

McCain Taunts Putin Over Protests

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U.S. Senator John McCain has again angered supporters of Prime Minister Vladimir Putin by describing Russia's nascent protest movement as an extension of the Arab Spring uprisings that have shaken and toppled governments across the Middle East.

"Dear Vlad, the #ArabSpring has arrived at a neighborhood near you," the Arizona Republican and former presidential candidate tweeted Sunday. He included a link to a New York Times article about Saturday's opposition protest, which drew tens of thousands.

The tweet provoked a sharp response from at least two senior United Russia officials including Andrei Vorobyov, the leader of the party's Duma faction, who described it as a "provocation," and called on Russians to resist foreign "meddling" from American officials he said were trying to incite revolution.

In a separate commentary on the ruling party's website, Deputy Irina Yarovaya wrote that McCain's tweet was a de facto admission that the United States is exporting "Orange Revolutions."

McCain has directed provocative remarks at Putin in the past. In 2007, he said he saw "K-G-

B" in Putin's eyes, and after the first large Duma protest in December, he tweeted to Putin that "the Arab Spring is coming to a neighborhood near you," leading Putin to publicly suggest that McCain was "nuts" after fighting in the Vietnam War.

During the 2008 U.S. presidential campaign, McCain called for Russia's expulsion from the Group of Eight industrial nations.

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