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U.S. diplomat claims Russia is behind Chile's popular uprising

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A top U.S. diplomat with extensive experience in Latin America has made the surprising -- and some observers say rather bizzare -- claim that Russia is behind the massive anti-government protests in Chile.

Speaking before a congressional committee hearing on Capitol Hill, State Department diplomat Michael Kozak suggested that "foreign actors" were stoking protests in Chile. Pressed on the statement by reporters following his testimony, Kozak elaborated further. "We have identified on social networks false accounts that emanate from Russia, which are people who pretend to be Chilean, but in reality all the message they are doing is trying to undermine all Chilean institutions and society," he was quoted by Chilean media.

Observers said that Kozak didn't provide evidence, because there is no evidence of such claims. Accusations of Russia's social media meddling have been thrown around Washington for nearly three years now, and the best that social media 'bot hunters' have managed to come up with is lists of meme posting accounts that they "believe" are "potentially" Kremlin-backed, based on the claims of NATO-backed think tanks, professional 'Russiagaters' and Democrat intelligence officials.

Michael Kozak has a long history of interventionist actions in Latin America. He once served as the chief of the U.S. Interests Section in Havana -- from 1996 to 1999 -- during which time the Cuban Five were arrested in the United States.

Edited by Ed Newman

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