The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Navalny Proposes Sanctions List to the West

By Christopher Brennan

March 20, 2014

Alexei Navalny has written an op-ed for the New York Times in which he calls for sanctions on officials and businessmen connected to President Vladimir Putin.

Opposition leader Alexei Navalny, currently under house arrest in connection with a criminal case against him, has written an op-ed for the New York Times in which he calls for sanctions on officials and businessmen connected to President Vladimir Putin.

Saying that previous U.S. and EU sanctions in response to Russian military forces in Crimea were "mocked" and acted as "tacit encouragement to Mr. Putin and his entourage," Navalny urged further sanctions "freezing the oligarchs' financial assets and seizing their property."

Navalny's suggested sanctions list included billionaire businessmen Gennady Timchenko, Arkady and Boris Rotenberg, Yury Kovalchuk, Roman Abramovich, Alisher Usmanov, Russian Railways head Vladimir Yakunin, Gazprom head Alexei Miller and Rosneft CEO Igor Sechin.

The opposition leader, whose blog was recently blocked for presenting "extremist material," also urged the West to place sanctions against owners of pro-Kremlin media personalities and United Russia "apparatchiks."

Russia's annexation of Crimea, "has polarized members of Russia's elite, many of whom view it as reckless" Navalny said, adding that "blocking access to their plush London apartments will show that Mr. Putin's folly comes with serious costs." He also speculated that sanctions against wealthy businesspeople would be welcomed by most Russians.

On Thursday Navalny's blog published the results of a poll in which the largest percentage of respondents, presumably his readers, said that businessmen close to Putin — like Timchenko and the Rotenbergs — should be sanctioned. Despite Navalny's LiveJournal blog being blocked for extremism, other opposition bloggers have reposted the activist lawyer's material on their own websites.

Navalny has become a leading figure in the anti-Kremlin opposition after investigating official's corruption and said in his op-ed ,"in 90 percent of those cases, Russian money was laundered in the West." In September he ran for Moscow mayor and received 27 percent of the vote.

Late last month a Moscow district court ruled that Navalny had violated travel restrictions imposed on him as part of a fraud case that observers believe to be politically motivated, confining the politician to house arrest.

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Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2014/03/20/navalny-proposes-sanctions-list-to-the-west-a33162