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Russia's State Duma Speaker Demands USAID Funding Lists From Congress

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State Duma Speaker Vyacheslav Volodin. **duma.gov.ru**

Russian State Duma Speaker Vyacheslav Volodin on Tuesday called on Congress to disclose the names of individuals and groups that received U.S. funding in Russia so the country's law enforcement agencies could investigate them.

"We need to request lists from the U.S. Congress of those who were funded by USAID in Russia, then hand these lists to the FSB," Volodin said during a parliamentary session.

The Trump administration has taken steps to curtail the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), which distributes billions of dollars in humanitarian aid and democracy promotion initiatives worldwide.

Russia's Foreign Ministry last week welcomed cost-cutting measures by U.S. President Donald Trump and Elon Musk's so-called Department of Government Efficiency, calling USAID a "regime-change mechanism."

Volodin, a member of the ruling United Russia party, denounced USAID as a tool of "pseudo-democracy that fooled half the world" and claimed Russia's exiled critics would now be left without foreign funding.

"The only real democracy left is in Russia. Those who were funded from abroad should publicly apologize and seek penance on Red Square," he said to scattered applause from lawmakers.

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"The political parties, public organizations and activists that left hoping they'd be funded by USAID abroad will now go cold and hungry waiting to receive something. They'll get nothing," Volodin said.

USAID operated in Russia from 1992 until it was ordered to leave in 2012. The year Russia expelled the agency, it passed a law requiring all foreign-funded Russian NGOs engaged in political activity to register as "foreign agents."

The U.S. agency had spent more than $2.7 billion on Russia-focused humanitarian programs, with a third of that dedicated to promoting democracy.

Russian officials have repeatedly accused U.S.-funded NGOs of orchestrating protests that led to the ouster of political leaders in Ukraine and Georgia in the mid-2000s.

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