

# 10 Bipartisan Senators Introduce Comprehensive Russia Sanctions Legislation

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WASHINGTON – **U.S. Senators Ben Cardin (D-Md.), Ranking Member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and John McCain (R-Ariz.), Chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee,** led a group of bipartisan Senators Wednesday to introduce comprehensive sanctions legislation on Russia for their cyber intrusions, aggression, and destabilizing activities here in the United States and around the world. A factsheet on the legislation follows the quotes from the original cosponsoring Senators: Robert Menendez (D-N.J.); Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.); Jeanne Shaheen (D-N.H.); Marco Rubio (R-Fla.); Amy Klobuchar (D-Minn.); Ben Sasse (R-Neb.); Dick Durbin (D-Ill.); and Rob Portman (R-Ohio).

“Russia has worked to insidiously interfere with and influence the Presidential election in the United States, and Russian military aggression in Ukraine and Syria has violated international commitments and shown a clear disregard for sovereignty and humanitarian norms. Our comprehensive sanctions package being introduced today will send a clear message to Vladimir Putin that he has gone too far, and that there will be consequences for his actions,” said **Senator Cardin**. “I thank my bipartisan colleagues for joining me in this effort. I look forward to its passage and President Trump taking advantage of this strong tool as part of our American diplomatic arsenal.”

“Every American should be alarmed by Russia’s brazen attack on our democracy,” said **Senator McCain**. “For eight years, the United States has had no policy to deter, respond to, or retaliate against cyberattacks. As a nation, we must demonstrate that if you attack our country, you will pay a price. That’s why I’m proud to join with my Republican and Democratic colleagues in the Senate to introduce legislation that would impose new sanctions on Russia for its attack on our election and destabilizing activities in democracies around the world. Now is the time to put partisanship aside and send a signal that the United States will not stand for Russia’s aggressive actions.”

“As Russia continues its flagrant efforts to sabotage and subvert democratic norms and principles of freedom across the world, this is a significant step that sends an unequivocal response to President Putin: The U.S. Congress remains united in our absolute rejection of their rule over Crimea, belligerent actions in Syria, and will hold them accountable for their interference in our democratic system,” said **Senator Menendez**, author of the STAND for Ukraine Act, legislation that was incorporated into the Countering Russian Hostilities Act. “This comprehensive, bipartisan legislation creates a broad policy framework that combines new ways to proactively support our allies, bolster democratic institutions across Europe, and also expand and strengthen aggressive sanctions across Russian individuals and entities. At a pivotal time in world affairs in the face of Russian aggression, the Countering Russian Hostilities Act makes clear that the United States will not tolerate dictatorial actions, annexation or interventionism.”

“When it comes to Russia’s efforts to undermine democracy in our backyard and throughout the world, enough is enough. These bipartisan sanctions will be hard-hitting and go well-beyond what exists today. And hopefully, these sanctions will deter other would-be bad actors from interfering with the democratic process in the future. Focusing on the financial services and energy sectors – and targeting Putin and his inner circle – is the best way to get Russia’s attention,” said **Senator Graham**.

“The Russian government, directed by President Putin, launched a brazen attack on our elections that demands an aggressive response,” said **Senator Shaheen**. “The facts are clear, and it’s time to act. America must stand united in sending a strong message to the Kremlin that this attack on the

foundation our democracy will not go unpunished. I'm very proud to say that this legislation is bipartisan and pulls no punches. President-elect Trump should face the facts and lend his support to our effort."

"Vladimir Putin is not an ally of America, and he only understands strength, not weakness in the form of unilateral concessions. These two facts are important to remember as a new president takes office," said **Senator Rubio**. "I will continue working with our bipartisan coalition to pressure Putin and his corrupt regime until Russia changes its behavior."

"Russia used cyberattacks and propaganda to try and undermine our democracy. We are not alone. Russia has a pattern of waging cyberattacks and military invasions against democracies across the world," said **Senator Klobuchar**. "On a recent trip to the Baltic states, Ukraine, and Georgia with Senators McCain and Graham, it became clear that this is not about one party, one election, or even one country. It's about defending democracies. This bipartisan sanctions bill sends a message to the Kremlin that Russian aggression will not go unchecked."

"Russia is no friend — by Putin's choice, not ours. His Soviet-style aggressions toward the people of the United States, NATO, and our other allies cannot be rewarded. This bipartisan effort works to upend Putin's calculus and defend America from Russian cyberattacks and political meddling," said **Senator Sasse**.

"Russia struck at the heart of American democracy with its cyberattacks last year," said **Senator Durbin**. "While Moscow has been targeting us for a very long time, this most recent attack was a dramatic escalation that cannot be ignored or go unanswered. The Obama Administration issued significant new sanctions on the Russian Federation—that sent a signal to the Kremlin that must now be amplified by Congress. There is bipartisan support for strong additional sanctions against Russia, and I will support that effort every step of the way. The American people should be absolutely outraged that some Members of Congress continue to waffle and downplay this—but make no mistake: this was an attack on America, and it will not go unanswered."

"Russia must be held accountable for its illegal annexation of Crimea, ongoing aggression inside Ukraine, extensive disinformation and propaganda campaigns against the United States and its allies," said **Senator Portman**. "This bipartisan legislation sends an important message that the United States Senate takes its obligation to act on behalf of American national security interests seriously, and is prepared to take proactive steps to ensure that we live up to our commitments to our allies and uphold longstanding American values and ideals."

## **ABOUT THE COUNTERING RUSSIAN HOSTILITIES ACT OF 2017**

### **TITLE I: COUNTERING RUSSIAN CYBER INTRUSIONS**

On January 6, 2017, an Intelligence Community Assessment entitled "Assessing Russian Activities and Intentions in Recent U.S. Elections" assessed that "Russian President Vladimir Putin ordered an influence campaign in 2016 aimed at the US presidential election. The assessment warns that "Moscow will apply lessons learned from its Putin-ordered campaign aimed at the U.S. Presidential election to future influence efforts worldwide, including against U.S. allies and their election processes."

#### **Cyber Sanctions**

- The bill would impose mandatory visa bans and asset freezes those who undermine the cybersecurity of public or private infrastructure and democratic institutions.
- The bill would impose mandatory sanctions on those who materially assist, sponsor, or provide financial, material, or technological support for such activities.
- The bill would also impose mandatory sanctions on transactions with the Russian defense or intelligence sectors, including the FSB and GRU.
- The bill also codifies the administration's Executive Order 13694 and its related annex regarding cyber security and Russian interference in the 2016 election.

### **Public Service Campaigns Related to Cybersecurity and Combating Disinformation**

- The bill mandates that the Secretary of Homeland Security conduct a series of public service campaigns to educate the public on threats to cybersecurity and urging better online practices to ensure better protection of online information.
- The bill authorizes \$25 million for fiscal years FY18 and FY19 for this programming.

### **TITLE II: COUNTERING RUSSIAN AGGRESSION**

Russia continues to violate its international commitments by its 2008 invasion of Georgia, 2014 illegal annexation of Crimea in 2014, its ongoing destabilizing activities in eastern Ukraine. Russia has failed to comply with the terms of the Minsk Agreement and Protocol. In Syria, Russia has provided support to the Assad regime and engaged in a devastating military campaign which has targeted hospitals and medical facilities, resulting in thousands of civilian casualties.

#### **Ukraine/Syria-related sanctions**

- The bill would codify the four Obama Administration executive orders (EOs 13660, 13661, 13662, 13685) with respect to sanctions on Russia for its actions in Ukraine.
- The bill would mandate sanctions on investments of \$20 million or more in Russia's ability to develop its petroleum and natural gas resources.
- The bill would mandate sanctions the development of Russian energy pipelines.
- Similarly, the bill would impose mandatory sanctions on investments in the development of civil nuclear projects by the Russian Federation.
- The bill would impose mandatory sanctions on U.S. and third party investment in Russian privatization of state-owned assets and sales of sovereign debt.
- The bill would impose visa ban and asset freezes on those responsible for the commission of serious human rights abuses in any territory occupied or controlled by Russia.

#### **Crimea/Georgia related provisions**

- The bill would not recognize Russia's territorial changes effected by force alone. It would also prohibit any action or extend any assistance that recognizes or implies any recognition of the de jure or de facto sovereignty of Russia over Crimea, its airspace, or its territorial waters or the independence of South Ossetia or Abkhazia in Georgia.

### **TITLE III: EUROPE AND EURASIA DEMOCRACY AND ANTI-CORRUPTION INITIATIVE**

Russia has sought to exert influence throughout Europe and Eurasia by overtly and covertly providing resources to political parties, think tanks, and civil society groups that sow distrust in democratic institutions, promote xenophobic and illiberal views. The Russian government has also engaged in well-documented corruption practices as a means toward undermining and buying influence in these European countries. This bill would support programs that build the resilience of democratic institutions in Europe against Russian aggression exerted through corruption, propaganda and other forms of political interference.

#### **Report on Advertising on Russian State-owned or Controlled Media.**

The bill mandates a report by the Secretary of State detailing media outlets controlled and funded by the Russian government as well as their advertisers with headquarters in the United States.

#### **Europe and Eurasia Democracy and Anti-Corruption Fund**

The State Department, Global Engagement Center and USAID are mandated to provide support for programming to:

- improve democratic governance, transparency, accountability, rule of law, and combat corruption, including by strengthening democratic civil society and political parties, and independent and nonpartisan think tanks;

- support the efforts of independent media outlets and public broadcasters to broadcast, distribute, and share information in all regions;
- support objective, Russian-language, independent media, investigative journalism, and civil society watchdog groups working to combat corruption;
- promote and protect Internet freedom;
- support, as appropriate, the operations and activities of national anti-corruption and auditing offices;
- support programs that strengthen independent judiciaries and prosecutor general offices;
- strengthen cybersecurity practices of governments and civil society organizations;
- support research and analysis on the effects of information warfare on target audiences and best practices for promoting resilience;
- support evidence-based civic education and advocacy programs to strengthen resilience to misinformation;
- encourage cooperation with social media companies to strengthen the integrity of information on the Internet; and
- support programs to counter “fake news”.
- The bill would authorize \$100 million for these activities.

#### **Establishment of a Russia Unit in the Financial Crimes and Enforcement Network**

The bill mandates that the Secretary of Treasury establish a high level task force within the Department’s Financial Crimes and Enforcement Network that would focus on:

- tracing, mapping, and prosecuting illicit financial flows linked to the Russian Federation if such flows interact with the United States financial system;
- working with liaison officers in key United States embassies, especially in Europe, to work with local authorities to uncover and prosecute the networks responsible for the illicit Russian financial flows; and
- seeking to expand the number of real estate geographic targeting orders beyond the number of cities to which such orders apply to capture more links to illicit financial flows.

#### **Sunset Provision**

- The bill would sunset ten years after enactment.

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