

U.S. Names Oligarchs, Kremlin Elite But Avoids New Sanctions

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- Putin calls list 'unfriendly act' but says no retaliation yet
- Rosters mandated by 2017 sanctions law; don't impose limits

U.S. Identifies Russia's Richest as Oligarchs

The U.S. identified 210 Russian billionaires and top officials in a sweeping list required under last summer's sanctions law, but underlined that those named aren't being targeted for new restrictions.

The highly anticipated document, mandated by Congress over White House objections to punish Russia for alleged meddling in the 2016 election, had fueled alarm in Moscow and threatened to further escalate tensions between the Cold War rivals. The Treasury announced the list just ahead of a midnight deadline, emphasizing it doesn't mean those listed "meet the criteria for designation under any sanctions program."

Relieved investors pushed yields on Russian 10-year bonds to the lowest levels in five years as the Treasury provided no details on a separate report on the effect of expanding sanctions to Russian sovereign debt. The State Department told Congress Monday that provisions of the law affecting the defense and intelligence sector are having a deterrent effect, making new sanctions on dealing with them mandated by the law unnecessary.



The U.S. lists 96 of Russia's richest people as oligarchs. Bloomberg's Henry Meyer reports.

(Source: Bloomberg)

[Read more: The full list released by the U.S. Treasury](#)

Joking that it was "offensive" that he wasn't included, President Vladimir Putin told a campaign event that Russia will "refrain for the moment" from implementing serious retaliatory measures it has prepared. "In effect, all 146 million of us have been put on some list," he said, calling it "indisputably an unfriendly act."

ForbesList

In the weeks ahead of the release of the oligarch lists, Russian tycoons and officials had shown growing concern about the possibility they could trigger a new wave of tensions and possibly dissuade banks and other institutions in the U.S. and Europe from doing business with them. In the end, the rosters published by Treasury were broader and less targeted than some former officials who'd advised on the process had called for.

"By naming the whole Russian government, presidential administration and all Russian billionaires, the Trump administration has undermined and ridiculed the U.S. sanctions on Russia," Anders Aslund, an economist and frequent Putin critic who had published [recommendations](#) for the list before its release, wrote on Twitter.

The 96 tycoons matched the list of billionaires published by the Russian edition of Forbes magazine last year. Along with the 114 officials and state-company heads, they were compiled based on "objective criteria drawn from publicly available sources," the Treasury said.

Among business leaders, the list includes people already subject to sanctions because of their close ties to Putin, such as Arkady Rotenberg, as well as those seen as distant from the Kremlin, such as banker Oleg Tirkov and grocery tycoon Sergey Galitsky.

Government officials listed ranged from Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev and Energy Minister Alexander Novak to the heads of state companies and Kremlin representatives in Russia's regions.

Classified Supplements

The Treasury said it was submitting classified lists, as well, that could include tycoons and officials of lesser rank and wealth, but provided no further information.

Markets had been watching closely for the report on possible sanctions on sovereign debt, which has been an investor favorite, and found the signals Monday encouraging.

"We believe that the current U.S. approach significantly diminishes the risk of harsh measures against Russian sovereign debt over the short term," Societe Generale SA analysts led by Phoenix Kalen said in a note.

While privately some Russians included in the lists said they were so broad, an undercurrent of concern remained about what the impact might be.

"The power of U.S. sanctions is not in the specifics of people or companies blacklisted but in a simple message: those who want to do deals with Russians might have to deal with the United States," Dmitry Trenin, director of the Carnegie Moscow Center, wrote in Twitter.

Putin's spokesman Dmitry Peskov Monday accused the Trump administration of using the measure to try to influence the March 18 presidential election, in which the Russian leader is seeking to extend his almost two-decade-long rule.

— With assistance by Anna Andrianova, Nick Wadhams, and Saleha Mohsin

