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Republicans Denounce Trump Over Failure to Condemn Putin

By Jason Ditz
February 5, 2017

Congressional Republicans are once again furiously condemning President Trump for not being sufficiently anti-Russia this weekend, following a Fox News interview in which Trump was prompted to condemn President Vladimir Putin as a killer and declined to do so.

Trump, who has yet to meet with Putin, said he “respects” the Russian leader and sees him as a potential help in fighting against ISIS. When interviewer Bill O’Reilly insisted “he’s a killer,” Trump shrugged it off, insisting “there are a lot of killers, You think our country’s so innocent?”

That predictably sparked angry condemnations from Congressional Republicans, who insisted “America is exceptional” and that any attempt to suggest any sort of equivalency between when America kills people and when anyone else does is wrong.

There was so much anger, Vice President Mike Pence felt the need to walk back Trump’s comments, insisting Putin and Russia are much worse than the United States, and that there is no

equivalency, that Putin is “a bad guy,” but that it’s possible the US has “done some bad things too.”

Even that’s unlikely to satisfy many, for whom American exceptionalism is seen as absolute and unquestionable. Fear that Trump is going to stop short of being an eager partner in a new Cold War with Russia is likely to keep such questions coming at him, and any answer short of unconditional condemnation is likely to provoke a reaction like this.