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U.S. Eyes Closing 2 Remaining Russian Consulates – Kommersant

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Russia ordered the U.S. to close its consulate in St. Petersburg in 2018. **Dmitri Lovetsky / AP / TASS**

The United States is considering closing its two remaining consulates in Russia amid the coronavirus pandemic and continued bilateral tensions, the Kommersant business daily reported Monday, citing unnamed diplomatic sources.

The U.S. in March temporarily suspended operations at its Vladivostok consulate and reduced services at the Yekaterinburg consulate due to the Covid-19 outbreak.

Related article: U.S. Drastically Reduces Visa Services in Russia After St. Petersburg Consulate's Closure

According to Kommersant, the U.S. State Department "concluded that the situation will not get much better in the near future." Citing several unnamed diplomatic sources, it reported that one of the options under consideration is to fully close the Vladivostok and Yekaterinburg consulates.

The U.S. Embassy in Moscow has not yet commented on the report.

The U.S. drastically reduced visa services in Russia in 2018 after a series of tit-for-tat expulsions and consulate closures, including the closure of its St. Petersburg consulate.

Russian citizens seeking U.S. visas have faced wait times of up to one year due to the retaliatory measures over the poisoning of a former Russian spy in Britain and accusations that Russia interfered in the 2016 presidential election.

Russia's consulate in New York, meanwhile, announced Saturday it was temporarily closing due to a spike in coronavirus cases there.

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