

Russia Could Turn U.S. into 'Radioactive Ashes,' State TV Anchor Says

By [Anna Dolgov](#)

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Kiselyov speaking on his news program on state television on Sunday.

An anchor on state-run television threatened that Russia could "turn the U.S. into radioactive ashes" and showed a simulation of a Russian nuclear strike during his program on the U.S. response to Russia's interference in Ukraine.

Dmitry Kiselyov, who hosts a current affairs talk show on the Rossiya television network and heads a new Kremlin-backed news agency, accused U.S. President Barack Obama of supposedly dithering in talks with President Vladimir Putin, and suggested on his Sunday program that the U.S. leader was intimidated by his Kremlin opponent, who is "not an easy one."

"And Russia is the only country that could really turn the U.S. into radioactive ashes," Kiselyov said, against the backdrop of a mushroom cloud from a nuclear blast appearing on a huge screen behind him.

Kiselyov also suggested that threats of a nuclear strike were coming from the Kremlin.

"I do not know if this is a coincidence or what, but here was Obama calling Putin on Jan. 21 — probably, again trying to pressure somehow — and the very next day, on Jan. 22, the official media outlet of the Russian government ran an article that spelled out in simple terms how our system of nuclear response works," he said.

While Kiselyov's comment suggested that Obama's Jan. 21 call had to do with the Ukrainian crisis, an earlier statement from the White House said the U.S. leader spoke to Putin on that day to wish him a "safe and secure" Olympics in Sochi.

The Kremlin has unleashed a large-scale propaganda war over Moscow's takeover of Crimea and the peninsula's referendum on Sunday, in which more than 90 percent of voters cast supported seceding from Ukraine to Russia, according to preliminary results released by Crimea's pro-Russian administration.

The promotion by state-run television of the Kremlin's views has also helped Putin's approval ratings in the country to soar to 72 percent this month, a recent survey by the Levada pollster showed.

The number of respondents who said they would like to see Putin as Russia's president for a fourth term increased this month to 32 percent, from 26 percent in April, 2013, while the number of people who said they would like the job to go to a "person who proposes a different solution to Russia's problems" declined from 41 percent to 31 percent over the same period.

The poll, conducted on March 7-10 among 1,603 people around Russia, gave a margin of error of 3.4 percentage points.

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