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White House Orders New Anti-Russia Sanctions Over Missile Control Violations

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Mike Pompeo and Donald Trump (Jonathan Ernst / Reuters)

U.S. President Donald Trump has ordered his administration to draw up new sanctions against Russian officials over arms control violations, adding to the expanding list of measures imposed against Moscow.

Russia has been hit by a series of international sanctions after its 2014 annexation of the Crimean peninsula from Ukraine and alleged interference in the 2016 U.S. presidential election. The latest U.S. sanctions targeted Russia's defense sector earlier this month for violating weapons of mass destruction non-proliferation rules for Iran, Syria and North Korea.

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On Wednesday, Trump ordered State Secretary Mike Pompeo to draft sanctions in accordance with an annual defense policy bill that lawmakers passed last year.

The bill accuses Russia of deploying a ground-based cruise missile in violation of the 1987 pact that bans testing and fielding missiles with ranges of 500-5,500 kilometers (310-3,417 miles), known as the INF Treaty. Russian officials deny violating the treaty and say that the missile in question can't fly that far.

Senior Russian government figures could face visa bans, transaction prohibitions and "any other sanctions the President determines to be appropriate" under the $700 billion bill that Trump signed in December 2017.

The draft sanctions should be published within two months after they are submitted to congressional panels, as prescribed by the 2018 National Defense Authorization Act.

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