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# Leaked Audio Catches Top U.S. Official Cursing EU Over Ukraine

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Victoria Nuland has apologized to her EU counterparts for the "reported comments". **Voice of America**

The U.S. State Department has apologized for a profane comment supposedly made by a top official in a conversation about Ukraine's political crisis, but accused Russia of sinking to "a new low" by circulating a tape of the private phone call.

In the recorded conversation posted on YouTube this week, a voice believed be that of Assistant Secretary of State, Victoria Nuland, used a swear word to describe her frustration with the EU over its supposedly sluggish role in resolving the ongoing anti-government protests in Ukraine.

U.S. officials declined to confirm or deny the authenticity of the tape, but State Department spokeswoman Jen Psaki said Thursday: "I didn't say it was inauthentic. I think we can leave it at that."

Psaki said that Nuland — who is in charge of European and Eurasian affairs at the State Department — has apologized to her EU counterparts for the "reported comments."

In the slightly longer than 4-minute recording — that supposedly represents a phone conversation between Nuland and U.S. Ambassador to Ukraine Geoffrey Pyatt — two speakers discuss Ukraine's opposition leaders and talk about ways of persuading them to work a way out of the crisis with President Viktor Yanukovych.

The female speaker says that it would be "great" to get more involvement from the UN to "glue this thing." Then, she adds a graphic expletive to refer to the European Union.

The publication of the recording came amid Russia's accusations that the U.S. is meddling in Ukraine's affairs and supposedly bankrolling the opposition.

The video was posted by an anonymous user on YouTube with Russian captions, and carried a Russian-language title "Maidan's Puppets," in a reference to Kiev's Maidan Nezalezhnosti, or Independence Square, the main site of anti-government protests.

"Certainly we think this is a new low in Russian tradecraft in terms of publicizing, posting," Psaki said in comments published on the State Department website. "This is something they've been actively promoting, posting on, tweeting about, and certainly that we feel that represents a new low."

One of the first tweets about the video came from an aide to Russian Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Rogozin, shortly before midnight on Wednesday.

"Sort of controversial judgment from Assistant Secretary of State Victoria Nuland speaking about the EU," the tweet by the aide, Dmitry Loskutov, said.

Psaki did not directly accuse any Russian agency of surreptitiously recording the conversation or posting it on YouTube, but said that "obviously, they promoted this and were the first to tweet about it."

White House spokesman Jay Carney also stopped just short of accusing Russia of tapping the phone conversation, saying that as "the video was first noted and tweeted out by the Russian government, I think it says something about Russia's role," The Associated Press reported.

Ukraine has been gripped by a political crisis since last fall, when people initially took to the streets to protest the government's abandonment of a planned association deal with the EU in favor of closer ties with Russia. The protest soon took a wider political scope of calls for Yanukovych's resignation and a new election.

Russian officials have repeatedly accused the West of bankrolling the Ukrainian opposition, even though Moscow has offered a $15 billion aid package to Yanukovych's government.

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