

Hello HumanFont

The discussions that the president's former national security adviser, Michael T. Flynn, held with the Russian ambassador to the United States during the transition were also said to be about sanctions, including President Barack Obama's decision, in his last weeks in office, to evict Russia from two of its diplomatic compounds in the United States. Mr. Trump must soon decide whether to return them.

For months, lawmakers have agreed on the need to punish Russia, separating the issue from others, such as immigration and health care, that have been mired in partisan wheel-spinning. The unity has placed Republicans in the unusual position of undercutting their own president on a particularly awkward subject.

Yet politically, the collaboration delivers benefits to members of both parties. Democrats have sought to make Russia pay for its 2016 election interference which many of them believe contributed to Mr. Trump's triumph over Hillary Clinton. And Republicans, who have long placed an aggressive stance toward Russia at the center of their foreign policy, can quiet critics who have suggested they are shielding the president from scrutiny by failing to embrace the sanctions.

Senator Chuck Schumer of New York, the minority leader, said he expected this "strong" bill to reach the president's desk promptly "on a bipartisan basis."

In the House, Representative Steny H. Hoyer of Maryland, the minority whip, praised the agreement's stipulation that the majority and minority are able to exercise our oversight role over the administration's implementation of sanctions.

Representative Nancy Pelosi of California, the Democratic leader, registered concerns about adding sanctions against North Korea to the package, questioning whether it would prompt delays in the Senate. Mr. Schumer and Mr. Cardin expressed no such anxieties on Saturday.

As House Republican leaders like Mr. Ryan chafed at the suggestion that they were doing the White House's bidding by not taking up the measure immediately, the administration sought to pressure members by insisting that the legislation would unduly hamstring the president.

Mr. Trump's aversion to sanctions targeting Russia is not new. During the campaign, he questioned whether the United States should retain existing sanctions on Russia, imposed after Mr. Putin seized Crimea from Ukraine.

Under the wording in the legislative deal, it would be difficult, but not impossible, for the president to undercut sanctions without congressional approval.

The administration could stall in identifying individuals and companies subject to new sanctions. To lift existing sanctions related to Ukraine, Mr. Trump would have to certify that the conditions that prompted them had been reversed.

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And to end sanctions over Russian cyberattacks, he would have to provide similar evidence that Russia had tried to reduce the number and intensity of such intrusions, an unlikely prospect.

Mr. Trump still regularly questions the intelligence showing that Russia sought to interfere in the election. He has suggested that because evidence was processed by people he deems hostile to his White House - including Obama administration officials and James B. Comey, the former F.B.I. director he fired - the conclusion is inherently tainted.