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Ukraine Says Putin Is Destabilizing Country and Wants to Wreck Election

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KIEV — Ukraine's prime minister on Thursday accused President Vladimir Putin of building a terrorist network in Ukraine to destabilize it and wreck its presidential election next month.

Arseniy Yatsenyuk launched the broadside after Putin accused the Kiev government in his annual televised phone-in show of dragging Ukraine into the "abyss" and said Moscow might not recognize next month's Ukrainian election.

"Russia is playing only one game: further aggravation, further provocation, because the task that Putin today officially announced is to wreck the presidential election on May 25," Yatsenyuk told journalists in Kiev.

"There is only one person in the world who believes that there are no Russian troops in the east of Ukraine. His name is Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin.

"He again recounted the fairy tale that these are not his agents who he has sent here and who have created a terrorist network in Ukraine. But we have irrefutable evidence," Yatsenyuk

said.

Earlier, Ukraine's State Security Service, or SBU, said it was holding in detention about 10 Russian citizens, all of whom have intelligence backgrounds. They were being questioned, said an SBU spokeswoman.

Ukraine said Thursday that it would impose stricter border controls on Russian men trying to enter the country. Russian airline Aeroflot issued a statement indicating that men between the ages of 16 and 60 would be denied entry to Ukraine unless they had proof of a reason to visit, such as family ties or an invitation from a business or individual, or were traveling with their families.

Putin on Thursday acknowledged that Moscow responded to the overthrow of its ally, Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovych, in February by sending Russian forces to help seize Ukraine's Crimean peninsula and annexing it shortly afterwards.

The Ukrainian government has also accused Moscow of being behind the takeover of public buildings in at least 10 east Ukrainian cities by pro-Russian separatists, a charge Putin again denied.

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