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Obama Says Unity With Europe Should Trump More Sanctions Against Russia

By The Moscow Times

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U.S. President Barack Obama speaks during a meeting with the President's Export Council at the White House in Washington on Dec. 11, 2014.

President Barack Obama expressed caution on Thursday about the possibility of the United States adding more sanctions against Russia for its incursion into Ukraine because it could cause divide Washington and Europe.

With some lawmakers on Capitol Hill considering more sanctions, Obama told the President's Export Council that the current path he is taking, in which the United States operates largely in lockstep with Europe, eventually will force President Vladimir Putin to reconsider the wisdom of going into eastern Ukraine.

"The notion that we can simply ratchet up sanctions further and further and further and then ultimately Putin changes his mind, I think is a miscalculation," Obama said.

What ultimately will lead Putin to make a strategic decision, he said, is if Putin recognizes that Europe and the United States are standing together over the long haul.

"If they see that there aren't any cracks in the coalition, then over time, you could see them saying that the costs to their economy outweigh any strategic benefits that they get," he said.

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