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Senior Russian Politician Slams U.S. for Inciting Conflict in Kiev

By Peter Spinella

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LDPR leader Vladimir Zhirinovsky speaking at a plenary assembly of the State Duma on Tuesday.

Dressed in the camouflage uniform of an Army colonel, the firebrand leader of Russia's nationalist Liberal Democratic Party on Tuesday accused the United States of stirring up belligerent sentiments in Kiev.

The protest movement on Kiev's Independence Square "was set up by the United States ... so that Europe would smell the gunpowder," party leader Vladimir Zhirinovsky told the lower house of parliament, state news wire RIA Novosti reported.

Zhirinovsky added that as soon as people started dying in central Kiev, the U.S. and the European Union began conducting closed-door meetings about how to divvy up Europe, the report said.

He made the comments during a discussion of Ukraine's military preparations to quell pro-

Russia riots in that country's east.

He said the interim government in Kiev was planning to bring in "special forces, the Army and the National Guard" to suppress the secessionists, who have gained a foothold in several regional capitals.

Zhirinovsky, who is also an Army colonel, said he was wearing the uniform because the interim government, which he called a "military junta," had already changed their clothes into camouflage.

He singled out Ukrainian parliament speaker Oleksandr Turchynov as being part of the so-called junta.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov recently called Ukraine's decision to use force in suppressing the riots an "extremely dangerous development."

Lavrov earlier warned Kiev that it risks unleashing civil war by deploying troops in the country's east, where pro-Russian groups have occupied administrative buildings in several cities.

However, the U.S. ambassador to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe said last week that Russia had amassed "tens of thousands" of its own troops near the Ukrainian border.

Russian troops are "again not in their normal peacetime positions or garrisons," ambassador Daniel Baer said, comparing the reported military buildup to the spread of Russia-aligned forces throughout the former Ukrainian region of Crimea.

Moscow, which said that the troops in Crimea were actually members of a militia local to the majority ethnic-Russian region, went on to annex the peninsula to much outcry in the West.

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