

'NTV Lies' Enters Twitter Trends After Channel's Program on Opposition Rallies

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State-controlled TV channel NTV entered the top 10 worldwide trends on Twitter on Thursday evening, after drawing the ire of bloggers who slammed the channel for airing a documentary on recent opposition rallies that many said contained false information.

On Thursday evening NTV showed a program called "Anatomy of a Protest" that alleged that participants in recent opposition demonstrations have been paid to attend, echoing accusations made in the past by president-elect Vladimir Putin and pro-Kremlin commentators. Rally organizers have denied the allegation and shot back that events held in support of Putin have been attended by hired actors.

After the program aired, bloggers took to LiveJournal and Twitter en masse, with the hashtag "NTVlzhyot," or "NTV lies," becoming one of the top trending topics on Twitter.

"NTV, what kind of professional journalists are you? Lies, nonsense...," wrote Twitter user @Dimich_O.

Pro-Kremlin bloggers snapped back that the program had simply exposed rally organizers.

"Watched the sensational NTV program that I appeared in myself. Very cute: [U.S. Ambassador Michael] McFaul's liberals and office workers are outraged that they were caught red-handed," wrote blogger Eduard Bagirov on Twitter.

The program implies but does not state outright that the United States was behind payments it said were given to opposition demonstrators.

NTV showed another documentary in recent months accusing the U.S. of being behind supposed attempts to influence Russia's political situation. Before December's State Duma elections, the channel ran a program about independent elections watchdog Golos, which receives funding from the United States government. That program spawned the Internet meme "Surkov's propaganda," referring to former architect of the government's political policies Vladislav Surkov and his alleged role controlling coverage at state-run media outlets.

On Friday morning, the NTV website suffered a denial of service attack, NTV reported. The site opened without problems on Friday afternoon.

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