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Russian Officials Propose Mandatory University Course Teaching Students to Fight 'Color Revolutions'

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Amid the Kremlin's mounting fears of "color revolutions" — a term favored by Moscow to describe political protests that had toppled Russian-backed administrations in several former Soviet states in recent years — the Defense Ministry has proposed educating all Russian students on how to combat any such revolts in their own country, Izvestia reported Thursday.

The proposal reportedly came in response to a request by a Moscow city lawmaker, Kirill Shchitov, who had argued that an "anti-revolutionary" course should be part of military education included in undergraduate programs in many Russian universities.

The Defense Ministry responded that the initiative should be taken a step further, requiring not only participants in military training courses, but all Russian students to be drilled in opposing political revolts, the report said.

“Students should study the technologies of the spread of 'color revolutions' and the methods of counteracting them [legal methods, administrative, economic, informational, cultural and so on] as they undergo the programs of higher education,” Deputy Defense Minister Nikolai Pankov was quoted by Izvestia as saying.

But a leader of a Russian students' association, Alexei Krapukhin, said the “propaganda” involved in such courses could provoke the opposite of the effect it seeks, Izvestia reported.

“I don't think universities should be excessively politicized,” Krapukhin was quoted as saying. “This could cause protests among students.”

Meanwhile, the head of the educational research institute at the Higher School of Economics, Irina Abankina, argued that college students were already too mature to be swayed by anti-protest education, and that programs should begin at an earlier age, the report said.

“[University] students are already fully shaped individuals with their own points of view. This work would be more effective if it begins in [high or middle] school,” Abankina was quoted as saying.

Earlier this summer, the Defense Ministry has announced plans to commission a research project on the theme of color revolutions, in a bid to prevent any repeats in Russia.

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