

Russia to expand American 'blacklist' after new US sanctions

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The Trump administration said on Thursday that it was enacting the new sanctions on Russia, including individuals indicted in February by special counsel Robert Mueller.

Russian President Vladimir Putin

Moscow: Russia on Friday said it will expand its own "blacklist" of Americans in response to new US sanctions announced by the Trump administration.

The Trump administration said on Thursday that it was enacting the new sanctions on Russia, including individuals indicted in February by special counsel Robert Mueller, in a sweeping new effort to punish Moscow for its attempts to interfere in the 2016 US election.

Moscow will use "the principle of parity" as it responds, Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov was quoted as saying by Russian state news agency RIA Novosti. Additional measures were not ruled out, he said.

However, Ryabkov also said Russia did not want to close the window of dialogue with the US or the possibility of stabilizing bilateral relations.

"It is also worth thinking about that, destroying Russian-American relations," said Ryabkov. "These politicians play with fire, because they simultaneously undermine global stability."

In total, the Trump administration applied new sanctions on five Russian entities and 19 individuals, including the Internet Research Agency, a Russian troll farm that produced divisive political posts on US social media platforms during the presidential election, CNN reported.

Yevgeny Prigozhin, a financial backer to the Internet Research Agency with deep ties to Russian President Vladimir Putin, was also included.

The administration also disclosed a Russian attempt to penetrate the US energy grid and said the sanctions would punish actors for their participation in other major cyberattacks.

The sanctions were also slapped on two Russian intelligence agencies -- the Federal Security Service and the Main Intelligence Directorate -- as well as some of their employees.

The new sanctions would bar the individuals from travelling to the US and freeze whatever assets they may have in the country.

Prigozhin was quoted by RIA Novosti as saying that he "couldn't care less" about the latest US sanctions placed on him.

The new sanctions came as the US joined European allies in blaming Russia for a nerve agent attack on a former Russian spy in Britain, deeming the action a "clear violation" of international law.

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