

Duma mulls new bill to define and punish 'aggressor nations'

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The bill, prepared by United Russia MPs Evgeny Fyodorov and Anton Romanov, together with the 'Parliamentary Sovereignty' group uniting representatives of all State Duma parties, seeks to amend several existing laws, such as the Law on State Contracts and the Law on Audit.

Lawmakers want to give the Russian government the powers to form and approve a list of 'aggressor nations' – countries where authorities introduce sanctions against Russia, its citizens or companies.

Once some country is included in this list, all its citizens, permanent residents and companies registered on its territory automatically lose the right to deliver legal services, business consultancy and financial audits on Russian territory. The Russian government also will be able to lift some of the sanctions or introduce additional restrictions on business activities on such people and companies if such necessity arises.

Fyodorov has told the mass circulation daily Izvestia that the list would definitely include all six major US auditing and consulting companies that work in Russia – Deloitte, KPMG, Ernst and Young, Price Waterhouse Coopers, Boston Consulting and McKinsey. He added that, in his view, some restrictions on these companies could be introduced straight away, as the State Duma will only consider the bill in autumn and some government contracts need to be signed before that.

The MP is known for similar suggestions made earlier this year. In June, [he claimed](#) that the

lower house was preparing a bill that would completely ban state-owned companies from using the services of US consulting firms and their subsidiaries. Prior to that he suggested outlawing the use of US accountancy firms to financially audit state corporations.

The MP has claimed that foreign consultants were secretly lobbying the interests of their own states and this caused the Russian economy’s slow growth. He also noted that the consulting firms were not helping Russian banks to set up their own management schemes, but simply appointed management, often building the dependency from external interventions.

The lawmakers’ latest move was welcomed by the head of the Russian Institute for Problems of Globalization, Mikhail Delyagin, who said that any corporation, even the largest one, has to be loyal to the country where it is registered and is likely to execute some of its government’s secret orders, without publicly acknowledging this fact.

*“Some countries, like the USA, have the practice of specialists’ rotation – they leave business positions for government posts and vice versa. Any senior manager of a major US consulting company can one day assume a senior position in the CIA, for example, and later go back to business administration,”* Delyagin told Izvestiya.

However, Delyagin noted that it would be better to strictly define the definition of aggressor nation and the Russian sanctions against it in the law, in order to relieve the government from additional workload.

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