



## Patriotism as Defense against Color Revolutions

**OE Watch Commentary:** Contemporary Russian military publications frequently discuss the importance of defending against hybrid threats from the US. They often point to American schemes to manipulate both economic and information systems in order to spark domestic protests, which could ultimately lead to a “color revolution.” One influential Russian military expert, Colonel-General Andrey Kartapolov has specifically stated that the US remains intent upon using everything within its arsenal (e.g. information, economic, diplomatic, military, etc...) to prevent Russia from becoming a peer competitor. For instance, according to General Kartapolov in an article published in 2015, the US instigated regime change in Ukraine in early 2014 to both foster anti-Russian sentiments in Ukraine and to gain a strategic foothold to further weaken Russia.

General Kartapolov is an experienced officer who has commanded from the platoon to the Military District level. Most recently, while serving as the Commander of the Western Military District, he was placed in charge of the Russian forces operating in Syria. As the brief accompanying excerpt from the centrist daily, *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, points out, in late July, General Kartapolov was appointed as Deputy Minister-Chief of the Main Military-Political Directorate of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation (formerly, GlavPUR). In this position, according to the excerpt, General Kartapolov will be responsible for “the organization of military-political work in the Armed Forces... and military-patriotic activities...”

The GlavPUR directorate dates from the Soviet period and was designed to maintain morale within the military and adherence to communist party doctrine. When the USSR collapsed, this department was eliminated, and was rebranded using chaplains and morale officers to help with discipline and esprit de corps. Kartapolov’s appointment suggests that these earlier initiatives proved insufficient to today’s threats, or as the article points out, “this choice is fully justified, since in our difficult time, when the country, as they say, is ‘encircled by enemies’...”

The article concludes on a cautious note, recalling a debate within Russian military circles from the last century, which dealt with the role of the armed forces and politics. One side argued that “the military is outside parties, the military is outside politics, it is for the law,” while the other side insisted that the military is simply too large to remain outside of politics. Kartapolov’s appointment may suggest that the current Kremlin leadership wants to ensure that the military knows which side to remain on in the event of a “color revolution.” **End OE Watch Commentary (Finch)**



Colonel-General Andrey Kartapolov.  
Source: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Andrey\\_Kartapolov](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Andrey_Kartapolov). CCA-SA 4.0.

*“What military-political work, and most importantly - in the interest of which political party will be held by the revived GlavPUR - is not entirely clear. After all, Russia is not a one-party political system.”*

**Source:** Vladimir Scherbakov, “Возвращение ГлавПУРа (Return of GlavPUR [Main Military-Political Administration]),” *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, 30 July 2018. [www.ng.ru/armies/2018-07-30/2\\_7277\\_glavpur.html](http://www.ng.ru/armies/2018-07-30/2_7277_glavpur.html)

*...According to two decrees signed by Russian President Vladimir Putin yesterday, a new post of Deputy Minister-Chief of the Main Military-Political Directorate of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation (Decree No. 454) is appointed to the Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation. Colonel-General Andrey Kartapolov (Decree No. 456) is appointed to this position. The main administration itself, apparently, is recreated and will soon begin to work.*

*...From now on, the list of powers exercised by the Defense Ministry includes the organization of military-political work in the Armed Forces... and military-patriotic activities....*

*...As you can see, Andrei Kartapolov is a real military general, not a political worker.... This choice is fully justified, since in our difficult time, when the country, as they say, is “encircled by enemies,” it is a combat rather than a parquet general who should be appointed to such a position.*

*However, the main question is this. During the Soviet era, GlavPUR actually worked as a department of the Central Committee of the CPSU, being the director in the field of party political work in the Armed Forces. What military-political work, and most importantly - in the interest of which political party will be held by the revived GlavPUR - is not entirely clear. After all, Russia is not a one-party political system.*

*...In general, Colonel Ivan Bolotnikov turned out to be wrong: “The military is outside parties, the military is outside politics, it is for the law.” Even then, the staff captain Vsevolod Korotkevich in ‘Army and Peace’ responded to this: “At best, we will be advised that the army does not interfere with politics. This advice is so often repeated to us that the true essence of it has long ago become obliterated, and the advisers recommend the lifelessness of the army in both foreign and domestic politics. But the army is too large to be lifeless.? Who is right? – time will tell.*