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Europe Says U.S. Scaled Back Russian Sanctions Evasion Enforcement – Bloomberg

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Donald Trump. **The White House**

The United States has reduced its participation in several working groups with European allies that focus on punishing Russia's evasion of Western sanctions that were imposed over its invasion of Ukraine, Bloomberg reported Friday, citing anonymous European officials.

Washington was "mostly unresponsive" in one group dedicated to stopping Moscow from obtaining military-grade parts and equipment, according to Bloomberg. The U.S. has also reportedly "gone quiet" in another group that focuses on enforcing the G7 price cap on Russian oil.

Junior U.S. officials with little decision-making power have attended some of the meetings, Bloomberg said.

Since taking office, U.S. President Donald Trump has made ending the war in Ukraine a key

policy objective and said he would sanction Russia for refusing to negotiate peace. Russian President Vladimir Putin has pushed for sanctions relief in exchange for agreeing to a ceasefire in Ukraine.

European officials said they have seen "little sign" of U.S. preparations to ramp up sanctions. But after Putin put forward his conditions for the U.S.-proposed 30-day ceasefire, Trump tightened sanctions by allowing a key license for energy payments via Russian banks to expire.

Bloomberg's report comes after Reuters, citing current and former U.S. officials, reported this week that the Trump administration halted his predecessor Joe Biden's multiagency effort to track and counter Russia's hybrid warfare campaign against the West.

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Like Reuters, Bloomberg said it was unclear if Washington had made the decision to pare back its involvement actively, or if it was experiencing a personnel shortage.

The Treasury Department declined to respond to the agency's request for comment.

The U.S. and its allies set up a number of working groups and task forces in 2022 to coordinate their sanctions enforcement efforts.

In his second term, Trump has thus far broken with Western efforts to isolate Putin, maintaining direct contact with the Kremlin and publicly clashing with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky.

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