

## **New US Sanctions to Be Directed at Putin Personally, Piontkovsky Says Opinion**

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**“...seizing the assets of Putin and other Russians held abroad via the new sanctions law will help promote the necessary changes in Russia and bring closer the day these assets can be returned.**

By Paul Goble for “Window on Eurasia”: Nov 19 – The United States is now prepared to impose “sanctions in the harshest possible form,” Andrey Piontkovsky says, thus directly affecting not only the business and political entourage of Vladimir Putin but also -- and in ways that change the nature of the game -- the Kremlin leader himself. On Youtube yesterday, the émigré Russian analyst says it is his impression that the August 2 sanctions law will be carried out “in the harshest possible form” and that “what is the most revolutionary aspect of the law” is that “this will be the first case when the head of the Russian state will turn up on this list” ([youtube.com/watch?v=xvbRqX5fYG0&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xvbRqX5fYG0&feature=youtu.be)). The inclusion of Putin on this list is significant, Piontkovsky says, because normally such sanctions are imposed only on “absolutely hardened rogues and criminals like Milosevich, the Sudanese president, someone from Equatorial Guinea and so on.” For Putin to be on this list and for the Americans to put him there is thus a breakthrough. He adds that US President Donald Trump, although he has opposed this measure despite signing it, “will not be able to interfere with the imposition of sanctions. This is a government law, and any effort to sabotage it” will have the most serious consequences for the incumbent of the White House. In other comments, Piontkovsky argues that the approximately one trillion US dollars in illegal earnings of Russians now stashed abroad must be returned to “the first post-mafia government of Russia,” something requiring more changes in Russia than just a move to a “post-Putin” one. It is a mistake to over-personalize things in the Russian case, he suggests. Putin may leave office but “the essence of this mafia system will not change” as a result by that alone. But seizing the assets of Putin and other Russians held abroad via the new sanctions law will help promote the necessary changes in Russia and bring closer the day these assets can be returned.   

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The commentary above is from Paul Goble’s “Window on Eurasia” series and appears here with the author’s permission. Contact Goble at: [paul.goble@gmail.com](mailto:paul.goble@gmail.com)