

U.S. Will Not Lift Sanctions if Situation in Belarus Doesn't Change



The United States chargé d'affaires in Belarus Jonathan Moore commented on the situation with U.S. sanctions against Lukashenka's regime.

When taking a decision on sanctions against Belneftekhim Belarusian state-owned company in March 2009, the US will take into consideration the fact the situation in Belarus hasn't changed over the last six months," the US chargé d'affaires in Belarus told in an interview to PRIME-TASS.

Earlier, in September 2008, the Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) decided to allow transactions between US persons and entities and Lakokraska OAO and Polotsk Steklovolokno OAO for a period of 180 days.

Washington hasn't yet decided on sanctions (after March 2). But if the situation in Belarus remains the same it was in September 2008, a decision won't most likely change, the diplomat said.

Mr Moore stresses that if the Belarusian authorities took more active positive steps, reaction of the US administration would be far more positive.

The chargé d'affaires also noted that the information about US sanctions against Belneftekhim state-run company would be issued by the US Department of the Treasury. Jonathan Moore

added it would happen by March 2.

The US suspended sanctions against Lakokraska OAO and Polotsk Steklovolokno OAO in September 2008, because the Belarusian authorities released three political prisoners.

On November 13, 2007, the US Department of the Treasury froze accounts of the company in the United States and its branches in Germany, Latvia, Ukraine, Russia and China, as well as accounts of Belneftekhim USA Inc.

In response, Belarus recalled Belarusian ambassador to the US Mikhail Khvastou for consultations on March 7, 2008. At the same time Belarus strongly recommended US ambassador Karen Stewart to leave Belarus. She did it on March 12.

Besides, Belarus demanded that the US should reduce its embassy staff in Minsk and cut the staff of the Belarusian embassy in the United States.

Source [Charter97](#).