

U.S. senator seeks dialogue with Russian legislators

August 6, 2018

U.S. Republican Senator Rand Paul said here Monday that the main purpose of his visit to Russia is to establish and develop dialogue between the lawmakers of the two countries.

"We are interested in cooperation with the Russian Federation, especially with the legislative bodies, because we have common problems, common tasks," Paul was quoted as saying by a press release of the Federation Council, the upper house of the Russian parliament.

Paul headed a U.S. delegation, which includes member of the Texas State Senate Don Huffines and representatives of the Cato Institute, a public policy research organization.

The delegation met the Chairman of the Federation Council Committee on International Affairs Konstantin Kosachev and Vice Speaker of the Federation Council Vladimir Lukin.

The parties discussed issues of Russian-U.S. relations and prospects of inter-parliamentary relations, according to the press release.

"There are many differences in our approaches. Nevertheless, your position in favor of developing dialogue that equally meets the interests of the United States and Russia can not but inspire respect," Kosachev said.

Kosachev said the visit is especially valuable as some U.S. representatives are attempting to treat all contacts with Russian politicians as toxic ones.

The senior Russian lawmaker listed the main issues which should constitute the core of bilateral relations, including maintaining strategic stability, arms control and ensuring a further reduction of military tension.

Paul also met representatives of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the State Duma, the lower house of the Russian parliament, led by the committee's chairman Leonid Slutsky.

"The conversation with U.S. politicians was about resuming close cooperation between the Russian Federal Assembly and the U.S. Congress," Slutsky told reporters after the meeting.

He said the parties agreed to make efforts in the coming weeks and try to relaunch some kind of cooperation format as early as this autumn.

Slutsky added that his committee intends to continue discussion with the U.S. delegation at a luncheon on Tuesday.

He named the situation in Ukraine, Syria and disarmament issues as possible topics for the upcoming conversation.