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Kremlin Says Putin Did Not Discuss Cutting Russia Off From the Internet

By The Moscow Times

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President Vladimir Putin did not discuss plans to cut off the Russian Internet from the global network in a security council meeting on Monday, Kremlin press secretary Dmitry Peskov was quoted as saying by RIA Novosti.

On Friday, news reports said the plan would be on the table, as Russia deals with escalating Western sanctions in response to Moscow's actions in Ukraine.

"Discussions on cutting off [the Russian Internet] from the global Internet were not on the agenda of today's meeting of the Security Council," Peskov said.

Instead, Peskov said, Putin and the Security Council discussed the threat posed by the IS militant group ravaging the Middle East and how to combat the spread of the Ebola virus.

Business daily Vedomosti on Friday said the Russian government was interested in setting up

a kill switch that would enable authorities to sever Russia's Internet from the global network in the event of a cyber attack from abroad, war, or civil unrest at home.

Peskov on Friday denied that Moscow was planning to cut itself off from the World Wide Web, but said the government was aiming to bolster its national security by ensuring the Russian Internet could function as a sovereign unit if the West removed it from the global network.

Russian authorities have been gradually encroaching on Internet freedoms in recent years. This year, a controversial law was signed into place that would force foreign Internet companies to store Russian data on Russian soil, allowing the security services to have easy access to their citizens' Internet activity.

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