

Security Council Chief Says Some Protesters Seeking Violent Crackdown

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Security Council head Nikolai Patrushev said the recent opposition rallies represent the beginnings of civil society but that some protesters are paid by Western governments and are seeking a violent crackdown by authorities as an excuse to revolt.

Patrushev thereby echoed allegations made by other high-ranking government officials, including Prime Minister Vladimir Putin, that some protesters are fulfilling the commands of foreign powers seeking to influence the political situation in Russia.

"Unfortunately, not everyone is satisfied with the peaceful and organized nature of the demonstrators' actions, insofar as their behavior does not give cause to accuse the authorities of 'mass repression of dissent,'" Patrushev said in an interview published Friday in Komsomolskaya Pravda.

"After all, it is just those kinds of accusations that are the typical pretext for 'color' revolutions and large-scale outside interference in the internal affairs of one or another country," he said.

Patrushev noted that Russians are taking to the streets to express their views and that most are interested in less extreme change.

"The demonstrations are evidence of the free activity of our citizens. They are not staying silent — they are expressing their opinion directly," he said. He noted that "the civil society that we talked about for many years but did not see is taking form."

"The absolute majority of people desire steady and constructive development of the political and economic system," Patrushev said.

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