



Durbin, 10 bipartisan senators introduce comprehensive Russia sanctions legislation

January 11 2017 11:16 AM

WASHINGTON—U.S. Senator Dick Durbin (IL-D) joined Senators John McCain (R-AZ) and Ben Cardin (D-MD) to introduce comprehensive sanctions legislation on Russia for their cyber intrusions, aggression, and destabilizing activities here in the United States and around the world.

“Russia struck at the heart of American democracy with its cyberattacks last year,” said 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.”**

Original cosponsors of the legislation include U.S. Senators Robert Menendez (D-NJ), Lindsey Graham (R-SC), Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH), Marco Rubio (R-FL), Amy Klobuchar (D-MN), Ben Sasse (R-NE), and Rob Portman (R-OH).

[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.