

U.S. 'Fueling' Georgian 'Revanchism'

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In the latest friction to the U.S.-Russia "reset" in relations, the Foreign Ministry on Monday criticized a U.S. Senate resolution calling for Moscow to withdraw troops from Georgia's breakaway regions, saying it fueled a "revanchist mood" in Tbilisi.

The resolution reiterates Washington's long-standing call for Moscow to comply with the terms of a cease-fire ending its five-day war with Georgia in 2008 and withdraw troops from the breakaway regions of South Ossetia and Abkhazia.

Russia, which recognized the two Georgian territories as independent following the conflict, maintains its right to base soldiers there.

"The new resolution on Georgia adopted by the U.S. Senate on July 29 sounds like a broken record. ... The latest resolution is no more than a PR exercise, undertaken in order to 'publicize' the 'Georgian story,'" the Foreign Ministry said in a statement on its web site.

"However, such statements are not without harm. They fuel the revanchist mood in politics in Tbilisi, justify and promote Georgia's unwillingness to cooperate."

The renewed friction comes days after the Kremlin criticized a U.S. State Department decision to slap travel restrictions on a group of Russian officials implicated in the jail death of Hermitage lawyer Sergei Magnitsky. The U.S. measure was an attempt to convince U.S. lawmakers to abandon harsher legislation under consideration that aimed to punish Russian officials implicated in several unsolved killings.

But President Dmitry Medvedev ordered the Foreign Ministry to draft a similar blacklist against U.S. citizens.

Also last week, The Washington Times and The New York Times newspapers reported that a classified CIA report has linked Russian intelligence services to a small bomb blast near the U.S. Embassy in Tbilisi last September.

Despite the tensions, analysts say it is too early to write off the reset, which U.S. President Barack Obama considers a hallmark of his time in office.

(MT, Reuters)

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