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Russia Concerned by Reports, Germany Sees Kremlin as 'Threat'

By The Moscow Times

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The Kremlin is worried by claims that Germany now sees Russia has a rival rather than a partner, the Interfax news agency reported Monday.

Presidential spokesman Dmitry Peskov said that the Russian government was troubled by newspaper reports claiming that changes to the country's "white book" – the document which outlines Germany's security strategy – had marked Russia out as a threat.

"If this information about the new edition of the "white book" is true, then this may cause both countries regret and concern," Peskov said, as cited by Interfax.

Any exclusion of Russia from Germany's list of partners indicates "an apparent lack of understanding of Russian position," Peskov said. He maintained that Russian policy was "not aimed at confrontation but at creation of the atmosphere of mutually beneficial cooperation on the European continent," Interfax reported.

German newspaper Die Welt reported on Saturday that the new version of the document states that Russia "is no longer Germany's partner, but its rival" and now is one of its main threats. The newspaper claims to have seen a draft copy of the document.

The report also states that Russia is "openly contesting the European order of peace established after the Cold War," noting Russia's "willingness to use force to promote its interests."

Russia is considered "to be turning away from the West, putting a focus on strategic rivalry, and is increasing its military activities on the EU's outside borders," the report states, as cited by Die Welt.

The document allegedly also maintains that Russia will remain a challenge to the European security unless it significantly changes its course.

The Kremlin's comment comes a day after United Russia lawmaker Irina Yarovaya linked the Die Welt reports and the recent decision to release a reprint of Adolf Hitler's book Mein Kampf.

"The proposal to declare Russian a threat to Germany looks ominous following the recent re-release of Mein Kampf," she said, as quoted by the RIA Novosti news outlet.

Mein Kampf, which is banned in Russia as an extremist work, was republished in Germany for the first time since World War II at the beginning of the year, when the copyright held by the federal state of Bavaria expired. The new three-volume edition includes annotations provided by German historians specializing in the Nazi period.

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