

U.S. Anticipates Further Sanctions Against Russia

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The U.S. State Department has said it anticipates more Ukraine-related sanctions on Russia but suggested that no action was likely before a diplomatic meeting in Geneva this week.

Russian, Ukrainian, U.S. and EU foreign ministers are due to gather on Thursday to discuss the crisis in Ukraine that comes after Russia's annexation of Crimea last month. The U.S. also accuses Moscow of fomenting unrest in eastern Ukraine, where Ukrainian military forces are seeking to regain control of sites seized by pro-Russian separatists over the weekend.

"Thursday is the next opportunity to have a diplomatic discussion and I think it's safe to lean into the unlikelihood of making [sanctions] announcements before Thursday," State Department spokeswoman Jen Psaki said Tuesday at a news briefing.

A new round of U.S. sanctions against Russia is likely to target influential people or companies in sectors such as energy, engineering and financial services, as spelled out in an executive order issued by President Barack Obama last month.

"They're all on the table," Psaki said.

However, the new sanctions are not expected to hit industrial sectors as a whole, diplomats said.

One Western diplomat said European nations including Germany are reluctant to impose sanctions targeting entire sectors absent an outright Russian invasion of eastern Ukraine.

Among other factors, there are fears that wide-ranging sanctions could hurt vulnerable European economies.

The diplomat, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said such sectoral sanctions could range, at the low end, from limiting technology transfers to Russia, to curbs on military sales, up to much more dramatic sanctions to squeeze its energy exports.

The U.S. has imposed three rounds of sanctions as a result of the unrest in Ukraine and the Russian annexation of Crimea, though it has so far shied away from sectoral sanctions.

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