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From BusinessWeek.com | Original Article

Russia barred 11 serving and former U.S. administration officials for human rights abuses at facilities including Guantanamo Bay and the Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq.

The ban on entry to Russia was enacted last year in retaliation for a U.S. visa ban for 11 Russian officials accused of playing a role in the death of anti-corruption lawyer Sergei Magnitsky, President Vladimir Putin's top foreign policy adviser, Yuri Ushakov, said in an e-mailed statement.

"These people are linked to high-profile human rights abuses, including torture and abuse of detainees in special prisons set up by the Pentagon and the Central Intelligence Agency in Guantanamo, Bagram in Afghanistan and Abu Ghraib in Iraq," Ushakov said. Russia hadn't previously made public the exact nature of its response to the U.S. visa ban, which was announced in July last year.

Russia is warning of further steps if Congress passes a law that would impose U.S. travel and financial curbs on any official abusing human rights in Russia, including all 60 people suspected of involvement in Magnitsky's death in a Moscow jail in 2009. Ushakov criticized what he termed as an "anti- Russian" step that would complicate ties as Putin and U.S. President Barack Obama prepare to meet on the sidelines of the Group of 20 summit in Mexico.

The U.S. Supreme Court in December 2009 refused to revive a lawsuit against former Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld and other military leaders by four British men who said they were tortured while imprisoned at Guantanamo Bay, a detention center at the U.S. military base in Cuba. Abu Ghraib photographs showing U.S. guards mistreating inmates surfaced in 2004.

Deviant Behavior

Rumsfeld spoke of “disgusting deviant behavior” by guards at Abu Ghraib while praising Guantanamo as an “exceedingly well-run prison” in an interview with Fox News in February last year.

The House Foreign Affairs Committee on June 7 approved the legislation targeting Russian officials guilty of human rights abuses. Congress will vote on the measure at a later date.

The U.S. administration will no longer seek to prevent Congress from passing the bill, U.S. Trade Representative Ron Kirk said June 7 in Moscow. “You’d be hard pressed to find anyone who would bet against Congress expressing their concerns on the Magnitsky matter in some way,” Kirk said.

The Obama administration is seeking to repeal trade restrictions with Russia to prevent U.S. companies from being penalized once Russian membership of the World Trade Organization takes effect later this year. A bipartisan group of senators has made a repeal of the 1974 Jackson-Vanik amendment conditional on imposing sanctions on Russian officials for human-rights violations.