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Saakashvili Says Ukraine Could 'Conquer Russia,' Provoking Official Outcry

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Mikheil Saakashvil

Georgia's former President Mikheil Saakashvili told a Ukrainian television channel over the weekend that Ukraine's military could "conquer all of Russia," a remark that incited the ire of Russian officials.

Saakashvili was "born an idiot and will die one," Russian Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Rogozin, who oversees the country's defense industry, said in a Twitter post.

"Saakashvili is a clown at a corporate party chewing on his tie," Vladimir Markin, spokesman for Russia's federal Investigative Committee, said on Twitter, referring to a famous incident of Saakashvili nervously chewing on his tie before a 2008 television interview.

Saakashvili, who lost a five-day war with Russia over two breakaway regions in 2008, told Ukraine's 24 TV in an interview aired Saturday that Georgian officers working with the Ukrainian military said "the spirit of the Ukrainian soldiers is one of the best in world."

"If you give them the necessary knowledge, skills and weapons, they can conquer all of Russia," Saakashvili said, citing the unnamed "Georgian officers." The United States is "ready to provide drone aircraft and artillery."

U.S. Senator John McCain said Thursday that American lawmakers were writing legislation to send weapons to Ukraine even if the measure is not supported by President Barack Obama.

Ramzan Kadyrov, who heads Russia's Chechnya republic, called Saakashvili a "buffoon" in an Instagram post. "And what kind of buffoon does Poroshenko [Ukraine's president] have to be to listen to this idiot?"

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