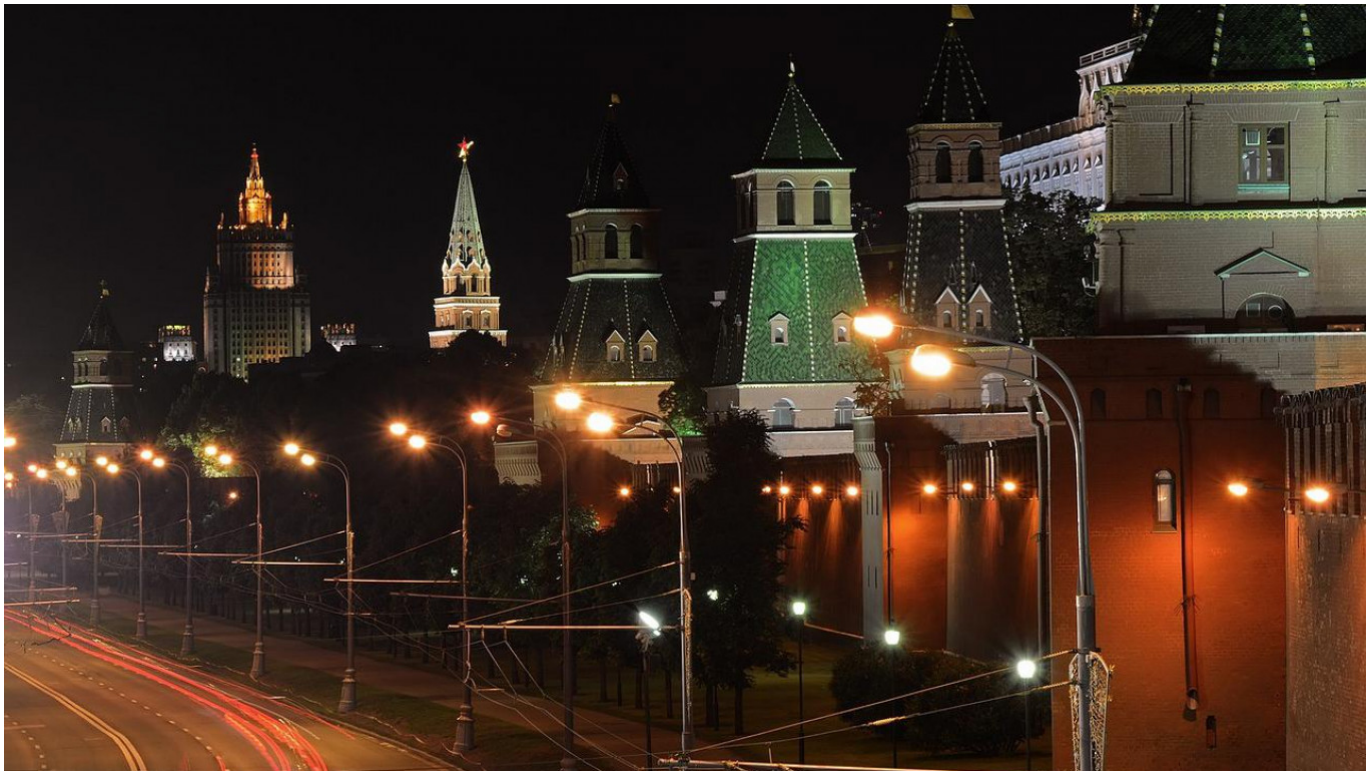
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INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

U.S. on 'Dangerous Path' With Hacking Claim 'Provocations,' Says Kremlin Official

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A top Kremlin official has accused theUnited States of deliberately “provoking Russia” with claims that the country carried out cyber-attacks on American institutions.

Andrei Krutskikh, the president's special representative on cyber-security, said that Washington had not formally approached the Kremlin on the issue,Interfax reported Tuesday.

"No appeals have been made via official channels,” Krutskikh said. “It suggests that the Americans are making these claims to impress a domestic audience."

Krutskikh called on Washington to begin bilateral talks, warning that the United States was on a “dangerous path.”

“Any provocation will not remainunanswered— and we have something to say," he said.

Several prominent Americans, including presidential candidate Hillary Clinton, have accused Russia of backing cyber-attacks. A hack of the U.S.Democratic National Committee (DNC) in July saw thousands of private emails leaked, and even caused some to claim that the Kremlin wished to meddle in the U.S. Presidential elections.

The Kremlin has denied all claims of its involvement in cyber-attacks againstU.S. institutions as “absurd” and “insulting.”

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