

Washington May Force Russia to Close Consulate Amid Diplomatic Spat

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Residence of the Russian Ambassador to the U.S. **Russian Embassy in the USA Press Service**

Washington could force Russia to shutter one of four consulates in the United States as part of an escalating diplomatic rift between the countries over fresh U.S. sanctions, the Kommersant newspaper [reported](#) on Friday citing unidentified sources.

Russian authorities on July 28 ordered the United States reduce the number of employees in its diplomatic missions in Russia to 455, equal to the number of Russian staff in the United States.

The Kremlin also seized two Moscow properties belonging to the U.S. embassy, including recreational cottages and warehouse on the capital's outskirts.

Moscow said the moves were in retaliation to the U.S. Senate bill signed into law by President Donald Trump on Aug. 2 that codifies sanctions against Russia over its alleged role in U.S. presidential elections in 2016.

Russia's Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov warned Washington in July against leveraging the spat to "spiral measures and countermeasures."

Ryabkov referred to Moscow's measures as "a response to illegal actions taken by U.S. and to the anti-Russian spree in the American Congress."

Kommersant's sources close to the U.S. State Department said that Washington considers the expulsions to be an unjustified escalation of the conflict.

Russia currently has four consulates on U.S. territory: in New York City, San Francisco, Seattle, and Houston.

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