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Russian Senators to Snub U.S. Meeting of Bilateral Business Group

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At least nine members of the Federation Council have been sanctioned by Western governments over what the latter see as Russia's aggressive policies with regard to Ukraine.

Members of the upper chamber of the Russian parliament will boycott the U.S.-Russia Business Council's annual meeting, scheduled to take place on Oct. 14-15 in New York, over sanctions imposed against Russian officials, Izvestia newspaper reported Tuesday.

The decision was made by the Federation Council's International Affairs Committee and was announced by its acting chairman, Vladimir Dzhabarov, citing sanctions and the Foreign Ministry's recommendation that officials refrain from such trips, the newspaper said.

According to the committee's deputy chair, Andrei Klimov, the decision only regards official visits and does not impose any restrictions on senators' personal travel plans.

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"We have never observed great inter-parliamentary relations with the U.S., and attempts to jump at any chance to see the Americans right now don't seem right after our former colleague — a senator, and now the head of state — called Russia the second biggest threat facing the world after the Ebola virus," Klimov told Izvestia.

During his speech at the United Nations last week, U.S. President Barack Obama listed Russian actions in Ukraine as a threat to world stability, along with the Ebola pandemic in West Africa and the rise of radical Islamism in the Middle East.

In addition to spurning the U.S.-Russia Business Council meeting, the senators said they would not create a working group on cooperation with the parliament of Cyprus, saying it was controlled by the U.S.

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