



BRITAIN EXPECTS DONALD TRUMP TO 'STAND UP' TO RUSSIA, MICHAEL FALLON WARNS

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29.11.2016

Telegraph, 28 Nov 2016

Britain expects US President-elect Donald Trump to "stand up" to Russia, Sir Michael Fallon has said.

The Defence Secretary insisted that Britain will not become internationally isolated by its tough stance towards the Russian President, as he called on Mr Trump not to treat Russia as an "equal partner".

Vladimir Putin was one of the first world leaders to congratulate Mr Trump on his victory and the pair vowed to establish a new relationship between the US and Russia based on "mutual respect".

It came after Mr Trump expressed admiration for the Russian president during his campaign for the White House.

However, Mr Fallon suggested Mr Trump might change his tune when he becomes president.

Speaking to Radio 4's Today programme, he said: I don't agree with that and I think you have to distinguish between the campaign rhetoric of president-elect Trump and what he does in practice.

"In practice every American administration has always stood up to Russia. We're not suggesting you shouldn't talk to Russia but what you can't do is treat Russia as business as usual, as any kind of equal partner.

"Russia is clearly breaking the international rules by what it did in Crimea and Ukraine and that can never be forgotten.

He added that the latest deployment of 150 British troops to Poland was part of an effort to face down Putins attempt to test Nato.

"Putin, I think, is testing the alliance and we have to respond", he said.

"We have to make clear that Nato is a defensive alliance but ultimately it is prepared to come to the defence of those members who feel very vulnerable, particularly on the eastern flank – countries like the three Baltic states and Poland in particular.

For members of Nato itself, it is extremely important now that the alliance pulls itself together, Nato members increase their defence spending – Poland and Britain actually meet the 2 per cent commitment – and that we do reassure those members that feel extremely vulnerable.

He also called on Russia to use its influence over the Assad regime to bring to an end to the bloodshed in Syria.

Russia controls what's happening in Syria. They can bring this civil war to an end tomorrow by using their influence; they control the skies over Aleppo with the regime and its air defences.

"We continue to press Russia to use its influence for the good, bring this civil war to an end.

"But in the end, yes, we can't stop this civil war; in the end, it does depend on Russia recognising its responsibilities, bringing the war to an end and, above all, letting humanitarian aid into eastern Aleppo.

He made the comments after 150 MPs called on Theresa May to authorise the immediate airdrops of food and medicine to starving civilians.

Syria's rebels lost all of the northern neighbourhoods of their stronghold in east Aleppo on Monday, as the army gained significant ground in its offensive to recapture the entire city.

Kaynak/Source: