

Russia's Top Investigator Sees U.S. Hand in Economic Crisis, Litvinenko Probe

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Investigative Committee head Alexander Bastrykin

Russia's top investigator Alexander Bastrykin has accused the United States of heralding in a new phase of “open confrontation” with Russia that has seen it undermine justice to damage Russian interests.

Bastrykin told a roundtable discussion at Moscow's All-Russian State University of Justice that the United States and its allies had waged a “hybrid war (economic, political, informational)” against Russia for two decades, a transcript of his speech on the Investigative Committee's website published Friday said.

“In the past years, this war has entered a new phase of open confrontation,” said Bastrykin. “Sadly, justice itself has become the victim of this hybrid war.”

Bastrykin cited the findings of a British-led inquest into the fatal poisoning of ex-KGB spy Alexander Litvinenko as an example of U.S. interference. The report published in January concluded that Russian President Vladimir Putin had “probably” approved the use of

polonium-210 to poison Litvinenko at a London hotel.

A court order on Yukos — the oil giant that was disbanded and its owner Mikhail Khodorkovsky imprisoned — and a Dutch report into the downing of MH17 were also cited as examples of U.S. influence by the investigator.

An investigation into the election of Russia as a World Cup host and the jailing of Russian arms trafficker Viktor Bout and pilot Konstantin Yaroshenko, provided further proof, Bastrykin said.

Bastrykin also blamed the United States for Russia's economic troubles — holding it culpable for a plunging oil price and economic sanctions imposed over Russia's role in the Ukraine crisis and its annexation of Crimea in March 2014.

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