

Kremlin: Russia Will Retaliate If G7 Nations Strengthen Sanctions

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov

Russia is prepared to retaliate against the Group of Seven leading industrial nations should they choose to toughen economic sanctions on Moscow, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov was quoted by news agency Interfax as saying.

“In the case of sanctions, Russia has repeatedly emphasized its commitment to the principle of reciprocity,” Peskov said. “Naturally, on the basis of reciprocity, any sanction actions will not be left without an answer,” he said Thursday.

Peskov was responding to a comment by U.S. Vice President Joe Biden, who said Wednesday that the United States and its G7 partners were prepared to significantly intensify sanctions against Russia for its continued involvement in the separatist conflict that has ravaged eastern Ukraine.

The G7 nations met for their 41st summit on June 7 and 8. Russia had been a member of the group, then known as the G8, from 1998, but its membership was suspended in March last year after Russia annexed Crimea from Ukraine.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel, who has become the West's point person for negotiating with Russian President Vladimir Putin throughout the crisis, said earlier this week that the G7 countries were prepared to strengthen sanctions against Russia if necessary, Reuters reported.

Merkel said sanctions will be expanded if Russia does not comply with its obligations under a Feb. 12 cease-fire agreement signed in the Belarussian capital of Minsk that was intended to freeze hostilities between the Ukrainian army and Russia-backed troops.

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