

U.S. Reportedly Pressuring Russia to Sell Shuttered Diplomatic Properties

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Stephen Lam / Reuters

Washington D.C. has repeatedly called on Moscow to sell its former consulate building in San Francisco after it was shuttered in September, the Kommersant newspaper [reported](#) Thursday.

The U.S. State Department ordered Russia on Aug 31. to close its San Francisco consulate and scale back operations in Washington D.C. and New York after the U.S imposed fresh sanctions on Moscow in early August.

U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson suggested to his Russian counterpart Sergei Lavrov that the diplomatic property be put on sale on numerous occasions behind closed doors, Kommersant reported, citing Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov.

The annexes in San Francisco and New York are both owned by Russia and according to American real-estate portal [Trulia.com](#) the San Francisco property could be sold for up to \$50 million.

Russian diplomats are not pleased with the proposal because they hope to reopen the San Francisco consulate, Kommersant reports.

Ryabkov and U.S. Undersecretary of State for Political Affairs Thomas Shannon discussed reinstating the properties in Helsinki earlier this week but made little progress, the deputy minister said.

Ryabkov reiterated Russia's plan to file a lawsuit against the U.S. for violating diplomatic immunity for using the "threat of force" during searches of the San Francisco property on Sept. 2. The Deputy Foreign Minister [said](#) Moscow would have a case prepared in a matter of weeks.

Russian President Vladimir Putin said earlier this month he would instruct the Foreign Ministry to take Washington to court for the "violation of Russia's property rights."

"Let's see how effective the widely praised American judicial system is," he added.

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