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Matviyenko Calls Ukraine a 'Geopolitical Project of the U.S.'

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Federation Council head Valentina Matviyenko

The Ukrainian-born speaker of Russia's Federation Council has denounced her native land as a "geopolitical project of the U.S." and its citizens as being "unable to make a single independent decision," according to an interview published Monday in Russian newspaper Izvestia.

The speaker of Russia's upper house of parliament and a leader of the ruling United Russia party, Valentina Matviyenko, accused the U.S. of plotting to dominate Ukraine — a former Soviet republic — and of orchestrating the ongoing crisis in the country, said Izvestia.

"Ukraine is one of the geopolitical projects of the U.S.," she was quoted as saying. "The States for many years have massively worked over Ukraine's elite, nationalists, various kinds of radicals for the purpose of forming anti-Russian moods, cutting away Ukraine from Russia

and subjugating it to the West."

"Ukrainians themselves are today unable to make a single independent decision," she added.

Her remarks echoed the words of Russian President Vladimir Putin, who reportedly told U.S. President George W. Bush during the 2008 NATO summit in Bucharest that "Ukraine is not even a state!"

Matviyenko added that Ukrainians "are implementing the geopolitical line, which has been forced on them, instead of defending the interests of their country."

Such interests, according to Matviyenko, include a loyalty to Moscow. When Ukraine's previous, Russian-backed administration tried to reach an association agreement with the European Union two years ago, Moscow threatened economic reprisals and put political pressure on Ukraine's government, forcing it to abandon the deal.

The failed EU agreement brought thousands of Ukrainians to the streets, in protests that toppled the Moscow-backed administration of then-President Viktor Yanukovych.

The success of the protests — which Moscow officials described as "fascist" -— prompted Russia to annex Crimea last year under the guise of protecting the peninsula's Russian speakers, and led it to support pro-Russian separatists currently fighting Kiev government forces in eastern Ukraine.

Having for decades regarded Ukraine as its younger sibling, Russia accused Western nations of trying to take over Moscow's "sphere of influence," and accused Ukrainian leaders of failing to create a functional state.

"Ukraine is a country whose leaders in the post-Soviet period have failed to create stable state institutions and did not stand against the ideological and political aggression of the U.S.," Matviyenko was quoted by Izvestia as saying.

The Federation Council speaker was born in Shepetivka, Ukraine, when the country was still part of the Soviet Union.

She is one of the Russian officials under sanctions by the U.S. over the Ukrainian crisis.

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