

## Russian Defense Official Articulates Kremlin’s “Mental War” Ideology



**Andrei Ilnitsky.**

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OE Watch Commentary

Defense against foreign attack remains a central component of the Kremlin’s current ideology. In this worldview, the West/United States is using every available tool to weaken Russia and prevent it from regaining superpower status. According to the brief excerpt from the state-run news agency *RIA Novosti*, Andrei Ilnitsky, an advisor to Defense Minister Shoigu, has determined that “the West, led by the United States, has unleashed a new type of war against Russia - a mental one.” While specifics are lacking, the objective of this new mental assault “is to destroy self-consciousness, change the mental - civilizational - basis of Russian society.” Furthermore, the article quotes President Putin who asserts that “a targeted information campaign against Russia’s achievements is being waged abroad,” designed to “ultimately weaken Russia and put it under external control.” To prevent dangerous ideas from infecting the minds of unsuspecting Russians, Ilnitsky recommends developing “sovereignty of the Internet, training personnel in information countermeasures, a reset of youth policy, and resuming an active and broad dialogue with the conservative majority.” While new technologies have greatly increased the flow of information, the Kremlin leadership appears increasingly determined to monitor, and perhaps block this flow, especially that info coming from the West.

“The West, led by the United States, has unleashed a new type of war against Russia - a mental one...”

**Source:** “В Минобороны заявили, что США начали против России ментальную войну (The Ministry of Defense said that the United States began a mental war against Russia),” *RIA Novosti* (Russian state-run news agency), 25 March 2021. <https://ria.ru/20210325/ssha-1602735487.html>

*The West, led by the United States, has unleashed a new type of war against Russia - a mental one, the consequences of which will not appear immediately, Advisor to the Minister of Defense, an actual third-class state adviser, Andrei Ilnitsky, said in an interview with Arsenal Otechestvo magazine.*

*According to him, Western countries avoid direct military confrontation with Russia, since it is capable of inflicting unacceptable damage on them with its nuclear weapons and modern army, and the likelihood of such a conflict is excluded for the next ten years. Therefore, the adviser notes, the West under the leadership of the United States has unleashed an information-hybrid war against Russia.*

*“All this leads to the emergence of a new type of war. If in classical wars the goal is to destroy the enemy’s manpower, in modern cyber wars - to destroy the enemy’s infrastructure, then the goal of a new war is to destroy self-consciousness, change the mental - civilizational - basis of Russian society. I would call this the type of war as mental,” said Ilnitsky.*

*An adviser to the Minister of Defense listed the priority measures to counter mental warfare. In his opinion, this is the sovereignty of the Internet, training of personnel in information countermeasures in the power and civil spheres, a reset of youth policy, the resumption of an active and broad dialogue with the conservative majority - the supporting electorate of the current government.*

*President Vladimir Putin has previously stated that a targeted information campaign against Russia’s achievements is being waged abroad. The head of state added that Russia is facing a consistent and aggressive policy aimed at disrupting the country’s development and creating problems along its perimeter. As the president noted, this is being done to “ultimately weaken Russia and put it under external control.”*