

RELEASE IN FULL

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**From:** Abedin, Huma <AbedinH@state.gov>  
**Sent:** Thursday, December 8, 2011 5:50 AM  
**To:** H  
**Subject:** Fw: Russia's Putin says U.S. encouraged election protests

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**From:** OpsNewsTicker  
**Sent:** Thursday, December 08, 2011 05:08 AM  
**To:** NEWS-Russia; NEWS-Mahogany  
**Subject:** Russia's Putin says U.S. encouraged election protests

MOSCOW (Reuters) - Prime Minister Putin accused the United States of encouraging protests over Russia's parliamentary election and said hundreds of millions of dollars in foreign funds were used to influence the vote.

In his first public remarks about daily demonstrations by protesters alleging the December 4 vote was fraudulent and unfair, Putin said U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton "gave a signal" to Kremlin opponents.

"She set the tone for some opposition activists, gave them a signal, they heard this signal and started active work," Putin said.

Putin said some of the demonstrators who have protested daily over allegations of election fraud were pursuing selfish political aims and that most Russians do not want political upheaval.

"We are all adults here and we understand that some ... of the organisers act in accordance with a well-known scenario and in their own mercenary political interests," he said.

The United States has expressed serious concern about the conduct of the Russian election, which Clinton suggested was not free or fair.

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