter's annexation of Crimea from Ukraine and its support for the Syrian regime.

- The summit follows after the indictments of 12 Russian military intelligence agents in the United States for meddling in the November 2016 US elections.

Why is the Summit Important for India?

- A successful Trump-Putin summit is good news for India. Deteriorating US-Russia ties have put considerable strain on India. The most recent example being the Countering America's
- Adversaries through Sanctions Act, which can lead to sanctions being imposed on countries that engage in "significant transactions" with any of the listed Russian companies.

NOTE: Countering America's Adversaries through Sanctions Act

- The Countering America's Adversaries through Sanctions Act (CAATSA) is a United States federal law that imposed sanctions on Iran, North Korea, and Russia.
- It includes sanctions against countries that engage in significant transactions with Russia's defense and intelligence sectors.
- India has close defense ties with Russia and Indian armed forces remain highly dependent on Russia for strategic technologies and supply of spares and maintenance.
- India has been nervous about Russia's increasing alienation from the West, which has propelled it closer to China, seen as India's Asian strategic rival. On the other hand, India's warming ties with Washington in the past few years had seen Russia become increasingly wary of India's ties with the US.
- As a consequence, Russia, seen as India's traditional friend especially during the Cold War years, was seen moving closer not only to China but also to India's traditional rival, Pakistan. In 2016, Russia held its first-ever military exercises with Pakistan and also started selling weapons to Islamabad.