

White House Says Russia Sanctions Will Remain Until Crimea Returned to Ukraine

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U.S. Sanctions against Russia will remain in place until the Crimean peninsula is returned to Ukraine, [the White House has announced.](#)

Presidential Press Secretary Sean Spicer described the process of lifting sanctions as a “non-starter.”

“With respect to the sanctions that specifically deal with Ukraine and Crimea, I think that Ambassador Haley, [Washington's representative to the United Nations], has spoken very, very clearly about that,” Spicer told journalists on Wednesday. “Until Russia leaves Crimea, those sanctions are a non-starter.”

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A group of six U.S. senators [launched a bill on Wednesday](#) which would stop U.S. President Donald Trump from lifting sanctions against Russia without the approval of Congress.

The bill would force the Trump administration to prove that the Russian government was not “undermining” Ukrainian sovereignty before sanctions could be eased or lifted. The White House would also have to show that Moscow was not supporting cyber-attacks against U.S. institutions. Both houses of Congress would then have 120 days to reject the proposed changes.

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Republican Senator Lindsey Graham is one of the politicians backing the proposal. “To provide [sanctions] relief at this time would send the wrong signal to Russia and our allies who face Russian oppression,” he said in a statement. “Sanctions relief must be earned, not given.”

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