The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

U.S. 'Preparing Response' to Russian Harassment of Diplomats

June 30, 2016



The U.S. Embassy in Moscow

The U.S. is "preparing a response" to claims that Russia has been harassing its diplomatic staff based in the country, the Interfax news agency reported Thursday.

Spokesman for the U.S. Embassy in Moscow Will Stevens said that the harassment and surveillance of diplomats by security forces and traffic police was "unacceptable." He said that the issue had been raised at the highest levels and was against international law, Interfax reported.

"The U.S. isn't interested in a public debate on this matter. We believe that the best course of action is to discuss this privately as governments," said Stevens. "We have made our concerns clear to Russian officials, and Secretary of State John Kerry discussed this issue with the Russian president on March 24 this year," he said.

The U.S. State Department has accused Russian intelligence services of "continuous

interference" with American diplomatic personnel. The Washington Post newspaper reported Wednesday that a Russian Federal Security Service guard beat up an American diplomat outside the embassy in Moscow when he tried to enter the building.

The newspaper also reported earlier in the week that Russian intelligence and security personnel had put mounting pressure on American diplomats, sometimes harassing or following them or paying journalists to write negative articles about them. Some diplomats reported that the security services had broken into their homes only to rearrange furniture, switch on lights, or in one incident defecate on the carpet.

The Russian Foreign Ministry has denounced the allegations, saying that they worsen relations between the two countries. Ministry Spokesperson Maria Zakharova also accused the FBI and CIA of provoking Russian diplomats stationed in the U.S.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2016/06/30/us-preparing-response-to-russian-harassment-of-diplomats-a53528