

Kremlin's Chief Propagandist Accuses U.S. of Using Doping Ban to Meddle in Russian Politics

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Dmitry Kiselyov / Screenshot Vesti

The United States is leveraging the International Olympic Committee (IOC) to ban Russian Olympians with the end goal of influencing Russia's upcoming presidential elections, the Kremlin's chief propagandist [said](#) this Sunday on his weekly talk show.

Four Russian skiers were [banned](#) for doping by the IOC last week ahead of next year's Winter Olympics in South Korea. President Putin claimed the ban was an attempt to discredit his government and undermine Russia's presidential elections next March.

"In response to our supposed interference in their elections, they want to cause problems in the Russian presidential election," Putin told reporters last week.

On his weekly Sunday night talk show Vesti Nedeli, Dmitry Kiselyov echoed the Kremlin's line.

“The Americans, figuratively speaking, have decided to step on all the pedals on the eve of our presidential elections in Russia, using any method possible,” he said. Only, Kiselyov added, “it’s unlikely their desired result will be achieved.”

Kiselyov’s Sunday night segment on doping hammered the point that the IOC is treating Russian Olympians unfairly.

“Our people feel the unfairness of this sharply,” Kiselyov said. “We remember of course that when our Paralympic team was unfairly banned two years ago from the summer games in Rio, everyone understood where the wind is blowing from.”

The IOC on Monday will consider whether to ban the Russian women’s hockey team ahead of the Pyeongchang games, according to Russian media. It will also consider whether to strip the gold medal-winning bobsled team of its medals.

During Kiselyov’s show Sunday night, Alexei Voevoda, one of the bobsled medalists, offered the IOC a proposal.

“Come here to me, to my motherland, and try to take it away,” Voevoda said.

Elena Vyalbe, the president of the Russian Skiing Federation, distanced herself during the segment from Grigory Rodchenkov, the former head of a Moscow anti-doping lab.

Rodchenkov fled to the U.S. after telling The New York Times newspaper that he had provided athletes with banned substances — including during the 2014 Sochi Olympics hosted by Russia.

Last week, two Russian athletes admitted to taking a Rodchenkov doping cocktail. Rodchenko's account has largely been dismissed in Russia, and investigators have opened a case into him.

“Rodchenkov never worked with our team,” Vyalbe told a reporter from Kiselyov’s show. “He absolutely did not keep in touch. We operated in totally different spheres.”

Kiselyov, for his part, seemed determined to sign off in an optimistic mood, saying the accusations would “fly by.”

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