

Russia Needs McDonald's and Coca-Cola — Kudrin

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Former Russian Finance Minister Alexei Kudrin has leapt to the defense of McDonald's and Coca-Cola after a senior lawmaker suggested that they leave the Russian market because of Washington's clash with Moscow over Ukraine.

With Russia already set to enter deep recession this year, Kudrin slammed the proposal as economic self-harm.

“If high-tech U.S. companies limit their supplies because of political pressure from a few deputies, it will really hit Russian industry,” tweeted Kudrin, who served as the country's finance minister between 2000 and 2011.

Kudrin's comments came after Alexei Pushkov, the head of the Russian parliament's foreign affairs committee, tweeted on Thursday: “Don't McDonald's and Coca-Cola want to support [U.S. President Barack] Obama's sanctions and rid us of their products? They would stick to principles and we would be healthier.”

The United States imposed sanctions on Russia last year for its support of separatists in Ukraine, prompting counter-sanctions from Moscow and resurgent anti-American sentiment. The sanctions, combined with a fall in the price of Russian export oil, have paralyzed the Russian economy.

Kudrin on Friday condemned Pushkov's comments, saying the withdrawal of the companies would harm the local workforce and domestic suppliers.

“It seems Mr. Pushkov does not know that 85 percent of raw produce delivered to McDonald's comes from more than 160 Russian companies,” Kudrin said on Twitter.

He added in a separate message: “Coca-Cola buys more than 75 percent of its raw materials in Russia. Thousands of people would be left without jobs — a great anti-crisis program.”

Coca-Cola and McDonald's both have large businesses in Russia with outlets and infrastructure across the country. Both companies saw sales growth in the country slow in 2014.

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