

On July 27, the US Congress passed a new bill on tougher anti-Russia sanctions. This measure is further proof of the United States' extremely hostile foreign policy. Hiding behind its own "exclusiveness", the United States arrogantly ignores the stances and interests of other countries.

It is common knowledge that the Russian Federation has been doing everything in its power to improve bilateral relations, to encourage ties and cooperation with the US on the most pressing issues on the international agenda including fighting terrorism, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, illegal drug trafficking, illegal migration, cybercrime, etc. Our understanding has been that we can only solve these global problems if we work together. We believe the majority of people in the world share this approach.

Meanwhile, the United States is using Russia's alleged interference in its domestic affairs as an absolutely contrived excuse for its persevering and crude campaigns against Russia. This activity contradicts the principles of international law, the UN Charter, WTO regulations and, simply, the common standards of civilised international communication.

The United States continues to pass more unlawful sanctions against Russia, to seize Russia's diplomatic property, which is formalised in binding bilateral documents, and to deport Russian diplomats. This is clearly a violation of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations and generally recognised diplomatic practices.

The adoption of the new sanctions bill is an obvious indication that relations with Russia are in thrall to the political infighting in the United States. Moreover, the new bill sets to a goal to create a dishonest competitive advantage for the US in the global economy through the use of political means. This blackmail aimed at restricting Russia's cooperation with its foreign partners threatens many countries and international businesses.

Despite Washington's constant outbursts, we have adhered to responsible and reserved behaviour and have not responded to express provocations until now. However, the latest events confirm that certain circles in the US are fixated on Russophobia and open confrontation with our country.

- Therefore, we suggest our American counterparts bringing the number of diplomatic and technical staff at the US Embassy in Moscow, the consulates general in St Petersburg, Yekaterinburg and Vladivostok, into strict correspondence with the number of Russian diplomats and technical staff currently working in the United States, until September 1, 2017. This means that the total number of American diplomatic and consular office employees in the Russian Federation must be reduced to 455 people. In the event of further unilateral action on behalf of US officials to reduce the Russian diplomatic staff in the US, we will respond accordingly.

- Starting August 1, the use of all the storage facilities on Dorozhnaya Street in Moscow and the country house in Serebryany Bor will be suspended from use by the US Embassy.

Russia reserves the right to resort to other measures affecting US' interests on a basis of reciprocity.