

The Russia Review Act: Senate Aims to Block Trump From Lifting Sanctions on Russia

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In late January, Senate Republicans John McCain and Rob Portman strongly opposed lifting sanctions on Russia, McCain saying:

"I hope President Trump will put an end to this speculation and reject such a reckless course. If he does not, I will work with my colleagues to codify sanctions against Russia into law."

Portman claimed lifting them would damage US leadership and credibility. After 24 years under the Clintons, Bush/Cheney and Obama, they're damaged beyond repair.

US sanctions on Russia were illegally imposed for political reasons, no others – part of longstanding US Russia bashing, with strong bipartisan support.

On Wednesday, bipartisan Senate sanctions oversight legislation on Russia was introduced – sponsored by neocons Lindsey Graham (R. SC) and Ben Cardin (D. MD), co-sponsored by a rogue's gallery of bipartisan senators, including GOP and Democrat leaders.

Called the "Russia Review Act," it establishes a review process, giving congressional members oversight over whether to maintain or lift sanctions, preventing unilateral Trump action.

It requires the White House to submit a report, explaining why it seeks sanctions removal, a 120-day review period following, giving Congress final say on whether to maintain or ease sanctions in question.

The new measure follows earlier introduced legislation, titled "Countering Russian Hostilities Act of 2017," introduced by McCain and Graham. If enacted, likely tough new sanctions on Russia will be imposed.

Perhaps other anti-Russia legislation will follow, whether veto-proof remains to be seen. Clearly, Congress is going all-out to obstruct any attempts by Trump to improve relations with Moscow.

If he ignores congressional action and acts unilaterally, an unlikely prospect, he could be impeached and removed from office – a first in US history if occurs. The closest example was Nixon's resignation to avoid impeachment.

Separately, Putin spokesman Dmitry Peskov responded to Fox News host Bill O'Reilly calling Putin "a killer," saying:

“We consider such words from the Fox TV company to be unacceptable and insulting, and honestly speaking, we would prefer to get an apology from such a respected TV company.”

O'Reilly responded dismissively, saying he's "working on that apology, but it may take a little time. You might want to check with me around...2023."

Putin is no "killer." He's a preeminent world leader, a peacemaker, polar opposite a long line of US warrior presidents, waging endless wars on humanity, responsible for millions of casualties.

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