

Russian President Says U.S. Plotted Coup in Ukraine



Moscow, March 16 (RHC)-- Russian President Vladimir Putin has accused Washington of organizing what he describes as an armed coup in Ukraine, saying Moscow saw through the U.S. ploy of hiding behind Europe in the bid to overthrow the former Ukrainian government.

"The trick of the situation was that outwardly the [Ukrainian] opposition was supported mostly by the Europeans. But we knew for sure that the real masterminds were our American friends," Putin said in an interview for a documentary dubbed "Crimea - The Way Home," that was aired Sunday by Rossiya 1 news channel.

"They helped train the nationalists, their armed groups, in Western Ukraine, in Poland and to some extent in Lithuania," he said, adding that "they facilitated the armed coup," which eventually led to the removal of then-President Viktor Yanukovich.

According to the documentary, the Russian president personally ordered the preparation for Crimea's special operation the morning after Yanukovich escaped the

country.

The Crimean people voted in a referendum to join Russia after rejecting the Western-backed government that took over power in Kiev in February 2014. The move triggered an international controversy after the new government's foreign sponsors accused Russia of annexing the peninsula through military force.

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