

State TV Host Accuses Ukraine's Yanukovich of 'Betrayal'

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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A prominent Russian state television host said Sunday that ousted Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich had betrayed his people when he fled Kiev, an uncompromising verdict on a leader President Vladimir Putin had hoped would bring Ukraine closer to Moscow's orbit.

The remarks by Dmitry Kiselyov on Russia's main state channel indicate Moscow is unlikely to seek to restore Yanukovich to power despite its calls for implementation of a peace deal that, at least on paper, would keep him as president until a new election.

Kiselyov, who is known for elaborate, acid diatribes against the West, criticized the U.S. and the European Union over their roles in the upheaval in Ukraine but then set his sights on Yanukovich, saying he was ultimately to blame.

"The West is the West, but the head of state in any case always holds fundamental responsibility for his country," he said on his show "Vesti Nedeli," or News of the Week,

which aired after the closing ceremony of the Sochi Olympics on Russia 1.

"Viktor Yanukovych, holding the full array of presidential powers, was obliged to ensure the country's stability, to overcome the split, to decisively stop extremism," he said.

"Yanukovych turned out to be incapable not only of working out a state strategy, but even of formulating the real national interests of the country," said Kiselyov, to whom Putin awarded a medal this month and whose program is watched for clues to Kremlin policy and signs of how the government wants Russians to perceive events.

"Yanukovych only seemed amorphous; in reality he was taking action. The result: the real betrayal of the Ukrainian people, his partners and even — and this is completely low — his own police.

"The consequences are irreversible. Ukraine is one step from a split and probably already beyond the threshold of civil war," he said. "Now there is no such political factor in Ukraine as Yanukovych. He left behind ... anarchy."

Yanukovych triggered a deadly three-month standoff in the ex-Soviet republic when, under pressure from Russia, he shelved plans to sign political and trade deals with the EU in November and said Ukraine would seek closer ties with Moscow.

He signed a peace deal with opposition leaders on Friday after dozens of people were killed in fighting in Kiev, but he then fled the capital and lawmakers swiftly voted to oust him and name a temporary replacement. His whereabouts are unknown.

Russia, which promised Ukraine a \$15 billion bailout in December, had signaled last week that Yanukovych must restore order or risk losing Moscow's support, with Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev saying his government could not have full ties with a leader who was being tramped on like a "doormat."

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