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Kiselyov Defends TV Network After Caucasus Footage Labeled as Ukraine

By Anna Dolgov

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Dmitry Kiselyov, the deputy chief of the the All-Russia State Television and Radio Broadcasting Company.

The deputy chief of a pro-Kremlin television holding has dismissed as an "accidental error" his network's use of footage from a gunfight in the North Caucasus to illustrate supposed recent anti-Russian violence in eastern Ukraine, a news report said.

The footage — first used in a Rossia television report in 2012 about a clash between government troops and militants in the republic of Kabardino-Balkaria — resurfaced again on the network's prime-time Vesti program last week, this time as part of a report about supposed atrocities against pro-Russian civilians in Ukraine.

"Every day peaceful residents are dying," a Vesti correspondent said last week as the footage of a dead body lying in a fog-covered field appeared on television screens.

"Today near Slovyansk the [Ukrainian] National Guard gunned down a man. Weapons were ostentatiously left near the body, to show that it was an enemy they killed, but the [pro-Russian] resistance headquarters has already said that the victim was not a member of their self-defense units."

InfoResist.org, an online group run by Ukrainians to expose distortions by pro-Kremlin media, debunked the material as fake, after posting a clip of the 2012 program that used the same footage.

Dmitry Kiselyov, the deputy chief of the All-Russia State Television and Radio Broadcasting Company, which includes Rossia television, said the use of the old video from a different location was an "accidental error," the Slon.ru news portal reported Monday.

"The report had an error, but errors are possible," Kiselyov said. "I have not seen that report, but what it had was an error. An error but in no way a manipulation."

Since the start of the Ukrainian conflict, media analysts have accused state-run television of falsifying their reports to put a pro-Kremlin spin on their coverage.

"This is how they work: Relabel militants as resistance fighters, Kabardino-Balkaria as Slovyansk, and head over to the Kremlin to collect their medals and orders," opposition leader Boris Nemtsov said Monday in his blog on the Ekho Moskvy website.

Kiselyov said the latest fallacy may have been a result of a "computer error" or a mistake by the "young nymphs in video editing," Slon.ru reported.

He did not offer an explanation for how an editing or computer glitch may have led the Vesti correspondent to comment on the specific details of the footage, such as weapons lying near the dead body.

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