The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Russian Foreign Ministry Spokeswoman Says Trump Might Not Serve Full Term

September 04, 2017



U.S. President Donald Trump may not serve out his four-year term, Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said on state television Sunday as bilateral ties continue to spiral following the eviction of Russian diplomats in San Francisco.

“Not all American presidents have reached the end of their term,” Zakharova told the host of the state-run Rossia-1 television channel Vladimir Solovyov. “It could be worth remembering, considering the government we are dealing with in today’s historical times."

Her comments to the channel’s flagship "Voskresny Vecher" (Sunday Evening) program followed on a remark from Solovyov that “no American president has ever gone this far.”

The comment marks a significant departure from the tone struck by Russian state media leading up to Trump's election.

The program aired two days after Russian diplomats vacated the consulate in San Francisco

on the U.S. State Department's orders. The move came after Moscow instructed the U.S. Embassy and consulates in Russia to cut their staff numbers by Sept. 1.

According to a White House statement, Trump personally ordered the consulate's closure.

Russia's Foreign Ministry this weekend accused the U.S. of a "blatantly hostile" takeover of both the San Francisco Consulate and the Russian annexes in Washington D.C. and New York. In a statement published on Sunday, the ministry demanded the immediate return of the seized diplomatic facilities, warning that otherwise the U.S. "will bear the total blame for the ongoing degradation" in bilateral ties.

"At present, U.S. special services supported by armed police are in control of the seized buildings," the statement said.

In the Sunday interview with one of Russia's leading propagandists, Zakharova said U.S. special services and law enforcement officials had warned Russian diplomats that they were searching for "explosives" at the San Francisco consulate. Footage published by the ministry on its Facebook page on Sunday purported to show FBI officials searching its San Francisco office.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov called the searches a "crackdown on international law."

Zakharova told Solovyov that "it is impossible to believe, but the State Department has made it understood, told us directly, that they expect us to sell the buildings to the U.S. government."

Asked about how Russia planned to respond, she said "the issue doesn't fall within my competencies and is not one to be answered today."

"This is definitely a black day in the history of American diplomacy," she concluded.

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