US-Russia Diplomatic Tussle

Why in news?

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United States had expelled Russians officials and ordered to shut Russian consulate in Seattle.

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What is happening in U.S?

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- The diplomatic ties between the nuclear powers U.S and Russia continue to deteriorate.
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- U.S. expelled 60 Russian officials and ordered the closure of the consulate in Seattle.
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- The consulate in Seattle alone was ordered for a closure is due to its proximity to one of US's submarine bases and Boeing Aircraft Company.
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- U.S. administration has given seven days for the officials and their families to leave the country.
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What is the reason behind this move?

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- Recently an ex-Russian spy in UK was poisoned with military grade chemical nerve agent.
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- The UK side claimed that this substance was related to the Novichok-class nerve agents developed in the Soviet Union.
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- UK administration accused Russia of orchestrating the attack and expelled

23 Russian diplomats as a punitive measure.
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- Following these actions US administration ordered the expulsion of Russian intelligence officers from the United States and the closure of the Russian consulate in Seattle.
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What is US’s stand on its decision?

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- The U.S. takes this action in conjunction with its NATO allies and partners around the world in response to Russia’s use of a military-grade chemical weapon on the soil of the United Kingdom.
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- US claims its actions will make the United States safer by reducing Russia’s ability to spy on Americans and to conduct covert operations that threaten America’s national security.
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- It is believed that with these steps, the U.S. and its allies pose clear to Russia that its actions have consequences.
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- United States also stated that its ready to build a better relationship with Russia, but this can only happen with a change in the Russian government’s behaviour.
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What is the response of Russia on this regard?

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- The Russian side has strongly rejected the accusations and offered assistance in the investigation.
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- Russian Defence Ministry made it clear that all chemical weapons stockpiles in Russia had been completely destroyed in late 2017.
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- Which had been even confirmed by the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW).
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- However, Moscow's request for samples of the chemical substance used to

poison the ex-spy was denied by UK.
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- Moscow also expelled UK diplomats and ordered the British Council to stop its activities in Russia in response to the UK move and plans to take the same move with US.
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Source: The Hindu, Sputnik International

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