

U.S. Senate Pushes for New Committee to Hunt Russian Spies

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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The United States Senate is expected to vote by the end of July on the creation of an interagency intelligence committee designed to monitor and report on Russian espionage operations on American soil, the news website BuzzFeed reported Wednesday.

The committee would, among other things, be charged with “countering active measures by the Russian Federation to exert covert influence over peoples and governments,” according to the bill’s text, posted on the U.S. Congress website. The committee will report on Russian clandestine operations to [Congress](#).

The bill has already cleared the House of Representatives, and according to BuzzFeed is expected to be passed by the Senate before its annual recess in July. If passed into law, the President will be required to establish the committee and staff it with representatives from the State Department, the intelligence community and officials from executive branch. The House’s version of the bill lacks the specific mentions of Russia and the creation of a new intelligence committee found in the proposed Senate [version](#).

The Senate bill tasks the proposed committee with investigating Russian funding for non-government organizations, covert broadcasting, media manipulation and disinformation. The committee would also take measures to expose Russian corruption, human rights abuses and assassinations.

The bill also requires the FBI to approve any trips made by Russian diplomats that would require them to travel more than 50 miles from their U.S. posting. Diplomats could be denied the right to make a journey based on any previous misdemeanours by colleagues in the U.S.

Also found in the bill is a proposal to increase intelligence sharing with all members of the international Open Skies Treaty - designed to promote military transparency - with the exception of Russia and Belarus. Both nations are signatories of the treaty.

The proposed measure follows a spate of Russian spy scandals in the U.S. over the past several years. Most recently, a Russian banker working in the U.S. was sentenced to two-and-a-half years in prison in May after admitting to working as a spy.

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