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FIFA Should Expel Russia From Soccer World Cup, U.S. Senator Says

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The Russian delegation celebrate after winning the right to host the soccer 2018 World Cup.

A U.S. senator has said that the world soccer's governing body FIFA was wrong when it refused to kick Russia out of this year's World Cup and bar it from hosting the tournament in 2018 over its occupation of Crimea.

"FIFA suggests that outrageous misbehavior by member states does not matter because such decisions are irrelevant to soccer," U.S. Senator Dan Coats said Wednesday.

In a letter to Coats and another Republican senator, Mark Kirk, FIFA said World Cup participation is based on sporting merit, and that only a violation of FIFA statutes and regulations could lead to suspension or expulsion from a competition.

Coats noted that Yugoslavia was banned from international competition in 1992 and 1994 because of its behavior during the Balkan wars, a matter unconnected to the playing field.

"I continue to call upon FIFA leadership to impose the same punishment on Russia," Coats

said.

Coats and Kirk wrote to FIFA on March 7 asking it to convene an emergency session to consider suspending Russia's membership, strip it of its right to host the World Cup in four years, and deny the Russian national team the right to play in Brazil.

Two Russian lawmakers shot back a few days later, calling on Blatter to expel the U.S. from the World Cup finals.

Among other things, the deputies from the State Duma, Alexandr Sidyakin and Mikhail Markelov, cited aggressive American actions against Yugoslavia, Iraq and Libya, as well as attempts to encroach on Libya.

This year's World Cup will be staged in Brazil from June 12 to July 13. The U.S. could meet Russia in the knockout round of the competition if they both advance from their groups.

The U.S. are in Group G with Ghana, Portugal and Germany, while Russia will play in Group H with Belgium, South Korea and Algeria.

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